Holds Candle-light Vigil in Memory of Lives Lost during Catastrophic Floods in Nepal

Buddha, Bodhisattvas's Mantra and Dharanipada, Durgati Parishodhana Paath Chanted by Prajwal Vajracharya, chief priest of Newar Buddhist Vihara in Portland

Rabin Man Shakya

A catastrophic cross-border flash flood and mudslide hit the Nepal-China border on Wednesday, Aug 26, 2026 killing hundreds of people and leaving thousands of others missing. The flood has wreaked havoc on people, destroyed property, environment, economy, energy, education, infrastructure, tourism and livelihood.

The disaster has created a massive humanitarian crisis, sweeping away entire riverside settlements, cutting off key transit routes, and trapping a high number of foreign tourists and pilgrims.

The flood has caused extensive damage in Nuwakot, Dhading and Rasuwa, particularly in the Timure and Syafrubesi areas. It has washed away settlements and damaged several hydropower infrastructures including Chilime Hydropower Project.

Infrastructure damage has been extensive, with 19 motorable bridges destroyed and 40 kilometers of paved highway rendered impassable,

severing transportation routes and complicating rescue efforts.

Meanwhile, a candle-light vigil was held at Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA on Sunday, Aug 30, 2026 in memory of lives lost during recent catastrophic floods in Nepal. The vigil was organized by NRNA - USA - Oregon State Chapter. One minute silence was observed at the beginning of the vigil.

Buddha, Bodhisattvas's Mantra and Dharanipada as well as Durgati Parishodhana Paath were chanted by chief priest of the Vihara Prajwal Vajracharya.

Sangha member of the Vihara Dechen Lhamo played a melancholic music tune on the flute in memory of lives lost during the catastrophic floods.

President of NRNA-USA-Oregon Chapter Shuddhodan Ranjit said:"It is very sad and heart breaking to hear the news about the devastating flash floods in our beloved country - Nepal."

Ranjit added:"Let us all pray for Nepal and for the safety and wellbeing of our people especially the people affected by this tragedy. May everyone stay safe, and may those who have lost loved ones find strength and comfort during this difficult time.""

President of Nepa Chhen, a Nepali nonprofit in Portland, Daya Shakya expressed his belief on the link between the sweating of Kavre Palanchowk Bhagavati, tears falling down from the eyes of Living Goddess Kumari and the catastrophic flood.

Founder president of Nepali Association of Oregon (NAO) Raju Mali, former NAO presidents Bharat Baskota, Ganga Sharma and former NAO secretary Punam Glee expressed sorrow over precious lives lost and stressed the need for standing together in solidarity

with our homeland - Nepal during this heartbreaking time and emphasized the need for community fund raising for Nepal.

The candle-light vigil at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland was attended by 70 Nepalese Portlanders and some American Buddhists who are the Sangha members of the Vihara.

Prema Dasara's 21 Tara Dance Offering Blooms at Portland's Nritya Mandala Mahavihara

An amazing '21 Tara Dance Offering' by Prema Dasara's team was organized at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA on Wednesday, Aug 19, 2026. Prajwal Vajracharya gave a brief introduction of Prema Dasara to the audience.

The Mandala dance of 21 Praises of Tara is a ritual dance offered worldwide as a prayer of peace, protection, wisdom and capability.

The practices often bridge traditional Charya dance elements originating from Nepal with international sacred movement communities

Prior to the 21 Tara Dance, 'Four Yogini Mandala Formation' Charya dance was presented by Myri Naves, Carey Avery, Adrianne Smith and Min Hyung, students of Helen Appell, who is the founder of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara.

'21 Tara Dance Offering' is based on a Tibetan Buddhist practice honoring the twenty-one enlightened qualities of the female Buddha Tara.

The 21 Taras are powerful manifestations of the female Buddha of compassion, originating from the foundational Buddhist prayer, 'the praises to the Twenty-one Taras'.

Dancers embody Tara's qualities through their

dance, each representing a different form of awakened energy.

It is performed publicly as an offering dedicated to the welfare of all beings. Bokar Rinpoche declared it a vehicle of liberation. For the audience it can bring deep healing and an experience of freedom from self obsession.

