

Nritya Mandala Mahavihara Greet's New Year 2024 with Dhalan Danegu Rituals

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Portland, Jan 1st ,A New Year celebration purification ritual - Dhalan Danegu - was held at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihar on Monday, Jan 1, 2024. The purification ritual which was held for about three hours was performed and led by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya.

American and Nepali Sangha members - joined the Puja for purifying and reviving old energy of the previous year and for overcoming obstacles and opening to fresh new potential through the annual New Year's 'Dhalan Danegu' ritual at the Mahavihara.

'Dhalan Danegu' which originated in the third century in the Nepal Mandala is a ritual to purify mind and body. It is a ritual dedication to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, according to Prajwal Vajracharya. The Gurumandala Workshop trainees - Riyaz Khan, Gabriel Quitslund and Naveena Shakya - were also among the participants of the purification rituals.

The traditional community ceremony honored oneself and others by making offerings of purified elements and was guided by using one's own mandala of sand.

A special Puja Sankalpa consisting of Jaki, Sinha, Ita, Dhup, Swan, Jajanka, Taaye etc was carefully prepared for each participant who were seen sitting cross-legged in different lines inside the temple.

A sand mandala, a circle, or cosmic diagram for use in ritual or inner visualization, had been drawn for the use of each participant. Also, three Gojas on the sand mandala were worshipped during the ritual. First Goja represents the honoring of one's body speech and mind. The second Goja represents honoring obstacles one faces on the spiritual path, if we don't honor these obstacles as a means of wisdom they will come back to hinder us again and again. The third Goja represents light



illumination for a happy, joyful, healthy way of living in the new year.

On the occasion, participants were also given time for short meditation. Similarly, a long Pasuka (sacred thread) was used, spread, passed over to all the New Year purification ritual participants. It was an important component of purification ritual.

Purification ritual event was followed by a Nepali-style dinner in the temple at the Mahavihara.



Teaching on Pancha Buddha Organized at Pure Land Farm, CA

Mandala of the Five Buddha Families
Sacred Buddhist art and dance retreat with Prajwal Vajracharya and Tiffani Gyatso, January 5-11

This seven day retreat was the perfect way to start the new year. Blending meditation, movement and dance with artistic expression. All while being held in the embrace of the beautiful landscape of Pure Land Farms in the hilltops of Topanga Canyon, California.

The aim of this retreat was to dive deeply into understanding the five Buddha families. Discussing and meditating upon the outer, inner and secret qualities. On an outer level, how color and ornaments of the Buddhas represent their inner abilities. And then bringing their interpretation into their personal experience with how they have observed this in others, and in themselves. Each day began with retreatants meeting for brief meditation and discussion led by their teacher and world renowned Thangka painter, Tiffany Gyatso. These discussions took place in an appropriate setting each morning. For example, on the day they studied Amithaba and the Padma Family, they all huddled in a dark yurt and meditated upon a single candle flame, as Padma is represented by a red lotus and is associated with the fire element, glowing with the vitality of red energy.

They discussed how passions and desire influenced their lives, as Padma represents discriminating-awareness wisdom as well as its opposite, emotion and grasping. On the day they studied Amoghasiddhi and the Karma Family they sat upon a



windy hilltop surrounded by grass, trees and native plants, as the Karma Family is represented by the color green and the cold, stormy energetic quality of the north. It is the energy of the element of wind which is present everywhere, touching all corners of space. They discussed how jealousy and envy have affected us personally as Karma family energy manifests neurotically as jealousy and paranoia. On the awakened level this energy manifests as all-accomplishing wisdom, and they discussed how becoming active in situations can lead to doing whatever needs to be done and eliminate obstacles on their spiritual path.



The retreat at Pure Land Farms was an opportunity for the participants to get first-hand information and knowledge about arts on five Buddhas and Pancha Buddha Charya Nriya from the experienced and seasoned teachers. Tiffany Gyatso said: "A Mandala, meaning 'circle' in Sanskrit, is a geometric representation of enlightened wholeness."

