



# Non-obstruction and Not Fighting

## 無礙無爭

A Talk Given by Justin Howe at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on March 24, 2020

Chinese Translated by Janet Lee

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李采真 中譯

All Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Venerable Master, Dharma Masters, laypeople: Amitufo.

This the first time that I've sat to listen to the sutra lecture. It was quite a pleasure, and I will be back to listen to more. This sutra has a wonderful flavor. I have only looked at a small amount of it, but I would like to study it more closely in the future.

Actually just this morning I was sitting in the Chan hall and I heard someone chanting. I wasn't sure who it was. They were chanting, "Homage to the Buddha's Flower Garland Sutra of Great Expansive Teachings and the Ocean-wide Flower Garland Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas". And I felt very, very happy. There is something about this melody that just overwhelms me. I feel, even now, I feel very happy thinking about it. But sitting there in the Chan hall, it was sort of a miraculous thing listening to it.

I don't know who it was. I thought it was the boys' school, but then I was told later that it was one of the DRBU classes. I don't really know. But I think it was the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

I was in a DRBU class just yesterday, and we chanted Amitabha's name and "Homage to the pure Dharma body Buddha" (Namo Qingjing Fashen Fo). This is a good practice. Everyone really responded well to this, and it gave a wonderful atmosphere to the room. It really settled people. Some people said that it helped them feel grounded, or it calmed them down. I usually find that's true for me. I once did the "Homage to the Buddha's Flower Garland Sutra of Great Expansive Teachings

諸佛菩薩、上人、各位法師、各位居士，阿彌陀佛！

這是我第一次坐在這裡聽經。這讓我感到相當法喜，我還會回來接受更多的薰習。這部經有一種特殊的法味。我只讀了其中的一小部分，但我想深入研究。

事實上，今天早上，我坐在禪堂裡，聽到有人在唱誦。我不確定是誰，他們唱著「南無大方廣佛華嚴經，華嚴海會佛菩薩」。我感到非常非常開心。這段旋律讓我的法喜充滿。我覺得，即使是現在，一想到它就讓我感到歡喜。但坐在禪堂中聽著它，覺得有點不可思議。

我不知道是誰在唱誦。我以為是男校的學生，但後來有人告訴我，這是法大的課程之一。我不清楚，但我認為是佛菩薩。

昨天，我上了一門法大的課程，我們唱誦阿彌陀佛的聖號和南無清淨法身佛。這是一個很好的學習，每個人的反應都相當好，讓室內充滿良好的氣場。這些旋律真能安撫我們。有些人說，唱誦幫助他們感到踏實，讓他們平靜下來。我常覺得這對我來說也是如此。我曾經一邊唱誦「南無大方廣佛華嚴經，

and the Ocean-wide Flower Garland Assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,” I bowed this with the three steps, one bow, and that was a really wonderful practice. That was not at DRBU, but it was another place.

So I’ve had a chance to work translating the “Ten Dedications chapter” and the *Prologue to Master Qingliang’s Preface*, the verses, along with Master Hua’s commentary. And this is a wonderful opportunity to study the sutra and to study Master Qingliang’s commentary, which I find that I have a strong affinity with. I wrote a paper in DRBU on a couple of paragraphs from this commentary. It really moved my heart.

Often at DRBU when we have written a paper, after we turn in the paper, a lot of times, in class everyone will discuss what they did, what their paper was about a little bit, talk about it. And as I was talking about my paper, which was reviewing one of the Ten Doors, I actually found myself crying, because I was so moved by the principles of non-obstruction, of not fighting. Master Qingliang talks of course about non-obstruction between principle and specifics and non-obstruction between specifics and specifics, but I found myself at that time struck by the possibility of non-obstruction between person and person. And this was just very moving to me, the possibility of not fighting and not having to fight.

I remember at that time connecting this principle of non-obstruction, of not fighting, with a story from the *Sixth Patriarch Sutra*, which is the first teaching that the Sixth Patriarch gives after he comes out of the wilderness, where he’s been living with the hunters or the trappers for fifteen years. He sees two monks, and they are talking about a flag. One of them says, “The wind is moving,” and the other says, “The flag is moving,” and the Sixth Patriarch says, “Your minds are moving.” And at the time I had an insight, which is that not only are their minds moving in the sense of they’re creating this situation out of their minds, but they’re fighting. They’re arguing about something. They’re both attached to their views. And part of what the Sixth Patriarch is helping them to see is that views are the basis for fighting with each other, and if we can relinquish our views and not attach to them, then we won’t have any reason to fight with each other.

