2568th Buddha Purnima Marked with Naamsangiti and other programs

Rabin Man Shakya

Portland, May 24: The auspicious 2568th Buddha Purnima - also known as Swan Ya Punhi - which kicked off with baby Buddha bath was celebrated at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA on Friday, May 24, 2024 with Maha Manjushree Naamsangiti chanting and other programs. Naamsangiti chanting was offered by Prajwal Guruji, Sangha members and Nepali community members.

108 butter lamps were illuminated during the religious ceremony, followed by a Refuge Dance (a performance of Buddha Bandana Dance through charya nritya) 108 times continuously by American and Nepali devotees.

Likewise, a number of Buddha Bhajan songs in Nepal Bhasa (the language of Newar people) were presented by Joshua Proto, Anastasia Roderick, Adam Bidema and Susan Morningstar.

Similarly, a Sixteen Offering Goddess Dance, also known as Sodasha Lasya in Sanskrit was presented by Prajwal Guruji and Anastasia Roderick while Adam Bidema was seated on the center as Vajrasattva Bodhisattva during the dance. Sixteen Offering Goddess chanting was vocalized by Joshua Proto and Anna Shustrova.

Sixteen offering dances 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.

On the occasion, 90 year-old Nepali Portlander Devi Laxmi Maharjan offered Tri Ratna Bandana (Sheel Prarthana). Sangha member Naveena Shakya recited a poem entitled 'In Search of Dhamma'.

Patron of World Newah Organization (WNO) Daya Ratna Shakya, founder president of Nepali Association of Oregon Raju Mali, Sangha members Adam Bidema, Roger Desesa and Rabin Man Shakya threw light on the relevance of Lord Buddha's teachings.

Moreover, Dr Tina Ho and Dr Eliza Lau of Hong Kong Buddhist Studies Association, Sangha member Crystal Marie James from Los Angeles, Selina Shakya from San Diego extended congratulations to the Vihara participants from zoom on the occasion of Buddha Purnima.

Buddha Jayanti program was followed by a pot-luck dinner including Kheer (rice cooked in milk with sugar and nuts) vegetarian cuisine, sweets and fruits.

Teaching on Tibetan Medicine Organized

Portland, May 14 A teaching on 'Let Meditation be thy Medicine' by Dr Nida Chenatsang was organized at the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland on Tuesday, May 14, 2024. The teaching was attended by about 40 people.

Prajwal Vajracharya of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara said:"It is a great pleasure to receive a beautiful teaching from Dr Nida Chenatsang at the temple."

Addressing the gathering, Dr Nida said:"The beauty of Tantric Buddhism is its diversity of process -- there are many types of practice. But that means it is easy to feel lost -- which practice is best for you?"During the teaching, Dr Nida

explored the two treasures of the 12th century yogi-physician, Yuthok Yonten Gonpo - Sowa Rigpa and Yuthok Nyingthig to help us find our spiritual match.

Stating that Sowa Rigpa (Tibetan medical) diagnosis and treatment revolves around elemental type, similar to Ayurveda, Dr Nida shared that the Yuthok Nyinthig Buddhist path likewise offers practices that are particularly well suited for each type - wind, fire, earth and water.

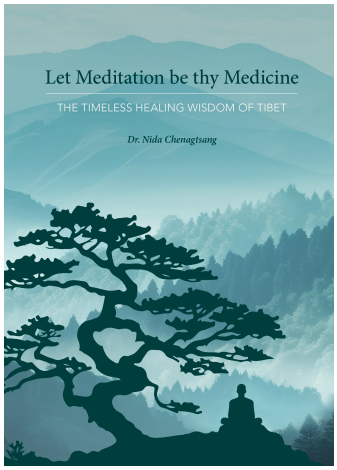
In the unique presentation of the interconnectedness of Tibetan medicine and Buddhist tantra, Dr Nida threw light on traditional meditation techniques alongside diet and lifestyle recommendations that teach us how to nourish, detox, or fast physically, psychologically and spiritually in order to balance our unique elemental type.

Dr Nida went on saying:"When Yuthok composed his teachings in the 12th century, he predicted that future students would be busy, lacking the time and resources to do long and elaborate practices and retreats like practitioners of the past."

At the end of the teaching, Dr Nida replied to queries of the participants. Similarly, Dr Nida signed his books that were on sale at the program.

Born in Amdo, Malho, in Northeastern Tibet, Dr Nida began his early studies of Sowa Rigpa at the local Tibetan medical hospital. Later, he was awarded a scholarship to enter the Lhasa Mentsikhang or Tibetan Medical University where he completed his degree in 1996, with practical training at the Tibetan Medicine hospitals in Lhasa and Lhoka.

