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Hans Gerald Hödl and Lukas K. Pokorny  
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# Religion in Austria

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# Buddhist Religious Education at Schools in Austria

*Lukas K. Pokorny and Martina Anissa Strommer*

## 1. Introduction

In 1983, “Austro-Buddhism” in its corporate form qua Austrian Buddhist Religious Society (*Österreichische Buddhistische Religionsgesellschaft; ÖBR*) was admitted to an illustrious circle then consisting of ten Legally Recognised Churches and Religious Societies (*gesetzlich anerkannte Kirchen und Religionsgesellschaften*).<sup>1</sup> The formal recognition crowned nearly a century of Buddhist activities in the country<sup>2</sup>—activities that had gained some pace only a decade or so prior when the membership base of the earliest of the *ÖBR*’s precursor organisations—the Buddhist Society of Vienna (*Buddhistische Gesellschaft Wien; BGW*)—hardly comprised more than thirty regular practitioners. The *BGW* itself was established in 1948 by a group of staid elderly gentlemen, who, in the spirit of Karl Eugen Neumann (while largely

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1 These included: (1) the Catholic Church; (2) the Protestant Church; (3) the Greek Oriental Church in Austria; (4) the Armenian Apostolic Church in Austria (which presently forms the corporate cluster Oriental Orthodox Churches in Austria alongside the Syriac Orthodox Church in Austria and the Coptic Orthodox Church in Austria); (5) the Old Catholic Church in Austria; (6) the Methodist Church in Austria (which appears as Protestant Methodist Church in Austria since 2004); (7) the New Apostolic Church in Austria; (8) the Islamic Faith Community in Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*); the (9) Israeli Religious Society (*Israelitische Religionsgesellschaft*); and (10) The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Austrian District. The Syriac Orthodox Church in Austria (1988) and the Coptic Orthodox Church in Austria (2003) aside, later additions comprise: (11) Jehovah’s Witnesses in Austria (*Jehovas Zeugen in Österreich*; 2009); (12) the Alevi Faith Community in Austria (*Alevitische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*; 2013); and (13) the Free Churches in Austria (2013). The official acknowledgement of the *ÖBR* was promulgated on February 11, 1983, following a directive by the Federal Minister of Education and Arts, Fred Sinowatz (1929–2008), issued on December 13, 1982 (*BGBI* 72/1983). Notably, seven years earlier, in 1975, an application for legal recognition had failed (Prochaska 1999).

2 Provided one takes the year of conversion (1884) of the Austro-Buddhist pioneer Karl Eugen Neumann (1865–1915) as the starting point of Buddhism in Austria.

drawing on *the “Neumann”*), engaged almost exclusively with the Pāli tradition.<sup>3</sup> Slowly, the scope of interest extended at first to Japanese forms of Buddhism (Pokorny 2021a) in the 1950s and 1960s, which heralded the surging diversification of the Buddhist panorama in Austria from the 1970s (also owing to the arrival of a growing number of ethnic Buddhists). The immense (intra-)denominational diversity of Buddhism in contemporary Austria is to some extent also visible when looking at the presently thirty-one orders and dharma groups (*Orden und Dharmagruppen*) affiliated with the ÖBR.

ÖBR membership figures rose steadily, from sixty-six individuals in late 1976 to 234 in 1986, and from “around 500” (Strohal 1998: 72) in 1993 to “more than 2000” by 2010 (Hutter 2010: 252). Today, little more than ten per cent of the estimated some 30,000 Buddhists in Austria are registered ÖBR members.<sup>4</sup> Yet, by virtue of its legal status, the ÖBR is meant to represent and cater to the Buddhist community as a whole, while also serving as a pan-Buddhist contact point for everyone interested in all things Buddhist. This dual mission is also mirrored within a key area of responsibility that comes as one of the greatest benefits of being a Legally Recognised Religious Society—namely, to provide religious instruction in public and private schools to both Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist students (as long as they do not belong to any other Legally Recognised Church and Religious Society). Buddhist Religious Education at schools (BRE) commenced in September 1993 and is arguably one of the ÖBR’s most important fields of action ever since (also according to ÖBR president Gerhard Weißgrab; Interview on November 30, 2021).

Notably, Austria effectively spearheaded BRE in Europe. Portugal followed suit in 1998—however, since classes may only be formed with a minimum of ten students there, BRE practically exists only on paper (Jäggel and Jäger 2020: 151). Similarly, while in Poland offering BRE is legally possible since 1989, the limited presence of Buddhists renders BRE mostly a theoretical option only. More recently, BRE may also be taken at Dutch schools upon request, and it is projected to be soon offered in Belgium as well (Franken and Bertram-Troost 2022: 14, 18). Due to the unique make-up of

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3 Neumann’s translations from the Pāli canon, specifically the three-volume *Die Reden Gotamo Buddhos* (The Discourses of Gotamo Buddha), were seminal for the nascent Buddhist community. They were affectionately called “the Neumann” (*der Neumann*) by practitioners.

4 There exist a few reasons for this gap in numbers between overall practising Buddhists and ÖBR members. One being that many individuals, while perhaps maintaining strong ties to an individual group or teacher, simply do not take an active interest in “another” Buddhist institution outside their own. This is especially true with a view to the ethnic Buddhist community.

the Federal Republic of Germany, BRE is provided only in Berlin (Roloff 2020: 332–334)—launched in 2003 by Renate Noack, who remains at the time of writing (2022) the sole teacher, offering a weekly ninety-minute lesson in a school in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf. Although small in scope, BRE seems also to be offered in a few private schools in Russia (Metlik 2020: 167). Finland represents an interesting case of providing BRE at schools from a non-confessional perspective, also called a “weak confessional model” as it does not include “devotional or faith formation aims” (Ubani and Tirri 2014: 108). In several other countries Buddhism is taught as part of non-denominational religious or ethics education, such as in England (Thanissaro 2010), Norway (Skeie and Bråten 2014: 220), and Sweden (Berglund 2013).

Given the pioneering role and relative size of BRE in Austria, with 305 students registered for the school year 2021/2022, it is surprising that—save for a few *en passant* mentions—relevant scholarship is nonexistent. Drawing on archival research, the use of questionnaires, and a range of semi-structured interviews, this article is therefore an attempt to fill this lacuna, providing a very first outline of the history and present situation of BRE in Austria. Moreover, the BRE curricula (as well as an early draft curriculum for a Buddhist priest training course) are given in full in the original German and English translation in the Appendices. As a matter of fact, this research would have not been possible without the kind assistance of the ÖBR administration (in particular, Martin Schaurhofer and Gerhard Weißgrab) and its BRE teachers, past and present, sharing their knowledge and experiences.

## 2. A Brief Historical Outline

Several laws feed into the legal context which embeds BRE in Austria (Katzinger 2010; Potz and Schinkle 2005). Foremost, Article 14 (5a) of the Federal Constitutional Law (*Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz*) specifies the cardinal values and educational goals of school education,<sup>5</sup> and Article 17 of the

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<sup>5</sup> “In partnership between students, parents, and teachers, children and adolescents are to be given the best possible mental, emotional, and physical development so that they become healthy, self-confident, happy, achievement-oriented, dutiful, musical, and creative people who are capable of taking responsibility guided by social, religious, and moral values for themselves, their fellow human beings, the environment, and future generations. Every adolescent should be led to independent judgement and social understanding in accordance with his or her development and educational background, be open to the political, religious, and ideological thinking of others, and be capacitated to partake in the cultural and economic life of Austria, Europe, and the world and to contribute to the common tasks of humanity in love of freedom and peace” (“Im partnerschaftlichen Zusammenwirken von

1867 Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals (*Staatsgrundgesetz*) stipulates the confessional character of religious education in the framework of national jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup> Other important laws include the Religious Education Act (*Religionsunterrichtsgesetz*) of 1949<sup>7</sup> as well as the Private School Act (*Privatschulgesetz*) and the School Organisation Act (*Schulorganisationsgesetz*) of 1962.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Article 6 of the latter regulates that the religious education curriculum of a Legally Recognised Church and Religious Society—which has to adhere to a given structure—needs to be officially promulgated in the Federal Law Gazette of the Republic of Austria (*Bundesgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich*) (and thereby approved) by the Federal Minister of Education.<sup>9</sup>

One of the first efforts to provide BRE took place shortly after the ÖBR's official recognition as a Legally Recognised Religious Society in 1983, when Salzburg-based Friedrich Fenzl (Myōshin; 1932–2014), a Shin Buddhist

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Schülern, Eltern und Lehrern ist Kindern und Jugendlichen die bestmögliche geistige, seelische und körperliche Entwicklung zu ermöglichen, damit sie zu gesunden, selbstbewussten, glücklichen, leistungsorientierten, pflichttreuen, musischen und kreativen Menschen werden, die befähigt sind, an den sozialen, religiösen und moralischen Werten orientiert Verantwortung für sich selbst, Mitmenschen, Umwelt und nachfolgende Generationen zu übernehmen. Jeder Jugendliche soll seiner Entwicklung und seinem Bildungsweg entsprechend zu selbständigem Urteil und sozialem Verständnis geführt werden, dem politischen, religiösen und weltanschaulichen Denken anderer aufgeschlossen sein sowie befähigt werden, am Kultur- und Wirtschaftsleben Österreichs, Europas und der Welt teilzunehmen und in Freiheits- und Friedensliebe an den gemeinsamen Aufgaben der Menschheit mitzuwirken”).

6 “Religious education in schools shall be provided by the relevant church or religious society” (“Für den Religionsunterricht in den Schulen ist von der betreffenden Kirche oder Religionsgesellschaft Sorge zu tragen”).

7 According to Article 2 (*BGBI* 190/1949) “[r]eligious education shall be provided, conducted, and directly supervised by the relevant legally recognised church or religious community” (“Der Religionsunterricht wird durch die betreffende gesetzlich anerkannte Kirche oder Religionsgemeinschaft besorgt, geleitet und unmittelbar beaufsichtigt”).

8 The latter (*BGBI* 242/1962) states in Article 2 that “Austrian schools have the task of contributing to the development of the dispositions of young people according to moral, religious, and social values as well as according to the values of the true, the good, and the beautiful by means of instruction that is appropriate to their stage of development and their educational path” (“Die österreichische Schule hat die Aufgabe, an der Entwicklung der Anlagen der Jugend nach den sittlichen, religiösen und sozialen Werten sowie nach den Werten des Wahren, Guten und Schönen durch einen ihrer Entwicklungsstufe und ihrem Bildungsweg entsprechenden Unterricht mitzuwirken”).

9 Each curriculum must provide the general educational goals; the educational and teaching tasks of the individual subjects; the didactic principles; and the distribution of the teaching contents across the individual school levels.

(Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha) and one of the pioneers of institutionalised Buddhism in Austria (Zott 2007; Pokorny 2021c), requested the names of all Buddhist students from the Salzburg Board of Education (*Landesschulrat*).<sup>10</sup> The names were provided but classes could not immediately start due to a lack of infrastructure. Consequently, Fenzl and his co-religionist, the (Rinzai) Zen connoisseur Kurt Krammer (Gakuro; b. 1947), the later chairman of the Buddhist Community of Salzburg (*Buddhistische Gemeinschaft Salzburg*; 1994–2008, 2014–2016) and Vice-President of the European Buddhist Union (2005–2008), urged the ÖBR authorities in Vienna to work towards a curriculum and identify potential teachers in all federal states (Interview with Kurt Krammer on February 14, 2022).

The first curriculum (see Appendix 1) was promulgated in 1992 (*BGBI* 255/1992) by the Federal Minister of Education and Arts (1990–1994) Rudolf Scholten (b. 1955). It was the outcome of a collaborative project between four individuals:<sup>11</sup> the ÖBR President (1986–2002) Herbert Koudela (Genro; 1924–2010) and Sangha Council members Tilo Rom (1942–2018) and Alexander Draszczyk (b. 1960), the three representing the main Austro-Buddhist traditions at the time: Zen Buddhism, Theravāda, and Tibetan Buddhism, respectively. Substantially involved was the ÖBR Vice-President (1992–2002) Theodor Strohal (Hyaewon; b. 1949) as well, a lawyer and the architect of the ÖBR's formal recognition of 1983. A Buddhist in the Korean Chogye tradition, Strohal already brought along BRE teaching experience. As early as 1989/1990, he started to offer a BRE class for, on average, five to seven students aged seven to fifteen at the Vienna International School (VIS; Straße der Menschenrechte 1 in the twenty-second district). As an international (English-language) private school, the VIS was not subject to Austrian legislation, so BRE instruction there was possible even without having a state-

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10 Around the same time, Fenzl approached the then ÖBR president Walter Karwath (1919–1986) with a proposal to establish a four-year Buddhist priest (“dharmañan”) training programme at a corresponding facility tentatively called Buddhist Institute (*Buddhistisches Institut*) or Buddhist Seminary (*Buddhistisches Priesterseminar*). He envisioned that future BRE teachers would hail from the newly created ranks of the Austro-Buddhist priests. Fenzl’s proposal was discussed at the ÖBR Sangha Council (*Sangharat*) in early 1984 but was ultimately rejected. A major point of criticism raised was that such institution would indeed fuse the range of denominational self-identities into a novel Buddhist school, eclipsing the various existing Buddhist traditions in Austria in terms of doctrinal and practical authority. For the draft curriculum, see Appendix 3.

11 The BRE curriculum of 1992 makes excessive use of very specific terminology which is less relevant in working with children, and the educational principles are not very elaborate. This appears to be due to the fact that none of those involved devising the curriculum brought along a formal background in education.

approved curriculum in place. In 1993, Strohal passed on this teaching responsibility to Gerhard Urban (b. 1955; see further below), yet BRE teaching at VIS discontinued shortly thereafter (Interview with Theodor Strohal on May 18, 2022).

Drawing on the curriculum of 1992, BRE classes officially commenced in the academic year of 1993/1994 in the cities of Vienna, Graz, and Salzburg with altogether twenty-five students. The first three teachers were Strohal (Vienna), the Tibetologist Andrea S. Loseries-Leick (b. 1952) (Graz),<sup>12</sup> and Krammer (Salzburg), only the latter bringing along educational training as a secondary teacher for English and History. Regular teacher conferences would start only a few years later, yet while Krammer was largely working on his own, Strohal and Loseries-Leick were in steady contact exchanging ideas and teaching materials. Notably, there were no formal guidelines or teaching aides provided by the *ÖBR* or by any other authority except the official curriculum. In September 1993, just when BRE started in Austria, the annual meeting of the European Buddhist Union was hosted by Fenzl and Krammer in Salzburg. On this occasion, they were able to network with other BRE teachers from across Europe and exchange teaching ideas and materials, thereby further advancing the make-up and concept of BRE in Austria. In 1995, Strohal was installed as the first superintendent (*Fachinspektor*) followed by Krammer in 2000. Originally, the superintendent was to be responsible for all of Austria, which turned out to be overly time-consuming. Duties included, but were not limited to, identifying students, maintaining interreligious dialogue, and even organising bus passes for the children to commute to their Buddhism classes. Hence, later, the superintendent's sphere of influence would be split between East (Vienna, Burgenland, Lower Austria, Upper Austria) and West (Styria, Carinthia, Salzburg, Tyrol, Vorarlberg), a division which is still in effect today.

These early years were characterised by efforts to gradually expand BRE across Austria. Through networking and recommendations, another nine teachers were identified and recruited. By 1999, there were 128 students from ninety-three schools in six of Austria's nine federal states. They were instructed by twelve teachers in a total of twenty-one lessons per week. Over the years, the number of students gradually increased while that of the teachers varied only slightly: 151 students in 2001/2002 of which seven selected

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12 She obtained her Ph.D. at the University of Vienna in 1983 with a thesis on “Tibetische Knochenschnitzereien: Tradition und Praxis im Wandel der Zeit; eine Datenerhebung unter Berücksichtigung historisch-ethnographischen Quellenmaterials (10.–20. Jahrhundert)” (Tibetan Bone Carvings: Tradition and Practice Across Times. A Data Collection Considering Historical-Ethnographic Source Materials [10th–20th Century]) (Loseries-Leick 1983).

BRE as one of the subjects for their A-level exams (Fernsebner-Kokert 2002);<sup>13</sup> 190 students including fifty in upper secondary schools and thirteen teachers in 2013/2014 (Brnada 2013; Bures 2014: 2); 203 students and ten teachers in 2016/2017 (Klingler 2017: 89); and 231 students—half of which in Vienna alone—and fourteen teachers in 2017/2018 (NÖN 2017; Gassner 2019: 100).

From 1999 onwards, work meetings for all active teachers started to be held on a regular basis. During some of these workshops, the original curriculum was revised and expanded, and finally approved in its new version in 2008 (*BGBI* 241/2008). Whereas the basic structure remained the same, the contents were streamlined and decluttered, owing to the experience of the preceding years of putting the first curriculum into practice. The document grew from a mere three to eleven pages, adding significant sections on teaching methodology and aims. The subject matter for each year of instruction was presented in more detail, while at the same time complicated Sanskrit terms were omitted (see Appendix 2). Krammer was a key figure in this process.

In order to provide standardised, high-quality training and support for both current and future teachers, the establishment of an Institute for Buddhist Religious Education (*Buddhistisches Religionspädagogisches Institut; BRPI*) in Salzburg was requested in 2001, and workshops started taking place in April 2002. The *BRPI* was recognised as a private school and worked closely together with the *Pädagogisches Institut des Bundes für Salzburg* (Federal Education Institute of Salzburg; in operation from 1956 to 2007). Funding was one of the *BRPI*'s fundamental challenges as some administrative matters regarding the shared scope of responsibility between stakeholders in both Vienna and Salzburg (most notably, Krammer's legal employment and competences as the director of the Institute) were never resolved. After the legal premises of private schools changed in 2007, the *BRPI* had to be closed and eventually, following a transitional period, terminated its activities in December 2010. Efforts to either integrate it into the newly established *Pädagogische Hochschule Salzburg* (Salzburg University of Education) or reopen it in Vienna were not successful.

