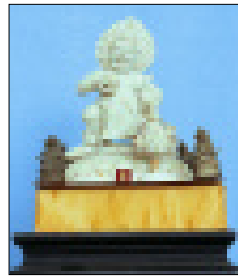


The road to enlightenment is under construction



Six years after groundbreaking, a Buddhist devotee continues building a monument to faith and peace

Photographer • Judith Calson
Editor • Eugene Louie

Winter came early this year in the Colorado Rockies, much too early for a Buddhist devotee who is helping build a towering white and gold religious retreat that he hopes will last for at least a thousand years. Part craftsman and part fund-raiser, Joshua Mulder labors five months each year to complete the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya, a sanctuary intended for meditation and contemplation. Mulder has helped build two other stupas in the Far West, but this is his first attempt as a member of a construction committee. When the 100-foot-tall building is finished — Mulder simply smiles when asked for a completion date — the stupa at the Rocky Mountain Dharma Center will be the tallest structure in Larimer County.

Mulder, 41, helps manage volunteers who are paid token wages of \$3 per day, and he directs the artistic details. Some 35 statues, several murals and a huge investment in gold leaf are to be added when the rough construction is finished in two years, he said.

For the last six summers, Mulder has focused his life on the stupa. Born in Illinois to a Presbyterian family, he became a Buddhist at age 18 and moved to Boulder in 1970. He speaks little about his past, and is modest about his leadership role at the stupa. His faith, and his commitment to the stupa, are a result of his relentless search for inner peace and his enduring debt to the

Venerable Chögyam Trungpa, a Buddhist leader revered by followers worldwide.

"I always found confusion painful," Mulder said. "I just want to do something properly and fully to completion. It's a sign of respect and appreciation"

Labouring in a three-room workshop, Mulder uses rubber, fiberglass and wood to make moulds for the concrete which will cover the exterior. He also builds architectural models that are to be auctioned at an annual summertime fundraiser. The models, which depict small portions of the finished stupa, are sold at a gathering of 300 to 400 donors. "Columns cost \$1,200," he said. "We raise what we need in the year that we need it." So far, the Buddhists have raised \$600,000, and an estimated \$1.5 million more will be needed in coming years.

Robert King, a retired contractor, and Joe Caragonna, a mathematician, team up with Mulder to form the core of a crew that sometimes numbers as many as 23 or as few as three. Recruiting new workers is an ongoing task. "We put the word out, but mostly people just show up," Mulder said on a recent snowy day. "We're losing two people tomorrow."

Mulder, who is divorced, invites his 13-year-old daughter to the site, but he said she mainly rides horses and enjoys the mountains. Completion of the stupa remains his individual goal, and this year's six-inch September snowfall became just another obstacle to overcome.

Said the unbowed Mulder: "There's a lot of problems, and we're just trying to build it. For me, it's good that we've gotten this far."



Above, Joshua Mulder performs a traditional bow as he walks away from the site of the incomplete Buddhist stupa. In his workshop, left, Mulder constructs a mold for an architectural casting. He also makes miniature models, top, to be sold at an annual fundraising party.

Each day, Buddhist volunteers meditate for an hour after breakfast, below.



Technical Data

INPUT
• Nikon F4, 8008s

SCANNING
HARDWARE
• Scitex Smart Plus PS

PAGE PRODUCTION
• Quark Publishing System
(QPS) 1.01

IMAGE PRODUCTION
SOFTWARE
• Adobe Photoshop 2.5.1

COMPUTER
PLATFORM
• Apple Macintosh

IMAGE MANAGEMENT
ARCHIVING
• Mead Data PhotoView
• AP Leaf Preserver,
level 2 software

PRINTER/PROOFER
• Iris 4012 Smartjet

OUTPUT
• Scitex Dolev 400 PS