

OPENING SPEECH BY IAN GREEN AT HOA NGHIEM PAGODA, ALDERGROVE, VANCOUVER CANADA AUGUST 8, 2010

NAM MO BON SU THICH CA MAU NI PHAT

Venerable Thich Nguyen Thao, Abbot of the Hoa Nghiem, Venerable Sangha, Honoured guests, Brothers and Sisters. It is truly a great pleasure for my wife Judy and I and for our tour manager My Linh Nguyen to be here at Hoa Nghiem Pagoda.

In the year 2000 a massive boulder of Jade was discovered in the far North of British Columbia. It was 18 tonnes of gem quality jade and nothing like it had ever been found before. It was called "the find of the millennium" and it was given the name "Polar Pride".

In early 2003 I came to a place only 20 minutes from here to see Polar Pride and to meet the President of the mining company Mr Kirk Makepeace. I am very pleased to welcome Kirk's wife, Eileen and his Office Manager, Kim here today.

I then spoke to my master, Lama Zopa Rinpoche about the jade boulder and that night he had a vision that this boulder would become a Buddha that would change the world. The next day he told me "You must turn this jade gem into a Buddha as a holy object to offer to the world."

It took another 5 years of great effort by my wife and I as well as thousands of people around the world who offered their time and money to create the world's largest gem-quality Jade Buddha.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche named the Buddha "The Jade Buddha for Universal Peace". He said "It will illuminate the world and bring inconceivable peace and happiness and help prevent the destruction that is happening so much in the world, including war." Rinpoche said if you leave the Buddha in one place, then only a few can see it - but if take the Buddha around the world then billions of beings can receive its blessing of peace and harmony.

Our aim is that this world tour will inspire everyone who sees the Jade Buddha to find peace in their home, their schools, their work and most importantly peace in their heart and mind.

The world tour began in March 2009 in Danang in Vietnam. We chose Vietnam as the first showing because it was our way of thanking the thousands of Vietnamese Australians who have been so kind and helpful to us.

After Vietnam the Jade Buddha travelled to Australia. And now it has begun its tour of USA and Canada which will go on until May 2011. In the first year of its world tour over 4.5 million people have paid homage to the Jade Buddha.

After North America the Jade Buddha travels to Germany, England, France, before returning to Asia.

When the tour is eventually complete in 5 or 6 years the Jade Buddha will come to its final home at the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion that we are building in Bendigo, Australia.

Our thanks once again to Venerable Thich Nguyen Thao and members of Hoa Nghiem Pagoda.

May the Buddhadharma flourish. May peace break out around the world.

NAM MO HOAN HY TANG BO TAT, MA HA TAT