

OPENING SPEECH BY IAN AND JUDY GREEN AT THE PEACE HALL, SAN JOSE SEPT. 18 2010

NAM MO BON SU THICH CA MAU NI PHAT

Venerable Sangha, Honoured guests, Brothers and Sisters. It is truly a great pleasure for my wife Judy and I and for our team to be here at the magnificent Peace Hall in San Jose.

In the year 2000 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 called "the find of the millennium" and it was given the name "Polar Pride".

In early 2003 I received a call from an American by the name of Cheyenne Sun Hill. Cheyenne explained he was a Buddhist and a jade jeweller and he was searching the world for someone to make a Buddha from Polar Pride.

It is now my great pleasure to introduce to you, Mr Cheyenne Sun Hill. Here in San Jose is the first time Cheyenne and I have seen each other since 2003 and the first time he will see the Jade Buddha for Universal Peace.

After Cheyenne and I saw 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 take the Buddha around the world then billions of beings can receive its blessing of peace and harmony.

The world tour began in March 2009 in Danang in Vietnam. From Vietnam the Jade Buddha travelled to Australia and Canada and it will continue touring USA until May 2011.

So far around 4 and a quarter million people have come to pay homage to the Jade Buddha.

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

When the tour is eventually over 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 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.

Much has been said in the media about the disharmony amongst the Vietnamese American community in San Jose. Our experience since coming to San Jose has been quite different. Nowhere else in the world has there been a street parade like the one we had on Wednesday. And nowhere else in the world has any community taken on such an ambitious project of converting a massive factory into a magnificent Peace Hall. It is not possible to achieve these things without the contribution and cooperation of thousands of people and a multitude of different organisations.

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

JUDY

We cannot end this without some words of gratitude to Su Co Tien Lien. My husband and I are full of admiration for the boldness of her vision as well as the calmness and grace with which she has responded to the difficulties that have arisen.

JUDY AND IAN

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

NAM MO HOAN HY TANG BO TAT, MA HA TAT