



北傳大乘經藏之始——

迦膩色迦王

The Formation of the Mahayana Buddhist Canon — King Kaniska

宣化上人講述於1987年10月19日

潘景安 英譯

Lectured by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua on October 19, 1987

English Translation by Benjamin Phua



BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

迦膩色迦王為蒙古後裔，大月氏人，比阿育王晚三百餘年統治印度。為貴霜王朝第三代王（公元一二〇年），晚年受牧童建塔之啓示，崇信佛教，貢獻頗鉅。

舉兵攻摩竭陀國，該國獻佛鉢及馬鳴菩薩求和。王每日請一高僧說法，同一經典，不同講解。王疑之，問耆尊者何故？尊者曰：「去佛日遠，各宗派滲入己見，難定是非，重結三藏，統一經義。」

於是請世友菩薩為上首，馬鳴菩薩為潤色。經律論各製十萬偈，名為大毘婆娑論，以梵文刻於赤銅碟，石函封之，藏於塔中，為第四次結集，乃是北傳大乘經藏之始。

King Kaniska was a descendant of the Mongols and a citizen of Great Rouzhi. He was born some three hundred years after King Ashoka and was the third ruler of the Kushan Dynasty (120 CE) in India. During his later years, he was inspired by a shepherd boy who constructed a stupa, thus becoming a devout Buddhist and making significant contributions to Buddhism.

One time, he led his army to attack the kingdom of Magadha; to negotiate for peace, Magadha offered the Buddha's bowl and Asvaghosa Bodhisattva. Thereafter, King Kaniska would invite an eminent monk to speak Dharma every day; over time, he heard different explanations of the same sutras. This caused him to give rise to doubts and he requested clarification from the Venerable Parsva (the Venerable Rib). The Venerable Parsva replied, "Day by day, we become increasingly distant from the Buddha's time. Each Buddhist school adds its own opinions into the orthodox Dharma. It has reached a point where it difficult to distinguish between right and wrong. We should re-assemble the Tripitaka and the Buddhist canon, and standardize the interpretations of the sacred texts."

Therefore, the king invited Vasumitra Bodhisattva to be the assembly host and Asvaghosa Bodhisattva as the chief-editor to undertake in this quest. For each respective division of the Sutra, Shastra, and Vinaya texts, they composed 100,000 verses, which became the Treatise of the Great Commentary on the Abhidharma. They had the texts carved onto copper plates in Sanskrit, sealed in stone boxes, and then stored within stupas. This was the Fourth Compilation of the Tripitaka, and marked the beginning of the expansion of the Northern Tradition, Mahayana Buddhism.

迦膩色迦王是蒙古大月氏人，他比阿育王晚三百多年統治印度，為貴霜王朝第三代王。晚年有一天，在山林中打獵，有隻白兔大概是菩薩的化現，引他到牧童那兒，他遇見這位牧童，用泥建塔，就問牧童為什麼？牧童對他說：「釋迦牟尼佛入涅槃前就說過，五百年後有位迦膩色迦王會在這裏造寶塔，所以我先來試一試。」這位王一聽說佛為他預先授記，認為自己應該篤信佛教，就對佛教很有興趣。他對佛教貢獻很大，提倡很多佛教方面的工作，譬如結集經藏等等。

他聽說摩竭陀國有四天王獻給佛的鉢，和馬鳴菩薩這位有大智慧的聖人，於是就像苻秦派兵到印度去搶鳩摩羅法師一樣，舉兵攻摩竭陀國，也就是王舍城。佛的鉢和馬鳴菩薩都是國家的寶，最受人重視。摩竭陀國的國王知道他最想要這兩樣：一個鉢、一個菩薩，因為沒有法子抵抗，所以就都獻出來求和。

