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Lukas K. Pokorny
(editor)

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Preface

Lukas K. Pokorny

This ninth volume of *Religion in Austria* has a special focus on Buddhism with six articles—four in the *Articles* section and two in the *Sources* section. Three of them pertain to the Tibetan tradition, with attention given to the foremost European populariser of Tibetan religions, the French Buddhist traveller and writer Alexandra David-Neel (1868–1969): Christoph Hammer (Vienna) and my *Tibetan Buddhism in Austria: The Beginnings* provides a systematic account of the background and early years of Tibetan Buddhism in Austria. Samuel R. Thévoz’s (Vienna) *Vienna in the Centre of Alexandra David-Neel’s 1936 European Tour: A French Buddhist Writer’s German-Language Network* draws on David-Neel’s Vienna sojourn in 1936, particularly exploring her wider contacts with Austrian intellectuals. In a second article—“*Beware of Comparisons*”: *An Exclusive Interview with and Article by Alexandra David-Neel on Tibetan Magic and Psychic Practices in the Austrian Cultural Press, Introduced and Annotated*—Thévoz offers an extensively introduced and annotated translation of an interview with and essay by David-Neel published at the time in the Vienna-based cultural periodical *Die Pause*. Two articles deal with forms of Chinese Buddhism. Joseph Chadwin’s (Vienna) *An Ethnographic Study of Private Individual Chinese Buddhists in Vienna* examines the practices and beliefs of unaffiliated/independent Chinese Buddhists in Vienna. Chadwin’s and my *Navigating Inclusion in Fóguāngshān: Why Austrian Locals Engage and Why They Disengage* resumes research on the Austrian branch of the Taiwanese neo-Buddhist Fóguāngshān (Chadwin and Pokorny 2022). Finally, my “*Slowly but Surely, Buddhism Is Going to the Dogs*”: *An Annotated Translation of the Correspondence between Anton Kropatsch and A. A. G. Bennett, 1961–1967* addresses the third and last part (for the first two, see Pokorny 2022 and 2023b) of the thirteen-year correspondence (1955–1967) between these two European Buddhists.

The remaining articles represent scholarship on East Asian religiosities, free churches, Islam, the holistic milieu, Protestant anti-Semitism, and the Unification Church. In my *East Asian Religiosities in Austria*, I outline the current state of this thriving area within Austria’s religious landscape, existing scholarship, and research lacunae and challenges. With *The Federation*

of Evangelical Churches in Austria: *Origins, Foundation, Structure, Development, and Theological Positions* (1991–2013), Frank Hinkelmann (Bonn) continues his research on the local history of the free churches (see Hinkelmann 2023). Hüseyin Çiçek's (Vienna) *The Reach of Faith: Diyanet's Publications in Turkish Bookstores and Online Markets in Austria and German-Speaking Europe* offers an in-depth analysis of a popular *Diyanet* (Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs) book series on Islam circulating in Austria and the wider German-speaking region. *Between Spirituality and Medicinalisation: The Professionalisation of Energy Healing in Austria* by Dominic Zoehrer (Vienna) provides further insights into Austria's holistic milieu (see Endler 2020; Zoehrer 2020), shedding light on the nexus of esotericism, spirituality, science, and secularisation through empirical research on Vienna-based energy healers. Dirk Schuster's (Vienna) *German, National Socialist, Anti-Semitic: The Protestant Theological Faculty at the University of Vienna and the "Elimination of Jewish Influence"* traces the involvement of professors from the University of Vienna's Faculty of Protestant Theology in the *Institut zur Erforschung und Beseitigung des jüdischen Einflusses auf das deutsche kirchliche Leben* (Institute for the Research and Elimination of Jewish Influence on German Church Life) during the 1940s.¹ Lastly, in my second *Sources* article "*Austria, the Land Our Father Has Entrusted to Us*": *Peter Koch's Reports to the Unificationist Leadership in 1969, Introduced and Annotated*, I resume (see Pokorny 2023a) the investigation of the early correspondence between the Austrian and the Korean Unificationist leaderships.

The *Resources* section contains four contributions. *Master's and Doctoral Theses in Religious Studies at Austrian Universities, 2008–2012* lists a total of three doctoral and fifty-six Master's theses submitted in Religious Studies programmes at the Universities of Graz and Vienna between 2008 and 2012. *Master's and Doctoral Theses in Religious Studies at Austrian Universities in 2023* lists seven doctoral and eighteen Master's theses submitted in Religious Studies programmes at the Universities of Graz, Salzburg, and Vienna in 2023. *Religion in Austria: Master's and Doctoral Theses Submitted at Austrian Universities in 2023* lists fourteen doctoral and eighty-five Master's theses related to the broader study of religion in Austria that were submitted at Austrian universities last year. Finally, *Religion in Austria: A Bibliography of 2023 Scholarship* comprises bibliographical information on twenty-three monographs and edited volumes as well as 187 scholarly articles on the broader topic of religion in Austria and from a variety of disciplines that were published last year.

1 On the intersection of religion and national socialism, see Scherzberg 2023. On the *völkisch* movement and anti-Semitism, see Schuster 2023.

Twenty-two books are reviewed in the *Reviews* section by fifteen contributors. These are in alphabetical order: Jakob Helmut Deibl (Vienna); Christian Feichtinger (Graz); Christoph Hammer (Vienna); Isabelle Jonveaux (Lausanne); Lisa Kienzl (Vienna); Andreas Kowatsch (Vienna); Konstantin Aron Moser (Göttingen); Evelyn Reuter (Munich); Dirk Schuster (Vienna); Lukas K. Pokorny (Vienna); Franz Reichel (Vienna); Kathrin Trattner (Bremen); Franz Winter (Graz); Robert Wurzrainer (Vienna); and Dominic Zoehler (Vienna). Most of the reviews deal with more recent publications—2022 (4); 2021 (6); 2020 (1); 2019 (2); 2017 (2); 2016 (1); 2015 (1). The five older books reviewed are from 2013, 2009 (2), 2002, and 1999.

I would like to thank all the contributors to this volume, the external reviewers, the copy editor Robert Wurzrainer, the language editor Nickolas Roubekas, and Michael Ritter of Praesens Verlag for his unfailing professionalism. This volume is dedicated to Robert A. Segal (1948–2024), who has been a Professorial Research Fellow at the University of Vienna’s Department of Religious Studies, an editorial board member of *Religion in Austria*, brilliant scholar, and dear friend. He will be greatly missed.

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