This is one of the best lessons that I’m learning from doing translating work, and the Venerable Master was very kind to set up the translation assemblies in the way that they were. He was

華嚴海會佛菩薩」，一邊三步一拜，那是一次非常棒的修行。我們不是在法大，是在其他地方進行。

我有機會參與翻譯〈十迴向品〉和清涼國師的《華嚴疏鈔》、偈頌和上人的淺釋。這是一個深入佛經和學習清涼國師注解的絕佳機會，我也發現自己對清涼國師的註釋有很強烈的共鳴。我在法大以這篇注解中的幾個段落寫了一篇研究報告，它真的觸動我的心。

我們在法大寫作研究報告時，交出報告後，在課堂上，大家常常都會討論自己所寫的論文以及作了哪些研究。當我提到所寫的那篇有關十門分別其中一門的研究時，我因為太感動而忍不住流淚，特別是清涼國師提到「理事無礙、事事無礙」的這種境界。我當時在人與人之間相處無礙上有點障礙，因此對無爭的可行性和無爭的想法特別感動。

記得當時我把這個無礙、無爭的原則與《六祖壇經》中的一個故事連結起來，那是六祖大師結束和獵人們一起生活十五年的隱居生活後所作的第一個教化。六祖大師看到兩個僧人正在談論一面幡。其中一位僧人說，「風在動」；另一位僧人說，「是幡在動」；六祖大師就說，「是你的心在動」。當時我有一個想法，那就是不僅他們的心在動（因為他們在心中製造這種情況），而且他們有爭。他們有爭執，彼此都執著自己的看法。六祖的教化是讓他們認識，我見是爭論的基礎。如果我們能夠放下自己的觀點而不執著，那麼我們就沒有互爭的理由。

這是我從翻譯工作中獲得的收穫之一。上人非常慈悲地成立翻譯委員會，這也代表他尊重傳統。我們的翻譯委員會與歷代祖師們的翻譯小組沒有太大的不同，都是以小組的形式工作。我們正在學習許多佛經以及有關經典翻譯成漢文的歷史。

also honoring tradition. Our translation assemblies are not so different from the translation assemblies of the great masters, who all worked in groups more or less. We're learning quite a bit about the history of the translation of the sutras and other texts into Chinese.

With the exception of a few of the earliest translators, who had to work in very small teams because there just weren't many people who were able to do this work, the later masters—Great Master Daoan, Great Master Kumarajiva, National Master Xuanzang, and other people like this—all of these people worked in big teams, and they had to trust each other. They had to be able to relinquish their views and to not fight and attach to what they thought was the correct version of things, and trust that if they were sincere and they worked together, then the right translation would emerge.

The *Avatamsaka Sutra* is a wonderful sutra to work on in translation for someone like me because, although its principles are profound, its language is very simple in many ways. It's incredibly beautiful, and in certain ways it's an easy language to learn, so it's a good place to start for someone like me, who doesn't know a great deal of Chinese and has a lot to learn. So this is another wonderful thing about this sutra, that although it speaks about the most profound principles of the Buddhadharmā, it can be approached by someone like me.

On Monday, just two days ago, we were working on Master Qingliang's verses. Unfortunately I don't have the Chinese memorized, so I'll have to recite our English translation. Maybe one of you will be able to figure out which verse it is. Master Qingliang says considering that, or given that, this sutra remained concealed or hidden even during the Proper Dharma Age, how fortunate it is that we, in the Dharma Semblance Age and the Dharma-Ending Age, are now able to encounter it. I feel very fortunate to be able to encounter this sutra.

I don't know if here in America it's the Dharma-Ending Age. Maybe it is. Maybe it's the "Dharma-Infant" Age or something, I don't know. The Dharma is coming here, I think. When we look at the histories of the transmission of Buddhism into China, I feel quite hopeful actually. The histories indicate that it was a long and complicated process, and there were a lot of people with a lot of faith and a lot of vigor who were involved, and in the end Buddhism was able to take root in China because of the work of those people, and I think because of the truth in the Buddhadharmā. And I see that happening here in the United States. But it may be that none of us are alive to really see the Buddhadharmā take root in such a way that it will flourish as it did after Great Master Kumarajiva and during the

除了早期的一些翻譯人員，因為人力有限，讓他們不得不在非常小的團隊中工作。後來的祖師們，像是道安大師、鳩摩羅什大師、玄奘國師以及其他從事翻譯的法師們，他們都在大型的譯場中工作，必須相互信任。他們必須放下自己的主張、不去爭論和執著自己所認為正確的版本，並且相信如果大家是誠心一起合作，就會作出正確的翻譯。

對於像我這樣的人而言，《華嚴經》是一部絕佳的翻譯素材。儘管它的原理很深奧，但是它的語言在很多方面都非常簡要。這部經典真的非常美妙，在某些方面它是一種易於學習的語言，所以對於像我這樣不懂中文的人來說，這是一個很好的開始。這也是這部佛經的另一個奇妙之處，儘管它談到了佛法最甚深的道理，但像我這樣初學的人卻能夠理解它。

