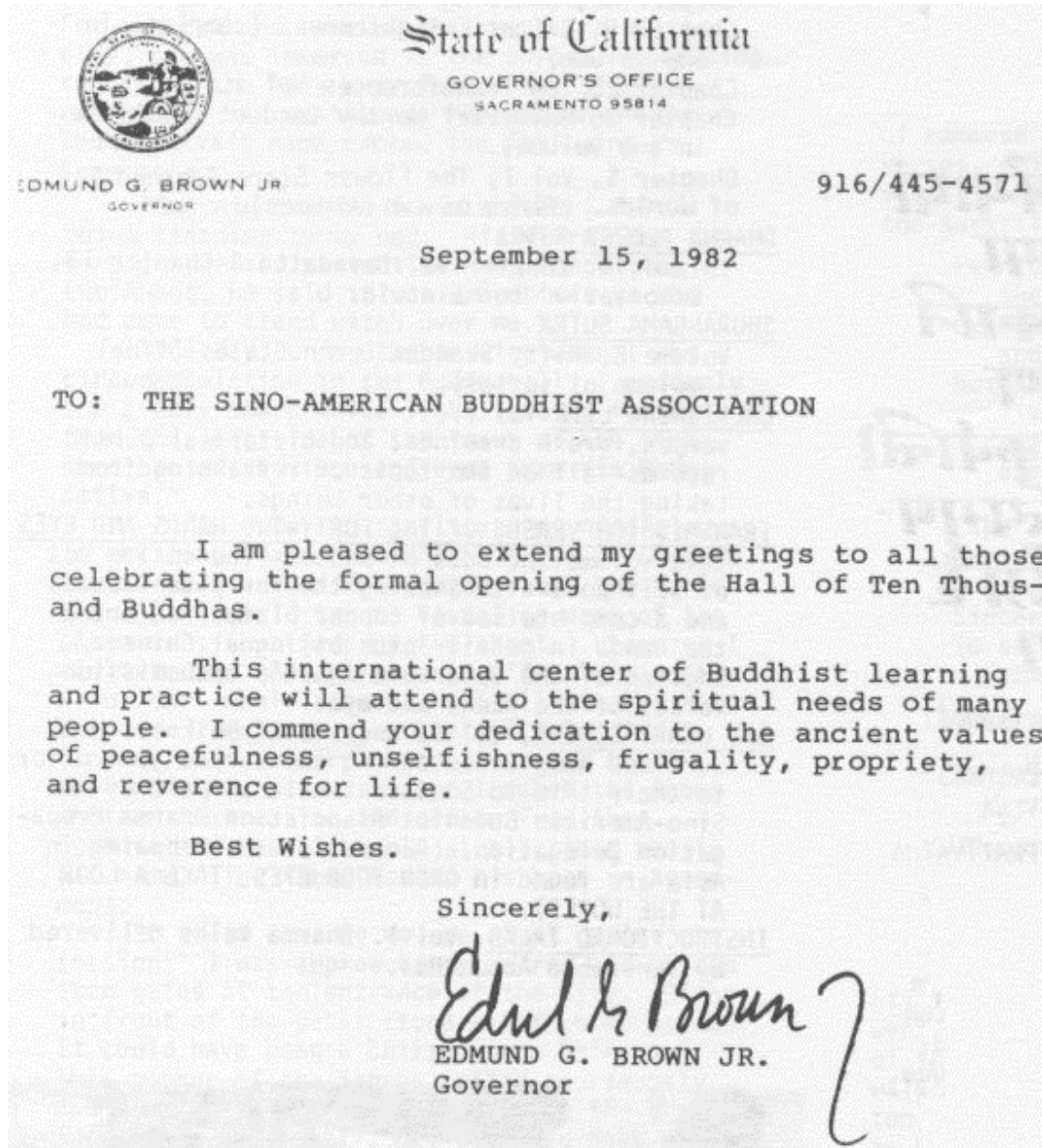


News From The Dharma Realm



PURIFYING THE SITE OF THE JEWELLED HALL OF GREAT HEROES

The Jeweled Hall of Great Heroes, now in its initial planning stages, will cover an area of over 60,000 square feet when completed. This will probably render it the largest Buddha Hall in the world.

