



*“Dream of the Good” – a Peace Education Project:
Exploring its Potential to Educate for Peace at an Individual Level.*

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Abstract

This study looked at a Swedish peace education project, the Dream of the Good, in terms of its possible potential to educate for peace. The Dream of the Good is a holistic, transformative and networking peace project. It aims to inspire for and facilitate education for individual peace at different levels in school through practical methods based on two key principles: 1) awareness of connection between self and experience, i.e. how conscious and unconscious thoughts, feelings and actions influence one's experiences, and 2) the role of calm and concentration in creating well-being, access to inner resource, and space for reflection.

The research question looked at the peace potential in implementing the key principles in teaching, and was operationalised as effects on: ability to react non-violently, empathy and kindness in attitudes and behaviour, and inspiration for peaceful development. The research question was answered through a theoretical study based on empirical (research based) psychology and Buddhist philosophy, as Western and Eastern perspectives respectively, and through qualitative interviews with students, teachers, and resource personnel participating in the project.

Reviewed theory yielded positive findings for a peace potential. A general potential for individual peaceful development was found to exist both according to psychology and Buddhism, with the latter predicting that it may be obtained fully. Both perspectives showed to various degrees that teaching based on the key principles affects individual peace positively. Reviewed research on relaxation methods used by the Dream of the Good also yielded strong support of this in the case of kindergarten children, and provided indications of increased individual peace for students and grown-ups.

The findings of the interview study were much in accordance with the findings of the theoretical study and thus had positive findings regarding a peace potential from teaching based on the key principles. The results included observations of reduced aggression among kindergarten children. To a large extent the interviewees expressed experiences of enhanced ability to react calmly and non-violently to potentially provoking or stressing situations, experiences of increased empathy as well as created harmony in the taught groups, and inspiration for methods or work that lead in a direction of individual peace.

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1 Introduction

Based on an appeal of all living Nobel Peace Laureates, the UN Resolution 54/243 B was adopted by the General assembly and signed by 186 states of the world (Appeal of the Nobel Peace Laureate Foundation, 2003¹). The resolution calls for a global movement for a culture of peace, and the teaching and practice of peace and non-violence at all levels in every school by 2010. Further, the Appeal of the Nobel Peace Laureates Foundation was formed to support the United Nations and member states in their efforts, and to formulate and implement an action plan with civil society structures. In particular the Appeal Foundation (abbreviated name) aims to act as a catalyser. It looks for peace education, peace work, and working tools that work toward the promotion of peace and non-violence, and seeks to catalyse an open knowledge transfer of these methods among people around the world by building networks, establishing communication tools and having relevant people meet.

Regarding the field of peace education, it is a relatively new field as it has developed in the shadows of the cold war (Burns, 2000). The field aims to affect attitudes and behaviour, but has needed a new epistemology and pedagogy that take these aims into consideration. There consequently seems to be a trend towards transformative education projects, aiming for change at personal, social and community levels, rather than using education as a mere instrument for replication of knowledge. Positive evaluation has been reported for different peace education projects of this kind (Miller, 2004), and is also reported for peace education in areas of intractable conflict (Salomon, 2003). However, peace education programmes vary widely, and each one must be assessed in its own right.

This study looks at the transformative peace education project “Dream of the Good” which is currently carried out in Sweden. This is a project that the Appeal Foundation both supports and participates in, and regards as a pilot project in its strategy. Against this background, this study sets out to explore the potential of the Dream of the Good against the aim of educating for peace, in terms of how participating teachers and students may be affected in a direction of peacefulness and non-violence. The research is done against a background of the author seeing individuals’ peacefulness as a necessary precondition for having peace at the level of society. However, regardless of this view, it is a strong aim that the research findings, used to discuss if and to what extent the Dream of the Good may educate for peace, shall stand up to scrutiny.

¹ Unpublished document written by the “Appeal Foundation”. Contact the author of this thesis to obtain a copy.

2 Dream of the Good

The project “Dream of the Good” is based in Stockholm. It is run by a voluntary organisation, “Det Andra”, that works to promote perspectives of peace and non-violence in Swedish schools. Det Andra ran the peace project “Dalai Lama’s Perspective” in Stockholm schools in 1995/6 (Bornstein, 1998). This project included a talk by the Dalai Lama to the students, seminars to the students by other inspirational persons, peace exhibitions, and tuition of methods to the students for individual peaceful development.

The current project Dream of the Good may be said to be much in line with, and a continuation of, the former project. The current project is also this time much inspired by the thinking of the Dalai Lama, though the project is not based on any specific theoretical, philosophical or religious orientation. Rather, it draws theoretical justification from a broad range of fields and disciplines that may help explain and promote development of peace and non-violence at an individual level. It is holistic and inclusive in its approach and does not claim that one specific philosophy and some specific methods constitute *the* right way towards the aims of peace at the individual level. The project may rather be said to encourage teachers and students to use methods and theory that fit them and their context.

However, as the Dream of the Good is a transformative education project, it is a main aim to affect involved teachers’ and students’ attitudes and behaviour in a direction of peacefulness and non-violence (Drömmen om det goda, 2003²). For these purposes, it emphasizes two key principles. The first is creating an awareness of a connection between oneself and one’s experience of the world, which will be referred to as ‘connection between self and experience’. This key principle, which concerns how one relates to oneself and others, deals with a vast area and may not be narrowly defined. However, in the context of this thesis the first key principle will be understood to include awareness of: how our thoughts and actions may influence our selves as well as others; the role of the unconscious in terms of affecting thoughts, emotions and behaviour; and the role of level of awareness and other factors in influencing perceptions. An example is represented by awareness of any tendencies to project one’s negative qualities onto others. The second key principle concerns using calm and concentration in peaceful development. Calm and concentration may be created through different relaxation methods, and is seen to counteract negative and stressing thoughts and

² This refers to an unpublished document that presents the Dream of the Good. To obtain a copy contact the author of this thesis.

emotions, and provide a space for increased awareness and better access to inner resources. It is thus emphasized that peace at the individual level may be developed by inner work based on the two key principles, 'awareness of connection' and 'calm and concentration', rather than just fighting to change unpleasant external conditions.

In line with the key principles the pedagogy of the project seeks to stimulate awareness and self-reflection. Main ideas and methods are thus taught to enable people's inner resources and capacity for individual peaceful development. The methods are broad based. They include raising awareness through peace films, books (in particular the "Dream of the Good", Bornstein, 1998), expositions, panel discussions, and seminars for teachers and students by accomplished persons in terms of inner peaceful development. A public seminar in Stockholm by the Dalai Lama in June 2003, at which tickets were supplied at reduced rates to 3000 students, marked a highlight. However, practical methods for everyday or frequent use are very central, and are often introduced to schools and teachers through organized theme days. Individual headmasters, teachers and students may adopt methods as presented or they may adapt them as they see fit. These methods include: discussions and reflections over existential questions; the use of massage, stillness, meditation, qigong, yoga and dream analysis; indigenous peoples' knowledge related to peace; engagement in help projects; and teaching of various themes and exercises specifically related to inner leadership, conflict handling and inner peace work. There is also specifically designed educational material, or "plug-ins", being developed for various school subjects that aim to show how these subjects relate to peace.

