



## Buddhist and Interreligious Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care

### Program Workshop 7–10 December 2022 (update 07.12.2022)

**Organizer:** Akademie der Weltreligionen, Universität Hamburg

**Venue:** St. Ansgar-Haus, Bildungs- und Gästehaus des Erzbistums Hamburg,  
Schmilinskystr. 78, 20099 Hamburg

<http://www.ansgarhaus-hamburg.de/>

#### In cooperation with:

- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- University of Oslo
- Upaya Zen Center, Santa Fe, NM
- Boeddhistische Unie Nederland (BUN)
- Buddhist Federation of Norway
- Deutsche Buddhistische Union e.V.

**Day of Arrival:** 7 December, 15:00 hrs, **Day of Departure:** 10 December, 09:30 hrs

**Accommodation:** St. Ansgar-Haus, Bildungs- und Gästehaus des Erzbistums Hamburg,  
Schmilinskystr. 78, 20099 Hamburg

**Background:** Buddhist chaplaincy or Buddhist care is spiritual care that is “Buddha-dharma-based,” i.e., based on the teachings of the historical Buddha and the three main Buddhist traditions: Theravāda, East Asian, and Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhist centers and umbrella organizations in Europe are increasingly receiving requests to assist people in difficult life situations, also in Germany. The appointment of chaplains is usually done by religious communities and regulated by law.

In Germany, the right to pastoral care/chaplaincy (“Seelsorge”) is guaranteed by the Basic Law Art. 140 GG in conjunction with Art. 141 WRV: “To the extent that a need exists for religious services and pastoral work in the army, in hospitals, in prisons or other public institutions, religious societies shall be permitted to provide them, but without the compulsion of any kind.”<sup>1</sup>

In the Netherlands, an ongoing postgraduate course called “Buddhist Chaplaincy” has been available at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Faculty of Theology) since 2014. Here, an MA in Religion and Religious Studies, specialisation Spiritual Care and further

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_gg/englisch\\_gg.html#p0825](https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0825) (28.04.2021).

academic qualifications in Buddhist Studies, are required. So far, in Europe, the Netherlands is the only country to have a state-regulated Chaplaincy/Spiritual Care education that includes all recognized religions and world views. The training to become an official Buddhist caregiver/chaplain (“geestelijke verzorger”) is carried out at the VU (Free University) Amsterdam by the Buddhist Seminary under state supervision and according to university-academic standards on behalf of the Dutch Buddhist religious community.

In Norway, since 2019/2020, the University of Oslo (The Faculty of Theology), offers an MA course on Buddhist care practices. It is part of the MA “Leadership, Ethics and Counselling (master – experience-based)” (Lederskap, etikk og samtalepraksis (master – erfaringsbasert) – 120 ECTS, with MA certificate), first course: August 2019.

In Austria, since 1983, the Österreichische Buddhistische Religionsgesellschaft has been recognized as a corporation under public law. They offer mobile hospice pastoral care in the Vienna General Hospital. However, as in Germany, professional university chaplaincy training is not provided yet.

The conference takes this development as an opportunity to take a critical look at the situation. Different approaches to Buddhist and Interreligious chaplaincy and spiritual care should be presented and examined in an open and critical discussion. Speakers from the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, and the United States report on their concepts and experiences with professional training in Buddhist care in cooperation with universities and discuss open questions and perspectives of Buddhist care in heterogeneous and religiously plural contexts. How have chaplaincy and spiritual care developed in the respective countries? Which training programs have proven themselves? What advantages and disadvantages does interreligious or interdenominational cooperation offer? And is international cooperation desirable?

### **The Goal of the Workshop:**

- To gain a clearer understanding of Buddhist chaplaincy's rules and organizational structure in the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, and the United States.
- To develop a strategy and first steps to establish Buddhist chaplaincy in Germany.
- To discuss possibilities of cooperation when it comes to the training of chaplains.

**Registration** by email to: [carola.roloff@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:carola.roloff@uni-hamburg.de)

**Participation fee daily visitors:** 58 Euro for both days (including lunch and hot and cold drinks during the breaks).

**For out-of-town guests plus accommodation:** single room with breakfast 86,90 Euro (vegan 88,90 Euro), double/twin bed room 71,50 Euro (vegan 73,50 Euro) per person and per day.

## Daily Schedule

### Wednesday 7 December

- 15.00 Arrival of out-of-town guests with accommodation at St. Ansgar
- 16.00 Preparatory meeting of the organizers in one of three coffee shops Lange Reihe (ca. 2-5 mins walk)
- 18.00 Dinner for out-of-town guest with accommodation at St. Ansgar – Welcome by Dr. Carola Roloff

### Thursday 8 December

- 07.30 Start of breakfast for St. Ansgar-House residents
- 09.00 **Arrival, Opening, and Welcome.** *Dr. Carola Roloff, Visiting Professor for Buddhism, Akademie der Weltreligionen, Universität Hamburg.*
- 09.20 **Brief round of introduction** (13 speakers and 17 further participants)
- 10.00 **Panel 1: Brief outline of the development and today's situation of the Buddhist Chaplaincy/Care in the respective countries**
  - How many Buddhist chaplains, both voluntary and full-time, paid?
  - In which areas of chaplaincy do they work?
  - By which institutions/organizations are they supported?
  - Who finances the training, and who certifies the chaplains?

