

維摩詰經—拉開宇宙大戲的序幕（一）

Vimalakirti Sutra—The Prelude to the Major Show of the Universe Has Now Begun (I)

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維摩詰居士

Upāsaka Vimalakirti

在中國的石窟壁畫——莫高窟、龍門石窟、雲岡石窟等等裡面有一些壁畫，大家比較耳熟能詳的像是西方淨土經變圖、《藥師經》經變圖，而《維摩詰經》經變也是其中蘊藏十分豐富的圖像。

以前我太不明白，為什麼魏晉南北朝、隋唐的人特別喜歡這部《維摩詰經》？根據歷史記載，佛教是在東漢時期傳到中國。輾轉二百餘年到了魏晉南北朝，當時社會上流行玄學，所謂的玄學就是老莊思想；老莊思想說「有」，也說「無」，但是我們發現「有」、「無」成了對立——老莊哲學

There are some murals in grottos in China — in the Mogao Grottos, Longmen (Dragon Gate) Grottoes, Yungang Grottoes, and so on. The paintings that everyone is familiar with are the depictions of spiritual transformations, such as those from the Western Pure Land and the *Medicine Master Sutra*, as well as murals depicting the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, which are full of vivid imagery.

In the past, I did not quite understand why the people of the Wei (220-266 CE), Jin (266-420CE), Sui (581-619 CE), and Tang (618-907 CE) dynasties as well as the Northern and Southern Dynasties (386-589 CE) always liked the *Vimalakirti Sūtra*. According to historical records, Buddhism spread to China (during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE)). It took another two-hundred or so years to spread to the Wei and Jin Dynasties, and the Northern and Southern Dynasties,



中國解空第一——僧肇法師

One Foremost in Understanding Emptiness
in China—Dharma Master Sengzhao.

以對立的方式來陳述義理。導致中國學佛的人對於「空有」、「有無」這兩個概念的融通一直混淆不清。

等到鳩摩羅什法師來到中國，他翻譯了大量的佛經，他所翻譯的經典不僅量大，質也非常好。在他的弟子裡面有四位非常傑出，人稱「什門四聖」，其中一位就是僧肇法師。

僧肇法師十幾歲的有一天，無意間讀到了支謙法師翻譯的《維摩詰經》，大歎：「眾理之妙——就是宇宙間的道理，最圓融、最奧妙的就在佛經裡面。」於是毅然而出家了。那時他二十歲不到。由於國學底子深厚，才思敏捷，不久鳩摩羅什法師到中國來，他就幫助鳩摩羅什法師做翻譯。使翻譯的工作做得非常圓滿。在鳩摩羅什法師的眾弟子裡面，僧肇法師被鳩摩羅什法師稱讚為「中國解空第一」。

這部經流傳到現在，總共有三個翻譯版本。一個就是支謙翻譯的，一個是現在比較流行的鳩摩羅什法師翻譯的，另外還有一個是玄奘大師翻譯的。

接下來，我們來看看這部經的經題。

when it became quite fashionable for people to contemplate metaphysics. At that time, metaphysics basically referred to the thoughts of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Lao and Zhuang's thoughts concerned both "emptiness" and "existence." We can see that these two concepts are polar opposites. Lao-Zhuang philosophy presents its arguments in an antagonistic manner, which led the Chinese who studied Buddhism to confuse the dualities "emptiness versus existence" with "existence versus nonexistence."

After Dharma Master Kumārajīva came to China, he translated a large number of sutras. Not only was their quantity great, but the quality of his translations was also excellent. Among his disciples, four were most outstanding, and people called them "the Four Sages of Kuma's Sect." One of these was Dharma Master Sengzhao.

