8 ENLIGHTENMENT

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ENLIGHTENMENT

Enlightenment is a state of unwavering fearlessness, complete joy and boundless compassion. One experiences oneself fully connected with everything and perceives the mind as a luminous conscious space, which by its nature is insight, by its experience is supreme joy, and by its expression is energetic love.

Is there a permanent happiness, independent of all external circumstances?
Realizing that everything that is composed is impermanent and dissolves again, Prince Siddhartha left his royal palace 2600 years ago and set out to find a way to overcome suffering. He became Buddha, the "Awakened One" - awakened from the dream of ignorance. The historical Buddha Shakyamuni showed that this state can be experienced permanently. He gave teachings about the foundation, path and goal. He showed his disciples methods how enlightenment can be realized. This path of experience is still passed on today.

In Buddhism, two levels of realization are distinguished on the path to enlightenment.
The first level is called **liberation**, in which one develops the insight that everything personal, such as the body and inner states, are in constant flux. Accordingly, one lets go of the ego concept. A state of inner peace and clarity is experienced, free from any disturbing feelings. Theravada Buddhism primarily uses meditations to practice mindfulness, aiming for inner serenity and ego-lessness. This means the end of suffering. Buddha Shakyamuni explained this in the so-called Four Noble Truths.

In the Great Way (sanskr. Mahayana) and in the Diamond Way (sanskr. Vajrayana), liberation is considered the foundation for the further path to full **enlightenment**. Here it is about the development of compassion and wisdom with the motivation to be able to benefit all beings. Wisdom means to realize the emptiness of all appearances - beyond dualistic concepts. Through meditation the separation between experiencer, experience and experienced dissolves, so that one experiences the non-separateness of all appearances, one experiences space and joy inseparably. In the Diamond Way, one applies Pure View, that is, one practices seeing the world as the free play of space and beings as potential Buddhas.

COMPASSION

Enlightened mind (sanskr.: Bodhicitta) is the desire to achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. This attitude is based on the understanding that one is not separate from other beings and that one's own happiness is not more important than the happiness of other beings. **Compassion** and the abilities to help others unfold naturally. This attitude makes both meditation practice and action in everyday life very powerful. Every action becomes the action of a **Bodhisattva** (literally, "hero of the enlightened mind") and thus a step on the path to enlightenment.

WISDOM

Wisdom includes the understanding of cause and effect, the knowledge of impermanence, the realization of the relativity of attributions and one develops the insight that experiencer, experienced and experienced - subject, object and action - cannot be separated and are parts of a totality. All phenomena are conditioned and arise in inter-dependence; they are devoid of independent self-existence. This is called emptiness in Buddhism. Everything is experienced in a beyond personal way.

ACTIVITY

By combining energetic **compassion** and beyond-personal **wisdom**, the scope of action expands. Wisdom and compassion have become so natural that every action arises spontaneously, without the dualistic notion of "I am doing something to you or for you," and contributes to the benefit of other beings. Simply put, every situation is accurately grasped, and enlightened activity does exactly what is most appropriate. Buddhas and realized teachers act for the benefit of beings. Depending on what is needed, they act to **pacify, enrich, fascinate, and/or to powerfully protect others.** These are the four enlightened spheres of activity.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

COURSE OF LESSON – SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- explain the terms "liberation" and "enlightenment" from a Buddhist perspective.
- distinguish an ego-related level from a free level of action.
- understand the developmental path to enlightenment from a Buddhist perspective.

SECURING KNOWLEDGE	Full enlightenment and the unfolding of all Buddha qualities	**Material 3** Students expound upon terms
EXERCISE 2	Beyond-personal level of experience of **enlightenment**	**WS 3** **Answers to WS 3** Students work on tasks and interpret symbols
EXERCISE 1	From ego-centered experience to liberation	**AW 2** **Answers to WS 2** Students do exercises **Material 2** Students sumarize
FURTHER INSTRUCTION	Why did Siddhartha leave his usual life in search of enlightenment?	**WS 1** **Answers to WS 1** Students work out and discuss content
INTRO	State your ideas about the concept of enlightenment.	**Material 1** Students explain their ideas

BASIS

What might interest the students about the topic

- What is enlightenment? How does it make you feel? What can one do then?
- Was only the historical Buddha enlightened or is enlightenment also possible today?

