

# TOUR PROGRAM

Gomang US tour group 2010.

## Cultural pageant:

Experience ancient Tibetan cultural rituals of dance such as black hat dance, yak dance, snow lion dance, Panda dance, Good luck dance and sacred chants, prayers and debate as authentic Tibetan traditions comes to life as follows.



## Sand Mandala: 5 or 6 day construction

The Mandala purifies the creator from past negative deeds and that viewers will recover from physical sickness and mental problems. Mandalas are also believed to generate compassion in the viewer's heart and lay a foundation of constrictive karmic imprints. Also, the nation and the place where the Mandala is created will have timely rainfall, prosperity and peace.



The Drepung Gomang monks are renowned for the Sacred Art of Sand Mandala Construction. The event includes opening ceremonies, informal conversation and socializing as the mandala is created and formal closing ceremonies. Closing ceremonies include prayers, chanting, deconstruction of the mandala and sharing the blessed sand. Monks will construct following Sand Mandalas:

- ***Amitayus Sand Mandala (Tsepek Mae)***  
*Buddha of long life and compassion, love and peace.*
- ***Medicine Buddha Sand Mandala (Menlha)***  
*The manifestation of the healing energy of all enlightened beings*
- ***Green Tara Sand Mandala (Dol jang)***  
*Female Buddha that grants protection and relief from sufferings, generates compassion, love and peace.*

## Teachings

The tour group is led by Geshe Lharampa Lobsang Dhondup, a monk who has achieved the equivalent of a PhD. Geshe-la is available to give talks on the main tenets of Buddhist philosophy and is happy to answer your questions about the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. His teachings will be given in Tibetan and translated into English by a translator.

Some of the teachings that can be arranged are:

- ***Introduction to Buddhism***
- ***Basic meditation practice***
- ***The Four Noble Truths***
- ***Karma***
- ***Impermanence***
- ***Elements of traditional Lamrim Practice***
- ***Lojong (Mind Training)***
- ***Twelve interdependence link.***

## Pujas/Prayer offerings

*Puja* is a Sanskrit word that means “offering.” The monks chant prayers and perform rituals specific to the type of prayer being offered. Prayers are addressed to Buddha’s, bodhisattvas and deities. Their primary purpose is to overcome negativities that may be obstacles in obtaining release from suffering and to promote spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical well-being.



Prayers may be for a house blessing, wellness, for the souls of those who have left this world, (including animals), the clearing of karma, purification of local negative energy, world peace, individual or global healing, financial security, spiritual evolution, the development of wisdom, and the removal of obstacles.

The prayers are recited in the traditional overtone chanting, each monk singing a full chord of three notes. The prayers are often accompanied by delicate hand gestures, cymbals, drums, horns and flutes.

Sample Pujas:

- *World Peace and Healing Puja*
- *Removal of Negativities and Obstacles*
- *Purification*
- *Tara and Guru Puja*
- *House or Business Blessing*
- *Tea or Fire Puja*
- *House /business /factory blessing.*
- *Shrine room/ Buddha statue or idol blessing or purification puja*

## Workshop

The Drepung Gomang Tour will present workshops on a variety of topics related to traditional Tibetan art.

All workshops will include a short talk/explanation of the tradition of the various crafts as well as a short demonstration. The monks will facilitate full "hands on" participation by the public. They will supply photo step-by-step displays of how to do each craft and, in addition, clear sample drawings laminated for each workshop.

We foresee groups of 5 to 15--larger than that would be difficult to manage.

The following are the workshops currently planned:

- ***BUTTER SCULPTURE***
- ***COLORING TIBETAN DESIGN***
- ***SAND PAINTING***
- ***MANI STONE***

## **Butter Sculpture**

This will be a two-hour workshop.

For children: a simple version of the Losar traditional butter sculptures on wooden plaques. Designs for adults--adapted for various levels of ability--include

- flowers (several styles)
- conch
- jewels
- animals



A **longer workshop** with a higher level of complexity will also include the Four Friends and the Eight Auspicious Symbols (*Tashi Dargye*).

