10 THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

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THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

In the course of the last 2600 years, Buddhism spread from India through various Asian countries. However, it disappeared in its country of origin, India, due to Islamic conquests in the 11th and 12th centuries. Attempts to make Buddhism accessible to a larger amount of interested people in the 19th century, mostly Theravada, in Central Europe and the USA, failed largely because of the living conditions at the time and the lack of authentic transmission. In Tibet, 99.9% of the Buddhist infrastructure was destroyed in the mid-20th century due to Chinese invasion. Since the 1970s, Buddhism has become increasingly popular, especially in Western countries.

No direct written sources exist of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, who lived around 560 BC. His disciples kept the teachings in memory and wrote them down after his death. Buddhist historiography is therefore based on both texts and oral transmissions.

After his enlightenment, the Buddha wandered around northern India teaching for 45 years. In the first years he taught mainly the basics of the Path of the Elders (Theravada), which aims at liberation from personal suffering. Building on this was the teaching of the Great Way (Mahayana), centered on compassion and wisdom. Finally, Buddha also taught the Diamond Way (Vajrayana), which aims directly at the realization of Buddha nature, that is, all the qualities inherent in the mind.

The Path of the Elders spread in the following centuries in India and later far beyond the country's borders. In the 1st century A.D., the teachings of the Great Way became increasingly known in northern India, where they experienced their spiritual heyday from the 5th century onward. After being passed on only from teacher to student in India, the Buddhist teachings first became known in Tibet in the form of the Diamond Way around the 8th century.

In the 11th and 12th centuries A.D., Buddhism was consolidated in Southeast Asian countries as the Way of the Elders (Theravada, also "Southern Buddhism"). In the areas north and east of India, the Great Way and the Diamond Way (also "northern Buddhism") spread.

Buddhism was lost in its country of origin during this period. In the eleventh century, Turkic peoples (the Ghurids) began to take control of India from the northwest. As a result, Buddhism disappeared in Kashmir by the thirteenth century. Teachers and practitioners fled east to the central Indian plains or across the mountains to Tibet. A good hundred years later, the conquerors finally ruled over much of northern India. In the final phase of Indian Buddhism, the lineage holders made every effort to fully transmit the teaching to those countries that had opened themselves to it. In all the countries that embraced Buddhism, it shaped the culture for centuries, if not for a whole millennium, right up to our own time (an exception to this is Indonesia, which became Muslim in the 14th/15th centuries. Here Buddhism lasted for a total of 900 years). Thus Buddhism today unites an extraordinarily rich spiritual life from two and a half millennia with very different cultural backgrounds.

Buddhism grew strong where people were open to it. After Buddha's death, his disciples continued to spread the teaching. The Indian monastic university of Nalanda became the spiritual center of the new movement for a whole millennium. Traveling merchants brought Buddhism to other countries, which then invited scholars from India. Sometimes kings from different regions supported the new teaching, such as Ashoka in India (304 - 232 BC), Songtsen Gampo (604 - 650) and Trisong Detsen (742 - 796) in Tibet, or the Chinese emperor Yung-lo (1360 - 1424). Another important factor in the geographical expansion of Buddhism beyond India was the codification of Buddhist texts. This allowed them to form the basis for the study of Buddhist philosophy and to be widely disseminated. Later, the emergence of Buddhism in other regions of the world was very different: In the 16th/17th century, Mongolian tribes brought the teachings of the Great Way and Diamond Way to what is now Mongolia and Russia. In the USA, on the other hand, it was mainly immigrant Koreans and Chinese, the latter founding the first Buddhist center in San Francisco in the mid-19th century.

At the same time, the first delicate approaches to Buddhism emerged in the German-speaking world among the upper middle classes and in artistic circles. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 - 1860; "The world exists in consciousness") spoke of "Buddhaism", Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900), Richard Wagner (1813 - 1873), Rainer Maria Rilke (1875 - 1926), C.G. Jung (1875 - 1961) and Hermann Hesse (1877 - 1962) likewise showed a strong inclination towards Buddhism.