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL I

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to . . .
1. explain the terms "liberation" and "enlightenment" from a Buddhist perspective.
2. distinguish a self-centered level from a free level of action.
3. trace the developmental path to enlightenment from a Buddhist perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of Buddhist practice is "enlightenment." This term is familiar to the students, but probably without a precise idea. A humorous graphic is used as a first approach to the topic.

The teacher projects **Material 1**, the students name their current idea of enlightenment in plenary.

NOTES

On the path to enlightenment, two levels are distinguished.

In Theravada, the emphasis is placed on the goal of liberation from one's own suffering.

In the Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions, compassion and wisdom and all enlightening qualities are developed to benefit all beings as much as possible. By thinking of everyone, beyond-personal wisdom emerges and experiences and abilities flow freely. Enlightenment is the highest functioning of the mind.

FURTHER INTRODUCTION

Students read on **Worksheet 1** how the path of the historical Buddha began. In group work, they encounter the question, what does it mean to strive for the goal of "enlightenment"? The tasks aim to make the search comprehensible. Prince Siddhartha understood impermanence and therefore gave up his previous life.
The exchange takes place in the plenary. See possible results on **Answers to WS1**.

EXERCISE 1

First, the level of how inner freedom can be achieved is worked out.

In the group work, the students can understand the limitations of a strongly ego-centered experience by means of pictures and tasks on **Worksheet 2**. They are asked to formulate a conclusion.
This should include the understanding: If you are entangled in your own disturbing feelings, you cannot act freely. The **Answers to WS 2** give possible suggestions.

Material 2 shows the level of liberation. The pupils describe in plenary how this free level feels and expresses itself.

EXERCIXSE 2

Now it is about the level of full enlightenment and unfoldment of all Buddha qualities, which are unshakable fearlessness, perfect joy and boundless compassion.

Buddha did not want this freedom only for himself, but he wanted to show the way to lasting happiness for all beings. The great attitude of thinking of all accomplishes great things. With this super-personal view, one acts out of compassion and wisdom and uses the enlightened qualities for the benefit of beings wherever they are open.

Students work individually to explore the experiential level of enlightenment using the tasks on **Worksheet 3**. Possible meanings of the Buddhist symbols lotus and diamond are associated. The **Answers to WS 3** provide possible replies.

