INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to ...

1. distinguish between fate, divine influence, coincidence and karma (= cause and effect).
2. explain the term "karma" from a Buddhist perspective.
3. reflect on the consequences of actions.
4. reflect on whether and to what extent everyone is responsible for their own luck and life.

NOTES

The concept of karma is clearly separated from the concept of fate in Buddhism. According to Buddha, neither a creator god nor an external cause is responsible for our experiences. Karma is the principle of cause and effect: Our deeds, words and thoughts (karma literally: "deed, action or activity") - also from previous lives - are the causes for what we experience now. What and especially how something is experienced depends on the stored impressions from before, and at the same time new seeds are constantly being sown. When one understands that every action has consequences for oneself and the environment, one takes responsibility and is not discouraged by difficult situations. One gains the insight that it is always worthwhile to put positive impressions in one's mind. To this end, one can make a conscious decision.

INTRODUCTION

Impulse:
"Everyone is the architect of his own fortune".

- The students first discuss the correctness of this proverb in partner work. The range of answers is from "Yes, everything is possible" to "Not in every case" to "Very rarely".
- There are different belief systems, ideas about life and role models. This is collected in plenary.

EXERCISE 1

The students work in groups with **Worksheet 1** and **Material 1** to develop a definition and an example of the three terms "God, fate, chance". In a further step, they are asked to assess the respective scope of action for humans. In the class discussion, the results are recorded in the form of a table on the board or whiteboard, see **Answers to WS 1**.

EXERCISE 2

In this step, the Buddhist model of karma - cause and effect is introduced. The students receive **Material 2** and read the text. They now complete the table on **Worksheet 1** on the term "karma" and answer question 5 on the basic Buddhist attitude. This can be done in partner work, the result is clarified in plenary and recorded on the board or whiteboard, see **Answers to WS 1**.

NOTES

Karma (cause and effect) works even when the connections between the two are no longer recognizable - for example, when numerous causes overlap or a lot of time passes. Cause and effect does not mean constriction, but freedom. In fact, it allows us to shape both the present and the future at any moment through actions, words, and thoughts. The responsibility for the experience of happiness lies with everyone unreservedly.

DEEPENING

For understanding karma, the doctrine of cause and effect, Buddha drew on the analogy of seed and plant from nature.

Variation 1 with a high level of demand

The students find the parallels between the development of plants (from seed to fruit) on the one hand and the maturing of karma (according to cause and effect) on the other hand. For this purpose, **Worksheet 2 A** serves as a template, the filling in of the columns is done in partner work. The students understand the analogy and explain the results in the plenary on the board/whiteboard, cf. **Answers to WS 2**.

Variation 2 with intermediate level

On **Worksheet 2 B** the development of plants is given. The second column on the maturation of karma is completed in partner work and discussed in plenary. The results of the work are compared on the

board/whiteboard, see **Answers to WS 2**.

Variation 3 with easy level of demand

The students receive **Worksheet 2 A** as a template. They work out the analogy between the development of plants (from seed to fruit) and the ripening of karmic impressions (cause and effect) by sorting the cut-out text modules from **Worksheet 2 C**. This can be done in partner work. The results of the work can be compared on the board/whiteboard, see **Answers to WS 2**.

These three variants can also be used for simultaneous differentiation within very heterogeneous groups.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

In class discussion, the pupils look for examples where the interplay between cause and effect is easy to see!

Possible examples could be:

- doing nothing for others - being unpopular
- smoking - smoker's lung/lung cancer
- drug addiction - early death
- traveling a lot - openness to other people
- helpfulness - being liked
- aggressiveness - one is rejected
- healthy lifestyle - one is fit
- regular learning - good school performance
- frequent lying - others become suspicious of you
- honesty - the others trust you

It is also useful here to examine an example more closely for its connections: e.g., "I'm unpopular, nobody likes me!" By the resigned attitude and too little active friendly actions one strengthens the cycle. Liberating would be a fundamental attitude change with the decision to become positively active oneself and then to do so.

SECURING OF KNOWLEDGE

Finally, the it comes back to the initial statement "Everyone is the architect of his own fortune". **Material 3** is offered for this purpose. On the one hand, it is about reflecting the Buddhist point of view, but also about respecting the personal opinion of the students.