INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES — SEKUNDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to …

1. reflect on Buddha as a historically significant personality and as the founder of Buddhism.
2. explain important aspects of the phases of his life path.
3. explain Buddha's last statement.
4. reflect on their own life dreams and relate them to Buddha's life story.

INTRODUCTION

The central goal of Buddhist practice is to achieve a state of lasting happiness. As a starting point, the students should reflect on their own wishes for a fulfilling life. They fill out the "wish list" on the upper half of **Worksheet 1**, which is then completed on the lower half of **Worksheet 1** at the end of the lesson.

EXERCISE 1

Material 1 is read aloud by the teacher or projected with a suitable medium. On the upper half of the sheet a short description of Buddha's life in the palace is provided as well as details leading to the question:

What made Prince Siddhartha leave this "wonderful" situation in the Royal Palace?

The students consider the motives. These are not discussed; this is an approach to the topic.

Then the lower half of **Material 1** with the prophecy is read out or revealed:

Buddha's departure from the palace was predicted in case he was confronted with the suffering of the world. His goal will be to find a way to achieve lasting happiness.

Discussion about the meaning of the prophecy takes place in a short teaching talk.

EXERCISE 2

The students read the text on Buddha's life story in **Material 2** and formulate key points on important aspects of the individual phases in **Worksheet 2.**

They discuss these in the group and the results are then presented together in class.
The initial question of why he left the palace is again referred to. It should become clear that his motivation was outstanding, namely to find a way to achieve lasting happiness for himself and all beings (i.e. the "Four Noble Truths").

DISCUSSION

Exercise 6 of Worksheet 2 is dealt with in more detail. The last statements of Buddha, such as "Be your own clear light" are reflected in the plenary. His invitation to review his teachings makes it clear that Buddhism is not a religion of faith, but a path of experience. Anyone can follow the path to become a Buddha. Buddha is like a friend that you trust and whose example you can follow. He does not want blind followers, but gives teachings and methods. Each of his students makes his own experiences on the path to enlightenment. Realized Buddhist masters pass on the methods of the Buddha to their students to this day.

REFLECTION

The students read again their wish list on **Worksheet 1** from the beginning of the lesson. They reflect and formulate new wishes and ideas on the lower half of **Worksheet 1**, if necessary. At the end of the lesson it is all about the inspiration to develop a further perspective.

Buddha's life story could inspire to put the development of inner qualities and values on the wish list as well. Long-term life goals such as developing wisdom, strength and surplus, so that one can do a lot for others, could be added.

Further examples of additions to the wish list could be:
Love that thinks of others; using one's mind for meaningful scientific work; maintaining patience and perseverance in the long run; fearlessly maintaining one's goals; being aware of the meaning of one's own actions; ...