

First Chudakarma Ceremony Held at Portland's Newar Buddhist Temple

Dr.Rabin Man Shakya



Portland, Feb 18, Chudakarma ceremony of Siddhartha Muni Shakya, age 12 (son of Aniruddha Muni Shakya and Sharon) and Ian Shakya, age 7 (son of Ishan Shakya and Nafisa Tamrakar) was held at Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, Portland, USA on Saturday, Feb 17, 2024.

This was a historic event because it was the first time Chudakarma has been performed at the Vihara.

In Newar Vajrayana Buddhism, Chudakarma, meaning ‘initiation empowerment,’ and is one of the very important lifecycle rituals. Young boys are given the honor of performing the ritual, teaching them leadership and responsibility. While they learn how to perform the ritual they also learn mantra recitation, mudras, and visualization of the deities. In this ritual the boys truly become Vajracharya, meaning that from now on they are allowed to perform the ritual for others if they so wish. Also, they are allowed to be a part of high esoteric Buddhist practices.





In Nepal, the two Shakya boys will now be considered lifetime sangha members and any upcoming ceremonies or events they are able to join, they be will honored and respected as the ones to carry on the future of the tradition.

Part of the Chudakarma ceremony is to become a Monk. Traditionally boys will shave off their hair completely and for this event the boys chose to do so, as per the Newar custom. The two young Monks are given a traditional begging bowl and staff. If this ritual were performed in Nepal, they would remain as Monks for three days, going to the houses of friends, family, and neighbors to ‘beg’ and receive food, money and gifts. Here in the Vihara the boys only remained Monks for a couple of hours but still received a plentiful bounty of gifts. The purpose of becoming a Monk is to follow the Buddha’s example. Siddhartha Gautama, who later became the Buddha, left behind his opulent life to seek liberation of suffering for all sentient beings. By following this example, one can embark on a similar path of renunciation and inner exploration.



During the Chudakarma ceremony, Gurumandala Puja, Kalash Puja, Homa Puja, Naga puja Bali puja and other required pujas were chanted and ritualized by temple priest Prajwal.

Chudakarma is also known as 'Bare Chhuyegu', 'Prabajya Sambar', and 'Acharyabhisheka' (for Vajracharya boys) in Newar Vajrayana Buddhism, added Prajwal Guruju.

The Guruju maintained that the Mahavihara would give continuity to perform Chudakarma ceremony for Newar Buddhist community of USA in future as per the Vajrayana Buddhist traditions.

During the Bare Chhuyegu ceremony, the relatives of the boys and other guests performed traditional 'Baaran Chhuyegu' in which they offered jaki (raw rice) in a Gulpa and gifts to the Chudakarma boys. Also on the occasion, the Guruju dabbed 'Sinha' on the forehead of all the guests and provided them with 'Kokha'.



The Mahavihara was cleaned for the Chudakarma ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, the Chudakarma boys and all the guests walked in around the Buddhist temple three times. Breakfast and lunch were served to all the guests.

The news story about the first Chudakarma ceremony held at Portland's Newar Buddhist temple was covered by Imagekhabar.com

HKBSA Celebrates Avalokiteshvara Day with Various Mudra Zen Dances

Portland, Feb 5: Avalokiteshvara Day was celebrated by Hong Kong Buddhist Studies Association (HKBSA) on Sunday, Feb 4, 2024 on the zoom with various programs and Vajra dances.



The virtual event to celebrate Avalokiteshvara Day was divided into five parts: (1) Offerings -- Refuge prayer, Seven Limb Prayer (2) Joy -- Mahamayuri Zen dance, White Tara Zen dance (3) Loving Kindness and Compassion -- Introduction to 12 months Lokeshwor Dharani,

Avalokiteshvara zen dance (4) Merit and Wisdom -- Prajna Paramita charya dance, Vasundhara charya giti, Saraswoti charya giti, Vajra Saraswoti Vajra Dance and (5) Supplement and Dedication, 100 syllable mantra chanting.

