

# Prajwal Guruji's Visit to HK, Japan Meaningful

US Dance Mandal, HK Dance Mandal Join Forces to Further Promote Charya Dance

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Portland, Aug 9, Prajwal was in Hong Kong for a two-week visit from July 26 - August 8, 2023. US Dance Mandal and Hong Kong Dance Mandal joined forces in disseminating the value of Newar Buddhism and publicizing charya dances in Hong Kong. Prajwal Guruji's Hong Kong visit was marked

by strengthening connection and reuniting with students.

An introduction and demonstration of Newar Buddhist Charya Nritya dances was organized on Friday, July 28, 2023 by the Alumni Association of Master of Arts Program in Religious Studies - Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK AAMARS).

On the occasion Dr Tina Ho gave a presentation and





introduction for all Charya dances taught and performed.

She said: "Charya nritya dances are performed by Newar Buddhist priests known as Vajracharyas as part of their esoteric meditation, practices and rituals."

"Charya dance is a meditational dance that tells stories of the inner qualities and awakening of Buddhist deities."

Sangha members from the Hong Kong Dance Mandal offered refuge prayer and sixteen offering Goddess dance.

Likewise, Avalokiteshvara and Prajnaparamita charya dances were presented by the Sangha, and Prajwal performed Vajrasattva charya dance on the occasion.

The program of the demonstration of Charya nritya dances was organized at Kuan Yin Progress Society that belongs to Western Temple in Hong Kong.



Likewise, an empowerment (Dikchha) and teaching on deity Padmanateshvara was given at Utpala Meditation Center in Hong Kong. The empowerment was given for new and senior students to connect with a deeper way of practicing and



understand the meaning of visualizing ones self as the deity.

Gurumandala Puja was done, teaching the practice of purifying the body, speech and mind. This Gurumandala puja is very commonly used for any life rituals in Newar Buddhist traditions. In this practice you become Vajrasattva. To become Vajrasattva there is an elaborate process to create, and enter into the mandala. This is a thousand year old ritual carried on by Vajracharyas as carried on to the present day.

The Gurumandala is so important that without it there is no Mahayana, no Vajrayana in Nepal. The workshop on Gurumandala Puja.

In a Mudra Yoga workshop, Avalokiteshvara Sadhana was performed in Hong Kong by the Sangha members on Aug 1, 2023 to mark the Gun Punhi Full Moon Day. A foundational Vajra Dance classes including refuge prayer, 16 offering Goddess.

Avalokiteshvara sloka, offering praise and becoming the embodiment unconditional love and compassion. Generating the Ten Paramitas within the body.



Aug 5 was the birthday of Dr Tina Ho, the leader of Hong Kong Dance Mandal. Prajwal performed Nine Planets puja ritual, purifying any blockages in life. This purification ritual is performed with nine different grains, nine different minerals, representing spiritual medicine to clear the path. This ritual is renewed every year on ones birthday.



Aug 5 is also Avalokiteshvara Day according to Chinese Lunar Calendar. To mark the Avalokiteshvara Day, a Charya Nritya dance of "Thousand Year Vajra Dances on Avalokiteshvara Night" at Nada Sound Healing Center, Hong Kong.

The event, dedicated to Avalokiteshvara Day, kicked off with Avalokiteshvara Vajra dance by Dr Tina Ho, while White Tara Vajra dance was presented by Dr Eliza My Lau. Tara dance was performed by Eliza Lau, Shira Chan, Patty Chan, Mary Lau while Vajrasattva was offered by Eleanor Li. Little later, Prajwal and Dr Tina Ho danced together the lovely and respectful Amoghasiddhi and Arya Tara. Kerry Ho and Sin Yin Leung performed 'Manjushree'. Padmanateshvara was demonstrated by Ling Ling Lee, and Kurukulla was put on the stage by Saldon



Wu. The event came to an end with Mahakala which was displayed by Prajwal.

Prajwal gave an advanced teaching on Saraswoti, the goddess of the arts and wealth, softening the mind through music. She is white in color, representing the water element, blending into any elements of life. While playing music, she heals and transforms suffering. She rides a swan, extracting good qualities from any circumstances, as a swan picks nutrients from mud and dirt. Generating wisdom for those who practice Saraswoti, manifesting wisdom in the body, as she is considered a consort of Manjushree.

Prajwal visited Tsz Shan Monastery and Big Avalokiteshvara, Zhen Bao Museum and Dharmasthiti Group, Western Temple and Big Buddha.

Below are statements from the students expressing inspiration and gratitude for the teacher:

Dr. Eliza MY Lau: Being with Prajwal in person, (as some of our members here only meet him for the first time) they were impressed by the practice and teaching of Prajwal. They found him very kind and friendly





to everybody, and that he merged in our circle very well, giving guidance in a loving and non-intrusive way. Many students get his inspiration in a very natural way! All of us feel that Prajwal is a very special teacher and spiritual guide!

