



# Mandala and Landscape

*Alexander W. MacDonald*

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Since the publication in English of the Theory and Practice of Mandala by Giuseppe Tucci in 1961, our knowledge of the subject has increased considerably. Two-dimensional paintings (Tibetan: thanka, Skt.: paubha) have been displayed in many art exhibitions, reproduced photographically, and analysed in readable books as well as in articles in specialised journals. Three-dimensional mandalas like, for instance, the Barabadur in Java recently renovated by UNESCO, have been visited by many thousands of tourists as well as pilgrims.

In America, Europe and Asia, monks have made and unmade numerous sand-mandalas openly, in public. Mandalas are, indeed, much less secret than they used to be. Yet, up to now, mandalas have largely been studied outside the context of their use: in museums, in exhibitions and in libraries.

This volume highlights, perhaps for the first time, the techniques whereby mandala-schemes are projected in thought, belief and action, on to widely differing natural landscapes. Putting together the research findings of a group of Buddhist scholars from America, Austria, England, France, Germany and New Zealand, Professor Macdonald tries to underscore the linkages between mandalas and landscapes in varying eco-systems between Afghanistan and Japan with special focus on their geographical contexts and socio-cultural traditions.

Each of the ten studies, included here, is supported by relevant illustrative material and extensive bibliographical references. Embodied in Mandala and Landscape are the research results from field-work carried out in China, Nepal, Pakistan, Japan and Tibet. It is, as such, invaluable to scholars of Buddhist Studies, specially the researchers involved with the mandalas in South Asia and elsewhere.

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