6 COMPASSION AND WISDOM

INTRODUCTORY TEXT

SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL I

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COMPASSION AND WISDOM

Buddha showed a path to lasting happiness. He gave teachings on the way to experience the world (view), meditation and behavior in everyday life. Perfecting compassion and wisdom is an essential part of his teaching.

Understanding that all living beings want to experience happiness and at the same time realizing that one's own happiness is not separate from that of others, one develops the desire to be able to benefit others. Beyond personal compassion and wisdom do not exclude any living being and are independent of whether one likes someone or not.

Enlightenment mind (Sanskrit: bodhicitta), the attitude of developing oneself with compassion and wisdom for the good of all and attaining enlightenment, is the foundation in the Great Way (Mahayana) and the Diamond Way (Vajrayana).

Buddhists distinguish love and compassion: love is the deep wish that all beings may be happy; compassion is wishing that no being ever suffers.

Practitioners of the Great Way and Diamond Way are called Bodhisattvas, which translates as "enlightened courageous ones." They are courageous because a Bodhisattva is fearless and always supportive, no matter whether adverse circumstances or obstacles arise. Thinking of the welfare of others is included in his every action. The active implementation of this Bodhisattva attitude is through the **"Six Liberating Actions"** (Sanskrit.: paramitas). These are generosity, meaningful behavior, patience, joyful action, meditation, and the wisdom that results from them. Buddhist meditation is a method of allowing inherent qualities such as fearlessness, joy, and love to emerge. As one develops **beyond personal compassion and wisdom**, one becomes increasingly independent of external conditions, while one's natural inclination to do something meaningful for others increases. Perfect love and perfect, energetic compassion are an expression of enlightenment.

The **"Four Immeasurable"** wishes express this Bodhisattva attitude:

May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness (= love).

May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering (= compassion).

May they never be separate from true happiness, which is without suffering (=sympathetic joy).

May they abide in great equanimity, free from attachment and aversion =(equanimity).

According to these wishes, one acts for the best of all in every circumstance as best one can. Compassion extends a helping hand, but does not get involved in the difficulties. From a position of strength, surplus, and insight, one can help others in a meaningful and long-term way. Compassion and wisdom work together, for those who act only compassionately and without wisdom make mistakes. Wise people act in such a way that all can develop well. One sees the potential of others and strengthens their abilities. So compassion is included in every decision.

Wisdom means seeing how things are and not how they superficially appear. One experiences continuously that the doer, the act itself and the object of the act are inseparably connected - otherwise a (compassionate) act would never reach its goal. With wisdom, one recognizes what is real and can intuitively grasp a situation correctly. Wisdom is the ability to distinguish things completely clearly from each other, i.e. to recognize and know in a beyond personal way, unhindered by limiting ideas and prejudices. Under this condition, one is able to act meaningfully for the best of all. Finally, wisdom and compassion become so natural that every act arises spontaneously and without the notion of "I am doing something with you or for you" and contributes to the welfare of other beings.

Wisdom has many faces: There is a practical wisdom, namely to recognize what leads to happiness and what brings suffering; one acts accordingly. This creates more space and the view for others becomes increasingly free. The less one's own interests interfere, the more one feels connected to others and can be there for them.

Unwaveringness arises through the understanding of the transience of all phenomena, when one understands that occurring difficulties are not permanent, ultimately not even real.

Through unfolding intuitive wisdom, coupled with active compassion, a Bodhisattva opens access to each being's inherent qualities - each thereby becoming a tangible example of meaningful existence.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

COURSE OF LESSON – SECONDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- recognize causes of happiness.
- identify what constitutes the path of the Bodhisattva.
- understand the central importance of compassion and wisdom.
- test that wisdom and compassion applied in one's own life bring about a change in behavior.