Eliza also learnt how to let go since she felt a bit attachment when she left us to Nepal before the classes finished.

Patty: Happy to meet our Great teacher Prajwal, find he is very kind and like our father. Naturally , to treat him like father ♥

Moona: I'm glad to be able to gather with practitioners, sharing our experiences and joys together. I understand that everyone has different lifestyles and opinions, and they bring different perspectives. However, we are united as one, and through these gatherings, I have learned to better empathize with others' feelings. Gatherings also allow us to support and encourage each other.

Dickon: Through Charya Nritya practice, I feel that I can connect with the Buddhist painting more easily. And Guru Mandala and the 16 offers dance are very useful to purify myself and smoothen my spiritual path.

Eleanor: So greatful being able to learn directly from Prajwal for these days, we are so lucky and the teachings are so valuable.

Especially for the Guru Mandala, the instructions are so clear and we just need to follow every steps , be familiar with the steps, I m confidence that I ll continue to practice, benefit myself and others.

John: John felt goose bumps when he saw your Mahakala dance and very touching on Padmasambhava and Kurukulla dances.

Mary: It is a great honor to receive the empowerment of the Padmanateshvara. I am so lucky to learn the Guru Mandala purification rituals, and dance with the Saraswati goddess vajra dance. The Sadhana is very practical and I will practice more in the future.

Eliza Lok Yee: I feel that the teacher is very compassionate and teaches us with all his heart. I am very happy with the teacher, but it feels good to dance with the teacher. The teacher becomes a Bodhisattva when he puts on the crown. It feels so blessed. Together with the teacher I am so happy to dance Green Tara, I feel like I am Tara, I hope the teacher will come to Hong Kong to teach us next year.

Kerry: He felt he is now in the moment to know without thinking the steps and motions. He is more connect with Refuge Prayer and 16 Offerings. Also, through learning Guru Mandala puja and getting empowerment, he is more confidence. Dancing is not just forms but he felt he needs to be brewing, precipitation and deepening.





Sin Ying: During the time that Guruji Prajwal came to Hong Kong, I feel so lucky that I'd learned and experienced lots of things.

Such as dance Avalokitesvara sloka while surrounding Avalokitesvara in Tsz Shan Monetary, dance in front of the Buddhist relics, and study the ideology and tradition of Nepal Newar Buddhism through a Nepal priest directly. So grateful to have those rare opportunities, thank you so much!

Also, Prajwal treated us like friends and family. Feel comfortable even my English is poor, looking forward to meet Prajwal again.

Saldon: She felt so inspired by how fresh with lively energy of Prajwal and she felt to overcome some blocks and felt more easy and clear in mind when she received the empowerment. Now she is practicing continuously.

Shira: Excited to be involved in organizing this event. The 1st time to be moved and admired uncountably when experiencing Guru Prajwal's offering dances. So as to gain a deeper understanding of the Vajra Dance and the Newar Buddhist heritage. Throughout the time of studying and





getting along with the teacher, I felt great pleasure as well as to be one of the sangha.

Dr. Tina Ho: I felt so lucky to be with this wonderful sangha group. They worked so smart to prepare and to get along with Prajwal. I got a wonderful moment that I felt something experienced but it is not real, it is emptiness. No grasping but just open and embrace everything from the bottom of the heart. I am happy to be the protector of Prajwal, too.

## Teachings and Performances During Pilgrimage Tour of Japan



Prajwal visited Japan from Aug 10 to 29, 2023. Leader of Dance Madal Japan, Yuko Okomoto, a Japanese nun, coordinated Prajwal's visit to Japan. Yuko studied at Tribhuvan University, and is fluent in Nepali.

Prajwal visited many monasteries and sacred sites in Japan to teach and perform. The first program was organized at Wakasa Historical Museum, Fukui on Saturday, Aug 12,



2023. There was an exhibition of Vajra Dhatu and Dharma Dhatu Mandala at the museum. Speaking on the occasion, Prajwal said: "Vajra Dhatu is a metaphysical space inhabited by 53 deities including Pancha Buddhas -- Vairochana, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi, Akshovya, Ratnasambhava, 16

Mahabodhisattvas, 16 Bhadrakalpa Bodhisattvas, 8 Offering Goddesses and 8 Dvarpalas."

"According to Newar Vajrayana Buddhism, the whole universe is moving and revolving around Vajradhatu's fundamental principles."

Prajwal gave a talk on the deep connection between Japanese and Newar Buddhism. Especially the practices of Vajradhatu and Dharmadhatu, and the correlating Viharas and Stupas from the valleys of Nepal.

Vajradhatu rituals and practices date back to thousands of years in Newar Vajrayana Buddhism. Prajwal presented Maha Vairochana and Mahakala charya dances and Yuko Okomoto performed Manjushree and Pancha Buddha charya dances.

