COMPASSION AND WISDOM

Buddha showed a path to lasting happiness. He gave teachings on the way to experience the world (view), meditation and behavior in everyday life. Perfecting compassion and wisdom is an essential part of his teaching.

Understanding that all living beings want to experience happiness and at the same time realizing that one's own happiness is not separate from that of others, one develops the desire to be able to benefit others. Beyond personal compassion and wisdom do not exclude any living being and are independent of whether one likes someone or not.

Enlightenment mind (Sanskrit: bodhicitta), the attitude of developing oneself with compassion and wisdom for the good of all and attaining enlightenment, is the foundation in the Great Way (Mahayana) and the Diamond Way (Vajrayana).

Buddhists distinguish love and compassion: love is the deep wish that all beings may be happy; compassion is wishing that no being ever suffers.

Practitioners of the Great Way and Diamond Way are called Bodhisattvas, which translates as "enlightened courageous ones." They are courageous because a Bodhisattva is fearless and always supportive, no matter whether adverse circumstances or obstacles arise. Thinking of the welfare of others is included in his every action. The active implementation of this Bodhisattva attitude is through the **"Six Liberating Actions"** (Sanskrit.: paramitas). These are generosity, meaningful behavior, patience, joyful action, meditation, and the wisdom that results from them. Buddhist meditation is a method of allowing inherent qualities such as fearlessness, joy, and love to emerge. As one develops **beyond personal compassion and wisdom**, one becomes increasingly independent of external conditions, while one's natural inclination to do something meaningful for others increases. Perfect love and perfect, energetic compassion are an expression of enlightenment.

The **"Four Immeasurable"** wishes express this Bodhisattva attitude:

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness (= love).

May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering (= compassion).

May they never be separate from true happiness, which is without suffering (=sympathetic joy).

May they abide in great equanimity, free from attachment and aversion =(equanimity).

According to these wishes, one acts for the best of all in every circumstance as best one can. Compassion extends a helping hand, but does not get involved in the difficulties. From a position of strength, surplus, and insight, one can help others in a meaningful and long-term way. Compassion and wisdom work together, for those who act only compassionately and without wisdom make mistakes. Wise people act in such a way that all can develop well. One sees the potential of others and strengthens their abilities. So compassion is included in every decision.

Wisdom means seeing how things are and not how they superficially appear. One experiences continuously that the doer, the act itself and the object of the act are inseparably connected - otherwise a (compassionate) act would never reach its goal. With wisdom, one recognizes what is real and can intuitively grasp a situation correctly. Wisdom is the ability to distinguish things completely clearly from each other, i.e. to recognize and know in a beyond personal way, unhindered by limiting ideas and prejudices. Under this condition, one is able to act meaningfully for the best of all. Finally, wisdom and compassion become so natural that every act arises spontaneously and without the notion of "I am doing something with you or for you" and contributes to the welfare of other beings.

Wisdom has many faces: There is a practical wisdom, namely to recognize what leads to happiness and what brings suffering; one acts accordingly. This creates more space and the view for others becomes increasingly free. The less one's own interests inter-

fere, the more one feels connected to others and can be there for them.

Unwaveringness arises through the understanding of the transience of all phenomena, when one understands that occurring difficulties are not permanent, ultimately not even real.

Through unfolding intuitive wisdom, coupled with active compassion, a Bodhisattva opens access to each being's inherent qualities - each thereby becoming a tangible example of meaningful existence.