

## 9th World Newah Day Celebrated

By Rabin Man Shakya

A program was organized by Nritya Mandala Mahavihara and Nepa Chhen in Portland, USA on Saturday, March 28, 2026 to celebrate the Ninth World Newah Day.

American Buddhists and Nepalese community members - took part at the Portland's Ninth World Newah Day event. Likewise, 10 participants took part at the Portland's program on the zoom.

The World Newah Day celebration in Portland kicked off with the singing of Newah National Anthem.

The main attraction of the World Newah Day celebration in Portland, USA was the Newah Jhwo Bhoje (a Newar feast tradition in which participants or guests are seated cross-legged on long mats and Newar food served on a Lapte).

The Newah Jhwo Bhoje is organized every year at the Newar Buddhist temple in Portland to mark the World Newah Day. 21 different kinds of Newah cuisines were served on traditional green Lapte plates.

The community aspect of sharing food likely strengthens bonds and fosters community harmony among the Newah Portlanders. The Newar Bhoje tradition also highlights and preserves Newar cuisine and culinary heritage.

Delivering Laskus Nwochu (welcome speech) on the occasion, Prajwal Vajracharya, co-founder of Nritya Mandala Mahavihara expressed the view that celebration of World Newah Day is a chance for us to raise awareness for preservation and promotion of Newar culture and tradition.

Vajracharya, who is the chief pujari at the Mahavihara, also informed the participants about his recent visit to Oxford,





London, UK where he made presentations on Newar Vajrayana Buddhism.

Throwing light on the World Newah Day history, vice president of Nepa Chhen Dr Rabin Man Shakya stressed that the celebration of World Newah Day is an opportunity for the Newah people across the world to renew our commitment for Newah cause in challenging times.

On the occasion, expressing his happiness over the activities of the Mahavihara, Joshua Proto - a Sangha member and a seasoned Charya giti singer - underscored the need of collective efforts to promote Newar Buddhism and Newar culture. Joshua also extended World Newah Day greetings to all the participants.



After that, Hong Kong Dance Mandal presented two Vajra dances on the zoom: Manjushree Vajra Dance and Green Tara Vajra Dance.

Manjushree Vajra Dance was performed by Sin Ying Leung. Manjushree is the Bodhisattva associated with Pragna (wisdom) in Newar Buddhism. Manjushree means 'Gentle Glory' in Sanskrit. The Lord of Wisdom, Manjushree holds Pragna Paramita (perfection of wisdom) text and wields a sword to cut through ignorance. He is golden in color and speaks the universal language of all beings to aid them in understanding reality.

Likewise, Green Tara Vajra Dance was performed by Dr Tina Ho. Arya Tara is an important figure in Newar Vajrayana Buddhism. She appears as female Buddha in Vajrayana Buddhism. She is also known as 'mother of liberation' and represents the virtues of success in work and achievements. Arya Tara is green in color and embodies compassionate activity. She 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 lotus of purity with her left hand at her heart.

After that, Arya Shakya and Veena Shakya performed a Newah duet dance



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"Chhangu Mikha Taska Bala" (your eyes are very beautiful).

This was followed by a song rendition in Nepal Bhasa on months and seasons of Nepal Sambat by Anjali Bajracharya.

Kusumavati Bajracharya recited a poem in Nepal Bhasa about women empowerment. Naveena Shakya presented a poem in Nepal Bhasa 'Importance of Mother Tongue'. Likewise, Kritish Rajbhandari, a professor at Reeds College, read out a poem by Jana Kavi Durga Lal Shrestha.

Also, former president of Nepali Association of Oregon (NAO) Ganga Sharma gave information about the upcoming NAO New Year party, whereas Kritish Rajbhandari made an announcement about 'Nepal Bhasa Language Classes for all ages'. The classes are to begin from May 17, 2026 at Hollywood Taekwondo School. Furthermore, president of Nepa Chhen Daya Shakya shed light on nutritional value of Newah Bhoys.

