

Charya Nritya Veterans Perform Dances to Mark NMM's 14th Anniversary

Nritya Mandala Mahavihara Celebrates 14 Years with Various Programs

Rabin Man Shakya



Portland, Nov10 Various programs were organized all day long on Friday, Nov 10, 2023 to mark the fourteenth anniversary of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara (NMM) in Portland, USA.

The anniversary celebration kicked off with Gurumandala, kalasha puja and Mamaki Puja which were ritualized by Guruji Prajwal and participated by six other Sangha members: Joshua Proto, Anna Shustrova, Adam Bidema, Anastasia Roderick, Naveena Shakya and Gabriel Quitslund.



108 auspicious butter lamps were lit on the occasion followed by a refuge dance.



Meanwhile, evening celebrations of the anniversary started with educational Buddha Bhajans. Buddha Bhajans like (1) Dasaparamita Purna Yana, (2) Jaya Nammo Sri



(3) Najato Namu Buddhaye and (4) Tri Ratna Lumanki were performed by Joshua Proto, Anna Shustrova, Adam Bidema and Susan

Morningstar.

Similarly, Sunil Thapa sang a song ' Phoolko Aankha Ma' on the occasion.

Likewise, speaking at the event, Guruji Prajwal highlighted on the activities of the Mahavihara and underscored the need for further promotion and preservation of Newar Buddhism in the USA.



The NMM's fourteenth anniversary event was followed by an international Charya dance show at the Mahavihara and on the zoom.

Vesta Coradini from Brazil performed Green Tara charya dance where as Hong Kong Dance Mandal team demonstrated Padmanateshvara

charya dance and Vajrasaraswoti Sloka Vajra dance. The Vajra dances from Hong Kong were performed by Dr Tina Ho, Shira Chan, Patty Chan, Mary Lau, Sin Ying Leung, Wing Yee Lam, Sam Ng and Dickon Kong.



Also, on the occasion, different charya



nritya dances were beautifully and skillfully performed by veteran charya nritya dancers of the US Dance Mandal.

(1) Rakta Ganesh charya dance by Joshua Proto

(2) 16 Offering Goddess dance by Pepper Kocseb, Lilli Morell, Susan Morningstar, Neelam Kushwaha, Phyllis Moses

(3) Nairatma charya dance by Dara Daniels

(4) Vajrasaraswoti charya dance by Anastasia Roderick

(5) Maha Manjushree charya dance by Adam Bidema

(6) Vajrayogini charya dance by Alysha Graham

(7) Annapurna charya dance by Anna Shustrova

(8) Aakashyogini charya dance by Bobby Romansky

(9) Prajna Paramita charya dance by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya

(10) Mahakala charya dance by Corinne Nakamura - Rybak.

The evening program was hosted by Sangha member John Rybak at the temple and anchored on the Zoom by NMM board member Kuon Hunt. About 70 people participated at the NMM's fourteenth anniversary celebrations. Breakfast, lunch and dinner were served to the participants.



Prajwal Guruji's Visit Aims to Promote Newar Buddhism in Chile



Portland, Nov 20, Charya Nritya is an important part of Newar Vajrayana Buddhism. It originated in Nepal Mandala. This ancient and medieval dance dates back to more than 1,000 years and is a religious discipline of the Buddhist priests of the Kathmandu valley, who

perform the dances as part of their esoteric meditation, practices, ceremonies, and rituals.

Prajwal Vajracharya, who is a priest from one of the Vajracharya Buddhist lineages of Nepal, said this while addressing a 3 - day workshop 'Dance as a spiritual discipline - Charya Nritya' organized by Younge Khachod Ling (YKL-Chile) at Colegio Francisco Varela in Santiago on Friday thru Sunday Nov17-19, 2023.



In discussing the history of Newar Buddhism in Nepal, Prajwal also mentioned the visits of Vipaswi Buddha, Shikhi Buddha, Vishwabhu Buddha, Krakuchanda Buddha, Kashyapa Buddha and Kanakmuni Buddha to the Nepal Mandala.

Historical evidence has been found that Krakuchanda Buddha and Kanakmunu Buddha were also born in the Lumbini area in Nepal, the Guruji added.



Although Newar Buddhism is one of the oldest forms of Buddhism, few people in the world are familiar with it, said Prajwal Guruji. He also stressed the need for promotion and dissemination of Newar Buddhism in countries like Chile.

Dwelling on Charya Nritya, he said that it is a meditational dance that tells us stories of the inner qualities and awakening of Buddhist deities.

During the presentation, Prajwal Guruji threw light on the historical Namu Buddha where Prince Mahasattva fed a hungry tigress by sacrificing himself.

Princess Charumati, daughter of Ashoka, Mauryan Emperor of Magadha, is credited to have founded the monastery at Chabahil called Charumati Vihara, which is one of the oldest Buddhist monasteries of Nepal, the Guruji informed the Chilean participants.

During Prajwal Guruji's visit to Chile, the Chilean participants were able to explore Newar



Buddhism, the cultural and symbolic content of Charya Nritya dance, as well as fundamental principles for performing the Refuge dance and the 16 - Offering Goddess dance.

