

善言不辯

Skillful Speech Is Not Argumentative

節自宣化上人百日禪期間開示
吳蓮蓮 英譯

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English Translation by Lian-lian Wu



DHARMA TALK DHARMA RAIN | 法語法雨

再好的事情，也有人說你不好；再不好的事情，又有人說你好。不要說旁的，就拿天下雨來講，種田的人說：「喔！這個雨下得太好囉！我今天這個農作物，穀啊、豆啊，一定會很豐收的。」

那麼走路的人呢，就不願意了：「唉！說你這個老天爺，偏偏這時候下雨！我不走路你不下雨，我今天想去旅行你就下雨，令我這個barbecue也沒法子做，點不著火了！」你說，一樣的下雨就有人歡喜它，又有人不歡喜它。即使是開車的也覺得下雨不太好，因為前邊看不清楚，所以總要用那個撥水棍來回撥那個水，多麻煩啊！前幾天因為起霧下雨，撞車撞了幾十架車，車也破了，人也傷了，還有死的，所以大家都不願意下雨。這是說的下雨。

現在說這個月光。十五的月光很圓的，非常明亮，所以一般賞月的人就說這個月太好了，very beautiful! 可是做賊的呢，「唉！這麼討厭，你月照得這麼明，我怎麼偷東西呢？」這是說這個天。

再拿這個地來講，地能長很多東西。種田的人把田種到這個地下，就有雜草也一起生出來。於是乎，種田的人又要用人工把雜草拿走，認為這個地也不太好。有的地方又有很多

No matter how well you do something, someone will criticize you. No matter how poorly you perform, someone will praise you. We need not consider any other topic; let's discuss the rain that falls from the skies: People who plant the fields say, "Ah! How nice that it's raining. The grain I have planted will certainly flourish. There will be a good harvest."

Those traveling on foot, however don't want the rain: "Oh, the old man in heaven just has to make it rain right now. When I don't walk, it doesn't rain. Today I am on vacation and you make it rain, ruining my plans for a barbecue because I can't light my fire." It is the same rain, but some people like it and some people don't. Even if people drive cars, they don't think rain is very good because they can't see very far and have to use the windshield wipers, which is troublesome. A few days ago because of the frost and rain there was a car crash involving several dozen cars, where the cars were wrecked and people were injured and even killed. So, many don't like the rain.

Let's discuss the moonlight. When the moon is clear and round on the full moon day and can be seen far away and brightly, stargazers say, "Oh, it's really bright and beautiful." But thieves, on the other hand, say, "Ahhh! This is terrible! The moon is so bright. How am I going to steal things?"

Let us consider the earth. The earth supports many things to grow, so farmers plant seeds in the fields. Then when the weeds all come up together, they have to use effort to pull up the weeds and start to think that this earth isn't that great after all. There are places where it is full of rocks. People who can use rocks to build a house think this is fine. People who don't use rocks say, "Oh these rocks are dreadful. I can't

石頭，用石頭的人就說：「啊！這石頭我可以造房子，很好的。」不用石頭的人，這個石頭真討厭，在這個地方我又不能種東西。一樣的地，就有人歡喜它，有人不歡喜它。

再拿大學教授來講。教授教得很認真，這個懶學生就不高興了：「他這麼盡力教書，也沒看見學校多給他一塊錢啊，真是太愚癡了！」好好教書他罵他，說他不對。

那個願意讀書的學生就很高興了，說這個教授真好，一分鐘也不懶惰，用盡種種方法循循善誘來教他們多讀一點書。一樣的教授，就有的學生歡喜他，有的不歡喜。

為什麼這樣子呢？因為現在是鬥爭堅固的時候，你無論怎麼樣，都有人要說出你一點壞話來。由這一點知道，我們在這個世界上，不要聽人講好不好；自己往好了做，不用管人家怎麼樣批評。不要說現在，就是當初釋迦牟尼佛在世的時候，多少人譏諷他，多少人破壞佛教！以釋迦牟尼佛這種福慧雙圓，尚且有人來譏諷他，何況我們現在這個末法時代。