On the occasion, addressing the audience, Prema Dasara said:"The purpose of Tara Dhatu is to inspire and uplift, inviting everyone to experience the power of their own human potential through sacred music and dance."

Prema also shared her experience about her travels to different countries and interactions with religious luminaries and dignitaries.

Prema Dasara is an international spiritual teacher, performer, and the founder and creative director of Tara Dhatu, an organization dedicated to uplifting humanity through sacred music and dance.

Her organization 'Tara Dhatu' focuses on empowering people globally through sacred Buddhist dance, Mudras and music.

Prema is best known for the Mandala Dance of the 21 Praises of Tara in 1986. Prema has traveled the world for over 30 years teaching this dance to thousands of people.

She trained extensively in Asia with masters of sacred dance from Nepal, India, Tibet (China) and Bali.

While in Nepal, she trained extensively with late Ratna Kaji Vajracharya, father of Prajwal Guruji.

She has authored books such as 'Dancing Tara: A Manual of Practice.'

Four-week Teaching on 'Embodiment of the Dakini Praise' Kicks Off

A four-week teaching on 'Embodiment of the Dakini Praise' kicked off on Sunday, Aug 30, 2026 at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA. The teaching is scheduled to conclude on Sept 20, 2026.

Eleven participants took part in person at the Vihara, while 10 others on the zoom.

The two-hour teaching (once a

week) is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical.

The teaching event is accompanied by Refuge and 16 offering goddess dance.

Addressing the participants of the teaching event, Prajwal Guruji said:" A Dakini is a sacred female spirit, deity, or enlightened energy who represents wisdom, spiritual transformation and the dynamic feminine principle."

The first day teaching of the four-week course was devoted to 'Nairatma' charya nritya sloka.

Prajwal Guruji, a 35th-generation Vajrayana priest, chanted the Nairatma charya dance sloka in Sanskrit and explained the meaning of the sloka word by word.

Underscoring the importance of deity Nairatma, Prajwal Guruji said:"Nairatma is the egoless yogini, a fully enlightened female Buddha, the source of all creations, the formless infinite reality from which all visible forms arise."

In fact, Charya nritya is based on a 1000-year old Newar Buddhist tradition in Nepal, Prajwal Guruji shared with the participants.

He went on saying:"Nairatma is another name for emptiness or Sunyata. She is dark blue in color, representing the vast emptiness of the midnight sky. She holds a chopper, a skull cup and a staff. She wears a crown of skulls and the hide of a man as she tramples negative forces."

Prajwal Guruji further added:"The Nairatma charya dance specifically symbolizes spontaneous wisdom and emptiness, often depicted in a yogic union with her consort: the semi-wrathful Buddha Hevajra.”\

Gun Punhi (Kwati Punhi) Celebrated in Portland, USA

Gun Punhi, one of the important Full Moon Days in Newar Buddhism, was celebrated at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA on Friday, Aug 28 2026.

A group Naamsangiti recitation was held in the morning of the Gun Punhi immediately after the Charya Giti singing practice.

The Manjushree Naamsangiti recitation was led by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya and was also chanted by Meadow Lisa Wong, Teya De Sesa, Jennifer Koascis, Gabriel Quitslund, Allie White, Mathew Castagno, Naveena Shakya and Rabin Man Shakya.

Ten other people including Dr Tina Ho from Hong Kong took part at the Naamsangiti recitation on the zoom.

Gun Punhi is also called Kwati Punhi. Kwati is a soup of different beans, and Punhi means the Full Moon Day. On this auspicious full moon day, the Newah people in the Kathmandu valley traditionally prepare and cook the Kwati soup.

The ingredients used in cooking Kwati soup are: kidney beans, black-eyed peas, chick peas, soya beans, mung beans, green beans, black beans and white beans.

The Kwati soup was offered to the Naamsangiti participants by Prajwal

Guruji.

The Gun Punhi celebration was also attended by Helen Appell, founder of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara.

Vihara's Team Takes Part at InterFaith Event

Prajwal Vajracharya, co-founder of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, along with other Sangha members Mathew Castagno, Gabriel Quitslund, Anastasia Roderick, Casey Redman, Ashley Low Jennifer Koascis and Teya De Sesa participated at the 'World Chant for Peace' event hosted by Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple in Portland on Saturday, Aug 22, 2026.