這個星期一，也就是兩天前，我們正在研究清涼國師的偈頌。遺憾的是，我沒有記住中文，所以我必須念誦我們的英文翻譯，也許在座有人知道它是出自哪個章節。清涼國師說，考慮到這一點，或者說考慮到，即使在正法時代，這部經也一直被隱藏。我們在像法和末法時代，能夠值遇這部經典是多麼有幸！能夠遇到這部經，我感到非常幸運。

我不知道美國這個地方是否是在末法時代。也許是，但也可能是佛法初生時期之類的，我不清楚。我認為，佛法正要來美國。當我們回顧佛教傳入中國的歷史時，事實上我感到很有希望。這些歷史顯示，這是一個漫長的過程，有很多人抱著極大的信心和精力參與其中。



time of National Master Xuanzang.

Actually, there's two stories of vigor that stick out to me from the early translator masters. One of them is An Shigao. This master had broad knowledge of causes and conditions and at some point knew that he had a karmic debt that he had to pay. So he told his students, "I'm leaving, I have to go pay this karmic debt." And they begged him not to go. But he said, "No, I have to go." So he went to where he was supposed to die and talked to the man who was going to kill him, who ended up killing him. And then he was still committed to translation, so after he was killed, he was reborn and he returned to continue working in his rebirth. Then he was killed again paying another karmic debt, but none of this was able to stop his vigor. So this is really quite an amazing story about persistence in these difficult conditions.

The other story is—unfortunately I don't remember the names of the translators, but they were two Indian masters who came to China. They may have gone to the state of Wu in the Three Kingdoms. (Dharma Masters Vighana and Zhu Lüyan, Zhu Lüyan is also named Zhu Jiangyan.) And they basically knew no Chinese whatsoever, and all they had was a dictionary. And they translated character by character, or word for word. And the Venerable Master's commentary on this story is that, you know, their translations, you might say they were not very good, but these translators deserve the greatest respect for the difficult job that they were doing trying to bring the Buddhadharma into China.

So I don't know what your experience is, but for me here in America, to have encountered the Buddhadharma, the *Avatamsaka Sutra* and other sutras, I truly feel fortunate when I open the sutras and see the verse about how rare it is to encounter the Dharma. I really feel it. The last image that I'll leave you with is from *Zhuangzi*, who said that when the rivers and streams are dry, then the fish have to keep each other moist. But isn't it better just to swim freely in the lakes and streams? So I feel in a way I have gone from the first situation to the second, that here in America people have to try to make due with what we have, but to encounter the Buddhadharma is like swimming freely in the water. ❀

因為這些人的付出，佛教最終得以在中國紮根，我想這更是因為佛法的真實義理。我看到這種情況將要在美國發生。但是，也許我們沒有人有緣見證佛法在美國紮根，就像鳩摩羅什大師和玄奘國師的時代那樣蓬勃發展。

實際上，早期的譯經大師中，有兩個非常精進的故事讓我印象深刻。其中之一就是安世高大師。這位大師對因緣有相當的了解，並且在某個時候還知道自己有一個必須償還的宿業。他告訴他的學生，「我要走了，我必須去了這筆業債。」弟子們懇求大師不要去，但他說，「不，我必須去。」於是，他去了自己應該被殺的地方，和要殺他的人交談，那個人最終還是殺了他。之後大師仍然致力於翻譯，因為他被殺死後又重生，回來繼續完成他的翻譯工作。然後他又再度被殺，又償還了一筆業債，但這一切都無法阻止他的精進。這種在重重障礙中的堅持，真是一個不思議的故事。

另一個故事是——很不巧我忘了翻譯者的名字，但他們是兩個來到中國的印度大師，可能在三國時期中去了吳國（註：這兩位是維祇難、竺律炎大師；竺律炎又名竺將炎）。這兩個印度大師基本上不懂中文，他們只有一本字典。他們逐字翻譯，或者說逐字直譯。上人對這個故事的評論是，你們也許會說他們的翻譯不夠好，但這些譯者應該得到最高的尊敬，因為他們致力推動將佛法帶入中國的艱巨工作。

我不知道你們的學佛經歷是什麼，但對於身在美國的我，能到遇到佛法、遇到《華嚴經》和其他佛經，特別是當我打開佛經，看到佛法是多麼難遭遇的經文時，我真的覺得自己很幸運。我真的這麼認為。我要給大家看的最後一張投影片是出自《莊子·大宗師》，他說『泉涸，魚相與處於陸，相呴以濕，相濡以沫，不如相忘於江湖。』我也覺得如此。某種程度上，自己已從第一種情況進入到第二種情況。在美國，人們必須應付生活中的各種情況，但遇到佛法就像在水中悠游。❀