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Sunday 3 October Bhima Rathahana of Prof Ellington and Prof Iltis Celebrated

Dr. Ter Ellingson, an ethnomusicologist, and his spouse, Dr. Linda Iltis, an anthropologist, both of Washington state, celebrated their Bura Buri Janko (Newar) at Nritya Mandala Mahavihara with friends and sangha members from Portland. Their long-time friend, Guru Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya, presided over the intimate event.



This was the second Bhima Rathahana of a couple from the US performed in the temple. Guru

Vajracharya explained, "When a man or woman turns 77 years, 7 months and 7 days, there is a special ceremony to perform. The celebration may also be held for a couple when either the husband or wife reaches that age. This observance calls on the Goddess of long life - Usnisavijaya - to purify their Karma and bestow the blessings of good health and a long life span upon them."



In addition to the many rituals, one fun and important part of the hours-long ceremony is parading the honored couple around the vicinity in a procession led by a percussion band and the priest chanting mantras. So Ter and Linda were treated like a bridegroom and bride and

were carried in a colorful (wheeled) “flying” chariot through the streets of Portland near Nriya Mandala Mahavihara.

After the ceremony was complete, Dr Iltis released a statement, expressing their appreciation: “We are so grateful to Prajwal Vajracharya, to Subhash Prajapati and Srimati, Laxman Shakya, Ani Shakya,



Anastasia, Bobby and all the friends of Dance Mandal Mahavihara for all their help in making our Bhima Rathahana for Ter's 77 years, 7 months, 7 days, 7 hours, 7 minutes a reality and an amazing experience. Mahabhagya

to all who attended, including Jill Poris and Ed Hershberg and the people who welcomed our procession in the streets of Portland.” It should be noted that both Ter and Linda speak Nepal Bhasa and Nepali fluently.



9-30 October “The Path of Yogic Singing and Sacred Dance” Sessions

October 30th was the last of four sessions of “The Path of Yogic Singing and Sacred Dance” sponsored this month by Yangchenma Arts & Music of Pure Land Farms in California. This combination Charya Giti and Charya Nriya class was taught by Gurujy Vajracharya and the temple’s foremost singer,



Joshua Proto.

Guru Prajwal Vajracharya said, "In the Newar Vajrayana Buddhist tradition of Nepal, it is taught that there can be no liberation without singing and dancing -- the physical body and the voice are the tools of transformation with which we awaken and free our minds."

The Charya song and dance course consisted of both the practical and theoretical aspects of a particular Charya dance composed for the Vajrayana Adi Buddha, Vajrasattva. "The objective of the course was to familiarize the participants with the yogic song (charya giti) and the

accompanying sacred ritual dance (charya nritya) of Vajrasattva, the Buddha of Purification, in order that we might all purify and heal our own body, energy, mind and emotions," said Rev Guru Prajwal.



The course included four 2-hour Zoom-interactive webinars with both Prajwal and Josh, audio files of Charya dance songs, and additional written resources. It will be followed by more classes on other deities and dances in November.

In the first part of each weekly class, participants were instructed in the oral tradition of Nepalese Ragas (musical modes), Talas (rhythmic cycles) and were taught the traditional melodic song of Vajrasattva. Participants worked to cultivate their voices, matching the pitches of the Raga, and keeping time with the tinchu. In the second part of each class, participants learned the dance steps and mudras of the complete ritual dance of Vajrasattva. Finally, the song and dance were merged together.



Sunday, 10 October

Avalokiteshvara Day Observed by Dance Mandal Hong Kong Charya Nritya Sangha with Dance Performance



For Avalokiteshvara Day, the enthusiastic members of the Hong Kong Sangha performed a wide multiplicity of Charya dances on Zoom. The Refuge Prayer dance and the 16 Offering dance were followed by Manjushri, Kurukulla, Vajra Yogini, Vajrasattva, Prajnaparamita, Green Tara, Singha Mukha and Yogini Mandala. All were a testament to the able local leadership of Dr. Tina Ho and teacher Prajwal Vajracharya, usually with weekly classes.

During the virtual program, Guru Vajracharya expressed the belief that such a celebration of Avalokiteshvara Day will add new vigor, enthusiasm and positive energy to all. The group already has a lovely, supportive interaction that is very encouraging to participants. The performance in one program of such a number of dances by an even larger number of dancers was very impressive! Even new dancers or those dancing a new dance for the first time made a good showing.



Veteran dancers and practitioners not only performed beautifully, but reported special awareness, inner focus and dedication during their dancing. Singha Mukha was danced by Dr. Ho, who said that the energy of the music drove her to be more expressive in some gestures and body movements.





