Appendix A

Religious Representations and Building Design

The Sagely City of Dharma Realm
Jeweled Palace Buddhist Temple Project

Religious Representations
and
Building Design



Dharma Realm Buddhist Association

The Sagely City of Dharma Realm

West Sacramento, CA

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Table of Contents

Introduction to Religious Building Architecture **2**

Introduction of The Sagely City of Dharma Realm Buddhist Jeweled Palace Temple **4**

First Level Dining Hall **5**

Second Level Dharma Hall **6**

Third Level Buddha Hall **6**

Sky Bridge **8**

Mountain Gate – East – West **10**

Making Pilgrimages **11**

The Meaning of Bowing Pilgrimages to a Buddha up a Mountain **13**

Acknowledgement and Sources **14**

Introduction to Religious Building Architecture

Religious Building Architecture is distinguishable from the architecture of a secular building. This monograph discusses the religious significance and orientation of the Buddhist Jeweled Palace Temple at the Sagely City of Dharma Realm ("**Dharma Realm**"). The main difference in a building for religious worship versus a secular building is the ability of building of faith to elicit spiritual and psychological changes for the better. Whether it is the exterior and size of the building or its spatial orientation, it elevates one's character; therefore, the architecture of a religious building focuses on the sublimation and expansion of one's spirituality. It is said, *"**Famous mountains in China house the multitudes of Sangha.**"* Many ancient temples are built on top of well-known mountains, far from the hustle and bustle of the world, allowing for the cleansing and freeing of one's mind. When climbing high mountains and standing far atop its summit overlooking the world below, one's horizon and vision expands. Suddenly one realizes the illusoriness of fame and fortune and how insignificant one is, thereby gaining relief as one detaches from the burdens of the world below. Therefore, the orientation, the height and breadth of the current proposed tower bodhimandala ("**Buddhist Temple"**) for the Dharma Realm are very important.

The ancient Chinese pagodas, "***stupas***," came from India. "***Stupa***" is a Sanskrit word and means "***square grave."*** It is a place where the relics of Buddhas and patriarchs are kept so that people can make offerings to them. After the hierarch of Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha entered nirvana (the stillness), many crystal clear and inconceivable bone remnants resulted from his cremation; these relics are termed "***sharira***" in Buddhism. Shariras are a result of a cultivator's long-term sincere and dedicated practices of "***diligently cultivating precepts, samadhi, and wisdom, and putting to rest greed, hatred, and delusion."*** Therefore, shariras are regarded as the true body of the Buddhas by Buddhist disciples, and stupas are built to store them and allow people a place to making of offerings such relics. Some examples of ancient Chinese pagoda: Giant Wild Goose Pagoda (Xi-an, Shanxi, China) and Shakyamuni Pagoda of Fogong Temple (Ying County, Shanxi, China).

When Buddhism came to China from India, the ancient Indian culture of creating stupas also came. The Chinese incorporated elements of Chinese pavilions with Indian stupas, resulting in stupas with Chinese architectural characteristics that store the Buddha's and patriarch's relics and are sites of worship. In China, there are many precious ancient pagodas, built in different dynasties and different regions and provinces of China. The pagodas are tall and majestic, towering over its surroundings, allowing for unobstructed views — they represent to Buddhist disciples what is sacred and noble in Buddhism. Oftentimes pagodas also serve as symbolic representations of certain regions. Another name for a pagoda is "***high profile***," meaning that it is tall and wide, and majestically adorned. As the name suggests, the building is towering and easily visible even from afar; thus, further delineating the importance of the tower or the pagoda's height and breadth. As it is said, ***"vertically reaching through the three periods of time, and horizontally pervading the ten directions."*** "***Vertical***" refers to the height of these stupas; "***horizontal***" refers to the breadth. This is similar to the Catholic cathedrals, which also place great emphasis on their height and breadth, because the power of such towering buildings to influence and elevate people is quite important and quite astounding. Some examples of ancient Chinese pagoda: Cishou Pagoda of Jin Shan Temple (Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, China) and Great White Pagoda of Taiyuan Temple (Wutai County, Shanxi, China).