The hippie era, the search for new levels of consciousness by means of drugs, protests against the Vietnam War, peace demonstrations at the time of the Cold War, music with all its extreme manifestations (e.g. the festival in Woodstock), the student and civil rights movements, the politicization of everyday life, the trying out of new ways of life, which in Western Europe and North America expressed a break with the encrusted old traditions and the urge for individual freedom, testified to the changed consciousness of the young generation in the 1960s. Part of this freedom movement arose specifically from a desire for intellectual development.

Research and science also opened up to new ways of thinking. For example, newly emerged branches of science are wisdom research, resilience research, and happiness research.
For example, a branch of humanistic psychology that focuses on the potential of human development and is characterized by a free, non-moralizing, and compassion-based attitude is similar to the Buddhist view of inherent qualities. However, psychology generally describes states in the mind, whereas Buddhism ultimately aims at the full realization of the nature of mind.

The scientific findings of quantum physics about entangled particles and their behavior in space ("space is information") can be related to the statements of the historical Buddha about "form is emptiness, emptiness is form" etc.. This may have facilitated the opening to Buddhist views. In general, however, science is more about knowledge, while Buddhism is about experience.

Buddhist teachings have become widely available and popular in many sectors of society. They inspire - often not even explicitly declared as "Buddhist" (e.g. the development of more mindfulness) - and can change people's attitude towards lasting happiness.

Since the late 20th century, Buddhist teachings have spread to many Westernized countries. There are many communities of different Buddhist directions that live Buddha's way in everyday life and continue his teachings in an exemplary way.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

COURSE OF LESSON – SECONDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

The students will be able to:

- understand what conditions have led to Buddhism gaining a foothold in the West.
- explain what makes Buddhism attractive to people in Western cultures.
- relate scientific statements to Buddhist statements.

(OPTIONAL) ANCHORING	Buddhism in the West and its appeal	Students make poster/collage Students present synopsis
KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER	Science and Buddhism Quotes	**Material 3** **WS 2 and Answers to WS 2** Students evaluate quotations Students create an overview and take a stand
(OPTIONAL) EXPLORATION	Spirit of optimism of the 60s, hippie era	Students watch movie clips
EXERCISE	How Buddhism came from Tibet to the West	**WS 1 and Answers to WS 1** Students read text and answer questions **Material 2** for illustration and discussion
INTRO	Buddhist symbols in our everyday life - what makes them so attractive? How did they find their way here?	**Material 1** Students give answers from their previous knowledge

BASIS

What might interest the students about the topic:

- Why are people in the West interested in Buddhism?
- Is the peace-loving nature of Buddhism what makes it so attractive, or the wisdom that emanates from it?
- What can Buddhism give to well-educated and modern Westerners?

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

DIDACTIC REFERENCES – SECONDARY LEVEL II

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to ...

1. understand what conditions have led to Buddhism gaining a foothold in the West.
2. explain what makes Buddhism attractive to people in Western cultures.
3. relate scientific statements to Buddhist statements.

NOTES

This lesson will focus on the 20th century. If the students do not have any prior knowledge about the origin of Buddhism and its general spread, it is advisable to use the corresponding materials from Secondary Level I **(Materials 1 and 2)**

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In Secondary Level 2 it should become comprehensible why Buddhism began to spread in the West at the end of the 1960s. The teacher decides on the extent and detail of the treatment in class.

Phase 1 highlights the historical events and sociopolitical tensions that caused the desire for a new direction:

- Cold War, Vietnam War, and student movements.
- Chinese invasion of Tibet, Cultural Revolution, Tibetan refugees and spiritual search among masters of Eastern wisdom
- Hippie movement and search for new ways of life (flower power, fashion, music), for expansion of consciousness (drugs)

Phase 2 gives a brief insight into scientific approaches that touch on Buddhism.

In the present time it becomes clearer and clearer that Buddha in his teachings had already expressed many realizations, which were observed and also formulated today by scientists in quantum physics, neurology and psychology similarly. **(cf. also Buddha's teachings, Sec. Level II, Material 3).**

INTRODUCTION

The teacher gives the following impulse based on **Material 1**: Buddhism has now arrived in the West. In stores, hardware stores, restaurants, saunas, wellness hotels, etc. you can find Buddha statues or heads and other Buddhist decorative objects.

