

'Spring Blossoming Dance Offering' Organized, World Newah Day Observed in Portland

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Sixth World Newah Day Observed in Portlan

Portland, March 26: A program was organized by Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, Portland, USA on Saturday, March 25, 2023 to celebrate the Sixth World Newah Day.

40 people - among them: the American Buddhists and Nepalese community members - took part in person at the Portland's World Newah Day event. Likewise, 15 participants took part at the Portland's program on the zoom: from Nepal, USA, Britain, Hong Kong and Canada.

The World Newah Day event kicked off with the refuge dance (Newah Buddhist Charya Nritya) performed by Prajwal Vajracharya, Joshua Proto, Gabriel Quitslund, Bobby Romansky and Adam Bidema.



Speaking on the occasion, Prajwal said that celebration of World Newah Day is a chance for us to raise awareness for preservation and promotion of ancient Newar culture and heritage.



Patron of World Newah Organization (WNO) Daya Shakya threw light on the history and activities of the WNO established in 2011 by the London Declaration, and its decision in 2017 to observe the last Saturday of the month of March as World Newah Day.

Shakya also informed the audience about the brief history of Shree Bhaskara Deva Sanskarit Keshchandra Krit Paravarta Mahavihara of Itum



Bahal, Kathmandu including the ritual activities like Pravarjyasambhar and Pravarjyavishek.

Also, on the occasion, the Sangha member Adam Bidema stunned the crowd by speaking in Nepal Bhasa whereas Sangha members Joshua Proto, Gabriel Quitslund and Anastasia Roderick stressed on the need to preserve and promote Newar culture and Charya Nritya.

Shovit Shakya from Estonia (but currently in Nepal) underscored the activities being carried out to upgrade Google Nepal Bhasa Translation Project, while Paubha Sayami expressed his belief that WNO would be a formidable organization that works for the Newarh cause.

Kritish Rajbhandari who is English professor at Portland's Reed College recited a poem "Chiniyamha Kisicha" by noted Nepal Bhasa poet Durga Lal Shrestha.



The presentations during the event were profound and thought-provoking, but the Buddha Bhajans - Lumbini

and Dasa Paramita - performed

by Sangha members Joshua Proto and Adam Bidema in Nepal Bhasa stole the show.



The certificates on completion of the WNO-sponsored

Nepal Bhasa course were given to Sangha member

Adam Bidema and Hong Kong Sangha members Dr

Tina Ho and Dickon Kong, where as life-membership

certificates of WNO were handed over to Portlanders Pradeep Vajracharya and Kusumavati Vajracharya.

The Sixth World Newarh Day event was followed by a Newarh style potluck dinner.



"Spring Blossoming Dance Offering"

Portland, March 27: "Spring Blossoming Dance Offering" showcasing amazing and incredible Newar Vajrayana Buddhist Charya dances was organized at Portland's Nritya Mandala Mahavihara on Sunday, March 26, 2023.



The program which showcased sacred and esoteric Newar Buddhist meditational dances was attended by forty people in person at the temple and 22 people on Zoom. Prof. Dr. Miranda Shaw, Dr. Tina Ho and journalist Karen Greenspan are among the virtual participants.



Prior to the starting of the Charya Nritya show, Sangha member John A. Ryback, who skillfully conducted the program, said that Charya nritya is a Newar Vajrayana Buddhist ritual dance with a history going back to more than 1,000 years.

The event kicked off with Mahakala dance which was skillfully performed by Joshua Proto, sung by Leson Baker. Mahakala is a wrathful protector deity, turquoise in color and awesome to behold. He is beautiful and splendid with his short and stout body, huge belly and fierce look. He wears a tiger skin, bone ornaments and snakes and is destroyer of all fears. Like Vajrapani, he dances upon the negative forces that fuel the path to enlightenment. Mahakala is a mask dance.

After Mahakala dance, Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche) charya dance was offered by Bobby Romansky, while his consorts Mandarava was posed by Anastasia Roderick and Yeshe Tsogyal's role was performed by Anna Shrustova, sung by Leson Baker. Padmasambhava is semi-wrathful and smiling. His two eyes are always wide open and gazing straight ahead - awakening the people.





Next, Vajrasattva charya dance was performed by Sangha member Adam Bidema. Vajrasattva is considered the quintessence of all the peaceful Buddha families. Vajrasattva is peaceful in appearance, white in color, with one face and two hands, seated in Vajra posture. The proper right hand holds an upright gold Vajra at the level of the heart. The left hand holds a Vajra handled bell turned up at the left hip.



Likewise, the Sixteen Offering Goddess dance was performed by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya and Anastasia Roderick while Vajrasattva (Adam Bidema) was seen in sitting posture. The sixteen offering goddess dances, also known as Sodasha Lasya in Sanskrit, are sixteen dance postures representing various musical instrument offerings as well as other sense offerings. They are personified as the sixteen Goddesses of sensual enjoyment who show honor to the central deities of the Mandala through their pure offerings. Similarly, charya dance 'Kurukulla' was carried out by Sangha member Anna Shrustova with flying colors. Kurukulla charya dance is one of the ancient classical dances of Nepal. Kurukulla is a fully awakened female Buddha and a magnetizing Dakini. Kurukulla is a female deity whose body is usually depicted in red garments and red jewelry.

Kurukulla is also known as Ugra Tara who has four hands.



Next, the charya dance 'Green Tara' was performed by Sangha member Anastasia Roderick. Green Tara is green in color and embodies compassionate activity. Green Tara sits in a joyful ease pose with her right leg extended, always ready to come to the aid of beings. She gives generously with her right hand and holds a lotus of purity with her left hand at her heart.

