WORKSHEET 2

THE WAY OF THE BODHISATTVA – THE SIX LIBERATING ACTIONS

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In Buddhism, a Bodhisattva is someone who works for the benefit of all beings. Realizing that all people want to be happy and avoid suffering, a strong desire to truly help arises. This becomes the driving force. In the so-called Bodhisattva Pledge, practitioners of Buddhism emphasize that they want to develop their abilities with infinite power and perseverance for the benefit of all. In this, it is important that compassion and wisdom be developed with equal strength. This is because it is useful to give what people need, but not always what they desire. Those who act compassionately without being wise make mistakes, especially in the long run.
A Buddhist assumes that one can develop all the qualities and characteristics attributed to a Buddha. Every situation on the path is used to give the best. Thus, through perseverance, fearlessness, joy and meaningful action are developed to an increasing degree.
One method used by all past and present Bodhisattvas are the Six Liberating Actions:

- **Generosity**
- **Meaningful behavior**
- **Patience**
- **Joyful effort**
- **Meditation**
- **Wisdom**

The first four describe compassionate actions that lead to pleasant and friendly relationships. Through meditation and wisdom, these are internalized and directed in the right direction. Ultimately, this leads to liberation.

Generosity is the sharing of material things, one's strength, time and good feelings. It builds trust and openness, makes friendships rich, and avoids feelings of confinement.

Meaningful behavior keeps human exchange going and is the basis for more growth. It means avoiding causes of trouble and benefiting others as much as possible. Protecting with the body, telling the truth, speaking connectingly instead of intriguing, speaking calmly and kindly instead of speaking disparagingly and disrespectfully, and being benevolent, which means having a fundamentally understanding attitude toward the actions of others, because everyone wants happiness and to avoid suffering and acts out of ignorance rather than malice.

Patience is an antidote to anger. If we give anger a place in our behavior, it eats into us more and more and becomes more and more uncontrollable, so that sometimes friendships become enmities. Patience is the ability to handle difficulties with balance and to face circumstances that cannot be changed, such as illness, without panic.

Joyful Action means always doing our best and working with perseverance and strength for the best for others and ourselves.

Meditation creates space and freedom in one's consciousness. Inwardly, based on good concentration, one sees thoughts and feelings as they appear and pass away. A deeper understanding towards living beings and everyday situations arises.

The growing **wisdom** and insight into one's own mind - the observer who looks through the eyes, hears through the ears and perceives everything - leads to the experience of unconnectedness. Everything and everyone is connected.

EXERCISES

1. Briefly explain the term Bodhisattva.

2. Find appropriate phrases for the first four Liberating Actions and justify your choice.

3. Deepen the first Liberating Action, generosity. For this purpose, imagine an ideal celebration, the moment when you distribute your appropriate and very beautiful gifts:
   How does the person feel who has been given the gift and how does the one feel who has received the gift? In this context, clarify the characteristic of the process of gift giving, keeping in mind the last sentence of the text: "Everything and everyone is connected". Your result will lead you in the direction of Buddhist wisdom.