

Mandala Construction Process

1. Opening Ceremony

The monks begin by consecrating the site of the mandala Sand painting with approximately 30 minutes of chants, music and mantra recitation. This event is visually and acoustically striking, and the media should be invited to attend.

Items needed for the Opening Ceremony:

- Mandala Base: 5'x5' plywood, 3/4" thick and painted dark blue
- table for Altar , standard height, minimum length of 3feet
- 2 bouquets of flowers
- pitcher with water
- 7 pieces of fruit: apples and/or oranges
- 1 lb. of uncooked rice
- 9 pillows and 1 comfortable chair

2. Drawing of the Lines

After the Opening Ceremony the monks start drawing the line design for the mandala. This is very exacting work that takes about three hours to complete. It would be nice if refreshments such as soft drinks, hot milk tea, or juice was available for the monks throughout the mandala construction.

3. Mandala Construction

The monks will pour millions of grains of sand over a period of 4 to 5 days, using traditional metal funnels, called chak-pur. The finished Mandala is approximately 5 feet in diameter

4. Mandala Completion

The monks conclude their creation of the mandala with its consecration. In some cities, many guests have attended the closing ceremony. It is very colorful and should be considered a media event.

5. Dismantling the Mandala

During the Closing Ceremony, the monks dismantle the mandala, sweeping up the colored sands to symbolize the impermanence of all that exists. Half of the sand may be distributed to the audience in small bags as blessings for personal health and healing.

Items needed for the Closing Ceremony:

- bowl(s) and spoon(s) to distribute the sand
- small zip lock bags or small envelopes for sand distribution
- 2 bouquets of flowers
- 7 pieces of fruit: apples and/or oranges

6. Dispersal of the sand

The monks, along with spectators, travel to a body of water. The sand is then ceremonially poured into the water in order to spread the healing energies of the mandala throughout the world.