

Gyuto Monks Hold Court

The Supreme Court in Darwin came alive with colour and music as hundreds of people enjoyed the recent visit of seven monks from the Gyuto Tantric University in India who were visiting as part of the Festival of Darwin.

Over ten days the monks created an intricate mandala from memory out of grains of ground marble brought from India. The sand Mandala of Yamantaka features Yama, Protector of Life and Conqueror of Death. The richly coloured design has not changed for over 500 years.

"The monks create the environment wherever they go - whether its the desert, the snow, parliament house or anywhere else," said Maureen Fallon, organiser of the monk's visit.

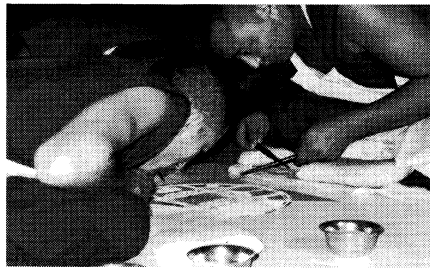
"All sorts of people come and see the monks: the sick and well, young and old, conservative, professional and from all different backgrounds."

"The monks create a calm and pleasant environment - so that visitors experience kindness and compassion," she said. This environment, as well as the beautiful altar decorating the Court, was enjoyed by many members of the legal profession, as well as staff of the Supreme Court and the general public.

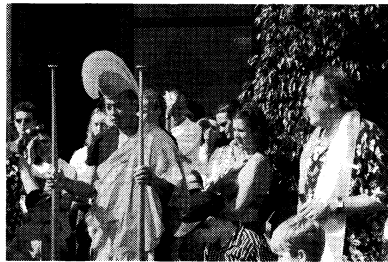
Practitioners were not the only people to enjoy the monk's visit: a week of children activities were also held, with children from primary schools all around Darwin enjoying craft lessons and teachings from the monks. Since their first visit to Australia in 1994, the monks have given workshops to over 100,000 children.

Seven hundred people packed the foyer of the Court to capacity to listen to the 'Sounds of Global Harmony' concert, filling the halls of the Supreme Court with the monks' powerful and fascinating harmonies.

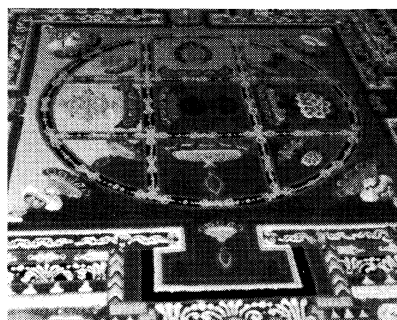
The Supreme Court was again filled with hundreds of visitors on the last day of the monk's visit, when the mandala was swept away and returned to earth via the fountain at Parliament House as a symbol of the impermanence of all things.



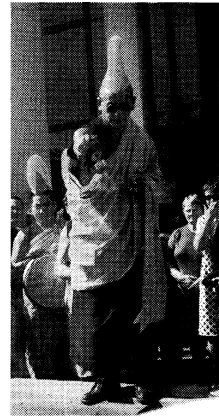
A labour of love: two of the monks working on the intricate mandala.



Tom Pauling, Solicitor General, right, was among the leaders of the parade in the final dissolution ceremony.



The Yamantaka mandala features Yama, Protector of Life and Conqueror of Death. The richly coloured design has not changed for over 500 years, and is recreated from memory.



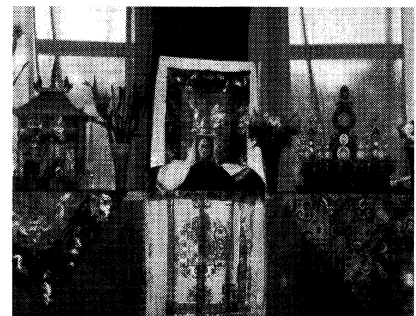
Gyuto Khensur Rinpoche Lobsang Tenzin, pouring the sands of the mandala into the fountain at parliament House.



The monks gave Culture for Kids workshops to hundreds of Darwin school children.



Chairman of the Darwin Festival, Peter McQueen, viewing the mandala. "It is good to see the Supreme Court being used from time to time for the benefit of the community," said Mr McQueen.



The beautiful altar in the Supreme Court was visited daily by scores of people.