Why do Buddhist symbols appear in our everyday life? What makes them so attractive? How did they find their way here? The students give answers from their previous knowledge. Buddhist images are associated with serenity and peace of mind, peace and happiness.

EXERCISE 1

The students work in pairs on **Worksheet 1**, under which circumstances Buddhism came to the West and why it became attractive for many. The teacher presents possible **Answers to WS 1.** The results are discussed in the plenary.

The visuals on **Material 2** give an impression of the spirit of optimism in the 1960s and help to illustrate the zeitgeist.

EXPLORATION, OPTIONAL

The links lead to films or film clips that reflect the attitude towards life in the 60s and can be shown as supplementary material:

- The Impact of the 1960s Counterculture Movement https://www.youtube.com/shorts/GGH570Igep0
- The Hippie Movement – 1960s Counter-culture https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jf52i-45Bi8E
- Hannah – Buddhism's Untold Journey https://www.wfilm.de/en/hannah/inhalt/

NOTES

The zeitgeist of the sixties tried to set an idealistic, humanistic and emancipatory alternative to materialism. Around the same time, the "real"-existing communism of the Eastern Bloc began to crumble, it could only be maintained by the state organs with iron harshness. The people there longed for freedom and the need for their own experiences was huge.

The young generation, especially the students, but also many intellectuals became more and more political. Since conservative thinking of the ruling war and post-war generation still prevailed, the change happened much too slowly for those interested in politics: The consequences were, among others, the founding of the "Extra-Parliamentary Opposition" (= APO), a radicalization that often ended in street fights.

The slogans of that time give an idea of this zeitgeist: "Break what breaks you!", "You only want our best, but you won't get that!" "Capitalism leads to fascism. Capitalism must go!", "If you sleep with the same person twice, you already belong to the establishment!", "Enough of the pettiness".

Those who were not attracted by this aggressive attitude took refuge in flower power, hippie and drug culture. Any kind of resistance, related to traditional values of the "old", was lived and also shown outwardly.

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

With the political, societal, economic, and social upheavals of the 1960s that allowed for a new freedom, including of the mind, the findings of the natural sciences proved to be catalysts for the spread of Buddhism in the Western world. Buddha's central teachings about the world of phenomena and the sciences explain the same phenomena in a comparable way. A comparable approach applies to spiritual advancement, namely to be courageous, to trust oneself, and to recognize that beyond all standardization there is still room for newness.

Buddha said, "I teach how things are - how to experience happiness and avoid suffering!" Buddha knew no mission: "Trust your own critical reason and your own clear light!" He wanted to show ways to become fundamentally permanently happy. Buddhism is an experiential religion and encourages questioning and examination of knowledge. Students are given **Material 3** with quotes from Buddhist teachers and scholars and discuss the questions on **Worksheet 2**, **A** as a group. The assignments in **Worksheet 2**, **B** guide the students to work out the information, to present it in a creative form and to make the attractiveness of Buddhism comprehensible.

In the plenum all results are reflected and the students explain the concordant scientific and Buddhist statements about consciousness / mind, reality and matter. The students recognize that the critical thinking approach and examination of findings are similar. The **Answers to WS 2** provide suggestions.

ANCHORING, OPTIONAL

Students can research on the Internet and create a **collage** or **poster** in group work.

This should illustrate the circumstances under which Buddhism was able to spread in the West. Essentially, it should become clear that the desire for freedom and for new forms of life and the findings of quantum physics promoted an openness to Buddhism. **Material 2** can be provided.

The students present their results in an exhibition and discuss the impressiveness of the different posters.

MATERIAL 1

BUDDHIST SYMBOLS IN THE MODERN WORLD



WHAT MAKES THE BUDDHA SO ATTRACTIVE?
HOW DID BUDDHIST SYMBOLS FIND THEIR WAY HERE?

WSORKSHEET 1

HOW BUDDHISM CAME TO THE WEST

As early as the 19th century and increasingly in the 20th century, British, Russian, German and French scholars were studying Buddhist scriptures. Famous philosophers such as Arthur Schopenhauer and the writer Hermann Hesse were inspired by Buddhism. Based on academic interests and a fad that developed among the upper middle classes, a few Europeans eventually discovered Buddhism as a way of life. The first Buddhist communities emerged in Europe. Personalities such as Alexandra David Neel and Anagarika Govinda traveled to Tibet, became convinced Buddhists, and described their experiences.

