

Ian Green – a background

Ian, along with his wife Judy, has been a Buddhist for over 35 years and a vegetarian for over 20 years.

Ian's connection to Buddhism began when he traveled to India in 1971. During his travels he saw how spirituality touched every part of Indian culture and by contrast how materialistic our Western society is. Towards the end of his Indian journey Ian visited the holy city of Varanasi on the Ganges. Seeking an escape from the noise and busy-ness he was attracted to a park which was situated nearby Varanasi. The moment he walked into that park he felt a tranquility and calmness he had not felt before. As he remembers it "I felt totally at peace...as if I had just come home after wandering for a very long time".

Standing in the centre of the park, Ian was confronted with by a great monolithic object. He could not work out if this was man-made or a natural phenomenon but as he says "It seemed to emanate an incredible power which nearly knocked me over." Ian was looking at the Great Stupa of Sarnath which marks the spot where the Buddha gave his first teaching. This park, which is known as Deer Park is one of the holiest pilgrimage places of Buddhism.

Ian purchased a book "What is Buddhism?" from the small shop at the park and on the plane home to Australia he read about Buddhist concepts such as karma and reincarnation. As Ian remembers it "I had the feeling that I knew all these things, even though I had not seen them written down before." Ian now accepts that in previous lifetimes he had exposure to Buddhism and that once he met with the right conditions in this life he had "no choice but to become a Buddhist."

Shortly after his return to Australia Ian had the good fortune to meet many Buddhist teachers including Nick Ribush, Geshe Loden, Zasep Tulku, Thubten Yeshe, Zopa Rinpoche and Ayya Khema. In 1979 Ian completed the month long course at Kopan Monastery, in Kathmandu (Nepal). Ian has continued his studies under many Buddhist masters to this day.

In 1980 Ian's father, Ed Green offered 50 acres of land to set up a Buddhist centre near Bendigo. This original 50 acres was later added to with a further land from Ian's mother and himself so that the Buddhist Centre in Bendigo is now 145 acres (60 hectares).

In March 1981, Ian along with his wife Judy and their three sons moved to Bendigo to set up Atisha Centre. At this time the only accommodation was old railway carriages with no electricity or running water. In August 1981, Thubten Yeshe laid out his master plan for Atisha Centre, the Monastery, an aged care facility, a lay community and as centerpiece to the plan, the Great Stupa. This blueprint was to set up a dharma city. Making this plan a reality has become Ian's lifework.

Ian is Chairman of the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion Ltd and Founder of the Jade Buddha for Universal peace.

He has received awards for:

- Meritorious Award for Excellence in multicultural affairs. Government of Victoria. 26 November 2009
- Special recognition honoring leadership in promoting peace. Phap Vuong Monastery, San Diego 7 February 2009

- Special recognition for efforts in promoting peace from Office of Assistant Chief of Police, San Diego 7 February 2009
- Outstanding contribution to World Peace and Tranquility from the International Buddhist meditation Association, Hawaii November 28 2010