

Mahavihara's Participation at Starlight Parade is a Hit with Portland Community

Rabin Man Shakya



Portland, (Nepal Oregon News): For the first time in history, Nriya Mandala Mahavihara represented Nepal by participating at the Starlight Parade in Portland on Saturday, June 3, 2023.



There is no doubt that it is an honor for the Nepalese community in Oregon to take part in Portland's Starlight Parade for the first time in the community's history. The Nepalese participation at the Starlight Parade was organized by the Nriya Mandala Mahavihara in collaboration with Seattle-based nonprofit 'Dabuli', Newah Organization of America - Seattle chapter and Nepali Association of Oregon.



Starlight Parade is held once a year as part of the Portland Rose Festival that was launched 116 years ago in 1907.



The Mahavihara's participation at the parade showcased traditional and historical art, music,

dance and more. The focus of the Mahavihara's participation at the parade was to expose the culture and traditions of Newar Buddhism to the city and its people and also to provide an opportunity for the broader public to experience the very rich and unique but often inaccessible traditions of Newar Buddhism.



The procession featured beautiful representations of the Charya dances and Charya Giti, displaying Pancha Buddha and showcasing Living Goddess Kumari. The group offered Lakhe Dance and Dhime Baja, and the



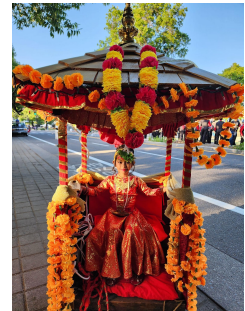
Nepalese Sherpas were seen walking in their traditional dresses. The group consisted of a diverse array of cultural backgrounds, including Newars (Buddhist as well as Hindu Newars), non-Newars, and American Buddhists.

All the Nepalese participants in their traditional Saree and Daura Suruwal were able to grab the attention of the Portland street

audience.

Judging by the local radio comments, Nritya Mandala Mahavihara's participation at the Starlight Parade was a hit with the Portland community.

The Facebook Live broadcast had over ten thousand views, and there were hundreds of positive comments and supportive messages. Professor of Journalism and Mass Communication at the Tribhuvan University, Prabal Raj Pokhrel commented that the "Preservation of cultural heritage is praiseworthy."



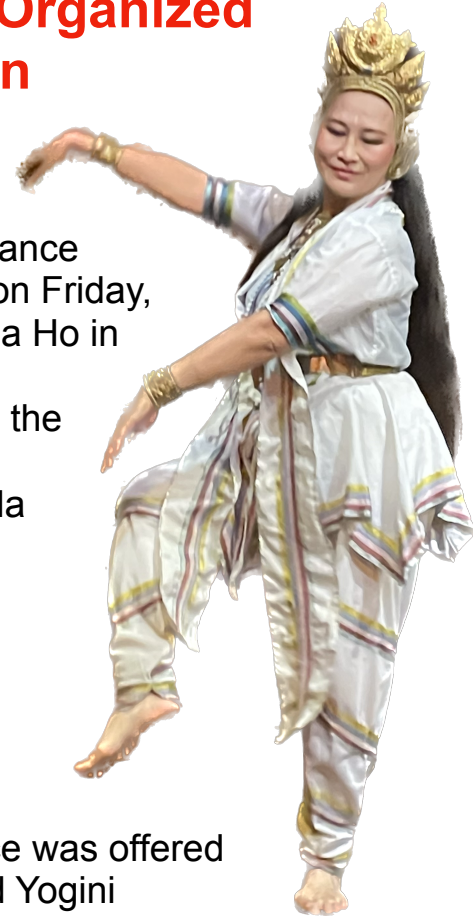
Special Charya Nritya Dance Offering Organized to Felicitate Hong Kong's Dr. Tina Ho in Portland

Portland, (Nepal Oregon News): A special Charya Nritya Dance offering was organized at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara on Friday, June 9, 2023 to welcome and felicitate Hong Kong's Dr Tina Ho in Portland, USA.

Altogether, seven Charya Nritya dances were presented at the program, with an audience of 25 Charya Nritya fans.

Charya Nritya dance offering event kicked off with Mahakala Charya dance which was performed by Sangha member Joshua Proto.

After that, Arya Tara - Amoghasiddhi charya dance was rendered by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya and Dr Tina Ho of Hong Kong Dance Mandal.



Likewise, Avalokiteshvara Charya dance was offered by Sangha member Adam Bidema, and Yogini Mandala Charya Dance was carried out by dance trio: Guruji Prajwal, Dr Tina Ho of Hong Kong Dance Mandal and Sangha member Anastasia Roderick. Yogini Mandala is one of the ancient and medieval Charya dance Nritya which embodies

Nairatma, Vajrayogini and Aakashyogini.