From the 1950s on, Asian teachers, including the well-known Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, increasingly came to the Western world, where they in turn contributed to a great reception of Buddhism in the West. Suzuki Shunryū , an acknowledged Sōtō Zen master, also went to the United States as early as 1958, where a large number of American followers soon gathered around him. So that he stayed until the end of his life.

As an example, we can also mention the Jesuit Father Lassalle, who was sent to Japan by his order in 1929. Lasalle wanted to understand the Japanese mentality, felt attracted by the culture of Buddhism and practiced meditation according to Zen Buddhism. Many years later, a lecture on "Zen and Christian Spirituality" at a congress in Elmau brought the Jesuit his breakthrough at the age of 69. The Zen movement in Germany and Europe grew rapidly.

In the period after the Second World War profound processes took place. Reconstruction in Europe required a great deal of effort, the Iron Curtain divided East and West, the Vietnam War escalated, and the Cuban Missile Crisis nearly plunged the two great powers of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union, into a Third World War.

In Asia, revolutionary events took place, culminating in China's so-called "Cultural Revolution" under Mao Zedong in 1966. The hitherto relatively isolated highlands of Tibet were also affected. The first invasion of Tibet by China with about 40,000 soldiers took place in 1950. Many of the Buddhists living there were tortured and killed - the numbers vary between 250,000 and 1.2 million out of a population of about 6 million at that time. Out of 6,500 monasteries, only three remained undamaged. In 1959, the Chinese finally took power in Tibet. A thousand-year-old Tibetan Buddhist culture was destroyed. High Buddhist teachers, such as the 14th Dalai Lama and the 16th Karmapa, fled with their people into exile in northern India and Sikkim. As best they could, they continued the Buddhist tradition.

In the economically well-established West, a counterculture emerged in the 1960s. The need for new ways of life without entrenched moral views was great. New ways of life were tried out and a clearly justified antithesis to materialism, capitalism and consumerism emerged.

The time of the hippies, rock music and experiments with "mind-expanding" drugs came. This time was also marked by the student movement, free love, communes, birth control pills and feminism. The longing for Asian countries, especially India and Nepal, grew stronger. In search of meaning, new ways of life and cheap drugs, people from Western cultures reached these countries, often by land. This led to encounters with Hindu gurus and Buddhist teachers of all currents, including the Tibetan lamas who had fled. Through these exchanges, a new way of thinking opened up to the Westerners, and their interest in inner development and meditation grew.

In exactly this mood of change, for example, the Danes Hannah and Ole Nydahl met their Buddhist teacher, the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, in Katmandu in Nepal in 1969. They became his disciples, received explanations and empowerments for meditation practice, and were later sent to the West to introduce the Diamond Way to lay people there. The Buddhist path, with its logical clarity and efficient meditations, coincided with the increasing openness and receptiveness of people and society. Buddhist personalities gained worldwide recognition, such as the 14th Dalai Lama through the Nobel Peace Prize received in 1989.

The disintegration of the Buddhist culture of Tibet and the simultaneous spirit of awakening of the



wild 1960s in politics, media, culture thus resulted in many people practicing Buddhism. Hannah and Ole Nydahl, for example, founded about 700 Buddhist groups of the Tibetan Diamond Way on all continents since the beginning of the 1970s.

This fulfilled the prophecy of Guru Rinpoche from the year 750, when he said: "When the iron bird flies, the fire horse rides and the Tibetans are scattered around the world like ants, then Buddha's teachings will come to the land of the red-faced (Westerners)".

Today, almost all traditions of Buddhism are represented in the West, most notably: Theravada, Mahayana/Great Way, Vajrayana/Diamond Way, and Zen. Buddhist centers of all directions have sprung up all over the world, offering lay people how to integrate the Buddhist view and meditation into everyday life.

Meditation is generally regarded, even by non-Buddhists, as an efficient method of reducing stress and developing mental serenity and experiencing more surplus and happiness.