In 2010, the *ÖBR* started a co-operation with the Church University College for Teacher Education Vienna/Krems (*Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems*; henceforth: *KPH Wien/Krems*) in order to fill the

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<sup>13</sup> According to the newspaper article, fifteen teachers were employed in the year after. BRE took place in seven of the nine federal states, excepting Lower Austria and Burgenland.

void left by the *BRPI*. In 2018, the *Institut Buddhistische Religion* (Department of Buddhist Religion) at the *KPH Wien/Krems* was established, which presented an opportunity for smaller religious communities, such as the *ÖBR*, to offer training and continuing education through a tertiary institution.<sup>14</sup> It presently has three members and is headed by Karin Anna Ertl (b. 1963).

### 3. Present Situation

It is not formally communicated how many students attend BRE classes, nor are these numbers centrally recorded internally by the *ÖBR*. Information drawn from various sources, such as the numbers of textbooks ordered each year, indicate that the numbers have been steadily increasing with some fluctuation across federal states and school levels. In more recent years, there were some 250 students on average. As of 2021/2022, there are 305 students taught by eleven teachers.<sup>15</sup> Two of them—Ertl and Wilfried Haunschmid (b. 1959)—also act as superintendents (a function that formally counts for four hours of teaching load), and one of these two superintendents currently also holds the position of *Schulamt* (education authority), that is, the point of contact for other authorities.

For the past few years, there has been no instruction in two of Austria's federal states, namely, in Carinthia and Burgenland—either due to a lack of students and/or teachers or generally flawed communication procedures on the part of individual schools. At the beginning of each new school year, all Austrian school directors survey their students' religious affiliations and report the numbers to the local authority (*Bildungsdirektion*). Students who identify as adherents of a religion formally represented by a Legally Recognised Church and Religious Society—or are indicated as such by their parents (Kronika 2016: 9)—may opt out of receiving religious instruction within five days (Matusek 2011: 13).<sup>16</sup> They need not be official members of the *ÖBR*. Notably, students must not opt out of religious education classes at denominational private schools: they need to take the subject but not necessarily the

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14 See <https://www.kphvie.ac.at/institute/institut-buddhistische-religion.html> (accessed: November 12, 2021).

15 The academic year started with twelve active teachers. However, since Gabriele Doppler had to give up her Buddhist classes in Tyrol, she will be omitted from the present analysis, although she has been a leading force in BRE for several years in various capacities.

16 Since 2021, upper secondary students who opt out of religious education need to attend ethics classes instead of religion, while those without any religious affiliation may choose between instruction in ethics or in a religion of their choice.

one in relation to the religious tradition sponsoring the school. Given this legal situation as well as the denominational composition of private schools in Austria, this means that classes in BRE traditionally materialise at either Catholic or Protestant schools.

A class is offered if a school has three or more students, provided that the *ÖBR* can recruit a teacher, which is occasionally not feasible. In most cases, however, students from several schools within the same city or district are gathered at one location to form a class. As a matter of fact, most Buddhist students in Austria either opt out or do not appear on any lists in the first place because they are not affiliated with the *ÖBR*. Hence, only a fraction of them actually attends BRE classes. It is common practice that a BRE class comprises not only of students from different schools, but also from different levels within primary, (lower) secondary, and upper secondary stages, resulting in rather heterogeneous mixed-age groups. Consequently, teachers need to select subject matters from the curriculum of all levels represented in the group and rotate the topics in a manner that ensures that each student covers all of them during the course of their schooling.

Depending on the number of students, classes meet for either one or two one-hour (i.e., fifty minutes) lessons per week.<sup>17</sup> If one hour per week is allocated to a class, they may meet bi-weekly in a double session instead, usually being scheduled in late afternoon. Many students have to cover long distances to reach their class and there might be timetabling conflicts with their regular schedules and other school activities, thus resulting in generally lower attendance.

Until 2015, classes used to take place at Buddhist centres and temples in order to provide a better instructional context (Kronika 2016: 9). However, out of the government's concern for (Islamic) fundamentalism and radicalisation, it became legally required for all religious education classes to take place at official schools, making visits to temples and other sites only possible in the framework of field trips. The shift into the regular classroom setting was not only met with concern on the part of teachers and students alike, but also meant an increase in administration (Kronika 2021: 8).

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17 For most school types, religious education lessons involve two hours per week, unless there are fewer than ten students in attendance—in that case, the time frame is halved to one hour.

### 3.1. Textbook and Curriculum

Currently, there is no standardised textbook for BRE in Austria. However, the task of creating a book for elementary schools has recently been assigned to Guntram Franz Ferstl (b. 1970; see below) and will be embedded in a research project at the *KPH Wien/Krems* (Interview with Karin Anna Ertl on October 19, 2021).<sup>18</sup> However, just like for all school subjects, the Austrian government provides funds for other books to be used in BRE class. Therefore, teachers usually purchase story books using these government funds, and rely on materials they gather or create individually for the time being. Most BRE teachers use Dominique Side's *Buddhismus: Ein Grundlagenwerk für Lehrende, Lernende und alle Interessierten* (Side 2009; subsequent editions were published in 2015 and 2017) for upper secondary education. Side is a British practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism and Buddhist educator who is involved in Sogyal Rinpoche's (1947–2019) Rigpa movement. In 2005, she published the textbook *Buddhism* (Side 2005), of which the German version is a translation.

The school curriculum for the primary and lower secondary levels is currently under revision in order to reflect new requirements of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, and Research as all instruction at Austrian schools now needs to be oriented at certain competences rather than just demanding rote memorisation. In other words, all the topics treated in BRE classes need to relate to one of the following competences: (1) perception and description; (2) cognition, understanding, and interpretation; (3) performance and creating; (4) interaction, communication, and evaluation; and (5) participation and decision.

Combined with the four dimensions that representatives of all Legally Recognised Churches and Religious Societies agreed on—that is, (1) individuals and their goals in life; (2) lived and learned religion; (3) religion in society and culture; (4) religious and ideological diversity—the above competences are meant to result in six core skills that are to be acquired through BRE in particular (Aldrian and Doppler 2020):<sup>19</sup>

- Perceive yourself and your environment in an open and differentiated way, including limitations and opportunities for development.

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18 Legally, the use of textbooks and other teaching materials is left as an internal matter to the *ÖBR* (and any other Legally Recognised Church and Religious Society) with the caveat that these must not contradict civic education.

19 Work on the new curriculum started in 2019 and, after submitting it to the Ministry of Education in late 2020, the draft is still awaiting approval at the time of writing.

- Respect various forms of expressing spirituality and religion and have a respectful dialogue with members of other cultures, confessions, and religions in a (religiously) diverse society.
- Reiterate central messages, concepts, and key events of your religion.
- Describe and implement meditation and basic forms of religious practice in an age-appropriate way.
- Recognise ethical conflicts based on religious core values and develop non-violent options for action.
- Interact with humans and with nature in a responsible and wholesome way.

Subject areas which are covered on virtually all levels of BRE include: (1) living together as a community (including interreligious dialogue); (2) confidence and responsibility; (3) ways of practising Buddhism; (4) celebrations and special days; (5) Buddhism in everyday life; and (6) the life of the Buddha with a transition to progressively more theoretical teachings (Aldrian and Doppler 2020).

Suffice it to say that each teacher has their personal approach to setting the stage, creating the right atmosphere, and conveying their instruction. However, there are some commonalities among most past and present BRE teachers in Austria: a typical lesson consists of meditation, followed by taking refuge and recitations, and some theoretical input such as learning about the Buddha's life, scripture reading, or applying the teachings to everyday problems. In their lesson plans, teachers strive to find a balance between theory (*dharma*) and practice (different forms of meditation or other exercises). For some teachers, it is important to work with stories, be it *Jātaka* stories or other types of narratives about the Buddha or other Buddhist key figures. Especially but not exclusively for younger children, there are also frequent songs, role play, *mandala* colouring, or other creative and mindful activities, such as making *mālā* beads or building a model of a stupa (see, e.g., ÖBR 2013: 5). Occasionally, field trips are included. One related early-day highlight for BRE students in Austria was an audience granted to them by the fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935) during a visit to Graz in June 1995.

During the survey conducted for this article, several current teachers commented on the challenges posed by the heterogeneous class setups: as outlined above, a typical class is attended by children of different ages and from various ethnic backgrounds. Accommodating these divergent needs and expectations is held to be usually achieved by focusing on mindfulness, mutual respect, and flexibility. The modes of performance appraisal vary to some extent: whereas active participation in class discussions is pivotal for some teachers, others require presentations or project work throughout the semester

or year. Homework and larger exams, however, remain a rare exception. Buddhist religion can be selected as a subject for the oral A-level exams (*Matura*) by students who attended BRE throughout upper secondary education. In this case, the candidates are provided with a question bank from eight to twelve standardised topics and receive dedicated one-on-one preparation time. If they missed one or several years, they have the option to be admitted after taking an additional exam covering the subject matter for the respective year or years of absence.

### 3.2. Buddhist Religious Education Teachers

Previously, any practising Buddhist could apply at the *ÖBR* to become a BRE teacher insofar they had completed a one-year diploma on Buddhism and were approved by the Sangha Council—regardless of their professional background or actual teaching experience. For several years now, however, it is mandatory for new BRE teachers in Austria to have a professional background related to the field of education, be it in preschool care, music, corresponding social work or as a conventional teacher at a primary, secondary, or continuing education institution. From 2012 to 2017, there was an agreement between the *ÖBR* and the *KPH Wien/Krems*, enabling non-teachers to satisfy this requirement by completing ten classes on relevant teaching methodology.

As of 2022, prospective elementary school teachers can choose BRE as the focus of their Bachelor of Education programme. Furthermore, the *KPH Wien/Krems* offers a certificate in teaching Buddhism worth sixty ECTS points for (1) student teachers from all over Austria, (2) teachers who already completed their certification for other subjects in the past, and (3) those interested in teaching Buddhism although they do not have a background in the field of education yet.<sup>20</sup> For active BRE teachers, monthly workshops and seminars—usually hosted in Vienna, Salzburg, or online—are offered as advanced training as well as quality assurance measures. These events represent a cornerstone of the teachers' community as they provide opportunities for relaying news, exchanging knowledge, and sharing experiences and ideas.

All of the current BRE teachers have a background in the field of education. With a few exceptions, most teachers teach Buddhism only for a few hours per week in addition to their regular teaching load: teaching Buddhism as their sole occupation applies to only two of the current eleven teachers,

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<sup>20</sup> Currently, a total of six individuals are in the process of earning their BRE teaching certification.

whereas the remaining nine teach other subjects as well or have additional obligations in other fields. Thus, the motivation to become a BRE teacher is presumably mainly idealistic rather than financial. When asked about their decision to become BRE teachers, eight of the current eleven teachers report that they were invited to do so, whereas the remaining three actively approached the *ÖBR* or the Board of Education and offered their services.

Although this used to be the case in previous years, the quite recent shift to a preference for certified teachers rather than merely interested individuals also means that there are no graduates of Buddhist Studies—beyond one- or two-year (part-time) diploma holders—among the current teachers.<sup>21</sup> Naturally, one also has to be formally a Buddhist and a member of the *ÖBR* in order to become a BRE teacher. Thus, one may argue that the three pillars constituting the background of all current and future BRE teachers in Austria are expertise in (1) education, (2) Buddhist theory, and (3) Buddhist practice.

Notably, with one exception,<sup>22</sup> all past and present teachers were born and raised in Austria, converted to Buddhism later in their lives, and now practise in various traditions across the Buddhist spectrum, chiefly involving Tibetan Buddhism of various kinds (five of the current eleven teachers) and Zen (Rinzai and Sōtō; four of eleven), but also Theravāda and Nichiren Buddhism (Sōka Gakkai; one of eleven each, respectively). Irrespective of their age, the current BRE teachers have first encountered Buddhism in two waves, either in the 1980s (four of eleven) or around the turn of the millennium (seven of eleven). Likewise, there is no correlation between the teachers' ages and when they entered their profession: the more recent hires are not necessarily younger than those who have been teaching Buddhism for years or decades. It is also noteworthy that many first encountered Buddhism abroad, be it in New York, Paris, or India. One can observe a certain degree of fluctuation among teachers, which is surprising given the required training and idealistic

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21 This diploma in Buddhism is issued by the Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka in connection with the Academy for Buddhism and Christianity (*Akademie für Buddhismus und Christentum*; <https://www.akademie-buddhismus-christentum.ac.at/>) programme run by the Vienna-based Theravāda monk Bhante Seelawansa Thero (b. 1953). Note that at the time of writing, one teacher—the co-author of this paper—was about to finish her Bachelor of Arts degree in “Languages and Cultures of South Asia and Tibet” at the University of Vienna. Strommer also holds a Master of Arts in Religious Studies, the only BRE teacher to do so.

22 In the early 2000s, a surge of ethnic Chinese students in Vienna led the *ÖBR* to temporarily hire an ethnic Taiwanese teacher, Chun-Kuei Chen, a leading member of the Pure Land Buddhist temple Wéiyěnà Cíén Fótáng (Compassion and Kindness Buddha Hall Vienna) at Althanstraße 35 in Vienna's ninth district (Chadwin and Pokorný 2021: 120, 127–128; Pusitz 2003).

commitment. Five of the current eleven teachers started their positions between 1999 and 2008 and, consequently, have been teaching for well over a decade. Two started in 2015 and 2016, respectively, and four began only in the past four years.

As of the school year 2021/2022, BRE teaching is largely represented by the following individuals:<sup>23</sup>

*Michael Aldrian* (b. 1965) encountered Buddhism in the late 1980s through the later (i.e., 2007) discontinued Tibetan Buddhist centre Thubten Rime Chöling operated by Loseries-Leick in Graz. In 1990, he met the Karma Kagyu lama Tenga Rinpoche (1932–2012), a striking episode affirming his devotion to Buddhism, which he solemnly articulated by seeking refuge in 1996. Since then, he engaged intra- (Gelug and Dzogchen) and inter-denominationally (Bhante Seelawansa's Singhalese Theravāda and Genro Herbert Koudela's Rinzai Zen). In 1996, Aldrian completed the diploma (i.e., four-year M.A.) programme in Philosophy and Education at the University of Graz with a thesis on “Wider die Sinnlosigkeit: Eine Untersuchung über das Menschenwesen am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts” (Against Meaninglessness: An Enquiry Into the Human Condition at the End of the 20th Century). He teaches BRE—presently comprising eight hours across six venues with some fifty students from ten schools in Graz and vicinity—independently since 2004 (before he was “assistant” to Loseries-Leick).<sup>24</sup> In 2021 and 2022, Aldrian served as superintendent for BRE in Styria, Carinthia, Salzburg, Tyrol, and Vorarlberg.

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23 The information provided here is largely based on questionnaires sent out to the Austrian BRE teachers as well as interviews. One BRE teacher from Tyrol—presently teaching six students from various schools at Volksschule Saggen (Siebererstraße 7, 6020 Innsbruck)—opted to remain anonymous. Naturally, given the fluidity of BRE staffing, the information provided is only a snapshot. However, the vignettes are very much indicative of the denominationally and biographically mixed composition of teachers since the beginning of BRE in Austria.

24 Volksschule BIPS-Krones (Bilingual Primary School) (Münzgrabenstraße 18, 8010 Graz as well as Brockmannsgasse 119, 8010 Graz); Private Mittelschule des Schulvereins der Grazer Schulschwestern (Georgigasse 84a, 8020 Graz); Akademisches Gymnasium Graz (Bürgergasse 15, 8010 Graz) at both lower (*Unterstufe*) and upper grades (*Oberstufe*); Höhere technische Bundeslehranstalt Graz-Gösting (Ibererstraße 15–21, 8051 Graz); and the Buddhist school The Schule im Pfeifferhof in Graz (see below). In addition, online Buddhist schooling takes place fortnightly at Bundesrealgymnasium Innsbruck (Adolf-Pichler-Platz 1, 6020 Innsbruck) and Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck (Angerzellgasse 14, 6020 Innsbruck).

*Anita Brandstätter* took refuge in 1996 having previously encountered the tradition through lectures by Diamond Way Buddhism founder Ole Nydahl (b. 1941) in Graz. Shortly thereafter she travelled to Dordogne, France, where she became disciple of the Karma Kagyu lama Guendune Rinpoche (1918–1997) at his Dhagpo Kagyu Ling. After many years, including visits to India and Nepal, she returned to Austria but tries to spend as much time as possible in Dordogne during holidays (Kronika 2022: 8–10).<sup>25</sup> Upon her return to Austria she completed a course at the *KPH Wien/Krems*. She teaches BRE in Vienna since 2018—presently comprising fourteen hours across eight venues with some one hundred students.<sup>26</sup>

*Karin Anna Ertl* is a trained nursery school teacher, completing diploma studies in Political Science (M.A. 2012) and Education (M.A. 2012), both at the University of Vienna.<sup>27</sup> Coping with long-term illness led her to Buddhism later in her life (around the year 2000), taking refuge in 2004 and becoming a disciple of Genro at the BodhidharmaZendo. Since then she was particularly inspired through Bhante Seelawansa as well as the writings of the Vietnamese Thiền (Japanese: Zen) monk Thích Nhát Hanh (1926–2022). Ertl embarked on teaching BRE in 2008, since 2012 serving as superintendent.

