

Recalling the Earliest Days at the City 聖城歷史的天空

A talk given by John Scroggs on March 10, 2019 at City of Ten Thousand Buddhas
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As I recall, when I first came to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas in 1975, it was to oversee the escrow process, prior to the actual purchase. There were only a few of us laymen at the time: Bob Olson, Jin Gong Shr, Lee Eagleson, myself, and, later, Morris Kaplan. Bhikshu Heng Kuan was here occasionally and primarily did negotiations for the purchase. Bhikshu Heng Lai was in and out as well usually on weekends.

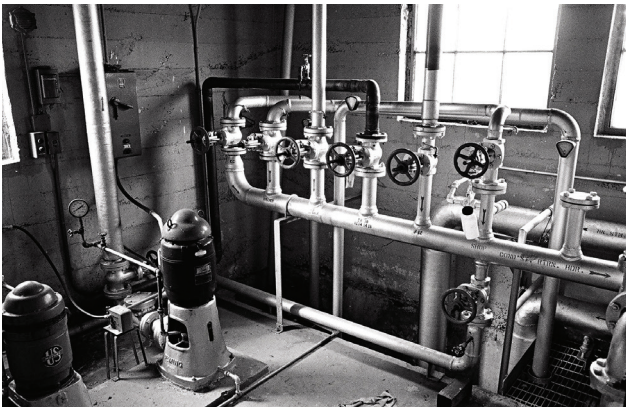
During this period, although the campus was depopulated, it was being maintained pretty much the way it was when it was being run by the State. The lawns were green, all the street lights were on, and most of the cottages were occupied by renters. There was a baseball field down by the current farm that was being used by the local little league. The Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall was then a basketball court/gymnasium, and to the north of it, there were some tennis courts. Almost everyone in the local community worked at the MSH (Mendocino

我記得1975年初到聖城，主要是監管購置地產之前的過戶手續。那時，只有幾位在家眾在這裡，包括鮑勃歐森（果法）、近恭師、李伊格遜（果璃）、我，後來又來了莫瑞斯開普蘭。恒觀法師偶爾會過來，主要是跟賣家議價。恒來法師來來去去，通常是週末過來。

這段時期，雖然院區人煙稀少，但還是沿用州政府的管理方式在維護。草坪依然翠綠，所有的路燈也都點亮，大部分的小木屋還住著房客。現在有機農場的所在地是當時的棒球場，由當地的棒球小聯盟使用。我們現在所在的萬佛寶殿，以前是一座籃球場（或稱體育館）；

State Hospital) or had family members who worked here. There were some three thousand people living on this campus when it was closed in 1972. When it was in operation, not only did many locals work here, they also availed themselves of the facilities. According to local people, there were a lot of informal gatherings in the summer evenings on the green grasses under the night sky here at the MSH. The little league was using the baseball field—the small work force that had maintained the grounds as well as the local police were encouraged to use the tennis courts, etc.—as this provided a presence and discouraged vandalism.

After escrow, initially we just kept things going, but we had to pay the bills. Slowly piece-by-piece, we began to pare back and shut down on those things that we did not need. Keeping the



lawns green was a luxury we could not afford so we shut down the watering system. The street lights were also expensive and unnecessary, so slowly we turned off the lights a section at a time.

We maintained security with bike patrols. Until we put in our well, the water was being pumped by other sources from wells down by the river, so we didn't have to service them. But there was a conventional sewage treatment system, (also off site), which we had to run—Jin Gong Shr, Lee Eagleson and I did this work. Jing Gong and I both became state certified operators. Most of the infrastructure was failing, so as you can imagine, everyone who was here was pretty much fully occupied with plain old work.

It had to be done and, usually, it had to be done without spending money. We also tried to maintain the daily routine of a Way-place. We held morning and evening recitations in what is now the small dining hall used by the students of our schools. We used what is now the Confucius Hall for our dining hall and we cooked in the small kitchen there. Fairly soon, Master Hua sent Bhikshu Heng Kung up to live in Tatagatha Monastery (TM)

在這棟樓的北邊有幾個網球場。當時，幾乎整個社區的居民或者他們的家人都在這所曼都仙諾州立醫院工作。這所州立醫院在一九七二年關門的時候，差不多有三千人住在這個院區內。醫院營運期間，當地人不僅在這裡工作，也使用這裡的場地和設施。當地人說，仲夏夜裡人們經常在草坪上舉辦非正式的聚會。不僅小聯盟使用棒球場，一小群被雇用維護設施的工作人員還有當地警察也都被鼓勵使用網球場等設施。這樣院區裡不但有人出入，也能防止設施被蓄意破壞。

過戶之後，起初我們沿用既有的維護方式，但是我們得支付帳單，於是我們逐一削減不需要的開支。維護翠綠的草坪所費不貲，而我們無力負擔，於是我們關閉草坪的灑水系統。路燈照明既昂貴又不需要，所以我們逐一關閉各區的的照明系統。

我們維護治安的方式是騎自行車巡邏。在我們擁有自己的水井之前，我們是從河邊用水泵把水抽到聖城來，我們不需管理這些系統。但是聖城有一個舊式汗水處理系統，它不在聖城內，我們得自己運作，這項工作由近恭師、果璃和我負責。後來我和近恭師都取得州政府頒發的證照。這個地產上大部分的基礎設施年久失修，不難想像，住在這裡的人多數時間都忙著維修這些舊設備。

維修的工作必須馬上做，而且不能花錢。我們還得作道場每天的定課。現在學

and maintain a monastic presence. Most of us also stayed at TM, but the firehouse was also used.

