WORKSHEET 5

THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH: "THERE IS A WAY TO THE END OF SUFFERING"

The goal of Buddhist teaching is for beings to develop until they become enlightened. The great difference between Buddha and non-enlightened beings is that he has freed his mind from all ignorance and habits that cause suffering, thus fulfilling the conditions for enlightenment. Non-enlightened beings only have to follow this path. This consists in the application of timeless methods and culminates in enlightenment.

During the 45 years in which he taught, Buddha gave 84,000 teachings that allowed his friends and disciples to make every moment of life a step on the path to liberation and enlightenment. His suggestions for ending suffering and experiencing lasting happiness can be categorized into three groups, namely, view, meditation, and behavior.

View: By understanding cause and effect, one takes responsibility for one's life and is aware that one is constantly planting seeds for the future. With a beyond-personal attitude and the knowledge that one is not separate from others, one realizes that all beings want to be happy. Releasing inner wealth, one sees the potential in every situation.

Meditation: The agitated mind comes to rest and one gains distance, so that one is not carried away by disturbing feelings. Confusion dissolves and more clarity emerges.
Compassion and wisdom unfold in the mind. In meditation, one practices keeping a Pure View by tuning into the joy and love of enlightenment.

Action: One avoids behavior that causes suffering and practices behavior that produces happiness in every situation of daily life. With compassion, one includes the welfare of others. Wisdom is important to see what is really beneficial and useful in the long run. One behaves like a Buddha until one has become a Buddha.

It is very helpful not to follow the Buddhist path alone. The community of friends who travel the path to enlightenment is called the Sangha, the "community of practitioners".

EXERCISES

Role play for the story with the hammer

Imagine that the neighbor in question is a Buddhist and acts according to the above view.

With a partner, develop a role play in which one takes the part of the Buddhist neighbor and the other takes the part of the man who needs the hammer. Develop several possibilities for how the situation might proceed. Prepare a variation for the plenary.

1. Role-play to illustrate how point of view and behavior are related by depicting the thoughts behind the behavior (talking quietly aside).

2. Invite the agitated neighbor to a short meditation exercise to calm him down and explain the effect of meditation.