

# 有佛嗎？

— 那先比丘經研討（續）

## Was there a Buddha?

— Discussion of the *Nagasena Bhikshu Sutra*

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The Indo-Greek King, Milinda, was interested in Buddhism. He had some dilemmas for which he sought to reconcile what appeared to him as contradictory statements by the Buddha in the Pali canon. He asked, “Can anyone discuss with me the meaning of the scriptures?”

Then one of the king’s attendant told him that there was a learned bhikshu named Nagasena, who was a well-known teacher of Sramanas at the time. He could have a dialogue with the King on the principles of Buddhism.

Nagasena’s name means Dragon Army. “Naga” for Dragon

對佛教感興趣的印度-希臘國王——彌蘭陀。國王有一些疑問。他認為在巴利文經典中，佛陀有些自相矛盾的地方，他想尋求解答。於是他問身旁的大臣：「有誰可以和我討論經義的嗎？」一位國王的侍者告訴他，有一位很有學問的比丘叫那先，是當時所有沙門的老師。肯定能夠和大王辯論經義。

那先這個名字的意思是龍軍；「那」（Naga）代表龍，「先」（sena）代表軍隊。

and “sena” for army. Nagasena was one of the eighteen arhats.

He is depicted with an instrument in his ear because he was also known as the “ear picking” Arhat, which is an analogy for purity of the ear organ. He was very good in debating and discourses, especially in the area of discourses on the ear organ. And because he perfected his awakening through the ear organ, he is usually shown picking his ear to represent that his ears were clean.

King Milinda went to ask his questions to Bhikshu Nagasena. This dialogue between them took place around 400-500 years after the Buddha’s Nirvana.

After getting all of his answers answered, King Milinda bowed to Venerable Nagasena as his teacher and became a supporter of Buddhism. He even had the Dharma wheel printed on the coins he used as currency at the time. This was proof that Buddhism had made a positive impression on him.

These dialogues were recorded in the *Milinda Pañha*, which means “*Questions of Milinda*” or there is another name of this sutra, *the Bhikshu Nagasena Sutra*. It’s a unique text that represents the conjunction of two great philosophical currents of the time, the Greeks and the Buddhists.

We are going to look into some of the questions King Milinda asked regarding the Buddha.

Because King Milinda had read some of the Buddhist scriptures, he wondered whether such a person as the Buddha really existed. He asked Venerable Nagasena, “Is there really a Buddha? Have you ever seen the Buddha?”

This is a reasonable question, since why would we believe in the Buddha when we don’t know whether or not the Buddha existed.

Venerable Nagasena replied, “I have never seen the Buddha.”

Milinda then asked: “Have other masters seen the Buddha?” Venerable Nagasena was accompanied by many other sramenas at the time of this dialogue.

“None of the masters have seen the Buddha.”

The king said, “If none of the masters in the past have seen the Buddha, then there must be no Buddha!”

Venerable Nagasena said, “Has the king ever seen where five hundred streams meet?”

The king said, “I have not.”

Venerable Nagasena said, “Have the king’s father and the king’s grandfather ever seen such waters?”

那先尊者還是十八羅漢之一。

他被描繪成耳朵裡有一個器具，所以他也被稱為「挖耳」羅漢，用來比喻耳根清淨。他非常擅長辯論和演講，尤其是關於耳根的演講。而且由於他獲得耳根圓通，因此通常會顯示他挖耳朵以表示他的耳根清淨。

彌蘭陀王前去向那先比丘提問。他們之間的對話發生在佛陀涅槃後大約400-500年間。

國王在和那先比丘辯論後，所有的疑問都解開了，便拜那先尊者為師，並且成為佛教的支持者。他甚至將法輪印在當時使用的貨幣上。這在在證明佛教在彌蘭陀王心中，留下了正面的印象。

他們的對話記錄在《彌蘭陀問經》中，在中國通常稱為《那先比丘經》。這是一部十分獨特的經典，因為它代表了當時兩大哲學潮流，也就是希臘哲學和佛教哲學的結合。

今晚我們將研究彌蘭陀王向那先比丘提問關於佛的問題。因為彌蘭陀王本身讀過一些佛經，可是他懷疑真的曾經有過佛陀這個人存在過嗎？還是杜撰出來的呢？於是他問那先尊者：「真的有佛嗎？你見過佛嗎？」

