

**ZCLA FENGSHUI READING
BY EVA WONG**

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The following is condensed from a four-hour fengshui reading of the Zen Center's buildings and grounds by Eva Wong. Eva's goal was to affirm the view of the Zen Center as a Mandala, a sacred space for awakening, and to provide short-term solutions that can be easily and inexpensively carried out to correct energy breaches, provide protection for the property and our Dharma work, and connect the buildings and spaces. She frequently noted that the Zen Center's grounds need major cleaning up, that there are so many unused doors, and that there is often lacking a clear statement of what the spaces are used for.

In this summary, I have woven the reading into one narrative and captured Eva's recommendations. Those familiar with the Zen Center's Glasscock Grounds Master Plan may find some similarities. Eva's views are shaped by her Chinese cultural background, her training in Taoism, Qi Gong, and spiritual fengshui, as well as her practice of Tibetan Buddhism, which has a clearly delineated path of the Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Vehicles. She is a translator of Taoist texts. Her brochure is attached as a separate file. I will note, for your own reflection, that Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche spoke of "the great eastern sun of enlightenment," whereas Maezumi Roshi spoke of "the hazy moon of enlightenment."

EVA WONG'S READING

Bow to each other. We dedicate this visit to the benefit of all sentient beings.

Thank you for inviting me. We have certain karmic relationships. When I first received the invitation from Roshi Wendy, it was through Joel Wachbrit, the director of the Los Angeles Shambhala Buddhist Meditation Center where I occasionally teach. And then I found out we have other auspicious karmic ties—my friendship with the Sakyang Mipham Rinpoche, this Center's history with Mipham Rinpoche's father, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, and, of course, your Founder's friendship with Seung Sahn Nim, with whom I worked for many years on his Cambridge Zen Center and DharmaCrafts. So this is a karmic coming together.

Introduction to Spiritual Fengshui and Principles of Sacred Architecture

Fengshui started several thousand years ago in China. It was first used to select sites for capital cities, palaces, and shrines. Before it was ever used for houses and commercial buildings, fengshui was a very sacred practice used to find the best places, so that the nation was ruled in the most enlightened way. Long before Buddhism became a spiritual teaching that was widely disseminated, the Chinese wanted a situation in which their shrines and temples would flourish. They wanted to find the best places to practice together in order to spiritually honor the deities and the forces of heaven and earth, so that the nation would prosper. Over time, fengshui was applied to large houses, especially the houses of the aristocracy and nobility, and all the way down to individual homes.

The Mahayana View to Save All Sentient Beings. We can understand the various applications of fengshui from the view of the vehicles of Buddhism. If we regard fengshui as only for homes, this is a Hinayana (Small Vehicle) approach, only for self-improvement. That's good—we want people to be happy; we want people to live a good life and bring health and harmony to the family.

My great uncle, who taught me fengshui, always taught me that the greatest benefit of fengshui is to save the world; so fengshui becomes a bodhisattva activity. It should be used to help shrines and temples develop so that we can radiate goodness and compassion to the whole world through our practice. This is the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) view. The reading of the Zen Center is not for the individual person, but for the spiritual tradition and how we are going to help the spiritual tradition radiate outwards.

The Principles of Sacred Architecture. In working with at a spiritual center, we need to look at what principles guide sacred architecture. A spiritual center is a place where, literally, the space is responsible for and is conducive to cultivating enlightenment. Therefore, the Zen Center is not simply a set of buildings. We are interested in how people move about the space and, literally, how the space changes mind. In the understanding of fengshui, mind is space and space is mind. So as we walk through the Zen Center, we are looking at how this environment could actually be conducive to your practice and to waking up.

How can space create enlightened mind? In the Longchen Nyintik Tibetan Buddhist tradition that I practice in, we believe that when space is bright and clear, mind will be bright and clear. The more transparent our space, the more we clearly reflect Buddha nature. When space is cluttered, labyrinth, and dark, then mind will be discursive and dim. So, designing a space literally affects mind, because mind is space.

For a Mahayana space, the guiding principles are to understand The Three Jewels (The Three Treasures) of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha and how these can be manifested in the space that we are in. So, I want you to adopt a view that we are not just walking around buildings made of bricks, mortar, and stone, but we are literally walking around the energetics of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. How do you lay out the buildings so that people can enter the gate properly? How can this space encourage people to arouse compassion and Bodhisattva aspirations?

In any kind of spiritual space, we are looking at a Mandala situation. This means that the relationship of each of your buildings is very important. We will look at the particular buildings as well as how your buildings are connected, because the relationship between the buildings is what hangs the Mandala together. All the relationships need to hang together within the Mandala—the connections of the buildings, where the gates are, and how we move through the space. How we move around the space is how we move around Dharma.

A Mandala always has a centerpiece, a space that holds the entire Mandala together. We need to identify that. We also need to identify where the gate is into your space, because the gate is where people come into the Dharma. In the fengshui of Buddhist temples, the gate is considered as very important. If the threshold is very high, it means that not many people can enter. If the threshold is low, more people can enter.

