

Naikan in Austria: Background and Early Years, 1980–1986

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1. Introduction

Naikan (literally, introspection) is often designated as a form of Japanese psychotherapy.¹ Rooted in the Buddhist tradition, it was devised by Yoshimoto Ishin (born Yoshimoto Inobu; 1916–1988) in the 1940s. A successful businessman, Yoshimoto retired in his late thirties, dedicating the rest of his life to the practice and propagation of his method. Soon thereafter Naikan practice was introduced to the Japanese penal system as a rehabilitation treatment where it had its heydays in the late 1970s and early 1980s. With rising popularity and a proliferation of training facilities across Japan, Naikan entered new fields of application being utilised by medical doctors, psychologists, and educators. Japanese and overseas scholars gradually took notice of the practice from the early 1960s. A decade later, Naikan hesitantly arrived in Europe (France and Germany), eventually gaining a lasting presence with the first public Naikan seminar held in Austria in 1980. Subsequently, Naikan’s internationalisation progressed: within the next twelve years the practice (in its classical group setting) was introduced to the United States and Canada (1981), Germany (1983), Italy (1985), England (1989), China and Switzerland (1992).

Once again, a development occurring in Austria marked a milestone in the history of Naikan: its first centre outside of Japan was established in 1986 by Franz Ritter (b. 1947), a chief exponent of Austro-Buddhism during the 1970s and 1980s. He later became European representative of the International Naikan Association, being its current President since 2016. Indeed, Austria was the international hub of Naikan for decades, hosting two congresses of the International Naikan Association in 1994 and 2006. Although the role of China has recently eclipsed that of Austria in terms of practition-

¹ Today, specifically in Japan and in the relevant scholarship, it is also variously called Naikan Method (*Naikanhō*), Naikan Therapy (*Naikan ryōhō*), and, rarely, Yoshimoto Naikan. Austrian practitioners simply refer to it as “Naikan.”

ers—notably, Shànghǎi was the venue of the Eighth and the Eleventh International Naikan Congress in 2010 and 2019, respectively—Austro-Naikan, with its more than forty years of history during which thousands of people experienced the practice, is still a major actor within the international Naikan community.²

This paper is the first outcome of a broader research project that aims to trace in detail the historical development of Naikan in Austria. I first encountered the practice in the 2000s while doing research in Japan. Years later—in 2016 having just arrived in Vienna from a previous post held at the University of Aberdeen—I started to establish a special library collection on things Naikan at the University of Vienna’s Department of Religious Studies; a growing collection which would never have seen the light of day if it were not for the invaluable help of Johanna Schuh, a long-time Naikan connoisseur (since 1993) and founder of the Insightvoice Naikan Training Vienna (2005; formerly Insightvoice Naikan Center Vienna).³ The same year, as a kind of inaugurating event, I co-ordinated a semester-long seminar on Naikan as part of the Religious Studies M.A. programme, involving two one-day Naikans in Vienna (Johanna Schuh) and Bodingbach/Lunz am See (Helga Hartl-Margreiter and Franz Ritter). Knowing of Austro-Naikan’s central place in the wider history of Naikan, I determined to embark on a research project documenting the story of Austro-Naikan. At first, I was not sure if my goal to write a micro-history could be accomplished at all, for written sources seemed to be scarce, especially for the first some fifteen years. In 2019, Franz Ritter passed on to me his “Naikan archive” comprising a dozen or so ring binders, for which I am extremely thankful. Valuable as these materials surely are, they were limited to his later writings and his Naikan-related accounting books. Ultimately, following a nice afternoon chat with him a year later in his Neunkirchen home, we went into his garage to look for some old photos. While he searched through damp-stained photo albums, I took the liberty to rummage around the various shelves and boxes. Astonishingly, I discovered that the Naikan archive I had inherited was in fact only but a peripheral part of what was still there. A veritable treasure chest materialised—also handed over to me in good confidence by Franz Ritter—upon which this paper is largely built. It also proved crucial in verifying but also correcting oral information received. Alongside working through the rich archival cor-

² To this day, several Naikan providers are also formally affiliated with the Austrian Buddhist Religious Society.

³ In this respect, gratitude is also owed to Helga Hartl-Margreiter, head of the Buddhakause in Bodingbach/Lunz am See, in particular for her donations of rare materials pertaining to Senkōbō Buddhism.

pus, I conducted a number of semi-structured interviews with the early Naikan pioneers. Adding to this were many personal correspondences I had the pleasure to have over the years. Likewise informing this research is the wider Naikan scholarship as well as Japanese sources relevant to the immediate subject, that is, Austro-Naikan. Needless to say, the research could not have been carried out without the enthusiastic support of—in alphabetic order—Roland Dick, Helga Hartl-Margreiter, Franz Ritter, and Johanna Schuh.

The following section briefly outlines the Japanese context of Naikan, while Section Three examines the international and local background prior to the formal beginning of Austro-Naikan. Section Four forms the main part of this paper, addressing the development of Austro-Naikan from its inception in 1980 until the end of 1986. The year 1986 marks an important caesura in many ways, foremostly due to the founding of the first Naikan centre by Ritter.

2. Japanese Origins

Yoshimoto was born into a trader's family in the village of Yamatokōriyama, Nara Prefecture, in 1916.⁴ The Yoshimotos were affiliated to the local Jōdo Shinshū temple. Following the untimely death of his little sister, Yoshimoto's mother intensified her devotional practice also affecting the young Yoshimoto. In 1936, through the grandfather of his later wife Kinuko (née Morikawa; 1920–2000), he became member of the small lay Shin Buddhist group Taikan-an (Hermitage of Taikan; *taikan* literally means “true insight”), founded by a former Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha priest Nishimoto Taikan (1849–1912) and then operated by a Morikawa family friend, Komatani Teishin (d. 1945).⁵ The latter was to become Yoshimoto's teacher.

4 Plenty has been written on Naikan in recent years, specifically in Japanese. In English, the best outline is given by University of Pittsburgh-based Religious Studies scholar Clark Chilson (2018; for further more recent studies, see Shimazono 2015 and Chervenkov 2017). In German, there is my “Naikan aus religionswissenschaftlicher Perspektive” (Naikan from the Perspective of Religious Studies; Pokorny 2016, republished with some emendations as Pokorny 2021). A fine English-language scholarly monograph is provided by Emory College anthropologist Chikako Ozawa-de Silva (2006). Translations of Yoshimoto's writings are rare; one such—the only scholarly translation to date—is Chilson 2019. In it Chilson culled three portions from Yoshimoto's autobiographical work *Naikan no michi* (Way of Naikan; Yoshimoto 1977) with a focus on Yoshimoto's encounter with Naikan's predecessor practice *mishirabe*.

5 Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha is the largest Shin Buddhist denomination.

Taikan-an practice centred on *mishirabe* (self-exploration), an otherwise unknown self-cultivational practice allegedly taught to Nishimoto by his own teacher. It discontinued with the dissolution of the group, probably brought about by the death of Komatani in an Ōsaka air raid in July 1945. Our knowledge of *mishirabe* is exclusively based on Yoshimoto's accounts. *Mishirabe* was supposedly a harsh ascetical practice with the intent to have one realise his/her *shinjin* (entrusting heart), that is, the unrelenting faith in salvation through Amida Buddha's infinite mercy. A practitioner (called *byōnin* or "sick person") would spend time in isolation enduring hunger, thirst, and sleep deprivation, meant to create a canvas for self-examination, reflecting one's life, death, a potential afterlife, and, specifically, one's wrongfulness within interpersonal relations and the ensuing guilt. The isolation would be regularly interrupted every two hours or so by a so-called *kai-gonin* (caregiver), someone who had mastered *mishirabe* before, now serving as guide. Their role was to foster further introspection in the *byōnin* by raising existential questions.

According to Yoshimoto, he successfully completed *mishirabe* on his fourth attempt in November 1937 (his wife apparently accomplished it earlier). Subsequently, he committed himself even more to Taikan-an's cause becoming a close aide of Komatani. Yoshimoto and his master seem to have stressed the need to continuously maintain one's salvation consciousness (*shinjin*) through repeated *mishirabe*. Yet, however powerful a practice *mishirabe* was, Yoshimoto recognised its limitations in application. Only few would be capable to master it even once, let alone face it on a more regular basis given the challenging ascetic regime. Already in the summer of 1940, encouraged by Komatani, he accordingly commenced to adjust the practice, allowing practitioners food, drink, and sleep, as well as implementing a clearer structure rendering the regular practice to last one week. A year later, in 1941, he called his modified version of *mishirabe naikanhō* (Naikan Method).

Towards the end of the Pacific War, Yoshimoto went on to employ the practice outside a decidedly religious environment, having his own workforce do Naikan in the company premises. While he greatly broadened Naikan's applicability to now also involve a non-Buddhist or non-religious clientele, he concurrently pursued his own Shin Buddhist cultivational path even more focusedly. In 1950, he was eventually certified as a priest in the Shinshū Kibe-ha, that is, one of the ten chief branches of Shin Buddhism.

Similarly, while Naikan became more and more secular in its outwardly expressed self-identity,⁶ Yoshimoto affiliated his newly founded Yamatokōriyama-based “headquarters”—the Naikan Dōjō (renamed to Naikan Kyōiku Kenshūjo or Naikan Educational Training Centre in 1957 and Naikan Kenshūjo or Naikan Training Institute in 1971)—with the Shinshū Kibe-ha as Naikanji (Naikan Temple).

Yoshimoto henceforth engaged full-time in promoting and providing Naikan. From the 1960s, a range of studies from various fields such as psychology/psychiatry, education, law, and medicine attributed to Naikan treatment a significant efficacy. The Naikan community grew considerably—a dedicated association was launched (see Figure 1) and annual conferences were held. Outside the Naikan centres, the emphasis gradually shifted from prisons to clinical application involving drug and alcohol addicts. From the late 1970s to the mid-1980s, Yoshimoto’s visibility was at its zenith. For instance, next to several media appearances, he and his wife personally hosted some 12,000 clients at their Naikan centre between 1976 and 1984. Yoshimoto died in August 1988. Kinuko carried on until her death in 2000.

Yoshimoto never wanted to form—let alone oversee—a close-knit organisation. From the start, he designed Naikan in very simple terms to facilitate wide and independent use. Naikan retained the basic functionality of *mishirabe*: the *kaigonin* or caregiver became *mensetsusha* (interviewer), who would attend the Naikan practitioner (*naikansha*) every two hours to guide his/her introspection alongside three central themes that were “codified” by Yoshimoto in 1968: what one received (from another person); what one returned (to that person); what troubles one caused (to this person). During a week of Naikan, the *naikansha* would meditatively address these questions centring on important interpersonal relations. For every person one needs to walk through set periods of time in their mutual history (e.g., relationship with one’s father between the age of ten and fourteen). There is no agreed standard beyond this basal setting. Traditionally, the *naikansha* would not leave his/her cell except for bathroom breaks. Save for the ritualised “interview,” he/she must engage in introspection only. In short, the ideal effect of Naikan practice is to uncover one’s existential dependencies and interpersonal entanglements, thereby eliminating egocentricity and creating a sense

6 This enabled Naikan to be adopted into the reform programme within correctional facilities. Nara Juvenile Prison was the first introducing Naikan in March 1954 (Takeda 1971) with Yoshimoto formally serving as a prison chaplain (*kyōkaishi*). However, Naikan’s application within Japan’s penal system was never without frictions, for its religious roots could not be tolerated by some in the light of the state’s laicism. Despite its evident success over decades in terms of reducing recidivism, Japanese prisons would later largely abolish the practice.

of gratitude vis-à-vis others and, possibly, the world at large. One is to discover the compassion and affection received by others that went hitherto unnoticed or were forgotten. Realising this could completely shift one's perspective, instilling tranquillity and benevolence (see Pokorny 2016).

3. Background

Naikan's internationalisation goes back to the mid-1960s and the American sociologist John Itsuro Kitsuse (1923–2003), who made himself a name with his scholarship in the areas of social problems, criminology, and deviance. An ethnic Japanese, Kitsuse was the first one publishing on Naikan outside Japan (Kitsuse 1962). Internationally more resonant was the research by the Hawai'i based anthropologist Takie Sugiyama Lebra (1930–2017) (Lebra 1976: 201–214) and, specifically, the many writings of fellow anthropologist David Kent Reynolds (b. 1940) (especially Reynolds 1983). Having experienced Naikan directly under Yoshimoto in 1973, Reynolds introduced the Naikan practice to the United States in August 1981 when he held a one-week seminar at the Californian Jōdo Shinshū temple San Luis Obispo Buddhist Church. Almost a decade earlier, Naikan practice gained a foothold in Europe, spearheaded by the then doctoral student Takino Isao (b. 1947) in Paris between 1972 and 1975. Takino eventually obtained a doctorate from Université de Paris V with a thesis on Naikan (Takino 1975) and went on to become a professor of psychology at Ritsumeikan University.

In 1976, Naikan, for the first time, entered the international prison context when the prison chaplain and pastor Lothar Finkbeiner (1939–2020) introduced it at the correctional facility Vechta in Lower Saxony, Germany, where it was on offer until 1986. Finkbeiner himself underwent a one-week Naikan practice a few months earlier, in April 1976, under the guidance of Ishii Akira (b. 1946). The two met in autumn 1975 at a conference on criminal pedagogy (Finkbeiner 2016).

Ishii is by far the most important figure in the international spread of Naikan. A Tōkyō native, he is professor emeritus of Criminal Law at Aoyama Gakuin University (Ph.D. in Law from Tōkyō University in 1979), serving for many years in various offices of the Japan Naikan Association (*Nihon Naikan Gakkai*). Between 1974 and 1976, he was a visiting scholar at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security and Law (formerly, Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law) in Freiburg im Breisgau. There he collaborated closely with the Saarland University-based legal scholar Dieter Bindzus (1936–2021), which led to the publication of *Strafvollzug in Japan* (The Penal System in Japan) (Bindzus and Ishii

1977). The book also introduced Naikan to the German-speaking audience (ibid.: 76–79; also cf. Reiss and Finkbeiner 2016: 56–57). A long-time Zen practitioner who was raised in the Pure Land tradition, Ishii had his first Naikan experience (under Yoshimoto) in 1973 shortly before his departure to Germany—a life-altering experience indeed, which turned him into Naikan’s prime international advocate.⁷ Unsurprisingly, it was through Ishii that the later Austrian pioneer, Franz Ritter, came to be a life-long proponent of Naikan himself.

Ritter encountered Ishii in the summer of 1978 at a Zen retreat at Eigenji, the head temple of the Rinzai Zen branch of the same name. At the time, Ritter was already one of the key figures of Austro-Buddhism. Not only did he establish the first stable group of Zen practitioners, gathering weekly in the premises of the *Buddhistische Gesellschaft Wien* (BGW; Buddhist Society of Vienna) from late 1976,⁸ but he was instrumental in founding (1975/76) and running the *Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs* (Buddhist Centre Scheibbs) and its supporting association, the Vienna-based *Verein der Freunde des Buddhistischen Kultur- und Meditationszentrums Scheibbs* (Friends Association of the Buddhist Cultural and Meditation Centre Scheibbs).⁹

Ritter was born into a Protestant family in Vienna and spent his childhood and youth in the twentieth district. He recalls that while early on he was at odds with the Christian faith, he was in general spiritually curious (Personal

7 Reiss indicates 1971 based on an interview with Ishii (Reiss and Finkbeiner 2016: 55). However, in older publications as well as in personal documents and an interview with me (August 31, 2016), Ishii mentioned 1973. Overall, Ishii reportedly practised Naikan four times under Yoshimoto.

