

【紀念宣公上人傳法西方60週年】

【Commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Venerable Master Hua's Bringing the Dharma to the West】

## 維摩詰經翻譯研討

# Discussion of the (English) Translation of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*

摘自恒異法師2022年6月23日聖荷西金聖寺講座系列

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Taken from a Dharma Talk by Dharma Master Heng Yi Given at the Gold Sage Monastery, San Jose, CA on June 23, 2022

English Translated by Michael Lu



### 翻譯緣起

首先，想跟大家分享我們翻譯這部經典的因緣。這是法大課程中的一個活動，每年秋季班開學前的一個禮拜會舉辦為期一週的譯經班。我們分別在2016年和2018年暑期譯經班進行翻譯。

這部《維摩詰經》的經文較短，加上法總尚未出版這部經的英文翻譯，因此在2016年暑期的譯經活動裡，我們就試著以這部

### How our translation came about

First of all, I would like to share how the English translation of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* came about. It originated from a DRBU event—the annual Translation Seminar—which usually happens the week before the beginning of the Fall Semester at DRBU. For the 2016 and 2018 translation seminars, we chose this Sutra for participants to translate.

We chose it because the Sutra was rather short in length, and at that time DRBA/BTTS had not published an English translation of this Sutra. So we chose this text as the translation material for the 2016 summer translation seminar.

經作為翻譯的題材。

我們除了英文組，還有德文組、法文組、西文組、韓文組以及梵文組一起同步翻譯這部《維摩詰經》；之後在2018年暑假，我們又辦了一次以這部經為題材的譯經班。

2019年，我們在法大開設翻譯系，也是以這部《維摩詰經》作為翻譯題材。我們在2020年完成這部經的翻譯工作，之後經過潤稿、排版，一直到2021年才得以出版這部《維摩詰經》英譯版。現在，可以在法總道場請到印刷版本或在亞馬遜網站請到電子書版本。德文版和法文版的翻譯也在今年(2022)完成。西班牙文及挪威文的翻譯則仍在進行。

中文譯本的《維摩詰經》，它的遣詞用字艱澀，意境也不容易理解。我們在翻譯的時候參考了諸多版本，其中包括玄奘大師的中譯本。我們發現玄奘大師翻譯的《維摩詰經》跟藏文版本的內容比較接近，由此可知，玄奘大師當時所參考的梵文版本與鳩摩羅什法師所參考的梵文版本應該不同。

我們除了參考玄奘大師的譯文以外，也參考各家的註解以及其他學者所翻譯的《維摩詰經》英文、法文和德文譯本。同時，也對這部經文進行許多相關研究，比方不同翻譯版本和詮釋這部經的方式等。

上人晚年的時候，有居士請法，請上人講這部《維摩詰經》。雖然當時上人允諾，但沒來得及講就圓寂了。因此，我們所出版的這部《維摩詰經》，只有英文翻譯而沒有上人講解。

## 流入中原

這部《維摩詰經》在西元二世紀就傳入中國，時間相當早。根據唐朝智昇法師所編譯的《開元釋教錄》裡頭的記載，截至當時《維摩詰經》總共有七個

That year, besides an English translation group, we also had five other language groups: German, French, Korean, Spanish and Sanskrit. These five groups simultaneously translated the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. Then in the summer of 2018, we translated the *Vimalakirti Sutra* again during the translation seminar.

In 2019, we started the Graduate Certificate Program in Buddhist Translation at DRBU, and we used the *Vimalakirti Sutra* as one of the program texts. We finished the primary translation in 2020 and then, after additional editing, polishing, and interior design work, published the English translation of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* in 2021. You can find the E-book version on Amazon and the print version at DRBA branch monasteries. German and French translations of this Sutra also have been completed this year (2022). Spanish and Norwegian translations are in progress.

The Chinese version of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* has many terms that are difficult to understand, and its core teaching is also hard to grasp. When we were translating it into English, we had to reference many different Chinese versions of the text. For example, we also looked at Great Master Xuan Zang's Chinese translation, which we found to be closer to the Tibetan version of this Sutra. This informed us that the Sanskrit version that Great Master Xuan Zang referenced was likely different from the Sanskrit version used by Dharma Master Kumarajiva.