EXERCISES

Read the text and note down relevant factors with your partner.

1. How was it possible for Buddhism to gain a foothold in the modern West? Include political, social, and personal reasons.

2. Discuss why Buddhist teachings became attractive to people in modern society.

ANSWERS TO WS 1

HOW BUDDHISM CAME TO THE WEST

EXERCISES

Read the text and note down relevant factors with your partner.

1. How was it possible for Buddhism to gain a foothold in the modern West? Include political, social, and personal reasons.

   - Buddhist teachers of different traditions taught in the West.
   - Famous Buddhist personalities such as the Dalai Lama received general social recognition (Nobel Prize).
   - Through the expulsion of Tibetan lamas, Tibetan Buddhism came to India (Sikkim).
   - Westerners seeking meaning could meet Buddhist teachers in Nepal and India.
   - An exchange developed.
   - Social upheavals in the 1960s created openness to new things.
   - Many people were in search of new ways and contents of life.
   - Many people were on a quest for inner development and finding meaning.

2. Discuss why Buddhist teachings became attractive to people in modern society.

   - One no longer found meaning in pure materialism and consumption.
   - The interest in inner development grew, among other things also stimulated by drug experiences.
   - Buddhism offers a clear logic to people with good education and abstract thinking.
   - Lay people can integrate meditation and viewpoint into life with work and family.
   - Meditation offers people not only stress relief and peace of mind, but also the opportunity to experience more surplus and happiness.

MATERIAL 2

SPIRIT OF OPTIMISM IN THE SIXTIES – THE HIPPIE MOVEMENT

SEARCH FOR NEW WAYS OF LIVING AND EXPANDING CONSCIOUSNESS



MATERIAL 3

QUOTES ON SCIENCE AND BUDDHISM

Buddha's teachings about the world of phenomena and scientific knowledge about the nature of phenomena show remarkable similarities.

BUDDHA SHAKYAMUNI GAUTAMA

"Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Form and emptiness are inseparable."

Prajnaparamita-teachings

"Believe nothing because a sage has said it. Believe nothing because everyone believes it. Believe nothing because it is written. Believe nothing because it is considered sacred. Believe nothing because someone else believes it. Believe only what you yourself have recognized to be true."

35 Zitate von Buddha, die glücklicher und gelassener machen, 33) Internet access: https://mymonk.de/buddha-zitate/ [10.10.2020]



Buddha Shakyamuni (6th century BC.) the historical Buddha, North India. After his enlightenment, he taught ways to fully develop the mind. The Kangyur, the collection of his words written down after death, contains 84,000 explanations in 108 volumes.

3RD KARMAPA RANGJUNG DORJE

"All phenomena are manifestations of the mind. The mind is not present as "a" mind, it is empty in its essence. Although empty, everything appears unhindered. May we know its real essence by examining it closely!"

"One cannot point out mind by saying this is it. You cannot deny it by saying this is not it. The reality beyond the mind is not compound."

3rd Karmapa: Mahamudra-Wishes, verse 9 and 12



3rd Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (* 1284 – 1339) The Karmapas are the first consciously reincarnated lamas of Tibet and the head of the Karma Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism.

LAMA OLE NYDAHL

"As long as one does not recognize the essence of mind, every experience remains colored by the inner attitude and limited in place and time."

"We do not see the world, we see our conception of the world."

"Mind is not composed. It was not born and will not die. It came from nowhere, nor can it pass away."

Lama Ole Nydahl: Vom Reichtum des Geistes. Buddhistische Inspirationen, Knaur Mens Sana 2006, S.20, S.54 u. S.65

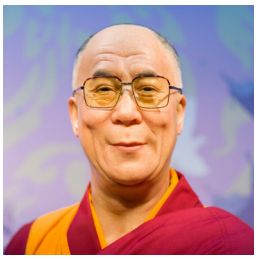


Lama Ole Nydahl (* 1941)**and his wife Hannah** (* 1946 – 2007) were disciples of the 16th Karmapa and were sent by him to the West to spread the Diamond Way there..

