

Too Big? It's Too Small!

太大？我覺得它太小！

A talk given by Bhikshui Heng Lai on June 16, 2018

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施無畏 中譯



1974年曼都仙諾州醫院及農場待售。
Mendocino State Hospital & Farm For Sale in 1974.

I used to live at Gold Mountain Monastery; I moved in around 1971. At that time, I got to draw very close to the Master. He would call us from the third floor during the day and often asked me if I had time. Did I have time to be with a sage? Of course!

Everyday we'd spend a good part of the morning and sometimes the afternoon driving around looking at properties. That was his favorite dharma. We usually had three or four real estate brokers looking for properties for us. I think it was '73 or '74 when a real estate agent called and told me there was a place open in Ukiah. He said, "I'm not really sure if you guys really want to look at this but I'll tell you anyways. There's a big institution up there, the size of a small city, and it even has its own firehouse. I don't know if you're interested." He started describing CTTB to me.

As soon as he hung up the phone, the phone rang again and it was the Master. I told him about the institution and the

我以前住在金山寺，大約是1971年搬進去，因此就跟上人變得很親近。上人白天會從三樓打電話來，問我有沒有時間。你說我會有時間跟聖人在一起嗎？當然有囉！

於是早上、有時是下午，我們就會到處去看地，那是上人最感興趣的法門之一。當時有三、四位仲介幫忙找地，所以幾乎天天都去看地。大約1973、1974年，有一位仲介打電話來說瑜伽市有一塊地：「我不知道你們要不要看，但我告訴你們這個地方非常的大，就像一個小城市一樣，甚至有自己的消防站，不知道你們有沒有興趣。」他講的就是萬佛聖城這個地方。

我們剛講完電話，電話馬上又響了，是上人打來的。我跟上人報告有這麼一塊地，上人說：「哦？」然後我跟他說那個地方很大，大概六十萬平方英尺，有六十幾棟房子。上人說：「哦！這麼大，那我們應該去看看。」

上人說等到西雅圖跟三步一拜的恒具、恒由碰面之後，回來的路上我們可以順道過去看看。所以果法（Bob Olson）、果真（現在的恒實法師）和我，當時仍是在家人，還有果蓀，我們四人都就坐果法的卡車，從西雅圖沿著加州海岸開下來。

我們先跟地主聯絡，等我們到的時候，他就找人帶我們看這個地方。他們把地方整理得非常好，所有的草地都是綠色的，他們每天用幾千幾萬加侖的水在澆這些草地。所以之前那個葡萄酒公司雖然用接近底價的價錢買下這個地方，但卻花了很多錢來保持環境翠綠，他們至少雇用十二個全職工人來整理這些草地。

Master said, “Yeah...” and I explained that the property is really big, over 600,000 square feet and with over 60 buildings. The Venerable Master said, “Oh, we should take a look.”

The Venerable Master said after our Seattle trip to meet the former Heng Ju and Heng Yo on their Three Steps, One Bow trip, Guo Fa (Bob Olson), Guo Zhen (now Heng Sure) and I could take a look at this place on the way back. So after Seattle, we got into Guo Fa's truck. Heng Sure and I were still laymen at that time. There was also Randall Peterson, Guo Sun. The four of us drove down from Seattle along the coastal highway.

We had made prior arrangements with the former owners, so when we arrived, people showed us around. The whole property was really green because they had pumped thousands of gallons of water on the lawns each day. The vineyard company that had owned this property had won it in a closed auction but they had difficulty maintaining the property. I think they had at least a dozen of people working full time just to keep the lawns green.

They gave us a grand tour. It took a few hours because this place was so big. Heng Sure at that time was a big camera buff. He had his Nikon camera and was taking photos left and right. We finally got back into Guo Fa's truck and drove back down to Gold Mountain in San Francisco. When we stepped into the monastery, the phone rings and it was the Master. “Shr Fu, this place is really big,” we told him. We got all excited when telling him about the buildings. “Yeah...” was his reply. I said, “Guo Zhen was taking pictures; he's upstairs now developing them to show you.” The Master said, “Oh, I don't need pictures; I already looked at the place.”

Then I got to witness the Master's great skill in negotiation. Back in the 70s, DRBA hardly had any money at all. The Master said, “We don't have enough money to buy the entire property.” So the Master said to the owner, Mr. Beckstoffer: “I thinking we buy the hospital.” “No, no, I can't just sell the hospital, I have to sell the whole thing,” said Beckstoffer. After talking back and forth, Beckstoffer was so desperate to sell the place that finally he said, “O.K. I'll sell the hospital.”