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25 Prior, she had received academic training in History/Sport Education at the University of Graz, receiving her diploma in 1993 with a thesis on “Kultur- und Religionsgeschichte der Hopi-Indianer: Von der Gründung des Reservates 1882 bis zur Gegenwart” (The Cultural and Religious History of the Hopi Indians: From the Founding of the Reservation in 1882 to the Present Day). She resumed her studies in History and obtained a Ph.D. in 1996 with a thesis on “Die kulturellen Veränderungen der Southern-Cheyenne Indianer im amerikanischen Bundesstaat von Oklahoma: Mit Berücksichtigung der amerikanischen Indianerpolitik des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts” (The Cultural Changes of the Southern Cheyenne Indians in the American State of Oklahoma: With Consideration of American Indian Policies in the 19th and 20th Centuries).

26 Volksschule Stubenbastei (Stubenbastei 3, 1010 Vienna); Volksschule im Bildungszentrum Kenyongasse (Kenyongasse 4–8, 1070 Vienna); Campus Sacre Coeur Wien Volksschule (Rennweg 31, 1030 Vienna); Offene Volksschule Kaisermühlen (Schüttauerstraße 42, 1220 Vienna); Volksschule Herbststraße (Herbststraße 86, 1160 Vienna); Mittelschule Bildungszentrum Kenyongasse (Kenyongasse 4–12, 1070 Vienna); Gymnasium und Realgymnasium Stubenbastei (Stubenbastei 6–8, 1010 Vienna) and Evangelisches Gymnasium und Werkshulheim (Erdbergstraße 222A, 1110 Vienna), both at lower grades.

27 Her theses include “NS-Euthanasie in Wien. Erwin Jekelius: Der Direktor vom ‘Spiegelgrund’ und seine Beteiligung am NS-Vernichtungsprogramm” (Nazi Euthanasia in Vienna. Erwin Jekelius: The Director of the “Spiegelgrund” and his Involvement in the National Socialist Extermination Programme) and “Personenzentrierte Psychotherapie und Zen-Buddhismus: Eine Begegnung zwischen zwei Wegen” (Person-centred Psychotherapy and Zen Buddhism: An Encounter Between Two Paths), respectively.

dent for Vienna, Burgenland, Lower Austria, and Upper Austria. Additionally, since 2018, she chairs the Department of Buddhist Religion at the *KPH Wien/Krems*. Because of her vast administrative responsibilities, she presently teaches BRE only once a week in a class of twelve students in Vienna.<sup>28</sup> Her all-time high was nine hours and some seventy students across nine venues.

*Guntram Franz Ferstl* is a civil engineer and secondary school teacher by training. In his late twenties he immersed himself, including an initiation, in neo-Shamanism for several years until 2005. A few years earlier, in 2002, he started to engage more closely with Buddhism following his reading of the Dalai Lama's *Einführung in den Buddhismus. Die Harvard-Vorlesungen*, that is, the German edition of *The Dalai Lama at Harvard: Lectures on the Buddhist Path to Peace* (1988), and particularly Sogyal Rinpoche's *Das tibetische Buch vom Leben und vom Sterben*, that is, the German edition of *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (1992). At the time, he also attended the Kalachakra for World Peace event in Graz, which was held under the auspices of the Dalai Lama and attended by some 10,000 spectators. Not only did he forge a strong spiritual connection to the Dalai Lama because of the event but he also got hold of yet another formative book, namely the Bon master Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's (b. 1961) *Der kurze Weg zur Erleuchtung. Dzogchen-Meditation nach den Bön-Lehren Tibets* (The Short Path to Enlightenment: Dzogchen Meditation According to the Bon Teachings of Tibet). He soon met his "root lama" (*Wurzellama*) in person and would repeatedly do so over the years while also engaging with Theravāda literature and Zen practice. In 2016, he was ultimately ordained into the Sōtō tradition of Otogawa Kōbun (1938–2002) as represented in Austria by Vanja Palmers (b. 1948) and David Steindl-Rast (b. 1926) and their Puregg Phönixwolke (i.e., Phoenix Cloud) Sangha, headquartered in Dienten am Hochkönig (Salzburg). The same year, he started as a BRE teacher in Lustenau when he also published his book (Ferstl 2016; with a revised edition in 2019). Since 2018, he also serves as assistant at the Department of Buddhist Religion at the *KPH Wien/Krems*. He presently teaches BRE at three schools in Vorarlberg—in Altach, Bregenz, and Lustenau—with forty-three students in total.<sup>29</sup>

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28 Gymnasium und Realgymnasium Stubenbastei (Stubenbastei 6–8, 1010 Vienna) at lower grades.

29 Bundeshandelsakademie und Bundeshandelsschule Bregenz (Hinterfeldgasse 19, 6900 Bregenz) at both lower and upper grades; Volksschule and Mittelschule Lustenau Kirchdorf (Maria-Theresien-Straße 27, 6890 Lustenau); and the Freie Montessori Schule Altach (see below).

*Wilfried Haunschmid* encountered the Buddhist tradition during a field trip of the Catholic Youth around 1976 where they practised walking meditation. He would later commit to Rinzai Zen, becoming a disciple of US-American (and largely Sōtō Zen trained) Charlotte Joko Beck (1917–2011), who herself had received dharma transmission through Maezumi Hakuyū (1931–1995). He is a business graduate—M.A. in 1986 with a thesis entitled “Management als soziale Einheit” (Management as a Social Unit)—from the University of Innsbruck, but also studied towards a Master of Education in Economics and worked for some ten years as a conservator of excavated items. He commenced teaching in 1999. Presently, he is responsible for six hours for some thirty-five students teaching across six venues in Gmunden, Leonding, Linz, and Vöcklabruck (all in Upper Austria).<sup>30</sup>

*Ingrid Köfler* (b. 1965) is a member of Nichirenist Sōka Gakkai, a tradition she encountered in 1988 while she lived in New York pursuing an M.A. in English as a Second Language at Mercy College. Previously, she studied lower secondary school education in Salzburg, where she presently teaches English, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. She was approached only recently by the ÖBR to take over two classes comprising three and four students, respectively, with one hour each in the city of Salzburg, starting in the school year 2021/2022.<sup>31</sup>

*Sabine Kuen* took refuge in 1996 under the US-Tibetan Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche (b. 1962), who was later to become head of Shambhala Buddhism, that is, a distinct merger of the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions within Tibetan Buddhism. One year earlier, a friend introduced her to sitting meditation and Kyūdō, which she started to practise at the Dharmadatu centre at Westbahnhofstraße 32–34 in Vienna’s seventh district.<sup>32</sup> Other teachers whose teachings she particularly appreciates—Sakyong Mipham’s father Chögyam Trungpa (1939–1987) aside—include the Karma Kagyu master Khenpo Tsultrim

<sup>30</sup> Europagymnasium Auhof (Aubrunnerweg 4, 4020 Linz), Bundesrealgymnasium Fadingerstraße (Fadingerstraße 4, 4020 Linz), Bundesgymnasium und Bundesrealgymnasium Linz (Ramsauerstraße 94, 4020 Linz), and Bundesgymnasium Vöcklabruck (Schloßstraße 31a, 4840 Vöcklabruck), all four at the lower grades; Höhere technische Bundeslehranstalt Leonding (Limesstraße 12–14, 4060 Leonding) and Bundesrealgymnasium Gmunden (Keramikstraße 28, 4810 Gmunden) at the upper grades.

<sup>31</sup> Christian-Doppler-Gymnasium (Franz-Josef-Kai 41, 5020 Salzburg) and Europa- und Bundesgymnasium Salzburg-Nonntal Karlheinz-Böhm-Gymnasium (Josef-Preis-Allee 3, 5020 Salzburg), both at the lower grades.

<sup>32</sup> The centre was later renamed Shambhala Meditationszentrum and relocated to Stiftsgasse 15–17.

Gyamtso Rinpoche (b. 1934) and the Shambala Buddhist Pema Chödrön (née Deirdre Blomfield-Brown; b. 1936). Kuen completed the diploma programme of Education (German as well as Philosophy, Psychology, and Pedagogics), subjects she teaches to this day at a grammar school in Bad Vöslau, Lower Austria. She commenced teaching BRE in the school year 2003/2004. She currently teaches one class of four students per week in Mödling, Lower Austria.<sup>33</sup> Previously, she taught three classes with some twenty-five students in Vienna.

*Monika Lamminger* (b. 1972) is a childcare worker and occupational therapist based in Salzburg. She encountered Buddhism through a friend in 1998 and later took refuge in Ole Nydahl's Diamond Way Buddhism. She started to teach in the school year 2018/2019 and presently runs one class at a primary school with three students in Salzburg. Before, she had three classes in three schools with twenty-four students.<sup>34</sup>

*Martina Anissa Strommer* (b. 1980) encountered the Buddhist tradition while teaching German at Peking University and at Delhi University in her early twenties. A few years later, from 2010, she gradually intensified her engagement with Buddhism, also motivated by courses she took at the University of Vienna as a student of Religious Studies.<sup>35</sup> She would subsequently become a disciple of Bhante Seelawansa, who also inspired her to get involved in BRE, which she does since the school year 2015/2016. She presently teaches one class in Vienna with eleven students while also serving as an assistant at the Department of Buddhist Religion at the *KPH Wien/Krems*.<sup>36</sup>

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33 Höhere Technische Bundeslehr- und Versuchsanstalt Mödling (Technikerstraße 1–5, 2340 Mödling).

34 Volksschule Josefiau (Billrothstraße 4, 5020 Salzburg).

35 There she obtained M.A. degrees in African Studies in 2012 with a thesis on “Der Missionar als Linguist. Der Wiener Johannes Rath (1816–1903) im Dienst der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft bei den Herero” (The Missionary as Linguist: The Viennese Johannes Rath [1816–1903] in the Service of the Rhenish Missionary Society at the Herero), and in Religious Studies in 2021 with a thesis on “Religion in der afrikanischen Diaspora in Moskau” (Religion in the African Diaspora in Moscow). Prior, she completed a diploma programme (four-year M.A.) in Linguistics at the University of Salzburg and an M.A. in German at the University of Connecticut Storrs, both in 2006. Additionally, she completed a course on German as a Foreign and Second Language at the Private University of Education, Diocese Linz, in 2002.

36 Gymnasium und Realgymnasium Stubenbastei (Stubenbastei 6–8, 1010 Vienna) at upper grades. For a short period, online Buddhist schooling also took place fortnightly at Franziskanergymnasium Hall in Tirol (Kathreinstraße 6, 6060 Hall in Tirol).

*Gerhard Urban* is a retired classical musician and music educator based in Linz where he also served as director of the musical school from 1994 to 2002. He is a Buddhist in the Sōtō Zen tradition since 1981 when he encountered Deshimaru Taisen (1914–1982), one of the chief exponents of Zen propagation in Europe, at his Paris *zendō*. In recent years, he has also taken a growing interest in Tibetan Buddhism, specifically through his contacts with the Buddhist centre Rangjung Yeshe Gomde in Scharnstein, which is connected to the Kagyu and Nyingma traditions and especially Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche (b. 1951). He took on his position as BRE teacher at a primary school in Linz with four students in the 2020/2021 school year.<sup>37</sup> In 1993, just when BRE officially started at Austrian public schools, Urban volunteered to provide several students at the Vienna International School with Buddhist instruction for a few months.

For various reasons, nearly all teachers have experienced a surge in numbers in the past year or years, both in students and in teaching hours: in the school year 2021/2022, there were 305 Buddhism students in Austria being taught in twenty-nine different locations for a total of thirty-nine lessons per week. With the exceptions of the Buddhist schools in Altach and Graz (see below), which are attended exclusively by Austrians, all other teachers report that the majority—or in some cases all—of their students originate from traditionally Buddhist countries. We can estimate that across Austria thirty per cent of the students come from Austrian or binational families and seventy per cent from Asian ones. Especially at the higher levels, one can also find ethnic Austrian students who developed an interest in Buddhism independently from their families (cf. Sterkl 2009). The majority of participants (or at least one of their parents), however, come from families that migrated to Austria from traditionally Buddhist countries one or two generations ago. Whereas one obstacle is to explain the Austrian system of religious education to these families, the other challenge is to provide meaningful theoretical and practical input to students from such diverse ethnic and spiritual backgrounds. In other words, the teachers do not only have to reconcile their own Buddhist orientation with the traditions represented in a class, but also need to find the lowest common denominator across the students' experiences and understandings of certain concepts. One of the pitfalls here could be that the teachers assume that the students are “experts” in their respective traditions and put them on the spot in front of the class by expecting some sort of insider knowledge. However, many students are only Buddhist on paper and do not

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37 Volksschule der Franziskanerinnen Linz (Brucknerstraße 8, 4020 Linz).

necessarily come from practising families. Thus, by definition, BRE in Austria is multi-ethnic and inter-denominational. Beyond the religious education regulated by Austrian federal law, the *ÖBR* also offers family pujas, a play-group for young children, a youth group, and an annual “Christmas” party for children (cf. Ertl 2017; Kronika 2015: 10).

There are currently two schools in Austria—one in Altach in Austria’s western-most federal state Vorarlberg, and one in the Styrian capital Graz, Austria’s second largest city—which are recognised as Buddhist schools by the *ÖBR* (since 2019 and 2021, respectively). What they have in common is that both are private progressive schools that were established several decades ago. However, being labelled as a Buddhist school does not mean that a majority of the students are or have to be Buddhist—it only means that BRE is being offered (without the tedious process of reporting the numbers, waiting if a class is going to materialise, seeing if a teacher is available, finding a practicable timeslot, and maybe even travelling to a different location) and that the *ÖBR* confirms that the school’s values conform to Buddhist principles. Each school is assigned a mentor who acts as an *ÖBR* representative by ensuring that Buddhist principles are observed, the communication flow between the respective schools and the *ÖBR* is maintained, and BRE is provided at the institution in question.

The Freie Montessori Schule (Enderstraße 1, 6844 Altach; [www.freie-montessori-schule.at](http://www.freie-montessori-schule.at); see Goldmann 2019 and Mäser 2019) offers regular Buddhism workshops by its BRE teacher Ferstl. The Schule im Pfeifferhof (Pfeifferhofweg 153, 8045 Graz; [www.sip-knallerbse.at/](http://www.sip-knallerbse.at/)) is likewise a private Montessori school with public law status for students from age six to fifteen (primary and secondary school). BRE aside (which is taught by Michael Aldrian), the school also maintains a special room for stillness, mindfulness, and meditation exercisers. Government funding to both of them, as Buddhist schools, provided an additional motivation for denominational recognition. In 2011, another Montessori private school—located at Galvanigasse 15–17 in Vienna’s twenty-first district—aimed at receiving denominational recognition for a while. It was supposed to be affiliated with Franz Ritter’s (b. 1947) *Neue Welt Institut* (New World Institute), then acknowledged as a Buddhist “institute” by the *ÖBR* located in Neunkirchen. Ritter is an Austro-Zen pioneer and the patriarch of Naikan in Europe (Pokorny 2021b). A former Naikan student of his—Sonja Pils—served as the pedagogical head of the school, which briefly took the name *Neue Welt-Schule* in reference to its supposed carrier facility (Matusek 2011: 13; see also Pils 2021). However, due to the school’s difficult economic situation, the *ÖBR* was reluctant to take the risk at the time although it was endorsing Ritter’s

plan. Eventually, the school was indeed closed shortly thereafter (Interview with Franz Ritter on November 15, 2021).

#### 4. Concluding Remarks

BRE at schools in Austria enjoys a unique position in Europe. However, public opinion on religious education oscillates between two different scenarios: on the one hand, maintaining the status quo, and on the other hand abolishing religious education in public schools altogether—in the light of increasing ethnic and ideological diversity within society. Alternatives would be to replace religious education by a subject with a more comparative approach (in German, *Religionenunterricht* rather than *Religionsunterricht*) or offering mandatory ethics classes for all students. In this discourse, the ÖBR highlights BRE as one of their flagship endeavours, both for facilitating interreligious encounters and for providing the fundamental Buddhist teachings to its members within the framework provided by Austrian legislation.

The last few years in particular have seen decisive developments alongside a veritable surge in student numbers, as of 2021/2022 reaching a total of 305 students taught by eleven teachers in seven federal states. These landmark events involve the recognition of two Buddhist schools in 2019 and 2021, respectively, and the establishment of the Department of Buddhist Religion at the KPH Wien/Krems in 2018 (currently employing three staff members). With a growing professionalisation of BRE, the attention has turned to the creation of an independent textbook and standardised teaching aids. Moreover, in 2019 the ÖBR commenced working towards a new curriculum for Primary Level and Secondary Level I (ranging from first to eighth grade). Likewise, one can expect that Austrian exponents of BRE will soon embark on producing related theory-driven and practical scholarship in line with the standards of academic religious education. To this end, for example, Karin Anna Ertl, the head of the KPH's Department of Buddhist Religion, is already working towards her doctoral thesis on BRE at the University of Vienna (Personal Interview with Karin Anna Ertl on October 19, 2021). The Austro-Buddhist community and the ÖBR membership is continuously growing. Especially by arranging for future teachers to receive standardised high-quality training at the KPH Wien/Krems, the ÖBR is on target for an increasing demand for BRE. Accordingly, with the rising visibility of Buddhism and BRE going hand in hand with these efforts, student figures too are very likely to keep increasing in the coming years.

