

## Buddhists give Amsterdam 20 security cameras

By Edward Munger Jr.



Amsterdam Mayor Ann Thane, center, gives a Lunar Hibiscus to Lucas Wang, left, known by his followers as Holy Master Ziguang Shang Shi, leader of the Chinese Buddhist World Peace and Health Organization. Thane made the offering in City Hall Thursday after the group donated 20 security cameras police will be installing throughout the city.

**AMSTERDAM** – Crime fighters will be getting a boost in Amsterdam with the installation of 20 security cameras bestowed on the city Thursday by the Chinese Buddhist World Peace and Health Organization.

City officials gathered at City Hall with Buddhist representatives and Amsterdam pediatrician Dr. Govind Rao, the leader of a cross-cultural committee working to build bridges between the city and its immigrant population.

During remarks at a brief ceremony, Rao recounted his experience with the Buddhists and said he finds them well-educated and well-mannered.

Rao said their purchase of roughly \$1.5 million worth of city property with the goal of beautifying the city was an ambitious and difficult one. But the Buddhists have suffered numerous losses at the properties they want to fix up, including thefts of copper and priceless statues.

The incidents left many of the new community feeling uncomfortable about crime, Rao said, which led to the idea of giving the city surveillance cameras.

In addition to investigating burglaries, Rao said the city has been working to assist the Buddhists with ideas on how to secure their properties and he suggested the Buddhists reciprocate.

“The Buddhist community must also do something for the city,” he said.

Rao said during a visit to Hong Kong, he noticed there are surveillance cameras on nearly every corner, and he believes there’s little crime in that urban environment.

As it turned out, the World Peace and Health Organization already had a contact in the surveillance camera business: Sky Deng, the owner of the LYD Technology company, which specializes in wireless digital camera kits and other gear.

Deng provided a full setup of 20 cameras with wireless technology, eliminating the need for hard wiring.

Though the cameras have to be installed on utility poles and get power hooked up to them, it won’t cost city taxpayers anything. Rao said he will donate that cost, roughly \$6,000.

In response, Mayor Ann Thane on Thursday presented Buddhist Holy Master Lucas Wang, known as Ziguang Shang Shi by his followers, with a bird feeder and some bird food. The birds will represent people flocking to the Buddhists to learn their healthy form of yoga.

Thane also gave Wang a lunar hibiscus plant, which she said will represent growth year after year.

Police Chief Gregory Culick said the Buddhists have pursued their own anti-crime effort by installing several surveillance cameras around their properties.

Wang, speaking through interpreter and spokeswoman Jennie Wong, expressed gratitude to city officials.

He urged city residents to join in on the effort to reduce crime in Amsterdam by getting involved and helping police.

Wang said it's important for residents unfamiliar with the Buddhist group to recognize they are in Amsterdam to do good.

"We have no other intention, we just want to better this place," he said through the interpreter.