Besides Great Master Xuan Zang's translation, we also studied various commentaries of this Sutra as well as English, French, and German translations done by other scholars. While we were translating, we did a lot of research into alternative translations and ways of expressing the Sutra's principles.

I also mentioned before that during the Venerable Master Hua's later years, a layperson had requested him to lecture this Sutra. Although he had consented, he entered Nirvana before he had the chance to do so. That is why our publication only has the English translation of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* without any commentary.

## Coming into China

The *Vimalakirti Sutra* came to China quite early on, in the second century CE. According to the *Records of Buddhism Compiled during the Kaiyuan Reign* by the Tang Dynasty Dharma Master Zhi Sheng 智昇, there were altogether seven

翻譯版本。

從後漢嚴佛調法師到支謙、一路到最後第七個版本，也就是玄奘大師的這個版本，這七個譯本中有四個譯本現已失傳，只有支謙、鳩摩羅什法師和玄奘大師譯的這三個版本還流傳在世。支謙譯的版本叫做《維摩詰經》；鳩摩羅什法師譯的經名是《維摩詰所說經》；玄奘大師則是直接把「維摩詰」翻譯成中文，也就是「無垢稱」，所以經名就叫《說無垢稱經》。

鳩摩羅什法師翻譯完《維摩詰所說經》之後，也親自為這部經作注解。鳩摩羅什法師是佛教歷史中非常有聲望的一位譯經家。當時中國僧人僧叡、僧肇和道生法師也一起參與鳩摩羅什法師譯經的法會。除了鳩摩羅什法師自己為這部經作注解以外，他的得力助手：僧肇、道生和道融法師也都分別為這部經作注解。這種翻譯者和協助翻譯工作者一起譯經、作注解之舉在佛教史上並不常見。雖然這些譯經的法師們都作了注解，但他們的注解也都失傳了。

現今我們看到《注維摩詰經》的這個注解共有十卷，雖然作者署名是僧肇——他是鳩摩羅什法師得力的助手之一。但實際上這部經是融合羅什大師、僧肇、道生和道融法師等人的注解。雖然他們各自寫的注解都已經失傳了，還好這本注解彙編成的十卷《注維摩詰經》還存留世間。

我們在進行翻譯時，也很倚重僧肇法師的這個注解。為什麼呢？因為僧肇法師親自參與鳩摩羅什法師譯場翻譯的工作，所以他的詮釋是非常有份量的。鳩摩羅什法師所翻譯的這個版本流傳很廣，從後代

different Chinese translations of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* up to that time.

From the first translation by Dharma Master Yan Fodiao 嚴佛調 of the late Han dynasty, to Upāsaka Zhi Qian 支謙, to the seventh translation by Dharma Master Xuan Zang, four of the seven translations have been lost over time. Only three still remain in circulation: one by Upāsaka Zhi Qian, with the title *Sūtra on Vimalakīrti*; one by Dharma Master Kumarajiva, with the title *the Sūtra Spoken by Vimalakīrti*; and one by Great Master Xuan Zang, with the title *The Sūtra Spoken By the One with Impeccable Reputation* is how Master Xuan Zang translated the name of Vimalakīrti into Chinese.

After Dharma Master Kumarajiva had translated *the Sūtra Spoken by Vimalakīrti*, he also wrote a commentary on the text. In the history of Buddhism, Master Kumarajiva was a translator with an eminent reputation. Some Chinese Dharma Masters, such as Dharma Master Seng Rui 僧叡, Dharma Master Seng Zhao 僧肇, and Dharma Master Dao Sheng 道生, participated in the translation Dharma assembly hosted by Master Kumarajiva. Therefore, besides Master Kumarajiva's own commentary on this Sūtra, there are also commentaries written by each of his three able assistants: Masters Seng Zhao 僧肇, Dao Sheng 道生 and Dao Rong 道融. In the history of Buddhism, it is uncommon for the main translator as well as other participants in the translation to write commentaries on the translated text. Unfortunately, the standalone commentaries done by each of these three Dharma Masters have been lost over time.

