

News Release

Wongdue Sangbo Gurung, a Buddhist Monk from Nepal, to Create Sand Mandala on visit to U of M, Crookston in April

By Itollefs on Monday, March 26, 2012



The creation and destruction of a sand mandala will bring an ancient Tibetan Buddhist tradition to the University of Minnesota, Crookston in April. Wongdue Sangbo Gurung (at left), a Buddhist monk from Nepal, will spend several days in the creation of the mandala leading up to the final dinner in the International Dinner Series on Wednesday, April 11, 2012. The opening ceremony will be held on Wednesday, April 4 at 11 a.m. in the Prairie Room, Sargeant Student Center. This ceremony will also provide an opportunity for discussion with Gurung. The campus and the community are welcome to visit often to view the work in progress. The closing ceremony will follow the final International Dinner on Wednesday, April 11.



The sand mandala, involves the creation of an elaborate geometric design using colored sand and working from the design's center to the outer edges. The sand is applied until the desired pattern is achieved in intricate detail. When completed, the mandala is much more than a work of art and reflects the deeply held Buddhist belief in the fleeting nature of the material world. The destruction of the sand mandala is also ceremonial and materials used in its creation are released back into nature and never used more than once.

Sand Mandalas are part of the ancient Tibetan Buddhism tradition. Sand mandalas are always set up to look like a palace with four gates pointed in the four directions. In the center of the mandala is the greater being, making it a three dimensional picture. The message of the sand mandala is that all living beings want to be happy and for that they need inner peace. On April 4, 2012, Wongdu Sangbo Gurung invites people to rid themselves of all the negative feelings and to discover inner peace.



Wongdue Sangbo Gurung is an uncle to Yangchen Gurung, a senior business management major at the U of M, Crookston. He was the former principal of the monastic school in Lo-manthang, the capital of the small Tibet-buddhist kingdom of Mustang, which now belongs to Nepal. The school was built in 1994 to try to keep their identity and their Tibetan culture alive. There are some 70 young monks above the age of 8 attending the school. Gurung is currently pursuing education in Tibetan Buddhism in International Buddhist Academy (IBA) in Kathmandu, Nepal. He has traveled to Germany, Switzerland, and Thailand to demonstrate sand mandala paintings.



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In the photos:

Top, left: Wongdue Sangbo Gurung

Top, right: Completed sand mandala

Middle, right: Gurung works on a sand mandala.

Bottom, left: Gurung and his fellow teachers and the students at the monastic school in Mustang, Nepal.

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