WORKSHEET 1

A STORY FROM THE LIFE OF PRINCE SIDDHARTHA, THE LATER BUDDHA

Prince Siddhartha lived 29 years in a shielded palace with the best education and all the comforts of life. But after secretly leaving the palace and seeing old age, sickness and death, the young prince could no longer find peace. Agitated, he tossed and turned all night. The realization that these sufferings belong to the life of beings made him brood. All joys, all possessions, all happy moments would pass away. No matter how he looked at it, he could find nothing to offer his family and friends as a lasting refuge. No happiness would last forever!

The next morning, the prince passed a man sitting in deep contemplation. When their eyes met, it triggered a deep inner certainty in the future Buddha. This man reflected something timeless that could not pass away. Buddha understood that there must be something between and behind the ideas and impressions of the usual life, an inner freedom that makes happy.

So he decided to go away from his palace and give up his rich pleasant life to find this timelessness.

EXERCISES

1. How does someone get the idea of striving for enlightenment when he does not even know this goal?

2. Did Siddhartha have any idea in which direction the path might go?

3. What might the goal of "enlightenment" look like?

A definition (Wikipedia):
The term **awakening** (Sanskrit bodhi), often inaccurately translated as "enlightenment," has a central meaning in Buddhism. It is found in "Buddha" ("the awakened one") and "Bodhisattva" (= enlightened one). Bodhi comes from the Sanskrit root budh, which means "to awaken, to recognize, to perceive, to understand."