The current commentary that exists on *the Sūtra Spoken by Vimalakīrti, Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, has ten rolls. Although the author is said to be Master Seng Zhao, the commentary actually merges the commentaries done by Master Kumarajiva and his assistants: Masters Seng Zhao, Dao Sheng and Dao Rong. Although the standalone commentaries by Kumarajiva's assistants have been lost, we are fortunate to have this *Commentary on the Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, which combines their commentaries together.

When we were translating this Sūtra into English, we relied heavily on this commentary because Dharma Master Seng Zhao had been deeply involved in Dharma Master Kumarajiva's Chinese translation efforts, so his commentary is quite authoritative.

Dharma Master Kumarajiva's translation of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra* is most widely circulated, evidenced by the fact that the vast majority of commentaries on this Sūtra references his Chinese translation.

的注解中就可發現多數的注解都是參考鳩摩羅什法師的中譯本。歷代《維摩詰經》的注疏有好幾個版本，隋朝的智慧大師也注釋了《維摩詰經》，他注解過的《法華經》也是最具權威、最受推崇的注釋本。

其他流傳下的《維摩詰經》注釋本來還有吉藏法師、慧遠大師、湛然大師、窺基法師、宋朝的智慧大師、明朝的通潤大師和傳燈法師以及楊起元居士的作品。這些注釋大多是依據鳩摩羅什法師的譯本，唯獨窺基法師是根據玄奘大師的譯本《說無垢稱經》。窺基法師是玄奘大師的弟子，也參與玄奘大師譯經的工作，他所作的注解也具有某種程度的價值。當時我們在進行翻譯工作的時候，也常參考窺基法師的注釋本。

之前，《維摩詰經》的梵文本被認為已經失傳。大家覺得這部經很重要，因此很多學者就將《維摩詰經》的漢譯本、藏譯本轉譯成英文、法文和德文譯本。大多數的外文譯本還是參照鳩摩羅什法師所翻的中譯本，我們這次翻譯也是參考鳩摩羅什法師的中譯本。

當時在進行翻譯工作的時候，我們發現玄奘大師的中譯本和藏文本比較接近。可是在比照之下發現，鳩摩羅什法師和玄奘大師在內容方面並沒有很大的差異，只在某些部分有些許不同。

剛剛提過，之前佛教界和學術界都普遍認為《維摩詰經》的梵文原本已經失傳；可是在1999年卻突然現身問世。據說，日本大正大學的學者在中國西藏拉薩的布達拉宮工作的時候，很偶然的發現這部經典。當時大正大學有一個研究團隊一直在蒐集流散在西藏的梵文佛經抄本。

1999年夏，這個研究團隊中的一

Many different commentaries have been done on this Sutra throughout the centuries, including one by Great Master Zhi Yi 智顛 of the Sui 隋 Dynasty, who is known for his authoritative, renowned commentary on the *Dharma Flower Sutra*.

Commentaries on this Sutra by Dharma Masters Ji Zang 吉藏, Hui Yuan 慧遠, Zhan Ran 湛然, Kui Ji 窺基, Master Zhi Yuan 智圓 of the Song 宋 Dynasty, and Masters Tong Run 通潤 and Chuan Deng 傳燈 as well as Layman Yang Qiyuan 楊起元 of the Ming 明 Dynasty are all in circulation today. All of these commentaries—with the exception of Master Kui Ji's, which uses Master Xuan Zang's translation—reference Master Kumarajiva's translation. Great Master Kui Ji was a disciple of Master Xuan Zang and participated in Xuan Zang's translation efforts as well, so his commentary holds particular value. We also frequently referenced his commentary while translating the Sutra into English.

For a long time, many people had thought that the Sanskrit version of the Vimalakirti Sutra was lost. Still, because they felt that this Sutra was very important, many scholars translated the Chinese and Tibetan translations into English, French and German. Many of those translations, like ours, were based on Dharma Master Kumarajiva's Chinese translation.

While we were translating, we found that Great Master Xuan Zang's version was closest to the Tibetan version, but that it wasn't significantly different in content from Dharma Master Kumarajiva's Chinese translation either. There were only minor differences in certain sections.