The charya dance 'Singhamukha' was well rendered by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya and Sangha members Anna Shustrova and Bobby Romansky. Singhamukha is a lion-faced female Buddha. She is red,



fearless and very wrathful, emphasizing that enlightenment is not a passionate state, but rather a state of wholeness in which one has access to all the energies and capacities of one's being. Singhamukha is a mask dance.

At the end of the "Spring Blossoming Dance Offering", a Refuge dance - a performance of Buddha Bandana dance through charya nritya - was performed by Guruji Prajwal and other Sangha members: John Ryback, Anna Shrustova, Joshua Proto, Anastasia Roderick, Leson Baker, Bobby Romansky, Gabriel Quitslund and Adam Bidema. Buddhist practitioners take refuge daily in the Buddha - the teacher, the Dharma - the teachings and the Sangha - the community.

The charya dances were beautiful and fascinating, reflecting the stories of the inner qualities and awakening of Buddhist deities. Sangha members Joshua Proto and Leson Baker sang charya giti for all the charya dances performed on the occasion. Leson and Joshua are seasoned and skilled charya giti singers.

Tinchu (small cymbals) were played by Leson Baker and Joshua Proto while Kanta Dub Dub (small hand drum, or Damaru) was beaten by John Ryback.



Teaching in Hong Kong Sangha Members

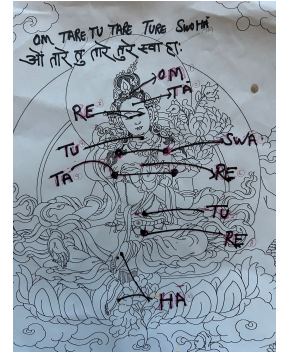


Portland, March 5: A virtual teaching entitled "Inner Awakening with the Mantra" was organized by Hong Kong Dance Mandal Sangha on Saturday, March 4, 2023. Eighteen participants from Hong Kong Dance Mandal Sangha took part at the virtual teaching.

Prajwal Guruji's virtual talk presented a detailed and comprehensive description of deity Tara.

Working with the Tantric practices of deity Tara, the Hong Kong participants were given an opportunity to explore techniques that empowered them to manifest our human potential. Movement, Meditation, Mudra and Dialogue were used to bring the participants deeper into the heart of wisdom, compassion and power.

Underscoring the importance of Tara Mantra - Om Tare Tutare Ture Swaha, and the somatic connection to the inner channels, awakening inner energies. Prajwal Guruji, said: "Tara is green and embodies compassionate activity. She sits in a pose of joyful ease, with her right leg extended, always ready to come to the aid of beings. She gives generously with her right hand and holds a lotus of purity with her left hand at her heart."



Prajwal Guruji further told the Hong Kong participants that chanting of her Mantra a hundred thousand times with the motivation of Bodhichitta will cause aversion of obstacles and hindrances.

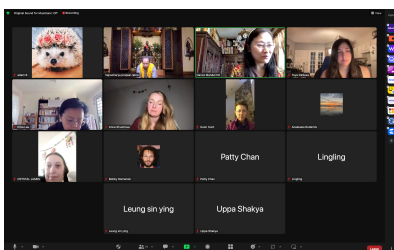
The Guruji went on saying: "Tara is an important figure in Newar Vajrayana Buddhism. She appears as female Buddha in Vajrayana Buddhism."

Tara is also known as 'mother of liberation' and represents the virtues of success in work and achievements.

In this teaching, Prajwal Guruji shared the Charya dance of Tara, the female Buddha of liberating activities, and demonstrated the expression of her all-pervasive enlightened qualities through body, energy and mind.



Prajwal informed the virtual participants that there are 21 forms of Tara. "They are all the transformed bodies of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of compassion", he stated.



Chuda Karma Ceremony Held in San Diego



Portland, March 18: A Chuda Karma ceremony (Bare Chhuyegu) of Julian Shakya, age 12, son of Birendra Shakya was performed by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya.

The Chuda Karma ceremony was ritualized at Birendra's residence in San Diego, California on Saturday, March 18, 2023.



Julian's Chuda Karma ceremony was held by performing Homa Puja and Gurumandala Puja and other required rituals and traditions.

The Chuda Karma boy - Julian - wore the Buddhist monk's (Vichhatan chiber) dress. As per the rituals, four gentlemen poured sacred water on the head of the Chuda Karma boy, and relatives of the boy gave away the alms (Vichha). This ceremony certifies the boy to become a Bare (monk), hence the name Bare Chhuyegu.



According to Prajwal Guruji, Chuda Karma is one of the important lifecycle rituals in a life of a young man. Chuda Karma is traditionally performed for boys aged five to thirteen.



Holi Punhi Observed with Chanting of Naamsangiti



Portland, March 9, Holi Punhi (Falgun Purnima) was observed by the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 by reciting Manjushree Naamsangiti.

Two other Newar festivals -- Chakan Dyo Jatra and Gurumapa Yat Ja Nakegu -- also coincide with this day of Falgun Purnima.

Naamsangiti was recited by Sangha members, Prajwal Guruji, Mathew Bourgeois, Gabriel Quitslund, Dina Shakya, Crystal James, Naveena Shakya and Dr Rabin Man Shakya and Dr Tina Ho from Hong Kong Sangha. Meanwhile, in March, as usual and as always, Dharani chanting on zoom was conducted once a week every Tuesday. Similarly, Sadhana Practice and Buddha Bhajan singing practice were held on each Wednesday. Likewise, the practice of singing Charya giti was performed on every Friday.