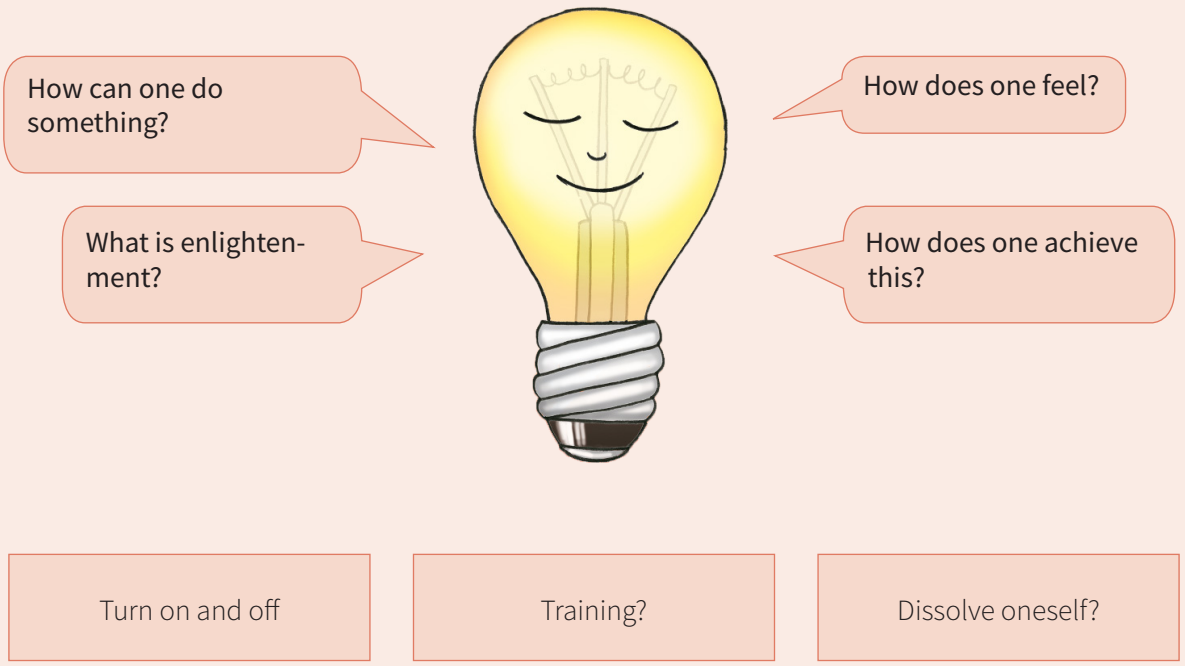
SECURING KNOWLEDGE

Enlightenment is a state of unwavering fearlessness, complete joy, and boundless compassion. One experiences oneself as fully connected to everything and perceives the mind as a luminous conscious space that is, by its nature, insight, by its experience, supreme joy, and by its expression, energetic love.

The aspects of full enlightenment on **Material 3** are traced in class discussion. The students explain the Buddhist terminology by bringing in the understanding of a beyond-personal way of experiencing that they have worked out so far.

MATERIAL 1

MATERIAL 1



Is there a crash course?
"In 10 days to enlightenment!
Discover your potential!"

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."

ANSWERS TO WS 1

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

EXERCISES

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

- Someone suspects that there is more to life than the "normal".
  - There must be a way to lasting happiness!
  - There must be a level that allows more depth/freedom/happiness.
  - One has the deep desire to be useful for the beings.

2. Did Siddhartha have any idea in which direction his path would take him?

- The path must go inward.
- You can't find lasting happiness on the outside, because everything is constantly changing.
- Everything really meaningful can only be found in one's own mind.

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

- All the inner qualities appear.
- One is happy.
- One can do anything.
- One has a natural desire to benefit others.

WORKSHEET 2

FROM SELF-CENTERED EXPERIENCE TO LIBERATION

**WHEN I GET CARRIED AWAY WITH ANGER, JEALOUSY, ENVY, GREED, ETC.
AND RELATE EVERYTHING TO MYSELF ....**



Is this a desirable state?

EXERCISES

1. Look at the picture, put yourselves in the situation and exchange ideas.
2. Can you intellectually control your feelings? Give reasons for your answer.
3. Describe a situation that people experience differently or even in the opposite way.
4. Is it possible to control one's experience in such a way that one is happy all the time? Give reasons for the answer.
5. How do happy and depressed people experience the world?
6. Tell yourself about situations in which you made someone happy, at least temporarily. How did that feel?
7. What sometimes prevents you from doing something for others?
8. If possible, sit back for a minute without distraction, close your eyes and observe what happens in your own mind.

Conclusion:

ANSWERS TO WS 2

FROM SELF-CENTERED EXPERIENCE TO LIBERATION

EXERCISES

1. Look at the picture, put yourselves in the situation and exchange ideas.
The students describe and interpret their ego-related experience.

2. Can you intellectually control your feelings? Justify the answer.
Feelings can be controlled intellectually to a limited extent ("You pull yourself together."). To free oneself intellectually from disturbing feelings is difficult. One needs insight into the transience of disturbing feelings and then must change one's behavior.

3. Describe a situation, which is experienced by people emotionally different or even opposite.
E.g., fans of different soccer clubs; Axel is in love with Lea, Paul finds Lea bitchy and ugly. Likes and dislikes color the experience.

4. Is it possible to control one's experience in such a way that one is happy all the time? Justify the answer.
Similar to disturbing feelings, intellectual influence on pleasant feelings is limited. One cannot intellectually command, "I want to be balanced and joyful all the time now."

5. How do happy or depressed people experience the world?
Happy people find everyone and everything joyful or interesting. The power of this positive basic attitude "invalidates" difficult situations and disorders. Depressed people see only the difficult, scary, problems and cannot see possibilities and opportunities.

6. Tell yourself about situations in which you have made someone happy, at least temporarily. How did that feel?
It feels good. You feel happy yourself.

7. What sometimes prevents you from doing something for others?
Your own comfort, as well as passivity and self-centeredness, also a lack of courage or the lack of realization that doing something meaningful makes you happy, can be reasons for hindrance. Also uncertainty regarding the assessment of a situation, one meant well, but it came out badly.