Similarly, Sangha member Anastasia Roderick presented a performance 'Vajrayogini' and Dr. Tina Ho of Hong Kong Dance Mandal put

'Padmanateshvara' Charya Nritya dance on the

stage. Finally, the special program to welcome and felicitate Dr. Tina Ho was wrapped up with Guruji Prajwal's Charya dance 'Mahavairochana'. All the Charya Nritya dances were skillfully





choreographed by Prajwal. Charya Gitis for all the Charya Nriyas were vocalized by singers Joshua Proto and Lesson Baker. The program was conducted by Sangha member Terry Satterthwaite.

Dr. Tina Ho, who is the leading figure of Charya dance teaching in Hong Kong. She has her Ph D in Chinese philosophy, and majored in Chinese Buddhism from the Sun Yat-sen University of China in 2005. Dr. Ho has been teaching in the colleges and sharing her knowledge in different Buddhist centers in Hong Kong on the weekends for the last 20 years.

Dr. Ho has written two books: "A Philosophical Analysis of Vimalakirti Sutra" (2021) as well as "Blissful Zen" (2010). She also has published a bilingual poetry book: "Dancing in my heart - Romancing the Buddha" (2017).

She has traveled to Indonesia, Taiwan, Nepal, India, Malaysia, USA and other places for learning and practicing Dharma and meditation and receiving teachings from Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche and other great masters.

Dr. Ho is also practicing Charya Nriya of Newar Buddhism under the guidance of 35th lineage holder Prajwal Vajracharya and his senior student LiAnne almost 10 years. In the past four years, she has been teaching dance in her own Buddhist center.



Potluck Dinner, Debriefing for Starlight Parade Participation



A potluck dinner and debriefing for Nriya Mandala Mahavihara's participation at Portland's Starlight Parade was organized on Saturday, June 10, 2023.

The gathering revolved around the planning and coordination of Vihara's participation at the parade.

Speaking on the occasion, Prajwal Vajracharya, co-founder of the Mahavihara, reckoned: "We were able to show the city and beyond the unity of the groups, as well as diversity and amazing cultural traditions."

The discussions also took stock of what can be done for the next year's participation. Lauding the role of the community, Prajwal said: "All the groups came together and did wonderful in their parts."

The Kumari was wonderful and beautiful. The Lakhe dance was a fantastic and important addition."

Underscoring the importance of Dhime Baja, Prajwal said: "Without drumming, this would not have been as powerful!" The Raga and Charya were amazing as well, the Guruji stated.

The Mahavihara will leave no stone unturned to make even a better participation in the coming days, Prajwal added: "In the future, we hope for more ethnic groups from all the parts of Nepal."

A number of the Nepalese community members also expressed their views during the interactive meeting. Meanwhile, on the occasion, Dr Tina Ho also handed over 'Certificate of Participation' to all the Charya Nritya dancers and Charya Giti singers who had participated at the International Dance Day program organized by the Mahavihara on April 29, 2023.

The certificates of participation which were issued by Hong Kong Dance Federation were handed over by Dr. Tina Ho to Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya, Joshua Proto, Adam Bidema, Anna Shustrova, Anastasia Roderick, Leson Baker, Bobby Romansky and John Ryback.

Likewise, a certificate on completion of the World Newah Organization-sponsored Nepal Bhasa Course was given to Dr. Tina Ho by Daya Shakya, the course teacher.



Macha Janko Ceremony: An Important Life Cycle Ritual in Newar Culture



Macha Janko (Nepal Bhasa), Pasni (Nepali) or Annaprasana (Sanskrit) are words used for a baby rice feeding ceremony.

This ceremony is one of the important life cycle rituals of Nepal, both a cultural and religious celebration, according to priest Prajwal Vajracharya.

The ceremony is typically held for girls at five months and boys at six months, because it is at about this time the child's digestive system can easily process solid food.

Prajwal traveled to San Diego, California to perform the Macha Jank rituals for Riyan (son of Kaushal Vajracharya and Selina Shakya, grandson of Dina Shakya) on Saturday, June 17, 2023.

Also, a rice feeding ceremony of Eklabya Sharan Shakya (son of Sudip Shakya and Anuja Thapa Magar and grandson of Daya and Jaya Shakya) was held at the temple of the Mahavihara on Sunday, June 4, 2023.



Weekly Activities in Vihara Continue

In June, as usual and as always, Dharani chanting on Zoom was conducted once a week every Tuesday evening. Similarly, Sadhana practice and Buddha Bhajan singing practice were held on each Wednesday evening. Likewise, the practice of singing Charya Giti was performed in the mornings every Friday.

This is edited by Teya DeSesa

