INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to . . .

1. recognize that different actions produce different effects.
2. apply the first four liberating actions in connection with wisdom as a Buddhist method to an everyday situation.
3. understand the liberating aspect of the Liberating Actions and relate them to the Bodhisattva Way.
4. Understand meditation as a method of developing clarity and peace of mind.

INTRODUCTION

Worksheet 1 presents an everyday scene at a supermarket checkout; the students are led to the question of what actions can be taken to react in a tense situation. The research question is: How can the man in the back make the situation easier for everyone? It should first become clear that in everyday life, small actions are often enough to make a positive difference. For this purpose, group work is suitable; with a suitable class, a role play is also conceivable.

EXERCISE

The Six Liberating Actions are a method from Buddhist teachings to develop compassion and wisdom, resulting in more freedom and happiness.

The students receive **Worksheet 2** with an overview of the Six Liberating Actions. As a group, they develop an understanding of the key messages. The assignments guide them to the understanding that these actions are "liberating" because a state free of suffering is attained, combined with the wisdom of not experiencing oneself as separate from others. The students apply this knowledge to the case study of **Worksheet 1**, the assignments are discussed in plenary. **Answers to WS 2** give possible replies. Despite the different suggestions of the students, a distinction should be made

- Those who are emotionally entangled in a situation often react impulsively instead of acting sensibly and in turn provoke a violent counter-reaction in others.
- With enough distance and composure, one usually has several possibilities to act and can consciously exert a positive influence.
- A Bodhisattva acts for the benefit of living beings. From the deep understanding of a situation he gives the beings what they need for their development.

DEEPENING, OPTIONAL

The topic can be further explored in class discussion by looking at the domino effect of actions. The students have already considered the immediate positive effects of the Liberating Actions for all involved. In a further step, they consider what might happen when these individuals walk out of the supermarket. What actions and impacts do they each bring to their environment? Actions touch not only the specific situation, but beyond that, the reaction of others, who in turn touch wider circles. Thus everything is interpenetrated - the mutual conditionality of all phenomena is to be clarified.

A humorous negative example of the mechanism of action - reaction is shown in **"The chain of screaming", "How I met your mother", season 3, episode 15**. The students turn this negative example into a positive one. They can also relate it again to the situation at the supermarket checkout. The exchange takes place in class discussion in plenary.

Source: How I Met Your Mother. The chain of screaming. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UFgQNqQXsA [27.01.2026)

SECURING KNOWLEDGE

Material 1 informs about the path of the Bodhisattva up to enlightenment. The students check their understanding individually. Any ambiguities are discussed. The backup can also be done as homework.

APPLICATION – MEDITATION

The students are given the opportunity to have their own short experience of the fifth Liberating Action, meditation. To illustrate the effect of meditation, the teacher introduces an experiment: Some soil is poured into a glass of water and stirred with a spoon, then the spoon is taken out and glass is set aside for the time being. The turbid stirred water corresponds to an unclear mind that expresses itself through many - mostly unconscious - thoughts.

The students now experience a short meditation themselves. The one-minute meditation on **Worksheet 3** is read aloud by the teacher, and then the students receive **Worksheet 3** in order to exchange ideas in the plenary. Perhaps individual students have kept an eye on the water glass and point it out so that everyone understands the analogy when they look at it: The earth has settled and the water is completely clear. The thoughts have come to rest, the mind is clear.

NOTES

Thoughts are a natural expression of the mind. The problem is that we are mostly unaware of the ego-centeredness of our thoughts. Moreover, we cling to them, after the first one a second one forms, then a third one on the same subject. Finally, each of our actions is determined by our thoughts and thus takes on a personal coloring. Becoming free from attachment to our thoughts does not mean suppressing them, but simply letting them move on.
This relaxation brings more space and joy to the mind, and so it becomes more natural to act compassionately. Compassionate action is characterized by turning to the other without judgment or expectation, wisdom makes one do the right thing, and meditation in turn strengthens and develops Liberating Actions.