8 In December 1974, the BGW was renamed *Buddhistische Gemeinschaft Österreichs* (BGÖ; Buddhist Community of Austria), which was reverted in 1976.

9 Alongside the then BGÖ secretary (since 1970) Erich Skrleta (1943–2010), Ritter was also the (second) mastermind behind the publication of *Bodhi Baum* (Bodhi Tree), which evolved into the major organ of the Austrian Buddhist community. Launched in early 1976 as a quarterly, *Bodhi Baum* was discontinued after seventy-one issues in 1993. In 1994, it resurfaced as a one-time yearbook (see Dr. Walter Karwath Gesellschaft 1994). An overview of all *Bodhi Baum* articles is given in the last issue (see Skrleta 1993). Ritter’s involvement in *Bodhi Baum* from early on made it a central platform to spread information on Naikan and advertise Naikan offerings in Austria. Formally, the *Verein der Freunde des Buddhistischen Kultur- und Meditationszentrums Scheibbs* was chaired by Franz Dolezel (1926–2012), and subsequently, from November 1, 1976, by Walter Karwath (1919–1986), who served as president of the *Österreichische Buddhistische Union* (ÖBU; Austrian Buddhist Union; from 1983 the *Österreichische Buddhistische Religionsgesellschaft* or Austrian Buddhist Religious Society) from 1977 to 1986. Skrleta and Ritter acted as deputy chairs.

Interview: February 16, 2021). After school, he started an apprenticeship as a salesperson and worked in retail. He completed a marketing course at the Vienna-based University for World Trade (*Hochschule für Welthandel*) in 1969, subsequently working as an advertising assistant, and between 1972 and 1989 as a self-employed copywriter. The latter occupation gave Ritter the required space to develop his spiritual career, which began in earnest in 1968. Through a co-worker he was introduced to the *BGW*, whose members gathered fortnightly at the *Porrhaus* in the fourth district's Treitlstraße 3.¹⁰ The meetings largely revolved around lectures by the then *BGW* president Fritz Hungerleider (1920–1998; p. 1955–1976). A Pāli Buddhism connoisseur, from the late 1950s Hungerleider increasingly turned his attention to Japanese Buddhism, eventually receiving training at the Kyōto-based Rinzaï Zen temple Daitokuji in 1961. Upon his return, he went on to hold the first ever intensive Zen meditation retreat (*sesshin*) in the German-speaking world at the *Haus der Stille* (House of Silence) Buddhist meditation centre in Roseburg near Hamburg, Germany, in 1962.¹¹ Hungerleider remained one of the chief figures of Buddhism in Europe until the 1980s. In appreciation of his enormous contribution to popular Buddhist education he was awarded a professorial title by the Austrian Federal President in July 1978.

Hungerleider's lectures intrigued the young Ritter, which to this day he deems brilliantly informed, albeit intellectually (too) challenging. A year later, in 1969, he attended his first *sesshin* under Hungerleider at Stift Zwettl, followed by another one in 1970. Whereas the former had him reportedly enter a most profound meditational state—a crucial first of many subsequent episodes of utter tranquillity, which would inspire him ever since—the latter led him to “discover hell within.” As Ritter notes: “I was full of sexual and other cravings and was incapable of containing these forces.”¹² This autobiographical account foreshadowed the nature of Ritter's further spiritual evolution: while for a long time Zen remained his self-cultivational compass, it could never really completely satisfy him spiritually. He kept being a (predominantly Buddhist) seeker until later in his Naikan career when he ultimately found spiritual rest in this very tradition.

10 The *Porrhaus* was built in 1930/31 by the Austrian construction company “Porr” and served as a rallying point for a number of religious communities in the 1960s and 1970s.

11 Notably, the *Haus der Stille* served as a model for the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs.

12 “1970 wiederholte ich den Besuch, aber diesmal entdeckte ich die Hölle in mir. Mich durchfuhr in dieser Übung das, was im indischen Raum Kundalini genannt wird, Lebenskraft. Ich war voller sexueller und sonstiger Gier und konnte diese Kräfte in mir nicht bändigen” (Ritter n/a: 1).

Following his *sesshin* experiences, Ritter gradually committed to a Buddhist life course and, reportedly, attained enlightenment while sitting on a park bench one sunny Sunday afternoon in October 1972. In the following years, Ritter immersed himself in his spiritual cultivation with a focus on Zen as well as the propagation of the wider Buddhist tradition. He was the most dynamic of the new generation of Austro-Buddhists, who sought to break with the perceived staid-gentlemen philosophical elitism represented by the *BGW/BGÖ*. The opening of the former asylum for the blind-turned-meditation centre in the village of Scheibbs (Ginselberg 12), Lower Austria, in 1975, the launch of *Bodhi Baum* in March 1976, but, somewhat surprisingly, also the renting of a permanent facility qua *BGÖ* headquarters at Dannebergplatz 10 in Vienna's third district later that year, most noticeably highlight the break with Austro-Buddhism of old. His own health concern aside, the increasingly antagonising “enthusiastic wing stroke of the youth” resulted in Hungerleider's demission as he emphatically explained in his valedictory on May 23, 1976:

The friends of Scheibbs later described my remarks during a debate in our premises [...] as “incendiary speech against Scheibbs” [...]. It is therefore ludicrous that the young people engaging in the Scheibbs project distrust me, although they themselves are those who first have to earn our trust!! [...] The overinflated laudation in the first issue of Bodhibaum seems to have caused offence both at home and abroad, as indicated by letters and telephone calls. People seem to be largely thinking that I myself am the author of this concoction [...]. This is embarrassing, but insignificant. [...] The last issue I would like to briefly address is an incomparably more important one and relates to the recent plans to establish a Buddhist headquarters in Vienna. For some time now, some friends have no longer felt happy in our present location [i.e., the Porrhaus]. They criticise the lack of atmosphere, the punctual closing time, which would prohibit that conversations develop after events. [...] My concern that it would not be easy to keep activities in a facility which is steadily accessible under control and to monitor them cannot be denied. Frankly speaking, also among hippies and dropouts [*Gammler*] one certainly finds serious seekers; assuredly, there will also be those who do not take drugs. But it is inevitable that also shady characters will show up. I myself, however, am quite unsuited to act as a supervising body in such a place in order to sort the wheat from the chaff.¹³ [...] The enthusiastic wing stroke of the youth should not be paralysed by someone, who has had his natural optimism beaten out

13 A major concern of Hungerleider regarding Scheibbs and, by extension, the centre in Vienna (which was the initiative of Skrleta), apparently revolved around potentially dire economic consequences for the Buddhist community and his concomitant discrediting as its president in case of failure.

over the decades; someone, who has accordingly not become a pessimist but a realist.¹⁴

Being the most strident of the “friends of Scheibbs,” it was Ritter who published somewhat of a response to Hungerleider’s critique in the same issue of *Bodhi Baum*, where he vividly calls for a change. He views the Buddhist community as envisaged and effectively embodied by Hungerleider to be behind the times and, accordingly, not sufficiently fit for growth. Buddhist practice shall prevail over theorising. It seems that for Ritter, Hungerleider’s resignation therefore is tantamount to this very shift, for “with Herr Hungerleider steps down a man who has acquired profound knowledge in the field of Buddhism and who presented this knowledge in his lectures – yet, all too often this happened in front of an audience for which the lecture contents were too difficult to understand.”¹⁵ Ritter’s scorn for the ossified Buddhism of Hungerleider and some of his peers even finds expression in his otherwise conciliatory conclusion, namely that “the dynamism of the youth is important, but even more important is that the older, more experienced members

14 “Die Scheibbser Freunde bezeichneten später meine Ausführungen anlässlich einer Aussprache in unseren Räumen [...] als ‘Brandrede gegen Scheibbs’ [...]. Es ist daher grotesk feststellen zu müssen, daß junge Menschen um Scheibbs mir [*sic*] Mißtrauen entgegenbringen, die selbst erst unser [*sic*] Vertrauen sich verdienen müssen!! [...] An der maßlos übertriebenen Laudatio in der 1. Nummer des Bodhibaumes [*sic*] scheint man sowohl im In-, wie auch im Ausland Anstoß genommen zu haben, wie Briefe und Telefonanrufe bezeigen. Man scheint weitgehendst der Ansicht zu sein, daß ich selbst Verfasser dieses Elaborates sei [...]. Das ist zwar peinlich, aber unbedeutend. [...] Der letzte Punkt, auf den ich kurz hinweisen möchte ist der unvergleichlich wichtigere und bezieht sich auf die jüngsten Pläne, in Wien eine buddhistische Heimstätte zu gründen. Schon seit einiger Zeit fühlen sich einige Freunde in unserem bisherigen Domizil nicht mehr glücklich. Man kritisiert den Mangel an Atmosphäre, die pünktliche Sperrstunde, sodaß sich keine Gespräche nach den Veranstaltungen entwickeln könnten. [...] Meine Bedenken, daß es nicht leicht sein werde, Vorgänge in einem stets offen stehenden Lokal unter Kontrolle zu halten, sie zu überwachen, sind nicht zu unterdrücken. Auch dazu ein offenes Wort. Sicherlich gibt es auch unterHippies [*sic*] und Gamlern [*sic*] ernsthaft Suchende; sicherlich wird es auch solche geben, die keine Drogen zu sich nehmen. Es wird aber nicht ausbleiben, daß sich auch zwielichtige Gestalten einfinden werden. Ich selbst jedoch bin durchaus ungeeignet, in einem solchen Lokal als Aufsichtsorgan zu amtieren, um Spreu von Weizen zu trennen. [...] Der enthusiastische Flügelschlag der Jugend soll nicht gelähmt werden von einem, dem der angeborene Optimismus im Laufe der Jahrzehnte gründlich ausgetrieben wurde, der deshalb nicht zum Pessimisten, aber zum Realisten geworden ist” (Hungerleider 1976: 15–17).

15 “Mit Herrn Hungerleider geht ein Mann, der sich ein fundiertes Wissen auf dem Gebiet des Buddhismus erarbeitet hat und der dieses Wissen in seinen Vorträgen – nur allzu oft vor einem Publikum, dem das Vorgetragene viel zu hoch war – darlegte” (Ritter 1976: 23).

of the community are willing to put their knowledge and experience, however limited it may seem in comparison to a great teacher, at the service of the community.”¹⁶ Hungerleider and Ritter personified the extreme ends of a generational divide within the Austro-Buddhist community.¹⁷ The account is another testament to Ritter’s zest for action, which also laid the groundwork for Naikan’s lasting presence in Austria.

Despite its conflictual beginning, the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs led by Ritter turned out to be a huge success. It quickly became the most important provider of retreats and workshops for the spiritually minded in the country. To Ritter Scheibbs was a gift, for he was not anymore required to seek out teachers but they all literally came to him (Personal Interview: February 23, 2021). The late 1970s and early 1980s were the most intense in terms of experimenting with all kinds of Buddhist meditational and other practices such as *tàiji* and *qigōng*. Receiving training by Austrian *tàiji* pioneer Gerhard Vasicek and the London-based Liu Hsiu Chi (Liú Xīūqí; 1930–1994), Ritter even became a short-time *tàiji* instructor. Likewise, he took refuge under a Tibetan master (Personal Interview: February 25, 2021), the eighth Khamtrul Rinpoche (*kham sprul rin po che*) Dongyü Nyima (Don brgyud nyi ma; 1931–1980) of the Kagyü School’s Drukpa lineage (*‘Brug pa bka’ brgyud*), in Scheibbs in January 1977, receiving the Buddhist name Ngawang Tenzin (*Ngag dbang bstan ’dzin*; literally, “the holder of the teachings who is a master of language”). Yet, Zen remained Ritter’s prime tradition. His first *sesshin* under the guidance of a Japanese master—Nagaya Kiichi (1895–1993), a most important Zen populariser in Germany—took place from August 28 to September 5, 1976, at the Missionshaus St. Gabriel in Maria Enzersdorf, Lower Austria. Two years later, Ritter would encounter his life-long *rōshi*, Seki Yūhō (1900–1982), a meeting that indirectly turned out to be decisive for the development of Naikan in Austria. Whereas Seki would become his chief Zen master, Ritter’s most trusted mentor was Walter Karwath.¹⁸ A medical doctor, Karwath spent the years from 1952 to 1955 in

16 “Die Dynamik der Jugend ist wichtig, aber noch wichtiger ist es, daß die älteren, erfahreneren Mitglieder der Gemeinschaft bereit sind, ihr Wissen und ihre Erfahrung, so bescheiden es im Vergleich mit einem großen Lehrer auch erscheinen mag, in den Dienst der Gemeinschaft zu stellen” (ibid.).

17 For the rest of his life, Hungerleider was deeply upset, also because he felt utterly marginalised by the *ÖBU/ÖBR* following his resignation.

18 In 1979, with the arrival of Austrian (Genro) Herbert Koudela (1924–2010), who was ordained a Rinzai Zen priest (*oshō*) in the United States by the Myōshinji *rōshi* Sasaki Jōshū (1907–2014), Ritter, himself an authorised Zen teacher (through Seki Yūhō), at the time responsible for the Zen group at the Vienna *ÖBU* headquarters, handed over the leadership and became a disciple of Koudela and Sasaki. In the early 1980s, Ritter occasionally

Indonesia (Borneo and Java), where he became a Buddhist. Alongside Hungerleider and writer Ernst Schönwiese (1905–1991), who, since 1971, was a disciple of Garma C. C. Chang (Zhāng Chéngjī; 1920–1988) in the Tibetan tradition, Karwath was one of the “three patriarchs” (Ritter 1993: 6) of Austro-Buddhism in the 1970s. Karwath was very sympathetic to the circle around Ritter and Skrleta.

In early 1978, Ritter commenced his training in psychotherapy with a focus on gestalt therapy and bioenergetics. At the time, in April, the Eigenji abbot Seki Yūhō and fellow monks accompanied by several German practitioners sojourned to Scheibbs. The German guests invited Ritter to join them on a trip to Japan centring on a *sesshin* at Eigenji under Seki, who, like Nagaya Kiichi, was crucial in spreading Zen to Western Europe. Ritter agreed and journeyed to Japan in late June that year. Next to the actual retreat, the temple stay programme involved sightseeing trips to nearby historic sites, among others, in Kyōto and Nara.¹⁹ Engaged as an interpreter for the visit of the German-speaking practitioners was Ishii Akira. Following the end of the Eigenji *sesshin*, Ritter and Ishii found themselves on a bus ride to Nara. In a chat, Ishii mentioned Naikan (Rittā 1993: 1). Ritter recalls:

I understood next to nothing he said. Sitting, answering questions, contemplating mother and father... It sounded like a combination of Zen and psychotherapy,²⁰ but I could not imagine how this would work. [...] For me the first psychotherapy sessions, at that time characterised by the ideology of catharsis, the scream of rage, and violent physical acting out, stood in marked contrast to sitting quietly on the cushion, observing one’s breath, and the knee pain. Both – psychotherapy and Zen – were (and still are) important to me, but I deemed the two incompatible at the time.²¹

assisted Koudela during *zazen* (Zen meditational) sessions qua *jikijitsu* (head of meditation). During one of his many visits to Austria, Sasaki, with the view that Ritter would don the monk’s robe, gave him the Buddhist name Yōshin (literally, “nurturing the heart”), which he occasionally uses to this day. Koudela went on to become one of the most influential figures of Austro-Buddhism, also serving as *ÖBR* president from 1986 to 2002. His BodhidharmaZendo, using facilities of the *ÖBU/ÖBR* headquarters, was and still is the largest Zen group in Austria.