The relationship of the Mandala is how we move from one building to another. The relationship is literally a way of connecting the different components of your community—the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha. Each of these Three Jewels needs to be connected. If they are not

connected, we will get isolated components. For example, there are some Buddhist communities I work with where the practice hall is far away from the rest of the Center, so you have to cross quite a bit of a space to get to it. The main components have no path to each other. What I see in those Centers is that people get very heady in their practice. The practice becomes extremely difficult to actualize, extremely conceptual. It's very difficult to bring the practice into the everyday life of the people living in the community. So, again, how we move around and connect the spaces is important.

I also need to know how you envision your Center. Where is your focus? Is your focus on bringing in people to practice, or is this space more for your Sangha, or is it a residential place, where you live as a monastic community and wish to strengthen the bonds of the people who are practicing here? I would need to know your purpose, because this hinges on what I am going to recommend.

Another view of fengshui as applied to sacred space is that a space will definitely affect how one practices. The great Kagyu Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhist teacher Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche wrote a book called "Sacred Geography." In this book, he writes that if we practice in the right space one time, one session equals one hundred thousand sessions. Now for those of us who do prostrations in our practice, that means a lot (laughter). So he is saying that practice space is not arbitrary. Practice space is very intentional—the intention is to make the most of qualitative practice; one session of sitting equals ten thousand sessions. Therefore, we put in much effort in selecting where to put our monasteries and temples.

When I visited Japan, I was very impressed with the Shinto shrines. Shinto is the national religion of Japan. They really know how to situate their shrines; they are so attuned to the energy of the space that they literally put it right on the spot where it would benefit the entire nation. People who understand how to situate these spaces have always been part of Asian culture. We recognize where the best energies are; we also build buildings to magnetize the sacred world, for we all live in the sacred world.

As we interact with the outside world, we come into contact with our sacredness, which brings out the best in us. That's why, especially in working in Buddhist practice centers, everything—all space—is Buddha. Even your rocks and your trees, all are Buddha; we wander around the Great Mind of the Buddha. We design our space so that our space can mirror the Mind of the Buddha.

So my goal today is to work with you very closely so that when people come into this space, they literally see Buddha nature. In the long term, your space may need some rearrangement, but for today, I want to get a feel of the entire space, then the specific buildings, and make recommendations to protect and link the buildings of your Mandala.

Eva's Approach to the Zen Center's Buildings & Spaces

Roshi's note: I am combining the remarks from her initial tour of the grounds with the remarks made when we visited individual locations after the tour.

First, I would like to work on Roshi's building, the Pine House (Buddha). This is a very, very important piece of this Mandala. Any spiritual center is dependent on the Abbot/Head Teacher. When that particular space is where and how it should be, it actually radiates; it carries the entire

Mandala, so that's where I would like to start. We always start from the lineage, and since the Abbot/Head Teacher is really the representative of the lineage, we will start from there.

Second, I would like to look at the Zendo (Dharma). This is the next important space. This is where the major practice goes on. Third, we will look at your service hall, the Buddha Hall. So what I am doing is sort of the hierarchy—the abbot's space, the Zendo, the Buddha Hall, and then the rest—the administrative building (Sangha House), the Dharma Hall, and the residential areas. We will work on the garden spaces and the connections as we go from each of the buildings.

The major recommendations will occur around the Buddha Hall and Founder's Room, where I feel there is a lot of vulnerability. When we consider a Mandala, we have a perimeter. Your perimeter needs to be protected, and yet allow people to enter. We don't want high walls which protect you, but keep out people. I see a lot of doors in your place, doors that don't get used to the outside and doors within the buildings; the Dharma energy is leaking out like crazy. There are a lot of breaches in your protection.

We will work on the flow of movement within buildings and the flow of going from one building to the next. We do not need to address basements used for storage or service rooms, such as kitchens, bathrooms, the shop, and laundry areas.

I know that people live here and you have individual concerns, but as we go around, I would like you to really think about The Three Jewels and how that is really what we are working with. I am not working with residents; I am not going to work with every apartment. That is their private space; how they do with it, is their private life.

My concern, as I honor Roshi's request, is to make sure that the entire Center has spiritual integrity and that it is safe, protected, and that it is a space conducive to practitioners, not people's little concerns. We are not on a Hinayana trip, and we really want to be able to do this in a very bodhisattva way.

I will make both short-term and long-term recommendations. I know that there's bound to be projects going on all the time. So, your council will have to decide what to do.

Specific Buildings and Locations

The Pine House

The Pine House is the Center of the Mandala because Roshi holds the Lineage. The Lineage is the anchor of the entire space. When this space is proper, everything falls into place. The fengshui of spiritual traditions works from the top down. The teacher, the Lineage, is most important. I am not in favor of the Sangha voting on all things, because, if anything, your teacher is closest to the Mind of the Buddha; that's where it has to come from. I am not trying to demean the rest of the Sangha, but this is a tradition that has been held for several thousand years. The teacher is always the Center of the Mandala, the center of the space. So we will spend quite a bit of time working on this space, because when the teacher takes the seat properly in the space, the entire Mandala will function.

Since this is Roshi's private residence, the interior of the Pine House is a confidential consultation.

