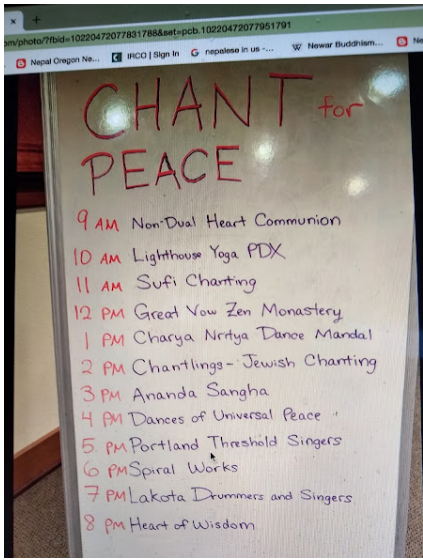
InterFaith Event 'World Chant for Peace' Champions the Cause of World Peace

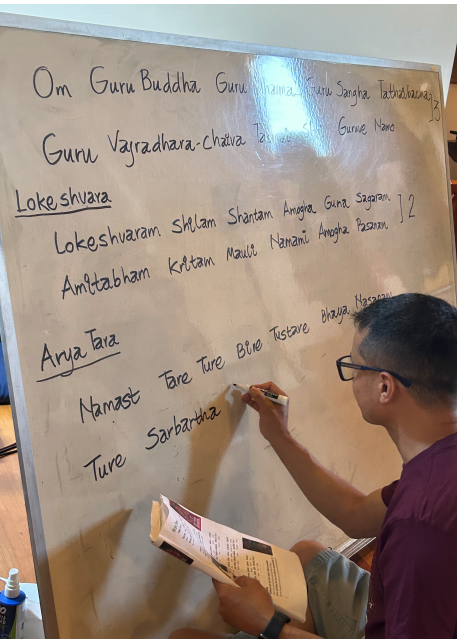
Powerful Charya Nritya Livens Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple

By Rabin Man Shakya

Portland, July 13 Prajwal Vajracharya, prominent Charya Nritya pedagogue and co-founder of Portland's Newar Buddhist temple 'Nritya Mandala Mahavihara' along with other Sangha members Joshua Proto, Anna Shustrova, Anastasia Roderick,Subhash prajapati,Chaitane, Naveena Shakya and Rabin Man Shakya participated at the 'World Chant for Peace' event hosted by Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple in Portland on Saturday, July 13, 2024.

Nritya Mandala Mahavihara was among 12 other Buddhist and non-Buddhist community organizations that took part at the 'World Chant for Peace' event. On the occasion, Refuge dance, Sixteen Offering Goddess dance, Avalokiteshvara, Arya Tara and Manjushree Charya Nritya (sloka)





were brilliantly performed by Prajwal Guruji and other Sangha members.

During the Charya Nritya presentations, Prajwal Guruji also explained the audience about the meaning and relevance of Charya dances: Refuge dance, Sixteen Offering Goddess dance, Avalokiteshvara, Arya Tara and Manjushree charya dances.

Elucidating the meaning of Refuge dance, Prajwal Guruji said that it is a performance of Buddha Bandana Dance through Charya Nritya. Buddhist practitioners take refuge daily in the Buddha - the teacher, the Dharma - the teachings and the Sangha - the community.

Speaking about the Sixteen Offering Goddess dances, the Guruji said that these dances which is also known as Sodasha Lasya in Sanskrit, are sixteen dance postures representing various musical instrument offerings as well as other sense offerings. They personify as the sixteen goddesses of sensual enjoyment who show honor to the central deities of the Mandala through their pure offerings.

Touching on Avalokiteshvara charya dance, the veteran Charya guru said:"Avalokiteshvara is the embodiment of universal

compassion, and has the softest, gentlest and most fluid of dances represented in the Charya Nritya tradition. Avalokiteshvara Charya Nritya is an ancient form of deity yoga meditation for physical transformation, refinement of emotions and spiritual emotions."

Throwing light on Arya Tara Charya dance, Prajwal Guruji said:"Arya Tara is an important figure in Newar Buddhism. She appears as a female Buddha in Newar Buddhism. She is also known as 'mother of liberation' and represents the virtues of success in work and achievement."

He further went on saying:"Tara is a meditation deity revered by practitioners of Newar Buddhism to develop certain inner qualities and to understand outer, inner and sacred teachings, such as, Karuna (compassion), metta (loving - kindness) and shunyata (emptiness). Om Tare Tutare Ture Svaha is the Tara Mantra."

