



Chart of the Elements in a Kalachakra Sand Mandala



The multicoloured Kalachakra Mandala, made entirely from coloured sand, was painstakingly created over three weeks by monks from the Namgyal Monastery in Dharamsala, India. In a lesson about the impermanence of life, the completed mandala was destroyed and the sands were used as an offering for world peace.

'Kalachakra' means 'Wheel of Time' and is the name of one of the Buddhist deities which represent particular aspects of the Enlightened Mind. It forms a part of a system of teachings and practice conferred by the Buddha to his disciples. Traditionally this Kalachakra Initiation has been a closely guarded secret and the viewing of the mandala forms the culmination of a twelve day initiation ritual for the Buddhist practitioners. However, the Dalai Lama, recognizing the many misconceptions surrounding Tibetan Buddhist practice, began presentations of the Kalachakra Sand Mandala to the general public as a cultural offering.

Practitioners use the Mandala to visualize in meditation the steps along the Path to Enlightenment. In the Kalachakra Mandala, 722 deities, or manifestations of the supreme deity Kalachakra, are portrayed within a circle of some 2 metres in diameter in the form of miniature human, animal and flora forms, abstract pictographs and Sanskrit syllables. The sand is made from white stones ground and mixed with opaque water colors.

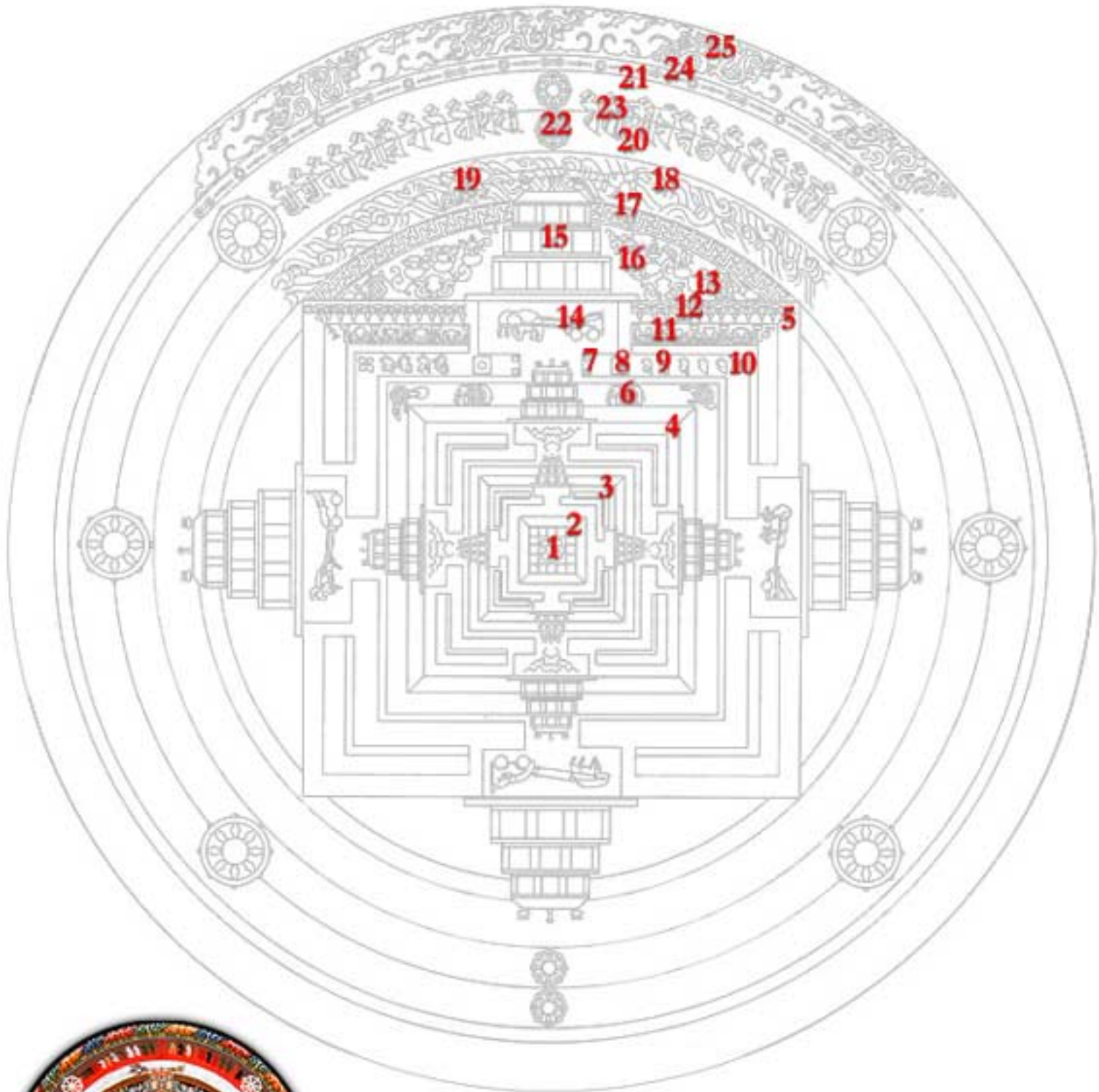


Chart of the Elements in a Kalachakra Sand Mandala

1. Mandala of Great Bliss with a lotus flower center housing six deities including Kalachakra and Vishvamata, Askshobhya and Prajnaparamita, Vajrasattva and Vajradhatvishvari surrounded by eight shaktis
2. Mandala of Enlightened Wisdom
3. Mandala of Enlightened Mind
4. Mandala of Enlightened Speech
5. Mandala of Enlightened Body

6. Animals representing the months of the year
7. Half vajras with half-moons, each adorned with a red jewel
8. Geometric shapes symbolizing the six elements, which are the five physical elements (fire, water, earth, air, space) plus the wisdom element (consciousness)
9. Thirty-six offering goddesses represented by Sanskrit seed-syllables
10. Double vajras which correspond to each of the four directions
11. Hanging garlands and half-garlands of white pearls surrounding the eight auspicious signs
12. Downspouts, which release rainwater from the palace roof
13. Half-lotus petal design symbolizing protection from afflictive emotion
14. Seven animals pulling a chariot that holds two protective deities; seven elephants are here in the western quadrant
15. Western gate of the Mandala of Enlightened Body
16. Offering garden
17. Earth element circle filled with interlocking crosses representing earth's stability
18. Water element circle containing wavelike ripples
19. Senge Kangpa Gyepa, an eight-legged lion pulling a cart containing two wrathful protective deities
- 20-21. This whole area is known as the cemetery grounds and is composed of the fire element circle (20) and the wind element circle(21)
22. Wheel of Dharma with a pair of protective deities in the center
23. Sanskrit seed-syllables
24. Space element circle containing an interlocking fence of golden vajras
25. Wisdom element circle, also known as the Great Protective Circle