## Appendix 1: Curriculum for Buddhist Religious Education at Schools (May 20, 1992)

### 255. Bekanntmachung des Bundesministers für Unterricht und Kunst betreffend den Lehrplan für den buddhistischen Religionsunterricht an Pflichtschulen, mittleren und höheren Schulen

Der in der Anlage wiedergegebene Lehrplan für den buddhistischen Religionsunterricht an Pflichtschulen, mittleren und höheren Schulen wurde vom Sangharat der Österreichischen Buddhistischen Religionsgesellschaft erlassen und wird hiemit gemäß § 2 Abs. 2 des Religionsunterrichtsgesetzes, BGBl. Nr. 190/1949, zuletzt geändert durch das Bundesgesetz BGBl. Nr. 329/1988, bekanntgemacht.

### LEHRPLAN FÜR DEN BUDHISTISCHEN RELIGIONSSUNTERRICHT AN PFlichtSCHULEN, MITTLEREN UND HÖHEREN SCHULEN

#### A. Allgemeines Bildungsziel

Der buddhistische Religionsunterricht soll den Kindern und Jugendlichen die Grundlagen der buddhistischen Lehre — Philosophie, Ethik und Meditation — vermitteln.

Vorrangiges Bildungsziel ist, die Schüler im Sinne des Buddhismus zu selbstständigem Denken, Toleranz und Friedfertigkeit zu erziehen.

Sie sollen an das Verständnis herangeführt werden, daß die Praxis

### 255. Announcement of the Federal Minister for Education and the Arts concerning the Curriculum for Buddhist Religious Education at compulsory, middle, and upper secondary schools

The curriculum for Buddhist religious education at compulsory, middle, and upper secondary schools was developed by the Sangha Council of the Austrian Buddhist Religious Society and is hereby pursuant to § 2 para. 2 of the Religious Education Act, Federal Law Gazette No. 190/1949, as last amended by the Federal Law Gazette No. 329/1988.

### CURRICULUM FOR BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN COMPULSORY, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

#### A. General Educational Goal

Buddhist religious education is intended to teach children and adolescents the foundations of the Buddhist teachings — philosophy, ethics, and meditation.

The primary educational goal is to educate the students to think independently, be tolerant and peaceful in the sense of Buddhism.

They should be introduced to the understanding that the practice of the Buddhist teachings is an essential part of a meaningful life.

der buddhistischen Lehre ein wesentlicher Bestandteil eines sinnerfüllten Lebens ist.

### **B. Allgemeine Bemerkungen und didaktische Grundsätze**

Da der buddhistische Religionsunterricht zum überwiegenden Teil als Mehrklassenunterricht in Religionsunterrichtsgruppen geführt wird, ergibt sich die Notwendigkeit, Schüler verschiedener Altersstufen zusammenzuziehen.

Bei der Festlegung der Themenschwerpunkte ist auf die Zusammensetzung der Religionsunterrichtsgruppen Bedacht zu nehmen. Die allgemein gültigen didaktischen Grundsätze sind auch für den Religionsunterricht anzuwenden, soweit dies seine Eigenart zuläßt.

Besonderes Augenmerk ist darauf zu legen, daß die Schüler den Bezug der Lehrinhalte zu ihrem eigenen Leben erkennen und fähig werden, das Gelernte in ihrem täglichen Leben anzuwenden.

### **C. Lehrplan**

#### **1. und 2. Schulstufe**

Jatakas = frühere Lebensgeschichte des Buddha. Mit Bildern erklären, vorlesen und nachspielen lassen.

Das Leben des historischen Buddha. Von seiner Geburt als Prinz Siddhartha bis zum 29. Lebensjahr.

3 Juwelen: Kindgerechte Darstellung von Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. Buddha = Gründer,

### **B. General Remarks and Didactic Principles**

Since Buddhist religious education is chiefly conducted as multi-class teaching in religious education groups, it is necessary to bring together concentrate students of different ages together.

When determining the main topics, the composition of the religious education groups must be taken into account.

The generally valid didactic tenets shall also be applied to religious education insofar as this is permitted by its scope.

Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring that students recognise the relevance of the teaching contents to their own lives and are able to apply what they have learned in their daily lives.

### **C. Curriculum**

#### **1st and 2nd Grade**

Jatakas = earlier life story of the Buddha. Explain with pictures, read aloud, and act out.

The life of the historical Buddha. From his birth as Prince Siddhartha to the age of 29.

3 Jewels: Child-oriented representation of Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. Buddha = founder, Dharma =

Dharma = Lehre, Sangha = Gemeinschaft der Anhänger.  
 Verehrungs- und Zufluchtsformeln lernen und rezitieren.  
 Achtsamkeitsübungen: Durch achtsamkeitsfördernde Wahrnehmungsspiele (sehen, hören, riechen, schmecken, fühlen, denken): Vorübungen für Sitz- und Gehmeditation. Buddhistische Kinderfeste mit den Kindern gemeinsam vorbereiten.  
 Ritus und Symbole besprechen und gemeinsam auswählen.

**3. und 4. Schulstufe**

Das Leben des Buddha.  
 Ausführlich von seiner Geburt bis zur Entsaugung.  
 Sein geistiger Weg bis zur Erleuchtung.  
 „Buddha“, der Erleuchtete. Seine wichtigsten Schüler: Shariputra, Mogallana, Ananda, Rahula, Khema Uppalavanna.  
 Lebensgeschichten von Bodhisattvas, Mahasiddhas und großen Lehrern:  
 5 Sila.  
 Sittenregeln, Ethik im Buddhismus. Unterschied zwischen „Verbot“ und „Angebot“. Deutlich machen des Zusammenhangs von Ursache und Wirkung.  
 Altersentsprechende Meditationen. Auswahl von den Kindern entsprechenden Meditationsobjekten und formlosen Meditationen. Gespräche über die Meditation, ihre Schwierigkeiten und ihre Vorteile.

teaching, Sangha = community of followers.  
 Learn and recite worship and refuge formulas.  
 Mindfulness exercises: Through perception plays promoting mindfulness (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking): Preliminary exercises for sitting and walking meditation. Prepare Buddhist children's festivals together with the children.  
 Discuss and jointly select rite and symbols.  

**3rd and 4th Grade**

The Life of the Buddha.  
 In detail from his birth to his renunciation.  
 His spiritual path to enlightenment.  
 “Buddha,” the Enlightened One.  
 His most important disciples:  
 Shariputra, Mogallana, Ananda, Rahula, Khema Uppalavanna.  
 Life stories of bodhisattvas, mahasiddhas, and great teachers:  
 5 Sila.  
 Moral rules, ethics in Buddhism.  
 Difference between “prohibition” and “offer.” Clarifying the connection between cause and effect.  
 Meditations appropriate to age.  
 Selection of meditation objects and informal meditations appropriate for the children. Discussions about meditation, its difficulties, and its benefits.

**5. und 6. Schulstufe**

Wichtige Stätten des Buddhismus: Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Lumbini, Rajagriha, Kushinagara usw.

Leben und Lehren großer buddhistischer Meister: Shantideva, Nagarjuna, Padmasambhava, Bodhidharma, Rinzai, Dogen, Nichiren, Honen, Shinran, Milarepa, Niguma, Sukkhasiddhi, Yeshe Tsogyal, Mandarava usw.

Die 3 Juwelen: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

Die 4 Edlen Wahrheiten: Die edle Wahrheit vom Leid, von der Entstehung des Leidens, vom Aufhören des Leidens und vom Weg [rechte(s) Einsicht, Gesinnung, Reden, Handeln, Anstrengung, Lebensführung, Achtsamkeit, Meditation].

Das Gesetz von Karma.

Altersentsprechende Formen von Meditationen.

**7. und 8. Schulstufe**

Die geschichtliche Entwicklung des Sangha (der buddhistischen Gemeinschaft); die Ursachen und Ergebnisse der Konzile, Verbreitung des Buddhismus.

Entwicklung der verschiedenen Fahrzeuge: Hinayana (Sravaka- und Pratyekabuddhayana), Mahayana (Bodhisattvayana), Vajrayana; ihre verschiedenen Lehrmeinungen (1).

Die verschiedenen Traditionen: Theravada, Zentraditionen, tibetische Schulen, Amidabuddhismus usw.

**5th and 6th Grade**

Important Buddhist sites: Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Lumbini, Rajagriha, Kushinagara, etc.

Lives and teachings of great Buddhist masters: Shantideva, Nagarjuna, Padmasambhava, Bodhidharma, Rinzai, Dogen, Nichiren, Honen, Shinran, Milarepa, Niguma, Sukkhasiddhi, Yeshe Tsogyal, Mandarava, etc.

The 3 Jewels: Buddha, Dharma, Sangha

The 4 Noble Truths: The Noble Truth of Suffering, of the Origin of Suffering, of the Cessation of Suffering, and of the Way [right view, intention, speech, action, effort, livelihood, mindfulness, meditation].

The Law of karma.

Forms of meditation appropriate to age.

**7th and 8th Grade**

The historical development of the Sangha (the Buddhist community); the causes and results of the councils, spread of Buddhism.

Development of the different vehicles: Hinayana (Sravaka- and Pratyekabuddhayana), Mahayana (Bodhisattvayana), Vajrayana; their different doctrines (1).

The different traditions: Theravada, Zen traditions, Tibetan schools, Amida Buddhism, etc.

Erweiterung des in den vorangegangenen Jahren erworbenen Wissens über den Dharma.	Extending the knowledge of the Dharma acquired in the previous years.
Zeitgenössische Persönlichkeiten des Buddhismus.	Contemporary Buddhist figures.
Befreende Handlungen (Paramitas).	Liberating actions (paramitas).
Umgang mit Emotionen.	Dealing with emotions.
Buddhistisches Weltbild. Das positive Menschenbild im Buddhismus.	Buddhist worldview. The positive anthropology in Buddhism.
Die anderen Weltreligionen. Theistische und nontheistische Religionen.	The other world religions. Theistic and nontheistic religions.
Themen unserer Zeit: Familie, Freundschaft, Liebe, Sexualität, Drogenmißbrauch, Friedensarbeit, Toleranz.	Topics of our time: family, friendship, love, sexuality, drug abuse, peace work, tolerance.
Vertiefung der Achtsamkeitsmeditationen. Metta/Maitri Meditation.	Deepening the [practice of] mindfulness meditations. Metta/Maitri meditation.
<b>9. und 10. Schulstufe</b>	
Die verschiedenen Lehrmeinungen (2): Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Cittamattra, Madhyamaka.	The different doctrines (2): Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Cittamattra, Madhyamaka.
Buddhismus im Westen: Mißverständnisse; Übersetzungen; Wissensgehalt der Lehre und kulturspezifische Verbrämung; Exotik; christlich geprägtes Umfeld; westlicher Buddhismus.	Buddhism in the West: misunderstandings; translations; essence of the doctrine and culture-specific adaptation; exoticism; Christian-influenced environment; Western Buddhism.
Entwicklung des Buddhismus in Österreich.	Development of Buddhism in Austria.
Einheit in der Vielfalt: gemeinsame Basis aller Lehrmeinungen und Traditionen (die 3 Daseinsmerkmale, die 4 Siegel des Buddhismus, die 4 Edlen Wahrheiten usw.).	Unity in diversity: common basis of all doctrines and traditions (the 3 marks of existence, the 4 seals of Buddhism, the 4 Noble Truths, etc.).

Schwerpunkte: die 4 Grundgedanken; Zuflucht; Der Edle Achtfache Pfad; Samsara und Nirvana.

Buddhismus und Kunst.

Verschiedene grundlegende Meditationsformen:

- Achtsamkeitsmeditation
- Kontemplationen (meditative Betrachtung eines Themas)
- Liebe und Mitgefühl entfalten (Metta/Maitri Meditation; Meditation des Gebens und Nehmens)
- Vertiefungsmeditation, Meditation der Geistesruhe (Samatha oder Samadhi Meditation)
- Einsichtsmeditationen, Meditation des klaren Sehens (Vipassana).

### **11. bis 13. Schulstufe**

Buddhistische Sozialphilosophie. Buddhismus und wissenschaftliche Erkenntnisse.

Die 12gliedrige Kette des Abhängigen Entstehens.

Schwerpunkte: Bodhicitta, Bodhisattvaideal, die Emotionen (Kleshas), absolute und relative Wahrheit.

Buddhistische Literatur aus den verschiedenen Traditionen.

Themen unserer Zeit: Gleichberechtigung von Frau und Mann, Sexualität, Ökologie, Friedensarbeit, Nord-Süd-Problematik, Rassismus usw.

Einfluß des Buddhismus auf westliche Denker: Schopenhauer, Schumacher, Hesse, Heisenberg usw.

Focus: the 4 basic thoughts; refuge; The Noble Eightfold Path; samsara and nirvana.

Buddhism and Arts

Various basic forms of meditation:

- Mindfulness meditation
- Contemplations (theme-centred meditative contemplation)
- Developing love and compassion (metta/maitri meditation; meditation of giving and receiving)
- Deepening meditation, meditation of peace of mind (samatha or Samadhi meditation)
- Insight meditations, meditation of clear seeing (vipassana).

### **11th to 13th Grade**

Buddhist social philosophy.

Buddhism and scientific knowledge.

The 12 links of dependent origination.

Focus: Bodhicitta, bodhisattva ideal, the emotions (kleshas), absolute and relative truth.

Buddhist literature from the different traditions.

Topics of our time: equal rights for women and men, sexuality, ecology, peace work, North-South issues, racism, etc.

Influence of Buddhism on Western thinkers: Schopenhauer, Schumacher, Hesse, Heisenberg, etc.

Erweiterung des Wissens über die verschiedenen buddhistischen Traditionen. Dabei sollten deren Schwerpunkte in Philosophie und Meditation nach Möglichkeit mit Praktizierenden dieser Traditionen erörtert und praktiziert werden.

Extending knowledge about the different Buddhist traditions. In doing so, their foci in philosophy and meditation should be discussed and practised with practitioners of these traditions wherever possible.

## **Appendix 2: Curriculum for Buddhist Religious Education at Schools (July 8, 2008)**

241. Bekanntmachung der Bundesministerin für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur betreffend den Lehrplan für den buddhistischen Religionsunterricht an Pflichtschulen, mittleren und höheren Schulen

Auf Grund des § 2 Abs. 2 des Religionsunterrichtsgesetzes, BGBl. Nr. 190/1949, zuletzt geändert durch das Bundesgesetz BGBl. Nr. 256/1993, wird bekannt gemacht:

Der in der Anlage wiedergegebene Lehrplan für den buddhistischen Religionsunterricht an Pflichtschulen, mittleren und höheren Schulen wurde vom Sangharat der Österreichischen Buddhistischen Religionsgesellschaft erlassen und wird mit Wirksamkeit vom 1. September 2008 gemäß § 2 Abs. 2 des Religionsunterrichtsgesetzes bekannt gemacht.

**LEHRPLAN DES BUDDHISTISCHEN RELIGIONSUNTERRICHTES AN PFLICHTSCHULEN, MITTLEREN UND HÖHEREN SCHULEN**

241. Announcement of the Federal Minister for Education, the Arts, and Culture concerning the Curriculum for Buddhist Religious Education at compulsory schools, middle schools, and upper secondary schools

On the basis of § 2 para. 2 of the Religious Education Act, Federal Law Gazette No. 190/1949, last amended by Federal Law Gazette No. 256/1993, it is hereby announced:

The Curriculum for Buddhist Religious Education at compulsory schools, middle schools, and upper secondary schools was issued by the Sangha Council of the Austrian Buddhist Religious Society and is published with effect from 1 September 2008 pursuant to § 2 para. 2 of the Religious Education Act.

**CURRICULUM OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT COMPULSORY, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

## **1. Allgemeines Bildungsziel**

Alle Wesen unseres Planeten verbindet ein gemeinsames Streben: es ist das Verlangen nach der Erfahrung von Glück und das Vermeiden der Erfahrung von Leid. Diese beiden Grunderfahrungen hängen von Ursachen im individuellen Geist ab. Buddha Shakyamuni hat vor 2500 Jahren die Zusammenhänge dieser Faktoren ausführlich dargelegt und damit jedem, der seine Lehre erfassen kann, den Schlüssel zur Gestaltung des eigenen Lebensweges in die Hand gegeben. Aus tiefster meditativer Einsicht und erleuchtetem Wissen zeigte er allen Menschen – unabhängig von Rasse, Geschlecht und sozialem Stand – den Weg zu wahrer inneren Glück und vollkommener Freiheit des Geistes. Dieser Weg, bekannt unter dem Begriff Buddha-Dharma, beruht auf drei Schulungen: dem Entwickeln von ethischem Verhalten allem Leben gegenüber, dem Vertiefen von Meditation und dem Erlangen reiner Weisheit, die das abhängige Bestehen aller Phänomene erkennt und damit deren Leerheit von Eigenexistenz. Ein wichtiger Schritt dazu besteht darin, die volle Verantwortung für das eigene Leben in Bezug auf Denken, Reden und Tun zu übernehmen. Durch die Zuflucht zum Buddha, zu seiner Lehre und zur Gemeinschaft derer, die diesen Weg gegangen sind und noch gehen, wird das Vertrauen in die eigenen Bemühungen und in eine buddhistische Lebensführung gestärkt. Wenn sich

## **1. General Educational Goal**

All beings on our planet share a common aspiration: the desire to experience happiness and to avoid the experience of suffering. These two basic experiences depend on causes in the individual mind. Shakyamuni Buddha thoroughly elucidated the connections between these factors 2,500 years ago and thus gave everyone who can grasp his teachings the key to shaping their own path through life. From the most profound meditative insight and enlightened knowledge, he showed all people – regardless of race, sex, and social standing – the way to true inner happiness and complete freedom of the mind. This way, known as Buddha-Dharma, is based on three disciplines: the developing of ethical behaviour towards all life, the deepening of meditation, and the attaining of pure wisdom that recognises the dependent existence of all phenomena and thus their emptiness of self-existence. An important step towards this is to take full responsibility for one's own life in terms of thought, speech, and action. By taking refuge in the Buddha, in his teachings, and in the community of those who have walked and are still walking this path, confidence in one's own efforts and in a Buddhist way of living is strengthened. If people change

der Mensch so zum Positiven verändert, wird jede bzw. jeder einzelne seinen Beitrag für mehr Frieden, Toleranz und universelle Verantwortung in unserer Welt leisten.