The key principles and methods promoted by the Dream of the Good have been introduced in many schools in Sweden in the school year 2003-4 from primary to upper secondary level. However, some schools and kindergartens have already been involved and have been employing Dream of the Good principles and methods for a few years. It is important to note here that the Dream of the Good evolves as a network organisation. Its network counts about 250 people³ of whom perhaps half are at any one time active in teaching the project's key principles and methods. The project expands by mechanisms of inspiration and personal encounters. It consequently spreads organically in a loosely defined way. It is up to individual teachers how and what parts of the project they want to implement. For instance, one teacher may choose to have the students massage each other for 15 minutes at the start of

³ Estimated figure per October 2003

ordinary classes. Another teacher may choose to construct a whole elective course about physical and mental health in which methods such as yoga, meditation and massage are employed and underlying philosophy of non-violence is addressed.

In sum, the Dream of the Good is a transformative peace education project that aims for peaceful development of individual students and teachers. It has a holistic approach and encourages an individual adaptation to implementation of its key principles and methods. It is a networking project and as such aims to spread by mechanisms of inspiration.

3 Research Question

The Dream of the Good's strong focus on inner peaceful change and its role as a pilot project in the strategy of the Appeal Foundation makes it an important project. It is central to know if teaching based on its key principles and methods work in educating for peace at the individual level. Knowledge of this should be of interests to several groups, such as the Dream of the Good resource persons (organizers), the Appeal Foundation, schools and other groups wanting to do similar work, and people involved in related research. The research question to be answered is:

Explore the potential of the Dream of the Good – through teaching based on its key principles – to educate for peace at an individual level.

Here it is important to note that it is the Dream of the Good's *potential* for individual peace that will be explored. Although currently implemented by teachers from more than twenty schools (teachers with whom Dream of the Good organizers have direct contact), it may be said to be at an early stage as a potential large-scale project. Even though some schools have incorporated key principles and methods of the Dream of the Good for a few years, a more general spreading to other schools, through organic growth, started in the second half of 2003. This means that some schools included in the empirical study have incorporated the Dream of the Good key principles and methods for a very short period, for only one or two months at the time of data collection. Thus it makes sense to explore the potential.

Also, it is critical to be aware that it is teaching based on the Dream of the Good *key principles* that will be explored in terms of an individual peace potential, rather than the Dream of the Good organizers' specific ways of organising and teaching. This is necessary because of the project's loose network structure, it's full flexibility in how the key principles are implemented in teaching, and it's holistic nature that means that no theoretical views and methods are given superiority over others. Further, as these key principles do not exclusively apply to the Dream of the Good, relevant research found in literature may, and will, be used in answering the research question. Finally, it should also be noted that *teaching* (of key principles) in this context not only is confined to formal school teaching, but in addition includes being self-taught through own study and practice of Dream of the Good methods.

The research question is **operationalised** through the following questions, thus giving meaning to ‘potential to educate for peace’, as used in this context:

- *Does teaching based on the Dream of the Good’s key principles affect the individual’s **ability to react non-violently**⁴ to internal and external influences?*
- *Does teaching based on of Dream of the Good’s key principles affect the individual’s level of **empathy and kindness** in attitudes and behaviour?*
- *Does exposure to the Dream to the Good’s key principles **inspire or motivate** for individual peaceful development?*

The operationalised research question will be answered in two main parts:

- I. Discussion of theory and research
- II. Empirical study of experiences of participants in the project.

The first part covers theories and empirical studies that are relevant to the key principles and peaceful development. Western psychology and Buddhist philosophy is used as the two main theoretical perspectives, and will, together with research on some main practical methods employed by the Dream of the Good, provide findings in relation to the research question.

The second part covers an interview study focusing on participants’ experiences of being subject to ‘Dream of the Good’- teaching. The participants consisted of students, teacher and resource persons that have been exposed to teaching, and also teach in the case of teachers, based on the Dream of the Good’s key principles and methods. The resulting findings in relation to the research question are in terms of the participants’ perceived effects of the teaching. The strength of the findings from both the discussed theory and the empirical study will be discussed in the respective sections.

⁴ The meaning of ‘non-violence’, as applied in the context of this thesis, is discussed in sections 4 and 5.1.

4 Assumptions – Role of Individual Peace

As this study concerns itself with peace at the individual level, it gives rise to two fundamental questions. First, what is the relevance of peace at an individual level to peace in larger groups or society as a whole? And second, if relevant, do all people have the capacity for peaceful development? In this respect, the following assumptions have been made, for which support is discussed below:

- 1. Sustainable peace in society requires that individual people constituting society are themselves peaceful and non-violent.*
- 2. All people have the capacity for peaceful development.*

The assumptions refer to a positive peace concept as defined by Galtung (1996). According to this definition a society is at peace where direct, structural and cultural violence is largely absent, these types of violence are replaced with positive counterparts such as kindness, cooperation and freedom, and the society has a capacity to handle conflict in a peaceful way.

This inclusive definition of peace allows us to include different forms of violence in the discussion. For instance, a society is not at peace if there is little direct violence, but there is political repression, economic exploitation and/or cultural chauvinism in relation to groups in that society. Of course, no society will totally fulfil these criteria for peace, but peace, as defined, can be seen as a long-term goal or direction.

Regarding the first assumption, a society is necessarily peaceful if all its members are peaceful. But can a society be made peaceful in other ways – by implementing structures that make it peaceful? It is already clear from the definition that a repressive system that minimizes direct violence in the population by mechanisms of fear of retribution is not a peaceful society. On the other hand, a democratic society, in which protective human rights are enacted, would be expected to be far closer to the defined concept of peace. However, it may be fair to say that instituting and sustaining such a system requires a certain peacefulness and peace mindedness of the members of society. Then it comes back to the individuals. Also the actual peacefulness of a democracy as a whole necessarily depends on its members. In so-called peaceful democracies many examples may be found of high levels of violence in terms of crime and unjust treatments of groups. Or, alternatively, if a country is fairly peaceful

within it may not be so without, for instance by economic exploitation and protective policies, and in other ways contributing to conflict.

In relation to the first assumption there is also the question of whether members of the society, who are normally peaceful as individuals, become non-peaceful in the emergence of group conflict. Social psychologists have concluded that what holds true for theories on interpersonal behaviour do not extrapolate easily to intergroup behaviour. Groups are shown to be more aggressive and competitive than individuals (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). According to Tajfel's dominant social identity theory (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001) individuals define themselves to a large degree in terms of their social group membership. This implies, for instance, that when a part of the group is threatened, the individual identifying with it will be threatened. However, peace at the individual level implies his or her capacity to deal with conflict. To be peaceful thus means the capacity to remain non-violent when one is subject to such group mechanisms, and we are brought back to needing peace at the individual level. The next section will elaborate further how peace and non-violence at the individual level is understood in the context of this thesis.

Finally, the second assumption specifies that people have a capacity for change in the direction of individual peace, and that this is a capacity that everybody has. Many of us might find that we have a tendency to think of people as being static in their attitudes and behaviour, and especially so in a conflict situation. However, it is easy to recognize that people develop during their life span, and unless one takes a fatalistic view one may acknowledge that this development can be influenced. Also, there is a whole science, namely psychology, whose therapeutic parts deal with changing negative psychological conditions, and we have a number of philosophical, religions and "wisdom traditions" that deal with peaceful development. A further discussion of a general potential to develop peacefully is placed in the theoretical chapter.

