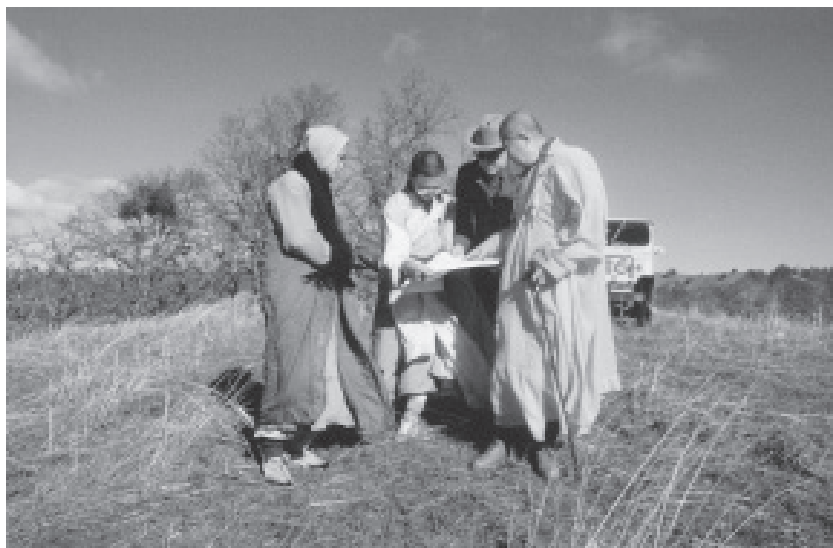


Commemorating the Relocation of Snow Mountain Monastery: An Interview with Dharma Master Heng Lai (Continued)

賀 雪山寺喬遷——專訪恒來法師

(續)

法興等採訪整理 Interviewed and compiled by Fa Hsing and others
果殊等 中譯 Translated into Chinese by Guo Shu and others



Monasteries Are Buddha Factories

Q: Can you share your experiences about the time when you went with the Master to look for sacred mountains? What did the Master teach you to look for when searching for property?

A: The Master's interest varied, depending on the property. If the site was in the city, he looked at the building to see which part would serve as the Buddha Hall. That was his number one focus, his number one interest. Always the first thing was what kind of assembly hall does it have, how big is it. He always made us pace the length and width of the potential hall. For instance, if the Master was looking at church property, the first thing he would say was, "Walk to the end of the sanctuary, count your steps, then multiply by three. The same for the width. He wanted to know how long it was, how wide it was, and what direction it faced – east, west, north, south. He needed to know which way the hall faced. That was the very first thing, every time. Then he wanted the same information for the dining hall. He wasn't interested in the color of the paint or whether the buildings looked pretty or not. He didn't care about the superficial. He just looked at the basics.

寺廟是造佛場

問：可以和我們分享您跟隨上人，四處尋找名山聖地的經驗嗎？在找地時，上人有教您要注意什麼？

答：要看是在什麼地方。如果地點是在城市，上人會看房子裏哪裏可以做為佛殿，因為佛殿是上人最注重、最關心的地方。是個怎麼樣的佛殿，大小如何等等，永遠是最先要弄明白的一件事。他常要我們踱步來測量佛殿的長度和寬度，譬如上人在看一座教堂，首先就是教我們走到聖壇的盡頭，數一數走了幾步，然後再乘以三。寬度也是一樣。他要知道有多長，多寬，面向什麼方位——東西南北，他需要知道佛殿將來朝向的方向。這就是看房子的第一要務，每一次都是這樣。決定齋堂時也是如此。至於油漆的顏色，或者房子看起來漂不漂亮，上人對這些不感興趣。他不在乎表面的東西，他只看最重要基本的。

如果是在郊外，土地面積就比較大，這時上人就會看風水。他告訴過我一點風水的東西，不是很多，只是一點點最基本的。他說風水的要點很簡單，就是水要在前面，但不一定非要在地界範圍內，只要是在前面就好了，而且要有山在後面。建築面向的方位，從西面到南面之間都可以，這樣就是好風水。金鎮（位於卑詩省洛磯山脈）就是一個好例子。

If the property was rural, in the country, then it would usually involve more land and he would look at the lay of the land, the geomancy (feng shui). He told me a little bit about feng shui. Not a lot but a little bit, just the basics. He said the basics of feng shui are very simple: everybody knows you want water in front, it doesn't have to be on the property just so long as it's in front; and you want the mountains in the back. You want to be facing anywhere from west to south, with the mountains to your back. That would be good feng shui. Golden [in the Rockies of British Columbia] is a good example.