Recommendations for the outside of the Pine House:

1. I recommend a fence between the Pine House and neighboring apartment building. We need to protect the Pine House perimeter, and the lack of fencing between these two buildings is a major energy leak.
2. I do not recommend a kinhin path around the Pine House (north side as in plans). This would be a breach of energy for the Lineage seat.

The Zendo

The Zendo needs to have a very dignified entrance. The Zendo is where transformation takes place. Just as Roshi's home is the representative of the Lineage, the Zendo is the Lineage in action. So in any practice hall, we need to have what is called an "anchoring statement," for lack of a better word, so if this is the Zendo, you actually need to put a sign here (*the sign is hidden behind bushes*), because this is your main meditation hall. It has to be very prominent.

We say that the path to the Dharma has to be very bright and clear. The Buddha has always said, "My path is a very easy path; it's a very straightforward path." If we hide it; if we don't put signs or put signs that are misleading, then people won't be able to enter the Dharma.

1. For the short term, I recommend attention to your signage. So the first thing is trim the plants, make sure the sign is very visible. The second thing is that this sign is actually facing towards the garden, which is the wrong direction. Re-orient the sign and make it higher. From the sacred architecture point of view, the sign of a zendo should never be below the heart level because if it starts going below the heart level, we are looking down on it. Even from a practical point of view, people don't look down. When most people look at signs to go somewhere, they always look up. So, raise the sign higher to above the heart level.
2. I recommend two signs: one here at the foot of the stairs because it is consistent with the rest of the other signage, and one actually above the door to make it more formal, so that this becomes the formal entry. Any practice space needs to have a formal entry. It shouldn't look like a back door because the Dharma does not come in through the back door. It has to come through the front door—we have nothing to hide. This needs to look more like a formal entry.
3. For the long term, I recommend putting the risers between each step of these entry stairs, because this looks like a back stairs, not a formal entry. We want to make this a formal entry, so put in the backs to the riser and then clean up the entrance. Then this becomes a nice, formal entry into the Zendo. (*Discussion followed on whether these steps meet building codes.*)

Main (Back) Zendo gaitan entrance. The meditation already begins when someone enters this area (gaitan), so this should not be a storage area for chairs.

1. I recommend storing the chairs in the storage area, so this entrance is completely opened up. We should never use the entrance to a practice space as storage, because it gives us the feeling of walking through storage, which is a service space, into a Buddha space. It pulls down the dignity and the respect of the meditation hall.

2. These cushions can be organized and set upright, rather than throwing them here and there. I would set them upright on the side; you'll be able to fit more. You need slightly higher shelving to have these stored on the side. Bigger ones at bottom, smaller at top. You'll have more storage, and it will look really nice.
3. I recommend that the zendo windows have some translucent rice-paper type of covering or curtains. You don't want to make this room very dark, otherwise people get sleepy and dim, and mind is not clear. So we need to have light, but we need to also have protection. So don't cover the entire window, but just the bottom half. In this way, you still get sky energy; sky mind comes in through the zendo windows and you have a view of that.
4. I would make the ceiling light brighter, especially for new people. I think seasoned practitioners can practice in any kind of environment, but, we want to create an environment where the newest person would feel comfortable and be able to get stillness and get a glimpse of emptiness. A dim room is very difficult for a beginning meditator. Candlelight sitting is good for more seasoned practitioners, but the new people need light, because they are not used to sitting. You have to have both options.

The south side entrance to the Zendo (facing the Pundarika). When you open this door, the energy just goes all the way out.

1. I recommend that we begin to address containing this energy by enclosing the corner of the porch from the building wall to the shoe rack. Use glass or Plexiglas on the top, so you will still have light and it won't be a dark entry. When you exit the building, this area is more like a vestibule instead of just a little landing. Then the energy does not rush all the way out.

An important feature of Dharma centers is containment. You are like a bowl, and your practice and the teachers are held in a bowl. If the bowl has a crack, then whatever you pour into the bowl is going right out. That's what is happening here with this door. There is tremendous Dharma energy being planted by the practice here, and once this opens for people to come in and out, the energy just goes out. What happens is that people can't go deep into the practice, because the energy leaks out. And this can be taken care of very easily architecturally by just framing this area in. Make sure that the glass is kept clean; wood on the bottom, glass on top. Keep the shoe rack.

2. Make sure these stairs have risers. This will provide protection, because again, this is vulnerable.
3. The distance between the door and threshold—you just need to redo the threshold, or place a weather strip during cold days. This is for the comfort of the people who sit near this door, so that they don't get the draft coming in from the gap at the threshold.

The Zendo upstairs, guest rooms. This is fine, but if we were designing the Center, I would put the zendo high and the residential space on the bottom. The ideal is that you come into the dormitories and then you have a central stairway and the zendo would be on top. But you have to work with the buildings you have.

The Zendo interior shelf by garden-side windows.

1. I recommend storing the cushions on the side here as well. Have two shelves. Again, neatness and tidiness are important. It also manifests the powerful simplicity of the Zen teachings, that

you actually walk your talk. It's especially important for new people—they usually want to find out what different lineages are about, and it's an educational experience for them to see who you are, the way you live, and the way you move around the space. You can put sliding doors or curtains in front of the shelves, shoji style.

