INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES — SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to …

1. explain the difference between conditional and lasting happiness.
2. distinguish between the three paths and the three pillars of Buddhism.
3. identify Buddhist philosophies in the pursuit of lasting happiness.

NOTES

When Buddha was asked why he taught, his answer was, "I teach because people want to be happy and avoid suffering."
This statement shows the orientation of Buddha's entire teaching. Because people were (and are) so different, Buddha gave different advice and teachings. It is always about developing one's inner qualities and being able to be happy and free more independently of external circumstances. From the Buddhist point of view, the seed and quality of true happiness, enlightenment, lies within every sentient being.

INTRODUCTION

Material 1 provides text and image stimuli for the search for happiness. It is projected using a suitable medium. The students reflect in class on the impermanence of happiness, be it emotional, physical or material. The question of lasting happiness leads to the Buddhist theme of the lesson.

EXERCISE 1

Permanent happiness as a goal of Buddhist practice is addressed in **Worksheet 1**. Students are introduced to the Buddhist view that the external world can never produce lasting happiness. Buddha's statement, "Lasting happiness can only be found in one's own mind, the experiencer of all things," is illustrated by graphics with Buddhist symbols. In a first approach, the students should interpret them freely by exchanging ideas in the group. The **Answers to WS 1** give suggestions for **Worksheet 1**.

DEEPENING

The students are presented in **Worksheet 2** with the same graphics with the Buddhist symbols, this time short texts offer explanations of the "experiencer" or "mind," both core concepts of Buddhist teachings. This states that ultimately lasting happiness refers to the qualities we find in our own minds, regardless of external conditions. The assignments encourage you to grasp the difference between a veiled mind and a liberated mind. For this purpose, partner work is recommended, in plenary the essentials are secured, **Answers to WS 2**.

EXERCISE 2

Buddha said, "There are ways to lasting happiness." From the Buddhist point of view, Buddha himself is the best example of this unchanging happiness. Buddha is an enlightened being - a fully awakened being. He sought and ultimately attained timeless happiness by investigating the causes and conditions for happiness. It is a matter of freeing one's mind from the veils of ignorance and disturbing feelings and realizing all enlightened qualities.

Worksheet 3, Task 1 provides a stimulus for the students to reflect in plenary on how meditation might be related to happiness. Afterwards, the students read **Material 2** with basic statements about Buddha's teachings. They grasp the systematic nature of the three ways and pillars. **Worksheet 3, Task 2** provides a basic grid in which the students enter key points after evaluating the text. This work can be done in small groups.

SECURING AND TRANSFER

The students present their results, possibly in three groups, according to the three paths. Solutions are provided by **Answers to WS 3**. In essence, it should be ensured that Buddhism offers different paths with different emphases to lasting happiness.

Common to all paths is the realization that encounters, experiences and possessions do not ultimately bring happiness because they are impermanent. However, if the focus is on the mind, the "timeless experiencer," one has the inner freedom to decide how to experience: in the here and now, without hope or fear, without concepts and without expectations, with fearlessness, joy and compassion. **Material 3** is projected at the end. The connection to the beginning of the lesson is made, what was learned in the lesson about the Buddhist view is integrated. A short exchange between the students can take place.