5 Review of Theory and Research

This chapter looks at theories of aggression, prosocial behaviour and peaceful development from the chosen Western and Eastern perspectives, and at empirical studies regarding meditation, massage and qigong, belonging to the main practical methods employed by the Dream of the Good. However, first individual peace and non-violence will be related to conflict theory, and the choices of perspectives will be discussed.

5.1 Conflict Theory – Individual Peace and Non-violence

In order to relate this study to conflict theory, Galtung's definition of conflict will be used as a point of departure due to its inclusiveness. He has defined conflict as consisting of attitudes (A), behaviour (B) and contradictions (C) (Galtung, 1996). That is $\text{conflict} = A+B+C$. 'A' refers to negative attitudes and feelings, conscious or unconscious. 'B' refers to violent behaviour, physically, verbally or otherwise, and 'C' refers to competing goals, either interpersonally or internally as a frustration. A conflict may be solved by peaceful transformation of the three components A, B and C. The Dream of the Good involves, as stated, education that aims for change of the *individual's* capacity to deal with conflict. This then entails the individual's ability to peacefully (non-violently) handle situations of competing goals (C), with others or oneself, and situations of being subject to violent attitudes (A) and behaviour (B). To this can be added the ability to peacefully handle all other forms of psychological stress, as well as learned reaction patterns that may induce a violent response. Overall, peace at the individual level will be viewed as the individual's capacity for a non-violent response to the various internal and external influences one may experience. Of course, few people, if any, obtain this fully. It should consequently be seen as a possible goal or direction one may set for oneself. According to this peace definition individuals will be somewhere on the scale between totally violent and totally peaceful, and will hence have a certain degree of individual peace.

A non-violent response in this context should be understood as refraining from all types of violence. For instance, when faced with anger, hate or violence directed against oneself a non-violent approach means not doing physical, verbal, or other harmful acts in return. It is thus different from what may be seen as an instinctual reaction whereby one meets violence with violence (see Wetlesen, 2003). Also, it does not mean to repress one's emotions and instead react violently against somebody else at a later time, in which case the violent

response is only postponed and redirected. In fact, instead of repressing emotions, which may be harmful to oneself, non-violence is here about being able to react peacefully to potential provocations and stressors in a spontaneous manner. Non-violence, as used in this context, should be understood as what Gandhi called strong non-violence (Næss, 2000). It is accompanied by the development of non-violent attitudes that helps one to act non-violently. This development thus also means strengthening positive qualities such as empathy, kindness and compassion. These qualities would be part of the non-violent attitudes.

The Dream of the Good relates to non-violence through its emphasized two key principles. First, an increased awareness of connection between self and experience is believed to help strengthen positive qualities such as empathy and kindness, and in this way help the development of non-violent attitudes. Second, methods that provide inner calm and concentration are similarly believed to help realize a peace potential of the individual. The calm may, as mentioned, be said to provide a space for increased awareness, better access to inner resources, and help to react peacefully in different situations.

The above understanding of individual peace and non-violence was built into the operationalisation of the research question. This understanding will be used in the discussion of the chosen theoretical perspectives.

5.2 Theoretical Perspectives to be Discussed

What is the theoretical basis for the Dream of the Good? Many different perspectives or viewpoints are presented by the project tools: the book “Dream of the Good” (Bornstein 1998) and by the project’s CD with the same name. As already alluded to, the Dream of the Good can be said to be holistic, or polytheistic, in the sense that it builds on many different theoretical, philosophic and religious outlooks. There is not one system of thought that is called *the* right one. The different outlooks are instead important in terms of their power to explain how the key principles of the Dream of the Good (‘awareness of connection’ and ‘calm and concentration’) may educate for peace. As examples, Western psychology and medical research are used to explain how relaxation methods create calm and well-being that counter stress and aggression. Buddhism and Hinduism are used to discuss the nature of consciousness and the potential for an inner peaceful development. Jungian psychology is used as a basis to interpret dreams, thereby accessing unconscious thoughts and feelings that may affect one’s behaviour. Modern Physics and existential philosophy (e.g. idealism) are

used to discuss how one's experiences depend on and are related to oneself and therefore may be changed. Indigenous peoples' knowledge is presented to show perspectives of old traditions of peace and holistic ways of viewing our existence. These examples illustrate how different outlooks are used together in support of the aims and the key principles of the Dream of the Good.

The holistic nature of Dream of the Good suggests an analysis of theory from different fields. Yet, the amount of theory to be included in this thesis must be limited due to space limitations. Further, the chosen theory must be valid by being relevant to the key principles of the Dream of the Good. Thus, in accordance with the research question, the theory need to link the key principles to aggression that is to be avoided, prosocial attitudes and behaviour that are to be promoted, and peaceful development. Also, more specifically, research results regarding some of the Dream of the Good's main practical methods, such as meditation, massage and qigong, and their mechanisms need to be reviewed. For these purposes, two different outlooks have been chosen as main pillars of explanation. One outlook is represented by Western psychology, by predominantly research-based disciplines, and the other one is represented by Buddhist philosophy. They are chosen to provide one perspective that is firmly rooted within a Western scientific tradition with high demands on objectivity and use of the scientific method, and one perspective that is Eastern that has a very long tradition in exploration of the mind with the aim of individual peace. It should be noted that these perspectives are not viewed as superior or more relevant than left out fields of theory. Other fields have not received any detailed assessment. However, it does mean that the chosen perspectives are found to be relevant, and thus valid, for the purposes of this study. These two perspectives are discussed below in terms of some strengths and weaknesses.

5.2.1 A Western Perspective - Psychology

Western research-based psychology follows the rules of the scientific method. It thus abides by what may be called a fundamental assumption of Western science; that the test of all knowledge is experiment (see Mansfield, 2002). The knowledge must be obtained in a subject-object relationship by objective and detached observers (to the extent possible), and data and analysis must be publicly available, so as to allow trained scientists to repeat the experiments. These rigorous procedures have the advantage of producing experimental results

that are repetitive, and a number of findings from several experiments with similar results may be compounded into theories with predictive value (Passer & Smith, 2002)

However, knowledge resulting from the scientific method also has some inherent limitations that need mentioning. As discussed by astrophysicist Mansfield (2000), science cannot by nature reveal knowledge about reality as objectively as we would like it to do. He states that our experience of the world is not independent of the observer, but is a convolution of what exists intrinsically with the processes of our own mind-body complex. Deconvolution of what exists intrinsically would require full knowledge of the mind-body processes including unconscious aspects – a knowledge we do not have. Hence science cannot reveal an objective reality independent of the observer.

Modern physics provide examples of how the objective view breaks down at close inspection. Quantum mechanics shows that observations at a quantum level, whether particle like or wave like qualities are observed, are subject to probabilities and depends on the observer and her methods of observation. Also, theories of relativity tell us that that a quantity measured only has a well-defined value in the particular reference frame or viewpoint chosen by the observer. In addition, perhaps most limiting to the study of psychology is the strict subject-object relation itself of Western science. Introspection of the mind is not an acceptable research method, and in this way a potentially important resource for psychological knowledge may not be used.

5.2.2 An Eastern Perspective - Buddhism

Buddhist philosophy also has advantages and limitations as a theoretical outlook. A major advantage is that it may be treated as a powerful science of the mind if one is willing to abide by different scientific rules. For instance, Mathieu Ricard, a biological researcher who became a Buddhist monk, strongly argues in favour of calling Buddhism a science of the mind (Revel & Ricard, 1999). Buddhism is an old tradition starting with the life of Gautama Buddha about 2500 years ago. It has introspection through meditation as a primary research method, and aims towards a very direct experience of the reality of the world including oneself. Practitioners are encouraged to experience insights for oneself, and not accept Buddhist doctrines by mere belief. Thus, there is a principle of validation of Buddhist empirical knowledge through inward investigation and observation by other practitioners. The

main principles of Buddhist theory, that is the original teachings of Gautama Buddha, are claimed to have survived the later challenge of other practitioners' personal investigation.