**Paradigmen des Buddhismus:**  
Ich bekenne mich zum Buddha als meinem unübertroffenen Lehrer, denn er hat die Vollkommenheiten verwirklicht und ist aus eigener Kraft den Weg zur Befreiung und Erleuchtung gegangen. Aus dieser Erfahrung hat er die Lehre dargelegt, damit auch wir die endgültige Leidfreiheit erlangen können.

Ich bekenne mich zur Lehre des Buddha, denn sie ist klar, zeitlos und lädt jeden ein, sie zu prüfen, sie im Leben anzuwenden und zu verwirklichen.

Ich bekenne mich zur Gemeinschaft der Schüler und Schülerinnen des Buddha, die sich ernsthaft um die Verwirklichung seiner Lehre bemühen, um die verschiedenen Stufen der inneren Erfahrung und des Erwachens zu verwirklichen. Sie dienen mir als Vorbild.

Ich habe festes Vertrauen zu den Vier Edlen Wahrheiten. Sie besagen:

- Leben im Daseinskreislauf ist letztlich leidvoll. Dies ist zu durchschauen.

- Ursachen des Leidens sind Gier, Hass und Verblendung. Sie sind zu überwinden.

- Erlöschen die Ursachen, erlischt das Leiden. Dies ist zu verwirklichen.

accordingly for the better, everyone will contribute to more peace, tolerance, and universal responsibility in our world.

#### Paradigms of Buddhism:

I profess the Buddha as my unsurpassed teacher because he realised the perfections and walked the path to liberation and enlightenment by his own efforts. From this experience, he has set forth the teaching so that we too can attain ultimate freedom from suffering.

I profess the teaching of the Buddha because it is clear, timeless, and invites everyone to examine it, to apply it in life, and to realise it.

I profess to belong to the community of disciples of the Buddha who earnestly strive to realise his teaching, to realise the various stages of inner experience and awakening. They serve as a role model for me.

I have firm faith in the Four Noble Truths. They state:

- Life in the cycle of existence is ultimately painful. This is to be comprehended.
- The causes of suffering are greed, hatred, and delusion. They are to be overcome.
- If the causes are extinguished, suffering is extinguished. This is to be realised.

– Zum Erlöschen des Leidens führt ein Weg, der Edle Achtfache Pfad. Er ist zu gehen.

Ich bekenne mich zur Einheit aller Buddhisten, denn wir folgen unserem gemeinsamen Lehrer und sind bestrebt, seine Lehre zu verwirklichen: Ethisches Verhalten, Sammlung und Weisheit wollen wir entwickeln, um Befreiung zu erlangen. In diesem Bewusstsein begegne ich allen Mitgliedern dieser Gemeinschaft mit Achtung und Offenheit.

Ich will mich bemühen, keine Lebewesen zu töten oder zu verletzen, Nichtgegebenes nicht zu nehmen, keine unheilsamen sexuellen Beziehungen zu pflegen, nicht zu lügen oder unheilsam zu reden, mir nicht durch berauschende Mittel das Bewusstsein zu trüben.

Zu allen Lebewesen will ich unbegrenzte Liebe, Mitgefühl, Mitfreude und Gleichmut entfalten, im Wissen um das Streben aller Lebewesen nach Glück.

Der Geist des Menschen mit seinen Faktoren von Denken, Empfinden und Wollen, kann durch Schulung, Bildung und meditative Übungen in positive und heilsame Zustände transformiert werden. Die spiegelgleiche Natur des Geistes reagiert auf Wahrnehmungen und Eindrücke und determiniert so die individuelle Struktur eines Menschen. Dieser Umstand soll von den Lehrerinnen und Lehrern des buddhistischen Religionsunterrichtes (BRU) bewusst genutzt werden, um die Inhalte der buddhistischen Ethik, Anschauung

– The Noble Eightfold Path leads to the extinction of suffering. It is to be followed.

I profess the unity of all Buddhists because we follow our common teacher and strive to realise his teaching: We want to develop ethical behaviour, composure, and wisdom in order to attain liberation. With this awareness, I encounter all members of this community with respect and openness.

I will strive not to kill living beings, or to harm them, not to take what is not given, not to have unwholesome sexual relations, not to lie or speak unwholesomely, not to cloud my consciousness with intoxicants.

I want to develop unlimited love, compassion, shared joy, and equanimity towards all living beings, knowing that all living beings strive for happiness.

The human mind with its faculties of thought, sensation, and volition can be transformed into positive and wholesome states through edification, education, and meditative exercises. The mirror-like nature of the mind responds to perceptions and impressions and thus determines the individual structure of a person. Teachers of Buddhist Religious Education (BRE) should consciously make use of this circumstance in order to instil the contents of Buddhist ethics, ideas,

und Meditation im Kind bzw. Jugendlichen zu veranlagen. Daraus ergibt sich das Bildungsziel des BRU wie von selbst: es gilt die buddhistischen Lehrinhalte ständig zu vertiefen und zu internalisieren. Diese definieren sich wie folgt: eigenständiges und kritisches Denken, Ehrfurcht vor allem Lebendigem und der „Schöpfung“. Der holistische Ansatz des bedingten Entstehens – die gegenseitige Abhängigkeit aller Phänomene – sollte die „Schöpfung“ als Motivation aus der klaren Erkenntnis des vorher Gesagten ersetzen und für Buddhisten und Buddhistinnen der tiefere Beweggrund sein. Ebenso sind gewaltfreie Konfliktlösungen, Toleranz und Friedfertigkeit vorrangige Bildungsziele. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen sollen erkennen, dass sie durch die Anwendung der Lehre Buddhas zu einer heilsamen Lebensführung durch Körper, Sprache und Geist gelangen und so mehr Glück, Ausgeglichenheit und psychische Stabilität in ihrem Leben erfahren. Den Schülern und Schülerinnen mögen zur Gestaltung einer buddhistischen Lebensführung die „Paradigmen des Buddhismus“ dienen, das von den Unterrichtenden nicht als Dogma zu vermitteln ist, sondern als Angebot und Hilfe, um den jungen Menschen einen spirituellen Leitgedanken ins Herz zu legen. Dadurch wird die Freiheit der eigenen Entscheidung, den Weg des Buddha zu gehen, gewahrt.

and meditation in the child or the adolescent. From this, the educational goal of BRE is self-evident: to constantly deepen and internalise the Buddhist teaching contents. These are defined as follows: independent and critical thinking, reverence for all sentient beings and the “creation.” Based on the clear realisation of what is given above, the holistic approach of conditional arising – the interdependence of all phenomena – should replace “creation” as the motivation, being the deeper motive for Buddhists. Likewise, non-violent conflict resolution, tolerance, and peacefulness are primary educational goals. Students should realise that by applying the Buddha’s teachings they can achieve a wholesome way of life through body, speech, and mind and thus experience more happiness, balance, and psychological stability in their lives. The students may use the “paradigms of Buddhism” to shape a Buddhist way of life, which is not to be taught by the teachers as dogma but as an offer and help to put a spiritual principle into the young people’s hearts. This preserves the freedom of one’s own decision to follow the path of the Buddha.

Der Unterricht hat das Ziel, die Schüler und Schülerinnen zu einer toleranten Weltoffenheit zu führen und in der Begegnung mit anderen Anschauungen und Bekenntnissen, den eigenen Standpunkt zu überprüfen und zu vertiefen. Dadurch wird auch die Dialogfähigkeit entwickelt. Es gilt für die Schüler und Schülerinnen zu erkennen, dass der Weg des Buddha die Wertschätzung anderer fordert und eigene gedankliche Fixierungen, sowie emotionale Muster zu überwinden anregt, um so eine positive Kommunikation bzw. Interaktion zu erreichen. Die eigene Erfahrung aus Meditation und Lebensführung zählt mehr als angelerntes Wissen. So vermittelt der BRU den jungen Menschen eine äußerst hilfreiche Praxis für ihr Leben, die letztlich vom Individuum Auswirkung auf das gesellschaftliche Leben hat.

## **2. Organisation, Bildungs- und Lehraufgaben, Lehrstoff, Didaktische Grundsätze**

Der Buddhistische Religionsunterricht (BRU) wird Schüler-zahlenbedingt in der Grundstufe wie auch in der Oberstufe meist als schulstufen- bzw. schulübergreifender Unterricht geführt werden.

Dies besagt, dass die Schüler und Schülerinnen verschiedener Altersstufen in „Jahrgangsübergreifenden Lerngruppen“ (JÜL) unterrichtet werden. Diese Organisationsform verlangt vom Unterrichtenden als didaktische Maßnahme den Abteilungsunterricht, welcher pädagogi-

The aim of the lessons is to lead the students to a tolerant open-mindedness and examine and deepen their own point of view in their encounter with other views and confessions. This also develops the ability to engage in dialogue. It is important for the students to realise that the path of Buddha demands the appreciation of others and encourages them to overcome their own mental fixations and emotional patterns in order to achieve positive communication and interaction. One's own experience derived from meditation and life conduct counts more than learned knowledge. Accordingly, BRE provides young people with a very helpful practice for their lives, which ultimately exerts influence upon societal life.

## **2. Organisation, Educational and Teaching Tasks, Teaching Contents, Didactic Principles**

Due to the number of students, Buddhist Religious Education (BRE) will mainly be conducted in the elementary classes as well as in the upper classes involving several class levels and schools. This means that students of different age cohorts are taught in “inter-year learning groups” (IYLG). This form of organisation requires the teacher to use parallel teaching as a didactic measure, which demands pedagogical flexibility and good preparation of the teaching units. It is

sche Flexibilität und gute Vorbereitung der Unterrichtseinheiten erfordert. Es ist hilfreich und ratsam, wenn der BRU Bezüge zu den Lehrplänen der Grundstufe, Sekundarstufe und Oberstufe herstellt, um Anknüpfungen bzw. Bezugspunkte für die eigene pädagogische Arbeit zu finden.

Themenschwerpunkte liegen zB im sozialen Lernen, in der Friedenserziehung und den Konfliktlösungsstrategien im Klassenverband. Die Lehrpläne der Primarstufe und Sekundarstufe bieten auch Einblicke in pädagogisch-didaktische sowie entwicklungspsychologische Zusammenhänge. Da ein beträchtlicher Teil der Unterrichtenden des Buddhistischen Religionsunterrichts in Österreich nicht ausgebildete Lehrer sind, empfiehlt es sich, diesen obigen Hinweis als unterstützenden Faktor zu beachten.

Der BRU wird häufig in ethnisch gemischten Gruppen abgehalten werden, da ein Teil der Schüler und Schülerinnen Ethno-Buddhisten sind (China, Thailand, Vietnam, usw.). Daher bildet der BRU einen Beitrag zur interkulturellen und integrativen Bildung und Erziehung innerhalb der österreichischen Schule.

Es ist auch sehr empfehlenswert, an den Festen der verschiedenen buddhistischen Traditionen mit den Schülern und Schülerinnen teilzunehmen, um so die Vielfalt buddhistischer Sangha zu erleben.

### 3. Gliederung der Schulstufen

helpful and advisable if BRE establishes references to the curricula of the primary school, secondary school, and upper secondary school in order to find connections or reference points for one's own pedagogical work.

The main topics are, for example, social learning, peace education, and conflict resolution strategies in the classroom. The primary and secondary school curricula also provide insights into pedagogical-didactic and developmental-psychological contexts. Since a considerable proportion of those teaching Buddhist Religious Education in Austria are not trained teachers, it is advisable to consider the above advice as a supporting factor.

BRE will frequently be held in ethnically mixed groups, as some of the students are Ethno-Buddhists (China, Thailand, Vietnam, etc.). Hence, BRE contributes to intercultural and inclusive education within Austrian schools.

It is also highly recommended to participate with the students in the festivals of the different Buddhist traditions in order to experience the diversity of the Buddhist Sangha.

### 3. Division of School Levels

Es empfiehlt sich vom entwicklungspsychologischen und pädagogischen Standpunkt aus die Lehrplanstufen bei der Erstellung von Klassen bzw. JÜL als Grundlage – wie im Schulorganisationsgesetz gegliedert – zu berücksichtigen. Durch das Zusammenziehen der Altersgruppen entsteht eine Korrelation zum adäquaten Entwicklungsstand der Schüler und Schülerinnen.

#### **Volksschule, Sonderschulen**

Primarstufe I (1. und 2. Schulstufe)

Primarstufe II (3. und 4. Schulstufe)

#### **Volksschule-Oberstufe, Sonder-schulen-Oberstufe, Hauptschulen und Unterstufe der allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen**

Sekundarstufe I (5. und 6. Schulstufe)

Sekundarstufe I (7. und 8. Schulstufe)

#### **Polytechnische Schule, Oberstufe der allgemein bildenden höheren Schulen und berufsbildende mittlere und höhere Schulen**

Sekundarstufe II (9. bis 13. Schulstufe)

Diese Einteilung soll als pädagogisches Schema gedacht sein, wobei in Ausnahmefällen der Lehrer bzw. die Lehrerin zu entscheiden haben.

#### **4. Lehrstoff (einschließlich Lernziele und methodische Hinweise) der Primarstufe und der Sekundarstufe I**

From the point of view of developmental psychology and pedagogy, it is advisable to take the curriculum levels – as structured in the School Organisation Act – into account as a foundation when creating classes or IYLG. By grouping the age cohorts together, a correlation to the adequate developmental level of the students is created.

#### **Primary School, Special Schools**

Primary Level I (1st and 2nd grade)

Primary Level II (3rd and 4th grade)

#### **Primary School Upper Level, Special Schools Upper Level, Lower Secondary Schools, and Lower Level of Grammar Schools**

Secondary Level I (5th and 6th grade)

Secondary Level I (7th and 8th grade)

#### **Pre-vocational School, Upper Level of Grammar Schools, and Vocational Middle and Upper Secondary Schools**

Secondary Level II (9th to 13th grade)

This classification is intended as a pedagogical scheme, whereby in exceptional cases it is up to the teacher to decide.

#### **4. Teaching Contents (Including Learning Objectives and Methodological Notes) for Primary Level and Secondary Level I**

#### **4.1. Primarstufe I** (1. und 2. Schulstufe)

##### 1. Der historische Buddha

Die Jatakas: Legenden aus den Lebensgeschichten des Buddha.

Altersgemäß geeignete Abschnitte aus der Buddha-Vita vermitteln.

Einfache Zuflucht zur Vertrauensbildung auf die Drei Juwelen.

##### **Lernziele**

Die Schüler und Schülerinnen sollen durch die Lebensgeschichte des Buddha Shakyamuni und den Legendenerstoff Beziehung zur Gestalt des Buddha aufbauen. Mittel: Bildnerisches Gestalten, Darstellendes Spiel, verschiedene Medien (Tonträger, Filme), Gestalten eines einfachen Altares mit buddhistischen Repräsentationen.

##### 2. Der Dharma

Kindgerechte Einführung in die Drei Juwelen.

Sila: Mit den Kindern die wichtigsten ethischen Grundregeln im Alterskontext behandeln.

Bewusstmachen der fünf Sinne durch Achtsamkeitsspiele.

Einführung in die Sitz- und Gehmeditation in kurzen Phasen.

Entschleunigungsübungen durch bewusst langsame körperliche Handlungen.

Kleine Rituale, wie Opfergaben darbringen.

##### **Lernziele**

Über die bildhafte Darstellung des Buddha und der Sangha erfahren die Schüler und Schülerinnen einfachste

#### **4.1 Primary Level I** (1st and 2nd grade)

##### 1. The historical Buddha

The Jatakas: Legends from the life stories of the Buddha.

Convey passages from the Buddha's vita appropriate to age.

Taking refuge to build trust in the Three Jewels.

##### **Learning Objectives**

The students should form a relationship to the figure of Buddha through the life story of Buddha Shakyamuni and the legend material. Means: Visual design, performing play, different media (audio media, films), creating a simple altar with Buddhist representations.

##### 2. The Dharma

Child-oriented introduction to the Three Jewels.

Sila: Covering the most important basic ethical rules with the children in the context of their age.

Raising awareness of the five senses through mindfulness games.

Introduction to sitting and walking meditation in short phases. Deceleration exercises through consciously slow physical actions.

Small rituals such as making sacrificial offerings.

##### **Learning Objectives**

Through the pictorial representation of the Buddha and the

Grundlagen des Dharma und der Ethik.  
 Wechselspiel von Bewegung und Ruhe erfahren und den Wert von Entspannung und Loslassen vermitteln.  
 Die Sinnesfunktionen bewusst machen.