Alongside his medical education, Dr Nida trained in Vajrayana with teachers from every school of Tibetan Buddhism. In particular, he trained in the Longchen Nyingthig tradition of the Nyingma School with his root guru Ani Ngawang Gyaltsen and in the Dudjom Tersar tradition with Chonyi Rinpoche and Semo Dechen Yudron. He received complete instruction in the Yuthok



Nyingthig lineage, the unique spiritual tradition of Tibetan Medicine, from his teachers Khenpo Tsultrim Gyaltsen and Khenchen Troru Tsenam, and was requested to continue the Yuthok Nyingthig lineage by Jamyang Rinpoche of the Rebkong ngakpa and ngakma (i.e non-monastic yogi and yogini) community.

A well-known poet in his youth, Dr Nida later published many articles and books on Sowa Rigpa and Yuthok Nyingthig tradition in Tibetan and English, which have been translated into several languages. He has

extensively researched ancient Tibetan healing methods, and has gained acclaim in East and West for his revival of little known Tibetan external therapies.

Dr Nida is the Founder and Medical Director of the Sowa Rigpa Institute of Tibetan Medicine and Sorig Khang International Foundation for Traditional Tibetan Medicine. He is also the co-founder and principal teacher of Pure Land Farms Center for Tibetan Medicine, Meditation and Rejuvenation in Los Angeles and the co-founder of the International Ngakmang Institute, which was established to preserve and support the unique Rebkong non-monastic yogi and yogini culture in modern Tibetan society.

In addition to his work as a physician, Dr Nida trains students in Sowa Rigpa and the Yuthok Nyingthig tradition in over forty countries around the world.

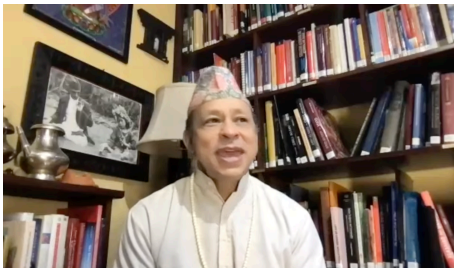
In an Interview with Guru Viking, Prajwal Guruji Zeroes in on Newar Vajrayana Buddhism

Portland, May 25 Prajwal Vajracharya -- co-founder of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara in Portland, USA and also a priest from one of the Vajrayana Buddhist lineages of Nepal -- was interviewed by Steve James for the Guru Viking podcast on Friday, May 24, 2024.

Prajwal Guruji's interview presented detailed and comprehensive information on the history of Newar Buddhism and its suppression for 800 years in Nepal.

Attributing to the causes of hidden culture and hidden nature of Buddhist rituals and Charya nritya, the Guruji said:"Non-Buddhist governments in the past centuries have been apathetic to the cause of development of Buddhism in Nepal." Despite the hidden nature, it still survived and it is alive. That is the beauty about Nepal, Vajracharya stated.

Newar Buddhist tradition is the oldest Buddhist tradition in the world, Prajwal Guruji said adding that based on Swayambhu Purana and ancient history, there were many Buddhas before the Shakya Muni Buddha: Vipashwi Buddha, Shikhi Buddha, Vishwobhu Buddha, Krakuchanda Buddha, Kanakmuni Buddha and Kashyap Buddha. They all had visited Nepal Mandala to establish Buddhism.



Prajwal Guruji's interview with Guru Viking zeroed in on Newar Vajrayana Buddhism including its ancient and medieval history.

Speaking about Guru Rinpoche's travels to Nepal, Prajwal Guruji said:"Guru Rinpoche visited several places in Nepal. He had meditated in the caves of Pharping, Nepal and was empowered by Vajrayogini.

During his travels to Nepal Mandala, Guru Rinpoche was in Patan and the place where he stayed was Yempi Mahavihara in Lalitpur. 84 Mahasiddhas from India had come to meet him at that place, Prajwal went on saying.

Likewise, Prajwal Guruji during the interview discussed how certain movements and Mudras affect health and create transformations in our bodies, how it heals our body, speech, mind, and energy channels.

Teya Gives Birth to a Baby Boy

Portland, May 22 Teya Vajracharya (Prajwal Guruji's spouse) gave birth to a baby boy on Wednesday, May 22, 2024 on the eve of Buddha Purnima. The baby was born at home in a birthing pool.

Baby boy was named Dewa Ratna Vajracharya. In Nepal Bhasa, Dewa means butter lamp.The butter lamp symbolizes inner light and wisdom, used as a source of focus for meditation, the butter lamp

represents the pursuit of enlightenment. And the name Ratna, meaning Jewel, was given to honor Prajwal's father, Ratna Kaji Vajracharya.

