

Art, psychology and religious practices



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Art, Psychology, and Religious Practices The Mandala in Tibetan Buddhism is a tool used to guide individuals on the path to the deities, who are housed in the middle of the Mandala. It is " a symbol of man or woman in the world, a support for the meditating person (Hansen)." The Mandala is primarily made of sand and allows individuals to become enlightened to the messages of the deities and to develop enlightened minds. The Mandala is used to gain wisdom and compassion - it is one of the most important tools in Buddhism in this sense, as Buddhism teaches compassion and serenity. Other uses for the Mandala, especially for those that are constructed out of sand, are to promote healing and purification.

In Catholicism, the Gregorian Chants are often used during Mass and other important ritual services. The Chants are some of the oldest notes of music used in religious settings, coming down from the medieval era. In the earlier days, the song was sung as often as nine times a day, though this has changed remarkably with the times. The purpose of the Gregorian Chants is to heighten the spiritual senses of the practitioners, as well as to aid them in becoming closer with their deity. The Chants allow the practitioners to calm down and to focus solely on gaining that closeness with the deity.

Dancing in the Oshun Festival of the Yoruba people is more to celebrate their festival than it is to feel more connected to their deities, though dancing does serve both purposes. " Oshun-Lyalode, the Yoruba water spirit of love, marriage and gold is one of the Orixhas that form the famous seven African powers (Jemi-Alade)." As the Oshun Festival celebrates this water spirit of love and marriage, the dancing is more to honor her and the festivities than any other purpose. The dancing allows the practitioners to free their minds and their stresses, letting them to fully engage themselves in the

celebrations and be open to the events that are taking place.

One thing that the majority of religions and spiritual paths have in common is that they each have some method to connect themselves more with their deities, whether it be dancing, chanting, or something for them to merely look at and involve themselves in, such as the Mandala with the Buddhists. Each method has a means for the followers to feel closer to their deities, thus becoming closer to being enlightened.

Works Cited

Hansen, Jytte. "Mandala." 2003. Online. Available <http://www.jyh.dk/indengl.htm>.

Jemi-Alade, Ladi. "Nigeria: Festivals." Online. Available http://www.africa-ata.org/nigeria_3.htm.