我知道外邊的人，尤其一些掛佛教招牌的人，對我們這兒是很不滿意的。為什麼呢？你問他，他也說不出一個所以然，他不知道為什麼不滿意。但是我知道，為什麼我知道呢？這只有兩個字——妒忌。因為他怕我們比他好，所以就生出一種妒忌心。

以後到什麼地方去，我們都不要說自己好，就說自己什麼都不懂，什麼都不明白，要各處去訪尋善知識。誰是善知識呢？能批評我們不對的，就是我們的善知識。以後你們到各處去，就抱定這種宗旨，接受人的批評。誰說我們不對，我們就是不對；說我們驕傲，我們就把這個驕傲改了它。只要你能說出我們一個毛病，我們就直認不辭地說：「好，我們是錯了，我們希望能改過。」

不要和人家辯論，我們只往真實了做去。世界上的人不是都是瞎子，不是都是盲眼睛的，會有人認識的。那麼有人認識我們已經就夠了，不需要向任何人去辯論去，這就是德行。你若不和人辯論，這就是有德行了；你若和人辯論，那就不是善了。

plant anything.” It’s the same earth. There are people who like it and people who don’t like it.

Let’s consider college professors. There are those who are very diligent and who put a lot of energy into teaching. The lazy students aren’t happy at all. They say, “Hah! He is working so hard, but he does not get a single dollar more from the university for his effort. How foolish of him!” So they scold the professor and say that he is wrong.

The students who are not lazy and who like to study say, “He is not even lazy for a minute. He uses a variety of methods to teach all of his students with skill and patience. He raises all these students and teaches them to study a few more books.” And so, among the students there are those who like him and those who do not.

Why is it this way? It is because we have reached a time when people are contentious and argumentative. Whoever you are, whatever you do, there are those who will criticize you a little. Given this point, in this world we should not listen to whether people speak well or poorly of us. We should consider whether we are being virtuous, and pay no attention to whether people criticize us. Even at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha, many people slandered him and sought to destroy Buddhism. Despite the Buddha, who was perfect in both in blessings and wisdom, some people nevertheless slandered him; how much the more is this the case for us now in the Dharma-ending age.

I know that on the exterior, everyone, especially those who call themselves “Buddhist,” are particularly displeased. Why? You ask them and they can’t say. But they are still that way. They don’t know why they are displeased, but I know. It’s because of jealousy. It is because they fear we will be better than they are, so they get jealous.

From now on, wherever we go, we should not praise ourselves. We should just say, “Oh! We don’t understand anything. We are not clear about anything. Wherever we go, we are looking for good spiritual advisors. Who are our good advisors? They are the people who are able to criticize our faults. They are all our good advisors. So afterwards, wherever you go, use this principle. Accept people’s criticism. If they say you are bad, say, “Oh, I am wrong.” If they say that you are arrogant, you say, “Oh, I hope I can remove this arrogance and change it.” So at the times when people criticize you, immediately you should agree. I hope that we are able to change.

Don’t argue with people! Just do things truly. People in the world are not all blind, not all unable to see. There are people who see clearly and so we are satisfied. It is not necessary to go around and debate with people. Refraining from arguing is the practice of virtue. If you argue with people, it’s not wholesome.

So it says: “Skillful speech is not argumentative; arguing is not skillful.” Wise people don’t argue, and those who argue are not wise. People who have wisdom would not say, “I know everything!” Somebody who says he knows everything really doesn’t know a thing. If he knew everything, he wouldn’t be so conceited in his speech.