¹⁹ While in Japan, Ritter also paid a visit to the famous Jesuit Zen teacher Hugo Enomiya-Lassalle (1898–1990) at his Akikawa Shinmeikutsu Zen centre near Tōkyō, the interview with whom he published in the *Bodhi Baum* upon his return (Ritter 1978).

²⁰ Notably, to this day, Ritter personally connects the Buddhist dimension of Naikan to Zen and not Shin Buddhism, the latter which he finds overly mystical and devotionalist.

²¹ “Ich verstand so gut wie gar nichts, was er sagte. Sitzen, Fragen beantworten, Mutter und Vater betrachten... Es klang wie eine Verbindung von Zen und Psychotherapie,

Their brief conversation and Ritter's rather half-hearted attention notwithstanding, Ritter spontaneously invited Ishii to the Scheibbs centre to conduct a Naikan seminar. The following year, Ishii's Naikan week was scheduled at relatively short notice to be held from August 3 to 10, 1979. The summer 1979 issue of *Bodhi Baum* included a small advert on the Naikan seminar to be conducted by Akira Isshii [*sic*] also noting the price of 1,750 Schilling, which corresponds to circa EUR 348 today. The advert was embedded within a five-page introductory article on Naikan (Murase and Reynolds 1979) provided by Ishii, that is, a German translation of a 1974 English information brochure by the psychologist and leading scholarly authority on Naikan Murase Takao (1930–1998), written with the help of the anthropologist David Kent Reynolds (Murase and Reynolds 1974).²² Eventually, the 1979 Naikan event did not materialise because, save for Ritter, no other practitioners registered. Ishii and Ritter agreed to give it another try a year later. This time a sufficient number of people signed up and thus the first Austrian Naikan seminar could be held, marking the formal beginning of Naikan in Austria.

4. The Pioneer Years, 1980–1986

1980

Ishii's Naikan seminar conducted at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs in August 1980 was the inauguration event of Naikan in Austria. Six individuals were registered, five male and one female, including Ritter, Peter Stöger (b. 1946)—a young scholar and later associate professor at the University of Innsbruck's School of Education—and the then director of Kodak Austria, Helmut Kacetl. One male practitioner left on the first day, the others completed the whole week (see Figure 3). For Ritter, the Naikan experience was incisive. Naikan had reportedly managed what previous psychotherapeutic sessions failed to accomplish, namely mending the strained emotional relationship with his mother (Ritter 2015: 153–154). What is more, the “force of Naikan energy” (*Wucht der Naikan-Energie*) for some time apparently removed his “projection and transference energy,” rendering him unable for a

aber ich konnte mir nicht vorstellen, wie das funktionieren sollte. [...] Die ersten Psychotherapie-Lerneinheiten, damals geprägt von der Ideologie der Katharsis, des Wut-Schreies und des heftigen körperlichen Ausagierens, standen für mich im krassen Gegensatz zum stillen Festsitzen am Polster, der Beobachtung des Atems und der Knieschmerzen. Beides – Psychotherapie und Zen – war (und ist) für mich wichtig, doch beides schien mir damals nicht vereinbar” (Ritter 2015: 152).

²² Murase was elected the first president of the Japan Naikan Association in 1979.

while to continue his psychotherapeutic training (Personal Interview: February 23, 2021). The same year, Ritter resigned from his position as administrative head of the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs responsible for day-to-day management in order to free up time for his own spiritual training and travelling (including a seven-week stay in China in early 1981). Yet, he very much remained a crucial part of the *ÖBU* (qua Scheibbs representative) and the early *ÖBR*, among others, in his role as vice-chairman of the *Buddhistische Kultusgemeinde Österreichs* (Austrian Buddhist Religious Community, which was the “missionary arm” of the *ÖBR*) from November 1984.²³ While Ritter continued to engage with various practices, the Naikan method had indeed made a lasting impression on him. Accordingly, Ishii’s next seminar in Scheibbs was planned for August 1981.

1981

A few days before the start of the 1981 Naikan seminar, Ishii had to cancel his trip due to his mother’s progressing cancer.²⁴ With a total of five people registered (Ritter aside) Ishii suggested that Ritter himself should conduct the week-long seminar on his behalf. Ritter agreed remembering:

So we conducted this Naikan together. He [called] me on the phone from Japan and I [was] in direct contact with the participants. At the time, I came to know Naikan as heavy labour. Countlessly kneeling down and bowing, opening and closing the heavy screens we had at the time, listening attentively and under no circumstances saying too much yourself. Strangely, even this Naikan [week] proved successful. Hence, not even an amateur like me could kill this method. So we continued.²⁵

23 Paragraph 7.1.1 of the *ÖBR* constitution of 1984 stated: “It is the duty of the religious community to do everything in its power to promote the Buddhist teachings, to provide information about the teachings, to disseminate them, and to hold religious practice. It is also the duty of the religious community to take care of its members in all religious matters” (“Der Kultusgemeinde obliegt es, alles zu unternehmen, was der Förderung der buddhistischen Lehre dient, Informationen über die Lehre zu erteilen, dieselbe zu verbreiten und religiöse Übungen abzuhalten. Es obliegt der Kultusgemeinde auch die Betreuung ihrer Mitglieder in allen religiösen Belangen”) (*ÖBR* 1983: 9).

24 Later that year, Ishii travelled to Canada where he held the first ever Naikan seminar.

25 “So haben wir dieses Naikan gemeinsam geleitet. Er [rief] mich über Telefon von Japan aus und ich [war] im Direktkontakt mit den Teilnehmern. Damals habe ich Naikan als Schwerarbeit kennengelernt. Die unzähligen Male Niederknien und Verbeugen, die schweren Schirme, die wir damals hatten, auf- und wieder zumachen, aufmerksam zuhören

Among the five practitioners,²⁶ including three female and two male,²⁷ were his then Zen teacher (Genro) Herbert Koudela, his then partner and student of Chinese Ingrid Schreiber (b. 1956),²⁸ his later wife Martha Pöchhacker (b. 1957; later Ritter), and his close friend Susanne Jarausach (b. 1956).²⁹ Both Pöchhacker and Jarausach went on to become Naikan guides (*Naikanleiter*).³⁰ Based on his seminar experience, Koudela would henceforth allegedly hold Naikan in high esteem, even recommending his senior disciples to practise it themselves. Yet, as Ritter laments (Personal Interview: February 23, 2021), not more than a handful of them would indeed participate in Naikan across the years. At the time, Koudela was an exception among the wider Austro-Buddhist “leadership.” Additionally, the Buddhist panorama was increasingly diversifying,³¹ which lent Naikan an even more marginal status. Moreover, as a practice that outwardly appeared to be intimately connected to Japanese Buddhism, those engaged in other traditions largely ignored it. And even those generally sympathetic to Zen and Shin Buddhism more often than not considered Naikan a fringe practice. Ritter attempted to tackle this issue by running more articles in the *Bodhi Baum*, starting with one by the Graz-based psychologist Gustav Leibeltern on Naikan from a psychological perspective (Leibeltern 1981). Drawing on the *Bodhi Baum* article by Murase and Reynolds (1979), Leibeltern limns an extolling picture of Naikan, concluding that to him “Naikan appears as a short-lasting psychotherapy of

und keinesfalls selber zu viel sagen. Auch dieses Naikan wurde seltsamerweise ein Erfolg. Also nicht einmal ein Dilletant [*sic*] wie ich konnte die Methode umbringen. Wir machten also weiter” (Ritter 1986c: 2).

²⁶ *Übende* (practitioners) was and still is the term largely used by Austrian Naikan guides.

²⁷ A look at the gender composition of the regular Scheibbs Naikans held from 1980 to 1986, altogether attended by eighty-five practitioners, shows a ratio of circa 1,3 male to 1 female or 58 to 46 individuals. This means in detail: 1980 (4/1); 1981 (2/3); 1982 (5/2); 1983 (10/5); 1984 (2/6 and 7/4 totalling 9/10); 1985 (6/6 and 5/4 totalling 11/10); 1986 (5/1, 5/8, 2/5, and 5/1 totalling 17/15).

²⁸ For Schreiber (later Fischer-Schreiber), see the article on Chinese Buddhism in Austria in this volume.

²⁹ Jarausach lived in Scheibbs from 1978 to 1986, immersing in a range of practices. She now primarily works as a trance instructor and, as a disciple of the anthropologist and famous teacher of ecstatic trance Felicitas Goodman (1914–2005), is a founding member of the *Felicitas Goodman Institut Österreich*, established in 2013. See <http://www.susanne-jarausach.at/> (accessed: February 26, 2021).

³⁰ Yet, Jarausach only started her assistantship after an eight-year Naikan break following a Naikan refresher (February 1989) from March 1989.

³¹ This is, for example, illustrated by the increasing number of seminars (see the figure within the brackets) offered at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs: 1977 (12) – 1978 (22) – 1979 (44) – 1980 (46) (Ritter 1980: 55).

which the Occident is always dreaming [...]. It is, undoubtedly, one of the noblest fruits on the tree of millennia-old Indian wisdom and the result of a genuinely Buddhist mindset.”³²

1982

For 1982, two Naikan seminars were planned: one by Ishii scheduled for August 15 to 22 and one by Ritter projected for March 7 to 14. However, while the former could take place as expected, the latter, which would have been the first seminar at Scheibbs that year after a maintenance break, had to be cancelled due to limited interest. Although Ishii granted financial discount (Köppler 1982: 178), only seven people eventually participated in his 1982 seminar. Alongside Ritter (who had to abort the practice due to his mother’s rapidly declining health), another Scheibbs commune member joined in, namely Gunnar Scharmüller (b. 1963).³³ Three of the remaining five practitioners came to Scheibbs from Germany (Cologne, Freising, and Münster), which was not unusual before Naikan had gained a larger presence in Germany from 1986/87, because the *Bodhi Baum* and with it the Scheibbs event programme also circulated in Germany. In fact, from 1980 to 1986, every Naikan was attended by people coming from Germany all the way down to Scheibbs (1980: 1/5; 1981: 1/5; 1982: 3/7; 1983: 4/15; 1984: 4/8 and 5/11; 1985: 2/12 and 4/9; 1986: 3/6, 3/13, 3/7, and 2/6).³⁴

1983

The year 1983 seems to be a watershed, with Ritter even speaking of an “exploding” interest vis-à-vis Naikan (Ritter 1986c: 3). Indeed, the number of practitioners at the Naikan seminar that year, which was held by Ishii from July 24 to August 1, more than doubled with a total of fifteen people participating.³⁵ As Scharmüller notes: “Naikan is a seminar near and dear to our

32 “Ja, uns scheint **Naikan** [*sic*] eine Kurzpsychotherapie zu sein, von der das Abendland immer träumt [...]. Es handelt sich hierbei unzweifelhaft um eine der edelsten Früchte am Baum Jahrtausendealter indischer Weisheit, um ein Ergebnis echter buddhistischer Geisteshaltung” (Lebzelter 1981: 167).

33 Scharmüller, later a disciple of TaKeTiNa founder Reinhard Flatischler (b. 1950), became a rhythm coach in Vienna.

34 The numbers on the right to the slash indicate the total number of Naikan practitioners and the ones on the left those of which were travelling from Germany.

35 That year, Ishii also held a successful Naikan seminar in Bonn (where he was invited by the psychologist Karlpeter Breuer), the first of many more to follow.

hearts and it now seems that word has finally got around that Naikan is a really good thing. The seminar is overly crowded and Isshi-san [*sic*] is on duty from six in the morning until late at night.”³⁶ Furthermore, this was the first seminar where Ritter assisted Ishii.

Assisting an experienced Naikan guide for a few Naikans was commonly expected before one conducted a Naikan session him/herself. However, since the Naikan creator Yoshimoto was firmly against standardising his practice beyond a basic framework—instead stating that a one-time full Naikan experience (i.e., completing a one-week Naikan) would effectively fully qualify the *naikansha* to conduct Naikan seminars in his/her own right—this was not a set rule, which was the reason why Ritter and Lothar Finkbeiner before him could very well hold Naikans themselves even without undergoing a year-long apprenticeship. In fact, the same year, Ritter began to offer individual Naikans in Scheibbs. While Austrian Naikan guides tried later to indeed standardise Naikan training, which, most notably, resulted in a Naikan curriculum devised by the then three major representatives of Austro-Naikan in 1996, an actual educational standard of how to become a Naikan guide does not exist to this day (besides, of course, the basic qualification “codified” by Yoshimoto). Prior to the curricular initiative, “Naikan apprenticeship” meant to independently direct practitioners under the “supervision” of an experienced Naikan guide.³⁷ That is, the Naikan guide assigned the assistant particular practitioners s/he deemed sufficiently “manageable” with respect to the assistant’s experience. Accordingly, a rise in experience ideally corresponded with being assigned practitioners with increasingly complex profiles. A most important element in the training already during these early days was the post-Naikan (session) joint assessment between the guide and the assistant, in which reflections and personal feelings about particular “clients” are shared, and advice is given. Today, the first phase of apprenticeship involves silently observing the guide (from some distance) during the Naikan. Only later the apprentices would be allowed to co-guide a Naikan.

The 1983 Naikan seminar was also attended by a few individuals who held formal positions in or maintained otherwise very close ties with the Austrian Buddhist community: Jesse Lyon (1912–1990), the then *ÖBR* general secretary (until 1987), Theravādin, and husband of the later well-known Buddhist and yoga teacher Ursula Lyon (b. 1928); Paul Köppler (b. 1946), a long-

36 “Das Naikan ist ein Seminar, das uns sehr am Herzen liegt, und nun scheint es sich endlich herumgesprochen zu haben, daß Naikan eine wirklich gute Sache ist. Das Seminar ist übertoll und Isshi-san [*sic*] ist von sechs Uhr früh bis spät in die Nacht hinein im Einsatz” (Scharmüller 1983: 166).

37 Furthermore, Naikan assistants worked on honorary basis, receiving no payments.

time Scheibbs commune member and former *ÖBU* vice-treasurer, who was to become a central figure of Buddhism in Germany;³⁸ and Martin Schönberger (1912–2005), a medical doctor who was at the time relatively well-known among spiritual seekers for his 1973 book *Verborgener Schlüssel zum Leben. Welt-Formel I-Ging im genetischen Code* (The Hidden Key to Life: The World Formula of I Ching in the Genetic Code also; also translated into English as *The I Ching and the Genetic Code: The Hidden Key to Life* in 1979).³⁹ A lively account of Schönberger's Naikan experience was published in the *Bodhi Baum*'s winter issue (Schönberger 1983).

Given the success of the 1983 seminar, Ishii and Ritter soon decided to organise two subsequent Naikans in the summer of 1984. In order to additionally promote the two seminars, Ritter solicited Jesse Lyon to translate a 1977 paper by Reynolds (1977). The relatively long nine-page article (Reynolds 1984), written by the then most prolific international Naikan specialist, introduced the method, adding a very detailed personal reflection on his own practice under Yoshimoto. That the article was meant to promote the upcoming Naikans is evident through a respective advert embedded in the layout of the first page. Ritter remembers that the relatively prominent status given to Naikan in *Bodhi Baum* in respect to the journal's overall thematic portfolio indeed had a noticeable impact on recruiting participants (Personal Interview: October 10, 2019). This as well as word-of-mouth advertising was the key to success. During Naikan's Scheibbs years, the average practitioners were Buddhists, general seekers, and those with a basic experience in meditational practice—a *naikansha* profile that later (i.e., from 1986) shifted to comprise more psychologists and educators.