We just mentioned how scholars and Buddhists alike had universally believed that the Sanskrit version of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* was lost. But then in 1999, it miraculously and suddenly appeared. Allegedly, scholars from the Taisho University of Japan had been doing some archaeological work at the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet, China and happened upon this Sutra. At the time, a research group from Taisho University had been collecting copies of Buddhist Sutras in Sanskrit across Tibet.

In the summer of 1999, one of the professors on the team unintentionally happened upon a full copy of the *Vimalakirti Sutra* in a pile of Sutra copies. The team was overjoyed upon hearing the news and immediately decided to keep it top secret and to tell nobody else. Only in November of 2001, after they had been awarded copying and publishing copyright of the

位教授無意中在收集的梵文抄本中發現一本完整的《維摩詰經》抄本。該考察團得知這消息之後大喜過望，馬上封鎖消息，對外界保密。直至2001年11月，在他們獲得《維摩詰經》梵文抄本的影印本版權之後，才向新聞界公佈這個重大發現。

2004年，日本大正大學出版了梵文、漢文和藏文三個對照版本的《維摩經》。他們還將現存的三本漢文譯本（支謙、羅什法師、玄奘大師譯本）進行比對和校正的工作，比對結果發現這些漢文譯本的內容和發現於布達拉宮的梵文本內容一致。因此，大家無須在意時下這些不同的版本，因為這些譯本的教義和內容基本上都是相同的。

在學術界兩位聲望很高的學者哥美茲教授和哈里森教授他們從2010年起，帶領一群學者和研究生一起將這本新發現的梵文本譯成英文，歷時十三年後終於在今年2022年出版了。哥美茲教授是波多黎各人，是密西根大學的佛學教授，於2017年往生。另外的一位哈里森教授則是史丹佛大學的佛學教授，在學術界也相當受到推崇。

☞待續

Sanskrit version of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, did they reveal their momentous discovery to the media.

Later in 2004, Taisho University published a book comparing the Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan versions of the *Vimalakirti Sutra*. They also compared and revised the three extant Chinese translations of the Sutra (translated by Upāsaka Zhi Qian, Dharma Master Kumarajiva, and Dharma Master Xuan Zang). Their findings showed that the content of the Chinese translations were consistent with the Sanskrit text found in Potola Palace. Therefore, we do not need to be concerned about the existence of different translations, because their principles and content are similar.

Starting from 2010, two distinguished Buddhist scholars, Luis Gomez and Paul Harrison, led a group of graduate students and other scholars to translate this newly discovered Sanskrit version into English. After thirteen years, their translation was finally published this year. Luis Gomez, who passed away in 2017, was a Puerto Rican and a professor in Buddhist Studies at the University of Michigan. Paul Harrison is an esteemed professor in Buddhist Studies at Stanford University. Both are eminent scholars of Buddhism within academia.

☞To be continued

諸惡業中，唯殺最重。普天之下，殆無不造殺業之人。即畢生不曾殺生，而日日食肉，即日日殺生。以非殺決無有肉故，以屠者，獵者，漁者，皆為供給食肉者之所需，而代為之殺。然則食肉吃素一關，實為吾人升沉，天下治亂之本，非細故也。其有自愛其身，兼愛普天人民，欲令長壽安樂，不罹意外災禍者，當以戒殺吃素，為挽回天災人禍之第一妙法。

—摘自印光大師文鈔·比丘尼近經英譯

Among all the evil karma, killing is the most severe. In the world, everyone has probably committed killing karma one way or another. Even though one has never engaged in the actual act of killing, eating meat every day is equivalent to engaging in killing every single day. If no one kills, no meat is sold. However, in order to accommodate popular demands, butchers, hunters and fishermen supply meat and engage in killing on our behalf. Therefore, eating meat or being a vegetarian is the basis of whether we ascend or descend in the six paths as well as the causes of chaos or peace in the world. It is not a trivial matter at all. If one cherishes his own body and is kind toward all people in the world, he will certainly wish all to be long-lived, in peace and happiness without getting into any accidents or disaster. In that case, one shall refrain from killing by becoming a vegetarian. This is the most wonderful Dharma to save people from both natural and man-made disasters.

—An Excerpt from Essays and Letters by Great Master Yinguang  
English translation by Bhikshuni Jin Jing