2. In the long run, I would even do the windows in shoji style, so when you come in, it really feels like you are entering a very special space that can match the culture from which your lineage comes from. I know this is North America, but there is still a connection to the culture that your practice comes from. People need to learn that when they enter, this is the path; this is the Lineage that has been taught for hundreds and hundreds of years and, by the way, it works.

The Zen Center's Front Gate

The nature of any sacred space is that we need to have an approach for people to come in, so when you come into a practice Center, you don't just drop yourself into it—you need to slow down; we call it an approach. This is why in the tradition in monasteries and temples, there is a long walk before you even get to the practice hall. What the approach does is create a sense of a contemplative, quieted-down avenue before you sit on the cushion. So one thing we don't want to do, and the space reflects this, is to drive up, throw the keys down, and go on the cushion. There is no time to settle. (*Roshi's note: This is reflected in the scattered energy with which many practitioners come into the Face-to-Face Meetings.*)

My concern is that when people are sitting on the front street side of the Zendo, they are awfully close to the front gate. So, again, I am worried about the protection. Is there somebody who is a gatekeeper of some kind, who is available while everybody is sitting? You need some kind of protection for the space when people are sitting. The gate is really intruding into the zendo.

One way of doing the protection on the energetic level is the possibility of a statue of a bodhisattva warrior that is positioned in the entrance. This would give the feeling of a gate. A gate is very important. There are always gates to spiritual centers. Gates are to let people in, not to shut out people. The gate literally guides people in, as well as protects the practice space.

The protector principle is important in the Dharma. These are people who usually guard the temples. They are actually quite adept at martial arts (warrior monks); they guard the temples from being robbed and vandalized; they protect the teachers when the teachers travel from one place to another. What we are doing here is to make sure that your security isn't breached and also that you don't have people wandering around. Practitioners coming here is one thing, but you don't want curiosity seekers coming in and out. It disrupts the practice space. So having a live person at the gate is the best.

The next thing is to have a gate, which I think is very important, with the bodhisattva warriors.

In Buddhist and Taoist temples, there are many ceremonial gates. In Shintoism, it is even more dramatic. The gates in Shinto seem to lead nowhere—to woods or a tree or a hot springs; the gates actually lead to the kami (spirits or divinities). Trungpa Rinpoche borrowed this principle because he felt that to enter Buddhism, the gate is important, but the Tibetans did not have this architecture. He learned so much from Shibata Sensei and Kobun Chino Roshi, that the gate literally guides people in, as well as protects the practice space.

1. I recommend that you close the sliding door from the front gaitan when there is no face-to-face teaching. You should secure the outside door, meaning that once the Abbot has entered, you should actively lock the Abbot's entrance. Otherwise, this area is very vulnerable to the outside.
2. I recommend that you need a gatekeeper; a real person is the best.
3. I recommend that you actually build a temple gate in the long run. You can still have your iron fence and gate for security, but the temple gate itself is an entrance to this practice space. You can consider a Japanese-style gate with a roof and the two wooden doors so that you are still able to come in. On the two sides of the gate, you have your bodhisattva warriors. That would feel much better. Gates are pretty easy to build.

The Gardening Shed

This unpainted garden shed door looks like an appendage.

1. I recommend painting it the same color as the shop, so that you don't have a collection of shack-like sheds right next to a very dignified space. I think the shop looks fine, just continue the same color. (*Done*).

The Buddha Hall

1. I recommend raising the sign, so that it is not low. Consider putting the sign on the building itself.
2. I recommend having the porch come out more and incorporate all of this little garden. It's good that you are already working on this.
3. I recommend replacing this covered window and unused door with siding (on the west side of building, next to the door the Sangha enters). As they are now, it is a superfluous door. Even though you never use it, it still becomes a leakage of Dharma energy. When you replace the siding, also dry wall the interior so that there is no leakage.
4. I recommend covering this interior door behind the mokugyo with a wall hanging; you will have egress for emergencies. This is another breach of the energy of this space, even if you don't use this door.
5. I recommend not standing directly under the beams inside the Buddha Hall service room. In fengshui, beams are not great, especially for a very low ceiling. When you look at the Japanese temples, they have a lot of beams, but they are high, like three stories high. When you have low beams, it has the effect of a hindrance on people. So I would ask that when people stand in here, don't have them stand under a beam. Since these beams are structural, the best thing to do is just be mindful of not standing under the beams.

The Buddha Hall – Founders Room

We really need to figure out a way of protecting the Founders.

This Founders Room with Maezumi Roshi's relics is really the heart of the Mandala. So the way I would understand your Zen Center Mandala is that Roshi's space, the Pine House, is the manifested seat of the Mandala; this Founders Room is the ground of the manifestation. This is a very important space because Maezumi Roshi's relics are here. This is not the visible part; this is ground that we stand on. Just as we can't see through the ground that we stand on, we can't stand without it. So this space needs to be much protected.

