



The Mystical Arts of Tibet

by the Tibetan Monks from Drepung Loseling Monastery

for World
Healing

Mandala Sand Painting

Introduction

Mandala is a Sanskrit word meaning sacred cosmogram. In Tibetan, the art is called *dul-tson-kyil-khor*, which translates to “mandala of colored powders.” As with the sand painting tradition as a whole, mandalas have their roots in the Tantric legacy of Buddhist India, extending back some 2,500 years.



What are they?

Mandalas are used as tools for reconsecrating the earth and healing its inhabitants. They are formed of geometric shapes and ancient spiritual symbols.

How are they made?

To construct the mandala, millions of grains of sand are painstakingly laid into place on a flat platform over a period of days or weeks by the use of long, narrow tools called *chak-purs*. In general, it takes four monks working a combined 125 hours to complete a 5' mandala.

Why are they created?

Mandalas are created for the healing of living beings and the environment. They are also created as a meditation tool to become one with the universe. This week, the monk artists will create a colorful mandala sand painting as a meditative practice on world healing and as a symbol for the impermanence of life.

What do they represent?

Each mandala is created for a specific purpose whether it's for compassion, healing, wisdom, etc. In general they represent a guiding principle for wholeness and are believed to affect purification and healing.

What happens when they are complete?

When finished, the mandala is deconstructed to symbolize the impermanence of all that exists, and the colored sands are swept up and poured into a nearby river or stream where the waters carry the healing energies throughout the world.