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佛陀小传

Buddha

A Very Short Introduction

Michael Carrithers 著
高山杉 译

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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译者序

《佛陀小传》是一位颇有哲学素养的西方学者撰写的关于释迦牟尼佛的学术传记。我国佛学家吕澂说过：“释迦之传记不仅南北所传有异，同一所传之中或则为单纯素朴之记事，或则为绚烂庄丽之美文，又或广或略，而实录与譬说相杂则诸说无别；欲取舍所有材料以得的确史实，实非今日所能也。”¹由此可见，撰写一本佛陀传是如何之难。本书的撰写，依据的是南传巴利文三藏，择取了其中“单纯素朴之记事”，略述了佛陀一生的思想和行迹。作者在撰写中尤重于佛家哲学的疏通和整理，并阐明了当时社会、经济、政治、思想诸因素与佛陀之间的互相影响。本书是否达到吕澂所说“取舍所有材料以得的确史实”的目标，实在难以评说，但是，至少就一个西方学人以哲学眼光审视佛陀来说，我认为还是值得一读的。

作者迈克尔·卡里瑟斯（Michael Carrithers）是英国人，达勒姆大学（University of Durham）人类学教授，曾在斯里兰卡研究南传上座部佛教多年，著有《吉祥楞迦岛的阿兰若僧》（*The Forest Monks of Sri Lanka: An Anthropological and Historical Study*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983）、《我们为什么有文化——阐释人类学和社会多样性》（*Why Humans Have Cultures:*

¹ 吕澂（编译）《印度佛教史略》，台北市：广文书局有限公司，1971年9月重印本，第14页。

Explaining Anthropology and Social Diversity. Oxford University Press, 1992)¹等专著。《佛陀小传》最早由牛津大学出版社作为“已逝大师丛书”(Past Masters)的一种出版(*The Buddha*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 此后又只字未动, 与同一丛书里的另外三本(分别讲述耶稣、穆罕默德和孔子的生平事迹)合订出版(*Founders of Faith*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986)。再后来,《佛陀小传》被收进“学术小引丛书”(Very Short Introductions), 除增加六张图片外, 文字几乎没有变动。

本书是根据“学术小引丛书”版的《佛陀小传》翻译的。此前, 已经有过两种汉译本: 一是迈克尔·凯里泽:《佛陀——至善的觉悟者》, 孟祥森译,“文化丛书”第76种, 台北市: 时报文化出版企业有限公司, 1988年4月1日第1版; 二是迈克尔·卡瑞提斯:《佛陀》, 孙晶译,“外国著名思想家译丛”第1函第3种, 北京: 中国社会科学出版社, 1992年8月第1版。台湾版本只印了1,500册, 流通有限。也许正因为如此, 大陆本翻译出版时, 好像完全不知道台湾已有汉译, 也就未能取来参考。原书学术性很强, 文字简奥, 翻译起来不是很容易。我在翻译时参考了上述两个译本, 受到一定的启发。同时, 我发现这两个译本在原文理解上有不少问题, 而且大多是按照原文直译, 没有还原到传统汉译佛典和新译南传佛典的用语上来。因此, 我在翻译时尽自己所能做了一些改进, 尽量使用传统汉译佛典和新译南传佛典的术语和译文。但因学术水平、文字功力和翻译经验有限, 译文中错误和不完善的地方恐怕还有不少。另外, 原著没有任何注释, 译文中的脚注都是我在翻译过程中添加的。做这些注释时引用了一些权威学者的著作, 以及近年

¹ 《我们为什么有文化——阐释人类学和社会多样性》, 陈丰译, 辽宁教育出版社, 牛津大学出版社, 1998年。

台湾出版的一批关于南传佛教的著作和译作，并参阅了一些大陆上常见的佛教和宗教辞书，诸如丁福保编译的《佛学大辞典》、任继愈主编的《宗教词典》、《中国大百科全书·宗教卷》等等。希望这些注释能对读者阅读本书和了解佛陀有所帮助。

