

# Exhibition of Buddhist Relics Celebrates Peace

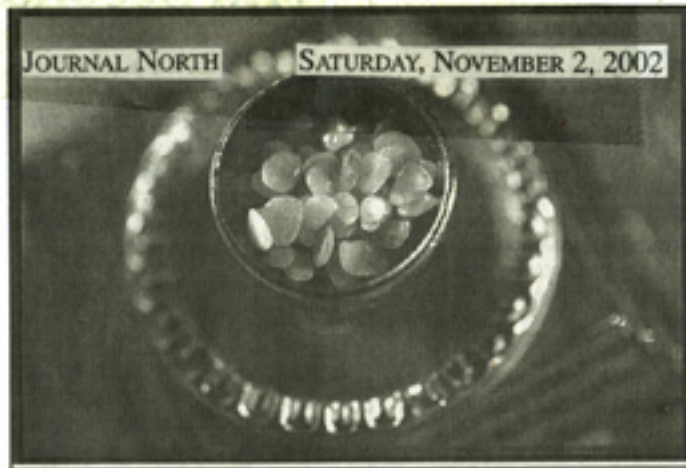
BY EMILY VAN CLEVE

For the Journal

Victoria Ewart and Fleur Chyta are weary but enthusiastic travelers who have been touring the world since May 2001 with a collection of rare Buddhist relics. Ewart and Chyta are the custodians of the collection, which will be on display at Tropic of Capricorn 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

Most of the several-thousand-year-old items are in the form of small, crystalline, pearl-like deposits called ringsel. These deposits appear within the cremated ashes of Buddhist masters who have attained extraordinary spiritual realizations during their lifetimes. The collection also includes bone fragments.

A few of the relics on display are of Shakyamuni



**ANCIENT PIECES:** A collection of rare Buddhist relics are being taken on a world tour as part of the Maitreya Project, which is a five-year endeavor to build a 500-foot bronze image of Maitreya, the future Buddha, in Bodhgaya, India.

Buddha and his closest disciples, Tibet's beloved Yogi Milarepa and His Holiness the

Kharmapa. They are stored in beautiful containers made in the shape of a stupa, or

temple. Some of the relics were salvaged from statues in Tibet, while others were donated by museums and monasteries. The Dalai Lama also donated relics from his personal collection.

"Every ringsel contains compassion and universal wisdom from the consciousness of the teachers," Ewart said. "Our journeys have taken us throughout Asia and the western part of the United States. People of all faiths and cultural traditions have seen the relics. Relics of such rarity bring forth the innate wisdom and compassion in all of those fortunate enough to encounter them. We invite Buddhists and non-Buddhists to view these special relics and participate in our celebration of peace."

In addition to sponsoring a viewing period 1-4 p.m. that includes refreshments and

## If you go

**WHAT:** Heart Shrine Relic Tour

**WHEN:** 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday

**WHERE:** Tropic of Capricorn, 86 Old Las Vegas Highway

**HOW MUCH:** Free, but donations accepted

live music, Ewart and Chyta will talk about the relics and guide short healing meditation sessions.

Geshe Tashi Gyaltzen leads blessing ceremonies before and after the viewing and a closing ceremony following the viewing. The blessing ceremony is for anyone who would like to be blessed by a golden stupa containing the relics of Shakyamuni Buddha.

There is no charge to attend, but donations are welcome.

The world relic tour is part of the Maitreya Project, which is a five-year endeavor led by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to build a 500-foot bronze image of Maitreya, the future Buddha, in Bodhgaya, India. These sacred relics eventually will be placed inside the heart chakra of the Buddha. The statue will be hollow and contain shrine rooms for meditation. The Buddha statue is intended to serve as a beacon for humankind and to inspire love and peace throughout the world.

The Maitreya Project needs to raise \$200 million to complete the statue and has a long way to go to accomplish that goal, Ewart said. The relics will be taken to communities on the East Coast during 2003.