Materials Required (unless indicated, participants bring their own materials)

roll of waste paper

scotch tape

form cardboard or thin plywood for the cutouts

patterns for cutouts (supplied by tour)

play doh (mixed colors)

carving tools (supplied by tour)

***Butter sculpture** is an ancient Tibetan Buddhist art. Although it is not as well known as another Tibetan ritual art, the sand mandala it is still an important aspect of Tibetan Buddhism in its own right. Butter sculptures symbolize impermanence, (a main tenet of Buddhism,) along with more ritualistic components, and are usually destroyed in anywhere from a day to a few years. They are traditionally made with yak butter, but in exiled Tibetan communities, as the weather is usually warmer, it is made with ghee, fat, and*

wax. Butter sculptures are displayed on altars and shrines in monasteries or family homes. They are traditionally made every Losar, the Tibetan New Year, and for the Butter Sculpture Festival, part of the Great Prayer Festival, or "Monlam Chenmo" that is held soon after Losar. In it, monks made huge, story high butter sculptures displayed outside the Jokhang in Lhasa, the holiest temple in Tibetan Buddhism.



#### Butter Sculptures at Monlam Festival

Butter sculptures are displayed in many different ways; typically, they are made on a paddle, as free standing sculptures, or a decoration on tsampa cones called tormas. They are usually made in the form of flowers, "metog," or traditional symbols such as the 8 auspicious signs.

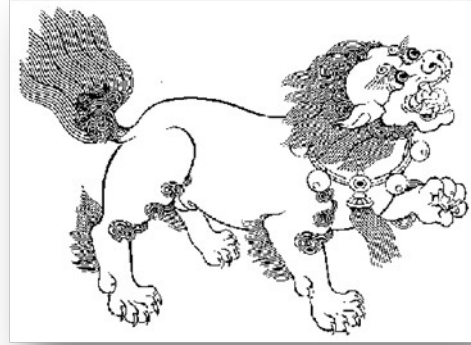


*Monk Making a Butter Sculpture*

*Butter Sculptures Made by Gomang Monks*

## Coloring Tibetan Designs

This **one-hour workshop** is designed with small children in mind. The monks will provide prepared drawings of Tibetan designs, such as the Eight Auspicious Symbols, snow lions and yaks. All that is required is that the children bring their own crayons.



## Sand Painting

This is a **two-hour workshop** and includes teaching how to create the following designs using the same techniques as monks use in creating a Sacred Sand Mandala:

- Eight Auspicious Symbols (*Tashi Dargye*)
- yaks
- windhorses
- snow lions
- stylized fire patterns



All of the designs will be pre-drawn so visitors can draw the sand following the lines.

Materials Required (participants will bring their own supplies)

small pillows

two thin steel tubes (about 1-foot long and a half inch in diameter)

thin plywood "slates"

colored sand (available in crafts stores)

***Sand painting** is an ancient Tibetan art form. The Sacred Sand Mandala is carefully constructed from dyed sand particles to represent the particular esoteric, textual traditions of Buddhism. It is a transient art form, thought to have originated in India and been transferred in the middle ages to Tibet. The sand*

*mandala is constructed as vehicle to generate compassion, realize the impermanence of reality, and a social/cosmic healing of the environment.*

*Millions of grains of colored sand are painstakingly laid into place on a flat platform over a period of several days, forming an intricate diagram of the enlightened mind and the ideal world. The most common substance used in the creation of dul-tson-kyil-khor is colored sand, which is ground from stone. Other popular substances are powdered flowers, herbs or grains. In ancient times, powdered precious and semi-precious gems were also used. Thus, lapis lazuli would be used for the blues, rubies for the reds, and so forth. When finished, to symbolize the impermanence of all that exists, the colored sands are swept up and poured into a nearby river or stream where the waters carry the healing energies throughout the world.*

## **Mani Stones**



*The prayer stones (called “mani stones”) of Drepung Gomang Monastery. The stones are painted with the prayer “Om mani padme hum,” a prayer asking for the qualities of wisdom, compassion, and a good heart. The monks will teach you how to create images on flat stones and decorate them with sacred mantras.*