Speaking for the group, Ho also expressed her sincere gratitude to Guru Vajracharya, saying that the Guru had taught them nearly 20 Charya dances over the past two years. In expressing her personal feelings to the Guru, she said, "When I look back on these years, from not having so much interaction to seeing each other on zoom multiple times a week, it is amazing. Many memorable moments we shared throughout, and you never feel bored. You have an energetic personality to drive us to a joyful and happy way of living. Your lineage is spiritual but practical, experienced, obviously, and esoteric. It still has enormous unveiled parts for us to explore and experience."



Sunday, 10 October Shradh Rituals Performed in Honor of Late Jagat Maharjan



Guru Vajracharya performed the death rituals appropriate to his 45th Day for Mr. Jagat Maharjan at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara on Sunday evening. Maharjan's adult sons Prakash and Bikash were present.

Barkhi Phukaya Yayegu (mourning period) ritual, the Maamaki Puja and others were also conducted during the ceremony by the Guruj. The Shradh rituals are conducted so that the

heavenly journey of the deceased soul after death is comfortable and stress-free.

Monday, 11 October

Ihi Rituals for Two Newar Girls Organized at Temple



Along with their respective families, 8 year old Samata Shrestha from Seattle, Washington, and Sophia Singh Tronstab from Hermiston, Oregon, participated in an I'hi ceremony held in their honor. I'hi is the first of the set of the lifecycle rituals of Newar women. Both families were grateful that the ritual was available to their girls in the Portland area. The ceremony was conducted by ritual master Prajwal Vajracharya.



Prajwal indicated that the ritual had been in practice for hundreds of years. In the ceremony young pre-pubescent girls make a commitment to the bel fruit or wood apple. Guru Prajwal used the bel fruit as a symbol of all the kinds of nutrition the girls must rely on at this stage of growth to build pure bodies and minds. He encouraged the girls to turn to Buddha, Dharma, Sangha as they grew; to also be strong and self-reliant. Families surrounded these girls with love and support throughout the ceremony.



Friday, 15 October

Zoom Course on Charya Nritya for Singaporeans Begins

A virtual, once-a-week Charya dance course has begun for interested students in Singapore. This is a foundation course and lays the groundwork for all continued studies in the tradition of the sacred Buddhist dance of Nepal.

Every Friday Singaporean participants will learn the history of this ancient practice, as well as train their bodies in the movements, exercises, hand and foot mudras, and techniques that are the foundations of Charya dance. Students will also learn and have a chance to practice the Refuge Prayer dance and the 16 Offering Goddess dance. Time for a Dharma talk underscoring the relevance of Newar Vajrayana Buddhism to Charya and to life will also be included.

Thursday, 21 October

MahaVairochana Danced by Prajwal Vajracharya During Core of Culture's Virtual Program on 'Mudra & the Diamond Sphere'



Joseph Houseal's Core of Culture, based in Chicago and hosted by Yangchenma Arts and Culture, presented a series of short films, live dances and dialogues based on its ongoing theme 'Mudra & the Diamond Sphere.' The project by the same name is a four-year initiative of Core of Culture, Houseal's

organization, assisting the preservation of cultural and ritual heritage, especially having to do with dance and movement.

The films presented were “Shaping the Timeless,” featuring Indian classical dance, “Inside the Mandala,” featuring Charya Nritya, and “Ocean of Mudra,” focused on Vajrayana monastic ritual mudra and dance. Two of the six dances were based on the *Nispannayogavali*’s Mahavairocana Mandala, one them being Charyamaster Prajwal’s. His brilliantly performed dance was accompanied by the exquisite singer, Joshua Proto.

According to Joseph Houseal, Director of Core of Culture, these films, the dances and the scholarly dialogues that followed all explored the mysteries, powers and evolution of mudra in tantric Buddhism, in order to illuminate the performance of the Vajradhatu ritual in Tabo monastery. Core of Culture is currently documenting their ancient ritual, performed within a thousand year old Unesco world heritage site.

Following the films and dances Houseal brought in four scholars to discuss the issues raised: Dr. Ann R. David of the University of Roehampton, London, Dr. Miranda Shaw, University of Richmond Emerita, Dr. Elizabeth Tinsley, UC Irvine, and Dr. Lindsay Gilmour, also UC Irvine. Their discussion was particularly enlightening. Houseal’s project receives lead support from the Robert H N Ho Family Foundation and additional support from the Kipper Family Foundation.



Oct 30 & 31 Cleaning party Cleaning party for the 12 years anniversary

Community member came to help for the cleaning party on both days, it was sunny and beautiful day. Prajwal make lunch for every body. We clean every corners.

