A Mandala represents simultaneously, an inner landscape and physical realm, within which every element of experience is unified, balanced and complete. In Tibetan tradition it is considered a great blessing to see a mandala, as it conveys a deep impression of wholeness, bringing about healing and peace.

Each element of the color particle sand mandala has precise symbolic meaning. The structures portrayed are the structures of human consciousness. The surrounding circle represents dynamic awareness. The square symbolizes the four directions, the physical world. At each side of the square, a gate is constructed: these represent the four immeasurables: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity; through these practices one enters the sacred ground.

The center point of a mandala is the essence of an archetypal energy: this specific mandala, represents Avalokitesvara, the archetypal energy of compassion. Compassion is described within Tibetan art as intensity, symmetry and grace. Avalokitesvara is represented symbolically through the Sanscrit letters, "om mani pad me hum", the jewel within the lotus—may the mind be within the heart.

The sacred circle of the mandala revitalizes our dreams of the sacred nature of Earth itself, and reminds us that the sacred ground is ultimately found here and now, within the core of our existence.

May I be a servant when there is a need to serve others.
May I become a bridge and ship when there is a need for crossing.
May I become food, drink, medicine, doctor and nurse when there is famine and disease.
May I become the source of life, like the earth and other elements, and serve all these infinite beings until they go beyond conditions and suffering and find lasting freedom and happiness. — Shantideva

The Mandala is one of the highest forms of Tibetan art.
Circles of Interconnection

...I knew that in finding the mandala as an expression of the self I had attained what was for me the ultimate.

– C. G. Jung

The concept of the mandala has, in the twentieth century, found a wide range of correspondences. Carl Jung found the mandala exists within most world cultures.

In Jungian psychology, the mandala represents an inner wholeness which we all seek to restore: the inherent deep connection of all aspects of body, mind and spirit—and the connectedness of all things to each other.

Within a mandala, the interrelationship of all elements is clearly visible; the center of the circle and the edges are brought into symmetry. One’s inner life, in the same way, is always related to all phenomena and the international world. Contemplation and action can be seen to be in dynamic interplay, inseparable from each other.

For these nuns, taking vows is a personal, contemplative decision with clear political resonances, an expression of Tibetan cultural identity at a time when Tibetan spiritual and cultural identity are politically suppressed; monks and nuns are imprisoned for possessing a picture of the Dalai Lama, and other peaceful expressions of religious conscience.

Tuesday, March 15, 4:00 p.m.
Ceremony for the dismantling of the Avalokitesvara sand mandala

Upon completion of the sand mandala, it is dismantled and the sand is offered back to the earth in a symbolic recognition of impermanence. The public is invited to participate in this, and all accompanying events.