**Report from the Dutch Buddhist Union:** Anya Wiersma, board member of the *Buddhist Union Netherlands (BUN)*, i.e., the state-recognized representation of the Buddhist religious community. 20 mins

**Report from the Buddhist Federation of Norway:** Egil Lothe, *Secretary General of the Buddhist Federation of Norway*, i.e., the state-recognized representation of the Buddhist religious community. 20 mins

**Report from the German Buddhist Union:** Regina Weilhart, *Councillor German Buddhist Union*. 20 mins
- 11.00 Coffee/Tea break (20 mins)
  - Report from the United Kingdom:** Keith Munnings, *Fellow of Buddhist Healthcare Chaplaincy Group (UK)*. 20 mins
  - Zoom Report from the European Buddhist Union**, taking Italy as an example: Sensei Dario Doshin Girolami, *Buddhist chaplain and Abbot of Centro Zen L'Arco Rome, Italy. Buddhist chaplaincy Expert's Network coordinator of the European Buddhist Union, the umbrella association of 14 national Buddhist unions and Buddhist organizations in Europe*. 20 mins
  - Report from the United States**, taking Upaya Zen Center as an example: Mary Remington, *Director, Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program at Upaya Zen Center, Buddhist Chaplain*. 20 mins
  - Moderator:** Dr. Carola Roloff
- 12.30 Lunch
- 13.30 **Panel 2: Training programs**

- Who offers the training/studies, who design the curricula?
- How are the curricula structured?
  - Are philosophical/theological studies and clinical chaplaincy training separate?
  - Internships, retreats
  - Requirements for training
  - Supervision during and after the training

**Worldwide:** Rev. Helmut Weiss, *President of the SIPCC – Society for inter-cultural pastoral care and counselling*. 25-30 mins

**Netherlands:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Bee Scherer, *Rector of the Buddhist Seminary at VU Amsterdam and head of the official training for Buddhist spiritual care*. 25-30 mins

**United States:** Mary Remington, Director, Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program at Upaya Zen Center, Buddhist Chaplain. 25-30 mins

Direct comprehension questions and Feedback from the speakers and if the time allows, from other participants.

**Moderator:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Anne Hege Grung, *Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo*

15.30 Coffee/Tea break

16.00 **Panel 2: Training programs (to be continued)**

**Norway:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Anne Hege Grung, *Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo, Norway*. 25-30 mins

**Netherlands:**

Ulli Fischer (MA), lecturer Buddhist Spiritual Care (VU Amsterdam) and Buddhist Spiritual Caregiver in the Dutch prison services.

25-30 mins (co-presentation)

Direct comprehension questions and Feedback from the speakers and if the time allows, from other participants.

**Moderator:** Univ.-Prof. Dr. Bee Scherer

17.20 Discussion and planning

18.00 End of program

19.00 Dinner

## Friday 9 December

07.30 Start of breakfast for St. Ansgar-House residents

09.00 **Panel 3: Interreligious/interdenominational cooperation, advantages, and disadvantages – Resistance and collaboration**

- Possibilities and limits of traditional chaplaincy / spiritual care

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Anne Hege Grung, Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo.  
Main Research areas: Interreligious dialogue and gender, chaplaincy and leadership, religious pluralism, and social theory. 25-30 mins

- Caring for Buddhists and Non-Buddhists from a Buddhist perspective

Mary Remington, Director, Buddhist Chaplaincy Training Program at Upaya Zen Center, Buddhist Chaplain. 25-30 mins

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- Possibilities and challenges of Muslim chaplaincy / spiritual care

Daniel Roters, M.A., Research Associate, Centre for Islamic Theology, University of Münster, and Scientific Advisory Board Member & Lecturer, Muslim Chaplaincy Baden-Wurttemberg. 25-30 mins

**Moderator:** Dr. Carola Roloff

11.00 Coffee/Tea break (20 mins)

11.30 **Panel 4: Buddhist chaplaincy and spiritual care in the context of interreligious chaplaincy**

- What does it mean to be a Buddhist counsellor, chaplain or caregiver? What makes a caregiver a Buddhist caregiver?
- Interreligious chaplaincy by whom for whom?
- How are chaplains prepared/trained for this task by whom?

Dr. Carola Roloff, *Visiting Professor for Buddhism, Akademie der Weltreligionen, Universität Hamburg*. 20 mins

Rev. Dr. Sönke Lorberg-Fehring, *Head of the Christian-Islamic Dialogue Department of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Northern Germany, Supervisor (DGfP), Docent for Pastoral Care and Counseling at the University of Hamburg and Co-team leader in an interreligious training course for Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)*. 20 mins

Exchange of ideas and experiences.

**Moderator:** Rev. Helmut Weiss

12.30 Lunch

13.30 **Strategy development: How to establish Buddhist chaplaincy in Germany**

14.45 Coffee break

15.00 **Concluding Session: What international cooperation would be desirable?**

Discussion and planning session

17.30 End of program

18.00 Dinner for St. Ansgar-House residents (until 19.00 h)

## Saturday 10 December

08.00 Start of breakfast for St. Ansgar-House residents (until 09.30 h)

## 10.00 Departure