INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to . . .

1. bring in their previous knowledge about meditation and acquire knowledge about Buddhist meditation.
2. discuss how Buddhist meditation has practical benefits in everyday life.
3. have a practical experience of a simple Buddhist meditation.

INTRODUCTION

Material 1 gives the students the opportunity to introduce their basic knowledge about meditation in two steps. The pictures and the simple questions in the upper half of the picture are projected via a suitable medium and lead to the topic being taken up in the class discussion. The pictures of the accessories (lower half of the picture) can optionally be shown to lead over to Buddhist meditation.

NOTES

The right size **cushion** helps to find a comfortable sitting position, especially when sitting in the half or full lotus position.

Meditation beads (Sanskrit: mala) come in a long and a short version, usually consisting of 108 and 27 beads, respectively. It is used to count mantras. It also helps to make meditation a holistic experience: The mind visualizes a Buddha aspect, the speech repeats a mantra, and the body moves the beads of the meditation chain.

A picture or statue of an enlightened **Buddha aspect** can be used as a tool for meditation to focus the mind on.

EXERCISE

In the following, Buddhist knowledge on the topic of meditation is developed on the basis of an information text (**Material 2**) with the corresponding **Worksheet 1**. The text introduces basic goals and ways (methods) in Buddhism and also includes the effects of meditation and the sitting posture.

Note: It is advisable to print out the speech bubbles on **Worksheet 1** enlarged in order to have enough space for the method of thinking-exchanging-discussing.

1. The students first work individually to gain an understanding of **Material 2**: They read the text and write down their first key points for the individual tasks in the speech bubbles on **Worksheet 1**
2. Afterwards, two people sitting next to each other exchange their results, correct each other and add key points on **Worksheet 1**.
3. In a group of 4, a second round of exchange follows: two pairs each compare their results and complete their answers on their **Worksheet 1**.
4. Each group of students receives **Worksheet 1** from the teacher to fill in their answers for the following presentation. Afterwards, the answers are presented in the plenary. The solutions provide **Answers to WS 1**, which can also be printed out for the students as a backup.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Worksheet 2 builds on the positive effects of meditation that have already been developed. In group work, the students find concrete everyday situations and reflect on possible practical effects of meditation. They are asked to reflect to what extent difficult situations change when one meditates regularly and reacts differently. The effects on the environment should also be included. The results will be presented in a class discussion.

NOTES

Regardless of one's specific spiritual path, meditation practices have positive effects that manifest in daily life. The experience of everyday life changes when one meditates regularly. These effects are particularly evident in a growing sense of calm, which also leads to an increase in joy and compassion in one's surroundings.

- The ability to concentrate is increased; one can persistently deal with a matter without being distracted.
- One gets distance from mood swings and disturbing feelings. One becomes angry, jealous, etc., but can contemplate the feeling without immediately reacting with words and actions.
- One can relax in a very short time, relieve stress and then be fit for new activities.
- Meditation can have a positive effect on numerous disorders such as nervousness, sleep disor-

ders, anxiety, etc.
- Awareness and mindfulness develop, one becomes more aware of one's own feelings, thoughts and reaction patterns and can therefore deal with them more appropriately. At the same time, you become more mindful of what is going on around you. This can be very useful especially in interpersonal interactions.

APPLICATION

Material 3 provides a simple meditation that is read aloud by the teacher. The students simply follow what the teacher reads. They sit upright with their backs as straight as possible. It is advisable to take small pauses between paragraphs so that the text can be better internalized by the students. It is simply about the experience.

Meditation can meet with great approval even in noisy classes. Therefore, the invitation to meditate should go out to all students. If someone does not want to participate, they can be asked to simply remain silent. However, individual students may burst out laughing at first because the situation is foreign to them. They are asked in a quiet manner to be still and engage in the new experience.

Finally, there may be a need to talk about the experience, but this should not get out of hand, it is simply about the experience. Every experience is individual. The likelihood is that the students (like everyone else) will go back and forth in their minds between the past and the future, or think of some other place. The trick is to stay in the here and now. It is important not to judge a meditation, and at the same time to let each thought pass, rather than attaching another thought to the first.