

# 百辭莫辯

*bai3 ci2 mo4 bian4*

Two members of a mainland-backing foundation have been caught on camera with sexy young women in a Beijing karaoke lounge.

They were part of a 37-strong Hong Kong delegation, comprising lawyers, that was meant to be learning about Belt and Road strategies. The two were said to have visited the club for all three nights of the visit in mid-May.

They reacted to the scandal differently. One issued a statement, apologizing profusely and promising to mend his ways. The other insisted that nothing inappropriate had happened as “many people hold each other when they dance” and that “there was really nothing special” about holding a young woman at a venue of entertainment.

Well, he might honestly think so, but trying to explain it to the public is another matter. When images of what happened were splashed across newspaper front pages, the pictures spoke for themselves and people form their own opinions accordingly.

## Idiom by Lon Yan

The situation, for the two, is one of “百辭莫辯” (*bai3 ci2 mo4 bian4*), even if they are lawyers.

“百” (*bai3*) is “a hundred,” “辭” (*ci2*) “words,” “diction,” “phraseology,” “莫” (*mo4*) means “don’t” and “辯” (*bian4*) “to argue,” “to debate,” “to justify oneself,” “to protest,” “to explain away.” Literally, “百辭莫辯” (*bai3 ci2 mo4 bian4*) is “a hundred words won’t explain.”

“百” (*bai3*), “a hundred,” means figuratively “numerous,” “a large number.” The idiom means no amount of words and arguments is enough to explain away what one is accused of. It describes a situation in which evidence is so overwhelming, or people’s views against you are so strong, that nothing you can say is going to convince them otherwise.

**Terms containing the character “辯” (*bian4*) include:**

辯論 (*bian4 lun4*) – to debate

狡辯 (*jiao3 bian4*) – to argue speciously

辯白 (*bian4 bai2*) – to protest one’s innocence

辯明 (*bian4 ming2*) – to explain clearly