关于书名和书中所引佛典也需要解释一下。我之所以在书名和译文中使用“佛陀”，而没有使用大家都很熟悉的“释迦牟尼”，是因为“释迦牟尼”是北传佛教常用的对佛陀的称谓，而南传佛教中使用最多的称谓则是“佛陀”。本书完全按照南传佛教的资料撰写，甚至一次都没有提到“释迦牟尼”这个名字。本书所引佛典，主要是巴利文的《长部经典》、《中部经典》、《增支部经典》和《相应部经典》。它们略等于汉译佛典里的“四《阿含》”，也就是《长阿含经》、《中阿含经》、《增一阿含经》和《杂阿含经》。民国时期出版《普慧大藏经》时，曾经从日本刊行的《南传大藏经》（巴利文三藏的日文译本）中重译出一部分《长部经典》、《中部经典》、《增支部经典》和《相应部经典》，台湾后来还有重印本。我在翻译本书时，有选择地使用了这些译文。但由于这些译文使用的是文言，我按照编辑的要求对有些不好理解的文句作了白话翻译。

大约八年前，我曾撷掇老友李鹏从北京国家图书馆借出并复印了帝俄科学院院士、汉学名家王西礼的《佛教论》，帝俄科学院院士、印度学家鄂登堡的《释尊小传》和《西域考古记》，还有莫斯科科学出版社的《鄂登堡纪念文集》。我们当时商定，他先把《释尊小传》从俄文翻译成中文，再由我做文字整理。这些年过去了，译事未能完成，部分译稿也不知所之。现在，译完《佛陀小传》，附记此事，以纪念我们的友谊，并感谢老友付出的辛劳。

在本书的翻译过程中，责任编辑高耿松先生付出很多心血。他认真校阅，为译稿纠正不少文字和内容上的错误。在此，我

谨表示衷心的感谢。

最后，我想申明，这个译本肯定还会有很多错误和不足，而责任均在译者。我真诚欢迎读者朋友批评指正，以便再版时进一步加工修改。

译者谨识

2008年5月18日

Preface

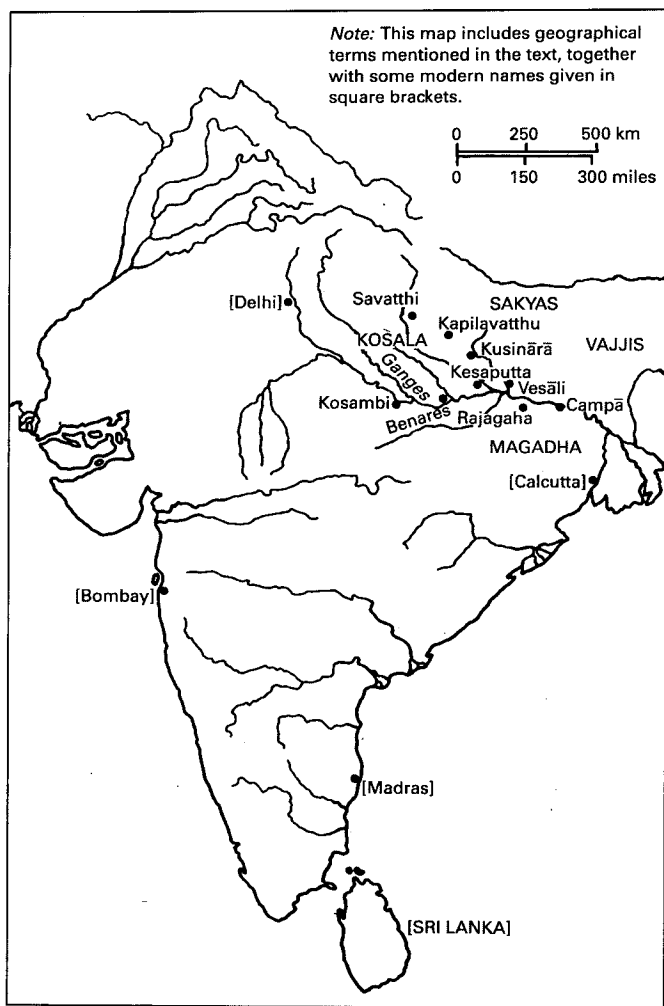
Until the last century the Buddha was probably the most influential thinker in human history. His teaching prospered throughout the subcontinent of India for more than 1500 years, and in that time it changed and diversified at least as much as Christianity did in its first 1500 years in Europe. By the thirteenth century AD, when the power of Buddhism was broken in its original home, it had long since spread to the Himalayas, East Asia, Central Asia, and Sri Lanka, and it was making its way into South-East Asia. Buddhism's history in those regions was as complicated as it had already been in India.