1. The first recommendation is to shore up the protection of the Founders Room, so that the Dharma energy is not being breached. I recommend that spaces like these, where relics are kept, need to be very, very protected because they are almost like vaults, where the Dharma energy your Founder planted and everything that has accumulated since then, is stored. So think of it as a battery where this energy is stored.
2. Door leading from Founders Room to Irolo-side porch. Doors like this are a breach in your battery. I recommend that you don't use this door, even for throwing out your ritual water. (*Note: we have stopped using it to throw out the Founder's face washing water at dawn.*) I recommend that you block it by placing a beautiful wall hanging over it, so that the door is not visible from the inside. This would retain the safety of it being a fire escape, if you ever actually need to use it for egress. The outside would still look like a door, but that's okay. This is a house, but to have something exit from this room out to the street is somewhat dangerous. The hanging should cover the entire door, the cracks, knobs, and lock. So when you are inside the room, you don't have a feeling that there is actually a door.

In Asia, this room would be at the top level of a pagoda. You would have to go through all the layers to get there. Doors like this one are problematic, if you actually open it up.

3. Door from Founders Room to guest room. A guestroom next to one of the most sacred areas of your facility is not just a casual guest room. It should be used for a very important visiting teacher; technically, the space is not for casual access. Relics are really very, very important. (*Someone asks, shall we move the Founders Room upstairs?*) The problem is that the upstairs is not dignified enough; you have a very dignified area now behind the service hall. So the question regarding the guest room is who stays there and how often? If indeed we do a hanging here to cover this door, it would not be used. It can be used as a fire escape (*the windows are a fire escape*), but it would be covered and the Founders Room would have some protection. Whoever stays in the room should not be just a casual visitor, because they are right next to the Founders.

(Roshi: I opened this room up because I felt the Sangha had a need to connect with the Founders. But lately I have been thinking that it is time to not have this room be as accessible, even for the memorial services, but just to the officiant and attendant.) Yes, you may want to rethink who has access to this room. This really feels like the relics room in a pagoda, which is really how relics are stored, and not to have casual entrance, with people coming and going.

4. I recommend removing the chiden storage under the altar and moving it to the chiden area. This would help this area become more protected.

5. I recommend putting a magnetic lock on the Founders Room doors that open to the main service room. (*Done*)

Upstairs in Buddha Hall: This room has a lot of good energy. The only thing is that it's right above the shrine room, so it is not for casual guests—it would be like walking on the head of the Founder, which isn't exactly what we want to do. (*We established that it is over the Buddha Hall altar, not the Founders.*) I would use this room only as a last resort because, again, we say that mind is sky and, therefore, you don't want discursive mind on top of sky mind.

1. I recommend that ideally this room be used for visiting teachers—such as a Roshi from Japan, because this room the closest you would get to the Mind of the Buddha, on top of the Mind of the Buddha.
2. (*Question: Could this room be used for the archives?*) It could be for archives, for Dharma books and Dharma texts, because Dharma texts are really higher than the human head, so that's very workable. The texts could be stored here. The lighting can be fixed, if it is too much for archives.

Hakuryusan (White Dragon Protector) Shrine

Good, you have a protector shrine (*laughter; He's been asleep lately.*). This shrine is very important because it watches your back. Watching your back is very important.

Outside of Buddha Hall/Founder's Room Along Irolo Street Gardens

This area really concerns me because, with your security gate between these inner pillars, your Founders Room sits outside of the Mandala and is, therefore, unprotected. This area is very, very vulnerable. You need to reclaim the gardens that are now “outside” of the Center. In any spiritual place, you always have a perimeter. The question is where do we draw the boundaries? Right now because of this security gate, you basically define your boundaries as this gate. It's weird energetically, because you have excluded everything beyond the gate from the Mandala. See how the Founder's Relics are out there, sort of out on a limb? The relics are unprotected; it's not even part of your enclosed space, within your perimeter.

Architecture and the immediate environment manifest the Lineage. So what I would like to recommend is that, when we consider what to do here, it is something that would manifest the Lineage. When people walk by, they can't tell who you are. Of course they can read the sign, but a spiritual tradition is also a very cultural. Your practice is very, very much tied to architecture, to the way of looking at landscape. With Zen temples, you just look at the front gate and the Three Jewels are right out there.

So one thing that you can all work towards is to begin to manifest a kind of cultural-spiritual energy that radiates out, so that when people just look at the Zen Center, they get the teachings. The most important thing about landscape and architecture is the view to enlightenment. That's why the rock or sand garden is almost a total immersion in enlightened mind.

1. I recommend that you reclaim and rework the gardens, so that it is included as a courtyard into your facility. I would go on a minimization principle. Clean up the gardens and

landscape it, so that it is less grown together. You might go with a dry garden, or a more manicured rock garden, so the teachings are really extended out to the garden. Open it up. This is the simplest first step for the gardens. The more open it is, the more light there is. Perhaps put some benches, even if just for show. Then this garden becomes an entry point into the Mandala, and the Founder's Relics room will become part of the Mandala. (*We have thought of these gardens as the Founder's Gardens.*) Absolutely!

2. I recommend considering making another gate, an energetic gate, between the outer pillars and leave the security gate as is between the two inner pillars. You could do a mock, Japanese-style wooden gate at the outer pillars, which would include the Founders and the front part of the buildings energetically into your Mandala. This area between the inner and outer pillars would be an entry area and walkway between the two buildings, all of which would be included energetically. You can create a little bit of buffer space so that you can all enjoy it.