Before a throng of over 2000 believers from overseas and all parts of the States, the Venerable Abbot gave the following speech during the purifying ceremonies:

"America is a leader among all the world's countries and therefore it should do things on a grand scale that matches its status as a world-leading nation. History has shown us that whenever Buddhism is transmitted to a country where its orthodox principles are put into practice, the country invariably flourishes and experiences major growth and well-being. Wars end, allies unite, resources abound, and the people become prosperous and at peace. Take for example the Han Dynasty (first century B.C. to second century A.D.) and the T'ang Dynasty (seventh to ninth centuries A.D.) in China. During those times Buddhist thrived and was greatly respected by the emperors and those in all echelons of society. Correspondingly, the country experienced a Golden Age and flowering of its culture in those periods. In both cases, Buddhism eventually declined. Why did it? It was because by and by people no longer brought forth their true hearts. They resorted instead to seeking small advantages and looking for cheap bargains within Buddhism. They lost their faith and as a result, Buddhism slowly declined. Along with the decline of the religion came a decline in the country's fate.

"Now Buddhism has arrived in America. This event is the prelude of a major awakening, a turn for the better, for the entire nation. However, in a super country we should have a super Way-Place that is of international scale. It should be large enough to accommodate all believers from all countries of the world. The Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is a Way-Place which overlooks all discriminations as to nationality, race, or creed. Not only Buddhists, but practitioners of other religions as well, are welcome to come here and investigate true principle with us. The only condition is that they respect and follow the pure rules of the City.

"The British historian Arnold Toynbee said, 'When we look back on the events that transpired in the Twentieth Century, we will discover that surpassing the significance of the invention of the atom bomb, and the effects of various major wars, as well as all else that transpired in that period, will be the significance of the arrival of Buddhism to the West. That particular event will be considered the single most important event of that entire period.' Those are very meaningful words. Everyone should ponder them well and take them to heart."

OPENING THE LIGHT OF THE TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS



Tathagata Monastery Abbot and Bhikshus shown in the solemn ceremony of purifying the boundaries at the site of the proposed JEWELLED HALL OF GREAT HEROES during opening festivities in November.

After five years of hard work and preparation, the completion of the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas stands as awesome testimony of the pious prayers of Buddhists the world over. While offering their supplication for peace and an end to all nuclear weaponry and expressing their hopes for a new spiritual awakening for humankind, people the world over have reverently invited ten thousand Buddhas to reside in the hall. Now, ten thousand Buddha statues do indeed line the four walls of the Hall. The Hall is further adorned with streamers, banners, lamps, and a new altar, and graced in the center by the presence of an eighteen-foot high statue of the Thousand-Handed, Thousand-Eyed Kuan Yin Bodhisattva. The ten thousand Buddhas have been sponsored by Buddhist disciples the world over who by thus inviting the Buddhas to the Hall have expressed their abiding faith in the importance of Buddhism to the future of world peace.

On the day of the Opening of Light Ceremony, and during the week's events surrounding this auspicious occasion, the Buddha Hall became the center of all worship and devotional activities. The congregation recited Kuan Yin (Avalokiteshvara) Bodhisattva's

name non-stop, paying homage to the Bodhisattva of Compassion in the age-old tradition of calling on his name. The energy surrounding the Sagely City was vibrant--charged with invigorating light and happiness. So sincere were the worshippers, that during the course of the week's recitation of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's name, numerous responses were reported. Some saw light streaming from the statue's face and crown, some saw the ten thousand Buddhas come to rub them on the tops of their heads, some saw the magnificent white-robed Bodhisattva pour sweet dew over them. Some saw the regalia of heavenly dragons, patrolling spirits, and celestial maidens strewing flowers and hoisting jeweled canopies, emitting precious lights, and constantly sending down a fragrant rain of adornments over all the participants. So highly do all the Buddhas and Sages honor the Proper Dharma that it is no wonder the Sagely City is a pivotal point in the cosmos, because the Wheel of Proper Dharma turns without cease. It would be hard to find any other place where a group of people practice and propagate the Dharma with such dedication, vigor, purity, and identical hearts and aspirations.

