



安世高法師

Dharma Master An Shigao

宣公上人講於金山寺 一九八七年二月二十日
國際譯經學院 英譯

Composed by the Venerable Master Hua at Gold Mountain
Monastery, February 20, 1987
English Translated by the International Institute for the
Translation of Buddhist Texts (IITBT)

安世高名清（安清），安息國（古之波斯，今之伊朗）之太子。博學多識，無所不通，善解鳥語，通二十餘國文字。一日，偶閱佛經有省，萌出塵志。俟父王崩，讓王位與叔。

出家之後，精通三藏，各國弘法。於東漢末葉，由絲路至洛陽，不久通漢文，開始譯經，口述解釋，他人執筆成書。所譯經典，義理明晰，措辭恰當。在華三十餘載，譯經有《八大人覺經》，《八正道》及《禪經》等二十餘部，多屬於小乘經典。後因關中擾亂，而至江南弘揚聖教，將佛法傳於民間，神奇異事，不勝枚舉。

自此，梵僧接踵而來中國，弘法利生，譯經流通。如支謙法師所譯之經典，皆屬大乘經典，有《

Master An Qing (安清 ānqīng), known as An Shigao (安世高 ān shigāo), was a crown prince of Persia (ancient Parthia, a region of north-eastern Iran.) He was knowledgeable, well-learned, and highly skilled in many arts and sciences, such as being able to interpret birdsong and the languages of more than twenty nations.

Once, he accidentally came across a sutra; he gained some insight while reading it, and there sprouted within him the resolve to renounce the wearisome, mundane world and leave home. He waited until his father passed away, and then abdicated the throne to his uncle.

After having become a monastic, he mastered the entire Tripitaka, the Three Baskets of Buddhist Canon, and then traveled to other kingdoms to propagate the Dharma. At the end of the Eastern (Later) Han (漢hàn) Dynasty, he arrived at Luoyang (洛陽Luòyáng), (the capital) at that time, via the Silk Road. Before long, he mastered Chinese and started translating sutras. He explained the meaning of the contents of the sutras, and his fellow translators wrote them down. The Sutras he translated were clear in meaning and structure and proper in wording. Master An Shigao spent over three decades in China and translated more than twenty Theravada sutras, including *the Sutra on the Eight Awakenings of a Great Person*, *the Eightfold Path Sutra*, and *Sutras on Dhyana* —a total of more than twenty different sutras. Later, because of social upheaval in the Guanzhong Plain, he relocated to the area of south of the Yangtze River to spread the Dharma, where countless miraculous stories about him arose describing his spiritual powers. A succession of Indian monks, followed in his footsteps, coming to China to propagate the Dharma and benefit beings. During that time, Master Lokakṣema was translating Mahayana Sutras and *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*

道行般若經》，流通於當時。

安世高的名字叫安清，他是安息國人，也是安息國國王的太子，他生生世世都在修道。可是人修道有時候修的對，走到正路上；有的時候走的不對，路走偏了，錯因果，所以不能出六道輪迴。雖然不能出六道輪迴，可是他不昧宿因，生生世世都要出家修道，也就好像我們做工有儲蓄一樣。他所儲蓄的是什麼呢？他儲蓄的是德行與智慧。雖然有德行及智慧，有時也會愚痴錯因果，所以生了又死，死了又生，頭出頭沒，跑不出輪迴。

他往昔誦了很多經典，所以他聰明有智慧，大概他過去曾做過小鳥，所以也懂得鳥語。因為菩薩行四攝法——布施、愛語、利行、同事。他有時會生到鳥類裡去，把鳥的語言學會了，又回來做人，但是還沒有忘記鳥的語言。譬如鸚鵡雖然是鸚鵡，牠會學人說話，這就是一個證明。安世高法師不單精通鳥語，他在往昔大概在二十多個國家出生過，所以他懂得二十多國語言，有語言天才，但是仍然像小鳥被關在籠子裡，在輪迴裡轉。

在東漢末年時，他由天山絲綢之路到中國來，先到洛陽來，沒有多久就通達漢文，他可能在書寫方面不太好，所以口述並加以解釋印度的經典，由中國人執筆抄錄。安世高法師翻譯的有《八大人覺經》，《八正道經》，《禪經》等等共二十餘部。

他在中國三十多年，後來因為關內不平安，有黃巾造反，又有董卓叛亂的情形，於是他到江南去把佛教普及傳遍到社會上；這是中國佛教普遍的開始。

☞待續

***Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* was then in circulation.**

Master Shigao's name was Qing (last name, An), and he was the crown prince of the Parthia (current day Iran). Life after life, he had been a cultivator of the Way. However, like many other cultivators, sometimes he was on the right path, practicing correctly, and sometimes he strayed and was confused about cause and effect, and therefore he had been unsuccessful in breaking free from samsara, revolving in the Six Paths. That being said, he was still able to know his past lives and devoted every life to Buddhist practice as a monastic. Just as we save money from our salaries, An Shigao accumulated virtuous deeds and wisdom. But due to his occasional mistakes and confusion in cause-and-effect, he lived and died again and again, never escaping from *samsara*.

Master An Shigao was wise because he had recited a lot of sutras in the past. He probably was once reborn as a bird, so he even understood the birds as they sang. He practiced a Bodhisattva's Four Dharmas of Attraction: giving, kind words, beneficial acts, and cooperation. A Bodhisattva may sometimes be reborn as a bird to learn how they sing and then return to the path of humans without forgetting it. (He learned birdsong when he reincarnated as a bird, which he still remembered when he was later reborn as a human.) It is similar to how a parrot can communicate with humans. Probably, in the past, Master An Shigao at one time or another was reborn in over twenty different nations, which would explain his mastery of more than twenty languages. Nonetheless he was trapped in samsara like a caged bird.

Towards the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, Master An Shigao travelled the Silk Road to China, arriving at Luoyang first. It was not long before he mastered Chinese Mandarin speech, except for written Chinese perhaps. He did the Buddhist translation by first (speaking and) explaining the meaning of the sutras that he had brought from India, and then having the Chinese scribes write the translations down. He translated more than twenty Theravada Sutras, including *the Sutra on the Eight Awakenings of a Great Person, the Eightfold Path, and Sutras on Dhyana (Zen Sutra)*.

He spent over three decades in China. Due to social upheaval in the interior region of the Guanzhong Plain including the Yellow Turban Rebellion and Dong Zhuo's revolt. Therefore, Master An Shigao relocated to Jiangnan (south of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River) to introduce Buddhism to that region. This was the beginning of the widespread propagation of Buddhism in China.

☞To be continued