INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to . . .

1. to recognize causes of happiness.
2. to show what constitutes the path of the Bodhisattva.
3. understand the central importance of compassion and wisdom.
4. test that wisdom and compassion applied in one's own life bring about a change in behavior

NOTES

Compassion and wisdom are at the core of Buddhist teachings. To develop these very important human qualities, there are different methods:

In the Great Way one proceeds step by step to develop compassion and wisdom equally -supported by meditation. In the Diamond Way, the teacher (Lama) is taken as a model. In the meditations, the practitioner identifies either with the qualities of Buddha aspects that specifically stand for compassion and wisdom, or with enlightened teachers who stand for the wholeness of enlightenment and thus express compassion and wisdom.

INTRODUCTION

A cartoon in **Material 1** serves as an introductory stimulus to briefly discuss the problem of attaining happiness.

EXERCISE 1

In groups, the students work on **Worksheet 1** with a text on the World Happiness Report and various quotations on happiness. These are not Buddhist texts, but for the most part they support the Buddhist teachings on happiness in connection with an altruistic attitude.

Students evaluate the texts by finding causes of happiness, distinguishing internal and external causes. Likewise, they can use statements from happiness research and the quotations to prove that one's own happiness is related to the happiness of others. People who are voluntarily prepared to do something for others out of their inner understanding (voluntary work, social commitment) have always been identified by happiness research as the happier people compared to the rest of the population. All qualities - including lasting happiness - depend on one's own inner life. This is what needs to be strengthened.

The conclusions of the respective groups should capture the importance of the inner attitude and will be presented in plenary. **Answers to WS 1** give suggestions for solutions.

EXERCISE 2

Now, **Worksheet 2** introduces the core Buddhist concepts of compassion and wisdom. They are essential on the path of the Bodhisattva, who strives for happiness for the best of all living beings. The students compare these statements with those on the inner causes of happiness **(Exercise 1, WS 1)** and develop the Buddhist meanings of the terms in partner work. They recognize the importance of meditation as training on the path. The teacher offers suggestions for **Answers to WS 2**, which are compared in plenary.

DEEPENING KNOWLEDGE

Ultimately, one can hardly manage to control inner states through the intellect: compassion and wisdom are not strengthened through mental effort (just as love, perseverance, patience, joy, fearlessness, and all other meaningful human qualities).

Therefore, Buddha gave different methods to develop compassion and wisdom, for example:

1. through the Six Liberating Actions (see lesson topic of the same name).
2. through meditation (see lesson topic of the same name), which is structured on the Great Way and in the Diamond Way in such a way that the development of compassion and wisdom is experienced centrally.
3. through recitation of mantras that strengthen qualities of compassion and wisdom.

Material 2 shows Buddha forms that express compassion and wisdom. The teacher chooses a way of projection and in class discussion the students deepen their understanding of the way of the Bodhisattva. This is motivated by the mind of enlightenment, an attitude through which one develops for the good of all and attains enlightenment, and specifically strengthens compassion and wisdom, through meditation and recitation of mantras.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, optional

During a test week, the pupils check in their every-

day life through their consciously compassionate behavior whether they experience a meaningful change in their inner life as well as in their environment. Optionally, they keep a diary or use virtual communication to share their experiences. If desired, there is an evaluative class discussion about the experience. An impetus is provided by information about neuroscience experiments on compassion meditation. Depending on the time, the teacher chooses the level of detail and the form in which the knowledge about the experiments is elaborated.

NOTES

At the University of Madison (Wisconsin, USA), students were asked to participate in a scientific experiment. They were told that the purpose was to test whether meditation could have an effect on the brain; if so, what effect. They learned a meditation on compassion and repeated it regularly. However, besides the actual change in the brain (frontal lobe), there was another thing that was really at stake: Weeks after the experiment, the students were asked again if anything had changed in their lives, and if so, what? The general answer was that relationships with parents, friends, fellow students, etc. had become much friendlier.

Land, Dian: Study shows how compassion and meditation change the brain. 12.12.2016, Internet publication in German at: https://www.epochtimes.de/gesundheit/studie-zeigt-wie-mitgefuehl-und-meditation-das-gehirn-veraendern-a597807.html [20.10.2020]

Ricard, Matthieu :Neurowissenschaft und Buddhismus. Wie die Meditation unser Leben verändern kann, in: Tibet and Buddhism, February 2010, Internet publication in German at: https://www.tibet.de/fileadmin/migration/pdf/tibu/2010/tibu93_2_Matthieu_Ricard_Wissenschaft.pdf [Stand: 20.10.2020]