WORKSHEET 3

COMPASSION AND WISDOM IN BUDDHISM

Buddha taught a path to lasting happiness. We can consciously examine and change our attitudes and also personal habits.

COMPASSION

Buddhists have the desire to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. This attitude is based on the understanding that one's own happiness is not more significant than the happiness of other beings. On the contrary, one is only one person, while countless other beings also wish to attain happiness. Compassion in Buddhism is the wish that all sentient beings may be happy. The "Four Immeasurable" wishes express it like this:

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.
May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.
May they always experience happiness, which is totally free from suffering.
May they remain in the great equanimity, which is without attachment and aversion.

According to these wishes, one acts for the good of all in every circumstance as best one can. Compassion is clearly distinguished from **pity** in Buddhism. Compassion extends a helping hand, but does not get involved in the trouble. Only from a position of strength, surplus and insight can one truly help others in a meaningful and long-term way.

WISDOM

Wisdom is a beyond-personal understanding of contexts. Wisdom fully recognizes how things are and not how they superficially appear. Enlightenment is compared to waking up from the dream of ignorance. One experiences lasting joy, fearlessness, and compassionate love.

Instead of putting on blinders for egoistic reasons, one can freely grasp a situation with an overview and correctly understand connections.



In meditation, many Buddhists align themselves with the Buddha of Compassion. His four arms symbolize LOVE, COMPASSION, SYMPATHETIC JOY and EQUANIMITY

Bodhisattvas act with this attitude for the benefit of all beings - called enlightened mind. They are also called "heroes of the enlightened mind", and they work for the benefit of others with strength and joy. Compassion and wisdom work together, because those who act only compassionately and without wisdom make mistakes. Wise people act in such a way that everyone can develop well.

EXERCISES

1. Read the text and underline the statements that are important to you.

2. Why does a Buddhist want to be compassionate and wise?