14. DALAI LAMA TENZING GYATSO

"Therefore, when it comes to validating the truth of a claim, Buddhism accords greatest authority to experience, with reason second and scripture last. [...]
So one fundamental attitude shared by Buddhism and science is the commitment to keep searching for reality by empirical means and to be willing to discard accepted or long-held positions if our seach finds that the truth is different."

Dalai Lama: THE UNIVERSE IN A SINGLE ATOM , Morgan Road Books 2005, p. 24/25.

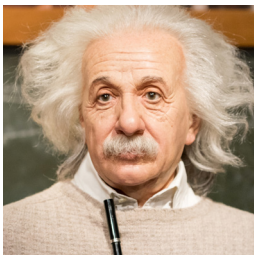


14. Dalai Lama
(* 1935) was the political leader of Tibet, he fled from the Chinese invasion to northern India in 1959 and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. In the spiritual hierarchy of his Gelugpa school, he is the highest recognized reincarnation.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

"The world as we have created it is the result of our thinking. Therefore, it cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

5 Zitate von Albert Einstein über persönliches Wachstum, in: Gedankenwelt, Psychologie, Internetzugriff: https://gedankenwelt.de/5-zitate-von-albert-einstein-ueber-persoenliches-wachstum/[Stand 10.05.2024]



Albert Einstein
(* 1879 – 1955)
His research on matter, space and time, and gravity changed the physical worldview. Einstein's main work, the theory of relativity, made him world famous. In 1922, he received the Nobel Prize in Physics.

HANS PETER DÜRR

"Primarily only connection exists, the connecting without material basis. We could also call it mind. Something that we only experience spontaneously and cannot grasp. Matter and energy appear only secondarily - as it were as congealed, solidified mind."

Dürr, Hans-Peter: Am Anfang war der Quantengeist, in Peter Moosleitners Magazin (P.M.), Mai 2007, Internetzugriff: https://www.flow-akademie.ch/texte/Quantengeist-1.pdf [Stand 10.05.2024] https://beruhmte-zitate.de/autoren/hans-peter-durr/



Hans Peter Emil Dürr
(* 1929 – 2014) was director at the Max Planck Institute for Physics in Munich until 1977. He was a collaborator of Werner Heisenberg in the project on a unified field theory of elementary particles.

PIM VAN LOMMEL

"Ultimately, we cannot avoid the conclusion that endless consciousness has always been and always will be, independently of the body. There is no beginning and there will never be an end to our consciousness. For this reason we ought to seriously consider the possibility that death, like birth, may be a mere passing from one state of consciousness into another and that during life the body functions as an interface or place of resonance."

Van Lommel, PimS: Consciousness Beyond Life: The Science of the Near-Death Experience, HarperOne, 2010, p.21



Willem (Pim) van Lommel
(* 1943)) is a Dutch cardiologist. Since 2003 he has been working mainly in the field of research on near-death experiences and related topics.

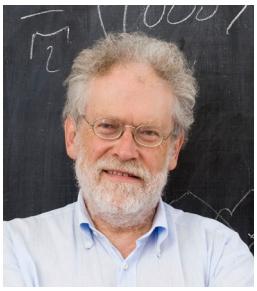
ANTON ZEILINGER

"It ultimately turns out that information is an essential basic building block of the world. We may have to say goodbye at some point to the naive realism according to which the world exists in itself, without our intervention and independent of our observation."

Naica-Loebell, Andrea: Es stellt sich letztlich heraus, dass Information ein wesentlicher Grundbaustein der Welt ist, Interview mit Zeilinger, 07. Mai 2001, Internetzugriff: http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/7/7550/1.html [Stand 10.05.2024]

"There is a spiritual world outside of material existence."
"To understand quantum physics, we have to think unusually, and I doubt if these paths have been trodden historically."