所謂「善言不辯，辯言不善」，好的話，不辯論；你若是辯論了，那就不是善了。「知者不博，博者不知」，知道的人、有智慧的人，他不會說：「喔，我什麼都知道！」他若說什麼他都知道，那他就是什麼也不知道；因為他若是什麼都知道，他不會自滿，不會這樣講的。

我們到任何地方都不要自滿，都要「有若無，實若虛」——有道德像沒有道德似的，有學問像沒有學問似的。人家說我們驕傲，我們就要迴光返照，問一問自己：我們如果不是驕傲的話，那就說我們驕傲也沒有用；如果真是驕傲，就要改過，改這個驕傲。

六祖大師說得很好：「若真修道人，不見世間過。」真正修道的人，看一切眾生將來都可以成佛，不見世間的過錯。人家說我們不對，我們不要說人的不對。為什麼呢？他說我們不對，你想想他是對不對。如果他說的是對，我們就應該接受他的指導；如果他說的不對，我們不應該學他的這個不對。我們應該自己知道哪個是對，哪個是不對。

人家說我們講經是不對的，分別名相。你就回答，我們不能不講經；為什麼呢？若不講經就會罵人，所以我們就要講經，這比罵人好得多。因為我們怕自己罵人，所以就講經。那麼講經也是說話，就不會罵人，看看他們怎麼樣？

世間上有智慧的人，就說有智慧的話；愚癡的人，就說愚癡的話。說愚癡話的，你不能叫他不說，說有智慧話的，你也不能叫他不說。那麼，我們也不是愚癡，也不是有智慧，我們就說佛說的話。這樣不管他說我們是怎麼樣，我們是根據佛所說的話去修行。我們自己要有一定的方針，向前修行去；要有擇法眼，知道什麼是法，什麼是非法，那麼就不會被愚癡人所迷。

有智慧的說話，和愚癡的說話，我們若能認識，就都是我們的善知識。善知識有兩種：這個善者就可以為法，我們就照他學去；不善者我們可以拿他做一個戒師，不效法他這個樣子。能這個樣子，那麼對於任何事情都沒有問題了，也可以說是你們英文說 Everything's OK了！

Now, wherever we go, we don't want to be egotistical. Even if we have some virtue, we should act as if they were nothing; if we have genuine learning, we should behave as if it were empty. Although we may have virtue—it's as if we have no virtue; although we may have learning—it's as if we have no learning. So, wherever we go we don't want to have a self, a big ego. If they say we are arrogant, then we ought to reflect inwardly and examine ourselves. If we find we are not arrogant, then even if they say we are, then what they say is of no use. But, if we are truly arrogant, then we should change and not be so arrogant.

The Sixth Patriarch put it very well, "If you are a person who truly cultivates the way, you don't perceive the faults of the world." When people who truly cultivate the path see living beings, they see that in the future they will all become Buddhas and so they don't perceive the faults of people in the world. If people say that we are not right, we don't want to say that these people are not right. Why? Now when they say that we are not right, think it over whether or not they are right in saying that. If it is the truth that we are in fact not right, then we ought to accept their guidance. And if they are not right, then we certainly ought not to learn their mistaken ways. We ought to know which is right and which is not right.

Some people say that our explaining sutras is not right, for it is just indulging in superficial discussion of terminologies. You can respond that we cannot desist from explaining sutras. Why? It is because when we don't explain the sutras, we will scold people. So we have to explain the sutras, because it is a lot better than scolding people. Because we are afraid we will scold others, we explain the sutras. Explaining the sutras is a form of talking, and it prevents us from scolding others. Then you can see what they reply.

The wise people in the world certainly have wisdom and speak wisely. Foolish people speak foolish talk, and you cannot tell them not to talk. Nor can you stop people from speaking words of wisdom. Well, we are not stupid and we are not wise. We just speak what the Buddha spoke. And we don't pay any attention to how they speak of us. We just rely on what the Buddha spoke to cultivate. We ought to be true in cultivating. If you have the Dharma-selecting eye, you know which is real dharma and which is false dharma. You will not be confused by foolish people.

Whether people speak wisely or foolishly, if we are able to recognize it, then they are all our good advisors. We should be able to see that all living beings are our good advisors. There are two kinds of good advisors: The good ones, and the bad ones. We can emulate the good ones and follow them in study. We should learn from the bad ones how not to repeat their mistakes and don't take them as a model. If we can be like this, then nothing presents a problem, or as you all say in English, "Everything's OK!"