ANSWERS TO WS 2

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

EXERCISES

Read the text "The Life Story of the Historical Buddha Shakyamuni" in **Material 2** and note down key points to the questions. Discuss them in the group.

1. **In what environment was Prince Siddhartha born?**
   Make a note of country, place, time, parents' house, culture.

   Southern Nepal - Northern India, Lumbini near Kapilavastu, ca. 560 B.C., princely family, dynasty of the Shakyas Gautama, flourishing high culture with spiritual openness and various philosophical directions

2. **What disturbed him when he was 29 years old so much that he left the palace?**
   Name the motives of the young prince.

   The confrontation with the reality of old age, sickness and death disturbed him greatly. He understood the transience of worldly pleasures and searched for a way to achieve lasting happiness.

3. **What did he try out on his search?**
   Find different phases.

   He went out and studied with many teachers of his time. He practiced in complete renunciation (asceticism) and starved himself almost to death. He sat in deep meditation (immersion) under the Bodhi tree without allowing any distraction.

4. **How is its goal, enlightenment, described?**
   Emphasize formulations in the text.

   Perfect purification from all veils of ignorance and the perfect development of all the inherent qualities of the mind: fearlessness, highest joy and boundless compassion. Huge streams of inner bliss flowed through his body.

5. **Who were his students?**
   Name what was special for that time.

   They came from all walks of life: Kings, merchants, beggars, women and men, his wife and son. The caste system had no meaning. Even women could achieve the highest realization.

6. **What were his last words?**
   Explain their meaning.

   "All that is of use to you, I have already given. Don't believe anything I say just because I am a Buddha, but check if it is in accordance with your experience. Be your own light."
   He passed on everything he knew and had experienced (84,000 teachings). It is not a religion of faith. It is about one's own experiences, everyone can critically question and check. He challenges people to go the way themselves.