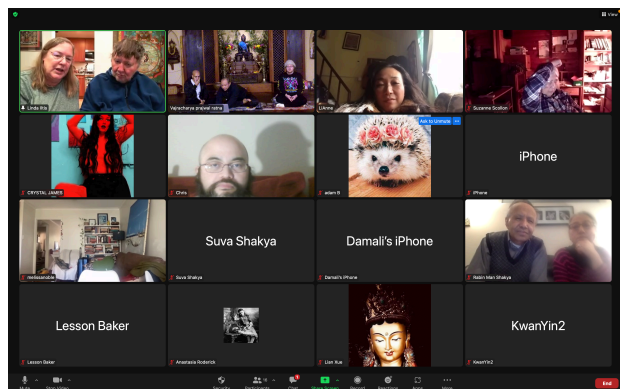


Thursday, 17 March 2022

Falgun Purnima Observed with Chanting of Namasangiti

Each Purnima (full moon day) is sacred and holy for Nepali Buddhists. Two other Nepali events, Chakan Dyo Jatra and Gurumapa Yat Ja Nakegu, also coincide with this day of Falgun

Purnima. Falgun Purnima was observed at Nritya Mandala Mahavirara here in Portland with the recitation of the Manjushri Namasangiti.



Naamsangiti was recited in the temple by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya, Joshua Proto, Riyaz Khan, Naveena Shakya and Dr

Rabin Man Shakya. They were joined by others on Zoom from Hong Kong, India and other parts of the USA.

Saturday, 19 March 2022

Sitar Concert Held at Nritya Mandala Mahavihara

The first Sitar concert at the Portland Baha after the relaxation of the COVID-19 pandemic guidelines was played by Josh Feinberg, accompanied by Ravi Albright on Tabla, and attended by 45 people. Masks were mandatory at the concert, as was proof of vaccination or a negative test result of COVID-19 within last 72 hours.

Guru Prajwal Vajracharya, senior pujari and priest, gave a short introduction of musician duo. Prior to the beginning of the Sitar concert, Maestro Feinberg said, "I am performing in Portland for the first time in two and half years. I am so happy to



be playing music again.” Remembering about the hardships during the pandemic, the noted Sitarist lamented, “The last couple of years have been so hard for me and so many others. I am filled with a sense of gratitude for my kids, my music and the ability to do what I love - spending my time creating music, teaching and bringing beauty and joy into the world.”



Josh Feinberg is celebrated as one of the world's leading young Sitarists, and is hailed as one of the most original and dynamic Sitar maestros of his generation. As a Jewish-American-Hindustani artist, Josh is a self described 'musical immigrant' in the field of Indian classical music. His new album 'Time does not exist for light' was released in Australia early on in COVID-19.

This enthralling and mesmerizing Sitar concert included (1) Basant Pancham Taal Ki Sawari + Tintal, (2) Charukesh in Sitarkhani and (3) Bhairavi Dadra.

Ravi Albright, who is a professional Tabla player, is the founder of Seattle Tabla Institute in Seattle, Washington, and also the adjunct faculty of music at Lewis and Clark College in Portland. Ravi has been a student of North American Indian classical tabla drumming in both India and the US since his youth. He is one of only a few ganda-banda (formally recognized) disciples of Pundit Anindo Chatterjee of Kolkata, India.



Saturday, 26 March 2022

Vihara Celebrates Fifth World Newar Day



Nritya Mandala Mahavihara celebrated World Newar (Newar) Day with various scholarly presentations, a Buddhist Bhajan and a poem in Nepal Bhasa. But, most importantly, the main attraction was the Newar Jhwo Bhoje (a Newar feast tradition in which participants or guests are seated on long mats). It was kind of a mini Newar food festival organized at the end of the program to mark the Day.