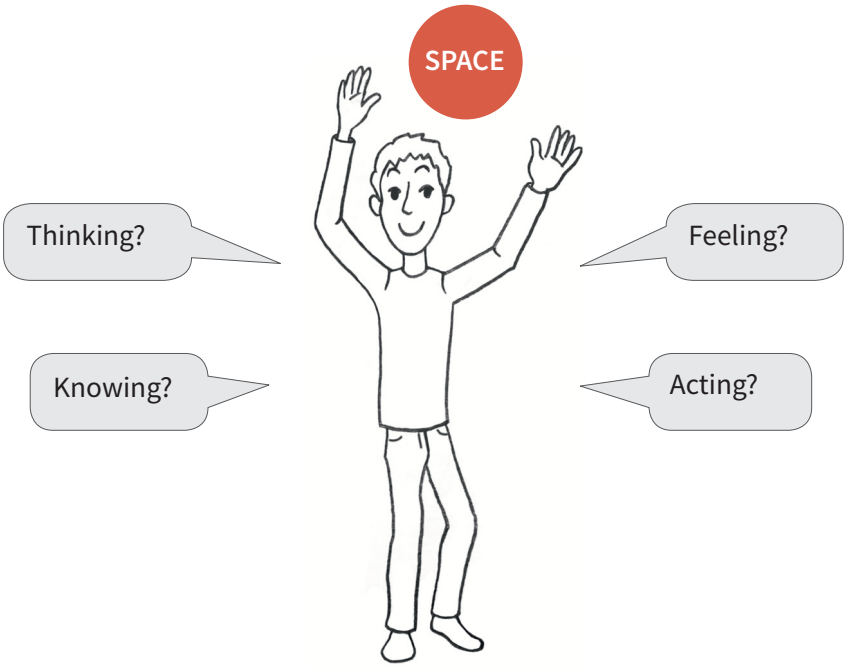
8. Sit back for a minute, if possible without distraction, close your eyes and observe what happens in your own mind.
The mind swings back and forth between past and future as well as to other places (think of the untidy room, for example). Feelings about the thought develop, but they are not relevant in the present situation.

Conclusion:
When you are entangled in your own disturbing feelings, you cannot act freely. One is unhappy and limited. One thinks in circles, takes oneself too seriously and does not recognize the situation. One experiences as if through colored glasses.

MATERIAL 2

THE FIRST LEVEL ON THE PATH TO ENLIGHTENMENT: LIBERATION

WHEN I HAVE DEVELOPED ENOUGH DISTANCE FROM DISTURBING FEELINGS ....



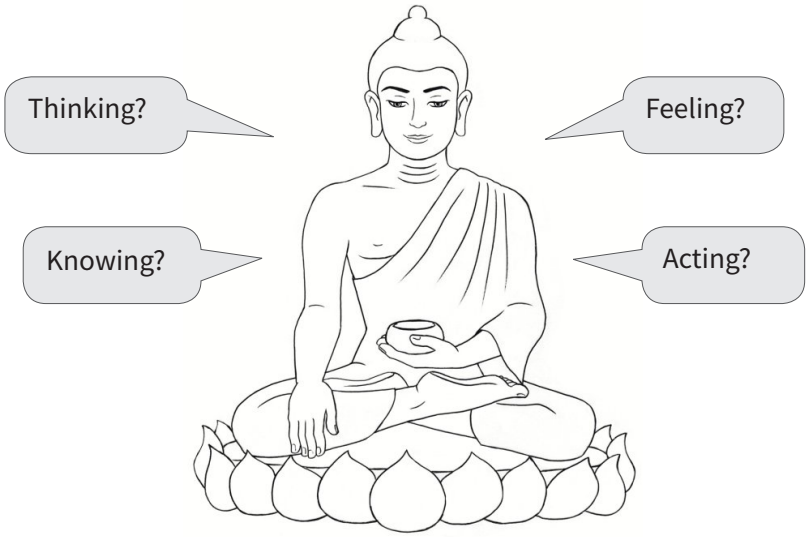
"I am not my thoughts and feelings, I have them."
"I am not my body, I have it."

The first level is called **liberation**, where one develops the insight that everything personal, such as the body and inner states, are in constant flux. Through meditation, one gets enough distance and inner freedom. Accordingly, one lets go of the ego conception. A state of inner peace and clarity is experienced, free from any disturbing feelings. One recognizes how a situation is. Thus one can decide responsibly and act sensibly.