Summers were unbelievably hot. I initially spent most of my time just mowing lawns from sun-up to sun down. The previous owners had left us a ride-on reel-to-reel mower to keep the grass down. However, if we did not constantly mow, the grass would get too high and it could not be mowed at all. I was very allergic to grass clippings, so I wheezed a lot and had watery eyes, and red itching skin. It was often very hot, 120 degrees, down at the sewage plant according to the temperature gauge down there. I have been told this is not quite accurate, but it was truly hot. Sometimes, it was so hot that it was impossible to do much of anything and, I admit, for relief, I would go down under the Talmage road bridge and just sit in the water.

In the winter, we had famous the “ice-box” of Gold Mountain Monastery (GMM) on steroids. We had to shut down the huge central boilers that provided steam heat to the whole property, so for us, there was no heat anywhere. It was so cold on the Chan benches that you couldn’t fall off to sleep even if you tried. Slowly we were getting our community moved up and one of the first people to come up was artist/craftsman named Robbie. Master Hua had given him the challenge of creating a lotus petal stand for the Guanyin image we currently have here in this hall. He came up in the late fall and when told there was no heat, he exclaimed, “That is ridiculous!” He immediately went to work and fabricated a 2-barrel wood stove and put it up in his shop, which was the old Mason Shop. Needless to say, a lot of us spent a considerable amount of time in his shop during that winter. Shortly thereafter Master Hua commissioned a local welder to fabricate, I believe, 25 cast iron wood stoves, which we installed here and there throughout CTTB. We put one in TM next to the TM Buddha Hall to be used as a sickroom for when our people really needed some warmth. We put some in the halls and annexes of the Joyful Giving House (JGH.) Anyway this began our long involvement with heat at CTTB.

Of course we had gas heat in the cottages and at Dragon Tree, Lion and Horse Whinny, so we could accommodate visitors with some limited hospitality, and Master Hua always made sure that visitors, especially the elderly, were kept warm. The hallmark events of the first few years—the opening in 1979, the construction of the mountain gate, and the construction of the dining hall—had not yet occurred. I have talked about the well we put in, but I would like to talk about some of these other events at a later date when we have time. ❀

生使用的小齋堂，以前是我們做早晚課的地方。現在的道源堂，以前是我們的齋堂，我們使用那裡的小廚房做飯菜。很快的，上人派恆空法師到如來寺，這裡開始有僧眾。當時，大多數的人都住在如來寺，也有人住消防站。

聖城的夏天炙熱難耐。起初，我常常從早到晚都在割草。前地主留給我們一部割草車，如果我們不常除草，當草長得太高，這輛割草車就毫無用武之地。我本身對割下來的草有過敏反應，所以常常哮喘、流眼淚、皮膚發紅發癢。夏天經常都很熱，汗水處理廠溫度計顯示的溫度是華氏一百二十度。有人說，溫度計的數字並不一定準確，但是天氣是真的非常酷熱。有時候，熱到無法幹活的時候，我承認，我會走到達摩陸橋下，坐在水裡消暑一下。

在冬天，金山寺是出了名的冰庫，聖城也不遑多讓。我們關閉城內為所有建築物提供暖氣的大型鍋爐，也就是說，任何地方都沒有暖氣。打坐用的禪凳冷到讓人想睡也睡不著。後來，我們的社區開始發展，慢慢有些人搬來，其中一位是藝術家——羅比。上人給他的一大挑戰，就是為我們佛殿的觀音像建造蓮花座。他秋末的時候來，當他得知沒有暖氣時，大嘆：「太可笑了！」他立即上工，在他的工作坊裡造了一個木柴爐，就是以前的石匠作坊。無需多說，冬天的時候許多人在他的工作坊裡消磨很多時間。不久，上人委託當地一位焊工製造了25台鑄鐵木柴爐，安裝在萬佛城的各個地方。我們在如來寺佛殿旁裝了一個，作為必要時可以供人取暖的病房。我們在喜捨院的佛堂和寮房都安裝了木柴爐，這是我們長期維護萬佛聖城取暖設備的開端。

當然，我們在龍樹、麒麟、馬鳴那幾棟建築物 and 居士林都備有暖氣，讓我們得以接待訪客。上人總是確保我們的訪客，特別是長者要注意保暖。頭幾年比較具有代表性的活動就是1979年的開光、山門和五觀堂的建造，那時都還沒展開。我已經談到我們的水井，以後有時間我會談談這些具有代表性的活動。 ❀