Machabu Byenkegu (a kind of cleaning and purification ritual for baby and mother) is an important ritual in Newar tradition.

Machabu Byenkegu ritual was celebrated on Sunday, May 26, 2024 on the fourth day after birth of the baby. Kalash Puja was ritualized by Prajwal Guruji on the occasion. A clean and new dress was put on the baby boy.

As per the ritual, the new-born baby was kissed by the beak of a duck (in this case a printed photo of a duck). A duck on the pond takes only what it needs and discards what it cannot digest. This is symbolic of the ritual, blessing us to take from life what is good and useful, and to let go of that which is not beneficial.

'Chhwasay Waye Yankegu' ritual was carried out at the end of the ceremony. 'Chhwasa' consists of raw rice, a vest of the newborn baby, and drops of milk from the mother.

In his book written in Nepal Bhasa "Newah Sanskar Sanskriti Ya Jata" (Manual of Newah Samskara and Culture), which was published in Kathmandu in 2061 BS, late Buddhist scholar Ratna Kaji Vajracharya mentioned:"Tradition requires that 'Machabu Byenkegu' should be performed on the fourth day after birth or within the twelve days after birth."

Vihara Participates at AANHPI Heritage Month

Portland, May 25 Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, which aims to preserve and share the traditions of Buddhist practice, arts and culture held by the Newar people of the Nepal Mandala, took part at the AANHPI Heritage Month at Lan Su Chinese Garden in Portland on Saturday, May 25, 2024.

May was Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month which celebrated all of the Asians, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

On behalf of the Mahavihara, Newar traditional dresses 'Daura Suruwal' (male) and 'Haku Patasi' (female) were displayed

for exhibition at Lan Su Chinese Garden for a month of May.

Also displayed were Five Elements in Newar Vajrayana Buddhism: Fire (Sukunda), Earth (Anti), Space (Jwola Nhayakan), Wind (Faya Gan), and Water (Karuwa).

On Saturday, May 25, Refuge Dance and Sixteen Offering Goddess Dance were presented at the Lan Su Chinese Garden.

Refuge dance which is a performance of Buddha Bandana dance through Charya nritya was performed by Prajwal Guruji, Anastasia Roderick and Adam Bidema.

The Sixteen Offering Goddess Dance, also known as Sodasha Lasya in Sanskrit, was performed by Prajwal Guruji and Anastasia Roderick while Adam Bidema was seated on the center as Vajrasattva during the dance. Moreover, Annapurna Charya Dance was performed by Uppa Shakya.

Along with the Mahavihara, cultural performances were carried out by Rhythms Dance Academy, Kalabharati School of Dance at the program dedicated to celebrating South Asia. It was a jam-packed day of art and

culture at Lan Su Chinese Garden.

Lan Su Chinese Garden, which was opened in September 2000, is one of Portland's greatest treasures and most interesting sites. This Garden is a result of collaboration between cities of Portland and Suzhou, Portland's sister-city in China.

Sangha Members Join in PSU's Nepali Cultural Night

Portland, May 31 The Sangha members of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara took part at the 'Nepali Cultural Night' organized at the initiative of Nepalese Student Association - Portland State University on Friday, May 31, 2024.

Buddha Jayanti, Charya Nritya, Traditional Dance, Nepali New Year, Food and Cultural Display were the highlights of the PSU program.

The PSU program 'Nepali Cultural Night' was a unique event for the students and the community members to experience the culture and cuisine of the Himalayas.

Speaking on the occasion, Prajwal Vajracharya, co-founder of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara, a Newar Buddhist Monastery in Portland, stressed that Buddha's teachings are more relevant today than ever.

Vajracharya, said that Buddha - the light

of Asia - was born in Nepal. He also threw light on the significance of Six Paramita on the lives of the people.

Sangha member of the Nritya Mandala Mahavihara Anastasia Roderick performed 'Manjushree' charya dance on the occasion. Sangha member Uppa Shakya and her team from Hermiston presented a popular Nepali dance, while Sangha members Ambika Shakya, Anushka S Thapa and Sunil Kumar Thapa offered a Newar dance based on the spring time song.

Wedding Ceremony Solemnized

Portland, May 20 A wedding ceremony of Adam and Yeahs Malla was solemnized on Monday, May 20, 2024.

The auspicious wedding ceremony was solemnized by Guruji Prajwal Vajracharya who is a priest from one of the Vajrayana Buddhist lineages of Nepal.