

Reed College Students Visit Nriya Mandala Mahavihara February 3rd

By Rabin Man Shakya



Portland: A group of students from Reed College, Portland visited the Nriya Mandala Mahavihara, the first and only one Newar Vajrayana Buddhist monastery in the West, on Friday, Feb 3, 2023 and continued to visit and observe with other pujari. The purpose of the visit by Reed College students was

to gain an understanding of the history, worship and practice in the Mahavihara.

The Reed College students observed and participated in the morning rituals performed by Naveena Shakya, a Sangha member and the Pujari of that day. As per the Vajrayana Buddhism, morning and evening rituals are traditionally conducted at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara just like in the Mahaviharas of the Kathmandu valley.

On the occasion, giving a short introduction about the temple, Rabin Man Shakya, a Sangha member of the Mahavihara, told the students: "This Vihara was established in 2009 by Helen Appell and Prajwal Vajracharya with the objectives of promoting Charya dances, observing age-old Newar festivals and lifecycle rituals and keeping alive the wonderful traditions and culture of the people of the Nepal Mandala."

Isabelle Chouinard, another Sangha member of the Vihara, threw light on Newar Buddhist rituals carried out at the Mahavihara everyday. Isabelle also took the students to the surroundings of the temple.

On the occasion, the Reed College students acquired information about the ongoing activities at the Newar Vajrayana monastery.

The team of the Reed College students visiting the Portland Baha were: Margot Becker, Katia Beegan, Finley Firth, Chloe

Fling, Elias Gonzales, Meera Hartman, Logan Hanrahan, Evelyn Lewis, Mack Marsaw, Lily Mechner and Max Wink.

Prior to their visit, in a letter addressed to Guruji Prajwal, the Reed College said: "We are a group of religious studies students from Reed College. As a requirement to begin our thesis program, we are seeking an empathetic understanding of a lived religious tradition in our community."

The Reed College letter further stated: "We are seeking your permission to attend public services and events over the next eight weeks in order to gain an understanding of the history, worship and practice in your community. Each student will undertake an independent research project on a different aspect of your faith tradition."

It is to be noted that Reed College is a private liberal arts college in Portland, Oregon. The College was established in 1908. It is a residential college with a campus in the Eastmoreland neighborhood, with Tudor-Gothic architecture, and a forested canyon nature preserve at its center.

Portland Baha Celebrates Lhosar, as Sangha members Recite Dharani

February 21



Portland: Lhosar was observed at the Nriya Mandala Mahavihara on Tuesday, Feb 21, 2023. Lhosar is a Tibetan New Year. It is an important festival in Tibetan Buddhism. Lhosar is widely and popularly celebrated in Nepal too.

Lhosar New Year celebration, which was followed by a dinner with champagne and wine, was participated by about 20 people. Coincidentally, that was also the birthday of Sangha member Anna Shustrova. As well as farewell for sangha members Isabelle and Teya.

On the same day, a weekly Dharani recitation was also held. Sangha member Gabriel Quitslund led the Dharani reading on the zoom, while Sangha members reciting it from the Mahavihara were: Adam Bidema, Anna Shustrova, Isabelle Chouinard, Naveena Shakya and Rabin Man Shakya. Members of Hong Kong Dance Mandal including Dr Tina Ho and some other virtual participants read Dharani from the zoom too.

Nriya Mandala Mahavihara's Dharani



recitation is the only chanting program of this kind in the West, and helps to preserve this special heritage.

The Dharani session kicks off with a Refuge prayer, the Guru Bandana. This is followed by a protective Dharani, the Graha Dasha Ya Paath, and then the Saptavidhana - or Seven Limb prayer. These are followed by mantras to the Buddha and Bodhisattvas and then recitation of a variety of appropriate Dharani. The Pragya Paramita Hridayam (Heart) Sutra concludes the chanting.

Dharani recitation have been continue many years. normally take turn to led by sangha member, followed by other participants on zoom.

Dharani literature has existed for over two millennia in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Typically used to prevent misfortune, remove obstacles, heal and protect, Dharani's are also used in lifecycle rituals and other practices.

Meanwhile, along with Dharani chanting on every Tuesday, other regular religious programs, such as, Sadhana practice and Buddha Bhajan recitation were conducted on each Wednesday, and Charya singing practice was held every Friday morning.

Temple Celebrates Si Punhi, as Month-long Swosthani Reciting Wraps up

February 5th

Portland: Si Punhi Full Moon Day was observed by Nriya Mandala Mahavihara with the chanting of Maha Manjushree Naamsangiti on zoom Sunday, Feb 5, 2023.



Twelve people from Hong Kong, Washington, California and Oregon took part in the virtual recitation practice. Si Punhi is also known as Maghi Purnima in Nepal.

Nriya Mandala Mahavihara has been organizing Manjushree Naamsangiti Recitation on every full moon day for last three years.

Also, Naamsangiti is recited daily at the Mahavihara during the month of Gunla (Nepal Sambat Lunar Calendar).

Coincidentally with Si Punhi, the month-long Hindu Swosthani sacred story reciting festival also ended. For the first time, a month-long Swosthani story reciting was conducted everyday by the Portland Baha in the zoom at the initiative of Prof Dr Linda Iltis from Seattle, Washington. The Swosthani story telling was participated by various people including



Prof Dr Linda Iltis, Prajwal Vajracharya, Anastasia Roderick, Adam Bidema, Dina Shakya and so on. The Swosthani was recited on the basis of texts provided by Bhaskara Rajopadhyaya.

Lots of Snow in Portland End of February