In this way, the remotely held program to mark Avalokiteshvara Day kicked off with Refuge prayers and Seven Limb Prayer (Sapta Vidhana Puja - from the Bhadra Charya Desana) chanted by Prajwal Guruji and followed by Joshua Proto, Anastasia

Roderick, Adam Bidema, Susan Morningstar at the Portland temple and other virtual participants from the HKBSA.



After that, under the theme 'Joy', Mahamayuri Zen dance and White Tara Zen dance were presented by the Hong Kong Dance Mandal. Mahamayuri Mudra Zen dance was performed by Sin Ying Leung, Wing Yee Lam and Sam Ng whereas White Tara Mudra Zen dance was offered by Shira Chan, Patty Chan, Sin Ying Leung, Wing Yee Lam.

Addressing the virtual gathering, Dr Tina Ho of HKBSA threw light on White Avalokiteshvara - Jana Baha Dyo, Dharani and Mantra.

On the occasion, 12-months Lokeshwor Dharani was chanted by Prajwal Guruji followed by other participants. Likewise, Avalokiteshvara Mudra Zen dance which was presented by Hong Kong Dance



Mandal was performed by Dr Tina Ho, Shira Chan, Sin Yin Leung, Wing Yee Lam, Sam Ng, Mary Lau, John Lui, Elaine Pang, Nora Ng and Cynthia Ng. Furthermore, a brief meditation was also conducted on the occasion.

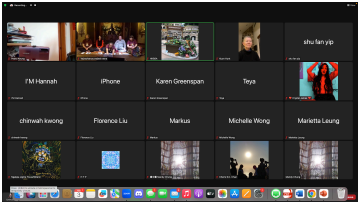
Likewise, under the theme 'Merit and Wisdom', Prajna Paramita charya dance was performed by Prajwal Vajracharya. Saying that Prajna Paramita is the mother of all Buddhas, Prajwal Guruji explained that Prajna Paramita means perfection of wisdom in Sanskrit.

Likewise, Vasundhara Bhajan and Sarashwoti sloka were vocalized by Prajwal Guruji, Joshua Proto, Anastasia Roderick, Adam Bidema and Susan Morningstar at the temple.



Besides, rare pictures on Vasundhara sculptures and paintings were demonstrated by Dr Tina Ho at the event. Paintings of Vasundhara Devi created by HKBSA members Shira Chan, Patty Chan and Mary Lau were also shown at the virtual program.

Moreover, during the event, Vajra Sarashwoti Vajra Dance was also put on the stage by Hong Kong Dance Mandal. Vajra Sarashwoti Vajra Dance was carried out by Sin Ying Leung, Wing Yee Lam, Sam Ng, Shira Chan, Mary Lau, John Lui and Dickon Kong. All the Vajra dances and Mudra Zen dances performed during the event by Hong Kong Dance Mandal members were skillfully choreographed by Dr Tina Ho.



The virtual event to mark Avalokiteshvara Day concluded with Supplement and Dedication -- 100 syllable mantra chanting by Prajwal Vajracharya followed by other zoom participants.

Workshop on -- How to Make a Prayer Wheel from Recycled Objects -- Held at Portland Baha

Portland, Feb 25 ,A workshop on how to make a prayer wheel from recycled objects was organized at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara on Saturday, Feb 24, 2024.



The workshop was conducted by Pepper Kocsis who is a Buddhist and an artist. Pepper says: "I am always looking for ways that I can explore my own creativity within the Tibetan Buddhist tradition."

The workshop was an opportunity for the participants to learn the art and skill of making prayer wheels out of recycled objects.

Laying emphasis on the relevance of prayer wheels and importance of celebration of joy in culture, Pepper says: "I would love to see prayer wheels becoming a ubiquitous part of Western culture, expressed in pop culture, public art installations, prayer wheels on street corners, in people's cars and homes. An object that emits joy recognizable by all."





Pepper, who earned her degree in 2017 from the Oregon College of Arts and Crafts, is also a Sangha member of the Nriya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland.

Regular activities:

Monthly Naam Sangiti chanting on the Full Moon Day, weekly activities: Dharani chanting (Tuesday), Sadhana practice, Buddha Bhajan practice (Wednesday) and Charya giti practice (Friday) -- all were conducted on a regular basis at the Mahavihara and through the zoom.