(OPTIONAL) TRANSFER	Venture cultivating compassion and wisdom in your own life during a test week.	Students observe and write blog / diary entries
DEEPENING KNOWLEDGE	Buddha forms expressing compassion and wisdom	**Material 2** Students learn about enlightened expression of compassion and wisdom
EXERCISE 2	What do compassion and wisdom mean in the Buddhist path of the Bodhisattva? What is the importance of meditation?	**WS 2** **Answers to WS 2** Students work on terms and understanding
EXERCISE 1	How does one attain happiness? Is one's own happiness related to the happiness of others?	**WS 1** **Answers to WS 1** Students evaluate quotes and texts on happiness research Students draw conclusions
INTRO	What is happiness? And how do you achieve it?	**Material 1** Students do free association with cartoons

BASIS

What might interest the students about the topic:

- Is it really possible to be happy permanently?
- What kind of attitude creates happiness?

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to . . .

1. to recognize causes of happiness.
2. to show what constitutes the path of the Bodhisattva.
3. understand the central importance of compassion and wisdom.
4. test that wisdom and compassion applied in one's own life bring about a change in behavior

NOTES

Compassion and wisdom are at the core of Buddhist teachings. To develop these very important human qualities, there are different methods:

In the Great Way one proceeds step by step to develop compassion and wisdom equally -supported by meditation. In the Diamond Way, the teacher (Lama) is taken as a model. In the meditations, the practitioner identifies either with the qualities of Buddha aspects that specifically stand for compassion and wisdom, or with enlightened teachers who stand for the wholeness of enlightenment and thus express compassion and wisdom.

INTRODUCTION

A cartoon in **Material 1** serves as an introductory stimulus to briefly discuss the problem of attaining happiness.

EXERCISE 1

In groups, the students work on **Worksheet 1** with a text on the World Happiness Report and various quotations on happiness. These are not Buddhist texts, but for the most part they support the Buddhist teachings on happiness in connection with an altruistic attitude.

Students evaluate the texts by finding causes of happiness, distinguishing internal and external causes. Likewise, they can use statements from happiness research and the quotations to prove that one's own happiness is related to the happiness of others. People who are voluntarily prepared to do something for others out of their inner understanding (voluntary work, social commitment) have always been identified by happiness research as the happier people compared to the rest of the population. All qualities - including lasting happiness - depend on one's own inner life. This is what needs to be strengthened.

The conclusions of the respective groups should capture the importance of the inner attitude and will be presented in plenary. **Answers to WS 1** give suggestions for solutions.

EXERCISE 2

Now, **Worksheet 2** introduces the core Buddhist concepts of compassion and wisdom. They are essential on the path of the Bodhisattva, who strives for happiness for the best of all living beings. The students compare these statements with those on the inner causes of happiness **(Exercise 1, WS 1)** and develop the Buddhist meanings of the terms in partner work. They recognize the importance of meditation as training on the path. The teacher offers suggestions for **Answers to WS 2**, which are compared in plenary.

DEEPENING KNOWLEDGE

Ultimately, one can hardly manage to control inner states through the intellect: compassion and wisdom are not strengthened through mental effort (just as love, perseverance, patience, joy, fearlessness, and all other meaningful human qualities).

Therefore, Buddha gave different methods to develop compassion and wisdom, for example:

1. through the Six Liberating Actions (see lesson topic of the same name).
2. through meditation (see lesson topic of the same name), which is structured on the Great Way and in the Diamond Way in such a way that the development of compassion and wisdom is experienced centrally.
3. through recitation of mantras that strengthen qualities of compassion and wisdom.

Material 2 shows Buddha forms that express compassion and wisdom. The teacher chooses a way of projection and in class discussion the students deepen their understanding of the way of the Bodhisattva. This is motivated by the mind

of enlightenment, an attitude through which one develops for the good of all and attains enlightenment, and specifically strengthens compassion and wisdom, through meditation and recitation of mantras.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, optional

During a test week, the pupils check in their everyday life through their consciously compassionate behavior whether they experience a meaningful change in their inner life as well as in their environment. Optionally, they keep a diary or use virtual communication to share their experiences. If desired, there is an evaluative class discussion about the experience.
An impetus is provided by information about neuroscience experiments on compassion meditation. Depending on the time, the teacher chooses the level of detail and the form in which the knowledge about the experiments is elaborated.