Introduction of The Sagely City of Dharma Realm Buddhist Jeweled Palace Temple

The founder of the Dharma Realm Buddhist Association, Venerable Master Hsuan Hua, brought Buddhadharma to the West in 1962, and established numerous Temples in the United States and around the world. The exterior and architecture of these temples typically are built using materials available locally but not limited to such. The Venerable Master himself designed a towering structure bodhimandala to be built at the heart of the West Sacramento city center, adjacent to the capital of California, Sacramento. This is the first building of its kind, designed using the orientation and elements of ancient Buddhist stupas and pagodas of the past. As soon as any Buddhist disciples see such a jeweled stupa, they would know that it houses the three jewels of the Buddhas, the Dharma, and Sangha, so people would naturally bring forth an awe-inspiring, sublime respect and reverent religious mind. The jeweled palace facing the offices of the Capitol of California would be a symbol of California and a landmark for West Sacramento.

The main architectural feature of a Buddhist building is the pagoda. There are many ancient pagodas in India, such as the famous Bodhi Gaya and Nanda ruins, all of which are quite large in their capacity. There are also similar constructions in many countries in southeast Asia, which are similarly magnificent and awe-inspiring. The Borobudur Temple in Indonesia, the Angkor Watt in Cambodia, the Shwedagon Pagoda in Burma, are all are well-known Buddhist structures in the world. The currently proposed Jeweled Palace at The Sagely City of Dharma Realm ("**Dharma Realm**") will be the very first building of its kind in California; therefore, one can imagine the importance and signification of the orientation, height, breadth, and construction.

The Jeweled Palace of the Dharma Realm Project is a three-storied pagoda, with the Sky Bridge and the Mountain Gate completing its overall structure modeled after the ancient Buddhist traditional building architecture. See Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1 - The Jeweled Palace of The City of Dharma Realm Cross-Sectional facing East