Your present security gate is the real security gate, which protects intrusion into your facility. This will still function as it does now, keeping it locked to keep people from just walking in.

3. I recommend a railing for the Dharma Hall front porch, just as the Buddha Hall front porch has a railing. Energetically, the railing provides a layer of protection. These houses need their own perimeter, so consider installing a railing around the Dharma Hall porch.
4. I recommend some kind of fence at the street level, as an energetic layer of protection. This fence would be for show to have some kind of perimeter marking the property from the street and to serve as an energetic barrier.

And now, let's look at the communication between these two buildings.

5. I recommend trimming the overgrown plants next to the Dharma Hall porch, recovering the stone path, and making a walking path between the Buddha Hall and Dharma Hall through the driveway. Remember, you are now claiming this as inside space.
6. I recommend repairing this cement driveway in this area between the inner and outer pillars. One way to link the two buildings is to create a pedestrian pathway, like an interlocking brick path, that goes from one building to the other. The path delineates the passage between the buildings. Even if you don't use the path, we need to energetically connect all of the buildings in the Mandala.

The way energy works is there is our reality and there is the energetic reality. The energetic level needs to have certain things in place, so that it will come back and affect the mundane reality. So we need to match or parallel the sacred and the mundane, so that these two worlds speak to each other. So even though we will not be using this path between the Buddha Hall and Dharma Hall, I recommend that you improve the stepping stones, clear out the brush, lay out a path, put in a railing, and install a second gate, so that all of this together creates an energetic perimeter.

7. I recommend some kind of sign on this Irolo Street side, like the sign in the front Normandie side.
8. I recommend some benches on the porches.

9. You might want to consider some floodlights—if you light the place up, it is not conducive to homeless people congregating here (*concern was expressed that this is happening*). Install enough flood lights so the place is lit up.

The Dharma Hall

Signage.

1. Make the sign higher, or actually put it on the building itself.

The Entrance. The first thing to consider in this building is the main entrance to the main teaching room. When you enter this building, there has to be one way to the main room, not two or three ways. What this says is that we have only one way to the Dharma, so you have to decide where you want to direct people when they enter.

Your community needs to get its priorities straight. Do you want to keep a guestroom, lose the guestroom and use it as the entry, or do you want to use this (dining) area as an entry and route people through here?

This lower level of the Dharma Hall is really divided into two sections, the main hall and dining hall, which has a subsection, the kitchen.

1. I recommend to make this (dining) area as the entrance, just for the reason that this is a bigger space, a bigger doorway so more people can come in. The other entrance is through a guestroom—we don't want to walk through a bedroom to enter a practice space. Start by closing the guestroom door and direct people, using the appropriate signage or arrow.

When people enter, the Buddha Mahaprajapati is here—this is the gateway, not through somebody's bedroom. So when people come through here, we have a very dignified entrance.

2. I recommend that you fill up this (dining area) space, so it doesn't feel so much like a transition place. If you are going to also use this as a classroom space, I would put some zabutons down along the wall, so that it actually looks like a used space and you get a feel for the space. Place them to show that this is actually a classroom space. Then the bigger room is your true meeting space, the teaching space.
3. I recommend not using these double French doors (*not used, except for air*). In the long term, you may want to close this up from the bottom and maintain a window on top for light.

Now we have the more public waiting room (kitchen), the more formal entry room (dining) and now the formal teaching room. So the spaces have become more defined, because right now there is no formal definition of the spaces.

The main teaching room. This room has no anchor, no reference point. It feels like a house that hasn't been occupied and is still waiting for furniture to arrive. You need to have a centerpiece to anchor this room. Right now there is nothing here, so it is actually very difficult to focus, because with beginning people, it is very difficult for them to make the big step that mind is emptiness; they need to have something to gravitate to—could be a statue or a picture of the Buddha, so that there is some kind of anchor in this Mandala.

1. I would put a platform in front of the fire place, so that it would be the dignified seat for the teacher. The seat is already in position. This would make this a very dignified teaching space, so that it is not just an empty room. It's very simple to build a low platform (*we have one*) and place it here.

The nature of your gatherings may change, but the seat doesn't change. These rooms look like transition spaces; as a result, the Dharma doesn't get planted because there is no teacher's seat. Even though the teacher may move around the room according to the program, the seat will anchor the space. You need the visual of the teacher.

Your constraint is that latecomers cannot move in front of the teacher. There is room for seats in the (dining) area for latecomers. That would make this a very dignified entry into this teaching space, whereas the entry through the guestroom is a back door.

The stairs are very awkward, but what we are doing here today is try to figure out what you can do now given what you have. If you do major architectural renovations, I would be happy to work with your architect for rerouting the stairs.

Right now, I think the most important thing is to plant the Dharma. And how we plant the Dharma is to give the teacher a seat. If the teacher starts moving around too much, then the lineage cannot sit properly and, therefore, the people are just going to be distracted by little things; you are always kind of wandering around. So if you can figure out a way to have a seating area for latecomers and do a platform for a seat for the teacher, it would really shift the energy of this room around.