38 In February 1984, Köppler founded the registered association *Buddhismus im Westen* (Buddhism in the West) in Frankfurt, which exists to this day under his chairmanship. He established the retreat centre Waldhaus am Laacher See in Nickenich near Koblenz, Rhineland-Palatinate (<https://buddhismus-im-westen.de/>; accessed: March 17, 2021). Together with his wife, in 2000, he opened a retreat centre in Bonn—Haus Siddharta—which the two still run today (<https://www.haus-siddharta.de/>; accessed: March 17, 2021). Köppler was deputy chairman of the *Deutsche Buddhistische Union* (German Buddhist Union) between 1999 and 2001. He is a disciple of American Ruth Denison (1922–2015) and Sri Lankan Godwin Samararatne (1932–2020) and is presently a member of Thích Nhất Hạnh's (b. 1926) Order of Interbeing (*Tiếp Hiện*) (<https://www.paul-koeppler.de/biografie.html>; accessed; March 17, 2021). Since 1986, at times he also conducted Naikans (occasionally alongside Ishii). See Köppler 2020 for some reflections of his Naikan experience.

39 Adding to the appeal also among Buddhists specifically in Austria and Germany was the foreword to the book provided by Ernst Lothar Hoffmann (Lama Anagarika Govinda).

1984

Running from August 20 to 27 and August 28 to September 4, both 1984 Naikan seminars—Ishii being again assisted by Ritter—were relatively well booked with eight and eleven practitioners, respectively.⁴⁰ The pricing was given to range between 3,460 and 4,370 Schilling (which, presently, translates to EUR 528 and 667, respectively).⁴¹ Already Yoshimoto established the practice of individually adjusting the pricing, at times even waiving the costs, depending on the financial status and perceived need of the client.⁴² This tradition is generally upheld by Naikan providers up to now. The same year, Ritter completed his training in psychotherapy and began his practise as a therapist. Early on, he reportedly tried to complement the two, that is, Naikan and psychotherapy. Some of his clients from psychotherapy he would recommend to undergo Naikan, while those who he could not properly help through Naikan, he would advise to take psychotherapeutical therapy (Personal Interview on March 4, 2021).

40 Both Naikans, yet only for two days each, were also attended by a Japanese female, who came to Scheibbs from Freiburg in Germany. Another female Japanese practitioner accompanying Ishii participated in the first 1985 Naikan. Additionally, the success of the first two Italian Naikans conducted by Ritter in late 1985 (see further below) had two South Tyrolians join Ishii's February 1986 seminar.

41 A year later, in 1985, the pricing was set to range between 4,060 and 4,970 Schilling (or, today, EUR 620 and 759, respectively), a sharp increase by seventeen per cent (minimum costs) and fourteen per cent (maximum costs), respectively, vis-à-vis 1984. For the first 1986 Naikan by Ishii held from February 28 to March 7 the pricing went up once again, then ranging from 4,800 to 5,800 Schilling (EUR 698 and 844 as of 2021), a further increase of twelve per cent in contrast to the preceding year. Notably, the pricing was dependent on the Naikan experience of the respective guide. When Ritter held the 1986 New Year's Naikan from January 2 to 8, he charged between 3,800 and 4,800 Schilling (that is, presently EUR 553 and 698). A few sources I found, which list the actual payments of the practitioners of the early-day Naikans in Austria, indicate that more often than not the actual amount paid tended to be relatively close to the set minimum costs. In comparison, nowadays, a seven-day Naikan seminar—occasionally called “classical Naikan”—in Austria and Germany ordinarily costs between EUR 700 and 1,000.

42 Ishii and the Austrian Naikan guides also adhered to this custom. Payment reduction of fifty per cent occurred occasionally. Full waivers were apparently very rare indeed. In the available sources of the time I could only trace one gratis Naikan week, being offered to Josef Hartl (1961–2005) for his 1986 Naikan. Hartl, a most important figure of Austro-Naikan, will be briefly introduced further below.

1985

The year 1985 is marked by two major developments in the history of Austro-Naikan, namely the first Naikan seminar held by an Austrian Naikan guide abroad, and the emergence of a woman who was to become the second Austrian Naikan pioneer—Helga Margreiter (b. 1948; later Hartl-Margreiter). Like in the previous year, Ritter invited Ishii to conduct two subsequent Naikans at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs in the summer. The first one was scheduled from August 4 to 10, being attended by eleven practitioners. The second one ran from August 11 to 18 with altogether nine practitioners, including Margreiter.

Margreiter was born the only child into a solid middle-class family, being raised in the Ober-St.-Veit area of Vienna's thirteenth district. Although formally Catholic, the Margreiters were not practising Christians but were generally open minded. Margreiter recalls to have had a sheltered upbringing, travelling every summer. It was largely through her uncle and his sizeable library, whom she visited for two weeks every year in Salzburg, that she encountered Asian philosophy. Still a teenager, she was particularly moved by James Hilton's (1900–1954) novel *Lost Horizon* (1933; first German edition 1937), which introduced the fictitious Shangri-La, a paradisiacal valley located in Tibet. Thanks to her uncle she also started to explore the writings of various neo-Hindu yoga masters. Yet, it was a book authored by a Buddhist—*Der Weg der weißen Wolken* (The Way of the White Clouds; 1966) by Ernst Lothar Hoffmann (Lama Anagarika Govinda; 1898–1985)—which had a lasting impact on her.⁴³ Upon completing high school, Margreiter enrolled in sports to become a physical education teacher. However, in 1972, a horrible car accident left her with a partially amputated left leg and had her spend almost a year in rehabilitation. This represented an existential turning point. On the one hand, it put an end to her sports studies, while making her financially independent because of a disability annuity she now received. On the other hand, dealing with suffering and coming to terms with her own mortality greatly changed her view of life and the world at large (Personal Interview: March 11, 2021).

Subsequently, Margreiter commenced to study psychology at the University of Vienna and autodidactically engaged in meditation. An Indophile by reading, she travelled India for some three months in 1976/77, where she also followed the footsteps of early Buddhism, visiting various historic sites in the north of the country. In the early 1980s, she resolved to seek meditational guidance of a Buddhist master. This master she found in the Zen teacher

⁴³ Hoffmann was the founder of Arya Maitreya Mandala, a pan-Buddhist group appearing in a largely Tibetan-Buddhist guise.

(Genro) Herbert Koudela, the head of BodhidharmaZendo at the Fleischmarkt. She intensified Zen-related reading and, on a weekly basis, joined the meditation sessions led by Koudela while also participating in a number of *sesshins* at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs conducted by Koudela and, at times, by his own master Sasaki. Both men she deems instrumental for her own Zen training (Personal Interview: March 11, 2021). One day, in the lobby of the *ÖBU* premises, which to this day accommodates, among others, the BodhidharmaZendo, she skimmed through the Scheibbs event schedule. There she read about the planned 1985 Naikan weeks and immediately decided to take part. She highlights her first Naikan experience under Ishii as life-changing indeed. First, she was impressed by Ishii for he was unlike the Zen masters she had encountered:

But what I remember most is Mr Akira Ishii's humble attitude. This person, who sat in front of me virtually in an attitude of gratitude, always bowing deeply before and after the conversation. That triggered a lot of astonishment and a lot of trust in me; it allowed me to open up. I felt accepted as I was. This made me ready to let myself in deeply.⁴⁴

Second, the practice established a level of physical and mental calmness completely new to her, eclipsing her year-long Zen experience. Yet, she is certain that her *zazen* training had laid the foundation to be able to arrive at such superlative experiential state in the first place. Above all, the so-called *Mutterbauch-Übung* (womb exercise) or *Mutterbauch-Naikan* (womb Naikan) resulted in an unprecedented flow of memories, having her enter an “emotional paradise.”⁴⁵ This new mental quality so attained elicited a personal paradigm shift. As a long-time student of psychology, she was well familiar with a number of methods. However, her Naikan dwarfed them all; “it just

44 “Was mir aber am meisten in Erinnerung blieb, war die Demuthaltung von Hrn. Akira Ishii. Diese Person, die, man kann fast sagen, in einer Dankbarkeitshaltung vor mir gesessen hat und sich immer vor und nach dem Gespräch tief verbeugt hat. Das hat in mir sehr viel Erstaunen und viel Vertrauen ausgelöst, dadurch konnte ich mich öffnen. Ich fühlte mich angenommen, so wie ich war. Dadurch war ich bereit, mich tief einzulassen” (Hartl-Margreiter and Ritter 2015: 141).

45 Womb Naikan (*tainai Naikan*) was not devised by Yoshimoto (neither did he ever employ this practice) but by former GLA member Haba Taketsugu (b. 1941) under the name *tainai taiken* (womb experience) in his own Naikan-related practice called Naisei (self-reflection; introspection). It was adopted by Ishii and through him, from the beginning, employed by Austrian Naikan guides. Womb Naikan is otherwise a peripheral practice within the wider Naikan context. The exercise is meant to lead the practitioner's memories back to his/her time in the mother's womb. In their cell practitioners may envelope themselves in their blanket to simulate the “womb environment.” On the coalescing of the “womb” and the “tomb” environment in Naikan, see Ozawa-de Silva 2006: 27–29.

worked” (Personal Interview: March 11, 2021). At the end of the Naikan seminar, she approached Ishii, requesting “apprenticeship”—the psychology programme she discontinued. Likewise, she soon left Koudela’s BodhidharmaZendo and instead pursued *zazen* in private centring her mind on the “Naikan way.” To this end, she kept in touch with Ritter who, over the next few years, became her main discussion partner about things Naikan.

While the 1985 summer Naikan in Scheibbs meant the start of one’s Naikan career (Margreiter), it likewise concluded the “training period” of another (Ritter). His previous Naikan guiding experience and concomitant (perhaps impetuous) “authorisation” notwithstanding, Ritter now emphatically received Ishii’s “full-formal” (“ex post” according to Ritter) authorisation to be a Naikan guide. Likewise, Ritter takes this “second” authorisation as the formal inception of him being a fully-fledged Naikan guide. As mentioned above, a kind of authorisation process was never stipulated by Yoshimoto and, accordingly, was rather an individual addition by Ishii—a certain change of mind, so to speak, following the more *laissez-faire* attitude of the years past (which was in line with that of Yoshimoto). Yet, to Ishii “authorisation” would still not have any clearly defined requirements. Following one’s own Naikan experience one could basically straightaway start to assist or co-guide a Naikan. The moment the Naikan “trainee” would become an “authorised” guide was self-chosen. That is to say, Ishii reportedly told his trainees that they should decide for themselves. What was implicated though was that the trainee had to gain at least some guiding experience (Personal Interview with Helga Hartl-Margreiter on March 17, 2021).

Around the time, Ritter had a brief appearance on Austrian national television talking about Naikan, upon which he was contacted by a representative of the South Tyrolian Bruneck (Italian: Brunico)-based adult education organisation “Rainbow.” Intrigued by what he had said about Naikan, Ritter was requested to conduct a seminar in South Tyrol, the most Northern Italian province with a pre-dominantly German-speaking population. He agreed and, in October that year, he held a Naikan in a rented house in the small village of Gargazon (Gargazzone) nearby the cities of Meran and Bozen. This was the first-ever Naikan seminar conducted in Italy. Being a great success, he was immediately invited for a follow-up Naikan, which was then organised in December 1985. To Ritter, in hindsight, the Gargazon Naikan was actually the earnest beginning of his own *Leiterkarriere* (career as a Naikan guide) (Personal Interview: February 16, 2021). The connection to South Tyrol so

established would prosper over the years and continue until 1992. In 1990 alone, four Naikan weeks were held by Ritter in South Tyrol.⁴⁶

1986

Back from the December 1985 Naikan in Italy, Ritter received a call from a befriended prison psychiatrist. The psychiatrist told him about an inmate-cum-client, who was about to be released from prison in the course of the annual Christmas amnesty; a client he deemed especially suitable for Naikan—Josef Hartl. Hartl’s Naikan career is untypical if compared to that of his peers. Commonly, driven by their immediate first Naikan experience, the later long-time Austrian Naikan guides would quickly start their apprenticeship. Not so Hartl, who committed only after a few years. Yet, he eventually did so to the point that his contributions to European Naikan are now deemed “spectacular” among the Austrian Naikan community (Kaspari, Lendawitsch, and Ritter 2015: 39). Ritter recalls him as a most charismatic person and the only Naikan guide who could establish a dedicated followership (Personal Interview: February 23, 2021). Furthermore, Naikan in contemporary Austria is dominated by his former trainees.

Hartl was born into very poor circumstances in the Upper Austrian countryside. Being raised in a small village (Suedt near Rohrbach) alongside five brothers and two sisters, he had a strictly conservative Catholic upbringing. Yet, his staunch Catholic background reportedly made him more of a religiously indifferent person until late in his life (Personal Interview with Helga Hartl-Margreiter on March 11, 2021). The family had to deal with an alcoholic father and Hartl, who served a plumber apprenticeship after school, soon went off the right track, himself engaging with alcohol and drugs. He transitioned into a criminal lifestyle, which repeatedly put him into jail. In late December 1985, having served another sentence, he was released from prison. He travelled to Scheibbs where Ritter offered him a job as a cook; however, this he did on the condition that Hartl would complete a week of Naikan practice. Hartl agreed and received a free slot for the first Naikan of 1986, held by Ritter with the assistance of Margreiter between January 2 and

46 In subsequent years, Austro-Naikans were held across South Tyrol: 1986 (November 15 to 22) in Sexten (Sesto); 1987 (May 23 to 30) in Sankt Georgen (San Giorgio) and (October 10 to 17) in Moos (Moso) near Sexten; 1988 (November 12 to 19) in Meran (Merano); 1989 (April 21 to May 1) in Sankt Georgen and (November 11 to 18) in Olang (Valdaora) nearby Bruneck; 1990 (May 12 to 19) in Olang, (June 30 to July 7) in Sterzing (Vipiteno), (October 6 to 13) in Bruneck, and (December 1 to 8) in Pfalzen (Falzes) nearby Bruneck; 1991 (July 25 to August 3) in Sterzing and (November 9 to 16) in Pfalzen; finally, 1992 (October 10 to 17) in Sterzing.

8. His personality impressed both. Ritter still remembers Hartl's Naikan as "tremendously powerful" (Personal Interview: February 16, 2021), and Margreiter was likewise taken aback—the two would later marry. Following a successful Naikan, the practitioners were usually requested to put some of their emotions and reflections down into writing.⁴⁷ So was Hartl, who noted:

I trod many paths, each in its own way cruel, beautiful, encumbering, and free. It always depended on how wide I opened my eyes and my heart while treading the various paths. Naikan was a beautiful path, because I had my eyes and my heart open like never before. I saw my life as it is, and it is beautiful! All my life I felt to be limited, but in the Naikan I realised that everyone determines his own limits. I returned home to my family and to some degree learned to love the person inside of me as well as those around me! It was beautiful and I thank everyone who helped me with the Naikan!⁴⁸

Unsurprisingly, Hartl got the job, serving for a while as the cook of the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs. Yet, after several months, bad habits prevailed. Hartl quit, fell into old patterns, and was, once again, incarcerated. After his release from Göllersdorf Prison, Lower Austria, in 1987, he moved into Margreiter's Vienna flat. Before, the two had already lived together for a while in the Scheibbs commune. It was in prison when Hartl started to engage closely with Buddhism due to Ritter who served as a Buddhist prison chaplain from June 1986, a position he took up exclusively in order to spend more time with and spiritually support Hartl (Personal Interview with Franz Ritter on March 25, 2021).⁴⁹ After his prison time and steadfastly supported by Margreiter, Hartl completed training courses in both classical massage

47 Additionally, Ritter used a tape recorder, recording the joint final meeting of all practitioners, in which they were equally requested to share their feelings and experiences of the Naikan they just finished.