One day, when Dharma Master Sengzhao was a teenager, he stumbled on a sutra—Dharma Master Zhiqian's translation of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. He was amazed and exclaimed, "Wondrous are its principles!" He meant that of all the principles concerning our universe, the most interfused, the most profound and wondrous are found within the Buddhist sutras. Then, full of determination, he left the householder's life. He had not yet reached the age of twenty, but already had a solid foundation in classic literature and thought. His thinking was agile and quick. Not long after Master Kumārajīva came to China, Dharma Master Sengzhao arrived and began to assist him in his translation work, helping to make Kumārajīva's translations smooth and perfect. Among Master Kumārajīva's disciples, he was praised by Master Kumārajīva as the "One Foremost in Understanding Emptiness in China."

Since it first began to circulate in China, three versions of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* have appeared: one translated by Zhiqian, one by Great Master Xuanzang, and one by Dharma Master Kumārajīva, which became the most popular.

Now, let's take a look at the title of this sutra. Whenever one lectures on a sutra, one must lecture on the seven classifications of sutra titles. These seven are established by reference to: 1) only people, 2) only Dharmas, 3) only analogies, 4) both people and Dharmas, 5) both Dharma and an analogies, or 6) both people and an analogies, or 7) all three of these: people, Dharma, and analogy.

In the title *The Vimalakīrti Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha*, the Buddha is a person, and so is Upāsaka Vimalakīrti. Therefore,

講經，都要講七種立題。(一)單人立題 (二)單法立題 (三)單喻立題 (四)人法立題 (五)法喻立題 (六)人喻立題 (七)具足三(人、法、喻)立題。

《佛說維摩詰經》，佛是人，維摩詰居士也是人，所以是單人立題。這本經另外一個名字叫《維摩詰所說不可思議解脫經》，「維摩詰」是人，「不可思議解脫」是個法。所以又是人法立體。

「維摩詰」翻譯成華語，叫做「淨名」。他從東方妙喜國來，一起來的有五百個童子，在他們要回到東方世界妙喜國——阿閼佛的國土之前。維摩詰居士方便慈悲的教化此土的眾生，所以就有一連串的故事——開演了。

接下來看「不可思議」。僧肇法師怎麼解釋不可思議解脫？這一部經主要的思想是「不二法門」，「不二」——空有不二，有無不二，實權不二，性相不二。他說：「這部經所講的八萬四千法門是以權智為主，德本則以六度為根。」度化眾生就是以慈悲為首，全部都在闡明不二的法門，全部都是不可思議。經典裡的故事，通通都是不可思議、不可思議的解脫。

在〈不二法門品〉中，文殊師利菩薩問：「什麼是不二法門？」維摩居士閉嘴，一句話都沒有說。圓教，以無言遣言。這就是頓法，也是圓教的法門。深入研究此經會發現它具有「折小彈偏，嘆大褒圓」的內容，這也是為甚麼清涼國師說：此經五教並談。由此我們知道這部經的重要性跟它的價值。

這部經在東漢的時候就已經傳到中國來。目前為止所存有有三個譯本中；支謙的三卷，鳩摩羅什

the sutra title is based only on people. This sutra has another name: *The Inconceivable Liberation Sutra Spoken by Vimalakīrti*. Vimalakīrti is a person; “the inconceivable liberation” is a Dharma. So this sutra also has a title that refers to both people and Dharmas.

In Chinese, “Vimalakīrti” translates to “Pure Name.” Vimalakīrti came from the land of Wondrous Bliss in the East, and five hundred youths also came with him. They were all about to go back to this land of Wondrous Bliss in the East — the land of Aksobhya Buddha. Before they returned, Upāsaka Vimalakīrti taught living beings of this (Saha) world with his compassion and expedient means. Because of that, a series of events began to unfold.

Now let's discuss the word “inconceivable.” How did Dharma Master Sengzhao explain this word? The theme of this sutra is the non-dual Dharma: the non-duality of emptiness and existence, the non-duality of existence and non-existence, the non-duality of provisional dharmas and actual dharmas, and the non-duality of nature and characteristics. Dharma Master Sengzhao said, “The Dharma-doors expounded by this sutra focus on provisional wisdom and take the Six Pāramitās as the root of their virtue.” Taking across living beings means that one puts kindness and compassion first and regards them as most important. The entire sutra explains the Dharma of non-duality, and everything in it is inconceivable. All the events mentioned in the sutra are inconceivable and concern the inconceivable liberation.