Then the Master said, “Maybe we'll buy one of the quads.” They called JGH and Great Compassion House areas “quads”. He said, “We'll maybe buy one

他們帶我們參觀每一棟建築，整圈走完就花了幾個小時，因為實在好大。實法師當時是個攝影迷，他有一台奈康（Nikon）照相機，所以就咔嚓、咔嚓四處拍照。大家看完之後就坐果法的車回三藩市。一踏進金山寺，電話就響了，師父打來的。「師父，這個地方真的好大。」每個人都很興奮地跟師父描述那些房子，師父只回答：「是啊……。」我說：「師父，果真照了很多照片，他正在樓上沖洗，好了就給您看。」師父回答：「喔，不用看照片，那個地方我已經看過了。」

接下來我就見識到，上人真是一個議價高手。一九七零年代，我們真的很窮。上人就跟地主貝克·斯多福先生說：「我們不夠錢買整個地方，我們買醫院那個部分好了。」「不可以、不可以，我不能只賣那個醫院，我是要賣全部。」貝克·斯多福先生回答。雙方就來回協商，因為貝克先生真的很想賣掉這個地方，最後只好說：「好吧，就賣醫院給你。」

等他答應要賣那個醫院，上人就說：「我們也許可以多買一個方庭。」他們把喜捨院、大悲院那些區域叫做「方庭」，上人說：「我們也許可以買其中一個方庭。」所以雙方又展開始議價，談妥了這一棟，上人會說：「那一棟也可以考慮。」就是這樣一棟一棟跟對方買下來。

那時候也可以看出大家對上人的信心，因為大家都很擔心這筆買賣。多少在家人，甚至出家人



攝於1975年冬，購買前上人造訪。

Venerable Master Hua had a Visit Before Purchasing in 1975 Winter.



攝於1976年6月12日，於金山寺簽約購買萬佛城。
1976.06.12 Signing Purchase Contract for CTTB at GMM.

of those too.” So it was back and forth again, building by building. One building at a time, the Master would say, “I think maybe that too.”

I truly got to see how much faith people had in our teacher because they were quite afraid of this purchase. There were many laypeople and even left home people who were quite intimidated by the size of the place. They didn't believe that the Master understood taking on such a property and they started questioning the Master. They didn't openly oppose him, but they discussed these issues behind his back, saying that it was too big. Yet the Master would always say, “Hmm... it's not too big; it's too small.”

Finally the Master negotiated for the entire property from Beckstoffer and we got a 15-year loan by the seller—one payment each year at the end of the year. However, if we failed to make a loan payment, the entire property would revert back to Beckstoffer. I think we finally closed in June 1976. That showed me the power of the Master's ability to be not intimidated by situations in this world. He didn't care how big this property was and it didn't intimidate him in the least bit.

When we legally bought the property, you'd think we'd move in immediately, but this was not the case. The Venerable Master didn't even go up to live there; he stayed in Gold Mountain. He

也是，都覺得這個地方實在是太大了，覺得上人根本不了解怎麼照顧這麼大的地方。於是他們開始質疑，可是只敢私底下討論這件事，說這個地方實在是太大了。可是上人總是說：「嗯，太大？我覺得它太小！」

最後每一棟房子都跟貝克·斯多福先生講妥，我們和賣方簽了十五年的貸款，每年年底付款一次。1976年6月成交，買下整座萬佛聖城。如果哪次沒付貸款，整座萬佛聖城就要還給貝克·斯多福。讓我看到上人不畏世間一切境界的功夫，他完全不在乎這地方有多大，絲毫不為所動。

一切手續都辦妥了，我們終於買下這個地方。你們大概會想我們立刻就搬來這裡，但是事實不是這麼一回事。上人還是住在金山寺，什麼也沒說，就像什麼都沒有發生一樣。上人只叫果法和果露到這裡來掘一口井，解決缺水的問題，並且告訴他們水井的位置。上人也叫了幾個人搬過來住，例如果蓀、果邇，前恒觀法師，和比丘尼恒持法師。很多金山寺的人都想要搬來住在這邊，因為他們都希望能盡快遠離塵囂。可是上人隻字不提，就像沒有這個地方似的。

雖然如此，上人已經著手進行準備工作。現在這個佛殿是當時的體育館，地毯下面是當時籃球場的地板，四邊牆上都有大大的籃球框。上人叫我們把籃球架拿下來，整修一下，這個地方以後要當作佛殿。1976年的三壇大戒，是



攝於1976年客僧造訪萬佛城。
Guest Sangha had a visit in CTTB around 1976.

didn't say anything, as if nothing happened. He sent Guo Fa and Guo Zhen to dig a well and get some water going. He told them where to dig it. He had some other lay people, Guo Sun and Guo Erh (Morris Keplar), live at CTTB, as well as former Heng Guan and Bhikshuni Heng Chih. Meanwhile all the lay people at Gold Mountain also wanted to come up. They wanted come live here right away and you could feel everybody's enthusiasm to get out of the city and move up here. The Master didn't say a word and went on as if we didn't even have the property.

