

Foundation Project

Buddhist Center Braunschweig

Kramerstraße 18 in Braunschweig

Annual Activity Report 2014

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1 Description of the project

The real estate Kramerstrasse 18, 38122 Braunschweig is located in the „Westlichen Ringgebiet“ of the city of Braunschweig, about ten minutes walking distance from the city center. The former factory has been converted into a meditation center.

Basic data:

- Ground area: 2477 m²
- Built-over area: around 1800 m²
- Located in a redevelopment area
- Registration in the real estate register of the municipal court Braunschweig A page 3144, no. 5 of the index, district Wilhelmitor, Ground 1, Ground piece 75/5, expanse of ground and buildings.
- Purchase date: 23.12.2002
- Purchase contract: document number 297, year 2002



2 Activities

The Buddhist center is open daily for Buddhist practitioners as well as for interested visitors. Guided meditations take place every day and regular lectures given by Buddhist teachers complement the programme.

Everybody can take part in the daily meditations that are guided in German in our center. One's participation doesn't require any preparation, nor is it binding. Wednesday is a key day for newcomers: up to 80 visitors attend the guided meditation on this day.

Tibetan, European and German teachers transmit background knowledge about meditation and the Buddhist philosophy within the framework of lectures. Furthermore, we offer teachers' training and have school classes come by on a regular basis who inform themselves about Buddhism in the context of Religious or Ethics Education classes.

The operation of the Buddhist center is carried out on a voluntary basis by the members of the association and by the six center residents.

2.1 Meditation and lectures in 2014

- weekly offer on Wednesdays: explanations on the meditation practice, short lectures, questions/answers – for newcomers as well as for (more) experienced practitioners,
- lectures given by seven Buddhist teachers from Poland, Spain, Hungary and Germany, mainly organized as a two- to three-day weekend course,
- lectures and introductory explanations given to twelve school classes from the region (mostly about one per month),
- hosting of the German-speaking Center Meeting, an internal gathering of representatives from around 500 German-speaking Buddhist centers plus members of several more countries
- extensive stage programme in the framework of the "Braunschweiger Kulturnacht" 2014
- hosting of transregional and national Buddhist workshops with 20 to 60 participants

2.2 Buddhist art 2014

2.2.1 Statue building

In January 2014, the second beginners' course with Chhemet Rigzin took place in the light and warm workshop room that had just been newly refurbished: An introduction to the technique of building Buddhist clay statues. Nine participants from Germany and the Czech Republic studied the proportions of the Buddha face according to Chhemet Rigzin's traditional transmission. After drawing the

face, it was modeled. At the end of the course, the participants had to name the measures of the Buddha face in an oral test. Chhemet Rigzin was very satisfied with the participants' work and hopes that many will wish to study the time-consuming art of building statues.

After this one-week beginners' course, four students arrived who had already taken part in a course with Chhemet Rigzin. Among them were two artists from Russia who stayed two and four weeks in order to work on the foundations of a Buddha statue. Due to the students' great interest in the teaching of the master, he hardly had any time left to dedicate himself to the large statue of Loving Eyes for the altar of the Braunschweig Buddhist Center. In order to ensure that Chhemet will be able to do both teaching and his artistic work in the future, BINTA will develop a more organized structure for his next stay, as well as new didactic methods that conform to the Western idea of artistic teaching. The artist from Ladakh very much liked the idea of establishing an Institute for Buddhist Art in Braunschweig.

Taking into account the experiences from past courses with Chhemet, Petra Förster and Kris Baranski led a preliminary course in December 2014, in which the participants were taught basic knowledge of the technique as well as first experiences with modelling and insights into the history of the art of building clay statues and of Buddhist art in general. Another preliminary course will take place in January 2015. These preliminary courses are prerequisites for participating in the introductory courses with Chhemet, and they provide an opportunity to study the basics of the topic and to check if it makes sense to continue the studies.



Since the summer of 2014, Binta offers an opportunity for the alumni of previous introductory courses to work together in the workshop room. During these weekends, they can practise together, work on projects and exchange experiences.



Statue of Black Coat, 2013;
material: unburnt clay, height: 100 cm.
Buddhist Institut for Tibetan Art (BINTA),
Braunschweig.

3.2.2. Statue filling

As in previous years, during a weekend in 2014 many statues were filled by the filling team of the Central Region (Buddhistische Zentren Mitte der Karma Kagyü Linie e.V.). According to tradition, many statue fillers from other regions and countries come to Braunschweig during this weekend.

3 Building activities 2014

Costs: about € 15,000

In 2014, no building activities requiring investments were realized. This is because our manpower and the space in the factory were used to produce the flooring for the Europe Center's gompa which has an area of 570 m². The flooring is made of massive oak wood floorboards which were manufactured from oak trunks.

The above mentioned costs were essentially final payments from the building activity "Construction of a new apartment for the lama and for guests".

Nonetheless, work on the factory has continued. Several repair and maintenance measures were carried out. Here are some examples:

- Repointing of the Southern façade
- Removal of old connections to the public water supply network
- Restoration of the water drainage of the art workshop

4 Proposed activities for 2015

- Installing industrial floor screed in the main hall and in the entrance area, mounting a fire door to the garage and a new door/façade element in the entrance area
- Installing a sound-absorbing acoustic ceiling in the café, new concept for the lighting and sound equipment in the café
- Designing the meditation garden