2. In addition to the teacher's seat, you will also need some kind of Buddha, either a hanging or some kind of statue behind the back of the teacher, so this would actually look like a formal teaching hall. (*Roshi's note: in Zen Dharma Halls, the speaker or teacher is the Buddha image.*)
3. If you make the changes above, then you can keep the guestroom. You can also consider having a couch that can actually fold out into a bed, instead of having a bed there. That furniture would make the room more spacious and also allow the option and flexibility of how to use it.

When you shift the use of your spaces, you may find that you may have to rethink how you schedule your activities and your programs.

The Parking Area In Front of the Dharma Hall

Now here's where we need a lot of major outside work.

1. I recommend that we continue the driveway and create a curved path to the Dharma Hall, not straight, but with a little bit of curve. You can place gravel to the side, however you want to do it, but you need to define a path. The vehicles can drive over it, but there is a clearly defined path.
2. I recommend that the path also branch out to the Buddha Hall, and so now those buildings are also connected. I would also recommend, once you start enlarging the Buddha Hall porch, that you not park cars in that space (*a truck was parked in this space that day*). Without the

cars, this becomes a more contemplative space and becomes a part of the space for the Buddha Hall.

You can use some of your left-over bricks for these paths.

3. I recommend that you think of this area as a central courtyard of the Mandala. When these buildings are connected, this space becomes a courtyard, rather than a no-man's space. The courtyard is the space between the Dharma activities. The courtyard is the gathering space; the buildings are your activity space. So the courtyard is how things are coming together.

In Asian architecture, courtyards are very important; landscaping is very much a part of the Mandala. When we do restorations in Asian temples, we always go to the gardens first. We work on the landscaping, then the buildings get placed around the landscape. In the West, the buildings are built first and then the landscape is figured out. In both Chinese and Japanese traditions, it's the reverse.

The Rock Pile

1. I recommend using these rocks in your rock garden. Pull out the unwanted bushes, leave the pines, and configure the rocks and gravel. You have enough materials.
2. I recommend a wooden fence to deal with the energy breach—the uncovered fence that looks into the back patio of the red brick building—of this area. This is a very different energy. A wooden fence would give your courtyard much more privacy and is much more elegant (than the chain link); you need to close this area off.

The Nilotpala

We have to do something about this. This section is cut off from the Mandala. We need to figure out a way to really connect this energetically to the rest of the Center. The main thing is you have this red brick building, which is so dominating; it intrudes into your space. We have to work on this space, so that the residents here are not so dissociated from the rest of the Sangha. Energetically, the residents here are not as much nourished by the energy of the Center. Anytime a piece of the Mandala is cut off, you are actually losing circulation of energy for the whole Mandala.

There are two ways to route this space into your main facility, which will connect this piece with the Mandala. One way is to have a practice space here, so that all practice spaces are energetically tied. Whenever you put a Buddha on an altar in a practice space, it's tied in energetically. The other way to is on the more everyday reality level: to have a pathway that connects this facility with the rest of the Mandala.

1. Stairs going from the Pundarika down to the Nilotpala. I recommend that you remove this small gate and make a lower wooden fence along the top wall, now that you have a security fence and gate. What you have now is a gate that literally separates the Nilotpala from the main buildings, so lower this railing section next to the Pundarika, so that it doesn't seem like a barrier. Ideally, if this was gone, it would be the best (*not feasible, for safety reasons*).

2. I recommend that the number one thing in the Nilotpala area is a major clean up. Your community needs to walk around your grounds (all of the Zen Center) and take a look at objects and claim them. If you can't claim them, get rid of it by donating them, because the Zen Center has become a dumping ground.
3. I recommend that you have a formal delineation of the entrance from the parking lot to the Nilotpala residences. A quick solution would be to find two nice logs and place them at either side of this entrance. That is all you need. In time, you can actually put some plants around it, so it would look an entrance to the space.
4. I recommend clearing out all these other trees left in the corner next to the parking garage.
5. I recommend moving the blue bin sitting by the entrance. It is just simply a matter of mindfulness of bringing it out on trash pick up day. You know, people walk chanting five miles up to the gate of shrines everyday. I think that moving a trash can from the back on pickup day is not a big thing to ask. It is a practice, and the community needs to get that it is a practice to do these kinds of things, because not doing it affects the dignity of the entire space.
6. I recommend risers in the stairs going up to the second floor.
7. (*Question about the Nilotpala cat problems.*) Your community has to figure out what to do with too many animals. Obviously there is a tradition of temple cats, but still, if you want a cat box, people have to take the responsibility for it. The box needs to be cleaned out every day, otherwise the smell is going to be even worse. Don't place it at the entrance; it has to be somewhere in the back, because it pulls down the dignity of your space. (*One cat box is not necessarily appealing to all of the cats.*) Exactly, so you have to figure out where to place a couple of boxes, but *not* in the entry, somewhere towards the back.

I want us to get the big points first—cat boxes are little things. The most important thing is to keep in mind The Three Jewels. Make sure that those Jewels are all interconnected, and we don't lose sight of what we are doing here; it is really for the benefit of all sentient beings.