Commenting on Manjushree dance, the Guruji said:"The Lord of Wisdom, Manjushree, holds a book 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."

The purpose of Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple, which was established in 2011 in Portland, is to provide a refuge of stillness and peace in a busy urban environment, to practice and share Buddhist teachings, and to cultivate community, compassion and wisdom.

The 12-hour 'World Chant for Peace' was celebrated with the strength and diversity of various religious communities of Portland.

In a statement about 'World Chant for Peace', Heart of Wisdom Zen Temple said:"Awake with a passion for inner and global transformation, this 12-hour chanting vigil is a celebration of our spiritual aspirations to see the Sacred in every person, and to live Unconditional Love. This is an InterFaith event. Each hour of the Chant for Peace is led by a different spiritual tradition. We form one community and join our voice together."The statement further added:"Chanting is spiritually potent medicine. It aligns heart and mind, connects us to Spirit and radiates waves of prayer and blessings into the world."

Chudakarma / Acharyabhiseka Rituals Held in Cazadero, California

Portland, July 20 Chudakarma ceremony of Neil Vajracharya (son of Subhash Vajracharya and Rinki Vajracharya (shakya)and grandson of Dr Gautama Vajracharya and Dewa Laxmi Vajracharya) was held in Cazadero, California on Saturday, July 20, 2024.

In Newar Vajrayana Buddhism, Chudakarma - which is one of the very important lifecycle rituals - is observed by the Vajracharya and Shakya boys of age 5 to 13. During Chudakarma rituals, the head of the boy is shaved completely and the boy is presented with loin cloth.

During the Chudakarma ceremony, Gurumandala Puja, Kalash Puja, Homa Puja, Naga puja, Bali puja and other required pujas were chanted and ritualized by Prajwal Guruji,
Chudakarma is also known as 'Bare Chhuyegu', 'Prabajya Sambar', and 'Acharyabhiseka' (for Vajracharya boys) in Newar Vajrayana Buddhism.

As Neil is a Vajracharya boy, he was further required to go

through Acharyabhiseka rituals which is a Tantric initiation rite that qualifies a Vajracharya to perform as a purohit.

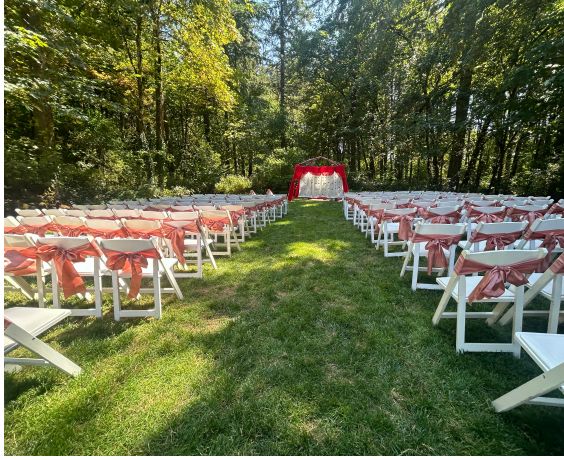
That is why Dashavisheka rituals, such as, Mantravisheka, Vajravisheka, Ghantavisheka, Makatavisheka, Kalashavisheka etc were also performed during Neil's Chudakkarma ceremony.

During the Chudakarma / Acharyavisheka ceremony, the relatives of the boy and other guests performed traditional 'Baaran Chhuyegu' in which they offered jaki (raw rice) in a Gulpa and gifts to the Chudakarma boy.

Similarly, as per the rituals, four gentlemen (from among the Vajracharya and Shakya castes) poured sacred water on the head of the Chudakarma boy. Also, on the occasion, Prajwal Guruji dabbed 'Sinha' on the forehead of all the family and guests and provided them with 'Kokha'.

Wedding Ceremony Solemnized in Beaverton

Portland, July 12 The marriage of Ina Prajapati Sahukhal and Santiago Aldaz Puga was solemnized by Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya,on Friday, July 12, 2024 in Beaverton, Oregon.



The wedding ceremony began with the ubiquitous Gurumandala Puja in which Prajwal Guruji not only offered materials and objects, he purified them, as well as his own body, mind and speech.

Swayambar was the most important component of the wedding ritual in which the bride circled the groom and placed a flower garland over his head and vice versa. Prajwal Guruji indicated that the circling binds their energies together, which was further solidified with exchange of wedding rings.

Weekly program continues

In July, 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. Month of August there will be Namasngiti Chanting every day at 8pm.