Furthermore, a music video in Nepal Bhasa 'Newah Voice' written and produced by Daya Shakya was officially released. The music video says - let us fight for our rights - and depicts struggle and protests of Newah people and harassment meted out to the Newah activists

### *Daya Shakya's Music Video 'Newah Voice' Released*



## *Zoom Teaching on 'Vajracharyas in Vajrayana' Held*

A zoom teaching on 'Vajracharyas in Vajrayana' which was conducted by Prajwal Vajracharya, was organized by Hong Kong Buddhist Studies Association (HKBSA) on Friday, March 20, 2026.

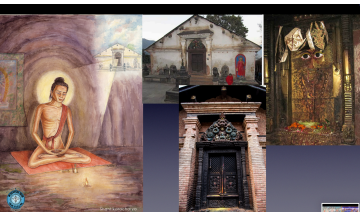
- ◆ Buddhism in Nepal
- ◆ Story behind growing up as Vajracharya
- ◆ Who is Vajracharya
- ◆ History of Vajracharya
- ◆ What make you Vajracharya
- ◆ How Many master( siddha) Vajracharya
- ◆ conclusion

Prior to the presentation, Prajwal Guruji and the zoom participants performed the Refuge chanting.

Making an introductory remark, Dr Tina Ho of HKBSA mentioned that Prajwal Guruji's talk is primarily based on his recent visit to Oxford, London.

Addressing the virtual gathering, Prajwal Vajracharya said: "The term - Vajrayana - refers to one of the three vehicles or routes to enlightenment, other two being the Sravakyana (Hinayana) and Mahayana (Paramitayana).

Prajwal in Portland emphasized that a Vajracharya is a Vajrayana Buddhist priest among the Newar communities of Nepal and a revered teacher who is highly attained in Vajrayana practices and rituals.



"Vajracharya means a Vajra Master. Vajracharyas are also called Guruju or Gubhaju which are Nepal Bhasa terms for Sanskrit word 'Guru'. The Vajracharya is the highest ranking of the Newar castes that are born Buddhist," added Prajwal Guruji.

Vajracharyas are the ritual masters for community festivals and essential life-cycle rituals, including birth, marriage and death ceremonies, ensuring that sacred traditions are woven into the fabric of daily life, the co-founder of the Mahavihara told the zoom audience.

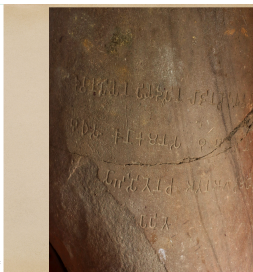
Stressing on the role and importance of the Vajracharyas in Newar Buddhism, Portland's Newar Gubhaju reiterated: "By bridging the gap between wisdom of ancient Mahasiddhas and modern practice, the Vajracharyas continue to preserve the deep spiritual heritage of the Himalayan region still in present days."

The Vajracharyas still serve as vital spiritual anchors and ritual experts in Newar Buddhism in Nepal, asserted the Guruji acknowledging "albeit the number of qualified and professional Vajracharyas is on the decline."

Newar Buddhist tradition is the oldest Buddhist tradition in the world, Prajwal Guruji said and threw light on Dipankara Buddha, one of the Buddhas of the past. He said that based on Swayambhu Purana and ancient history, there were many Buddhas before the Shakya Muni Buddha: Vipaswi Buddha, Shikhi Buddha, Vishwobhu Buddha, Krakuchanda Buddha, Kanakmuni Buddha and Kashyap Buddha.



Once upon a time, the Kathmandu valley was a huge lake, the Guruji told the participants about its history, Vipashwi Buddha's visit to Swayambhu, about Maha Manjushree striking the hill with his sword and releasing all the waters from the lake.



Prajwal Guruji also dealt on the ancient and medieval Tantric Mahasiddhas like Shantikaracharya, the first Vajrayana Tantric Guru of the Nepal Mandala, Surat Bajra Bajracharya, Lila Bajra Bajracharya, Manju Bajra Bajracharya and so on.