The participants were given the opportunity to connect with the Mandala of the five Buddha families through art, drawings, and embodiment in the form of dance.

During the retreat, Tiffany Gyatso presented a detailed and comprehensive description on how to complete the

Mandala uniting all the elements together in the complete circle.

During the five day retreat, Tiffany Gyatso, a Tibetan style Thangka painter and sacred geometry artist, dealt with practice through art, creating and coloring the Mandala with mindful awareness. Each day was devoted by Tiffany to one of the five Dhyani Buddhas during the art retreat. Meanwhile, also during the retreat, Prajwal Vajracharya, Charya dance teacher, shed light on different aspects of the Pancha Buddha Charya dance, devoting each day to learning the dance of each Buddha family.

He said: "Pancha Buddha charya dance is performed in honor of the five Dhyani Buddhas - Vairochana, Aksobhya, Ratna Sambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi."

Prajwal went on saying: "The Pancha Buddha Charya Dance is attributed to Lord Buddha. Pancha Buddha or five wisdom Buddhas are the five transcendental Buddhas of Tantric Buddhism."

Different colorful costumes used by the Charya dancers are symbolic to sky, earth, water, fire and air.



Laying emphasis on the power of hand Mudra, Prajwal also explained the role of sitting meditation, and the need for making a mind connection to the deity. Saying that Charya Nritya is key to enlightenment, Prajwal underscored the importance of the five wisdom Buddhas and their vehicles. During the retreat, Prajwal performed and taught the Charya songs of each of the Five Buddhas corresponding with the Charya dance. He also demonstrated the Pancha Buddha Charya dance for the participants as they studied the dance.

Tiffani Gyatso is an artist from Brazil who focused her studies on the sacred expressions of art from different cultures. She specialized in traditional Tibetan Thangka painting, which she learned in India at the Norbulingka Institute from the years 2003-2006 and later furthered her studies at the Prince School of Traditional Arts in London where she studied sacred Geometry of the Middle East. Today she runs her own art retreat center at the Atelier YabYum at the mountains of Brazil and guides art groups to India and Nepal.

Sacred Rituals Performed to Pay Tributes to late Tamrakar

Portland, Jan 24 Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya performed the 45th day ceremony death rituals for late Madan Sen Tamrakar on Wednesday, Jan 24, 2024 at the residence of Mrinal Sen Tamrakar, son of late Tamrakar.



The Gurumandala Puja, Mamaki Puja and other rituals were conducted by Guruji Prajwal.

The Shraddh rituals are conducted so that the heavenly journey of the deceased soul after death is comfortable and stress-free.

Madan Sen Tamrakar, 67, passed away on Dec 12, 2023. His antyesthi samskara (funeral sacrament) was held in Portland on Dec 13, 2023.

Our Hong Kong Sangha hosted part two of Prajwal's teachings on Pancha Tara.



Prajwal focused on The Eight Great Fears and how Tara subdues and destroys them. The Eight Great Fears: and taught on the wisdoms and their opposing poisons.

1)The lion of pride: As the king of the jungle, the lion looks down on everyone and listens to the counsel of no one. Our pride will isolate us from help and keep us locked in the control of ignorance.

2)The elephant of ignorance: The metaphor for ignorance is the elephant—not an ordinary elephant but a wild, drunken one. This elephant will not hesitate to trample anyone who gets in his way. That is what ignorance does to us.



3)The snake of jealousy: Like a snake in the shadows, jealousy hides in the darkness of ignorance. When we see others doing better than us, the snake strikes and poisons us. Then we spread that poison to others as soon as we are able.

4)The ghost of doubt: Ghosts usually function at night. Likewise, doubt functions in the darkness of ignorance. It frightens and confuses us, preventing us from making our way to the light of freedom.

5)The fire of anger: The fire of anger is fanned by the wind of wrongdoing. Wrongdoing is caused by the elephant of ignorance, which give strength to the fire.

6)The waters of attachment: Attachment functions like a violent, rushing river. It keeps us trapped in the current of samsara, carrying us further and further from the shores of liberation.

