WORKSHEET 1

IS THERE LASTING HAPPINESS?

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

As a prince, Siddhartha had a wonderful life in his parents' palace. His father made sure that he was not confronted with the problems of the world. However, after secretly leaving the palace and seeing old age, sickness and death, the young prince could no longer find peace. The realization that these sufferings were part of the lives of all beings stirred him up. All joys, all possessions, all happy moments would pass away.

No matter how he looked at it, he could not find a way to protect his family and friends from suffering. Is there a lasting happiness and how could it be found? He would not find the answer there in the palace.

So Prince Siddhartha decided to give up his comfortable life and he set out on a search. He met many masters of different philosophical schools. After six years of learning and meditation, Siddhartha, the future Buddha, made a firm decision to dwell in deep meditation. He sat down under the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya. After six days and nights of intense inner experience, he achieved enlightenment on the full moon morning in May. He became radiant awareness in the here and now, through every cell he knew and was everything. That is why he is called Buddha, the Awakened One.

EXERCISES

1. **In bullet points from the life story, note essentials about the following steps:**
   - Initial situation
   - Motivation
   - Path
   - Goal

2. **Discuss the following key questions with your partners:**
   - What do you think of the Buddha's decision to leave his familiar surroundings?
   - Do you think the urgency of Buddha's concern is still relevant in today's life?
   - Look for situations from your life experience where you have had similar situations.
   - Consider whether there are possible solutions to lasting happiness?
   - Do you see a way to change the outer world in such a way that lasting happiness is achieved?