NOTES

At the University of Madison (Wisconsin, USA), students were asked to participate in a scientific experiment. They were told that the purpose was to test whether meditation could have an effect on the brain; if so, what effect. They learned a meditation on compassion and repeated it regularly. However, besides the actual change in the brain (frontal lobe), there was another thing that was really at stake: Weeks after the experiment, the students were asked again if anything had changed in their lives, and if so, what? The general answer was that relationships with parents, friends, fellow students, etc. had become much friendlier.

Land, Dian: Study shows how compassion and meditation change the brain. 12.12.2016, Internet publication in German at: https://www.epochtimes.de/gesundheit/studie-zeigt-wie-mitgefuehl-und-meditation-das-gehirn-veraendern-a597807.html [20.10.2020]

Ricard, Matthieu :Neurowissenschaft und Buddhismus. Wie die Meditation unser Leben verändern kann, in: Tibet and Buddhism, February 2010, Internet publication in German at: https://www.tibet.de/fileadmin/migration/pdf/tibu/2010/tibu93_2_Matthieu_Ricard_Wissenschaft.pdf [Stand: 20.10.2020]

MATERIAL 1

WHAT IS HAPPINESS AND HOW DO YOU ACHIEVE IT?



WORKSHEET 1

HOW TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS - APPROACHES FROM PHILOSOPHY AND HAPPINESS RESEARCH

EXERCISES

Read texts below and work in a group.

1. Evaluate the text on the World Happiness Report and write a table on the causes of happiness. Distinguish between internal and external causes.
2. Which statements from the World Happiness Report and from the quotations prove that one's own happiness is related to the happiness of others? Underline the corresponding statements.
3. Formulate a conclusion and present it in the plenary.

WORLD HAPPINESS REPORT 2020

(trans. by the author)

THE HAPPIEST COUNTRIES ON EARTH

We've known it for a while, now the World Happiness Report from the Sustainable Development Solutions Network has confirmed it once again: People in northern Europe are happiest in their everyday lives. First and foremost: Finland. The Scandinavian country has already topped the satisfaction list for the past two years, followed last year by Denmark in second place. Switzerland follows in third place, with Iceland and Norway moving down two places.
This year, Germany is holding its own in 17th place, where it was last year. This puts it on the list behind countries such as Israel (14), Costa Rica (15) and Ireland (16). [...]

WHY ARE NORTHERN EUROPEANS SO HAPPY?

If you look at the top five, you'll notice that, with the exception of Switzerland, they are all countries in the north. Above all, the Nordic countries have high incomes, a long life expectancy and a well-developed social network. Although taxes are also high in Finland, residents seem to bring a basic level of satisfaction. The country is safe, stable and has a functioning government, which Finns rate as satisfactory. Corruption is very low in Finland, and the country is socially progressive at the same time. People can make their life decisions very freely and are always secure. Northern Europeans not only trust the authorities, police and judiciary more than people in other countries, but also each other. The ranking is also based, among other things, on the respondents' self-perception.

By the way, Finland is not alone in this. As the Happiness Report explains, since its launch, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland have been in the top ten, with three of them at the top in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. And it's not just about Northern Europeans' sense of happiness. The state of democracy and political rights, the lack of corruption and related trust in each other and in institutions, perceived security, social interaction, gender equality and income distribution also seem to work more than well in the European North compared to the rest of the world. [...]

HOW HAPPINESS IS MEASURED

Among other things, the report combines country data with surveys of residents' self-perceptions.
This year's report places a clear focus on how social, urban and natural environments together influence our sense of happiness.
Important factors in measuring happiness include subjectively perceived happiness, perceived freedom to shape one's own life, personal perceptions of corruption, and related trust in the environment and institutions. Income, life expectancy and the social network also play a major role. Negative factors such as worry, sadness and anger are also included in the evaluation.

Source:
Die glücklichsten Länder der Erde, 24.03.2020, internet publication in German at.: https://www.travelbook.de/ziele/laender/world-happiness-report-das-sind-die-gluecklichsten-laender-der-erde

WORKSHEET 1

HOW TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS - APPROACHES FROM PHILOSOPHY AND HAPPINESS RESEARCH

[20.10.2020]

QUOTES ON HAPPINESS

> ***"Do you want to wander on and on?***
> ***See, the good lies so close.***
> ***Just learn to grasp happiness,***
> ***For happiness is always there."***
> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, german poet,
> 1749 – 1832

> ***"If you want to be happy, be!"***
> Leo Tolstoi, russian Poet,
> 1828 – 1910

> ***"I teach because people want to be happy and not suffer.".“***
> Siddhartha Gautama Buddha,
> 563 – 483 Jh. v. Chr.