48 "Ich ging in meinem Leben viele Wege, jeder war auf seine Art grausam, schön, belastend oder frei. Es kam immer darauf an, wie weit ich meine Augen und mein Herz offen hatte auf den verschiedenen Pfaden. Naikan war ein schöner Weg, denn ich hatte die Augen und mein Herz soweit offen, wie nie zuvor. Ich sah mein Leben wie es ist und es ist schön! Mein ganzes Leben fühlte ich mich begrenzt, doch im Naikan sah ich das jeder seine Grenzen selbst bestimmt. Ich kehrte heim zu meiner Familie und lernte dem [*sic*] Menschen in mir und um mich ein wenig lieben! Es war schön und ich danke allen die mir beim Naikan beistanden!" (Ritter 1986a).

49 For this purpose, Ritter was formally acknowledged to act as a Buddhist chaplain (*Seelsorger*) by ÖBR president Koudela and the general secretary Lyon on June 16, 1986. While in prison, Hartl even petitioned via Ritter to be reinstated into his former job at the Scheibbs meditation centre following his release. This was formally endorsed by the Scheibbs board in a meeting on December 16, 1986, with the request that Hartl should write an official letter to Koudela. Hartl would not make use of this job opportunity.

and, later, shiatsu, while at the same time refreshing his Naikan experience under Ritter with two consecutive weeks of Naikan in Meran and Purkersdorf (November 12 to 19 and November 26 to December 3, 1988). A growing shiatsu clientele eventually had the two contemplate to bring back Naikan (Margreiter had paused her activities as a Naikan guide prior to the birth of their first son in late June 1988),⁵⁰ and establish a centre dedicated to both practices (the two would soon coalesce, being later supplemented by straight-forward Buddhist practice, into what they called “Naikido”). This idea materialised in 1992 with the founding of the Naikanhaus Wien (Naikan House Vienna) located in Mühlhäufelgasse in the twenty-second district’s Essling area. The Naikanhaus Wien was altogether the third Naikan centre launched in Austria.

Whereas Hartl’s first Naikan encounter proved to be momentous for the later expansion, it was, in fact, another development, which renders the year 1986 a crucial stage in the early history of Naikan not only in Austria but internationally. This landmark event was the founding of the first permanent Naikan facility outside of Japan by Ritter in the small village of Purkersdorf near Vienna. However, other important items on Austro-Naikan’s historical record of that year preceding the opening of the Purkersdorf centre need to be mentioned. Only one and a half months after the January Naikan involving Hartl alongside five other practitioners, the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs hosted another Naikan week from February 28 to March 7. This was the first Naikan in Austria conducted by Ishii outside of his regular summer schedule. Ritter assisted while, this time, Margreiter joined again as a practitioner next to twelve others.

Yet, the prime reason for Ishii’s sojourn was not the Scheibbs Naikan but an invitation to conduct Naikan at the long-term drug rehab treatment centre “Erlenhof.”⁵¹ Learning of the effectiveness of Naikan, the Erlenhof head and social worker Werner Ebner had contacted Ritter.⁵² Hence, subsequent to the

50 Yet, from December 25, 1988 to January 2, 1989 she underwent one week of Naikan under Ritter in Purkersdorf.

51 The Erlenhof was established in 1981 in Volkersdorf, a small town near the city of Enns, Upper Austria, and offered space for twelve to fifteen clients. In 1998, the Erlenhof was relocated to a larger facility in the village of Prambachkirchen near Eferding.

52 Already ten years earlier, in 1976, Naikan practice started to be employed in a Japanese clinic for alcohol addicts—the Ibusuki Takemoto Hospital (*Ibusuki Takemoto Byōin*) in Ibusuki, Kagoshima Prefecture—under the guidance of the clinic head and psychiatrist Takemoto Takahiro (b. 1940). In 1978, Takemoto together with a fellow long-time Naikan guide and professor of clinical psychology at Ōsaka University, Miki Yoshihiko (1941–2018), founded the Naikan Association (*Naikan Gakkai*; today’s Japan Naikan Association). The same year the Naikan Association hosted the first annual national Naikan Congress.

Scheibbs seminar, Ishii, Ritter, and Margreiter as well as (notably) Hartl travelled there. Hartl, himself a former addict, accompanied them not as a fellow Naikan guide but in order to “coach” the Naikan team, providing some first-hand insights about the lifeworlds of the Erlenhof clientele. The first Erlenhof Naikan actually consisted of two subsequent weeks. The first one involved eleven (of the then twelve) clients and the second was attended by three of the staff including Ebner. In his paper delivered at the Japanese Naikan Congress in Tōkyō several weeks later, Ritter still rejoiced in his Erlenhof experience, stating ardently:

Eleven people, who could hardly stand themselves without heroin, pills, LSD, or other drugs, and who had hardly any self-confidence and self-respect, endured this confrontation. Even more so, they were seized by it being carried through this week, so that in the end they became new persons. At the last day of the Naikan, one participant after the other finished, simply because the process was over and there was nothing left to do. I called this a Popcorn Naikan. You know how when you roast corn on a hotplate and it eventually pops with a leap, and you are left with pure white and delicious popcorn. That’s how it went there. We heated up by means of Naikan – and one after the other popped like corn. The atmosphere of this afternoon and evening was just indescribable. Everyone coming down was tenderly greeted by the others with a loud hello. When only one or two people were sitting behind the screen, the others sent up positive energies to support them. The entire building was glowing of liberated love. The participants ran around, hugging each other, being full of energy and happy.⁵³

The Erlenhof Naikan was extremely successful so that it was agreed to include one Naikan week into the annual therapy programme. In spite of Ebner leaving soon thereafter, Naikan served as an important—and indeed for

53 “11 Menschen, die sich selbst ohne Heroin, Tabletten, LSD oder sonstigen Drogen kaum ertragen konnten, die kaum mehr Selbstbewußtsein oder Achtung vor sich selbst besaßen [*sic*], hielten diese Konfrontation aus, mehr noch, wurden von ihr gepackt und durch diese Woche getragen, so daß sie am Ende als andere Menschen herauskamen. Am letzten Tag des Naikans hörte ein Teilnehmer nach dem anderen auf, einfach weil der Prozeß zu Ende war, es nichts mehr zu tun gab. Ich nannte dies ein Pop-Corn-Naikan. Sie wissen ja, wenn man Mais auf einer heißen [*sic*] Herdplatte röstet, dann platzt er schließlich mit einem Sprung und übrig bleibt ein reinweisses [*sic*], köstlich schmeckendes Pop-Corn [*sic*]. So gings auch dort. Wir hatten mittels Naikan eingeheizt – und einer nach dem anderen platzte wie ein Mais Korn. Die Stimmung dieses Nachmittags und Abends ist einfach unbeschreiblich. Jeder Herabkommende wurde von den anderen liebevoll und mit lautem Hallo begrüßt. Als nur mehr 1, 2 Leute hinter dem Schirm saßen, schickten die anderen gute Energien nach oben, um sie zu unterstützen. Das ganze Haus glühte vor befreiter Liebe. Die Teilnehmer liefen herum, einander umarmend, voller Energie und glücklich” (Ritter 1986c: 3–4).

some years even mandatory—part of the treatment process at the Erlenhof for years to come.⁵⁴ In fact, already in October of the same year, the next Naikan week was conducted. Ritter managed the collaboration with the Erlenhof until 1990, after which it was taken over by Roland Dick (b. 1946), who will be briefly introduced further below.⁵⁵

Soon after the Erlenhof event, Ritter left the Scheibbs commune and moved into a generous flat in Purkersdorf (Schwarzhubergasse 8), which, a few months later, would become the first permanent international Naikan centre. What is more, at the time, Ritter and Margreiter were invited by Ishii to participate in the annual Japanese Naikan Congress held in Tōkyō from May 31 to June 1 under the title “Naikan as Self-discovery” (*Jiko hakken to shite no Naikan*).⁵⁶ Ishii was not only the international lynchpin of Naikan in those days (as he is today) but he was likewise growingly instrumental a figure within the Japanese Naikan community. In fact, the Tōkyō 1986 Congress was organised by Ishii and his students.⁵⁷ Ritter and Margreiter arrived on May 24 and were picked up by Ishii at the airport, who took them to attend the penultimate day of the May *sumō basho* at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan in

54 Rising criticism vis-à-vis the obligatory nature of Naikan by both staff and clients resulted in making Naikan optional for handpicked well-progressing clients from 1994. In fact, Naikan practice is offered to Erlenhof clients to this day (Personal Interview with Roland Dick on December 10, 2019). Notably, one paper presenter at the first International Naikan Congress held in Tōkyō from September 15 to 16, 1991, was a former Erlenhof client, who delivered a short testimony highlighting how Naikan helped him to overcome his addiction.

55 The Erlenhof Naikans between 1987 and 1990 were held on the following dates: April 5 to 12 (1987); August 21 to 28 (1988); March 31 to April 7 (1989); and July 18 to 27 (1990). The Erlenhof Naikan core team from October 1986 to 1990 consisted of Ritter, Ishii (until 1989), and Eva May (see below). Dick got involved from 1988 as a Naikan trainee (Dick 2015: 259).

56 This was the ninth annual Naikan Congress. The preceding events were held in Tōkyō on June 4, 1978 (organised by Miki Yoshihiko and Takemoto Takahiro); in Tōkyō from June 2 to 3, 1979 (organised by Miki); in Okayama from May 31 to June 1, 1980 (organised by Yokoyama Shigeo); in Tōkyō from June 5 to 6, 1981 (organised by Murase Takao); in Kagoshima from June 6 to 7, 1982 (organised by Takemoto); in Sendai from May 28 to 29, 1983 (organised by Suzuki Jin'ichi); in Matsumoto from June 2 to 3, 1984 (organised by Nobuo Tatsumi); and in Nara from June 8 to 9, 1985 (once again organised by Miki).

57 Twenty years later, in 2006 (May 12 to 14), Ishii was to organise another (i.e., the twenty-ninth) Congress of the Japan Naikan Association in Tōkyō. In 1991 (September 15 to 16), he also hosted the first International Naikan Congress.

Tōkyō.⁵⁸ The next day, they visited the inventor of what Ishii styled Womb Naikan, Haba Taketsugu, in his Naisei centre. During the following week, they immersed in sightseeing activities across Tōkyō (see Figure 4) but also paid a visit to a well-known Naikan figure, Takeda Ryōji. Takeda had published the first monographic study on Naikan already in 1962, entitled *Naikanhō no shinrigaku-teki kadai* (Psychological Issues of the Naikan Method; Takeda 1962). He later published variously on the use of Naikan in corrections and served in the ministry of justice when Ritter and Margreiter met him. Takeda was also one of the paper presenters at the Congress.

The official start of the Congress with some 300 participants was scheduled for Saturday at 9:30 a.m. with informal gatherings taking place already on Friday (see Figure 5). Ritter's first paper was the last one on the first day.⁵⁹ As indicated in the conference review that was published in the annual newsletter of the Japan Naikan Association (Satō 1987: 4), Ritter—being addressed as “Director of the Scheibbs Seminar House”—reportedly compared western psychotherapy and Naikan, where he emphasised that the former would stress the breaking up of the child-parent relationship, while the latter aims at mending it.⁶⁰ In the first session of the next day, Ritter delivered his second presentation, entitled in Japanese *Yōroppa Naikan no tenkai* (The Development of European Naikan),⁶¹ in which, on the one hand, he succinctly outlined the development of Naikan in Europe focusing on his own Naikan career, and, on the other hand, exemplified the positive effects of the practice through a couple of intimate accounts. He concluded with some prospects and the final remarks:

Already it seems necessary to think about a first European Naikan centre. When and where it will be established, I cannot say at the moment. However,

58 Much of the subsequent information can be found in Ritter's travel account in Ritter and Röpke 1986, and has been confirmed and extended through interviews with Hartl-Margreiter and Ritter.

59 Next to Ritter and Margreiter, Ishii had also invited Karlpeter Breuer to give a presentation. However, he had to cancel at short notice. Ritter's and Margreiter's papers were delivered in German and subsequently translated into Japanese by an interpreter.

60 “また、一日目の一般演題の最後は、オーストリアから来日されたフランツ・リッター先生(シャイプス・セミナーハウス所長)の発表でした。先生は西洋の心理療法と内観を比較し、前者は両親と訣別するところにゴールがあるが、内観は再び両親に向かってゆくものである、と述べられました。”

61 The German title of the paper was actually “Naikan in Europa” (Naikan in Europe).

I know that it will come into being and I am already looking forward to the day when I can tell you about this centre.⁶²

In this respect, Ritter also pointed out that Ishii and himself would be striving to recruit new Naikan guides and that there were already five or six Naikan trainees, including Margreiter. The latter actually “completed” her Naikan “training” shortly thereafter when she declared herself fully-fledged *Naikan-leiterin*. This was consummated through a Naikan held at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs from February 7 to 14, 1987, in which she was the chief responsible (and sole) *mensetsusha* in residence. Notably, Margreiter thus became the first ever female Naikan guide outside of Japan.⁶³ Margreiter’s presentation at the Naikan Congress was scheduled for the second day. Therein she provided some brief personal reflections on her Naikan experience as a practitioner and (assistant) guide.

For the remaining time of their stay, Ishii provided his Austrian visitors with the opportunity to get to know the major Naikan sites and exponents in Japan, also involving Yoshimoto and his Naikan Training Institute (*Naikan Kenshūjo*). Their itinerary was tight, starting with a trip to the village of Kitsuregawa (now part of the city of Sakura) in Tochigi Prefecture, located in the North of Tōkyō some two hours away by car. Kitsuregawa is home to the Meisō no Mori Naikan Kenshūjo (Forest of Meditation Naikan Training Institute) founded in 1981 by Yanagita Kakusei (1930–2000), who had also given a paper at the Congress.⁶⁴ Yanagita’s Meisō no Mori became the chief Naikan facility in Japan, even dwarfing Yoshimoto’s Naikan Training Institute. As illustrated by Ozawa-de Silva (2006: 143), in whose book Yanagita features prominently, in its 1990s heydays the Meisō no Mori supplied Naikan with more than 1,500 practitioners annually.

Next, the group journeyed to clinical psychologist couple Miki Yoshihiko and his wife Miki Junko and their Nara Naikan Training Institute (*Nara Naikan Kenshūjo*). The Mikis had opened their centre three years earlier, in the

62 “Und schon jetzt kündigt sich als Notwendigkeit an, über ein erstes europäisches [sic] Naikan-Zentrum [sic] nachzudenken. Wann und wo es entstehen wird, kann ich derzeit noch nicht sagen. Aber ich weiß, daß es entstehend wird und ich freue mich heute schon auf den Tag, an dem ich Ihnen über dieses Zentrum berichten kann” (Ritter 1986c: 5).

63 Despite her extensive practice as a Naikan assistant, this first “standalone” Naikan was allegedly an extremely challenging experience (Personal Interview: March 11, 2021). The seven practitioners’ profiles were complex involving one *naikansha* with suicidal tendencies. She recalls to have “absorbed all the energies,” which she had to let loose through regurgitation once the Naikan was over.