7)The shackles of stinginess: Everyone views generosity as something positive. Stinginess is just the opposite. It binds us so that we are incapable





of acting positively. It keeps us hopelessly trapped in samsara.

8)The thief of wrong view. What does a thief do? He steals our valuables. Likewise, wrong view steals our opportunity to make any progress on the spiritual path.

Then he move on to wisdoms and their opposing poisons. **Lochani Tara**, spiritual consort of Vairocana. Representing the Buddha Family and Mirror-like wisdom. Her left hand is in the protective, “no fear" mudra, and her right hand makes the compassion and wish granting mudra.

A blue lotus flower is often depicted emerging from White Tara's left hand - an energy expression of a state of fearlessness leading to Buddhahood.

White Tara is a powerful female enlightened being whose function is to bestow long life, good health, wisdom, and good fortune to those devoted to a path of universal compassion.

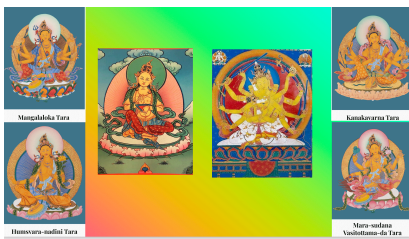
If we rely upon her with faith, she will protect us from contagious diseases, the dangers of fire, and other disasters.



Akasadhatesvari, spiritual consort is Akshobhya. Representing the Vajra Family and the Wisdom of Complete Understanding.

Residing in the East, her name means ‘the illuminator’. She and Akshobhya stand in the same relationship to one another as the Sun and the seemingly endless space through which its light travels. She has a special connection with the ability to communicating the Dharma.

Mamaki, consort of Ratnasambhava. She represent the Ratna Family and Wisdom of Equality. She is a golden-yellow color and resides in the south west corner. **Mamaki** has many forms. She can be found in two armed, six armed, eight armed and twelve armed forms. In two armed form she is depicted holding a vajra with her right and her left hand resting on her thigh. In another case she is seen displaying varada mudra with her right hand and the stalk of an utpala with her left.



According to Tantric Buddhist symbolism of Newar Buddhist tradition there is a special ritual worship of **Mamaki** in the form of triad ritual objects (Newari: Anti, Khayakori and Thapin). The Newari word Anti is a special jar used for keeping fermented wine, Khayakori for Yoghurt and Thapin for keeping fermented beer.

Pandaravasini, spiritual consort of Amitabha, she resides in the West. She represents the Padma family and the Wisdom of Discrimination. Her form and nature are described - "In the Vāyu corner on the orb of the moon there is Pāṇḍaravāsīnī originating from the (red) seed syllable Pām. She is red in color and has the Padma (lotus) as her recognition symbol.

Pandaravasini represents the completion and perfection of the process of spiritual sublimation of craving. The transformation of desire into unconditional love.

Green Tara, spiritual consort of Amoghashidhi. She represents the Karma Family and All- Accomplishing Wisdom. She resides in the North. The main characteristic of Arya Tara - Noble Tara - is that she is a Buddha who in earlier times promised to always be born in the pure form of a female body in order to help living beings reach enlightenment.

There are many outer and inner impediments that practitioners encounter, so Arya Tara manifests in order to eliminate hindrances and obstacles one runs into while on the path to liberation from suffering.

Pancha Tara

Raga: Nata Tala: Jati

om kara sanjata sri lochani tara /
yan bi mantra appearing eyes tara
ahukta barna sara ghadrak kara dhara //
white color like clear dew drops in body



namami namami sri arya tara janani
namami namami sri mother tara
asta maha bhaya tarani devi //dhu//
eight great fear destroy goddess



mung kara sanjata sri puspa tara devi /
mun bi mantra appearing flower tara goddess
nila barna rupa bakra kara dhara //dhu//
blue color beautiful face having

bang kara sanjata sri mamaki tara /
ban bi mantra appearing yellow tara
kanaka barna gata dhara manjurt dhara //dhu//
yellow color vessel meditation softly having

mang kara sanjata sri padhmami tara /
man bi mantra appearing flowers tara
lohita barna dhana badana kara dhara //bhu//
red color meditation face who have