8. The fence wall alongside the red brick building. I recommend that you find a fast growing plant that crawls up the fence. You will not be able to block the entire building, but whatever it is you decide, consider plants that climb quickly to block the lower part. Any fast-growing vine, so that you will have a wall of plants. What you have now is undignified.
9. The courtyard area. I recommend that this be cleaned up, and then this whole place will change. I don't know who this courtyard represents. I also think that a little gazebo with a roof in the middle would be a great thing, and then have plants in planters and minimal maintenance. This would give an outdoor space for the residents to sit outside—read, have tea—it should be quite easy to do. This is not a big space, so after the gazebo, a lot of these plants will have to go. You need to have small plants. The cleanest way is to do flower boxes; this will also take care of some of the cat problem in that the garden is easier to maintain, and the litter box is more appealing. Clean it up!
10. I recommend placing an outdoor shrine along the west wall of the carport. Shrines talk to shrines; that's why when you look at monastic grounds, they have a lot of shrines. Each building has a shrine because shrines talk to each other, so when we have an outdoor shrine here, this would link some of the practice energy together with the main space. Build it with a

door that can be opened; someone opens it in the morning and makes an offering; at sunset, someone closes it. A statue and offerings and would anchor this as a practitioner's space, not as an old motel. It would tie in together with the gazebo, and this space would become a contemplative garden.

The shrine would also link the two parts of the Center and make this space a practitioner's space. Not a place where people find themselves so they can have a room, but a place where sangha forms, where community living takes place.

(Someone asks about a fountain.) To do a fountain is a lot of maintenance and energy to take care of it. Are the people here up to doing it?

In the long run, it will inquire quite a bit more thinking about how to link the Nilotpala with the main space. A stairway linking the Pundarika and Nilotpala spaces would be major work. We are looking at 'quick and dirty' solutions. If you want to have a long-term plan for the next twenty to thirty years, I would be happy to work with you. Right now, we need to do something immediately.

It is really important that people have a place where they can actually be living a retreat-type of life, so that they don't have to interface with the public too much. There is a part of all our lineages that value reclusive living; it's very much a part of the practice. There are times when you need to go out to face the public; there are times when we need to shut in and have our own privacy and have our own practice.

Walkway by Pundarika to Nilotpala: Look at the bottleneck of plants in going from the main facility to the Nilotpala.

1. I recommend completely clearing this walkway; put the plants in the corner, but clear away the rest. Have the walkway clear.
2. I recommend cleaning up the overgrown plants by the garage courtyard entrance to the Pundarika.

The Pundarika courtyard. Sacred architecture is a very clean space; it does not have a lot of clutter because when the space is clutter, mind is clutter. If you have too much junk lying around, you are going to have too much junk in your mind. So by making it very dignified and hiding things that are not pretty, it would actually raise the level of the dignity of the practice.

1. I recommend cleaning it up.
2. Once it gets cleaned up, I recommend putting in a little shrine in the courtyard. *(Someone says that the Kanzeon by the gas meters was donated for the courtyard.)* Yes, it would become a shrine and have offerings.

The Pundarika Gas Meters. It looks ugly and rusting; they are an eyesore. When something is an eyesore, it actually brings down the energy and the dignity of the place.

1. I recommend building a low wooden fence in front of them. This is a very, very easy way to hide the meters.

The Sangha House

When people come to your Center, is this where they come? We need to do something about the greeting lounge because this is where a potential practitioner lands. [*Roshi's note: unfortunately, we forgot to revisit the Sangha House at the ending of the four-hour consultation. Roshi is contacting Eva for more on this.*]

The Kanzeon Garden

1. I recommend cleaning and tidying it up and trimming the plants, including those along the walkways.

Eva's Concluding Remarks. This is such a beautiful complex. You don't really find this kind of open gardens in the middle of a city. Your Founder found a very good space, and it can be uplifted even more. There is so much potential here. I would say that the main thing is to teach the people that what you are doing here is really for the benefit of all sentient beings. We always say that the view—The Three Jewels—is what moves us along.

Thank you.

BIOGRAPHY OF EVA WONG

Eva's brochure is attached as a separate file. The notes below are from an e-mail sent to Roshi Ekyoku in response to a question on what spiritual centers she has worked with. Her connection with Mipham Rinpoche began when she was invited to do a reading for one of the Shambhala Centers, after she did a consultation for Naropa Institute.

I helped out extensively with the Korean Zen Center in Boston for many years, as Seung San Nim was a good friend. Also the Tri-State Temple in Denver, the Paolin Monastery in Hong Kong, and many Chinese Zen temples in Taiwan. I am also involved in the restoration and rebuilding efforts of Chinese Buddhist and Taoist monasteries and temples in the PRC, and I sit on the UNESCO Advisory Group for the Preservation of East Asian Heritage Sites and Sacred Texts. Other than Zen temples, I also consult with Tibetan and Chinese Mahayana temples and monasteries over the last 20 years. I don't count any more - it must have been over a hundred.

Since I follow the hermit tradition of Xiantianwujimen Taoism and Longchen Nyintik Buddhism, I don't give public appearances. It is my friendship with Mipham Rinpoche that I have offered my qigong lineage to the Shambhala centers. I do not do public talks, interviews, and other public activity. Regrettably, I would not be able to schedule a talk at your practice center.

For more information about the traditional fengshui I do, please go to my website:
www.shambhala.com/fengshui.

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