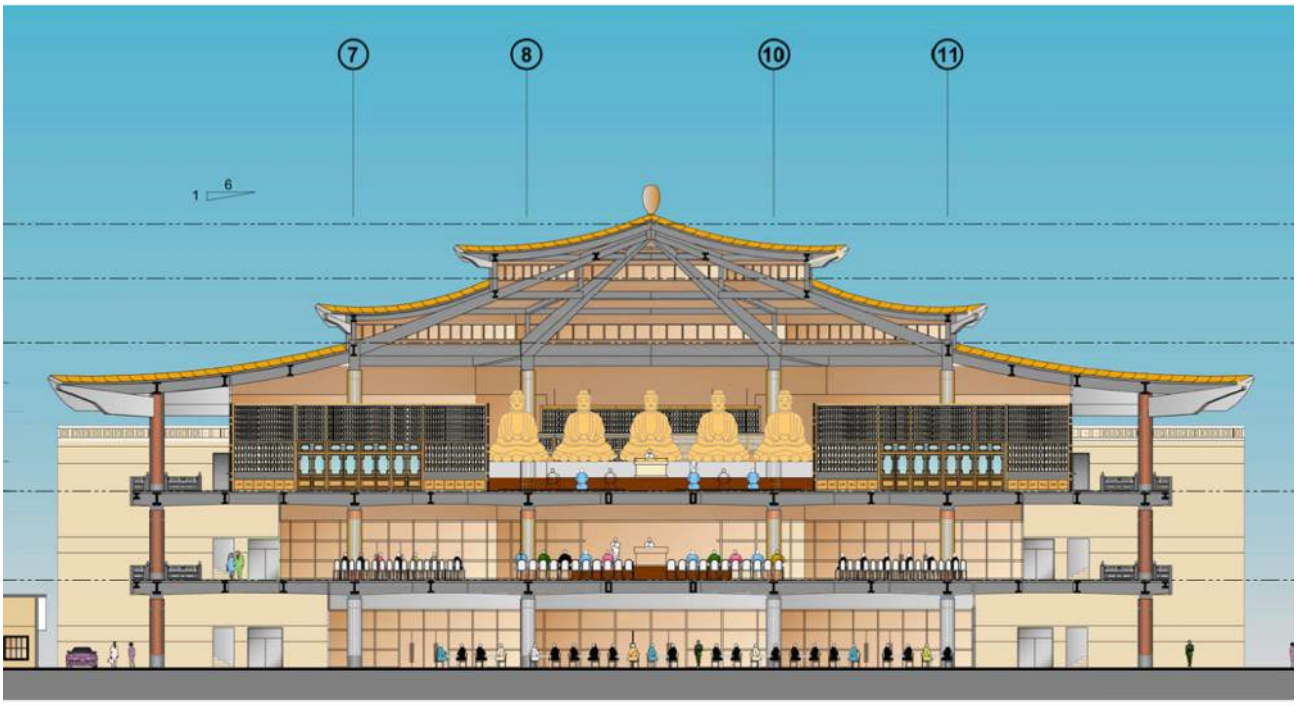

Figure 2 - The Jeweled Palace of The City of Dharma Realm – Cross-Sectional, Facing South

First Level Dining Hall

The basic principle of Buddhism is that ***"all living beings have Buddha nature, and all can become Buddhas. But because of false (delusive) thoughts and attachments, they are unable to attain the***

Thus Come One's (Buddha's) wisdom and virtuous appearance." Buddhist disciples view all living beings as equal, that they are all equally important and have the right to live. Buddhist do not kill; they protect and liberate lives. We can provide pure, clean vegetables dishes without killing karma as our source of food to nourish our physical body. Having compassion as our foundation, we do not wish death upon others — this is the manifestation of compassion. Vegetarianism can help grow our compassionate mind and is also a method of returning to our pure original nature. As the saying goes,

For hundreds of thousands of years, the stew in the pot
Has boiled up a resentment very hard to level.
If you want to know why there are calamities and wars in the world,
Just listen to the sounds from a slaughterhouse at midnight.

In the West, a similar phrase goes, *"**wars stop on the dining table.**"* Ending wars is to stop the causes for killing, the conditions for killing, and the methods and karma of killing. Therefore, we encourage protecting our planet and encourage vegetarianism for life's nourishment.

Second Level Dharma Hall

"Because of false (delusive) thoughts and attachments, they are unable to attain the Thus Come One's (Buddha's) wisdom and virtuous appearance." How do we rid ourselves of false thinking and attachments? We should listen to more sutras and dharma instructional talks and learn the cultivation experience and methods of the Buddha to advance on our progress. Buddhist disciples follow the steps of the Buddha's cultivation, step by step, using the Buddha's dharma teachings to remind oneself and address and correct one's three karmas of the body, mouth, and mind with appropriate thoughts. We should get rid of fighting, greed, selfishness, self-benefiting, and lying to allow one's wisdom to develop, culminating in enlightenment, using the "dharma-joy food" to nourish one's wisdom life.

Third Level Buddha Hall

The palace of the dharma king is the jeweled hall of the Thus Come One. Thus Come One is one of the ten names of the Buddha. *The* ***Dharma Flower Sutra*** states, ***"The Thus Come One's room is the mind of great compassion toward all living beings."*** *The* ***Great Expansive Flower Adornment Sutra*** states, ***"All Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, take the mind of great compassion as their substance. Because of living beings, they bring forth great compassion. From great compassion, the Bodhi mind is born, and because of the resolve for Bodhi, they accomplish Equal and Proper Enlightenment."*** Coming in the Buddha Hall is to perfect one's compassionate mind, allowing one to return to one's original pure Buddha nature and compassionate substance. The dais of the Buddhas of the Five Directions orients southward with their backs to the north. According to the principles of Chinese Feng-Shui, this is the proper setting, as it allows for warm winters and cool summers. In ancient Chinese history, the supreme emperors of China also sat facing south with their backs to the north. Similarly, the dais of the regal dharma king Buddha also has the same orientation, allowing sincere Buddhist disciples who pilgrimage toward north, facing the dharma king, to express their sincere reverence.

On the first floor, we will promote not eating living beings' flesh in the vegetarian dining hall as the start for learning Buddhism. Then one climbs up to the second-floor lecture hall where one can listen to dharma instructional talks and sutra lectures to improve one's behaviors and thoughts. Through these practices, one can reflect on and check the three karmas of body, mouth, and mind to constantly reform oneself and practice compassion to oneself and others. Finally, when one ascends to the third floor Buddha Hall and enters the chamber of the Thus Come One, one can cultivate the Bodhisattva path of six perfections and ten thousand practices of giving, holding precepts, patience, vigor, samadhi, and wisdom, and perfect the mind of compassion.