However, on the negative side, especially viewed through Western lenses, is the strong focus on the subject in Buddhist mind research. If some of the important insights only can be experienced by accomplished meditation practitioners, then how can or should non-practitioners and less experienced practitioners accept the knowledge? Unless the Buddhist understanding resonates with knowledge acquired from other disciplines, or from other life experiences, one may not know. One must choose to accept or not accept Buddhist knowledge based on the trust one has in its methods of investigation, including others' self-verification, logic reasoning, and reliance on scriptural authority, or alternatively oneself embark on a practice of meditation, reflection and related activities within or outside a Buddhist context.

5.2.3 Specifications within Employed Perspectives

Some strengths and weaknesses have been shown for both Western science, here applying to empirical disciplines of psychology, and for Buddhist philosophy viewed as a science of the mind. The attributed importance of the strengths and weaknesses of these two perspectives will depend on the readers' own outlooks and positions. However, the theory to follow will show some touch points between psychology and Buddhism. Theory and research from the two fields that support each other for the discussed aspects may increase the trust in the findings of both fields.

In terms of specific theories reviewed, it must be noted that the empirically based psychological theory to be presented naturally will not give a full overview of all research done on these topics. However, initially a broad coverage is attempted of different ways of understanding causes of aggression and prosocial behaviour, before the discussion is narrowed down based on the relevance to the Dream of the Good's key principles and peaceful development. Also Buddhist theory or philosophy exists as a large body of literature. Consequently the Buddhist theory to be presented will primarily consist of "core teaching" which is common to the different schools of Buddhism. This teaching is seen as relevant to the Dream of the Good key principles.

5.3 Aggression and Violence

5.3.1 Psychology on Causes of Aggression and Violence

Changing tendencies and potential for aggressive attitudes and behaviour is central to the development of the individual's capacity for non-violence. For this it is important to understand what aggression and violence is and the factors that contribute to it. Aggression may be defined as any sort of behaviour that is intended to harm another person (Passer and Smith, 2001). For the purposes of this discussion, aggressive and violent behaviour will to a large degree be viewed as the same. However, violence is defined widely in this thesis and is taken to also include actions associated with a lack of empathy from which others experience harm. Hence, a harmful intent as such is not necessarily needed as a motivator of violent actions. One may for instance only see one's own perspective and not be willing or able to mentally step into the shoes of the other. It should also be noted that actions motivated by empathy can be experienced as harmful, for example if the recipient have expectations that are not met. Such actions will, however, not be considered as violence.

5.3.1.1 Biological Factors of Aggression

Psychological research to a large degree deals with the term aggression. It provides no one answer to what causes aggression, however. There are instead many models of explanation of contributing factors at biological, environmental and psychological levels.

The biological theories include models of heredity whereby aggression is rooted in the genes by mechanisms of evolutionary adaptation (Passer & Smith, 2001). As such aggression may have helped to compete for mates, food and shelter, defend territory, and survive attack. The human body's response to stressors discovered by Cannon (1914), often called the 'fight or flight response', is believed to have evolved as an evolutionary mechanism. The response manifests itself through arousal of the sympathetic nervous system (part of the autonomic nervous system), increased heart rate and air to the lungs, dilated pupils, and more blood being pumped to the muscles. In this way the body is triggered for physical activity, such as fighting an opponent or pray or running for shelter. Modern research attempts to fully understand the physical mechanisms of aggression by looking at neural pathways and biochemistry. Findings suggest, for instance, that part of the hypothalamus and a low level of the neurotransmitter serotonin are part of the mechanisms of aggression (Passer & Smith, 2001). As such, therapeutic drugs that interfere with these mechanisms may have a potential

to reduce aggression. However, the Dream of the Good does not deal with therapeutic drugs as means to peaceful development of individual students and teachers. Individual peace, as the ability to react non-violently to external and internal influences, is sought despite the body's inherent fight and flight response to stressors. The following discussion will consequently concentrate on environmental and psychological explanations of aggression. Environmental and psychological factors are broadly separated under different headings, but the discussion will reveal fairly close links between them.

5.3.1.2 Environmental Factors of Aggression

In terms of environmental factors, Dollard and colleagues proposed the classical "frustration-aggression-hypothesis" in 1939 (Dollard et al., 1944). The hypothesis says that frustration, as an interference with progress towards a goal, inevitably will lead to aggression, and that the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration. Later research has modified the original statements to the understanding that frustration increases the risk of aggression, as there are also other ways of reacting (Passer & Smith, 2001). Studies show that chances of aggressive reactions increase if somebody's interference with one's progress towards a goal is perceived as illegitimate or is personally directed (Berkowitz, 1989). However, Berkowitz provides evidence that legitimate and non-personally directed frustrations can also produce aggression, and proposes that frustration instigates aggression to the degree that it generates negative emotions from experiencing the interference as an aversive event. As such, there is now much evidence that different aversive events increase the risk of aggressive behaviour. This has been shown for physical pain, exposure to heat, foul odours and cold water, provocation and crowding (Passer & Smith, 2001). However, it has also been shown to apply for psychological discomfort produced by scenes regarding as disgusting, and not least by feelings of sadness and depression (Berkowitz, 1989; 1990). In the latter case the aggression is found to typically happen as impulsive bursts of temper, rather than as planned attacks. In addition, everyday experience seems to suggest that fear increases the risk of aggression. Berkowitz proposes that fear and anger co-occurs, but which emotion is dominant (and experienced more strongly) depends on the situation and internal cognitive mechanisms of the person (Berkowitz, 1990). There is currently little direct evidence that fear can instigate aggression in humans, but a number of suggestive observations are described in two forthcoming publications (Berkowitz, 2004, Berkowitz & Harmon-Jones, 2004;).

As well as providing aversive stimuli that instigate aggression, the environment functions for learning aggressive behaviour through mechanisms of reinforcement and modelling. For instance, in one study of four-year-old nursery school children, in which approx. 2500 aggressive acts and their consequences were recorded, the children became increasingly aggressive when their aggressive behaviour was rewarded, for instance by another child giving up her toy (Patterson, Littman & Bricker, 1967). Conversely, children who were unsuccessful in their aggressive behaviour or experienced unpleasant consequences became less aggressive. In terms of modelling behaviour, experiments have shown that children may model aggression, even in cases where they witness their model being punished (Passer & Smith, 2001). It has also been shown that aggressive and delinquent children tend to have parents who frequently model for aggressive behaviour (Stormshak, Bierman, McMahon & Lengua, 2000).

5.3.1.3 Psychological Factors of Aggression

As already alluded to, the extent to which different situations will give rise to aggressive behaviour, will necessarily depend on the situation itself and how it is perceived. For the perception of a situation various psychological factors come into play. For example, in the case of frustration in terms of impeded progress towards a goal, the degree to which aggression is instigated is found to depend on the negative emotions created. Also any occurrence of overt aggression is found to depend on such factors as perceived legitimacy of aggressive reactions, inhibitions through social norms and possible threats to oneself (Berkowitz, 1989).

