WORKSHEET 2

THE PATH OF A BODHISATTVA - THE SIX LIBERATING ACTIONS

Realizing that all living beings want to be happy and avoid suffering, a strong desire to be truly useful arises. This desire becomes the driving force for action. In Buddhism, there is the so-called Bodhisattva Pledge, in which one deepens the attitude of developing all abilities with infinite power and perseverance for the benefit of all. In this, it is important to develop compassion and wisdom with equal strength. For it is useful to give what people need, but not always what they desire. Those who are only compassionate but act without wisdom make mistakes.

A Buddhist assumes that one can build and develop all the enlightened qualities attributed to a Buddha. Every situation on the path is used to give one's best. Thus, through perseverance, fearlessness, joy, and comprehensive love are developed to an increasing degree.

The Bodhisattva Attitude is realized in the Six Liberating Actions.

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

Why are they called "liberating"? Because, on the one hand, it gives you a state that is free from suffering, and on the other hand, it gives you the wisdom that you are not separate from others. The first four describe compassionate action that leads to pleasant and friendly relationships. Through meditation, one attains a stable mind that is less and less influenced by disturbances, which produces joy and single-mindedness. Wisdom should permeate all actions.

GENEROSITY

is the sharing of material and immaterial values. It creates trust and openness, fosters friendships and avoids the feeling of confinement. Generosity opens every situation and enriches every human encounter. One can be generous in various ways: by giving material things; with personal commitment, by sharing one's strength, skills, good feelings and qualities; by protecting those in need of help, by giving someone an education, or by simply being there for others when they need you. Of course, the most beneficial way to help others is to help them become self-sufficient.

MEANINGFUL BEHAVIOR

keeps human exchange going and is the basis for more growth. It means avoiding causes of trouble, making one's own life meaningful, and benefiting others as much as possible. This is expressed through the ten positive actions, such as protecting with the body, speaking the truth, speaking in an open way instead of scheming, speaking calmly and kindly instead of speaking disparagingly and disrespectfully, cultivating a benevolent attitude because everyone wants to have happiness and avoid suffering.

PATIENCE

creates distance from difficulties and goes in two directions: Patience with oneself and with others. One gives oneself and others the space to develop. Patience is the ability to deal with difficulties with emotional balance and to go through circumstances that cannot (yet) be changed. However, this does not mean remaining passive in a bad situation. Patience is an antidote to expectations, prejudice, and anger. Since anger can destroy all established good relationships and make one unhappy oneself, Buddha calls the state of patience the most beautiful but most difficult clothing to wear. One who is full of compassion and remains relaxed in any situation cannot be disturbed by anything and becomes unshakable.

JOYFUL EFFORT

includes perseverance and means that you just like to do something useful for the good of all, defeating your passivity at the same time. Each workout starts with simple tasks, continuously increasing the level of performance. What was laborious and needed overcoming at the beginning, happens effortlessly and playfully after a period of training. It is even fun. Every time you put extra power into what you are doing, you get extra energy and qualities. Sometimes going beyond habitual limits brings strength and stamina.

In fact, scientific research on happiness has confirmed what Buddha said some 2600 years ago: doing something voluntarily for others makes you happy. This doing brings growth and makes life rich. In-

wardly, one becomes more joyful; outwardly, things change in a way that today might be described as "improving the quality of life."

MEDITATION

creates a stable mind, which gets more and more ability to rest in itself. Inner freedom grows like a joyful force. A deeper understanding towards all living beings and everyday situations arises. (detailed on Worksheet 3)

WISDOM

Buddhist wisdom is not school wisdom and intellectual knowledge, but intuitive, spontaneous insight. Everything restrictive, which refers only to one's own ego, disappears. On the everyday level, the lack of wisdom becomes apparent when one is supposed to decide for oneself or for others, but does not know which action will bring the desired result. Such limitations gradually fall away on the Buddhist path. Through meditation and meaningful action, one increasingly develops intuitive wisdom. This leads to the experience of a beyond personal view that is not colored by one's own concepts. One recognizes which action is meaningful in a situation.

EXERCISES

Read the text and discuss in the group.

1. Explain why these actions are called “liberating”.

2. Why is wisdom so important in the application of all the Liberating Actions?

3. Specify the attitude and motivation of the man at the back of the supermarket checkout line and compare his actions to the Liberating Actions.