Nritya Mandala Mahavihara was among other Buddhist and non-Buddhist community organizations that took part at the 'World Chant for Peace' event.

On the occasion, Refuge Dance and Avalokiteshvara Charya dance were brilliantly performed by Prajwal Vajracharya and other Sangha members. Charya Nritya is an essential part of Newar Vajrayana Buddhism.

During the Charya Nritya presentations, Prajwal Guruji also explained the audience about the meaning and relevance of Charya dances: Refuge dance and Avalokiteshvara charya dance.

Elucidating the meaning of Refuge dance, the Guruji said that it is a performance of Buddha Bandana Dance through Charya Nritya. Buddhist practitioners take refuge daily in the Buddha - the teacher, the Dharma - the teachings and the Sangha - the community.

Touching on Avalokiteshvara charya dance, the veteran Charya guru said:"Avalokiteshvara is the embodiment of universal compassion, and has

the softest, gentlest and most fluid of dances, represented in the charya nritya tradition. Avalokiteshvara charya nritya is an ancient form of deity yoga meditation for physical transformation, refinement of emotions."

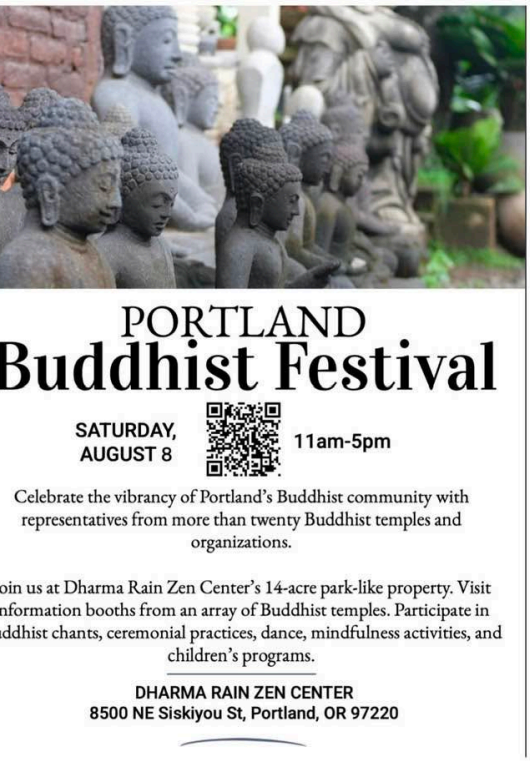
The purpose of Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple, which was established in 2011 in Portland, is to provide a refuge of stillness and peace in a busy urban environment, to practice and share Buddhist teachings, and to cultivate community, compassion and wisdom.

The 12-hour 'World Chant for Peace' was celebrated with the strength and diversity of various religious communities of Portland.

In a statement about 'World Chant for Peace', Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple said:"Awake with a passion for inner and global transformation, this 12-hour chanting vigil is a celebration of our spiritual aspirations to see the sacred in every person, and to live Unconditional Love."

The statement further added:"We form one community and join our voices together. Chanting is spiritually potent medicine. It aligns heart and mind, connects us to spirit and radiates waves of prayer and blessings into the world."

Portland Buddha Festival



A Buddhist Festival was organized on Saturday, Aug 15, 2026 by Dharma Rain Zen Center on its 14 acre park-like property in Portland. About 20 Buddhist centers and communities took part at the Buddhist Festival.

A procession of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara and other organizations walked through around the Festival space. During the procession, Prajwal Vajracharya offered the ringing of the bell, shaking of the Vajra and chanting of Tantric Buddhist prayer for good of all sentient beings.

On the occasion, Prajwal Guruji and other Sangha members of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara performed Refuge charya dance.

The park of Dharma Rain Zen Center was decorated with 20 different booths and tables hosted by various Buddhist monasteries and institutions.

The Nritya Mandala Mahavihara also hosted a beautiful booth at the event where Prajwal Guruji and other Sangha members provided information about the contributions the Mahavihara makes to promote Newar Buddhist heritage in USA.

The activities of the Festival Day were: chanting and singing, ceremonial practices, dances, mindfulness activities and children's program.

