MATERIAL 2

WHAT ARE THE POINTS OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE DISCIPLINES?

Is Buddhism a religion?

Buddhism is called one of the five world religions. It gives the seekers of meaning answers to the questions about the ultimate truth. In the different Buddhist directions there are different rituals, which often have cultural backgrounds. In Buddhism, there are no dogmas that must be believed or simply accepted. Instead, everything may be questioned. Everything Buddha taught is understood as advice that can be verified by one's own experiences, in meditation and in everyday life. In Buddhism there is no creator god. Buddha is not seen as a god, but as a role model and friend. Everyone can achieve spiritual realization just like him. Buddhism is therefore not a religion of faith, but can be described as a religion of experience. Buddhists themselves experience Buddhism as a method, a path that can be followed. There are teachers who pass on the knowledge and meditation methods.

Is Buddhism a psychology?

Buddha's teachings initially seem to have similar goals to positive psychology: both are intended to benefit people in everyday life, to bring about positive changes, to make them happier, and to help them develop their abilities for the benefit of others. While psychology usually stops when everything goes smoothly in everyday life and people are at peace with themselves again, Buddhism goes further and builds on that. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to realize the mind, our "experiencer," and to develop the full potential of enlightened qualities: This is expressed through unwavering fearlessness, supreme joy, and super-personal compassion. Knowing that everyone experiences his or her own karma, that is, the result of impressions of past thoughts, words and deeds stored in the mind, leads to personal responsibility. This also applies to stored karmic impressions from previous lifetimes. Through present actions, one is constantly planting new seeds for the future. Through Buddhist mediation methods, old karmic seeds and tendencies are cleared and qualities are developed.



Is Buddhism a Philosophy?

Buddha's teachings form a clear, logical and comprehensible explanatory model of the world. The insights can be supported by arguments. In this respect, Buddhism could also be called a philosophy. Philosophies depend on the spirit of the times and also have an influence on social trends and individual lifestyles. Buddhism, however, is timeless. Buddhism does not stop at theoretical knowledge and abstract explanations, but ultimately goes beyond all concepts and ideas. The application of Buddhist views and meditations in everyday life brings about a permanent change in body, speech and mind: One becomes more relaxed, acts increasingly from one's own center, and thus becomes more useful to others.

Is Buddhism a science?

Buddha examined the world and its phenomena to find out how they really are, not just how they appear to us. Buddha explained how the ego illusion filters perception and colors experience. He showed that there is no independent, material existence in the world of appearances and taught the dreamlike nature of all phenomena. The Buddhist teachings describe how things really are, and furthermore show ways how one can use this knowledge for oneself and others and achieve lasting happiness. In doing so, Buddha never had a claim to sole representation, but he called for not simply believing what he said, but to examine it critically and on the basis of one's own experiences. In this way, Buddha's statements should also stand up to modern scientific knowledge. In fact, there are many areas today where scientific findings and Buddha's statements about the world agree, such as in quantum physics, near-death research, medicine, and perception theory. Buddhism is the science of the mind, combining outer and inner truth.