64 For more information on this Naikan centre, see naikanhou.com (accessed: March 18, 2021).

spring of 1983, with the help of Yoshimoto, who had offered them one of his former company buildings as a venue. Over the Naikan career, the two reportedly guided more than 5,000 practitioners.⁶⁵ At the time of Ritter and Margreiter's visit, with both of whom a friendship ensued, the Mikis emphasised simultaneous parents-child Naikan, with at least one parent and one child doing Naikan at the same time.

Nearby the former Nara Naikan Training Institute one finds the famous Naikan Training Institute-cum-Naikan Temple (*Naikanji*) established by Yoshimoto and his wife Kinuko in 1955. The party spent an afternoon with the Yoshimotos, who were (as always) engaging in guiding Naikans. Ritter noted in his travelogue:

Meeting the two old people was indeed a fountain of youth. Yoshimoto-Sensei radiates timeless tranquillity. Whereas his wife is graciously active – a wonderful combination. We were even allowed to accompany them listening in on the conversations (while being invisible to the participants, of course). Yoshimoto-Sensei asks one question after another, very calmly, almost distantly.⁶⁶

Both Ritter and Hartl-Margreiter remember Yoshimoto's formidable aura. Their visit was short but two episodes they recall vividly to this day. Hartl-Margreiter says that observing Yoshimoto guiding the Naikan was in a way "Zen-like," for he did not adhere to the very "rules" for the *mensetsusha* she had learned about in her training (actually this is something that has been recounted by many who underwent or watched a Yoshimoto Naikan): he talked a lot, admonished, and—which makes Hartl-Margreiter chuckle every time—even yawned once while listening to one practitioner (Personal Interview: March 11, 2021). Ritter tells of another element of Yoshimoto's Naikan, which greatly intrigued but also baffled him. Already in the 1960s, Yoshimoto made wide use of Naikan confessional tape recordings, a practice that was adopted by other Naikan providers in Japan. One chief purpose of the recordings was to serve as additional sound stimulus. During meal breaks, the tape recording would create a constant confessional exposure for the practitioners, with the intention to facilitate their own introspection. Ritter states

65 See nara-counseling.com/access (accessed: March 26, 2021).

66 "Den beiden alten Leuten zu begegnen war ein wirklicher Jungbrunnen. Yoshimoto-Sensei strahlt eine zeitlose Ruhe aus. Während seine Frau gütige Aktivität ist – eine wundervolle Kombination. Wir durften sogar eine Runde mitgehen und die Gespräche mithören (unsichtbar natürlich für die Teilnehmer). Yoshimoto-Sensei stellt eine Frage nach der anderen, sehr ruhig, fast distanziert" (Ritter and Röpke 1986: 3).

that he was irritated by this practice and deems it the only element of Yoshimoto's Naikan, which could have never been employed in its international application. Hence, Austrian Naikan guides would never make use of it. Ritter relates that in their conversation (with Ishii translating) Yoshimoto allegedly claimed that Naikan indeed had its breakthrough thanks to the invention of the audio tape recorder together with the compact cassette (Personal Interview: February 16, 2021). They parted but Ritter and some other *naikansha* were to return the next year.

An even more important direct impact on Austro-Naikan had [Reiunken] Usami Shūe (1930–2019), abbot of the Senkōbō, a self-declared Shin-Buddhist temple located in the city of Kuwana, Mie Prefecture.⁶⁷ Previously tied to the Shinshū Ōtaniha,⁶⁸ in 1970 the Senkōbō became independent and the head temple of his newly launched Jōdo Shinshū Isshin Ikkō lineage. Usami, who is credited as being the twenty-third abbot of the temple, included Naikan into the temple's core training practice (thenceforth promoting the temple as *Naikanba* or Naikan place, that is, Senkōbō Naikanba). Shortly before, he reportedly had an enlightenment episode while doing Naikan under Yoshimoto. Apparently, Naikan not only helped him to overcome his alcohol problem but it paved the way to successfully completing his Zen training he had been stuck with for more than a decade. In 1980, he was made *rōshi* by Yamada Kōun (1907–1989) in the Sanbō Zen tradition. Based on his collected experience in the Shin and Zen traditions as well as Naikan, he went on to form his own hybrid tradition called “Senkōbō Buddhism” (*senkōbō buppō*),⁶⁹ to which most Austrian Naikan guides in the lineage of Hartl-Margreiter would later be initiated.⁷⁰

Upon their arrival at the Senkōbō, Ritter, Margreiter, and Ishii were greeted with hoisted Japanese and Austrian flags—a custom since then re-

67 See senkobo.life.coocan.jp/ (accessed: March 29, 2021).

68 The Shinshū Ōtani-ha is the second largest of the ten chief Shin Buddhist denominations.

69 However, he also remained involved in the Sanbō tradition. While the title *rōshi* is rather flexibly used in Sanbō Zen, in 1998 he received the formal status of *zenkyōshi* (Zen Teacher) and three years later, in 2001, he was promoted to *junshike* (Associate Zen Master). In 2007, he was appointed to the Board of Directors.

70 Today, the organisation chiefly representing Senkōbō Buddhism in the west is Senkōzan Sanghe Nembutsu Do Dharmagruppe (*Senkōzan Sange Nenbutsudō*). It is presently headed by [Shishin] Ernst Stockinger (b. 1970) out of his temple in Gramastetten/Linz, who succeeded Hartl-Margreiter in 2018. Since 2000, the group is member of the ÖBR. In 1993, Hartl was authorised by Usami to represent Senkōbō Buddhism in Austria (receiving the Buddhist name “Yokō” or “Giver of [Amida's] Light”), which he carried into effect from 1994.

peated whenever Austrian visitors came to the temple. The party stayed overnight and, the next morning, they could observe Usami's Naikan practice, in which he combined a classical master-disciple Zen conversation (*dokusan*) with Naikan. Both were deeply impressed. Margreiter would even seek out his mastership (alongside her then husband Hartl) a few years later in 1993. She obtained the Buddhist name "Nyoren" (or "Resembling a Lotus Flower [in Amida's Pure Land]") and was ordained as a priest (*oshō*) in the Senkōbō tradition following Hartl's premature death in 2005.⁷¹

The last destination on the Naikan travel party's itinerary was a Buddhist temple. Not far away from the Senkōbō, the Seitokuji Gasshōen (or short, Gasshōen), located in the town of Asahi, was operated by the Buddhist monk Mizuno Shūhō (1901–1993). Mizuno, a former businessman, was reportedly in particular influenced by Nishida Tenkō (1872–1968), the founder of the new religious movement Ittōen (Ozawa-de Silva 2006: 152). It was then through Yoshimoto—whose Naikan method he deemed an ideal application of the way of life he had adopted from Nishida—that Mizuno shifted from a more theoretical to a practical approach, employing Naikan as a salvific tool. At the time of their visit, the Seitokuji Gasshōen was one of the top Naikan providers with reportedly more than 10,000 practitioners in attendance between 1974 to 1993 (Chilson 2018: 9). The facilities offered space for forty *naikansha*.

The trip to the Seitokuji Gasshōen concluded Ritter and Margreiter's stay in Japan. Both would return: Margreiter in order to become a disciple of Usami Shūe, and Ritter, already the following year (August 19 to September 13, 1987) with largely the same travel programme in a different order but, notably, also involving a Naikan under Yoshimoto. For Ritter, the 1986 "study tour" in Japan was "opening up a new dimension of Naikan." They had visited "one Buddha after the other," for "Naikan is a way to enlightenment," greatly facilitating one's overall Buddhist practice (Ritter and Röpke 1986: 3–4). Enthused by this experience, he soon started to plan the "Naikan Trip 1987" (*Naikan-Reise 1987*), which addressed the fledgling Naikan community. However, likely due to the travelling costs of around 39,900 Schilling (or 5,817 Euro as of 2021) only three enthusiasts (two from Germany and one from South Tyrol, Italy) were to sign up—among them, an early-day Naikan guide, Horst Kern, who founded the *Naikan-Zentrum Auerberg* in

71 A year earlier, the couple were already elevated to the status of chief Senkōbō practitioners, receiving the honorary title of *daishi* (a great bodhisattva or mahāsattva, and by extension an exalted Buddhist teacher). Dated May 21, 2004, the official certificate pronounces Hartl's full Buddhist name as "Saikoin Shaku Yokō Daishi." In turn, Hartl-Margreiter's full Buddhist name according to her certificate issued October 9, 2004, is "Saikoin Shaku Myo Nyoren Daishi."

Bernbeuren (Hafegg 8), Bavaria, in 1988, and, notably, Gerald Steinke (1953–2010), the later central figure of German Naikan.⁷²

Back in Austria, Ritter eventually inaugurated the Naikan-Zentrum Purkersdorf (Naikan Centre Purkersdorf) with two weeks of Naikan running from June 21 to 28 and June 29 to July 6, 1986, and two practitioners each.⁷³ The available Naikan space was limited, enabling only a maximum of four *nai-kansha* to practise. In order to formalise the newly launched centre, Ritter and Pöchhacker liaised with Margreiter regarding the founding of a related umbrella association with Ishii as its honorary chairman. Ultimately, the *Kulturverein NAIKAN – Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Förderung von menschlicher Entwicklung und Kommunikation* (Cultural Association NAIKAN – Working Group for the Promotion of Human Development and Communication; ZVR number: 345555313), which exists to this day, was officially incorporated on September 26, 1986, following Ritter’s successful application to the *Sicherheitsdirektion* of Lower Austria on August 18, 1986. On the constitutive meeting of the association held on October 23, Ritter was elected chairman, Margreiter his deputy, May the minute taker, and Pöchhacker the treasurer (see Figure 6). Ishii was made honorary chairman. The main purpose of the Association (*Zweck des Vereins*) as given in the original statutes was as follows (see Figure 7 in the Appendix, for the complete statutes of the German original):⁷⁴

1. The Association considers itself as a cultural association, which serves the common good in the spiritual, moral, and cultural fields and therefore claims non-profit status. 2. The purpose of the Association is
 21. to conduct Naikan (=introspection) exercises throughout Austria for the purpose of self-experience and self-development of each participant. The use of supporting methods from other psychological or spiritual fields is intended.
 22. the development of the theoretical and practical foundations for this activity.

⁷² Before, Steinke and his first wife had assisted Ritter at a Naikan seminar in 1986. In 1987, he established the first German Naikan centre in Wolfenbüttel, Lower Saxony—the *Naikan-Trainings-Center Wolfenbüttel* (Schloßplatz 3).

⁷³ Vital early-stage administrative support qua “secretary” of the Naikan-Zentrum was given by a Scheibbs’ commune member, Marion Röpke, who had participated in the first summer Naikan (August 20 to 27) of 1984.

⁷⁴ This nicely indicates Ritter’s early vision for Austro-Naikan, all of which effectively came to fruition save for §27.

23. the training and education of assistants and guides for this introspection exercise.
24. the establishment and operation of Naikan centres, where the Naikan practice can be carried out in the best possible environment.
25. The planning, organisation, and realisation of Naikan information and practice trips to Japan or to other countries where Naikan is practised, for the purpose of deepening the understanding of Naikan and the mutual exchange of experiences.
26. The documentation of the Naikan practice as well as the theoretical findings thereof by means of printed, visual, or audio works
27. The counselling and care of members of marginalised social classes as well as the spiritual and material support of these persons through the establishment of living, working, and therapy communities for the promotion of human development and communication. [...].⁷⁵

Subsequent to the inaugural Naikans at the Naikan-Zentrum, Ritter and Röpke published the first number of *Naikan Report* (later variously entitled *Naikanreport*, *Report*, and *Naikan-Report*), a newsletter irregularly produced in nineteen issues until March 1994 and disseminated within the Naikan community including past Naikan practitioners.⁷⁶

75 “1. Der Verein versteht sich als Kulturverein, der dem Gemeinwohl auf geistigem, sittlichem und kulturellem Gebiet dient und daher Gemeinnützigkeit für sich in Anspruch nimmt. 2. Der Verein bezweckt 21. die Abhaltung von Naikan (=Innenschau)-Übungen in ganz Österreich zum Zwecke der Selbsterfahrung und Selbstentfaltung jedes Teilnehmers. Die Anwendung unterstützender Methoden aus anderen psychologischen oder geistigen Gebieten ist vorgesehen. 22. die Erarbeitung der theoretischen und praktischen Grundlagen für diese Tätigkeit. 23. die Schulung und Ausbildung von Assistenten und Leiter für diese Innenschau-Übung. 24. die Einrichtung und Betreibung von Naikan-Zentren, in denen die Naikan-Übung in bestmöglicher Umgebung durchgeführt werden kann. 25. Die Planung und Organisation und Durchführung von Naikan-Informations- und Übungsreisen nach Japan oder in andere Länder, in denen Naikan praktiziert wird, zum Zwecke der Vertiefung des Naikan-Verständnisses und des gegenseitigen Erfahrungsaustausches. 26. Die Dokumentation der Naikan-Tätigkeit sowie theoretischer Erkenntnisse daraus mittels Druck-, Bild- oder Tonwerken 27. Die Beratung und Betreuung von Angehörigen gesellschaftlicher Randschichten sowie geistige und materielle Unterstützung dieser Personen durch Einrichtung von Wohn-, Arbeits- und Therapiegemeinschaften zur Förderung von menschlicher Entwicklung und Kommunikation. [...].”

76 The second number of *Naikan Report* was issued in October 1986 exclusively including an advert for the projected three-week “Naikan Study Trip” (*Naikan-Studien-Reise*), which was originally planned to commence on May 15, but had to be postponed due to Ishii’s unavailability. The intended programme comprised a Naikan week under

Already before the Naikan Congress, Ishii had informed Ritter (on the phone and by letter) of his plan to spend some seven months, that is, the period from August 1986 to late March 1987, in Europe,⁷⁷ having several of his students join him towards the end of his stay. He had therefore requested Ritter to organise a travel programme involving Eastern European countries, specifically Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Additionally, he had asked Ritter to look into the possibility of organising Naikans in England and the United States as well as Naikan-related lectures. Ritter complied and some items on Ishii's wish list were indeed to materialise (in 1987), including lectures at the University of Innsbruck entailing an article in a local newspaper (*Tiroler Tageszeitung*), in Bruneck (Italy), and at a Conference on Integrative Gestalt Therapy in Weinheim near Heidelberg (Germany).

What has become somewhat of an Austro-Naikan custom, Ishii (together with Ritter and Margeiter) was also slated to hold two Naikan weeks at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs in the summer. And like several times before, the *Bodhi Baum* served as a platform to spread the word. The early summer issue 1986 comprised two Naikan adverts, the first containing a brief description of Naikan alongside the event details of the two seminars held from August 23 (10:00 a.m.) to 29 (2:00 p.m.), and August 29 (6:00 p.m.) to September 5 (2:00 p.m.);⁷⁸ the second indicated the details of a third Scheibbs Naikan scheduled from October 31 to November 8 under the lead of Ritter and Margreiter, which was relocated to Ritter's Naikan-Zentrum. The Naikans attracted lesser attention than expected with seven and six practitioners,

Yoshimoto as well as visits to the Mikis' Nara Naikan Training Institute, Usami's Senkōbō, Haba's Naisei centre, and, finally, Yanagita's Meisō no Mori Naikan Training Institute (Ritter 1986d). The third number (Ritter 1986e) provided an extended and revised detailed itinerary (now also including a brief visit to Mizuno's Seitokuji Gasshōen), also noting the postponing of the Naikan Japan sojourn to August. Moreover, it overviewed the upcoming 1987 Naikans, listing Margreiter as a standalone Naikan guide equal to Ishii and Ritter.