Authority is one factor that may influence the use of aggression as shown by the famous Milgram experiment (Milgram 1969). In this experiment the participants were asked to act as teachers, and administer increasingly strong electric shocks (in reality faked) to a learner when he answered incorrectly. Under the influence of the experimenter 65 % of the participants incrementally increased the shocks to levels where the learner screamed in agony and yet further to where he stopped responding all together. Later research has confirmed the effects of authority on aggression (Passer & Smith, 2001).

At the group level aggression is influenced by psychological factors that may be different or more pronounced than in interpersonal relations. As such, groups are found to be more competitive and aggressive than individuals (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001), and the very

membership in a group is found to be a promoter of prejudice against those who are not part of the “in-group”. The dominant explanatory model, Tajfel’s Social Identity theory, says that prejudice stems from individuals to a large degree defining themselves in terms of social group membership, and through that seek a positive social identity (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). Thus, the in-group must be valued higher than out-groups, and perceived threats against the in-group will contribute to conflict and aggression. A case in point would be the conflict of Northern Ireland, which to a large degree can be described as a fight for identity.

Other mechanisms of group behaviour are also important to aggressive behaviour. When group conflicts escalate, the degree of identification with the in-group is seen to increase (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). Consequently, the pressure to conform to the in-group, and thus share its views and aggressive behaviour, becomes stronger so as not to be perceived as a threat by other group members. Also, deindividuation, a loss of individuality that leads to disinhibited behaviour, may occur (Passer & Smith, 2001). This was especially evident in the “Stanford Prison Study” in which college students were assigned as prison guards and inmates (Zimbardo et al., 1973). The student prison guards, who wore similar uniforms, sunglasses and did not know they were being observed by staff, ended up dehumanising the student inmates after only a few days of the experiment and treated them cruelly and inhumanely.

The unconscious part of our minds seems to have a special role to play in guiding our reactions and behaviour, and consequently also in guiding aggression. This seems true in spite of the original psychodynamic theories of Freud, including his view of aggression happening as a catharsis for bottled up instinctive aggressive energy, being heavily criticised (see Passer & Smith, 2001). Now, much empirical research has been done, both in psychodynamic, neuropsychological and cognitive psychological disciplines, that support both the existence of an unconscious part of the mind and various effects the unconscious is understood to have on our reactions and behaviour. In a review, Westen cites extensive support for the existence of unconscious thoughts, emotions and motives (Westen, 1998). Further, conscious and unconscious mental processes, at the levels of thoughts, emotions and motives, have been shown to operate in parallel by largely independent neural networks. This in turn sets the stage for conscious and unconscious feelings motivating in opposing ways. For instance, in studies of racism towards minorities in the United States, people’s unconscious attitudes tended to be more negative and prejudiced as compared to their conscious attitudes (Westen, 1998). This is relevant in relation to findings that conscious attitudes heavily influence behaviour when they are focused upon, whereas chronically activated and unconscious attitudes do so when the

conscious attitudes are not focused upon (Westen, 1998). Reviewed studies also suggest that emotionally laden thoughts kept from consciousness continue to remain active through an emotional press (Westen, 1998). This is in contrast to a habituation found to occur when the emotional laden thought is kept in consciousness.

Westen also sites much support for unconscious emotions in relation to defensive processes (Westen, 1998). Of particular interest are studies on the mechanisms of defensive projection. This is a mechanism whereby one falsely attributes to others threatening unconscious aspects of oneself. The others' attributed negative qualities may in turn serve to justify aggression (see Passer and Smith, 1991). The studies found that a chronic vigilance against the threatening traits in oneself, gave a readiness to use the same trait constructs when making inferences about other people.

Finally, whether one reacts violently or non-violently to situations depends on the psychological factors of empathy and ability to regulate emotions. Both these factors have been shown to reduce the occurrence of aggressive reactions to provocations (Passer and Smith, 2001). These factors will be dealt with in more detail under the sections on prosocial behaviour and peaceful development.

5.3.1.4 An Encompassing Theory of Violence

The above creates a picture of various factors that enhance the possibility of violence. Environmental and psychological factors that play a role as eliciting stimuli or triggering factors represent stressors in that they place high demands on the individual. As such, they may elicit a violent (aggressive) response. Much in line with this way of understanding the causes of aggression, Per Isdal, leader of Alternative to Violence and authority on dealing with violence problems, proposes a theory that acts of violence always happens in response to feelings of powerlessness (Isdal, 2000). The violent behaviour becomes a way to regain power, control and mastery of one's situation. However, aggressive behaviour is seen as one of several possible ways to react to feeling powerless. Other ways of reacting include avoidance of difficult situations and excessive control strategies.

Isdal presents a broad picture of stressors that may contribute to situations where a person may feel powerless to a lesser or larger degree. The stressor may be structural, by living under repressive or exploitative conditions, or having to obey orders to an authority in a hierarchical power system such as that of work or the army. The stressor may be connected to

physiological conditions such as heat, thirst, hunger etc. The stressor may be emotional by not being able to cope with personal feelings. The latter kind of stress is seen as widespread among men in the Western culture as the traditional man's role defines most feelings apart from anger as a sign of weakness (Isdal, 2000). Isdal also emphasizes fear and anxiety as important emotional stressors; fear increases the risk of aggression, and the more afraid, the more dangerous a person may become. Finally, the stress or frustration of not being able to reach a goal, covered by the classical frustration – aggression theory, is also mentioned. In sum, the theory of violence as a response to feeling powerless may be said to incorporate into a whole the above theories on various environmental and psychological mechanisms of aggression.

5.3.2 Buddhism on Causes of Aggression and Violence

In Buddhism, anger and other negative emotional states that may lead to aggressive or violent acts constitute *suffering*. So do in fact all thoughts and emotions that are experienced negatively. The causes of suffering are described through The “Four Noble Truths”, the primary Buddhist teaching which describe the presence of, origin of, cessation of, and way out of suffering (see Dalai Lama, 1999). The first “Noble Truth” describes the pervasiveness of suffering. The Buddhist concept of suffering is broad and may be described in terms of three increasingly deeper levels (Wetlesen, 2000). At the first level, there is suffering in experiencing negative feelings that accompany different physical and mental states and processes. This suffering is related to not satisfying what one desires. Examples are frustration from not obtaining what one wants, aggression against people who stops one from obtaining the latter and hurt self image when one fails to live up to own or others' expectations. At the second level, there is suffering caused by all bodily and mental states being subject to change. One will suffer from changes to people and things with which one identifies, in particular from sickness, old age, death and loss. If things temporarily happen to be stable, one is likely to fear the end of positive mental and physical states. At the third level, according to Buddhism, there is suffering through a deep fear that what one identifies with does not have any real existence. All bodily and mental phenomena one may identify with have a conditioned or constituted way of existing, and cannot be said to exist in an absolute way independent of external factors.

Buddhism sees positive experiences such as joy to normally be accompanied by elements of suffering of the two deeper levels. In this way joy may be experienced as joy only because an experience provides relief from a relatively seen worse state. It is thus important to realize the pervasiveness of one's suffering. In this way one may gain motivation to do something about one's condition (Dalai Lama, 1999).