Zeilinger, Anton: Das Loch im Verständnis der Welt, in Wiener Zeitung, 07.02.2012, Internetzugriff:
https://www.wienerzeitung.at/h/das-loch-im-verstandnis-der-welt [Stand 10.05.2024]



Anton Zeilinger
(* 1945)) is an Austrian quantum physicist. The professor is head of the Institute of Experimental Physics and dean of the Faculty of Physics at the University of Vienna. In 2013 he was elected President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

WORKSHEET 2

SCIENCE AND BUDDHISM QUOTES

A

EXERCISES

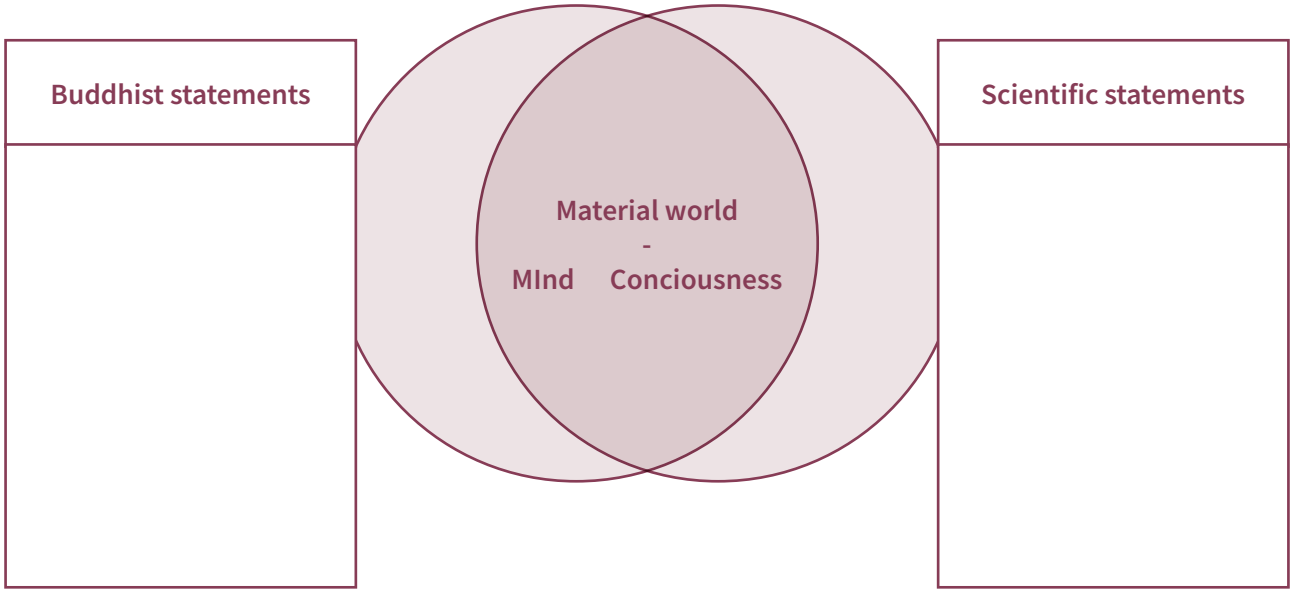
Highlight relevant statements in the quotations of **Material 3** and discuss the following questions in the group.

1. Are the search for truth in Buddhism and the scientific methods of gaining knowledge similar?
2. What does contemporary science say about matter, and what statements are there about it in Buddhism?
3. What is Albert Einstein's statement about the world and how it relates to our thinking?
4. Is Pim van Lommel's statement about consciousness different from the Buddhist view about the nature of mind?
5. Does Zeilinger's quote have any consequence for your worldview?
6. How do you feel about the Buddha's challenge not to believe, but to examine for oneself?

B

EXERCISES

1. Make a clear presentation of the intersection of Buddhist and scientific statements.



2. Explain in your own words why Buddhist teachings can be attractive to modern people.

ANSWERS TO WS 2

SCIENCE AND BUDDHISM QUOTES

A

EXERCISES

Highlight relevant statements in the quotations of **Material 3** and discuss the following questions in the group.

1. Are the search for truth in Buddhism and the scientific methods of gaining knowledge similar?
   - Yes, they are similar.