I have not attempted to explain such a vast matter in this short book. I have only recounted the life of the Buddha and described the genesis and significance of his teaching. I have tried, however, to phrase this account so the reader will be able to see why Buddhism moved so easily across continents and survived so well through the centuries.

前言

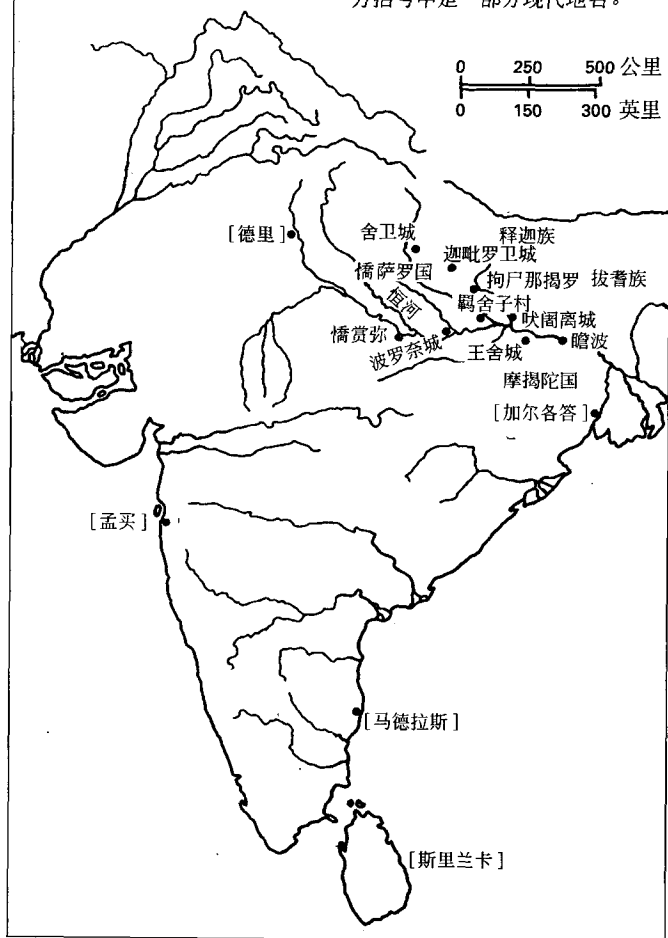
直到上个世纪为止，佛陀也许算是人类历史上最有影响的思想家。在整个印度次大陆，佛法盛行了 1,500 多年。在此期间，其变化流衍之广大，丝毫不逊于基督教在欧洲传布 1,500 年间所发生的变化。到公元 13 世纪时，佛教在印度本土虽然已经失其势力，但却早已远播东亚、中亚和斯里兰卡，并正在向东南亚传布。这几国的佛教史，其复杂程度也不亚于在印度本土的情况。

在这本小书里，我不打算阐释这样庞大的问题。我只略叙了佛陀生平，描述了佛法的起源和意义。可是，我尝试着通过自己的讲述，希望可以使读者诸君明白，为什么佛教可以如此容易地在诸大陆上传布，并且历经数世纪风雨，还能如此兴盛地延续下来。



Map 1. Northern India and Nepal.