### 3. Der Sangha

Wir sind ein Sangha (Gemeinschaft der Praktizierenden).  
 Gemeinsame Besuche von buddhistischen Zentren, Tempeln, Meditationsräumen.  
 Erleben von gemeinsamen Feiern buddhistischer Feste.  
 Malübungen von Mandalas als buddhistische Symbole.  
 Erlernen der Zufluchtformel im Bewusstsein der Verbundenheit aller, die einen Dharmaweg gehen.

### Lernziele

Erfahren der Vielfalt des Buddhismus durch verschiedene Gemeinschaften.  
 Erlebnisorientierte Auseinandersetzung der Schüler und Schülerinnen mit einfachen Formen buddhistischer Kunst.  
 Rezitation der Zuflucht und von Sprüchen musikalisch erarbeiten (Gesang, Instrumente).

### **4.2. Primarstufe II** (3. und 4. Schulstufe)

1. Der historische Buddha  
 Die Buddha-Vita in den einzelnen Abschnitten von Geburt bis zur Erleuchtung erarbeiten.  
 Was ist „Buddha“? Altersgemäße Definition eines Begriffes.

sangha, students learn the simplest foundations of the Dharma and ethics.

To experience the interplay of movement and rest and to convey the value of relaxation and letting go.

To become aware of the sensory functions.

### 3. The Sangha

We are a sangha (community of practitioners).  
 Visiting together Buddhist centres, temples, meditation rooms. Experiencing common celebrations of Buddhist festivals.  
 Painting exercises of mandalas as Buddhist symbols.  
 Learning the Refuge Formula in awareness of the interconnectedness of all who walk a Dharma path.

### Learning Objectives

To experience the diversity of Buddhism through different communities.  
 Experience-oriented engagement of the students with simple forms of Buddhist arts.  
 Developing in a musical way (chanting, instruments) the recitation of the Refuge and of sayings.

### **4.2 Primary Level II** (3rd and 4th grade)

1. The historical Buddha  
 Go over the Buddha vita across the individual sections from birth to enlightenment.  
 What is “Buddha”? Defining a term appropriate to age.

Buddhabilder: verschiedene wichtige Darstellung des Erleuchteten.

### **Lernziele**

Vertiefung der Buddha-Vita, aufbauend auf den Wissensstand der Primärstufe I. Kognitives Erfassen des gesamten Lebenslaufes von Buddha, Erkennen der außerordentlichen Erscheinung eines Buddha.

Vertrauen auf Buddha durch geeignete Szenen aus seinem Leben festigen.

Buddha in der Kunst.

### **2. Der Dharma**

Die Fünf Silas als moralische Empfehlungen.

Unterschied zwischen Angebot und Verbot!

Erstes Erkennen des Zusammenhangs von Ursache und Wirkung.

Was heißt Karma? Altersgemäße Begriffsklärung.

Altersgemäße Meditationsübungen mit und ohne Objekt.

Konfliktbewältigung und Friedfertigkeit. Lösungsstrategien aus buddhistischer Sicht.

Achtsamer Umgang mit mir selbst und meiner Umwelt.

Buddha images: various important representations of the Enlightened One.

### **Learning Objectives**

More in-depth engagement with the Buddha vita, drawing on the level of knowledge of Primary Level I. Cognitive grasp of the entire life of the Buddha, recognition of the extraordinary appearance of a Buddha.

Consolidate trust in Buddha through relevant scenes from his life.

Buddha in the arts.

### **2. The Dharma**

The five silas as moral recommendations.

Difference between offer and prohibition!

First understanding of the connection between cause and effect. What does karma mean? Clarification of terms appropriate to age.

Meditation exercises with and without object appropriate to age. Conflict resolution and peacefulness. Resolution strategies from the Buddhist perspective. Mindful interaction with myself and my environment.

### **Lernziele**

Die Schüler und Schülerinnen zu verschiedenen Meditationsformen motivieren und diese gemeinsam ausführen.

Auf der Grundlage von Sila und der Karmalehre sollen die Schüler und

### **Learning Objectives**

To motivate the students regarding different forms of meditation and perform them together.

On the basis of sila and the karma teachings, the students should work out conflict resolution models from their own experience.

Schülerinnen aus eigener Erfahrung Konfliktlösungsmodelle erarbeiten.

### 3. Der Sangha

Buddhas wichtigste Schüler seiner Zeit: Ananda, Shariputra, Maudgalyayana, Rahula, Mahakashyapa ua. Konfliktlösungen internalisieren an Hand praktischer Beispiele.

Beispiele buddhistischer Praxis und Friedfertigkeit der letzten 2500 Jahre.

Erfahrungen mit buddhistischer Musik sammeln.

Rezitationen und Zuflucht in verschiedenen Sprachen (Pali, Sanskrit, Chinesisch, Vietnamesisch, Japanisch, Tibetisch).

Widmen zum Wohle aller Wesen.

### Lernziele

Schüler und Schülerinnen mit Streit schlichtung vertraut machen. Andere Mitschüler und Mitschülerinnen dazu motivieren.

Besuche verschiedener Gemeinschaften sollen das Sangha-Gefühl vertiefen.

Anleiten zu einer kurzen täglichen Praxis zu Hause.

Anleiten zu einer achtsamen Lebensführung im Alltag.

### **4.3. Sekundarstufe I (5. und 6. Schulstufe)**

#### 1. Der Wirkungsraum des historischen Buddha

Der geographische Raum des Buddha Shakyamuni mit den wichtigsten Stätten des Buddhismus: Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Rajagriha, Kushinagara.

### 3. The Sangha

Buddha's most important disciples of his time: Ananda, Shariputra, Maudgalyayana, Rahula, Mahakashyapa, and others.

Internalising conflict resolutions through practical examples.

Examples of Buddhist practice and peacefulness from the last 2,500 years.

Gaining experience with Buddhist music.

Rezitations and refuge in different languages (Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese, Vietnamese, Japanese, Tibetan).

Dedicating for the benefit of all beings.

### **Learning Objectives**

Familiarise students with dispute resolution. Motivate fellow students to do likewise.

Visit different communities to deepen the sangha feeling.

Encourage a short daily practice at home.

Encourage mindful living in everyday life.

### **4.3 Secondary Level I (5th and 6th grade)**

#### 1. The sphere of influence of the historical Buddha

The geographical area of Buddha Shakyamuni with the most important sites of Buddhism: Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Rajagriha, Kushinagara.

Der Buddhismus und Buddha im Kontext des Zeitgeistes des 5. und 6. Jh. vor unserer Zeit.

### **Methodische Hinweise**

Buddhismus in der Werbung und der Geschäftswelt. Prominente (Hollywood) und Buddhismus.

Buddha für Dekoration, Werbung und Zierat.

#### 2. Der Dharma

Die verschiedenen Bedeutungsebenen der Drei Juwelen in den verschiedenen Traditionen.

Die Vier Edlen Wahrheiten als die Basis des Buddhadharma.

Der Achtfache Pfad als der umfassende Weg zur Befreiung.

Die wichtigsten Aussagen des Buddha und ihre Bedeutung für den Alltag.

Das Bhava-Chakra als Ausdruck der buddhistischen Ontologie in Verbindung mit den Begriffen „Karma“ und „Samsara“.

Altersgemäße Meditationen unter Berücksichtigung der traditionellen Herkunft der Schüler und Schülerinnen.

### **Lernziele**

Vertiefen der Kernaussagen des Buddha im Unterricht und deren Integration in den Alltag und die persönliche Lebensführung. Üben von Achtsamkeitsmeditation und ruhigem Verweilen.

### **Methodische Hinweise**

Aussagen von buddhistischen Meistern verschiedener Traditionen zur Thematik vergleichen und vertiefend

Buddhism and the Buddha in the context of the zeitgeist of the 5th and 6th centuries before the common era.

### **Methodological Notes**

Buddhism in advertising and the business world. Celebrities (Hollywood) and Buddhism.

Buddha for decoration, advertising, and embellishment.

#### 2. The Dharma

The different levels of meaning of the Three Jewels in the different traditions.

The Four Noble Truths as the basis of the Buddhadharma.

The Eightfold Path as the comprehensive way to liberation.

The most important statements of the Buddha and their significance for everyday life.

The bhavachakra as an expression of Buddhist ontology in connection with the concepts of “karma” and “samsara.”

Age-appropriate meditations taking into consideration the traditional background of the students.

### **Learning Objectives**

More in-depth engagement with the core statements of the Buddha in class and integrating them into everyday life and personal life conduct. Practising mindfulness meditation and remaining in quiescence.

### **Methodological Notes**

Compare statements of Buddhist masters from different traditions on the subject and discuss them

besprechen. Bilden von Arbeitsgruppen bzw. in Partnerarbeit die Vier Edlen Wahrheiten behandeln lassen – Prinzip der Selbsttätigkeit – und gemeinsam die Ergebnisse präsentieren.

### 3. Der Sangha

Kennenlernen der buddhistischen Gemeinschaften im Umfeld der Schüler und Schülerinnen, und Besuche von Festen und religiösen Zeremonien bzw. Meditationen.

Was und wie kann ich als Schüler und Schülerin in meinem sozialen Feld zu Konfliktlösungen beitragen. Die Idee des Weltethos von Hans Küng als Miteinander von Kulturen und Religionen.

Wege der Kunst, die vom Buddhismus geprägt worden sind: Kalligraphie, Musik, Thangkas, Gartenkunst, Tempelbau, Skulpturen.

Geist, Körper und konzentrierte Bewegung: Vom Buddhismus beeinflusste sogenannte „Kampfsportarten“ (Kung Fu, Tai Chi, Judo ua.). Gemeinsame Rezitation von Sutren und traditioneller Texte, um das Sangha-Gefühl zu empfinden.

Besondere Übung des Metta-Sutta zur Verstärkung des Wunsches: Mögen alle Wesen glücklich sein!

in detail. Form working groups or have them work in pairs on the Four Noble Truths – principle of self-directed learning – and present the results together.

### 3. The Sangha

Getting to know the Buddhist communities in the students' environment and visit festivals and religious ceremonies or meditations.

What and how can I contribute as a student to conflict resolution in my social environment.

The idea of Hans Küng's global ethic as co-existence of cultures and religions.

Ways of art that have been influenced by Buddhism: Calligraphy, music, thangkas, garden art, temple building, sculptures.

Mind, body, and concentrated movement: So-called “martial arts” influenced by Buddhism (kung fu, tai chi, judo, etc.).

Joint recitation of sutras and traditional texts to sense the sangha feeling.

Special practice of the Metta Sutta to strengthen the wish: May all beings be happy!

### Lernziele

Die Schüler und Schülerinnen sollen lernen, dass buddhistische Praxis und Studium kein Selbstzweck sind, sondern dem Wohl der Wesen dienen sollten. Sie mögen erkennen,

### Learning Objectives

Students should learn that Buddhist practice and study are not ends in themselves but should serve the welfare of beings. They may recognise how they can take action in the spirit of the Dharma

wie sie in Konfliktsituationen in ihrer Klasse/Peergroup aus dem Geist des Dharma zum Frieden der Mitwesen handeln und so als Konfliktlosen agieren können. Jedoch ist nicht jede bzw. jeder dazu geeignet, und daher darf dieses Lernziel im Unterricht nicht allgemein verordnet, wohl aber für alle angeboten werden. Die asiatischen Bewegungs- und Kunstformen sollen erfahren (zB Besuch einer Judo-Schule) und auf ihren buddhistischen Ursprung untersucht werden.

Das Metta-Sutta kann als eine gemeinsame, grundlegende Praxis in Wort und Meditation als Beitrag zum Weltfrieden geübt werden.

#### **Methodische Hinweise**

Konfliktlösungsmodelle am dargestellten Beispiel in der Klasse/Gruppe erarbeiten. Welche Konflikte treten am Häufigsten auf? Vergleiche von aktuellen Konflikten in der Welt und deren Ursachen aus buddhistischer Sicht.

#### **4.4. Sekundarstufe I (7. und 8.**

Schulstufe)

##### 1. Der Buddha

Der historische Buddha in den Sutren im Vergleich zu den Legenden.

Altersgemäße Erweiterung des historischen Kontext Indiens zu Zeiten des Buddha.

Darstellungen des Buddha nach seinem Tod mit besonderer Betrachtung des Gandhara-Stiles unter griechischem Einfluss.

for the peace of fellow beings in conflict situations in their class/peer group and thus act as conflict guides. However, not everyone is suited for this, and therefore this learning objective must not be generally decreed in the classroom but only given as an offer to everyone. Asian forms of movement and art should be experienced (e.g., visit a judo school) and examined for their Buddhist origins.

The Metta Sutta can be practised as a common, fundamental practice in word and meditation as a contribution to world peace.

#### **Methodological Notes**

Work out conflict resolution models in the class/group using the example shown. Which conflicts occur most frequently?

Compare current conflicts in the world and their causes from the Buddhist perspective.

#### **4.4 Secondary Level I (7th and**

8th grade)

##### 1. The Buddha

The historical Buddha in the sutras compared to the legends.

Expansion of the historical context of India at the time of the Buddha appropriate to age.

Representations of the Buddha after his death with special consideration of the Gandhara style under Greek influence.

Bedeutende Lebensgeschichten in der Nachfolge Buddhas von Bodhisattvas, Mahasiddhas und großen Lehrer und Lehrerinnen aller Traditionen.

### Lernziele

Den Schülern und Schülerinnen sollen die Schwierigkeiten historischer und legendenhafter Überlieferung aufgezeigt werden, die jede Religion betreffen.

Das Buddhabild im Wandel der Zeit vom Symbol zur konkreten Darstellung des Erleuchteten. Die unterschiedlichen Einflüsse aus Griechenland und aus asiatischen Kulturräumen (zB China, Tibet, Japan, Thailand) auf das Buddhabild.

Betrachten von Biographien großer Meister und Meisterinnen und besprechen ihrer Lebensweise und Lehrtradition.

### Methodische Hinweise

Wenn möglich Besuch eines Museums mit buddhistischer Kunst.

Kunstgalerien im Internet gemeinsam anschauen. Kataloge zu buddhistischer Kunst.

Besuch von buddhistischen Zentren mit Fokussierung auf Kultgegenstände.

### 2. Der Dharma

Die Entstehung der verschiedenen Fahrzeuge (Yanas): Hinayana/Theravada (Arhat), Mahayana (Bodhisattva), Vajrayana.

Die verschiedenen Traditionen in den drei Yanas. Theravada, Zen, Hua yen, tibetische Schulen, Reines Land, Amida-Buddhismus, Nichiren-Buddhismus ua.

Major life stories in the Buddha's succession of bodhisattvas, mahasiddhas, and great teachers of all traditions.

### Learning Objectives

Demonstrate students the difficulties of historical and legendary transmission that affect every religion.

The image of Buddha in the course of time, from being a symbol to concrete representation of the Enlightened One. The different impacts of Greece and the Asian cultures (e.g., China, Tibet, Japan, Thailand) on the image of the Buddha.

Looking at biographies of great masters and discussing their life conduct and teaching tradition.

### Methodological Notes

If possible, visit a museum with Buddhist arts.

Look together at art galleries on the internet. Catalogues of Buddhist arts.

Visit Buddhist centres with a focus on cult objects.

### 2. The Dharma

The emergence of the different vehicles (yanas): Hinayana/Theravada (arhat), Mahayana (bodhisattva), Vajrayana.

The different traditions in the three yantras. Theravada, Zen, Huayen, Tibetan schools, Pure Land, Amida Buddhism, Nichiren Buddhism, etc.

Vertiefung der Vier Edlen Wahrheiten und Ethik des Buddhismus.  
Die Sechs Vollkommenen Handlungen eines Bodhisattva – die Sechs Paramitas.  
Vertiefung von Achtsamkeits- und Metta-Meditation.  
Vertiefen des buddhistischen Menschenbildes.  
Die Weltreligionen (Hinduismus, Judentum, Christentum, Islam) im Vergleich mit dem Buddhismus.  
Theistische und non-theistische Vorstellungen der Religionen.  
Lebensthemen: Freundschaft, Beziehung, Liebe, Sexualität, Gesellschaft, Drogen und Alkohol, Friedensarbeit, Toleranz und Ethik.

### Lernziele

Erfassen verschiedener Anschauungen in der Menschheitsgeschichte in den Religionen.

Die Vielfalt des Buddhismus als hierarchisch-horizontale Bewegung im Ausdruck ihrer Traditionen und Schulen und deren Persönlichkeiten. Gemeinsames und Unterschiedliches in den verschiedenen Traditionen (lehrinhaltliche und ethische Aspekte). Vertiefte Meditationspraxis in der Gemeinschaft der Klasse sowie individuelle Praxis. Aus buddhistischer Sicht zu Weltproblemen Stellung nehmen – kritische Betrachtung.

### Methodische Hinweise

Besuch anderer Religionen und deren Einrichtungen. Einladen eines Vertreters einer Glaubensgemeinschaft zu Vortrag und Diskussion.

A more in-depth engagement with the Four Noble Truths and Ethics of Buddhism.

The Six Perfect Actions of a bodhisattva – the six paramitas.

A more in-depth engagement with mindfulness and metta meditation.

A more in-depth engagement with Buddhist anthropology.

The world religions (Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam) in comparison with Buddhism.

Theistic and non-theistic ideas of the religions.

Life themes: Friendship, relationship, love, sexuality, society, drugs and alcohol, peace work, tolerance, and ethics.

### Learning Objectives

Grasp the different views across human history within religions.

The diversity of Buddhism as a hierarchical-horizontal movement as expressed by its traditions and schools and their key figures.

Similarities and differences in the various traditions (doctrinal and ethical aspects). Advanced meditation practice in the community of the class as well as individual practice. Stating one position on world problems from the Buddhist perspective – critical reflection.