The Newar Jhwo Bhoje was the first organized at the temple since the relaxation of COVID-19 pandemic guidelines. Newar and American guests sat cross-legged in a line, and sangha volunteers served them Baji, Rice, Chhoyela, Bhuti, Simpu Kwa, Aalu Achar, Lain Achar, Tofu Curry, Musya Palu, Pachhai Tarkari, Dhau, Sisa Busa, Jeri Mari, Dudha Bhari and other treats. According to Guru Prajwal Vajracharya, 21 different kinds of food were served. The Bhoje was served on traditional brass plates.



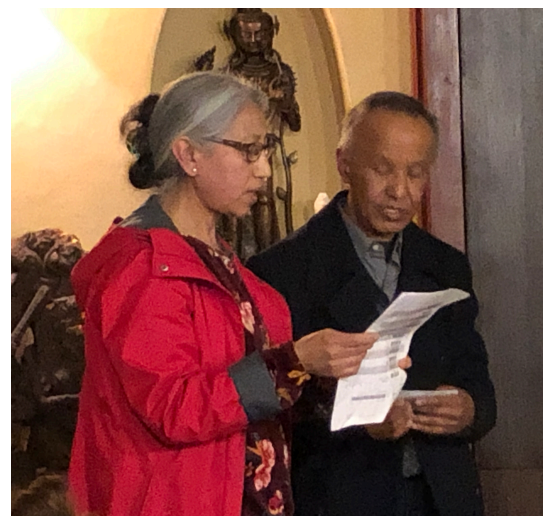
Prior to the feast, Prajwal Vajracharya discussed the many temples and historical monuments created by Newar artisans in the ancient and medieval periods. Guru Prajwal provided pictures of a variety of the Newar temples and stupas in the Nepal Mandala created by Newar craftsmen, calling them “a part of Nepal's glorious national history.” Lauding their artistry he



said, "The temples, stupas and historical monuments scattered throughout Nepal Mandala on the one hand show the flair of the Newar people for arts, sculpture, stone carving, masonry, carpentry, and architecture, and on the other hand indicate the significance of religious reverence and harmony."

Noting that cultural and traditional values have always been sacred to the Newar, Vajracharya pointed out the large number of historical monuments, stupas, Viharas and temples in the Nepal Mandala. He also said, "Keeping our Newar identity alive and saving our cultural and ritual traditions in the USA, that is a formidable challenge, but we are committed to it."

Daya Shakya, patron of the World Newarh Organization (WNO), made a presentation on "From Gallis and Nanis to the Alleys of Halin." His talk presented a detailed and comprehensive description on the history and activities of the World Newarh Organization, established in 2011 by the London Declaration, and its decision in 2017 to observe the last Saturday of the month of March as World Newarh Day (WND).



In discussing the activities and objectives of the WNO, Shakya said WNO was launched to act as an umbrella organization of all the Newar forums and associations in Nepal and abroad. Shakya indicated that WNO is a global entity to discuss the Newar issues among the wide range of underprivileged and deprived groups.

Our annual WND celebration is an



important national as well as international event for Newars, one that the WNO has been holding since 2018 to disseminate the idea that the civilization of Newar people should be recognized, he added.

A third presentation on "Newar Culinary Heritage: Medical Cuisine of the World" was made by well-known Newar chef Vikram Vaidya. "Each dish served during feasts and festivals have symbolic significance," he said. Vaidya, who is former faculty at the Oregon Culinary Institute in Portland, also indicated that "Different kind of foods are presented for different occasions, considering the seasonal climatic conditions and nutritional needs of human body."

During the presentation, Vaidya showed different pictures highlighting the Newar food to be used on different occasions and festivals. He shared that Kwati (a thick soup consisting of various beans) has a historical significance in Newar culture

because when food supply used to be scarce, Kwati provided farmers with much nourishment during monsoon's crop-planting season.

"There are over 200 dishes in Newar cuisines, however. Food is essential part of Newar culture. When community members come together to celebrate festivals, food brings everyone together. Without food, there is no festival," he said.