⁷⁷ Ishii's stay was eventually extended to a year, until early August 1987.

⁷⁸ The given outline of Naikan provided by Ritter was as follows: "Naikan means introspection. In Naikan we complete our fundamental relationships – the ones with our parents. Naikan enables you to really examine yourself for seven days. To see how your life story went and what you have done with your life. Directly re-experiencing this through Naikan has the power to fundamentally change our insights into our lives. We learn to build viable relationships that support and enhance our lives" ("Naikan heißt Innenschau. Im Naikan vervollständigen wir unsere fundamentalen Beziehungen – die zu unseren Eltern. Naikan setzt Dich in die Lage, sieben Tage wirklich in Dich hinein zu sehen. Zu sehen, wie Deine Lebensgeschichte gelaufen ist und was Du daraus gemacht hast. Das direkte Wiederleben im Naikan hat die Kraft, unsere Einsichten in unserem Leben grundlegend zu wandeln. Wir lernen lebensfähige Beziehungen aufzubauen, die unser Leben unterstützen und fördern") (Ritter 1986b: 117).

respectively. However, in both seminars, two participants each were so enthused by their experience that they subsequently commenced a Naikan assistantship. Two of them even went on to eventually establish their own Naikan centres. Doing Naikan in the first week were, among others, Horst Kern (see above) and Eva May. The latter was a Scheibbs sponsor, who, over the next years assisted in various Naikans becoming an integral part of the early Naikan community. Yet, May never decided to start an independent Naikan career. Attending the second week were, next to the Naikan “aficionado” Martin Schönberger, the author of *The I Ching and the Genetic Code*, who then already enjoyed his third Naikan after 1983 and 1984, also Roberto Preinreich, and, notably, Roland Dick, the third Austro-Naikan pioneer (see Figure 8). Preinreich became a *Volontär* (i.e., a trainee, a term Ritter employed from 1987 for some time) thereafter, having his first Naikan assistance under Margreiter at her February 1987 Scheibbs seminar. He later shifted his focus on shiatsu and, in 1991, established the *Europäisches Shiatsu Institut* (European Shiatsu Institute; ZVR number: 503852642), which is presently located at Margaretenstraße 32/6 in Vienna’s fourth district.

Roland Dick was to become not only the founder of the second Naikan centre in Austria but a major exponent of Austro-Naikan up to the present,⁷⁹ whose approach to and contextualisation of the “method” was different compared to his fellow Naikan peers. In contrast to them, Buddhism or “spirituality” at large never played a conscious role in his “Naikan philosophy” and guidance. Dick was born the fourth child of six into a middle class family in Saalfelden am Steinernen Meer, Salzburg. He enjoyed a typical conservative Catholic upbringing, which, however, had no discernible impact—if anything, it instilled in him a certain religious indifference (Personal Interview with Roland Dick on March 31, 2021). Important to his parents was to allow their children to engage intensively with the arts and music. Already during his high school years he developed a keen interest in apiculture, a passion he would later partially turn into a living. Upon graduation, Dick moved to the city of Salzburg and enrolled in Archaeology at the University of Salzburg. Although he never finished his studies, he would later occasionally work as an archaeologist at various sites in the region. He returned to apiculture, married, and, for years, also worked as a tour guide travelling Europe. Eventually his marriage was about to break up, which caused a severe existential crisis. One day, a female friend handed to him an unpretentious leaflet of the upcoming summer Naikans in Scheibbs with a Japanese xylograph on it. The

⁷⁹ His centre, the *Naikan-Zentrum Salzburg*, was opened in 1990 in his childhood home in Saalfelden am Steinernen Meer (Bahnhofstraße 61). See also Dick’s website at www.naikan.at/ (access: March 10, 2021).

friend's father had previously practised Naikan recommending her to do it herself and so gave her the pamphlet. Dick found himself in such a grim psychological state at the time due to his failing marriage that he quickly resolved to give Naikan a try. Yet, at the start of the seminar he found himself somewhat out of place. The *kimono*-wearing Ishii and particularly Ritter (being a westerner) as well as the general atmosphere created by several practitioners sharing one big room only being separated by thin screens and thus allowing everyone closely listening to each other's oft-times emotional Naikan conversations caused disconcertment. More so, he recalls, that he was briefly even worried to have ended up in a veritable "cult practice" (ibid.). Regardless of his initial suspicion, which was ultimately balanced out thanks to Ishii's charismatic performance,⁸⁰ from day four his Naikan proved transformative on many levels. For one, his first Naikan experience indeed successfully explored and emotionally mended key familial issues. These insights had a lasting tremendous effect on his personality, virtually "putting his mind at ease" for the rest of his life. What is more, this inner calmness resulting in a new way of life also engendered a shift in his professional life with the set aim of helping others. That is to say, the next year while nursing his sick father, he gradually determined to become a Naikan guide himself, for "the Naikan positively changed myself, which is why I wanted to extend this opportunity to others" (ibid.). Dick started his assistantship under Ritter in October 1987 and became a fully-fledged independent guide in 1990. Some five years later he embarked on a psychotherapeutical training with a focus on Existential Analysis, eventually becoming a staff member at the "Erlenhof."

It was also the Erlenhof that came next on the 1986 Austrian Naikan schedule following the two seminars at Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs (see Figure 9). Joining the Austro-Japanese Naikan "triumvirate" (i.e., Ishii, Margreiter, and Ritter) in early October as an assistant was the newest addition to the Naikan (guide) community, Eva May. In a similar constellation, excepting Ishii, the Purkersdorf Naikan (in lieu of the one planned at Scheibbs) was held but in a "packed format" with the number of participants—namely six—surpassing the normally available space at the centre of four Naikan spots. Similarly "crowded" with five practitioners turned out the New Year's Naikan at Purkersdorf held from December 25, 1986 to January 1, 1987. A month earlier, from November 15 to 22, the triumvirate sojourned to Sexten in South Tyrol joined by fourteen practitioners. Overall, the year

80 While both Ritter and Margreiter co-guided at this Naikan (Ritter did so in the preceding week as well), also engaging with Dick, his primary contact person was Ishii.

1986 witnessed a sharp increase in Naikan offerings, a trend that was to continue, albeit less steeply, in the years ahead. In total, twelve Naikan weeks were held in Austria or by Austrian guides abroad in 1986—more than all previous group Naikans conducted between 1980 and 1985 together, which totalled ten (1980: 1; 1981: 1; 1982: 1; 1983: 1; 1984: 2; 1985: 4). The latter number Ritter would reach in 1987 at his centre alone.

5. Concluding Remarks

A portrayal of Naikan's internationalisation would not only be incomplete but impossible without considering the case of Austro-Naikan. For decades, the Austrian Naikan community was the most sizeable and active outside of Japan. What is, in fact, also unique is that Naikan has left many footprints in the history of the wider Buddhist tradition in Austria. Unsurprisingly, even today it enjoys visibility being represented by two organisations among the some thirty officially recognised Buddhist groups—one led by Ritter, the other one led by the Hartl disciple Ernst Stockinger (who was preceded by Hartl-Margreiter).

This paper provided a comprehensive account on the background and historical development of Austro-Naikan until 1986. It introduced the Naikan pioneers, their activities, and the early key stages in the formation of institutionalised Naikan that first fully materialised in the launch of Ritter's Naikan-Zentrum Purkersdorf (Naikan Centre Purkersdorf) in June 1986. Austria served as the starting point of Naikan's lasting international presence worldwide. It likewise served as the international hub for many decades and played an essential role for the spread of Naikan to other European countries. Small wonder that recent studies employing international data (Ozawa-de Silva 2006; 2007; Ozawa-de Silva and Ozawa-de Silva 2010) or mentioning the international context (Chilson 2018) chiefly consider the Austrian case.

The paper thus shed light on an important, if not the most important, chapter in the international formation history of the wider tradition. Follow-up papers will explore the subsequent historical development (i.e., from 1987) up to this day, as well as address—in a separate study—the individual profiles of Austro-Naikan's chief representatives.

Appendix



Figure 1: Yoshimoto Ishin at the Foundation Meeting of the Naikan Association (第壹回内観學會) in 1978.



Figure 2: Franz Ritter (sitting on the right) during Zen practice at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs in the late 1970s. He is flanked on the right by Ingrid Schreiber.



Figure 3: Group photo taken at the end of the first Austrian Naikan in 1980 at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs. Ishii Akira (wearing a *kimono*) is flanked by the five practitioners (from left to right: Helmut Kacetzl, Peter Stöger, Ursula Kunz, Robert Czako, and Franz Ritter).



Figure 4: Helga Margreiter and Franz Ritter singing at a karaoke bar while in Tōkyō for the 1986 Naikan Congress. They were joined by Ishii Akira (not in the photo) and a befriended young Japanese student.



Figure 5: Helga Margreiter and Franz Ritter at the 1986 Naikan Congress.

Name des Vereines : Kulturverein NAIKAN - Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Förderung von menschlicher Entwicklung und Kommunikation Purkersdorf

Sitz des Vereines :

An die - den * WIEN-UMGEBUNG

Bezirkshauptmannschaft *

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Bundespolizeidirektion *

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Magistrat der Stadt *

Gemäß § 12 des Vereinsgesetzes 1951 i.d.g.F. wird hiermit angezeigt, daß bei der am 23/10/86 stattgefundenen konstituierenden Generalversammlung des oben bezeichneten Vereines die nachstehend angeführten Personen in den Vereinsvorstand gewählt worden sind:

| Funktionsbezeichnung: | Name: | genaue Anschrift: |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| Ehren-Vorsitzender | Akira Ishii | 4-1-23 Mita Minato-ku/Tokyo/Japan |
| 1. Vorsitzender | Franz Ritter | Schwarzhuberg, 8/3002 Purkersdorf |
| 2. Vorsitzende | Helga Margreiter | De Querg, 6/1170 Wien |
| Schriftführerin | Eva May | Linzer Str. 2a/3003 Gablitz |
| Kassier | Martha Pöchhacker | Schwarzhuberg, 8/3002 Purkersdorf. |

Statutengemäß gefertigt:

Franz Ritter

Helga Margreiter

* = Zutreffendes einsetzen bzw. Nichtzutreffendes streichen.

Sich.Eion f. NÖ. Lg. Nr. 327 b

Figure 6: Document sent to the Sicherheitsdirektion of the Federal State of Lower Austria announcing the board members of the Kulturverein NAIKAN elected at the association's constitutive meeting on October 23, 1986.

Purkersdorf, 4. Juli 1986

SATZUNG DES VEREINS

"Kulturverein NAIKAN - Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Förderung von menschlicher Entwicklung und Kommunikation"

ERSTES HAUPTSTÜCK - ALLGEMEINE BEDINGUNGEN

§1 NAME, SITZ UND TÄTIGKEITSBEREICH

1. Der Verein führt den Namen "Kulturverein NAIKAN - Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Förderung von menschlicher Entwicklung und Kommunikation" mit dem Sitz in Purkersdorf.
2. Der Verein erstreckt seine Tätigkeit auf das Gebiet der Republik Österreich. Die Errichtung von Zweigvereinen ist nicht vorgesehen.
3. Die Tätigkeit des Vereins ist unter Einhaltung der Bestimmung des § 39 der Bundesabgabenordnung nicht auf Gewinn ausgerichtet. Jede parteipolitische Tätigkeit ist ausgeschlossen.

§2 ZWECK DES VEREINS

1. Der Verein versteht sich als Kulturverein, der dem Gemeinwohl auf geistigem, sittlichem und kulturellem Gebiet dient und daher Gemeinnützigkeit für sich in Anspruch nimmt.
2. Der Verein bezweckt
 21. die Abhaltung von Naikan(=Innenschau)-Übungen in ganz Österreich zum Zwecke der Selbsterfahrung und Selbstentfaltung jedes Teilnehmers. Die Anwendung unterstützender Methoden aus anderen psychologischen oder geistigen Gebieten ist vorgesehen.
 22. die Erarbeitung der theoretischen und praktischen Grundlagen für diese Tätigkeit.
 23. die Schulung und Ausbildung von Assistenten und Leiter für diese Innenschau-Übung.
 24. die Einrichtung und Betreibung von Naikan-Zentren, in denen die Naikan-Übung in bestmöglicher Umgebung durchgeführt werden kann.
 25. Die Planung und Organisation und Durchführung von Naikan-Informations- und Übungsreisen nach Japan oder in andere Länder, in denen Naikan praktiziert wird, zum Zwecke der Vertiefung des Naikan-Verständnisses und des gegenseitigen Erfahrungsaustausches.
 26. Die Dokumentation der Naikan-Tätigkeit sowie theoretischer Erkenntnisse daraus mittels Druck-, Bild- oder Tonwerken

Figure 7: Statutes of the Kulturverein NAIKAN as submitted to the Sicherheitsdirektion on August 18, 1986.

27. Die Beratung und Betreuung von Angehörigen gesellschaftlicher Randschichten sowie geistige und materielle Unterstützung dieser Personen, durch Einrichtung von Wohn-, Arbeits- und Therapiegemeinschaften zur Förderung von menschlicher Entwicklung und Kommunikation.

28. Die Planung und Unterstützung von, sowie die Beteiligung an im Sinne der Ziffern 21. bis 27. gleichartigen Vorhaben oder Institutionen.

3. Der Vereinszweck gemäß Absatz 1 wird unter den Einschränkungen des § 45 Absatz 2 der Bundesabgabenordnung verfolgt, insbesondere durch

31. die Durchführung von Naikan-Übungen an hierzu geeigneten Plätzen

32. die Einrichtung von Naikan-Zentren zur Durchführung der Naikan-Übungen mit Einschluß der Erbringung aller für die Übung notwendigen Nebenleistungen wie Information, Schriftverkehr, Verpflegung, Unterbringung usw.

33. Herausgabe von Informationsmaterial und Veranstaltung von Vorträgen, Versammlungen und Ausstellungen sowie Informationsveranstaltungen jeder Art

34. Zusammenarbeit mit gleichartigen Organisationen des In- und Auslandes

35. Gründung und Führung von wirtschaftlichen Unternehmungen aller Art, sofern sie dem Vereinszweck dienen

4. Die Mittel zur Bestreitung der Vereinstätigkeit werden durch Beitrittsgebühren, Mitgliedsbeiträge, Erträgen der Vereinstätigkeit, Darlehen, Spenden und sonstige Zuwendungen aufgebracht.

ZWEITES HAUPTSTÜCK - MITGLIEDSCHAFT

§ 3 MITGLIEDER

Der Verein besteht aus ordentlichen Mitglieder und Ehrenmitgliedern.

§ 4 AUFNAHME VON MITGLIEDERN

41. Die Aufnahme der ordentlichen Mitglieder erfolgt durch den Vorstand (bis zur Konstituierung durch das Proponentenkomitee). Voraussetzung für die Mitgliedschaft ist die mindestens einmalige Teilnahme an einer Naikan-Übung. Die Aufnahme kann vom Vorstand ohne Angabe von Gründen verweigert werden.

42. Die Verleihung der Ehrenmitgliedschaft erfolgt auf Antrag des Vorstandes durch die Hauptversammlung.

§ 5 PFLICHTEN DER MITGLIEDER

51. Die Mitglieder sind verpflichtet, den Vereinszweck zu fördern und alles zu unterlassen, was das Ansehen und den Zweck des Vereines schädigen könnte.