When the Master was at Golden, I was with him and heard him say, "There's a tiger and there's a lion and those are the mountains. "This is very auspicious property because everything is situated as it should be – the feng shui is right. When you are facing west, the mountains are behind you; and there's a river below in front. You can see the Kootney River down there." Sometimes he said that it's not important that you actually see the water, as long as it is there, but it's nice if you can see it, of course. And it could either be a river, an ocean, or a lake. These things are basic. He always stressed that when I was with him. But he always made it simple. He didn't make it complicated. He didn't bring out all the fancy stuff and put coins everywhere, like a geomancer does. He didn't do that stuff, he just did the basics. He kept it simple.

For instant, we went to see a church recently; we looked first at the potential Buddha Hall. That's the most important part. The Master was only interested in, number one, the Buddha Hall. How is the Buddha Hall, how big is it, how long is it, how wide is it, and which way does it face -- north, south, east, or west. He would ask how many people can stay there; he always wanted to know that. He wanted to have room for more and more people; he always liked a big hall. That was number one with the Master -- he always liked a big Buddha Hall. He didn't like little Buddha Halls.

He said the trouble with China was that very expensive monasteries were built and, although they were beautiful, they had only a tiny Buddha Hall. You know, it's all for show. No room for the assembly. You can see that in the style of monasteries being built today here in the West. They've got a fancy courtyard, huge place, all kinds of buildings everywhere, covered walkways, very adorned. When you go to the Buddha Hall, it's adorned, too, but it's very small. The hall size is very, very small. The space is large enough just for the monks and nuns to get in to do the ceremony; no lay people can fit. The Master really didn't like that. He liked to have a big Buddha Hall so the whole assembly can be together. That was the one thing I remember most about the Master's instructions. He always wanted a big Dharma assembly, a big Buddha Hall, because that's where Buddhas are born.

He said the first Gold Mountain Monastery was a Buddha factory and that's how Buddhas are created, by people cultivating together. Everyone should be able to recite together and bow together, not just watch monks and nuns do it. So in China, the monastic layout is like putting on a show. They have a few monks and a few nuns, and they do a ceremony while all the lay people just stand there and watch. They cannot participate. The Master really didn't like that.

當上人到金鎮時，我和他在一起，他說那裏有一隻老虎和一隻獅子——其實指的是附近的山。他說這是一個非常殊勝的地方，因為每一樣東西都各安其所，所有的風水都恰如其分。當朝向西方，山就在你的後面，又有一條河——庫特尼河在下面。上人有時候會說，能不能看到水並不重要，主要是它在那裡就可以了，當然如果能看到更好。它可以是河流、海洋或是湖泊。這些是最基本的，當我和上人在一起時，他常常強調這些。但是他總是盡量把事情簡化，不會弄得很複雜。他不會像風水師一樣帶很多花俏的東西，他不做這些；他只是做最基本的，一切都簡單。

譬如我們最近去看一間教堂時，首先也是看將來佛殿的位置，這是最重要的部分。上人最關心的就是佛殿——佛殿怎麼樣，有多大、多長、多寬，是向東、向南、向西，還是向北。他還會問有多少人可以住在這裡，他要知道這些。希望人要越來越多，他喜歡大的佛殿，不喜歡小的佛殿。

他說中國寺廟的問題就是花了很多錢造廟，雖然很漂亮，但就只有一個小佛殿，根本不夠舉辦法會共修，只是蓋來當個裝飾而已。現在許多寺廟仍然是如此，包括那些在西方國家蓋的廟。華麗的庭院，廣大的空間，各式的建築物，甚至走廊的屋頂也裝飾得非常莊嚴。等走進佛殿，也是很莊嚴，但是非常非常小，只夠出家人可以進去參加法會，不夠容納在家人。上人真的不喜歡這樣，他喜歡有一個大的佛殿，所有的人都可以在一起共修。這是最記得的上人的教導，他要大法會、大佛殿，因為這是造佛的地方。

上人說第一個金山寺是造佛的工廠，佛就是跟大眾一起修行中所造就的。每一個人應該可以一起誦經，一起拜佛，而不是只看著出家人做而已。所以在中國寺廟的設計就像在作秀——就是廟裡的幾位出家人做法會，而所有的在家人就站那兒看著，不能跟著一起拜。上人真的不喜歡這樣。