The workshop on Newar Buddhism and Charya Nritya was followed by a slide presentation. Likewise, Sloka of various deities were also performed during the workshop.

Besides the three day workshop, Prajwal Guruji also gave a free talk and demonstration 'Sacred Dances of Nepal: Charya Nritya and Chacha' on Thursday, Nov 16, 2023.

Joshua Proto, a Sangha member of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, was with the Guruji during his visit to Chile and taught a brief explanation of Charya Giti alongside Guruji.

Charya Nritya Blooms in Argentina during Guruji's Visit



Portland, Nov 26 Various teachings on Charya Nritya and workshops on Tantric Vajrayana Buddhism were organized for four days Nov 22 - Nov 25, 2023 during Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya's short visit to Argentina at the friendly invitation of the Tantric Revolutionary Center (TRC). It was the first time that Newar Vajrayana

Buddhism was taught in Argentina, according to the TRC. And it

was the first time Charya Nritya dances bloomed in Argentina during Prajwal Guruji's recent visit to that country.

A certificate was also handed over on Nov 22, 2023 to Prajwal Vajracharya by the Faculty of Philosophy, History and Oriental Studies of University of Salvador for hosting a presentation on 'Introduction of Newar Buddhism'.

An introductory talk on Newar Buddhism and Charya Dance by Prajwal Guruji was organized by Los Cedros Foundation on Thursday, Nov 23, 2023.



Likewise, a sacred dance workshop by Prajwal Guruji was held on Nov 24, 2023 at DurgaMaa, Valentin Gomez.

During the all-day long workshop, various Charya Nritya dances -- Green Tara, Vajrasattva, Vajravarahi and Guru Rinpoche -- were also performed and demonstrated by Prajwal Guruji, one of the senior-most Charya Nritya pedagogues in the world. Live singing was conducted by Joshua Proto

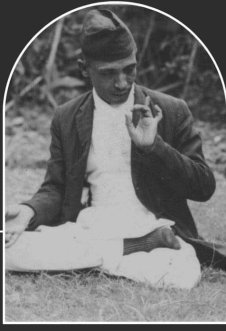
The workshop on Sacred Buddhist Dances of Nepal was an opportunity for Argentinians to get familiar with fundamental training in Charya Nritya dance, a unique Newar Buddhist Tantric tradition from Nepal dating back over a thousand years



GURU
PRAJWAL
VAJRA
CHARYA

Budismo de Nepal

Domingo 26/11
Ciudad de La Plata,
Buenos Aires



that uses the physical body as a vehicle for liberating the mind.

During the workshop, Prajwal Guruji threw light on Newar Vajrayana Tantric Buddhism.

He also touched on the ancient and medieval Tantric Mahasiddhas like Shantikaracharya, the first Vajrayana Tantric guru of the Nepal Mandala, Surat Vajra Vajracharya, Lila Vajra Vajracharya, Manju Vajra Vajracharya and so on.

Singing is the mantra, dancing is the meditation. When you combine the two - dance and song - that becomes where liberation comes from. Through it, you grow spiritually, and you can liberate yourself from the bondages and limitations, Prajwal Guruji went on saying adding that Vajrayana tradition is based on Tantric Buddhism.

In Sanskrit, Charya Nritya means dance as a spiritual discipline, said Prajwal Guruji adding that this is an ancient Vajracharya Buddhist dance tradition that until recently was unknown outside the circles of initiates who perform it. Also, on Saturday, Nov 25, 2023, Prajwal Guruji empowered 17 Argentinians with the Dikchha of Padmanateshvara by performing Newar Buddhist Tantric rituals.



GURU PRAJWAL VAJRACHARYA

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Joshua Proto, a Lama of TRC and a Sangha member of the Nriya Mandala Mahavihar was with the Guruji during his workshops in Argentina.

Anna, Stacie and Adam Perform Charya Dances at Nepal Festival 2023 in Bellevue, WA



Portland, Nov 18, Dance Mandal Portland team consisting of Prajwal Guruji's students Anna Shustrova, Anastasia Roderick and Adam Bidema performed rare Charya dances at Nepal Festival 2023.

Dabuli's eighth annual cultural event 'Nepal Festival 2023' was organized in collaboration with City of Bellevue on Saturday, Nov 18 at Bellevue College, Bellevue, Washington.

On the occasion, Anna Shustrova performed charya nritya dance 'Annapurna'. Likewise, charya dance 'Avalokiteshvara' was offered by Adam Bidema while charya dance 'Vajrayogini' was demonstrated by Anastasia Roderick.

The focus of Nepal Festival 2023 was to preserve the Newah and Nepali culture in the community and also provide an opportunity for the broader public to experience the very rich and unique but often inaccessible culture.





Dabuli's Nepal Festival 2023 provided an artistic platform for different indigenous and ethnic communities of Nepal to demonstrate their tradition and showcase their rich cultural heritage.

Weekly Activities in Vihara Continue

In November, 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.

(Rabin Man Shakya is a Newah journalist in USA)