> ***"Happiness is the ultimate goal of human action."***
> Aristoteles, greek philosopher, 384 – 322. B.C.

> ***"Throw off the yoke of superfluity, become rich without money, and you will be happy."***
> Fénélon, french archbishop and author,
> 1651 – 1715

> ***"No one can find happiness on earth in the given circumstances who does not bring courage, patience, prudence, and gentleness to overcome suffering."***
> Julie Burow, german author,
> 1806 – 1868

> ***"There is no path to happiness. Being happy is the way."***
> Siddhartha Gautama Buddha,
> 563 – 483 Jh. v. Chr.

> ***"True happiness is doing good."***
> Socrates, greek philosopher, 479 – 399 B.C.

> ***"Let each man be the blacksmith of his own fortune."*** ("Fabrum esse suae quemque fortunae.")
> Appius Claudius Caecus, roman consul,
> around 340 – 273 B.C.

> ***"The highest pleasure consists in satisfaction with oneself."***
> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, french-swiss author and philosopher,
> 1712 – 1778

> ***"Happiness belongs to those who are self-sufficient. For all external sources of happiness and enjoyment are, by their nature, highly uncertain, miserable, transitory, and subject to chance."***
> Arthur Schopenhauer, german philosopher,
> 1788 – 1860

> ***"Happiness is the only thing that doubles when you share it."***
> Albert Schweitzer, german doctor, theologian, musician and philosopher,
> 1875 – 1965

> ***"When you let go of something, you are a little happier. When you let go a lot, you are much happier. When you let go completely, you are free."***
> Ajahn Chah, Theravada-Buddhist monk,
> 1918 – 1992

ANSWERS TO WS 1

HOW TO ACHIEVE HAPPINESS - APPROACHES FROM PHILOSOPHY AND HAPPINESS RESEARCH

EXERCISES

Read texts below and work in a group.

1. Evaluate the text on the World Happiness Report and write a table on the causes of happiness. Distinguish between internal and external causes.

Outer conditions	Inner conditions
high income	basic satisfaction
long life expectancy	perceived freedom to shape one's own life
well-developed social network	perceived security
functioning government, democracy, political rights	trust in each other and in state institutions
safe, stable country	freedom to make own decisions
low corruption	few worries, sadness and anger
socially progressive	
social coexistence	
gender equality	

2. Which statements from the World Happiness Report and from the quotations prove that one's own happiness is related to the happiness of others? Underline the corresponding statements.

   World Happiness Report: social togetherness, trust in each other, gender equality, safe, free, stable country

   Quotes: Doing good (Socrates), Happiness doubles when shared (Albert Schweitzer)

3. Formulate a conclusion and present it in the plenary.

   Happiness comes from a basic satisfaction and positive inner attitude by developing certain good qualities and also involving others.

WORKSHEET 2

THE BODHISATTVA PATH

Every being strives for happiness, but rarely are methods for achieving this goal comprehensively presented. In school and university this subject is not taught, and even in one's personal environment probably no one experiences uninterrupted happiness or considers it possible. Buddha showed a path to permanent happiness and pointed out that it is possible to achieve this.

The enlightenment mind, the attitude of evolving with compassion and wisdom for the good of all and attaining enlightenment, is fundamental in the Great Way (Mahayana) and the Diamond Way (Vajrayana).

Understanding that all living beings wish to experience happiness and that one's own happiness is not separate from that of others, one develops the desire to be able to benefit others. Love and beyond-personal compassion are a natural expression of enlightenment. Beyond-personal compassion does not exclude any living being and is independent of whether one likes or dislikes someone. Compassion sees the potential of others and strengthens their abilities.