Hosting a workshop on the occasion, Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya provided detailed information about Newar Buddhism and history of Vajracharyas in Nepal to the participants of the Portland Buddhist Festival.

Prajwal Guruji said:"Newar Buddhism is considered to be the oldest known extant form of Buddhist practices. It has been preserved in two dedicated Newar family castes - the Vajracharyas and the Shakyas."

The Guruji further observed:"In Newar Buddhism, enlightenment and full understanding of the Buddhist teachings of transformation of mind, entails singing and dancing."

Throwing light on the Vajracharyas of Nepal, the Guruji said that the word Vajracharya is the combination of two words: Vajra (thunderbolt) and Acharya (teacher), meaning the Vajra Master.

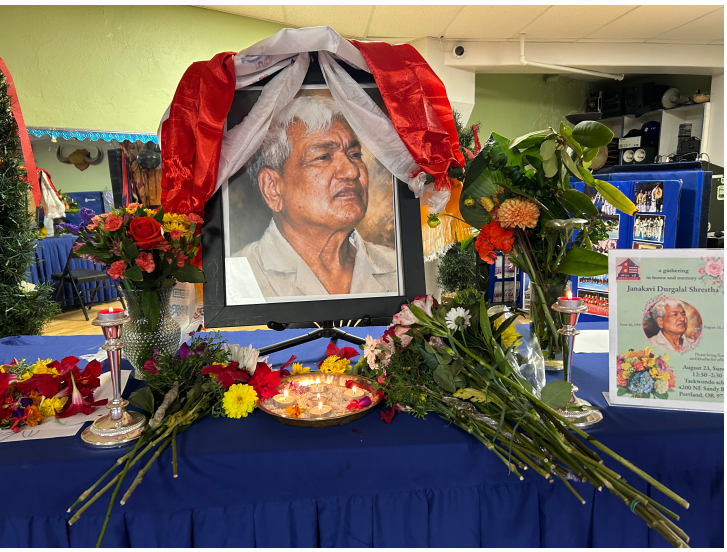
A Vajracharya is a priest among the Newar communities of Nepal and a revered teacher who is highly attained in Vajrayana practices and rituals, Prajwal Guruji added.

He further shared:"The Vajracharya is the highest ranking of the Newar castes. The Vajracharya boy goes through a ritualistic process of initiations known as Chudakarma, Acharyabhisek and Diksha, including shaving off the head as the Buddha, in tradition of monks since the time of the Buddha."

Prajwal Guruji also mentioned:"Still today, many of the Buddhist scholars in Nepal belong to Vajracharyas and Shakyas. There were many legendary Vajracharya priests (Mahasiddhas) from different parts of the Kathmandu valley."

Dharma Rain Zen Center is a Soto Zen Buddhist community in Portland dedicated to supporting each other in the practice of meditation and the study of Buddhist teachings. Center's shared intention is to cultivate compassion, love and wisdom in our own lives and in the larger community in which we live.

Durgati Parishodhana Dharani Chanted for late Poet Durga Lal Shrestha



A memorial service was organized at Nekusing Memorial Theater on Sunday, Aug 23, 2026 by Nepa Chhen, a Nepali non-profit in Portland, USA for paying glowing tributes and homage to late Nepal Bhasa poet Durga Lal Shrestha.

The memorial service was attended by more than 25 Newah community members including some American Buddhists who are the Sangha members of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA.

A one-minute silence was observed at the beginning of the condolence meeting in memory of the iconic Nepal Bhasa poet.

Prajwal Vajracharya, a 35th generation Vajracharya priest and Portland's most senior and octogenarian lady Devi Laxmi Maharjan paid tributes to late Shrestha by offering flowers and Khada.

After that, all the participants of the condolence-gathering in Portland offered flowers and sacred Khada one by one on the portrait of late Durga Lal, paying homage to the late poet.

Further, Durgati Parishodhana Dharani, which was led by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya of Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, was chanted by all the attendees of the memorial service. Prajwal Guruji also explained the meaning of Durgati Parishodhana Dharani to the participants of the gathering.

A poem entitled "Remembering Janakavi Durga Lal Shrestha" penned down by Vihara's Sangha member Naveena Shakya was also read out at the memorial service.