迦膩色迦王在王宮裏造了一個大講堂，每天請一位不同的高僧來講經說法。可是同一部經，每位高僧講的意思都不同，有不同的解釋；王無所適從，不知道哪個才是正確的，於是請問耆尊者這是什麼緣故。耆尊者是當時一位大德高僧，他在媽媽的肚子裏六十年，出生以後，鬍子頭髮都白了；出家修道後常坐不臥，耆不著蓆，所以叫「耆尊者」。為什麼他耆不著蓆？因為他天天在那兒不是打坐參禪，就是研究經典，所以沒有時間躺著。

尊者說：「現在離佛入涅槃已經五百多年了，佛教出現很多宗派，又是上座部，又是大眾部等等很多部，各部大都滲入己見，各執其是——各人說他自己的對，不接受旁人的意見，所以難定是非。我也沒有辦法說那個對，那個不對，各有各的道理；講的都有點對，可是都有點不對，似是而非，似非而是。如果想要解決這個問題，除非大家聚會到一起，重新結集經、律、論三藏，統一經義，令經義有一個標準，有一個系統，不那麼複雜。」

待續

Commentary:

King Kaniska was a descendant of the Mongols from the kingdom of Great Rouzhi (Tukhara). As the third ruler of the Kushan Dynasty (120 CE), he ruled India about three hundred years after King Ashoka. In the later part of his life, on a hunting trip in the forest King Kaniska saw a white rabbit, which was most likely a transformation-body of a Bodhisattva. The rabbit led the king to a shepherd boy, who at that time was busy making a pagoda out of mud. King Kaniska asked him what he was doing, and the boy replied, "Before Shakyamuni Buddha entered Nirvana, he prophesied that a king with the name Kaniska would appear five hundred years later to build pagodas on this spot, so I have come here to try it out first." Upon hearing the prediction the Buddha had made about him, Kaniska felt he should become a sincere Buddhist. Thus, he became keenly interested in Buddhism and thereafter made great contributions to Buddhism. The Compilation of the Buddhist Canon was one of the many areas of Buddhist works he advocated and pioneered.

King Kaniska had heard that Shakyamuni Buddha's alms bowl, a gift from the Four Heavenly Kings, was preserved and treasured within the kingdom of Magadha. Furthermore, Asvaghosa Bodhisattva, a sage of great wisdom, was in that kingdom. Both the Buddha's holy alms bowl and Asvaghosa Bodhisattva were two national treasures of the kingdom of Magadha. As a result, King Kaniska sent troops to attack the city of Rājagṛha in the kingdom of Magadha in order to obtain these two treasures. This is similar to how Emperor Fujian (of the Latter Qin) brought Kumarajiva (a great translator) to China by force. Knowing that King Kaniska was after these treasures and that Magadha was unable to defend itself against the impending army, the King of Magadha surrendered these two treasures to sue for peace.

King Kaniska built a large lecture hall. Each day he invited a different monk of high prominence to lecture on the sutras. However, for the same sutra, each monk had a different interpretation. King Kaniska did not know which monk had the right interpretation, so he went to Venerable Rib (Venerable Parsva) for help. Venerable Rib was a virtuous and respected monk of the time. He had remained in his mother's womb for sixty years, and by the time of his birth, his hair and beard had turned white. Venerable Rib sat in meditation all day and never laid down. His ribs never touched the bed, which is why he was called "Venerable Rib". Other than meditating and investigating Chan, he also studied the Buddhist sutras. He did not have the time to lie down.

Venerable Rib told King Kaniska, "It's been more than five hundred years since the Buddha's Nirvana and now there are many Buddhist schools such as the Theravada school, the Mahāsāṃghika school, etc. Each has added its own opinions and views, justified itself and has not accepted other opinions. I am unable to say who is right and who is wrong. Each has its reasoning and is correct in some ways yet incorrect in other ways. What appears to be true is false and what appears to be false is true. In order to resolve this problem, we should all gather together and recompile the Tripitaka - the Sutra, Vinaya, and Shastra texts, to create a standardized system of the interpreted sacred texts so that the texts won't be too complicated."

To be continued