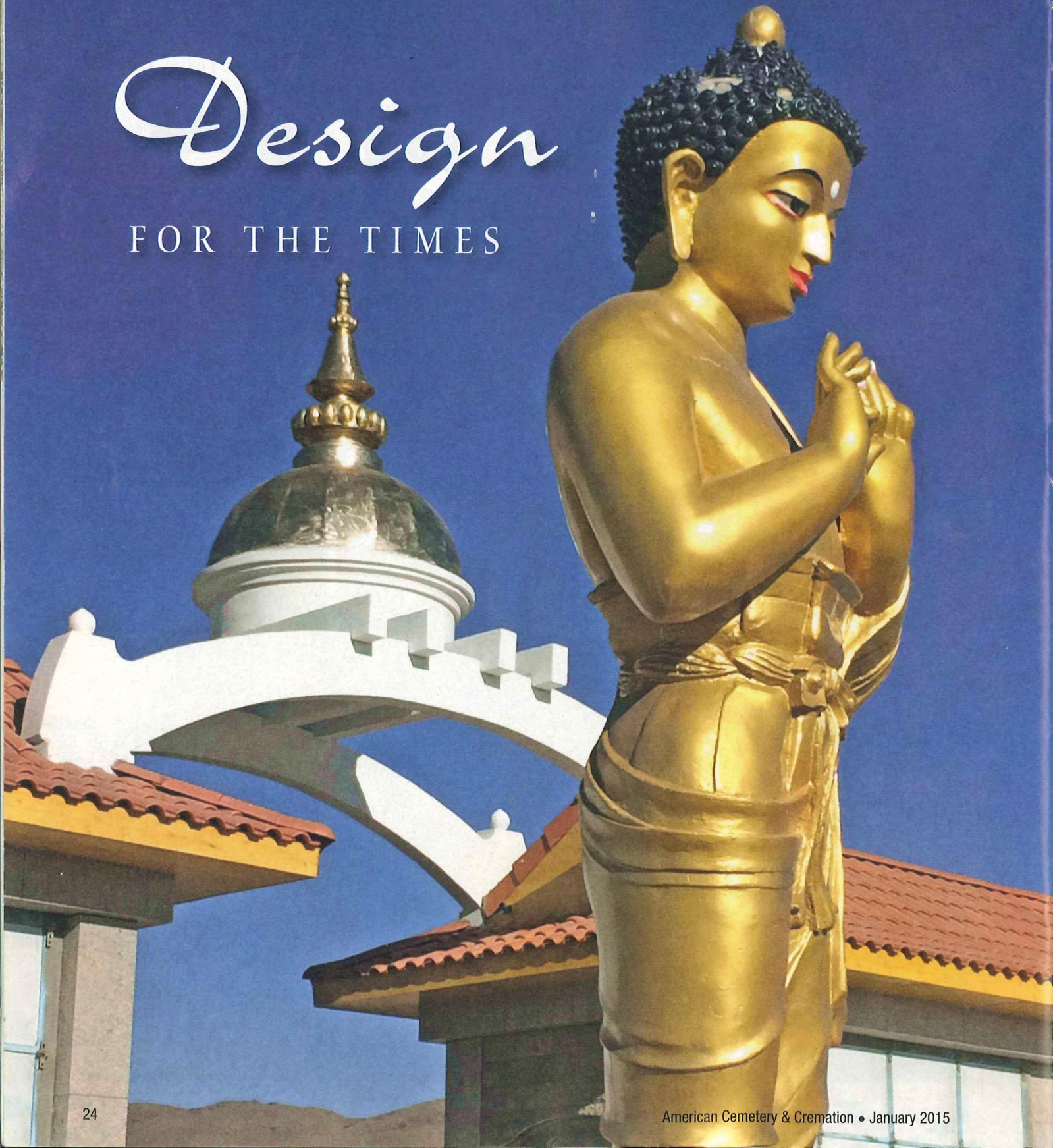


© Design

By Patti Martin Bartsche

# Design

FOR THE TIMES





**I**t wasn't that long ago that mausoleum buildings were designed strictly for function. But as families' preferences are changing, mausoleums and columbaria are taking on a new design aesthetic. Whether large or small, these structures are integrating beautifully into cemetery landscapes.

## **NEW CEMETERY LLC** **Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia**

In the midst of the plains just outside of the city of Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, a few solitary structures mark the rising of a new cemetery; aptly named New Cemetery LLC. Among those stands a unique building that aspires to set the tone for future development and choice.

Milne Construction Co.'s new mausoleum in Ulaanbaatar is the first community mausoleum in Mongolia.

It follows a line of firsts within a rapidly changing local cemetery industry, Milne officials point out. Just 10 years ago cremation was introduced; now, about 40 percent of Ulaanbaatar residents choose cremation. Similarly, pioneer humanitarian Idermaa Garavsuren introduced ground burial just two decades ago to a country known for its sky burial traditions. These prior steps were important developments that opened up new memorialization choices.

Designed and built by J.C. Milne Construction Co. (Canada) Inc., the community mausoleum is comprised of two cores containing 100 casket spaces and 140 niche spaces. The design draws upon elements from local monasteries, the new entry gate and new funeral home in order to contribute toward a harmonious cemetery design.

Symbolism, commonly found throughout architecture in Mongolia, is also present in the form and filigree of this building. The spanning archway with cupola not only acts as an identifying feature, but it also honors the end-of-life rite of passage. Adding to this theme, the Dharmachakra

Buddha – a symbol of the samsara – reminds visitors that death is but a stage in the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Lastly, in homage to tradition, the crypt walls and slabs have been painted blue and green respectively to represent the traditional nomadic funeral practice of sky burials.

Building in Mongolia was a big step that Milne was excited to take,

according to Ryan Byrne, architectural designer for Milne Construction Co. For Milne project supervisor Richard Marble and foreman Mark Ortiz, it was an opportunity to immerse themselves in another culture while constructing a distinct mausoleum. "It is an experience I won't soon forget," Marble said.



**Above: Ulaanbaatar is home to the first community mausoleum in Mongolia. Below: New Cemetery LLC was designed and built by J.C. Milne Construction Co. Inc.**