Sky Bridge



Figure 3 - Jeweled Palace's Sky Bridge

This is a main feature of the overall religious architectural design (see Figure 3), a key idea that puts the finishing touches on a unique and peerless ingenious creation that is without precedent and is a display of Venerable Master Hsuan Hua's foresight and infinite wisdom. So far in the world, whether it be India, China, southeast Asia, there is no such sky bridge that extends from a jeweled palace within a limited space in the center of a city such as it will exist here in West Sacramento, creating a limitless space for imagination on finite land. Moreover, without the sky bridge, it would be impossible to show the majesty and grandeur of the entire building even with the construction of a large Buddha Hall in the middle of the building. This sky bridge makes the entire jeweled pagoda stronger in its religious significance, more majestic and more sublime. As far as the physique and functions of the building are concerned, it reflects Venerable Master Hua's great kindness, great compassion, great vows, and great strength for all living beings, as well as his tireless efforts to promote world peace with his own blood and sweat in his entire life. He promoted for various religions communication and understanding, for Eastern and Western cultural integration, and for

better coordination and cooperation. These create a beautiful world in which all sentient beings can live and work in peace and contentment, develop wisdom, and return to their roots and purify their nature in accordance with ancient Buddhist principles.

Venerable Master Hsuan Hua had previously said, ***"Coming from outside, I'd like to be the bridge for the people of this country to introduce and bring Buddhism to the West."***

The sky bridge outside the main hall faces southward directly to the Mountain Gate. The symbolic meaning of the sky bridge is that the bridge is a channel connecting the two shores. From a religious point of view, there is still a distance between the bridge and the mountain gate. The metaphorical meaning is the cultivation process of going from the ordinary person to sage, from delusion to enlightenment. Master Hua instructed us that the function of this monastery is to be the bridge between the Eastern and Western cultures, to encourage religious communication and collaboration, as well as the communication, integration, and coordination of worldly activities. As long as everyone can respect the rules and regulations of the bodhimandala, everyone can make good use of the space available here.

East-West Cooperation, Past and Present:

- This conceptual drawing was completed by an American architect following the Master's instructions and traditional design, and the subsequent blueprints and design drawings were completed by another architect and disciple of the Venerable Master and other Eastern architects based on the conceptual traditional drawings.

- The conception of this bridge: from ancient times to the present (from the design of the sky bridge with the integration of ancient eastern buildings and western modernization, to efficiently use space, to make the best use of space).

Mountain Gate

East - West



Figure 4 - Mountain Gate

The Mountain Gate is the main entrance to all Buddhist temples, and it is located at the very front of all temple buildings. The main entrance is named "Mountain Gate" because from ancient times, most Buddhist monasteries were built in the mountains and in forests. It is also called "Three Gates" because the entrance represents in Buddhist teachings the three doors of liberation: the "door of emptiness," the "door of no mark," and the "door of non-action." (It is said that non-action is not artificial, not forced.") From outside entering the "***Mountain Gate,***" from ordinary to sage hood, from the low to the high, from delusion to enlightenment, these are the gates for entering the way toward Bodhi enlightenment. Stepping through these traditional religious gates symbolize entrance into another enriching and bountiful spiritual world: it is one that is pure and untainted, filled with kindness, compassion, and joy, far away from worldly troubles and fetters of obsession.

Making Pilgrimages

Making pilgrimages involves traveling to a preeminent ancient temple on sacred grounds in a famous mountain for Buddhist disciples and is one of the methods of cultivation for Buddhist who use the utmost sincere mind of vows to repent and reform one's karmic obstacles and to cleanse and purify one's mind. In order to show one's devotion and earnestness in seeking the way, the cultivator often practices "three steps, one bow" when making their pilgrimage to famous ancient temple and sacred grounds.