A popular song "Phoolko Aankhama Phoolai Sansar" written by late Durga Lal was also performed by Anastasia Roderick and Niva Maharjan (students of Nepal Bhasa classes run by Kritish Rajbhandari). The song was then chorused by all the participants of the gathering.

Speaking on the occasion, co-founder of Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland Prajwal Vajracharya said:"Late Shrestha was one of Nepal's most celebrated poets, lyricists and cultural icons."

President of Nepa Chhen Daya Shakya, vice president Rabin Man Shakya, member Kritish Rajbhandari and taekwondo expert Diwakar Maharjan threw light on the literary contributions of late poet Durga Lal.

Buddhist Deities Embody Hand Mudras for Purity, Wisdom, Says Prajwal Vajracharya

Body movement and Mudras are highly important tools used to connect physical body with the mind and energy pathways.

Prajwal Vajracharya, a prominent Newar Vajrayana Buddhist priest in USA, said this while addressing an opening ceremony at the 5-day North Star Campout on Friday, Aug 21 in Sammamish, WA.

Body movement and Mudras are crucial in Charya Nritya, said Prajwal Guruji adding that the Buddhist deities embody hand Mudras for purity, power and wisdom.

Prajwal Guruji went on saying:"Applying the appropriate gesture can heal the organs, tissues, bones and nerves of the body."

Prajwal Guruji, who is a well-known charya dancer and international teacher, said:"The sacred dance of the Buddhist priests of Nepal is a dynamic yogic discipline for healing and transformation."

Prajwal Guruji's presentation explained that hand Mudras represent different energies and moods of deities. He discussed that the left hand symbolizes the female energy which is associated with absolute reality and wisdom, and the right hand symbolizes the male energy, which is associated with conventional reality and skillful activity."

Guruji Prajwal gave detailed and comprehensive accounts of Karma Mudra, Dharma Mudra and Sahaj Sundari Mudra. He threw light on Vajra Mudra, Vitarka Mudra, Dharma Chakra Mudra, Abhaya Mudra and specific gestures.

The North Star Approaches event was also addressed by Lama Joshua Proto and Hawk Grubb who are the Sangha members of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara.

The North Star Approach focuses on aligning an entire organization or strategy around a single, central goal or metric.

Sammamish is a small city in King County, Washington, located on a plateau 20 mile east of Seattle.

Nava Graha Puja Ritualized at Vihara for Dechen and Allie

Portland, Aug 24 (Nepal Oregon News): A Nava Graha Puja was performed with right vidhi-vidhan (appropriate rituals) at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland on Monday by Prajwal Vajracharya, a priest from one of the Vajrayana Buddhist lineages of Nepal.The Nava Graha Puja was ritualized for Sangha members of the Vihara Dechen Lhamo and Allie White.

The purpose of the Nava Graha Puja is to remove obstacles and to do away with negative effects in life.

Prajwal Guruji says:"Nava Graha is a Sanskrit word in which Nava means nine and Graha refers to planet. In Nepalese astrology, there are nine planets which have impacts on human lives. Planets in the horoscope have configurations which can create obstacles in life called Nava Graha Dasa."

The Guruji added:"Though the planets have their effects, these malefic Dasas or negative effects can be minimized by performing the Nava Graha Puja (worship of nine planets).

He went on saying:"Nava Graha Puja engages the nine planets in a square Mandala with the Sun in the center, and in the process of acknowledging and honoring each of the planet, clears the cause of suffering related to each."

Ihi Rituals Held at Vihara

Ihi rituals of Clarissa Tyata was held at the Vihara on Tuesday, Aug 25, 2026 by chief priest Prajwal Vajracharya. Clarissa is the daughter of Rabina Maharjan.

The Ihi rituals has been in practice since hundreds of years. The Ihi ceremony is an important part of the Newar tradition where the young pre-adolescent girl make a commitment to the Bel fruit (wood apple), says Prajwal Guruji.

The Bel fruit has a peculiar quality of remaining fresh forever and healthy and long-lasting. Wood apple can bring conscious mind, added the Guruji. Regular Activities Continue

All the usual events including Monthly Full Moon Namasangiti chanting, weekly Dharani chanting, Sadhana Practice, Buddha Bhajan practice and Charya giti singing practice were conducted on a regular basis at the Vihara in person and on the zoom.