注释：本图包括了书中提到的古代地名，
方括号中是一部分现代地名。



地图 1：北印度和尼泊尔

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Among the ruins of Anuradhapura, the ancient capital of Sri Lanka, there rests alone on a pedestal above the grass a seated image of the Buddha in stone, slightly larger than life. The statue is conventional, probably more than a thousand years old, of a type found throughout Buddhist Asia. The legs are folded in meditation, the hands laid one upon the other in the lap. Buddhists hold that it was in this posture, seated beneath a tree more than 2500 years ago, that the Buddha was awakened, attaining decisive knowledge of the human condition and the unshakeable certainty that he was released from its suffering.

In its excellence, however, the Anuradhapura image is far from conventional. The back and head are disciplined and upright; but the arms are relaxed and the face reposes in tranquillity. The figure seems intelligent and serene, wed perfectly to the unmoving granite. Standing before it an elderly English socialist told me that in the whole mess of human history *this* at least – the statue and all it stands for – was something of which we could be proud. He said that he had no use for religion, but that he felt he had unknowingly been a follower of the Buddha all along.

An intensely private reflection, its disclosure prompted perhaps by the power of the figure: but what is remarkable is that it should be found in

so many others. Here, for example, is the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, by no means a Buddhist, writing in a similar vein:

what have I learnt from the masters I have listened to, the philosophers I have read, the societies I have investigated, and that very science in which the West takes such pride? Simply a fragmentary lesson or two which, if laid end to end, would add up to the meditations of the Sage at the foot of his tree.

This testifies to the fascination the Buddha still holds for us. Is it justified? What does an Oriental seer, born in the middle of the first millennium before Christ among historical circumstances and a culture so different from our own, have to offer such very modern thinkers? This is the first question I have tried to answer.

And I have tried to answer it by writing a biography of the Buddha. That this is a reasonable strategy is by no means obvious, for history is full of figures whose significance lies very little in their personal lives and very much in their teachings alone. But the Buddha is peculiar in this regard, for his teaching and his life are intimately and inextricably mingled.

A brief biography

Let me illustrate this from traditional accounts of the Buddha's life, which have exerted tremendous influence over Buddhists and are now widely available in European languages. The Buddha was born the son of a king, and so grew up with wealth, pleasure, and the prospect of power, all goods commonly desired by human beings. As he reached manhood, however, he was confronted with a sick man, an old man, and a corpse. He had lived a sheltered life, and these affected him profoundly, for he realized that no wealth or power could prevent him too from experiencing illness, old age, and death. He also saw a wandering ascetic, bent on escaping these sufferings. Reflecting on what he had seen, he reached the first great turning-point of his life:

against the wishes of his family he renounced home, wife, child, and position to become a homeless wanderer, seeking release from this apparently inevitable pain.

For some years he practised the trance-like meditation, and later the strenuous self-mortification, which were then current among such wanderers, but he found these ineffective. So he sat down to reflect quietly, with neither psychic nor physical rigours, on the common human plight. This led to the second great change in his life, for out of this reflection in tranquillity arose at last awakening and release. He had 'done what was to be done', he had solved the enigma of suffering. Deriving his philosophy from his experience he then taught for forty-five years, and his teaching touched most problems in the conduct of human life. He founded an order of monks who were to free themselves by following his example, and they spread his teaching abroad in the world. He eventually died of mortal causes, like others, but unlike others he was 'utterly extinguished' (*parinibbuto*), for he would never be reborn to suffer again.

There are good reasons to doubt even this very compressed account, but at least the outline of the life must be true: birth, maturity, renunciation, search, awakening and liberation, teaching, death. This biography, with the two marked transformations, the renunciation and the awakening, gave the Buddha and his followers the dramatic plot with which to illustrate their belief and the psychological and philosophical model on which to found their thought. Dramatically the action centres on spiritual changes achieved by heroic personal application, while philosophically it centres on discoveries made within the Buddha's own mind and body.

Hence he said, 'it is within this fathom-long carcass, with its mind and its notions, that I declare there is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the path leading to the cessation of the world' (S I 62). Within these bounds what he suffered was suffered in