

school students bury the teaching skeleton present in their school

German article (original): <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/bildung/nrw-schueler-beerdigen-unbekanntes-schulskelett-a-eae4b31a-d462-4353-b4d1-74fb5b8ea5d1>

English version (translated, shortened, edited):

For decades the skeleton was used in teaching: now the students buried the bones in a self-organized ceremony. Around 80 students, teachers and city representatives participated.

The students carried the coffin from the biology hall to the nearby evangelical graveyard. As the origin of the female skeleton was unknown, the ceremony was made inter-religiously, lead by an evangelical pastor. The coffin was decorated with symbols of various world religions and put into the soil - students shared what significance death has in the different world religions. They named the skeleton "Anh Bian", which is vietnamese for "mysterious peace".



Decorated coffin; skeleton visible in original article (<https://www.nordkurier.de/panorama/schuler-beerdigen-echtes-schulskelett-1131255>) but was censored by workshop host.

Q-Extra

It is a decision to show or not show / publish images of human remains.

What speaks for or against showing them?

"We are really carrying a school member to their grave" said the pastor. Since 1952 the skeleton was stored in the biology department - now it has been replaced by a plastic model. The original skeleton was bought by the city in 1952 for 600 DM (former German currency). A DNA sample was taken to determine the age and approximate origin/ethnicity of the unknown woman.

"We wanted to give our skeleton a final resting place" said the pastor. An example was taken from a school in another German city, which buried the school skeleton in 2016.

Questions

Q1: What would you do if you found a skeleton in your university or school?

Q2: Where do you think such a skeleton could have come from?

Q3: What can DNA really say about the skeleton? And is it ok to take a sample at all? (note: it is an invasive method that damages the bone)

Q4: What do you think about the burial?

Q-Extra: Look at the photo above and read the text in the box.

Q5: The skeleton was replaced by a plastic model. Do you think real human remains should be used in teaching (and research) nowadays? Feel free to explore different scenarios: school or university, different disciplines such as biology, medicine, archeology, art