### Methodological Notes

Visit other religions and their institutions. Invite a representative of a faith community for a lecture

Altersadäquater interreligiöser Dialog mit Gleichaltrigen anderer Konfessionen. In Referaten durch den Lehrer bzw. die Lehrerin unterstützt, kann die Sichtweise anderer Religionen oder humanistischer Bekenntnisse bewusst gemacht und mit dem eigenen Lebenshintergrund verglichen werden.

### 3. Der Sangha

Die historische Entwicklung des Sangha. Die buddhistischen Konzile und deren Ergebnisse.

Die Ausbreitung des Buddhismus bis in die Gegenwart.

Zeitgenössische Persönlichkeiten des Buddhismus aus den verschiedenen Traditionen.

Vertiefung der Konfliktlösungen und deren praktische Anwendung. Geistesschulung durch meditative und rituelle Übung zum Entwickeln einer friedvollen Geisteshaltung. Bewegungen und Initiativen in anderen Konfessionen – zB Caritas, Diakonie – als heilsame Aktivitäten erfahren.

### Lernziele

Beschäftigung mit der Ausbreitung des Buddhismus und seine wichtigsten zeitgenössischen Vertreter, zB Dalai Lama, Daisetz Taitaro Suzuki, Karmapa, Thich Nhat Hanh, Anagarika Govinda, Fumon Nakagawa Roshi, Buddhadhasa Bhikkhu ua. Kompetenz in Konfliktlösung. Bewusstmachen und Üben verdienstvoller Handlungen: Rezitationen, Dana, ethisches Verhalten ua.

and discussion. Inter-religious dialogue appropriate to age with peers of other confessions. The views of other religions or humanist creeds can be made aware and compared with one's own life background in presentations supported by the teacher.

### 3. The Sangha

The historical development of the sangha. The Buddhist councils and their results.

The spread of Buddhism up to the present day.

Contemporary personalities of Buddhism from the different traditions.

Advanced engagement with conflict resolutions and their practical application.

Training of the mind through meditative and ritual practice to develop a peaceful state of mind. Experience movements and initiatives in other confessions – e.g., Caritas, Diakonie – as wholesome activities.

### Learning Objectives

Study the spread of Buddhism and its most important contemporary representatives, e.g., the Dalai Lama, Daisetz Taitaro Suzuki, Karmapa, Thich Nhat Hanh, Anagarika Govinda, Fumon Nakagawa Roshi, Buddhadhasa Bhikkhu, and others.

Competence in conflict resolution. Awareness and practice of meritorious actions: Recitations, dana, ethical behaviour, etc.

### Methodische Hinweise

Begegnung mit authentischen, bekannten Lehrern, um direkte Erfahrung zu vermitteln. Kontakte zu Institutionen, die sich mit Konfliktmanagement befassen.

Besuch karitativer Organisationen von Kirchen oder Treffen mit deren Vertretern und Vertreterinnen.

#### **5. Sekundarstufe II** (9. bis 13. Schulstufe)

Bildungs- und Lehraufgabe

Der junge Mensch sollte im buddhistischen Religionsunterricht die Möglichkeit bekommen:

- sich mit der buddhistischen Lehre in ihrer gesamten Weite vertiefend zu befassen,
- die Auswirkung des Buddhismus auf die westliche Gesellschaft in verschiedensten Bereichen zu studieren,
- persönliche und aktuelle Probleme unserer Zeit aus der Perspektive des Mitgefühls, der Friedfertigkeit ohne äußereren Druck diskutieren zu können,
- seine buddhistische Praxis auf Grund direkter Begegnungen zu gestalten und zu wählen,
- über Sinn und Zweck einer regelmäßigen Praxis zu reflektieren,
- den Alltag als Übungsweg zu erkennen und als wertvolle Möglichkeit zu schätzen,
- den eigenen Geist als Ursache für Glück und Leiderfahrung zu erkennen,
- Einsicht zu erhalten, dass jede Tradition ihren besonderen Wert hat

### Methodological Notes

Meet authentic, well-known teachers to provide direct experience. Contacts with institutions dealing with conflict management.

Visit charitable organisations of churches or meet with their representatives.

#### **5. Secondary Level II** (9th to 13th grade)

Educational and teaching task

In Buddhist Religious Education, young people should be given the opportunity:

- to deal in-depth with the Buddhist teachings in their entire scope,
- to study the impact of Buddhism on Western society in a wide variety of areas,
- to be able to discuss, without external pressure, personal and current problems of our time from the perspective of compassion and peacefulness,
- to form and choose one's Buddhist practice on the basis of direct encounters,
- to reflect on the meaning and purpose of regular practice,
- to recognise everyday life as a way of practice and to appreciate it as a valuable opportunity,
- to recognise one's own mind as the cause of happiness and experience of suffering,
- to realise that each tradition has its own special value and that all traditions are therefore of equal value,

und dadurch alle Traditionen gleichwertig sind,  
 - zu realisieren, dass Buddhismus seit Buddha Shakyamuni primär ein Weg ist und nicht Organisation, Kirche und Hierarchie.

### **Didaktische Grundsätze**

Es macht im Religionsunterricht wenig Sinn, die in anderen Fächern durchaus gerechtfertigte, saubere thematische Trennung und Begrenzung einzelner Themen auf bestimmt Schulstufen, auch hier anzuwenden: Buddhismus ist eine Erfahrungsreligion und baut als solche stark auf dem Erlebnishorizont des Individuums auf. Das bedeutet, dass sich mit zunehmender Lebenserfahrung eine stetige Veränderung des Verständnisses buddhistischer Inhalte ergibt. So wird ein 18-jähriger junger Erwachsener ein anderes, nämlich immer weiter- und tiefergehendes Begreifen von zB Karma oder Bodhicitta (Erleuchtungsgeist) haben, als ein 15-jähriger Jugendlicher. Etwa ein selbst erfahrener „Liebeskummer“ wird das Verständnis von Leiden und Vergänglichkeit ohne Zweifel erweitern und vertiefen, das Mitgefühl stärken, usw. Konkret bedeutet das für den Lehrplan der Oberstufe, dass typische buddhistische „Themen“ immer wieder behandelt werden müssen, um ihre Bedeutung möglichst in ihrer ganzen Tiefe zu erfahren! Deshalb werden die folgenden Kern- und Erweiterungsstoffe nicht einzelnen Schulstufen zugeordnet. Sie sind vielmehr Teile eines übergeordneten

- to realise that Buddhism since Buddha Shakyamuni is primarily a way and not an organisation, church, and hierarchy.

### **Didactic Principles**

It makes little sense in religious education to apply in this respect the distinct thematic separation and limitation of individual topics to specific school levels, which is quite justified in other subjects: Buddhism is an experiential religion and as such builds strongly on the experiential horizon of the individual. This means that increasing life experience entails a constant change in the understanding of Buddhist contents. For example, an 18-year-old young adult will have a different understanding of karma or bodhicitta (enlightenment mind) than a 15-year-old youth. For example, self-experienced “lovesickness” will undoubtedly broaden and deepen one’s understanding of suffering and impermanence, strengthen one’s compassion, etc. More specifically, for the upper secondary school curriculum this means that typical Buddhist “topics” must be dealt with repeatedly in order to experience their meaning in their full depth if possible! Therefore, both the following core and extension contents are not assigned to individual school levels. Rather, they are parts of an overarching teaching cycle,

Lehrzyklus, ähnlich dem mehrmaligen Drehen des Dharmarades durch Buddha. Als Zeitgeber dienen dabei der Erfahrungs- und Entwicklungsstand der Schüler und Schülerinnen, aber auch tages- und weltpolitische Ereignisse (Glaubensfeste, Kriege, global-ökologische Themen, Nobelpreisverleihungen ...).

Bei Zeitmangel ist dem vertiefenden Bearbeiten einiger weniger, aber wichtiger Themen der Vorzug vor dem Anreißen möglichst vieler Themen zu geben!

In der Oberstufe sollen zur Leistungsbeurteilung verstärkt eigenständige Arbeiten der Schüler und Schülerinnen herangezogen werden, wie zB Referate zu einem überschaubaren Thema und Webprojekte, eventuell auch in Teamwork. Die mündliche Arbeitsleistung (Mitarbeit) spielt bei der Benotung ebenfalls eine große Rolle, die gleichwertig neben eventuellen schriftlichen Arbeiten zu werten ist.

Weiters sei darauf verwiesen, dass selbstverständlich auch die so genannten „Allgemeinen Unterrichtsprinzipien“ einzubeziehen sind.

### Methodische Hinweise

- Meditation ist ohne Zweifel ein unverzichtbarer Bestandteil der meisten Unterrichtsstunden.
- Zur Vermittlung der Inhalte ist, wie gewohnt, nach Möglichkeit von der Alltagserfahrung der Schüler und Schülerinnen auszugehen.

similar to the Buddha's repeated turning of the Dharma Wheel. The students' level of experience and development, but also daily and world-political events (religious festivals, wars, global-ecological issues, Nobel Prize awards ...) serve as impulses.

If there is lack of time, the in-depth treatment of a few but important topics should be given preference over outlining as many topics as possible!

In the upper secondary school, independent work by the students should be increasingly used for performance assessment, such as presentations on a manageable topic and web projects, possibly conducted in teamwork. The oral work performance (interaction) also plays a major role in terms of grading, which is to be considered equal to any written assignments.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the so-called “general teaching principles” must of course also be taken into account.

### Methodological Notes

- Meditation is without doubt an indispensable part of most lessons.
- In order to convey the contents, as it is usually the case, the students' everyday experience should be used as a starting point.

- Interreligiöse Themen sollen so geplant werden, dass ein zeitlicher Bezug zu deren bedeutenden Festen (zB Weihnachten, Ramadan) möglich ist.
  - Literatur, Tonträger, Internet und Filme als Vermittler buddhistischer Inhalte einsetzen.
  - Nutzung des Internets zur Beschaffung von Informationen
  - Begegnung mit gleichaltrigen Schülern und Schülerinnen und Vertretern oder Vertreterinnen christlicher Kirchen, des Islam, der jüdischen Gemeinde, des Hinduismus ua.
  - Zusammenarbeit mit örtlichen Lehrkräften für Deutsch, Religion, Ethik und Philosophie.
  - Projektorientierte Arbeiten von Schülern und Schülerinnen zu buddhistischen Themen unterstützen und fördern.
- Interreligious topics should be planned in such a way that a temporal reference to their important festivals (e.g., Christmas, Ramadan) is possible.
  - Use literature, audio media, internet, and films to convey Buddhist contents.
  - Use the internet to obtain information
  - Meet with students of the same age and representatives of Christian churches, Islam, the Jewish community, Hinduism, etc.
  - Collaborate with local teachers of German, religion, ethics, and philosophy.
  - Support and encourage project-oriented work by students on Buddhist topics.

## **Lehrstoff**

### 1. Die buddhistische Sicht

Die Vier Edlen Wahrheiten des Buddha in den Kommentaren bedeutender Lehrer und Lehrerinnen der unterschiedlichen Traditionen (Thich Nhat Hanh, Dalai Lama, Ayya Khema, ua.).

Die zwölfgliedrige Kette des Abhängigen Entstehens mit Kommentaren bedeutender Lehrer und Lehrerinnen. Dreifache Übung von Sila, Samadhi, Prajna.

Der Leerheits-Begriff und seine praktische Konkretisierung in den verschiedenen Traditionen unter be-

## **Teaching Contents**

### 1. The Buddhist view

The Four Noble Truths of the Buddha in the commentaries of eminent teachers of different traditions (Thich Nhat Hanh, Dalai Lama, Ayya Khema, etc.).

The twelve links of dependent origination with commentaries by eminent teachers. Threefold practice of sila, samadhi, prajna.

The notion of emptiness and its practical concretisation in the various traditions with special reference to the philosophy of Nagarjuna and the Prajna-paramita Sutras.

sonderer Berücksichtigung der Philosophie Nagarjunas und der Prajna-paramita Sutren.

Thematische Schwerpunkte der Buddhalehre: Die Brahma Vihara (Liebe, Mitgefühl, Mitfreude, Gleichmut). Bodhicitta, Bodhisattva-Ideal, Karma und Klesha, Qualitäten der Buddhanatur aus der Sicht verschiedener Traditionen, die Zwei Wahrheiten.

Unter anderem eigenen sich folgende Themen, um die Sicht der Buddhalehre anhand konkreter Fragestellungen herauszuarbeiten:

- Geschichtlicher Überblick über die Entwicklung und Verbreitung des Buddhismus
- Buddhas Leben
- Karma – Ursache und Wirkung
- Heilsame und unheilsame Handlungen
- Die Vier Edlen Wahrheiten
- Buddhismus im Alltag
- Alter, Krankheit und Tod
- Die Drei Arten von Leid
- Die 12 Taten eines Buddhas
- Das Rad des Lebens – Tod und Wiederverkörperung
- Die Buddha-Natur
- Die Drei Fahrzeuge
- Erleuchtungsgeist – Bodhicitta
- Das Bodhisattva-Ideal
- Weisheit, Liebe und Mitgefühl
- Buddhismus und Gesellschaft
- Buddhismus und Sexualität
- Frauen im Buddhismus
- Formen der Buddhistischen Meditation
- Bedeutende Buddhistische Lehrer der Vergangenheit und Gegenwart

Thematic foci of the Buddha teachings: The Brahmavihara (love, compassion, shared joy, equanimity). Bodhicitta, bodhisattva ideal, karma and klesha, qualities of Buddha nature from the perspective of different traditions, the Two Truths.

Among others, the following topics are suitable for elaborating the view of the Buddha teachings on the basis of particular issues:

- Historical outline of the development and spread of Buddhism
- Buddha's life
- Karma – cause and effect
- Wholesome and unwholesome actions
- The Four Noble Truths
- Buddhism in everyday life
- Age, sickness, and death
- The Three Types of suffering
- The 12 Deeds of a Buddha
- The Wheel of Life – death and reincarnation
- The Buddha Nature
- The Three Vehicles
- Enlightenment mind – Bodhicitta
- The bodhisattva ideal
- Wisdom, love, and compassion
- Buddhism and society
- Buddhism and sexuality
- Women in Buddhism
- Forms of Buddhist meditation
- Important Buddhist teachers of past and present
- Important suitable sutras, such as the Metta Sutta, Satipatthana Sutta, Culamalunkya Sutta,

- Wichtige, geeignete Sutren wie zB Metta-Sutta, Satipathhana-Sutta, Culamalunkya-Sutta, Kalama-Sutta, Herz-Sutra, Diamant-Sutra, Lotos-Sutra, Ullambana-Sutra oder Vimalakirti-Sutra
  - Die Sechs befreienden Handlungen (Paramitas)
  - Ich-Losigkeit („Nicht-Ich“, „Wahres Selbst“)
  - Der buddhistische Leerheits-Begriff
  - Die zwölf Glieder des Abhängigen Entstehens
  - Die Fünf Ansammlungen (Skandhas)
  - Buddhistische Erkenntnislehre (Wie wirklich ist die wahrgenommene Wirklichkeit)
- 2. Die Praxis der Meditation**  
 Vertiefende Begegnung mit den meditativen Formen in den Traditionen des Zen, Theravada, tibetischen Buddhismus und den Formen von Dankbarkeit und einlassendem Vertrauens der Schulen des Reinen Landes und der Lotosschulen.  
 Erweiterung des Wissens über buddhistische Traditionen durch Studium von bedeutenden Biographien, zentralen Lehrtexten und direkte Begegnung mit Praktizierenden der jeweiligen Tradition.  
 Das Phänomen des Geistes mittels Literatur bedeutender Lehrer aus dem gesamten Buddhismus analysieren.
- Wege und Formen der Geistesschulung, Lebens- und Alltagsgestaltung in den verschiedenen Traditionen.
- 3. Handlung und Transfer**
- Kalama Sutta, Heart Sutra, Diamond Sutra, Lotus Sutra, Ullambana Sutra, or Vimalakirti Sutra.
  - The Six Liberating Actions (paramitas)
  - Egolessness (“Not-I,” “True Self”)
  - The Buddhist notion of emptiness
  - The twelve links of dependent origination
  - The Five Aggregates (skandhas)
  - Buddhist epistemology (how real is the perceived reality?)
- 2. The Practice of Meditation**  
 Advanced encounter with the meditative forms in the traditions of Zen, Theravada, Tibetan Buddhism, as well as the forms of gratitude and involving trust of the Pure Land and Lotus schools. Extend knowledge of Buddhist traditions through study of major biographies, key doctrinal texts, and direct encounters with practitioners of each tradition.  
 Analyse the phenomenon of mind through literature of major teachers from across Buddhism.  
 Ways and forms of training the mind, life conduct, and everyday life in the different traditions.
- 3. Action and Transfer**

Themen unserer Gesellschaft aus der buddhistischen Sicht analysieren und bearbeiten: Selbstverwirklichung, Ego manie und Eigenverantwortung; Gleichberechtigung der Geschlechter, Sexualität; Ökologie, Friedensarbeit, Gerechtigkeit, Gewalt und Terror, Globalisierung; heilsame und unheilsame Ziele der Weltwirtschaft; Rassismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Toleranz; Bildung, Kultur, Information und Manipulation; Hegemonie der 1. Welt, ihrer Normen und Werte und die globalen Folgen. Entwickeln buddhistischer Lösungsansätze.

Transfer der buddhistischen Sicht- und Lebensweise in den eigenen Alltag. Sinn und Zweck der Praxis für ein bewusstes, mitfühlendes und achtsames Leben für sich selbst und die anderen.

