

Health Minister and Master open Temple

Victoria's new Minister for Health, the Hon. Daniel Andrews, MP and Master Ru Sun of the Yu Yang Temple in Narre Warren, officially opened the new temple in the Song He Yuan Asian burial grounds at Springvale Botanical Cemetery on Sunday 19 August 2007.

The Master has guided development within the Song He over the past eight years.

The colourful opening featured Buddhist monks and included a presentation of religious relics to Trust Chairman Laurie Ogilvie and a traditional blessing ceremony.

The religious relics are to be placed under a temple roof ridge tile. That traditional placement enhances the spiritual protection for over 2,000 ancestral tablets displayed within the temple.

The Di Zhang Wang Temple was built by Chinese artisans using traditional materials. It provides a permanent home for the Di Zhang Wang Buddha, a place for ancestral worship and a focal point for the local community.

The Chief Executive of Springvale Botanical Cemetery, Mr Russ Allison, said the cemetery's board of management was delighted to be able to provide the local community with a traditional temple facility, the first of its kind in an Australian cemetery.



Di Zhang Wang Temple within the Song He Yuan burial grounds at Springvale Botanical Cemetery



In the afternoon Master Ru Sun conducted the third annual Hungry Ghost Ceremony. This is a key annual event for Buddhists who celebrate ghosts being allowed out from heaven for the seventh month of the lunar year.

Members of the Buddhist community offer prayers, chants and food and burn incense to satisfy the ghosts and attract good fortune. As part of the ceremony, token memorabilia including papier mache houses,

Below: Starting early
Below left: Offerings of Gold were burned
Bottom of page: Di Zhang Wang



paper cars, paper clothing and other offerings were burned.

Families also visit graves, clean monuments and offer prayers during this period.

Springvale is the only cemetery in Australia to celebrate the Hungry Ghost Festival in this way, allowing participants to repay their debt of gratitude to departed relatives and ancestors and helping to resolve any animosity between enemies, as well as improve karma and fortune. ■



Contributed by Russ Allison CEO, The Necropolis Springvale

before Hungry Ghost Festival



Master Ru Sun



Presentation of relics



Incantations



Transferring merits



Blessing



The Hon. Daniel Andrews, Minister for Health, The Master Ru Sun and Chairman Laurie Ogilvie at the opening