According to legend, there is a custom of going on "***pilgrimages***" in ancient India. The so-called "***pilgrimages***" refers to visiting the sacred sites of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and patriarchs. In China, there are also pilgrimage to the four famous mountains and sacred sites of Buddhism as a method of cultivation:

- Mount Potala in Zhejiang Province (Guanyin Bodhisattva's Way-Place {bodhimandala})
- Mount Wutai in Shanxi Province (Manjushri Bodhisattva's Way-Place)
- Mount Jiuhua in Aunhi Province (Earth Store Bodhisattva's Way-Place)
- Mount Emei in Sichuan Province (Universal Worthy Bodhisattva's Way-Place)

The Dharma Realm Jeweled Buddhist Place, Sky Bridge and Mountain Gate will invite all Buddhist faithful to make a pilgrimage paying respect to the Triple Jewels and fulfilling their vows as others have done in the past in China. Additionally, it is our hope that the Jeweled Buddhist Palace will provide a sanctuary for all regardless of their faith or religious affiliation.

Recent Examples of the Three-Steps-One-Bow Pilgrimages:

1. The Venerable Hsu Yun ("***Empty Cloud***"), the most distinguished Chinese monastic for generations (1840-1959) lived to one hundred twenty (120) years of age, (one hundred and one (101) years of which as a monastic). He wished to repay his parents' kindness for giving him life, so at the age of 43, began his three- steps-one-bow pilgrimage from the Fahua (Dharma

Flower) Temple in Mount Potala and continued it to Mount Wutai. He completed his pilgrimage in three years.





The Venerable Hsu Yun on left, at 109 years of age; with Venerable Master Hsuan Hua on right, in 1948.

2. The Dharma Realm Buddhist Association had two separate three-steps-one-bow journeys to pray for world peace:

- Venerable Master Hsuan Hua' s American disciple Bhikshu (Buddhist Monk) Heng Ju decided to embark on a three-steps-one-bow pilgrimage to pray for world peace, from San Francisco to Seattle. With the help of his close friend, Bhikshu Heng Yo, Heng Ju completed the one thousand one hundred (1100)-mile journey in ten (10) months, from August 1973 to October 1974, making history as the very first Buddhist making the three-steps-one-bow pilgrimage in the United States.

- From May of 1977 to October of 1979, Dharma Masters Heng Sure and Heng Chau embarked on their eight hundred (800) miles' pilgrimage of three-steps-one-bow, praying for world peace, from Gold Wheel Monastery in Los Angeles to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, completing their journey in two (2) years nine months.



The Meaning of Bowing Pilgrimages to a Buddha up a Mountain

Cultivating the way starts from small to large, from near to far, from oneself to others, cultivating step by step. The cultivator bows from the foot of the mountain to the top of the mountain, from low to high, climbing with vigor, step by step, lifting one's spirits and expanding the space within one's mind just like the vast ocean and empty space; if one is able to enlarge the measure of one's mind, one may ennoble one's character beyond the ordinary. Buddhists disciples make the pilgrimage using a mind of repentance and remorse, the mind of respect, the mind of faith, and the mind of resolve.

This is born from a mind of earnest determination to pursue the path of enlightenment, from "***Bodhi,***" meaning "***path of enlightenment***," the resolve to become Buddha. Without the Bodhi resolve, one cannot become enlightened. Buddhist disciples' study and practice the Buddhadharma with resolution, sincerity, and faith, never turning back on the path. A bowing pilgrimage gives us the opportunity to pay homage to sacred Buddha sites and such an impressionably profound experience aids us to make the ultimate resolve for Bodhi. Moreover, *"**Bowing once to the Buddha eradicates karmic offenses as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges**."* Bowing to the Buddhas is the best exercise to strengthen the body and mind. The act of bowing can: 1) get rid of our arrogance; 2) develop a soft and gentle mind, which is one that is not stubborn; and 3) foster a respectful mind.

Bowing pilgrimages allow us to unite our body and mind when prostrating to the ground. The three-steps-one-bow method is especially effective in fostering a mind of repenting and remorse and of humility and purity. Respectfully bowing to the Buddha can subdue one's body and mind and pray for eradication of one's karmic offenses with repentance, which is a very important dharma door and process in cultivating Buddhadharma.

Acknowledgements and Sources

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