這是一個合理的疑問，因為當我們確實不知道佛陀是否存在時，我們為什麼要信佛。

於是彌蘭陀王問那先比丘說：「您曾經見過佛嗎？」

比丘回答：「不曾見過。」

彌蘭陀王繼續追問說：「諸位師父曾經見過佛嗎？」當時那先比丘身邊有許多法師陪同。

比丘回答：「沒有。」

彌蘭陀王於是斬釘截鐵地說：「既然您和諸位師父都不曾親眼見過佛，那肯定就沒有佛了。」

那先尊者說：「請問王可曾見過五百溪水匯集的處所嗎？」

彌蘭陀王說：「我不曾見過。」

The king said, “None of them have seen it.”

Venerable Nagasena said, “Neither the king’s father nor grandfather have ever seen such waters. Surely then, there is no such place in the world where five hundred streams meet?”

The king said, “Even though neither I nor my father nor my grandfather have ever seen such vast waters, there is actually such a place where the waters meet.”

Venerable Nagasena said, “Just as you know that there is a place where the waters meet even though you have not seen it, I and all the masters have never seen the Buddha, but there is actually a Buddha.”

King Milinda was satisfied with this answer and cried, “Good indeed! Well said!”

Just because we do not see something, it does not mean that it doesn’t exist. Just like in the past, Europeans did not know the Americas existed. It did not mean that the Americas weren’t there; they just did not know they were there.

Moreover, we can trace back historically to find that the Buddha did indeed exist in world. Although Indian history may not have put too much emphasis on exact dates and times, the Chinese did record it. Emperor Zhao of the Zhou Dynasty saw auspicious signs all the way from China on the Buddha’s birth even though he was very far away and was informed that an enlightened being was born in the West by his diviner.

We can also see evidence in art and statues, stupas and footprints of the Buddha, although the ones that survived are not as old as the historical Buddha.

Buddha has three meanings: self-enlightened one, one who enlightens others, and one of complete enlightenment. When self-enlightened, one is different from ordinary people. Although ordinary people are said to enlighten, they are still as yet unenlightened. They are still confused to the point that they think right is wrong and wrong is right. They fritter their time away chasing fame and fortune. Thus, self-enlightenment sets one apart from ordinary people.

Enlightenment of others makes one different from those of the Two Vehicles. Those of the Two Vehicles primarily enlighten themselves and enlighten the few others with which they have affinities with.. Bodhisattvas, however, enlighten themselves as well as others. However, their enlightenment is not complete.

The Buddha alone is complete in enlightenment and practice.

尊者接著問：「那王的父親和祖父都見過五百溪水嗎？」

彌蘭陀王說：「都不曾見過呢！」

那先說：「大王的父親和祖父都不曾見過這水。那天下肯定沒有這個所謂的五百溪匯集處囉。」

彌蘭陀王義正嚴詞地說：「雖然我不曾見，我的父親和祖父也都不曾見過這五百溪水。但是確確實實有這個水存在啊。」

那先說：「同理，雖然我和老師們不曾見過佛。但有佛是千真萬確的事啊。」

彌蘭陀王對這個回答很滿意，不禁歡欣鼓舞地說：「善哉！說得好！」

因為我們不能僅僅沒有看到某些東西，就意味著它不存在。就像過去歐洲人並不知道美洲的存在。這並不意味著美洲不存在。只是當時他們不知道它在那裡罷了。

另外，我們可以追溯歷史，發現佛陀確實存在於世間。儘管印度歷史可能沒有太強調確切的日期和時間，但中國人確實記錄了它。儘管中國離印度非常遠，但周昭王在佛出世時看到了各種祥瑞。太史占卜後告知西方有一位覺悟的聖人出世。

我們還可以在佛像、佛塔等藝術和雕像足跡中看到證據，儘管倖存下來的沒有佛陀時代那麼古老。

佛有三個含義：自覺、覺他、覺行圓滿。開悟了，就和凡夫不一樣了。凡夫雖說都有成佛的可能性，但還沒有覺悟。他們仍然有困惑，以至於不分對錯。浪費時間在追逐名利上，所以「自覺」的人與凡夫不同。

「覺他」與二乘不同。二乘以自覺為主而能隨緣少分覺他，而菩薩是自覺又能覺他。不過，他們還沒有覺行圓滿。唯有佛陀是覺行圓滿的。

☞ To be continued

☞ 待續