Practitioners of the Great Way and the Diamond Way are called Bodhisattvas, which translates as "enlightened courageous ones".
They are called courageous because a Bodhisattva is undaunted, no matter what adverse circumstances or obstacles arise. Thinking of the welfare of others is included in his every action. The active implementation of this Bodhisattva attitude is through the Six Liberating Actions (generosity, prudent action, patience, joyful action, meditation, and the resulting wisdom) . Buddhist meditation is a method for allowing inherent qualities such as fearlessness, clarity, joy, and love to emerge more and more. As one develops beyond-personal compassion and wisdom, one becomes increasingly independent of external conditions, while one's natural inclination to do something meaningful for others increases.

Wisdom has many faces: there is a practical wisdom, namely to recognize what leads to happiness and what brings suffering and to act accordingly.
Through meaningful action, more space is created and the view for others becomes increasingly free. The less attachment to one's own "I", the more one feels connected to others and can be there for them. Because one is no longer limited by feelings, hopes and fears, the ability to perceive how a situation really is becomes more apparent. Immovability comes from understanding impermanence, when one realizes that difficulties that arise are not permanent, or even real in the end. Buddha taught that all phenomena have no independent existence, but are composed by conditions. With this understanding of conditional reality, a Bodhisattva acts wisely and takes action at the right time.

Through the unfolding intuitive wisdom, a Bodhisattva can also open an access for others to a level where spontaneous joy, inspiration, help, protection and love can be directly experienced.

[1] *See chapter on Six Liberating Actions*

EXERCISES

Discuss the exercises with a partner.

1. Compare the attitude of the Bodhisattva with the inner causes of happiness that you worked out in **Worksheet 1**.
2. Explain the Buddhist terms "compassion and wisdom".
3. What is the significance of Buddhist meditation?

ANSWERS TO WS 2

THE BODHISATTVA PATH

EXERCISES

Discuss the tasks with a partner

1. Compare the Bodhisattva's attitude with the inner causes of happiness you worked out in **Worksheet 1**.

   - basic satisfaction - low attachment to the “I”
   - well-developed social network - desire to act for the best of all beings
   - trust among each other - to include the happiness of others
   - free shaping of one's own life - desire to develop
   - feeling of security and freedom - courageous and unshakable

2. Explain the Buddhist terms "compassion and wisdom".

   Compassion means:
   - understanding that all beings wish to experience happiness and that one's own happiness is not separate from this
   - to have the desire to benefit all beings
   - not to exclude any being
   - to see the potential of others and to strengthen their abilities
   - to be courageous and fearless in focusing on the happiness of others despite adverse circumstances
   - to do meaningful things in a completely super-personal way, without attachment to an ego

   Wisdom means:
   - to recognize what leads to happiness and what leads to suffering and to act accordingly
   - to perceive how a situation really is
   - to feel connected with others
   - to be unshakable by understanding impermanence, even in difficult situations
   - to know that all phenomena are composed by conditions and do not have a permanent existence

3. What is the value of meditation?

   Meditation is a training through which more wisdom, joy, space, clarity, and stability arise.
   Meditation is one of the "Six Liberating Actions".

MATERIAL 2

BUDDHA FORMS EXPRESSING COMPASSION AND WISDOM



The Buddha form **"Loving Eyes"** (sanskr. Avalokiteshvara / tib. Chenrezig) expresses the compassion of all Buddhas of all times. He is a Bodhisattva of the highest level. The four immeasurable wishes are included in many meditations. His mantra liberates beings in all realms of existence.

OM MANI PEME HUNG (sanskr. OM MANI PADME HUM)

Love: May all beings have happiness and the cause of happiness.
Compassion: May they be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.
Sympathetic joy: May they always experience happiness, which is totally freee from suffering
Equanimity: May they remain in the great equanimity, which is without attachment and free from aversion.



Liberatrice (sanskr. Tara / tib. Dölma) is a female Buddha aspect of love and compassion. Meditation on her and her mantra protects against fears, strengthens confidence and develops the inner qualities.

OM TARE TUTTARE TURE SOHA



Wisdom Buddha (sanskr. Manjushri / tib. Jampelyang), his wisdom sword cuts through basic ignorance. The book on the lotus flower on his left contains wisdom texts. His mantra works against confusion and helps learning.

OM ARA PADSA NA DI