WORKSHEET 3

THE SECOND LEVEL: FULL ENLIGHTENMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALL BUDDHA QUALITIES

Buddha did not want this freedom only for himself, but he wanted to show the way to lasting happiness for all beings. The great attitude of thinking of all brings about great things. With this super-personal view, one acts out of compassion and wisdom and uses the enlightened qualities for the benefit of beings wherever they are open.



EXERCISES

1. Formulate a possible statement of Buddha for each area: thinking, knowing, feeling, acting.

2. Lotus flower and diamond are well-known symbols of enlightenment. What could these symbols stand for?





ANSWERS TO WS 3

THE SECOND LEVEL: FULL ENLIGHTENMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF ALL BUDDHA QUALITIES

Buddha did not want this freedom only for himself, but he wanted to show the way to lasting happiness for all beings. The great attitude of thinking of all accomplishes great things. With this super-personal view, one acts out of compassion and wisdom and uses the enlightened qualities for the benefit of beings wherever they are open.



EXERCISES

1. Formulate a possible Buddha's statement for each area: thinking, knowing, feeling, acting

I think of all beings and wish them to happiness.
I see the situation clearly and without limitations and see what is needed.
I am happy and joyful and have a lot of compassion.
I act without selfishness and with wisdom.

2. Lotus flower and diamond are well-known symbols of enlightenment. What could these symbols stand for?



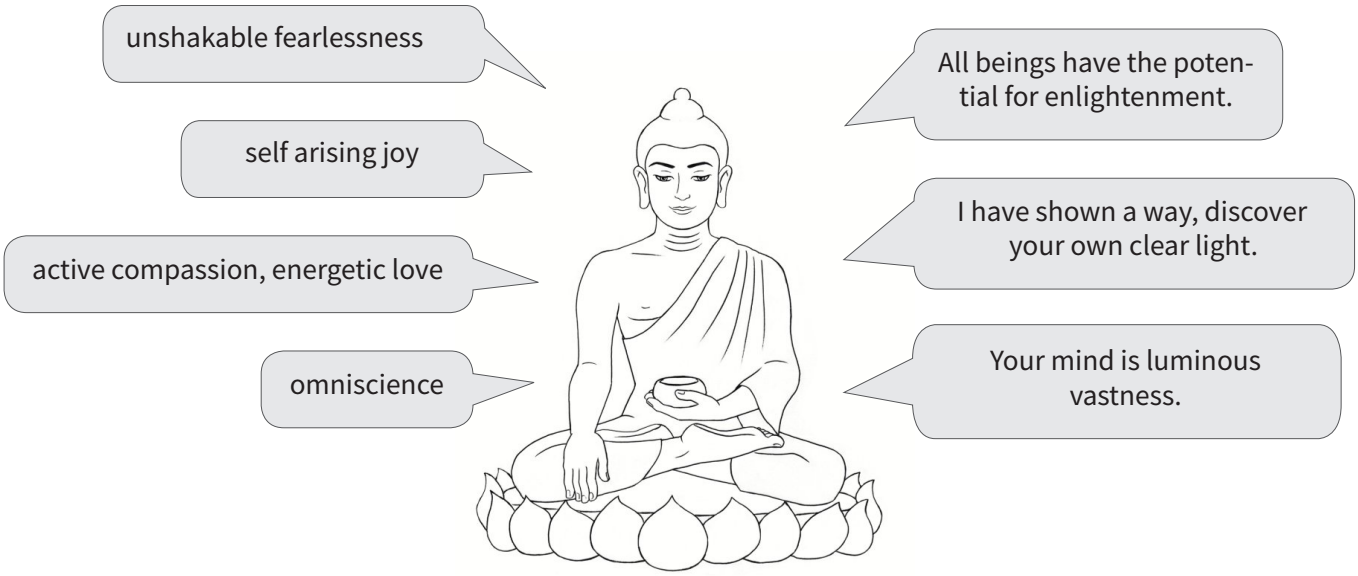
openness, purity, unfolding



clarity, radiance, abilities

MATERIAL 3

THE SECOND LEVEL: FULL ENLIGHTENMENT AND UNFOLDING OF ALL BUDDHA QUALITIES



Enlightenment is a state of unshakeable fearlessness, complete joy and boundless compassion. One experiences oneself fully connected with everything and perceives the mind as a luminous conscious space, which by its nature is insight, by its experience is supreme joy, and by its expression is energetic love.