The Master did have a couple things done. This building, the Buddha Hall, was the former gymnasium. Underneath the carpet, there is a basketball court and there used to be large basketball nets hanging on each side of the hall. The Venerable Master told us to get it ready, because we're going to use it as a Buddha Hall. In August of 1976 we had our first ordination, which was when Heng Sure, some others, and I left the home life. Even though we came here to leave the home life, we were still residing at Gold Mountain.

The Master said, "There are three of you at Gold Mountain now. Among you, one needs to go up to CTTB and help out." Heng Sure was ready to go on the bowing trip, so he can't go. Heng Shun was a novice and a full-time worker at Gold Mountain's office, so he can't go either. I said, "Shr Fu, I guess it's me then. I can go up there."

Meanwhile all the people up here started leasing out parts of the buildings. They had leased out part of the quad, which is now Great Compassion House to a Montessori school; they leased out another to a birthing center; and yet another to some other place. The first thing he told me to do is go tell all those people we're going to cancel the lease with them. I knew I was going to be really, really "popular" by doing this. So I had to go up and tell each of these people that we're not going to keep the lease.

On top of that, the Master told me to tell the little league that rented our land (west of the current greenhouse) that they couldn't use the ballpark anymore and that they had to move. The league was an American fundamental sport that people enjoyed like apple pie and we were going to go tell them they can't be here? They would think that we were terrible. I didn't dare say this to the Master, and thought, "Ok, he's testing me."

I went over and said to the little league manager we couldn't continue with the long term lease of the ballpark. He thanked me and said, "Oh thank you! I'm so happy you told us that. Now we get to have the ballpark we really wanted. We already have a spot picked out but we couldn't get the funding until we were told to leave." The Venerable Master already knew this, so this is just how things worked out.

Even during the process of buying this big huge property, the Master used it as a teaching device for all of us. He taught us patience and not to be greedy. If you look at how the Buddha taught, it's like the same thing. He used the conditions of what was going on as a teaching tool. Even though we bought this great big property, the Master was never greedy for it in the tiniest bit. Instead, he used the situation to teach and transform us. Amitufo. 囍

第一次在萬佛聖城傳戒，就是在這個佛殿舉行，恒實法師、恒順法師和我也是在那個時候出家。雖然在聖城出家，我們還是住在金山寺。

有一天上人對我們說：「你們三個在金山寺，其中一個人要去萬佛聖城幫忙。」實法師那時候已經準備要去三步一拜，所以不能去；順法師雖然是沙彌，可是在金山寺負責很多行政工作，也不能去。那就剩下我了，所以我跟上人說：「我想就是我了，我可以去萬佛聖城幫忙。」

那時候我們把一些地方租給別人，例如大悲院就租給一個蒙特利梭學校、一個生產中心和其他單位。上人叫我來做的第一件事，就是跟這些人說我們不租給他們了。我知道這會讓我從此「聲名大噪」，於是我得一個一個去告訴他們，請他們離開。

上人還要我請一個棒球小聯盟搬走，他們租用我們暖房西邊的空地打棒球，現在我們不讓他們在那裏打了。你知道棒球在美國受歡迎的程度，就像美國人愛吃蘋果派一樣，現在師父竟然要我跟他們說不准在這裡打球？他們一定很討厭我們。我不敢跟師父說，只好當作他在考驗我。

我跟小聯盟的經理解釋，我們必須解除這份長期的租約，那個經理居然謝謝我。他說：「喔，謝謝你，很高興你告訴我這件事。我們已經找到另一個更合適的球場，但是不能獲得資金，除非你們不租給我們，叫我們離開。」當然上人什麼都知道，他早就知道這回事。

即使購買一個這麼大的地方，上人也善用整個過程來教化我們。他教我們要有耐心，不要貪心。這是一個很有意思的教法。如果你研究一下佛陀的教法，會發現跟上人的沒有兩樣，他們都能把各種因緣當作教材。雖然買下這麼大的一個地方，上人沒有絲毫的貪心，他只是把這個地方拿來教化我們。阿彌陀佛！囍