The second "Noble Truth", about the origin of suffering, deals with how we fail to realize what is required to get rid of suffering and obtain happiness. This confusion, or ignorance as it is called in Buddhism, has two aspects (Dalai Lama, 1999). The first aspect deals with ignorance of the laws of causality, called Karma⁵. Simply put, positive actions help create positive experiences in the future for oneself, and negative actions help create negative experiences in the future. By using a psychological interpretation of the mechanisms of Karma, one may say that actions motivated by "unhealthy roots", such as greed, anger and self-deception will strengthen negative attitudes and dispositions, and the contrary for actions motivated by "healthy roots" such as generosity, kindness and understanding (Wetlesen, 2000). These negative, or positive, attitudes and dispositions will then contribute to how negatively, or positively, one experiences future situations.

The second, but deep aspect, deals with ignorance of the real nature of our existence. This ignorance causes us to cognitively identify with bodily and mental phenomena and processes that we assume constitute I, me and mine, such as perceptions, roles, attitudes etc. Feelings and attitudes are attached to these phenomena and processes, thus constituting an egocentric thirst for life (Wetlesen, 2000). The answer to the real nature of our existence lies outside our normal experience. Different schools of Buddhism have different views of whether the self is an experiencing subject as a transcendent self, or whether the concept of a self should be denied altogether (Wetlesen, 2000). Whichever the case, all Buddhist schools emphasize an understanding that an independently existing nature is falsely attributed to our selves and our world. The egocentric thirst for life gives rise to egocentric actions, such as striving for what one wants, and running from or defending against what one does not want. This allows for negative attitudes and feelings, such as greed, fear and anger, which in turn may lead to acts of aggression.

⁵ The Dalai Lama explains Karma as a theory concerning causality of actions involving intent (Dalai Lama, 1999)

In line with this picture of suffering and its origins, the Dalai Lama points out that anger, and its strong form hatred, is fuelled by mental unhappiness or discontent (Dalai Lama, 1997). Pervasive and nagging mental discontent, which may not be experienced at the conscious level, is seen to give rise to anger and hatred. The Dalai Lama points out that factors that cause mental discontent include unfair treatment and threats to oneself and close family and friends, as well as obstructions to one's achievements. These factors are related to one's need for self-identification and consequent egocentric actions, as discussed above.

The third and the fourth "Noble Truths" were said to deal with the cessation of suffering and the path leading to its cessation. These will be dealt with in subsequent sections.

5.3.3 Violence Propagation

To deepen the understanding of violence it may be useful to look at Isdal's description of how violence propagates. He provides numerous examples of how violence breeds violence both on the part of the perpetrator and on the part of the victim (Isdal, 2002). This is seen to hold true on a group level, but not on the individual level, as ways of reacting to feelings of powerlessness are diverse. The violence may also in severe cases breed violence in the observers, by mechanisms of modelling, such as when children bear witness to their father beating their mother.

Isdal states that victims of violence risk becoming traumatized, and especially so with severe violence, since it often entails overwhelming feelings of loss of control over the situation. Repeated violence traumas may put a victim in a constant state of alarm, and shift the dominant focus of attention outside himself on the lookout for danger. Thus the victim may get into a chronic stress condition, and the external focus of attention may cause gradual loss of contact with one's needs and feelings. Mastery of the traumatic experience(s) is through regaining a feeling of control or power. Though, avoidance, submission, taking on guilt, and various control projects are common ways to do this, research shows a greatly increased risk of becoming a perpetrator of violence (Isdal, 2000). For instance, a person subject to violence in the family is three to four times more likely to become a perpetrator of violence as compared to a person not exposed.

Isdal also states that violence tends to propagate in a hierarchical fashion and often with a delayed response. Thus, victims of violence may regain feelings of power and control by being violent against somebody less dangerous to them, which makes them a safe outlet

for violence. In this way, a man troubled by his boss at work, may beat his wife, who in turn may beat the children. The children on their part may beat smaller children who in turn may pester the dog. Also, beaten children, who often model their parents' behaviour, may become somebody's parents when they get older and the cycle may continue.

Regarding the perpetrator, violence may breed violence by a different mechanism. In fact, according to Isdal, violence always feels good to the perpetrator during the act, whether this is experienced consciously or unconsciously (Isdal, 2000). These violent acts are accompanied by feelings of power and control that include getting ones will through, getting revenge, stopping conflict, emotional purging, physical relaxation and stopping unpleasant emotions. Such immediate positive consequences constitute a strong learning according to Thorndike's law of effect (Passer & Smith, 2001). If the longer-term results of the violence are also perceived as positive, the violent tendencies will be further strengthened. Positive reinforcement may happen through material gains, increased authority or status. Negative reinforcement may happen through removal of unpleasant antecedents like perceived insults and disrespect (Passer & Smith, 2001). Even though long-term consequences may be experienced as negative, the strong learning effect from the positive immediate consequences will, according to Isdal, contribute to a pattern of violent behaviour.

Looking to Buddhism, support is found for violence having the tendency to breed violence in both the victims and the perpetrators. This must be qualified somewhat, however. For the victims, the effect of being subject to violence will depend on how the violence is experienced. The experience of it will in turn depend on attitudes and dispositions (karma) resulting from previous actions⁶ and degree of attachment to an egocentric definition of oneself. Thus negative attitudes and dispositions and a strong egocentricity will contribute to negative experiences of the violence, and the more pronounced the more negative the trace will be. In terms of the perpetrator of violence, karmic effects of actions have already been discussed. Negative actions will lead to negative results through strengthening negative attitudes and dispositions. Thus, violent acts are likely to strengthen dispositions for acting violently in the future.

⁶ Note that in Buddhism mental acts, as well as verbal and physical acts, also constitute actions.

5.4 Prosocial behaviour

5.4.1 Psychology on Prosocial Behaviour

Individual peace means the ability to react non-violently despite the discussed biological, environmental and psychological factors shown to increase the risk of aggression. However, as discussed, it also means having capabilities of prosocial behaviour, such as the ability to help and care for others. Psychological theories regarding prosocial behaviour come largely from the same schools of thought as the aggression theories. Consequently, genetics and evolutionary adaptation, social learning and modelling and various psychological and cognitive factors are used to provide explanations (Passer & Smith, 2001).

In terms of biological factors, evolutionary theories, which is about ensuring survival, include the *principle of kin selection*, whereby organisms are likely to help others with whom they share the most genes such as offspring and genetic relatives, and the concept of *reciprocal altruism*, whereby helping others is seen to increase the likelihood that they will help us or our kin in return (Passer & Smith, 2001). Of stronger relevance in this context is the body's inherent relaxation reaction, as opposed to the 'fight and flight response' associated with stress and aggression. This response, termed 'Relaxation Response' by Benson (Benson, 2000) and 'Calm and Connection Reaction' by Uvnäs Moberg (2003) will be dealt with in more detail under the sections on mastering aggression and practical methods. For now it will be noted that the relaxation reaction has been found to counteract the sympathetic nervous system activity of the fight and flight response, increase activity of the parasympathetic nervous system (often called 'rest and digest system'), and induce positive mental states and social behaviour (Uvnäs Moberg, 2003).