In the “*Dharma of Non-Duality*” chapter of this sutra, Manjushri Bodhisattva asks, “What is the Dharma of non-duality?” Layman Vimalakīrti keeps his mouth shut and does not utter a single word. In the perfect teachings, words are not used to express one's meaning. This is the sudden Dharma as well as the Dharma of the perfect teachings. When you study this sutra deeply, you find that the sutra contains this kind of “scolding the small and criticizing of the incomplete, exclaiming the great and extolling the perfect.” That is why National Master Qingliang said, “This (*Vimalakīrti*) Sūtra encompasses all five teachings (those of the Small Vehicle, the initial teachings of the Great Vehicle, the concluding teachings of the Great Vehicle, the sudden teachings of the Great Vehicle, and the perfect teachings of the Great Vehicle).” From this, we know the importance and value of this sutra.

It was during the Eastern Han Dynasty that this sutra arrived in China. Among the three translations that still exist, the translations of Zhiqian and Dharma Master Kumārajīva each has three volumes, while Great Master Xuanzang's translation has six. Zhiqian's translation has more idioms and everyday expressions—he uses words and language that are more accessible to ordinary people. However, if we are to discuss and compare the three versions in terms of accuracy, then Great Master Xuanzang's translation



魏晉南北朝時期(公元220-589)修建的佛教建築

Buddhist buildings during the time of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties (220-589 CE)

法師的三卷，玄奘大師的有六卷。支謙的譯本，文字比較世俗化，他用一般人可以懂得的語言來表述。如果要說翻譯經典的精確度，就屬玄奘大師的逐字翻譯，也因此他的譯本分量達六卷之多。

鳩摩羅什法師翻譯的特點是翻譯經文大意。鳩摩羅什法師在魏晉南北朝時來到中國，當時候流行的文字是「駢體文」——四六文，就是以四個字一句，六個字一句為主。因為當時的皇帝大多篤信佛法，於是佛法在中國大興。翻譯的工作於焉展開。這樣也就不難理解為甚麼佛經大部分是四個字一句，六個字一句組構而成了。鳩摩羅什法師形成了這個四個字為主的一個翻譯的體制，當時把它叫做「譯經體」。由此可知鳩摩羅什法師對整個中國佛教的影響是非常深遠的。

現在的人比較熟悉的經典大概就是《心經》、《金剛經》、《六祖法寶壇經》，尤其是《六祖法寶壇經》之後，《金剛經》在中國廣為流傳，反而《維摩詰經》大家的熟悉度就沒有那麼高。但是其實在《六祖法寶壇經》之前，魏晉、隋唐的人特別喜歡《維摩詰經》。

would prevail — his translation closely follows the original, and that is why it is six volumes long.

Dharma Master Kumārajīva's translation has one special characteristic, which is that he only translated the main idea. He arrived in China during the time of the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties (220-589 CE). At that time, the fashionable literary style was parallel prose, or the four-and-six style. In this literary style, each sentence of an article has a meter of either four or six characters. Most of the emperors of that period also sincerely believed in Buddhism. Therefore, Buddhism flourished in China, and it was the golden age for the translation of Buddhist texts. So it is not difficult for us to understand why most Buddhist sutras usually have either four characters or six characters in each sentence. Dharma Master Kumārajīva used the four-character sentence pattern, which then became a convention of translation and was regarded as the "translation style" at that period. From this, we can see that Dharma Master Kumārajīva exerted a profound and far-reaching influence upon Buddhism in China.

People nowadays are familiar with the *Heart Sutra*, the *Vajra Sutra*, and the *Sixth Patriarch Sutra*. After the *Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra*, the *Vajra Sutra* became widespread in China, whereas the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* diminished in popularity, and people became less familiar with it. However, it was not like that before the appearance of the *Sixth Patriarch Platform Sutra* — prior to that sutra, people in the Wei, Jin, Sui, and Tang dynasties really liked the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*.

待續

To be continued