Gefahren der Routine in der Praxis.  
Praxis als Herzensübung.  
Engagierter Buddhismus.

Begegnung mit Schülern und Schülerinnen anderer Religionen im interreligiösen Dialog.

Buddhismus und Naturwissenschaft: Vergleichen von Erkenntnissen (Quantenphysik).

Buddhismus aus der Sicht der Religionswissenschaften (zB Mircea Eliade, ...).

Buddhistische Literatur der Drei Fahrzeuge und verschiedener Traditionen.

Die Philosophischen Schulen Madhyamika und Cittamatra Schulen.

Analyse and work on issues of our society from the Buddhist perspective: Self-realisation, egomania, and personal responsibility; gender equality, sexuality; ecology, peace work, justice, violence, and terror, globalisation; wholesome and unwholesome goals of the world economy; racism, xenophobia, and tolerance; education, culture, information, and manipulation; hegemony of the 1st world, its norms and values, and the global consequences. Develop Buddhist approaches into solutions.

Transfer of the Buddhist view and lifestyle into one's own everyday life. Meaning and purpose of the practice for a conscious, compassionate, and mindful life for oneself and others.

Dangers of routine in practice. Practice as an exercise close to one's heart.

Engaged Buddhism.

Meet students of other religions in interreligious dialogue.

Buddhism and science: comparing findings (quantum physics). Buddhism from the perspective of religious studies (e.g., Mircea Eliade, ...).

Buddhist literature of the Three Vehicles and different traditions. The philosophical schools of Madhyamika and Cittamatra schools.

Buddhist iconography – major figures of the Buddhist pantheon.

Buddhistische Ikonografie – wichtige Gestalten des Buddhistischen Pantheons.

**6. Pädagogisch-didaktischer Überblick zur Orientierung insbesondere bei schulstufenübergreifendem Unterricht**

**6.1. Primarstufe I und II**

1. und 2. Schulstufe

1. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen die historischen Lebensstationen und die Legenden um die Gestalt des Buddha altersgerecht erleben lassen, unterstützt durch verschiedene Medien.
2. Über die bildliche Darstellung des Buddha und seiner Anhänger werden den Schülern und Schülerinnen einfache Grundzüge der Lehre vermittelt.
3. Von Bewegungs- in Ruhephasen wechseln; den Wert von Entspannung und Loslassen kennen lernen.
4. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen lernen die kulturelle Vielfalt durch Kontakte zu Kindern und Erwachsenen aus anderen Gruppen des Buddhismus kennen und besprechen das Erlebte; sie lernen einfache Formen der Rezitation.

3. und 4. Schulstufe

1. Aufbauend auf dem Wissensstand über die Jatakas beschäftigen sich die Schüler und Schülerinnen vertieft mit dem Leben Buddhas anhand von verschiedenen Darstellungen und können das Gelernte auch bei Museumsbesuchen in Bezug zur künstlerischen Darstellungsform bringen.

**6. Pedagogical-Didactic Outline for Orientation, Especially in Teaching Involving Different Class Levels**

**6.1 Primary Level I and II**

1st and 2nd Grade

1. Let the students experience the historical life stages and the legends surrounding the figure of Buddha in a way appropriate to age, supported by various media.
2. Through the pictorial representation of the Buddha and his followers, the students are taught simple basic principles of the teachings.
3. Change from movement to rest phases; learn the value of relaxation and letting go.
4. Students learn about cultural diversity through contact with children and adults from other groups of Buddhism and discuss what they have experienced; they learn simple forms of recitation.

3rd and 4th Grade

1. Drawing on the knowledge about the Jatakas, the students deal in-depth with the life of the Buddha on the basis of various representations and can also relate what they have learned to the artistic form of representation during visits to museums.

2. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen werden zu verschiedenen Meditationsformen motiviert und zum Erfahren derselben veranlasst.
  3. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen erarbeiten ausgehend von den eigenen Erfahrungen und Konfliktsituationen Lösungen oder Haltungen und können die Grundzüge der Karmalehre (bedingtes Entstehen) nachvollziehen sowie die Wichtigkeit ethischer Regeln begreifen.
  4. Nach Gesprächen über Konflikte in der Gruppe und an der Schule werden die Schüler und Schülerinnen mit den Prinzipien der Streitschlichtung vertraut gemacht. Es werden andere Beispiele von Übungsformen und rituellen Handlungen vorgestellt und geübt.
- 6.2. Sekundarstufe I**
5. und 6. Schulstufe
    1. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen lernen mit Hilfe von Bildmaterial, Filmen und Beschreibungen die oben genannten heutigen Pilgerorte kennen und können sie in die Biografie des Buddha und die Geschichte der Entstehung des Buddhismus einordnen.
    2. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen beschäftigen sich mit den Kernaussagen der Buddha-Lehre und versuchen, diese Vorstellungen auf das Leben in der Gegenwart zu übertragen.
    3. Außer der möglichen Teilnahme an der Konfliktlösungs-Ausbildung werden verschiedene Meditationsformen und Rituale/verdienstvolle Handlungen geübt und bei Besuchen
  2. The students are being motivated to experience different forms of meditation.
  3. The students work out solutions or attitudes on the basis of their own experiences and conflict situations and are able to understand the basic principles of the doctrine of karma (conditional origination) as well as the importance of ethical rules.
  4. After talking about conflicts in the group and at school, the students are familiarised with the principles of dispute resolution. Other examples of practice forms and ritual actions are introduced and practised.

### **6.2 Secondary Level I**

5th and 6th Grade

1. With the help of visual material, films, and descriptions, the students get to know the aforementioned present-day pilgrimage sites and can place them in the biography of the Buddha and the history of the emergence of Buddhism.
2. The students deal with the core statements of the Buddha's teachings and try to apply these ideas to life in the present day.
3. Apart from possibly taking part in conflict resolution training, they practise various forms of meditation and rituals/meritorious acts, and apply what they have learned when visiting festivals and ceremonies.

von Festen und Zeremonien das Gelehrte angewandt.

4. Der Buddhismus wird den Schülern und Schülerinnen im Sinne des „Weltethos“ als ein Teil der Weltreligionen dargestellt und die Kenntnis der wichtigsten anderen Weltreligionen und die Achtung vor ihnen und ihrem Glauben an Gott ebenso vermittelt wie die Prinzipien des Humanismus.

#### 7. und 8. Schulstufe

1. Den Schülern und Schülerinnen die Überlieferungsproblematik aufzeigen (historische Daten und Llegendenbildungen).

2. Mit unterschiedlichen Texten und Bildern die Entwicklung der unterschiedlichen buddhistischen Richtungen und Schulen und ihrer gegenwärtigen Persönlichkeiten darstellen; Kenntnis der Kernaussagen des Buddha.

3. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen beschäftigen sich mit der Frage, was diese Sichtweise für ihr eigenes Leben bedeutet und vergleichen sie in durch Lehrer und Lehrerinnen gestützten Referaten mit den anderen Weltreligionen und humanistischen Bekenntnissen.

4. Sie setzen die Konfliktlösungarbeit fort oder beginnen damit. Fortsetzung der Übung verdienstvoller Handlungen (Rezitationen; Übungen in Freigebigkeit und liebevollem Verhalten).

#### **6.3. Sekundarstufe II**

##### 9. und 10. Schulstufe

4. Buddhismus is presented to the students in terms of a “global ethic” as a part of the world religions. Knowledge of the most important other world religions and respect for them and their belief in God as well as the principles of humanism are taught.

#### 7th and 8th Grade

1. Show the students the problems of transmission (historical data and legend formations).

2. Using different texts and images, present the development of the different Buddhist schools and their current personalities; knowledge of the core statements of the Buddha.

3. The students deal with the question of what this view means for their own lives and compare it with the other world religions and humanistic creeds in teacher-supported presentations.

4. They continue or commence conflict resolution work. Continue practising meritorious actions (recitations; exercises in generosity and loving behaviour).

#### **6.3 Secondary Level II**

##### 9th and 10th Grade

1. The students engage intensively with Buddhist teaching

1. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen setzen sich intensiv mit den buddhistischen Lehrinhalten und Praxisformen sowie ihrer Adaption im Westen – mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Österreich – auseinander.  
 2. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen vertiefen ihre Erfahrungen und praktischen Übungen mit buddhistischer Lebensweise und Übungswegen, wie sie von Asien übermittelt werden, sowie mit Kunstformen aus den vorhergegangenen Übungen.

#### 11. bis 13. Schulstufe

Den jungen Erwachsenen gibt der buddhistische Religionsunterricht neben der Beschäftigung mit den Kernpunkten der buddhistischen Lehre und ihrer Wirkung im Westen vor allem Gelegenheit, persönliche und zeitbezogene Probleme ohne äußeren Druck aus der Perspektive des Mitgefühls und der Friedfertigkeit zu diskutieren. Die Schüler und Schülerinnen studieren dabei vertieft verschiedene buddhistische philosophische Sichtweisen und lernen speziellere Übungswege einzelner Traditionen kennen und entwickeln Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten, das Gelernte in ihren Alltag zu integrieren.

contents and forms of practice as well as their adaptation in the West – with special emphasis on Austria.

2. The students deepen their experiences and practical exercises with Buddhist ways of life and practice as transmitted from Asia, as well as with art forms from the previous exercises.

#### 11th to 13th Grade

Apart from engaging with the core points of Buddhist teachings and their impact in the West, Buddhist Religious Education primarily gives young adults the opportunity to discuss, without external pressure, personal and topical issues from the perspective of compassion and peacefulness. In doing so, the students study different Buddhist philosophical perspectives in-depth and learn more specific ways of practising individual traditions and develop abilities and skills to integrate what they have learned into their everyday lives.

### **Appendix 3: Friedrich Fenzl's Draft Curriculum for a Buddhist Priest or "Dharmadan" Training Programme in Austria (March 1984)**

#### Vorschläge für das Curriculum

##### A. Grundlagen des Buddhismus

(vier heiligen Wahrheiten – achtfacher Pfad – Anicca – Dukkha –

#### Proposals for the Curriculum

##### A. Foundations of Buddhism

(four holy truths – eightfold path – anicca – dukkha – anatta – karma

Anatta – Karma und Wiedergeburt  
– Nibbana – buddhistische Kosmologie – buddh. Standpunkt zum monotheistischen Gottesbegriff)

**B. Doktrin der wichtigsten buddhistischen Schulen**

(einschl. der Meditationstechniken dieser Schulen)

a. Theravada (“die Schule der Alten”)

b. Zen (Ch`an) Buddhismus

c. Vajrayâna (tibet.-mongol. Lamaismus und jap. Shingon)

d. Amida-Buddhismus

e. Nichiren (Lotus-)Buddhismus

**C. Geschichte des Buddhismus**

a. in Indien und SO-Asien

b. in China (incl. Korea und Vietnam)

c. in Japan

d. in Tibet (incl. Mongolei)

e. im Westen (Europa und Amerika)

**D. Buddhistische Ethik**

a. die Silâs und Paramitas

b. Sozialethik – Anwendung der buddh. Ethik in der modernen Gesellschaft

**E. Buddhistische Kunst, Kultur und Ikonographie**

Die wichtigsten Grundlagen und Begriffe

**F. Buddhistische Terminologie**

Buddhistische Terminis [sic] in Pali und Sanskrit

**G. Buddhismus und Naturwissenschaft**

Das Verhältnis des Buddhismus zu den modernen Naturwissenschaften

and rebirth – nibbana – Buddhist cosmology – Buddhist view on the monotheistic notion of God)

**B. Doctrine of the Most Important Buddhist Schools**

(including the meditation techniques of these schools)

a. Theravada (“the school of the elders”)

b. Zen (Ch`an) Buddhism

c. Vajrayâna (Tibetan-Mongolian Lamaism and Japanese Shingon)

d. Amida Buddhism

e. Nichiren (Lotus) Buddhism

**C. History of Buddhism**

a. in India and SE Asia

b. in China (incl. Korea and Vietnam)

c. in Japan

d. in Tibet (incl. Mongolia)

e. in the West (Europe and America)

**D. Buddhist Ethics**

a. The silâs and paramitas

b. Social ethics – application of Buddhist ethics in modern society

**E. Buddhist Arts, Culture, and Iconography**

The most important basics and terms

**F. Buddhist Terminology**

Buddhist terms in Pali and Sanskrit

**G. Buddhism and Natural Science**

The relationship of Buddhism to the modern natural sciences

#### H. Buddhismus und die nicht-buddhistischen Religionen

(Vergleichende Religionskunde)  
Das Verhältnis des Buddhismus zu den anderen Religionen, insbes. zum Christentum

#### I. Buddhistische Diakonie (Psychotherapeutik)

Für eine religiös-seelsorgerische Betreuung von Kranken, Sterbenden, Strafgefangenen, Flüchtlingen etc. ist unbedingt eine Ausbildung in Psychotherapie, Gesprächsführung etc. notwendig. Diese muß von psychiatrisch-psychologischen Fachleuten durchgeführt werden!

#### J. Religionspädagogik

(nur für Dharmadan-Kandidaten, die auch als Religionslehrer eingesetzt werden sollen)

#### K. Dialektik und Rhetorik

Schulung in diesen Bereichen, um bei Diskussionen, Konferenzen etc. mit Vertretern anderer Religionen und Weltanschauungen bestehen zu können. Rhetorik auch in Hinblick auf Einsatz in Rundfunk und TV wichtig!

#### L. Religionsrecht in Österreich

#### M. Englisch

Kandidaten sollen eine gute Beherrschung der englischen Sprache in Wort und Schrift nachweisen müssen.

(Ein großer Teil der buddh. Sekundärliteratur und Presse ist in Englisch, Englisch ist Konferenzsprache auf buddh. Tagungen und Konferenzen sowie Sprachmedium zur Betreuung und bei der Begegnung mit Ausländern usw.)

#### H. Buddhism and the Non-Buddhist Religions

(Comparative Study of Religions)  
The relationship of Buddhism to the other religions, especially to Christianity

#### I. Buddhist Diaconia (Psychotherapeutics)

For religious-pastoral care of the sick, the dying, prisoners, refugees, etc., training in psychotherapy, counselling techniques, etc. is indispensable. This must be carried out by psychiatric-psychological specialists!

#### J. Religious Education

(only for Dharmadan candidates who are also to be employed as religious education teachers)

#### K. Dialectics and Rhetoric

Training in these areas in order to be able to hold one's own in discussions, conferences etc. with representatives of other religions and worldviews. Rhetoric is also important in case it is used in radio and TV!

#### L. Law on Religions in Austria

#### M. English

Candidates should be required to demonstrate a good command of written and spoken English.

(Much of the secondary Buddhist literature and press is in English; English is the conference language at Buddhist meetings and conferences as well as the medium for mentoring and meeting foreigners etc.)

Abwicklung [sic] der Ausbildung

Um berufstätigen Dharmadan-Kandidaten und solchen außerhalb Wiens und in den Bundesländern die Teilnahme an der Ausbildung zu ermöglichen, sind Skripten und Lehrbriefe zu erstellen und den Kandidaten in regelmäßigen Abständen und nach einem genau ausgearbeiteten Zeitplan zuzustellen. Die Kandidaten sind dann um den persönlichen Kontakt mit den Dozenten sowie Dialog, Repetitorium etc. sicherzustellen, in regelmäßigen Abständen (zB. vierteljährlich) zu einem mehrtägigen Seminar in das BZ Scheibbs einzuladen.

Es ist rechtzeitig dafür zu sorgen, daß qualifizierte Lehrer[,] Dozenten und Autoren für die Skripten gewonnen werden. Diese können auch Ausländer sein.

Execution of the Training

In order to enable Dharmadan candidates who have jobs and those living outside Vienna and in the federal states to participate in the training, scripts and correspondence course materials are to be prepared and sent to the candidates at regular intervals and according to a precisely worked out schedule. In order to ensure personal contact with the lecturers as well as dialogue, review course, etc., the candidates are to be invited to a seminar lasting several days at the Buddhist Centre Scheibbs at regular intervals (e.g., quarterly).

It has to be ensured in a timely manner that qualified teachers, lecturers, and authors are recruited for the scripts. These can also be foreigners.

## List of Abbreviations

BGBI	<i>Bundesgesetzblatt für die Republik Österreich</i> (Federal Law Gazette of the Republic of Austria)
BGW	<i>Buddhistische Gesellschaft Wien</i> (Buddhist Society of Vienna)
BRE	Buddhist Religious Education at schools
BRPI	<i>Buddhistisches Religionspädagogisches Institut</i> (Institute for Buddhist Religious Education)
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
KPH	<i>Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Wien/Krems</i> (Church University College for Teacher Education Vienna/Krems)
ÖBR	<i>Österreichische Buddhistische Religionsgesellschaft</i> (Austrian Buddhist Religious Society)
VIS	Vienna International School

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## Glossary

Deshimaru Taisen	弟子丸泰仙
Gakuro	学朗 (=Kurt Krammer)
Genro	玄朗 (=Herbert Koudela)
Hyaewǒn	혜원/慧元 (=Theodor Strohal)
Maezumi Hakuyū	前角博雄
Myōshin	妙心 (=Friedrich Fenzl)
Otogawa Kōbun	乙川弘文
Bon	ぼん
Chogye	조계/曹溪
Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha	浄土真宗本願寺
Kyūdō	弓道
Rinzai	臨濟
Sōka Gakkai	創価学会
Sōtō	曹洞
Wéiyěnà Cíēn Fótáng	维也纳慈恩佛堂
Zen	禅
<i>zendō</i>	禅堂