

OPENING SPEECH BY IAN GREEN AT PARIS 2011

NAMO SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

NAM MO BON SU THICH CA MAU NI PHAT

Respect to *Hoa Thuong* Thich Giac Hue, Venerable Sangha from all traditions, Honoured guests, Brothers and Sisters.

It is a great pleasure for my wife and I (as well as our son Cody and his wife) to be here with you today at the opening ceremony of the Jade Buddha and holy relics showing in Paris.

The Jade Buddha has taken us all on a remarkable journey which began in the year 2000 when a massive boulder of Jade was discovered in the far North of Canada. It was 18 tonnes of gem quality jade and nothing like it had ever been found before. It was described as “the find of the millennium” and it was given the name “Polar Pride”.

In early 2003 I flew to Vancouver to view Polar Pride. I then spoke to my master, Lama Zopa Rinpoche and that night he had a vision that this boulder would become a Buddha that would change the world. The next day Rinpoche 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 you take the Buddha around the world then billions of beings can receive its blessing of peace and harmony.

After being carved in Northern Thailand, the world tour began in March 2009 in Danang in Vietnam. From Vietnam the Jade Buddha has travelled to Australia, Canada, USA, Germany, Norway and Sweden. And so far 5 million people have seen the Jade Buddha.

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

As many of you will know the Jade Buddha was recently involved in a shocking road accident in Germany when the container crashed on its side at 85 kph. But as you can see today the Jade Buddha has been fully restored. This experience with the Jade Buddha should help us all remember that even with all the suffering in the world and in our own lives we too can be restored to our natural state of peace and harmony.

When the tour is eventually over in 4 or 5 years the Jade Buddha will come to its final home at the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion that we are building in Bendigo, Australia.

We know that it is not possible to achieve such a magnificent event as we have here without the contribution and cooperation of hundreds of people. We congratulate *Hoa Thuong* Thich Giac Hue, and the Minh Dang Quang Mediation centre and everyone involved.

Our prayer is that the lasting legacy of the Jade Buddha for Universal Peace tour of Paris will be to inspire everyone to find a peaceful resolution to their differences so that they can work in peace to benefit all.

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

NAM MO HOAN HY TANG BO TAT, MA HA TAT