In fact, the origin of Mahankal temple in Kathmandu is tied to Tantric priest Shaswot Bajra Bajracharya of the Mantra Siddhi Mahavihara (Sabal Baha), he added.

Prajwal blamed on the then non-Buddhist rulers for the slow growth of Newar Buddhism in Nepal. "Newar Vajrayana Buddhism flourished during the Lichhavi dynasty in Nepal. But after that, it was followed by 800 years of secrecy under oppressive Hindu rule of Mallas, Shahs and Ranas".

During the presentation, Prajwal Guruji presented a detailed and comprehensive information on the history of Newar



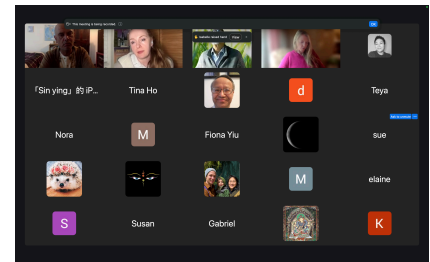
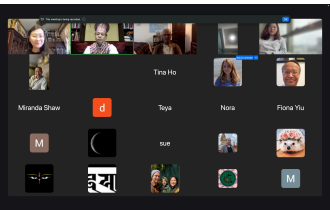


Vajrayana Buddhism and its interconnectedness with the Vajracharyas. "Historically, the first mention of Vajracharya was found in a stone carving dating 389 AD during the rule of King

Bishwo Deva," he said.

The participants of the online teaching also included Dr Mirada Shaw, Dr Tina Ho, Isabelle Chouinard and Daya Shakya.

At the end of the remotely-held teaching, Prajwal Guruji also answered to the questions of the zoom participants.



## Portland's Reed College Students Visit Temple

A team of students from Reed College, Portland visited Nriya Mandala Mahavihara, the first and only one Newar Vajrayana Buddhist monastery in the West, on Monday March 16, 2026.

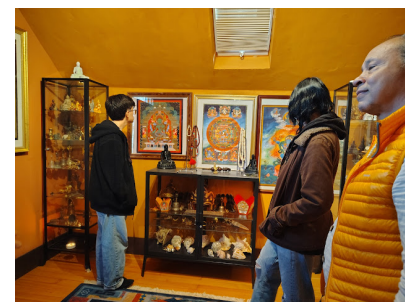


The team of the Reed College students visiting the Mahavihara were: Michael Stevenson (Teacher) and students - Kirk Rea, Jackson Chapman and Vieve Caperton.

The purpose of the field trip project "Land, Art & Spirituality - (LAS)" was to gain an understanding of the history, worship and practice in the Mahavihara.

Prajwal Guruji and the Reed College team together performed Refuge dance. Refuge dance is a performance of Buddha Bandana dance through Charya Nriya. Practitioners take refuge through embodiment of 'three jewels' - the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

On the occasion, Prajwal Guruji delivered a lecture on Newar Buddhism. The Guruji threw light on the history of Newar Buddhism, a rich form of Vajrayana practiced in the Kathmandu





valley.

The lecture zeroed in on the meaning of 10 Paramitas and the power of rituals. The teaching also focused on Charya Nritya which is a unique Newar Buddhist tradition dating back a thousand years that uses the physical body as vehicle for liberating the mind. The presentation also dealt with Mudra, Meditation and Mantras.

The Reed College students acquired information about the ongoing activities at the Newar Vajrayana monastery.

Likewise, the Reed College team visited library, art section, mask section and costume section of the Mahavihara.

"Land, Arts & Spirituality - (LAS)" gives students the opportunity to learn about embodied and meditative cultural practices while also learning about and practicing different methods of making.



### **Weekly Activities in Vihara Continue**

On Tuesday, March 3, Manjushree Naamsangiti was conducted by the Vihara on zoom to mark the Holi Punhi (full moon day). In March, as usual and as always, Dharani chanting on zoom was conducted once a week 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