   "Believe nothing just because a sage has said it. Believe nothing because everyone believes it. Believe nothing because it is written. Believe nothing because it is considered sacred. Believe nothing because someone else believes it. Believe only what you yourself have recognized as true." (Buddha)

   "So one fundamental attitude shared by Buddhism and science is the commitment to keep searching for reality by empirical means and to be willing to discard accepted or long-held positions if our seach finds that the truth is different." *(Dalai Lama)*

2. What does contemporary science say about matter, and what statements are there about it in Buddhism?

   "Primarily only connection exists, the connecting without material basis. We could also call it mind. Something that we only experience spontaneously and cannot grasp. Matter and energy appear only secondarily - as it were as congealed, solidified mind." (Hans Peter Dürr)

   "There is a spiritual world outside of material existence." (Anton Zeilinger)

   "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Form and emptiness are inseparable." (Buddha)

   "The reality beyond mind is not compound." (3rd Karmapa)

   "Although empty, everything appears unhindered." (3rd Karmapa)

3. What is Albert Einstein's statement about the world and how it relates to our thinking?

   The world as we have created it is the result of our thinking," (Albert Einstein).

4. Is Pim van Lommel's statement about consciousness different from the Buddhist view about the nature of mind?
   - No, the statements confirm that consciousness is not produced by the brain, it is like space, timeless and everywhere.

   "There is no beginning and there will never be an end to our consciousness." *(Pim van Lommel)*

   "The mind is not present as "a" mind, it is empty in its essence. Although empty, everything appears unhindered." (3rd Karmapa)

   "Mind is not composed. It was not born and will not die. It came from nowhere, nor can it pass away." *(Lama Ole Nydahl)*

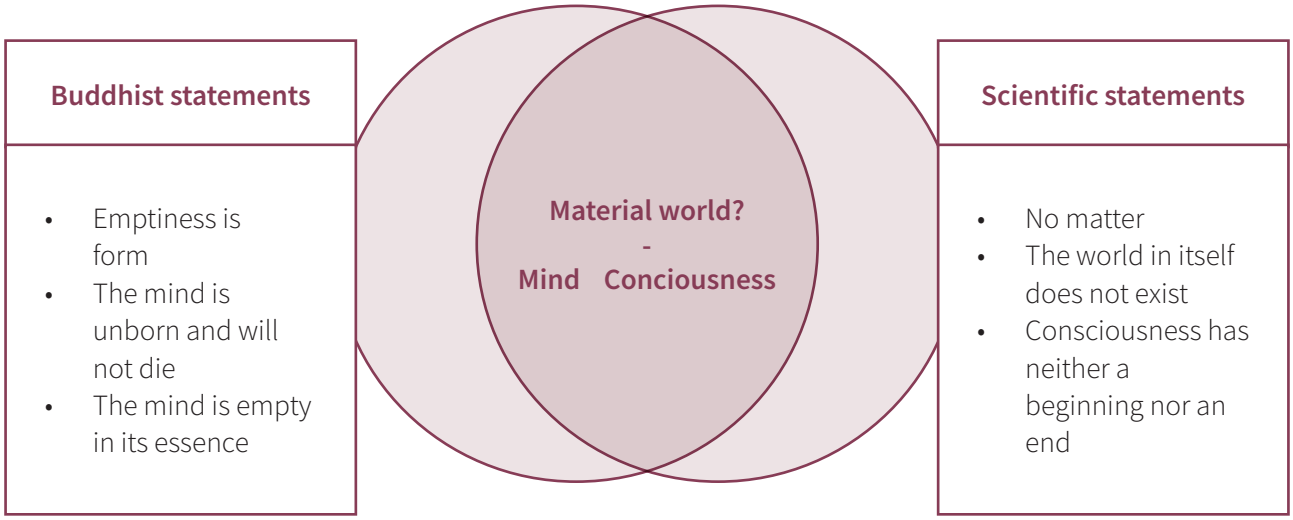
5. Does Zeilinger's quote have any consequence for your worldview?
   - Individual argumentative advocacy or rejection of the thesis that there is no world existing independently of the observer.

6. How do you feel about the Buddha's challenge not to believe, but to examine for oneself?
   - Personal answer, delineating belief from basic critical examination of supposed truths.

B

EXERCISES

1. Make a clear presentation of the intersection of Buddhist and scientific statements.



2. Explain in your own words why Buddhist teachings can be attractive to modern people.
   - One does not have to believe, there are no dogmas, statements are verified, logical contradictions may be clarified, ...