Newars are renowned for their festivals and feasts, Vaidya concluded.



During a brief presentation, Dr Rabin Man Shakya of the Nepal Oregon News discussed the contribution made by Guru Prajwal Vajracharya and the Portland's Newar Buddhist temple in

protecting and promoting Newar Buddhist heritage and rituals in the USA. Dr Shakya said, "World Newah Day (WND) is an opportunity for the Newar people across the world to renew our commitment to the Newar cause in challenging times. WND is a day to reflect on the messages and teachings of late Newar luminaries."

Dr Tina Ho, a prominent Charya dancer and teacher in Hong Kong, expressed the belief that various activities carried out by Hong Kong Dance Mandala Sangha and Portland's Nritya Mandala Mahavihara enhance and enrich Newar culture and rituals in Hong Kong and the USA respectively. Speaking over Zoom, Dr Ho from Hong Kong said, "Newah Buddhist Charya dance is an esoteric dance form that used to be exclusively performed by Vajracharyas within the Newar community. We are also students of Prajwal Guraju. Hong Kong Dance Mandala Sangha is always committed to promote and preserve the esoteric Newar Buddhist traditional dance."



Similarly, a poem in Nepal Bhasa "Bhingu Bicha Yaye Nu" (Let's think in a good, positive way) was recited by Sangha member Naveena Shakya and a Buddhist Bhajan was performed by Joshua Proto, Casey Redman, Mario Mastrangelo, Riyaz Khan and Yadav. The Bajan (a kind of drum) for the Bhajan was played by Satya Bayu (an American artist).

Every Friday, throughout the month of March International Webinar Training on Gurumandala Puja

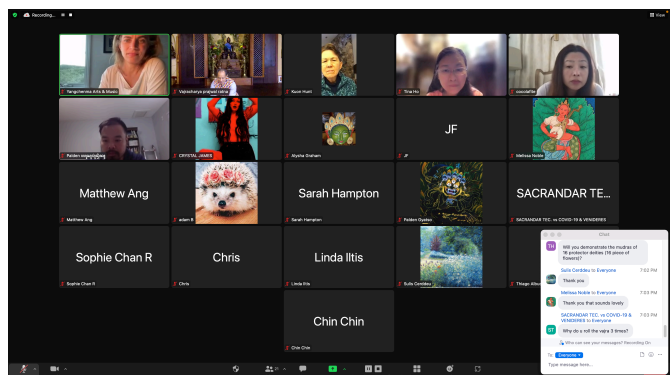
The 12-week international webinar on Gurumandala Puja hosted by Yangchenma Arts & Music, Los Angeles is continuing every Friday evening (Portland time) through the month of March and will complete on the 23rd of April. It is being attended on Zoom by 45 participants from 15 countries.

Co-founder of Nritya Mandala Mahavihara and its chief priest and pujari, Guru Prajwal Vajracharya, is conducting the international webinar. This month, Vajracharya indicated that participants were taught the meaning and scope of the Gurumandala Puja, as well as its structure and use. Guru Vajracharya, who is also an expert on Newar Vajrayana Buddhism, said, "In the broadest sense, Guru here refers to the TriRatna, the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Sangha; while Mandala's meaning is universal, going beyond the body, speech and mind of oneself; and Puja refers to rituals and worshipping. Therefore, Gurumandala Puja could very broadly be defined as the worshipping of the refined body,



speech and mind for attaining Nirvana.

It is to be noted that Gurumandala Puja is one of the oldest and most ubiquitous rituals of Newar Vajrayana Buddhism. It is a part of nearly every ritual, large and small.



Other classes continue

Meanwhile, regular **Dharani** reciting was held once a week on each Tuesday, while **Sadhana** practice and Buddhist **Bhajans** are conducted on every Wednesday. Also, **Charya giti** practice is held weekly on Friday. All classes are available at the vihara and on Zoom. See this website listing for times and Zoom logins.

