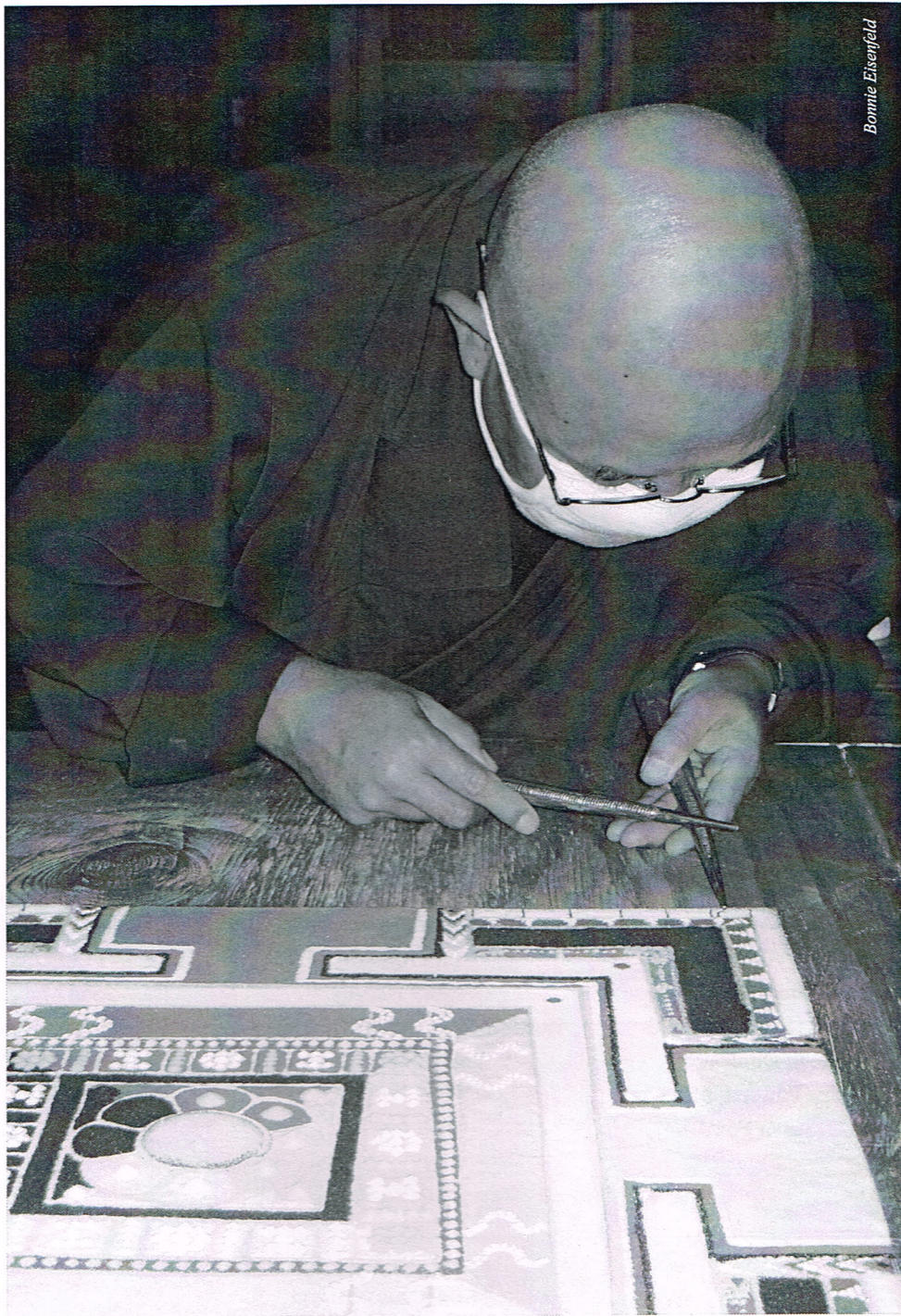


# Ancient Sand Painting Recreated at Trinity Center for Urban Life

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Mandala is the Sanskrit word for circle. It is a ritual art form that originated in India 2,500 years ago and has been practiced in Tibet since 600 A.D. Lama Losang Samten is the first Tibetan monk selected by the Dalai Lama to create the Kalachakra for World Peace Sand Mandala in this country. He recreated it at Trinity Center for Urban Life, 2212 Spruce Street, where it was on display from October 15 to 19. Composed of tiny grains of colored sand, the mandala is elaborately designed—every symbol and color has a specific meaning. Losang, internationally known for his skill, is one of only a few artists trained in the sacred art of building the Kalachakra mandala, the most advanced mandala. Traditionally created once a year to bring peace to the world, it is dismantled upon completion as a reminder of impermanence and change.

The Venerable Losang Samten escaped from Tibet to India, where he entered the Namgyal Monastery and was trained in sand mandala painting. Monks are selected for their artistic skills and are required to memorize 500 pages of sacred text. Losang was one of only four of the 28 monks in his class to finish the three-year course, and he is now one of an estimated 30 people in the world qualified to teach and demonstrate this spiritual art form. He holds a Master's Degree in Philosophy and Debate, is a scholar in Sutra and Tantra, was the monastery's ritual dance master and served as personal attendant for the Dalai Lama. Losang came to Philadelphia in 1989 and founded The Tibetan Buddhist Center, where he is Spiritual Director and conducts classes. In 2002 he received a National Endowment of the Arts Heritage Fellowship Lifetime Honor Award, and in 2004 he was awarded a Pew Fellowship in the Arts. He is delightfully kind, patient and understanding and remembers the faces of people he has met before.



Bonnie Eisenfeld

Venerable Losang Samten, a Tibetan monk, created the Kalachakra for World Peace Sand Mandala at Trinity Center for Urban Life.



## CCRA Members and Friends: Remember These Dates

- December 12, Quality Education Town Hall Meeting
- December 16, Sacred Spaces Open House
- February 10, Chili Challenge