Yang kara sanjata sri arya tara devi /
yai bi mantra appearing mother tara goddess
harita barna nilotpala dhara devi //dhu//
green color blue lotus having goddess

janma janma sri bairochana shtarane //
life time and life time bairochana bow
bhanabi sri kulishacharya gita charita // dhu//
singer vajra master song compose

Prajwal - Teya Wedding Solemnized as per Newar Vajrayana Tradition. Saturday, January , 2024



Portland, Jan 27, A marriage ceremony of Teya De Sesa and Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya was solemnized on Saturday, Jan 27, 2024 at Portland's Nritya Mandala Mahavihara by priest Helen Appell as per the Newar Vajrayana Buddhist traditions.

Helen, who is the founder of Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, the first Newar Buddhist temple and study center in the West, is a serious Buddhist practitioner and has studied Vajrayana for many years in India, Nepal and the US.



The wedding ceremony at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara is a historical moment because the nuptial-tie between a Vajracharya Guruju and an American woman was solemnized for the first time by a Westerner Vajrayana priest at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, the first and only one Newar Vajrayana vihara outside of Nepal. All traditional Newar Vajrayana rituals and chantings including Kalash Puja were performed by priest Helen during the wedding.



Prajwal is himself a Newar Vajrayana priest and Teya, an American, is affiliated to Pure Land Farms, a Tibetan Buddhist center in

California. But they have

made an important decision to hold each other's hand and share their future as husband and wife.

The wedding ceremony of Teya and Prajwal in Portland was arranged by Nritya Mandala Mahavihara's Sarvasangha.

Wearing a red Sari embroidered with gold thread and dotted with sequins, wearing all the required gold ornaments bride Teya and appropriately attired groom Prajwal sat across from priest Helen.



Prajwal and Teya then presented each other with Kisli, small bowls containing rice, coins and betel nuts, while prayed for good health and long life together.

Newar wedding rituals include many unique features, including the use of Sinha-Mu (five-story stupa-like colored powder holder), from which they were given Tikas. Likewise, there was also a brief mirror reflection (Jwola Nhayakan) ritual.

Swayambar was the most important component of the wedding ritual in which the bride circled the groom three times and placed a 'dubo' garland on the neck of the groom. After that, the groom also placed 'dubo' garland on bride's neck. Circumambulating the groom three times binds the couple's energies together and brings peace, happiness and prosperity and finally, the priest, Helen, announced now they married.



At the same time, under Shiffala Lwakegu ritual, the heads of the bride and groom were banged together; and rice, flowers and fruits were poured (shifan luigu) over the heads of the bride and groom.



The wedding rituals also included offering of 'Thaye Bhu' feast for the groom and the bride, and Khen Sagan in which wine, fish and eggs were offered to the bride, groom and the family.

'Thaye Bhu' is a variety of 84 different foods prepared on an extra large plate (bhu) for auspicious occasions especially the wedding ceremonies. Then there is introduction program with groom family to bride called the goaydhatayagu, the offering of two betel nuts from the bride to the groom's family, as a way to make a strong connection, long lasting like a betel nut.

The newly wed couple and friends who were present at the wedding ceremony circumvented the temple three time.

Similarly, parade of the newly wed - Janti - was taken out around the neighborhood of the Mahavihara, and the ongoing cars on the streets honked at the procession as a welcome gesture.

Among the guests, the American as well as the Nepalese ladies were dressed in the red Saris, whereas men were seen in Daura Suruwal, suit and Nepali Topi.

Many dear friends and family members joined the wedding ceremony at the Mahavihara. Present on the occasion were the board members of the Mahavihara, Sangha members and representatives of the Nepali community in Portland.



The wedding ceremony was followed by a breakfast and lunch was served.

It is to be noted that Prajwal - Teya wedding was solemnized on Sunday, Dec 3, 2023 at the Pure Land Farm in California as per Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

This is edited by Teya DeSesa