52. Die Mitglieder haben regelmäßig den Mitgliedsbeitrag in der satzungsgemäß bestimmten Art und Höhe zu leisten.

§ 6 RECHTE DER MITGLIEDER

61. Die Mitglieder sind zu allen Vereinsveranstaltungen teilnahmeberechtigt.

62. Die ordentlichen Mitglieder haben nach Maßgabe dieser Satzung Sitz und Stimme in der Hauptversammlung, insbesondere das Wahlrecht und die Wählbarkeit zur Wahl der Vereinsorgane.

63. Die Ehrenmitglieder haben die Rechtsstellung von ordentlichen Mitgliedern.

§ 7 ERLÖSCHEN DER MITGLIEDSCHAFT

71. Die Mitgliedschaft erlischt durch

- 711. Ende der Rechtsfähigkeit
- 712. freiwilligen Austritt
- 713. Ausschluß wegen Verletzung des § 5

72. Der freiwillige Austritt kann jederzeit erfolgen.

Dieser ist jedoch dem Vorstand schriftlich anzuzeigen.

73. Der Ausschluß erfolgt durch den Vorstand, die Aberkennung der Ehrenmitgliedschaft durch die Hauptversammlung.

DRITTES HAUPTSTÜCK - ORGANE

§ 8 ORGANE DES VEREINS

Organe des Vereins sind die Hauptversammlung und der Vorstand.

ERSTER ABSCHNITT - DIE HAUPTVERSAMMLUNG

§ 9 ZUSAMMENSETZUNG DER HAUPTVERSAMMLUNG

91. Die Hauptversammlung besteht aus den Mitgliedern des Vereins.

92. Den Vorsitz führt der 1. Vorsitzende des Vereins, in seiner Vertretung der 2. Vorsitzende oder allenfalls ein anderes, vom 1. Vorsitzenden damit betrautes Mitglied des Vorstandes.

§ 10 EINBERUFUNG DER HAUPTVERSAMMLUNG

101. Die Hauptversammlung ist vom Vorstand mindestens alle 3 Jahre einzuberufen; die Einberufung hat schriftlich mindestens 6 Wochen vor dem Stattfinden der Hauptversammlung zu erfolgen.

102. Auf Verlangen von mindestens einem Drittel der ordentlichen Mitglieder hat der Vorstand eine (außerordentliche) Hauptversammlung einzuberufen.

§ 11 BESCHLUßFASSUNG DER HAUPTVERSAMMLUNG

111. Die Hauptversammlung ist beschlußfähig, wenn ein Zehntel der Mitglieder erschienen sind. Vertretene Mitglieder gelten als anwesend.

112. Die Hauptversammlung beschließt über

1121. die Bestellung und Entlastung des Vorstandes

1122. die Bestellung von allenfalls zwei Rechnungsprüfern

1123. die Verleihung und Aberkennung der Ehrenmitgliedschaft

1124. die Änderung der Satzung

1125. die Auflösung des Vereines und die Verwendung eines Vereinsvermögens

1126. sonstige Angelegenheiten, die ihr vom Vorstand zur Beschlußfassung vorgelegt werden.

113. Beschlüsse gemäß litera 1124 und 1125 bedürfen der Mehrheit von drei Vierteln der abgegebenen Stimmen; im übrigen werden die Beschlüsse mit einfacher Mehrheit gefaßt. Bei Stimmgleichheit entscheidet die Stimme des 1. Vorsitzenden.

114. Die Ausfertigung, Bekanntmachung und Durchführung der Beschlüsse obliegt dem Vorstand.

ZWEITER ABSCHNITT - DER VORSTAND

§ 12 ZUSAMMENSETZUNG DES VORSTANDES

121. Der Vorstand besteht aus mindestens 3 Personen, die von der Hauptversammlung gewählt werden.

122. Der Vorstand wählt aus seiner Mitte den 1. und 2. Vorsitzenden und gegebenenfalls sonstige Funktionäre.

123. Die von der Hauptversammlung gewählten Vorstandsmitglieder werden in der Regel für drei Jahre gewählt; eine Wiederwahl ist zulässig.

124. Der Vorstand kann aus den Ehrenmitgliedern einen Ehrenvorsitzenden kooptieren. Der Ehrenvorsitzende hat Sitz und Stimme in den Sitzungen des Vorstandes.

§ 13 AUFGABEN DES VORSTANDES

Dem Vorstand obliegen alle Aufgaben des Vereines, sofern sie nicht durch die Satzung einem anderen Organ zugewiesen sind. Er kann zu seiner Unterstützung und Beratung Ausschüsse und Sachbearbeiter (auch im Dienstverhältnis) bestellen.

§ 14 BESCHLUßFASSUNG DES VORSTANDES

141. Der Vorstand ist beschlußfähig, wenn die Vorstandsmitglieder mindestens 2 Wochen vor der Vorstandssitzung durch den 1. oder 2. Vorsitzenden eingeladen wurden und mindestens die Hälfte erschienen ist.

142. Die Vorstandssitzung leitet der 1., in seiner Verhinderung der 2. oder in dessen Verhinderung ein, vom 1. Vorsitzenden bestelltes Vorstandsmitglied. Die Beschlüsse werden mit einfacher Mehrheit gefaßt. Bei Stimmgleichheit entscheidet der Leiter der Sitzung.

DRITTER ABSCHNITT - DIE VERTRETUNG

§ 15 VERTRETUNG NACH AUßEN

Die Vertretung und Zeichnung des Vereines nach außen erfolgt entweder durch den 1. Vorsitzenden oder durch ein vom 1. Vorsitzenden bevollmächtigtes Mitglied des Vorstandes. Eine Teilvertretung in bestimmten Bereichen durch beauftragte Sachbearbeiter ist möglich.

VIERTES HAUPTSTÜCK - SCHLUßBESTIMMUNGEN

§ 16 AUFLÖSUNG - VEREINSVERMÖGEN

Im Falle der Auflösung oder bei Wegfall seines Vereinszweckes darf das Vereinsvermögen nur gemeinnützigen Zwecken im Sinne des § 2 der Satzung verwendet werden.

Der letzte Vereinsvorstand hat die freiwillige Auflösung der Vereinsbehörde schriftlich anzuzeigen und ist im Sinne des §26 des Vereinsgesetzes 1951 verpflichtet, die freiwillige Auflösung in einem amtlichen Blatte zu verlautbaren.

§ 17 DURCHFÜHRUNGSBESTIMMUNGEN UND GESCHAFTSORDNUNG

Der Vorstand ist ermächtigt, die näheren Durchführungsbestimmungen zu der Satzung durch eine Geschäftsordnung zu erlassen.

§ 18 DAS SCHIEDSGERICHT

In allen aus dem Vereinsverhältnis entstehenden Streitigkeiten entscheidet das Schiedsgericht. Das Schiedsgericht setzt sich aus fünf ordentlichen Mitgliedern zusammen. Es wird derart gebildet, daß jeder Streitteil innerhalb von zwei Wochen dem Vorstand zwei ordentliche Mitglieder als Schiedsrichter namhaft macht. Die so namhaft gemachten Schiedsrichter wählen mit Stimmenmehrheit ein fünftes ordentliches Mitglied zum Vorsitzenden des Schiedsgerichtes. Bei Stimmengleichheit entscheidet unter den Vorgeschlagenen das Los. Das Schiedsgericht fällt seine Entscheidungen bei Anwesenheit aller seiner Mitglieder mit einfacher Stimmenmehrheit. Es entscheidet nach bestem Wissen und Gewissen. Seine Entscheidungen sind vereinsintern endgültig.

§ 19 DIE RECHNUNGSPRÜFER

Die beiden Rechnungsprüfer werden von der Generalversammlung für die Funktionsdauer des Vorstandes gewählt. Eine Wiederwahl ist möglich. Den Rechnungsprüfern obliegt die laufende Geschäftskontrolle und die Überprüfung des Rechnungsabschlusses. Sie haben der Generalversammlung über das Ergebnis der Überprüfung zu berichten.



Figure 8: Group photo with participants and guests taken at the end of the second summer Naikan of 1986 (August 29 to September 5) at the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs. Franz Ritter and Ishii Akira are wearing a *kimono*. Ishii is flanked on the right (from left to right) by Helga Margreiter, Martin Schönberger, Roland Dick, and Roberto Preinreich. Towering behind Schönberger and Dick (both with glasses) is the later head of the Buddhistisches Zentrum Scheibbs Erwin Jurasszovich (b. 1936).



Figure 9: Naikan at the “Erlenhof” in October 1986. A group photo of clients, staff, and the Naikan team. Franz Ritter is seen to the very left, Helga Margreiter stands to the left of the right-hand door frame, Ishii Akira (wearing a *kimono*) is flanked by two Erlenhof staff members. The Erlenhof head, Peter Olbrich, stands to the right of Ritter wearing a black shirt.

List of Abbreviations

- BGÖ* *Buddhistische Gemeinschaft Österreichs* (Buddhist Community of Austria)
- BGW* *Buddhistische Gesellschaft Wien* (Buddhist Society of Vienna)
- ÖBR* *Österreichische Buddhistische Religionsgesellschaft* (Austrian Buddhist Religious Society)
- ÖBU* *Österreichische Buddhistische Union* (Austrian Buddhist Union)

Glossary

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|---|---------------------|
| Don brgyud nyi ma [=Dongyü Nyima] | དོན་བརྒྱུད་ཉི་མ་ |
| Genro [=Herbert Koudela] | 玄朗 |
| Haba Taketsugu | 波場武嗣 |
| Ishii Akira | 石井光 |
| Komatani Teishin | 駒谷諦信 |
| Liú Xiūqí | 劉修琦 |
| Miki Junko | 三木潤子 |
| Miki Yoshihiko | 三木善彦 |
| Mizuno Shūhō | 水野秀法 |
| Morikawa Kinuko [=Yoshimoto Kinuko] | 森川キヌ子 |
| Murase Takao | 村瀬孝雄 |
| Nagaya Kiichi | 長屋喜一 |
| Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin [=Franz Ritter] | འགྲུབ་དང་བསྟན་འཛིན་ |
| Nishia Tenkō | 西田天香 |
| Nishimoto Taikan | 西本諦観 |
| Nobuo Tatsumi | 巽信夫 |
| Nyoren [=Helga Hartl-Margreiter] | 如蓮 |
| Reiunken [=Usami Shūe] | 靈雲軒 |
| Saikoin Shaku Myo Nyoren Daishi [=Helga Hartl-Margreiter] | 西向院如釋妙蓮大士 |
| Saikoin Shaku Yokō Daishi [=Josef Hartl] | 西向院釋与光大士 |
| Sasaki Jōshū | 佐々木承周 |
| Seki Yūhō | 関雄峰 |
| Shishin [=Ernst Stockinger] | 至心 |
| Suzuki Jin'ichi | 鈴木仁一 |
| Takeda Ryōji | 武田良二 |
| Takemoto Takahiro | 竹元隆洋 |
| Takino Isao | 滝野功 |
| Usami Shūe | 宇佐美秀慧 |
| Yamada Kōun | 山田耕雲 |
| Yanagita Kakusei | 柳田鶴声 |
| Yokō [=Josef Hartl] | 与光 |
| Yokoyama Shigeo | 横山茂生 |
| Yoshimoto Inobu [=Yoshimoto Ishin] | 吉本伊信 |
| Yoshimoto Ishin | 吉本伊信 |
| Yoshimoto Kinuko | 吉本キヌ子 |
| Yōshin [=Franz Ritter] | 養心 |
| Zhāng Chéngjī | 张澄基 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 'Brug pa bka' brgyud | འབྲུག་པ་བཀ་པ་བརྟུན |
| Akikawa Shinmeikutsu | 秋川神冥窟 |
| Amida | 阿弥陀 |
| Asahi | 朝日 |
| <i>basho</i> | 場所 |
| <i>byōnin</i> | 病人 |
| <i>daishi</i> | 大士 |
| Daitokuji | 大徳寺 |
| <i>dokusan</i> | 独参 |
| Eigenji | 永源寺 |
| Gasshōen | 合掌園 |
| Ibusuki Takemoto Byōin | 指宿竹元病院 |
| Ittōen | 一燈園 |
| <i>jikijitsu</i> | 直日 |
| Jiko hakken to shite no Naikan | 自己発見としての内観 |
| Jōdo Shinshū | 浄土真宗 |
| Jōdo Shinshū Honganji-ha | 浄土真宗本願寺派 |
| Jōdo Shinshū Isshin Ikkō-ha | 浄土真宗一心一向派 |
| <i>junshike</i> | 準師家 |
| Kagoshima | 鹿児島 |
| <i>kaigonin</i> | 介護人 |
| <i>karaoke</i> | カラオケ |
| khams sprul rin po che | མཁས་སྤུལ་རིན་པོ་ཅེ |
| <i>kimono</i> | 着物 |
| Kitsuregawa | 喜連川 |
| Kuwana | 桑名 |
| <i>kyōkaishi</i> | 教戒師 |
| Kyōto | 京都 |
| Matsumoto | 松本 |
| Meisō no Mori Naikan Kenshūjo | 瞑想の森内観研修所 |
| <i>mensetsusha</i> | 面接者 |
| Mie | 三重 |
| Myōshinji | 妙心寺 |
| Naikan | 内観 |
| Naikan Dōjō | 内観道場 |
| Naikan Gakkai | 内観学会 |
| Naikan Kenshūjo | 内観研修所 |
| Naikan Kyōiku Kenshūjo | 内観教育研修所 |
| Naikan ryōhō | 内観療法 |

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Naikanba | 内観場 |
| Naikanhō | 内観法 |
| Naikanji | 内観寺 |
| <i>naikansha</i> | 内観者 |
| Naisei | 内省 |
| Nara | 奈良 |
| Nara Naikan Kenshūjo | 奈良内観研修所 |
| Nihon Naikan Gakkai | 日本内観学会 |
| Okayama | 岡山 |
| Ōsaka | 大阪 |
| <i>oshō</i> | 和尚 |
| <i>qìgōng</i> | 气功/氣功 |
| Rinzai | 臨濟 |
| <i>rōshi</i> | 老師 |
| Ryōgoku Kokugikan | 両国国技館 |
| Sakura | さくら |
| Sanbō | 三宝 |
| Seitokuji Gasshōen | 聖徳寺合掌園 |
| Sendai | 仙台 |
| Senkōbō | 専光坊 |
| <i>senkōbō buppō</i> | 専光坊佛法 |
| Senkōbō Naikanba | 専光坊内観場 |
| Senkōzan Sange Nenbutsudō | 専光山懺悔念佛堂 |
| <i>sesshin</i> | 接心 |
| Shànghǎi | 上海 |
| <i>shiatsu</i> | 指压 |
| <i>shinjin</i> | 信心 |
| Shinshū Kibe-ha | 真宗木辺派 |
| Shinshū Ōtani-ha | 真宗大谷派 |
| <i>sumō</i> | 相撲 |
| <i>tàijí</i> | 太极/太極 |
| <i>taikan</i> | 諦観 |
| Taikan-an | 諦観庵 |
| tainai Naikan | 胎内内観 |
| <i>tainai taiken</i> | 胎内体験 |
| Tochigi | 栃木 |
| Tōkyō | 東京 |
| Yamatokōriyama | 大和郡山 |
| Yōroppa Naikan no tenkai | ヨーロッパ内観の展開 |
| Yoshimoto Naikan | 吉本内観 |

zazen
Zen
zenkyōshi

座禪
禪
禪教師

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