A workshop on Mudra and Charya Nritya was organized on Sunday, Aug 13, 2023 on the premises of Shere Space Hako at Takashima,



Shiga. Addressing the Japanese guests, Prajwal said: "The Buddhist deities embody hand mudras for purity, power and wisdom. Applying the appropriate gesture can heal the organs, tissues, bones and nerves of the body."

"The Charya performer goes into a meditative state and lets their body flow in movements."

Prajwal and Yuko were scheduled to visit Osaka, but due to the approaching of typhoon No 17, they had to stop in Nishimajima, and the workshop that was planned for the next day had to be abruptly cancelled. Although classes were cancelled, during their next performance Prajwal and Yuko gave in depth teachings on the material which was planned to be covered. Prajwal offered Vajrasattva and Mahakala charya

dances while Yuko Okomoto presented Lokeshvara and Vajrayogini charya dances.

A workshop on Newar Buddhism and Charya Nritya was organized on Sunday, Aug 20, 2023 at Hoya Hoya Studio in Tokyo. "Charya nritya, a rare practice unique to Newar Buddhism, dating back a thousand years, using the



physical body as a vehicle for liberating the mind." In charya, singing is the mantra and dancing is the meditation.

A Homa puja was conducted by Prajwal at Nikko Shuryamao Temple in Kanuma city on Monday, Aug 21, 2023. On the occasion, Prajwal



empowered the Japanese monks with the Dikchha of Rakta Ganesha. It is in this Japanese temple that esoteric Ganesh has been worshipped for centuries. That is why the Japanese monks were given Rakta Ganesha empowerment as per Newar Vajrayana traditions. Thursday, Aug 22, a teaching on Newar Vajrayana Buddhism, Mudra, Deity Yoga was conducted by Prajwal at a huge Buddha temple in Kanagawa.

A Newar Buddhist 'Chiva Dyo' stupa was consecrated by Buddhist scholar and ritual master late Ratna Kaji Vajracharya (Prajwal's father) on the premises of Nagoya Shibashi in 1989. Beside the Chiva Duo, a large, stone sleeping Buddha was coated by Yuko in memory of Prajwal's late brother and Paubha master, Gautam Vajracharya, who dedicated forty years of his

life to creating masterpiece mandalas based on 11th century texts on tantric sadhana. As an authentic fine artist, he dedicated his work to Japan's rich history



of Newar Buddhism in Japan.

Prajwal joined a luncheon with Guru Kawayashi. Besides, Mr Koujiyaba, who is associated with Kyoto Buddhist University as a cultural anthropologist (especially in Asian Music Studies) also came to pay his respect to Prajwal and Yuko.

On Friday, Aug 25, Prajwal was in Shizuoka city for couple of days. Prajwal visited various ancient and medieval temples in Shizuoka. A dance exchange program was organized on Saturday, Aug 26 at a Buddhist temple in Shizuoka which was built 1300 years ago. The city of Shizuoka is also known as second Kyoto. Manjushree, Pancha Buddha, Rakta Ganesha and Mahakala charya dances were presented on the occasion. The Japanese dancers also presented their native dances, which according to Prajwal, were performed in the form of Boddhisattvas just like Newar Buddhist charya dances.

A group Ihi and Bratabandha ceremony was organized by Newa International Forum Japan (NIFJ) at Solmari Restaurant, Shin Okubo, Tokyo on Monday, Aug 27. Six girls from Newar community attended the Ihi ceremony while a bratabandha ceremony for two Newar boys was also held in Tokyo. Both Ihi and Bratabandha ceremonies were ritualized by Prajwal.





It was a historic event for Newar community in Tokyo because it was the first group Ihi and Bratabandha ceremony solemnized by an authentic Newar Buddhist priest and ritual master. The ceremony was attended by more than 100 Newar community members, and the

chief guest on the occasion was Nepalese Ambassador to Japan His Excellency Durga Bahadur Subedi.

Ambassador Subedi, on the occasion, handed over certificate of appreciation to Guruji Prajwal and Japanese nun Yuko Okamoto on behalf of NIFJ. The Ambassador also gave away certificates to the Ihi girls and Bratabandha boys.

The certificate of appreciation handed over to Prajwal states: "This certificate is given to Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya, Charya Nritya Guru and traditional Nepali Nritya Guru for his invaluable contribution to the field of Nepali Traditional Dance Culture, Charya Nritya and sacred Buddhist practices."



## Gunla Dharma being Celebrated

Nritya Mandala Mahavihara is celebrating a month-long Gunla Dharma by reciting Naamsangiti everyday on zoom for the whole month of Gunla in the Nepal Sambat era. This year, the month-long Gunla Dharma kicked off on August 17 and is being wrapped up on September 16.

Edited by Teya DeSesa