Regarding environmental and psychological factors, in the previous discussion aversive emotions, often directly associated with a stimulus, were seen to increase the risk of aggressive behaviour. Similarly, positive or happy moods have been found to consistently enhance prosocial behaviour (Eisenberg, 2000; Salovey et al, 1991). Different mechanisms, all having empirical evidence in their favour, are proposed for this connection (Salovey et al, 1991). First, positive mood states are seen to involve positive cognitions about one self. This in turn may motivate to help others that seems to be in less fortunate states, and also to conform to salient behavioural norms and ideals. Second, positive moods are seen to improve perceptions of situations and of others. Happy individuals are found to generate more positive evaluations of others than do sad individuals, and thus generate a greater liking and desire to

help others. Lastly, people are seen to help, as a regulatory mechanism, to maintain a positive mood. This last mechanism has the most empirical support. Numerous studies show that helping, unless it is experienced as a burden or the helped person is thought not to deserve it, leads to enhanced mood (Salovey et al, 1991). Interestingly, contrary to positive mood seemingly helping individuals choose actions that have positive emotional consequences, negative moods owing to threatening stimuli such as stressing events have been found to undermine the quality of cognitive processing, and as a consequence, capacity of emotional regulation (Eisenberg, 2000).

Of particular interest to prosocial behaviour is research on empathy. Much evidence supports that empathy, associated with emotions such as sympathy, compassion and tenderness, is an important motivator of helping (Batson et al., 1981; Batson and Oleson, 1991; Eisenberg, 2000). Thus, it is important to look at how empathy is induced. During experimental designs it has been situationally induced by creating perceived similarity in values with the other person and by asking for active imagination of the other's perspective and feelings. However, dispositional empathy has also been used as basis for showing increased helping (Eisenberg, 2000), thus pointing to people's different empathic dispositions. Empathic dispositions seem to be related to the people's ability to regulate emotion (do acts or think thoughts that will have an effect on the mood). However, if and how dispositional empathy may be increased will be discussed in more detail under the heading of peaceful development. Here is noted that induced empathy for stigmatised groups have been shown by Batson to have enduring changes, through more benign attitudes weeks after it was induced (Eisenberg, 2000).

There is a debate on whether the motivation of empathy-induced helping may be altruistic (without self concerns) or whether the helping is always associated with self interests, such as expected "paybacks" or riddance of own disturbing emotions when somebody faces distress. This is relevant as one may expect greater positive effects if the receivers perceive the help to be done without selfish concerns⁷. Batson's *empathy-altruism hypothesis* does claim that empathy may induce altruistic motivation. By citing extensive evidence, and tests of egoistic alternatives to the hypothesis, support is given for at least some prosocial behaviour has an altruistic motivation (Batson & Oleson, 1991).

⁷ This seems reasonable to suggest by analogy with perceived harmful intent being found to increase the risk of aggressive behaviour.

The social learning environment, by means of socialization (internalising societal values and norms), modelling and reinforcement, plays a key role in fostering prosocial attitudes and behaviour (Passer & Smith, 2001). For instance, development of empathy in children has been associated with such factors as: parents being high in empathy, parents allowing the children to express emotions in a way that do not harm others, low levels of hostile emotions in the home, parental practices that help children cope with negative emotions, and parental practices that help children focus on and understand others' emotions (Eisenberg, 2000). Modelling of prosocial attitudes and behaviour has been shown to have beneficial and long lasting effects in both experimental and naturalistic settings (Grusec, 1991). For instance, in a school setting, prosocial modelling increased the high-school students' blood donations by showing an audiovisual programme of students giving blood (Sarason et al., 1991). In terms of reinforcement, laboratory studies also indicate that rewards may be used to enhance prosocial behaviour (Grusec, 1991). It should be noted, however, that the use of social approval for children's prosocial behaviour was found to internalise the motives for their prosocial behaviour, for instance as a concern for the other. In contrast, children used to receiving material rewards tended to help only if they expected to receive an external reward.

Finally, increased awareness of different mechanisms has been shown to increase the rate of helping in different situations. For instance, an experiment showed that teaching factors that hinder bystander intervention increased people's frequency to help others in distress (Passer & Smith, 2001; Beaman 1978). Also, enhanced awareness of one's attitudes and values increase the chances of prosocial behaviour, according to one of the proposed mechanisms of how positive mood increase helping. This is also in line with the previous discussion on how unconscious attitudes might affect aggression. Unconscious, and often negative, attitudes were found to guide behaviour when conscious attitudes were not focused upon, whereas conscious, and often more positive, attitudes were found to influence behaviour when focused upon.

5.4.2 Buddhist Philosophy on Prosocial Behaviour

Whereas much psychological research has focused on the acts of helping and caring, Buddhist philosophy also focuses much on underlying mental attitudes of helping like kindness and compassion.

An intimate connection is seen between attitudes and behaviour as mental acts strongly influence verbal and physical acts. Further, the intent of physical and verbal acts is seen to be what determines the karmic results of the actions. Similarly, mental acts, not accompanied by verbal and physical acts are also subject to karmic results in terms of developing attitudes and dispositions. This means that behaviour motivated by kindness, compassion, generosity and understanding, as well as these types of thoughts, feelings and attitudes on their own, will serve to develop and strengthen dispositions for positive attitudes and behaviour in the future, as well as give rise to more positive future experiences. In short the likelihood of future prosocial behaviour is increased.

For these reasons Buddhism places great emphasis on developing positive thoughts, feelings and attitudes. The third “Noble Truth” about cessation of suffering deals specifically with this (Dalai Lama, 1999). In order to stop suffering, or fully achieving peace at the individual level, the ignorance about the causes of suffering must be overcome. Consequently, both the mechanisms of Karma and the real nature of our existence must be fully understood and taken into account. This means that all our actions should be motivated by “healthy roots” such as generosity, kindness, compassion and understanding, and should be done without attachment to a self. Buddhism proposes that such qualities may only develop gradually. The discussion of the fourth “Noble Truth”, the path to cessation of suffering, will deal with how Buddhism approaches such a personal development. This discussion is placed under the following section on peaceful development.

5.5 Peaceful Development

5.5.1 Psychology on Potential for Peaceful Development

The second basic assumption of this study was that all people have a capacity for peaceful change. In psychological terms, it probably makes sense in this context to discuss the concept of personality that may be defined as “the distinctive and relatively enduring ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that characterize a person’s responses to life situations” (Passer & Smith, 2001, p. 542). Changes in individual peace, as the capacity to react non-violently to various situations, may be achieved by relevant changes in personality. Although, it is beyond the current scope to give an account of psychological theories of personality development, two comments will be made. First, psychological research has found childhood to be essential in shaping personalities. In particular, the amount of love and caring, and how conflicts and

problems have been experienced and handled, influence how we handle life stresses as grown-ups (Passer and Smith, 2001). Second, even if consistency in personality have been found to be greater in adulthood than in childhood, findings show that there remains a capacity for meaningful personality change in adulthood (Passer and Smith, 2001).

The mere existence of psychological treatment of various kinds shows that various psychological disciplines support the possibility of possible positive changes to people's attitudes and behaviours. For instance, in line with unconscious attitudes affecting behaviour when one does not focus on one's conscious attitudes, there seems to be a potential for techniques aimed at increasing awareness by bringing negative emotional content into the conscious part of the mind to be dealt with. The psychodynamic schools, which are central to this type of thinking, have tended to supply clinical evidence of long-term effects, which is typically regarded of lesser value to experimental evidence among empirical disciplines of psychology. Nevertheless, whether by psychodynamic techniques or other methods, the fields of psychology seem to support the possibilities of positive changes in individual's attitudes and behaviour. The question that Western psychology does not seem to answer is how big the potential for individual peaceful development is.