At the beginning of the Opening the Light Ceremony the Venerable Abbot intoned a verse of dedication:

Ten thousand Buddhas arrive;
 ten thousand nations prosper.
Ten thousand bright rays—
 lamps of ten thousand affinities.
Ten thousand multitudes establish
 the Hall of Ten Thousand Jewels.
Ten thousand things as you wish,
 ten thousand deeds accomplished.

The Venerable Abbot then invited the Buddhas of the ten directions to come and reside in the Hall of Ten Thousand Buddhas and to invest the 10,000 statues with the light of their compassion and wisdom. The great assembly repeated the Venerable Abbot's invocation after him. As the ceremony proceeded with the recitation of auspicious mantras, the participants felt the hall fill with light and an auspicious energy prevailed which confirmed their faith that the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Patriarchs, and Dharma Protectors have indeed come to the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas to certify it as a holy place where the Dharma of Shakyamuni Buddha is cultivated purely and diligently as it was in ancient times.

The Sagely City is the seat of miraculous cures and auspicious happenings too many to relate. Although the praise of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva says, "Prayers depart from a thousand places; in a thousand places he answers," and, truly, the Bodhisattva's Dharmabody does abide throughout all universes and the entirety of empty space, nonetheless, the Sagely City is the Way place of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva and the habitat of all Sages and Worthies. Hence the miraculous responses that occur are just part and parcel of the daily life here. With blessings and wisdom full, the air within the Sagely City is noticeably different from the air outside. It is a generator of righteous energy and

an endless storehouse of Dharma treasures that promises to recharge the spark in all living beings' hearts and to help them rediscover their inherent Buddha Nature.

OPENING FIVE CONTEMPLATIONS DINING HALL

In order to accommodate the large multitudes who would attend the Opening Ceremonies at the Sagely City, residents had busily constructed a massive Vegetarian Hall for the occasion. During the Opening, the doors of this brand new dining hall were flung open to receive 2000 guests. The hall is an elegant A-shaped building, lined with ultra-modern aluminum panels and fitted with more than sixty sky-lights overhead. Large picture--windows in front provide a spectacular view out onto a vista of undulating meadows and groves--the proposed site of the Pond for Liberating the Living, which will be constructed in the near future. The ample lighting and magnificent view add to the cheerful and serene atmosphere of this hall where cultivators share the pure food of the Triple Jewel and transfer the merit of the offerings to the donors' well-being. All residents and guests maintain total silence while taking their meals, in accord with the Buddha's regulations. And yet, during the noon meal, although all eat in silent contemplation, the sounds of the Dharma flow forth like a never-ending spring. On the day of the opening, various Dharma Masters gave talks on the Dharma, infusing devotees with transcendental bliss. The following is an excerpt from the Venerable Abbot's talk during lunch:

"The food at the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas has always been plain and simple and there is virtually no service to speak of. The chairs are hard, not plush, and the decor isn't fancy. Nonetheless, the Dharma you hear is the most proper, the most true, and the most sincere. He have 'feasts of the Dharma' at our City and if all of you pay attention to what you hear and apply it to your lives, then the benefit you will reap will be boundless. In that way, what you encountered during your sojourn to the Jeweled Mountain will not have been in vain--you will not go away empty-handed.

"The pure rules of the Sagely City of Ten Thousand Buddhas are the rules that are basic to being a decent human being. The very least you can do in making yourself a true human being is to follow these rules. They are also the rules upheld and venerated by all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. Therefore, if you are a tiger, you have to crouch; if you are a dragon, you have to coil up; if you are a gangster, you have to throw away your weapons at the gate; if you are a pickpocket, you have to chop off your hand that steals. If you are a blabber-mouth, you have to cut out your tongue. Now what do I mean by these words? I mean that whoever comes to the City must, without exception, follow the rules. A lot of you allow yourselves to go wild and do whatever you please outside. Well, that's fine because nobody told you any different. But when you enter the grounds of this Sagely City, it's ABSOLUTELY not permissible for you to slight the regulations or to make trouble. You can't be casual or sloppy in the least bit. Each of you should respect your own divine natures and not be the dregs of humanity or be rotten seeds within Buddhism.

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