5.5.2 Buddhism on Potential for Peaceful Development

According to the Buddhism and the third "Noble Truth" about cessation of suffering, every individual has a potential for fully attaining individual peace by getting rid of the causes of suffering. It should be noted that the opposite development, increasing personal suffering and thus becoming less peaceful and more aggressive is equally possible. Siddharta Gautama (ca. 566-486 B.C.), the founder of Buddhism called the Buddha (the awakened), is understood to have been fully liberated from suffering (Wetlesen, 2000). Also, a number of others are believed to fully have attained individual peace since. In fact, Buddhist practitioners in general may be said to be on a path of peaceful development through gradual liberation from the causes of suffering.

The Dalai Lama discusses the grounds one has, apart from relying on scriptural authority, for believing that mental afflictions can be rooted out of mind, thus fully obtaining individual peace (Dalai Lama, 1997). He offers three principle reasons. First, afflictive or aversive thoughts and emotions involve a distortion of the mind, so that one does not see clearly. In contrast, the "antidotal factors" (that may be cultivated to counter mental

afflictions), such as love, compassion and insight, involve an undistorted way of seeing things. He says understanding of this comes from both our varied experiences as well as from seeing the nature of reality. Second, the “antidotal factors” have the capacity to be strengthened through training, and when they are strengthened one is able to reduce the strength and the effects of the mental afflictions. Third, the essential nature of mind is found to be pure, which means it consists of “pure light” in which one sees very clearly (if one experiences it). The Dalai Lama points out that some of these points are more obvious than others. One may conclude that the level of understanding of these points, such as experience of the nature of the mind, will depend on one’s level of peaceful development and of accomplishment in practices such as meditation. The forthcoming discussion about the fourth “Noble Truth”, about the path that leads to cessation of suffering, will deal with how this grand goal may be obtained.

5.5.3 Mastering aggression

Previous discussions to a large extent painted a picture of aggression happening in response to aversively experienced situations, while often modelled and reinforced by mechanisms of learning. The picture of aversive events and feelings increasing the risk of violence is supported, among others, by research by Berkowitz, by Isdal’s theory of violence happening in response to feelings of powerlessness, and by Buddhist philosophy saying that violence is fuelled by experiences of suffering. Based on this picture, aggression may be mastered in two ways: firstly, by being able to act non-violently in response to aversive emotions, and, secondly, by reducing the tendency for aversive mental states in various situations. The Dream of the Good deals with both ways based on teaching of its key principles. Hence, approaches covering both ways of mastering aggression will be discussed here, starting with psychologically based approaches, then moving to Buddhist approaches.

5.5.3.1 Psychology on Mastering Aggression

Isdal’s approach is presented here as one psychologically based way of avoiding violent reactions to aversive emotions. Based on a discussion of theory and extensive field experience, Isdal proposes a “medicine” consisting of three points to deal with violent behaviour (Isdal, 2000). The first is to call violence by its true name. The problem of violent behaviour must be explicitly recognized to allow it to be dealt with. Also, violence must be

recognized in its many forms whether it is physical, sexual, psychological, latent (threat of violence), or retributive violence (Isdal's categories). The second point is to recognize violence as the responsibility of the actor. Only when the actor takes full responsibility for the violence, regardless of personal history and experienced conditions and situations, may the violent behaviour be stopped. The third point is to deal with the traumatic and difficult experiences that give rise to the violent behaviour. Isdal emphasises the sharing of these experiences with other people – not necessarily with health care personnel, but with listeners that are empathic. This may give feelings of being heard and may help own understanding of oneself. Isdal states that among people subject to violence as children, people following this receipt do not develop tendencies of violent behaviour in contrast to the ones that do not follow it. In sum this “medicine” against violence may be said to be about taking responsibility for one's actions and development, acknowledging and accepting unfortunate aspects of oneself, and deal with the aversive experiences that fuel the violent actions. Thus, at this level Isdal's medicine and the Buddhist approach, to be presented, are similar.

Isdal also emphasizes learning for countering violent acts, and in particular, in line with previously discussed theory, the proactive role of upbringing and education to learn empathy and control anger. Children and young people can learn these qualities by modelling and experiencing consequences of behaviour (operant conditioning). It follows that it is critical how parents and teachers themselves show empathy and control anger, and how they react to the children displaying these kinds of behaviour. In the control of anger Isdal finds it important for children to be allowed to recognize that they have anger, but they must recognize that reacting in a violent way is wrong, and rather learn to react in other ways. According, to Isdal, learning alternative ways of reacting to anger also applies to adults, but it may be harder for adults to change their behavioural dispositions.

As situations experienced as stressful seem to be associated with aversive emotions, which in turn may give rise to aggressive behaviour, it is important to cope with and counteract the stress reaction (fight or flight response). In psychologically based coping programmes people are taught to modify habits of thoughts that trigger aversive emotional responses and to control physiological arousal through relaxation skills (Passer & Smith, 2001). Examples of cognitive techniques in this respect are *cognitive restructuring* aimed at challenging and replacing unjustified negative thoughts that arise in various situations, and *self-instructional training* by which one mentally gives oneself instructions during preparation for the stressor, confronting the stressor, dealing with overwhelming feelings and finally

appraise oneself for coping efforts. The *physiological relaxation training* involves, tensing and relaxing muscles, mentally focusing on relaxing, doing breathing exercises, and learning to quickly elicit a relaxed state when aroused. An integrated coping response, encompassing both a cognitive technique and relaxation training, is probably most effective. Integrated coping response has been shown to reduce stress responses and enhance feelings of self-efficacy, as well as improved coping in terms of better academic and athletic performance (Crocker, 1989; Passer & Smith, 2001).

In terms of countering stress responses, elicitation of the ‘relaxation response’ (as termed by Benson), evoked by meditation or repetitive techniques involving concentration, have been shown to have profound effects (Benson, 2000). This includes both countering stress effects, increasing positive psychological characteristics such as enhanced self-esteem and internal locus of control, increasing positive moods, and improving cooperative behaviour. Likewise, Uvnäs Moberg shows that similar effects, including reduced aggression in children, may be induced by means of massage (Uvnäs Moberg, 2000). Relaxation responses are shown to be capable of countering stress, by reducing physiological stress reactions, but also by inducing more positive mental states, thus reducing the risk of aggressive behaviour. More details on the relaxation response will follow in the section on research on practical methods.

Finally, the role of the unconscious must be mentioned briefly, because the unconscious attitudes and emotions were seen to affect behaviour, as well as being subject to the mechanisms of projection, thus allowing for possible justification of aggressive behaviour. As mentioned, to bring unconscious negative mental content into awareness to be dealt with, traditionally belongs to the psychodynamic schools. The scope of this paper excludes any detailed description of these schools. However it should be noted that dream analysis, a technique used in traditional psychoanalysis, belongs to the package of methods offered by the Dream of the Good, though it was not used in any of the reviewed implementations in the empirical study. More important here is probably that the more extensively used relaxation response (through stillness, meditation, massage and qigong) may create a space of mind in which one becomes more aware of one’s mental activity at deeper levels. Also, techniques aiming at increased awareness of connection between self and experience, such as discussing existential questions and taking others’ perspectives, may benefit from the greater clarity of this space.

5.5.3.2 *Buddhism on Mastering Aggression*

In Buddhist terms, learning to master aggression, as well as individual peaceful development in general, is achieved by following the fourth Noble Truth. The fourth Noble Truth is about the path leading to cessation of suffering. It is also called the Eight Fold Path and may be seen as a practical guide to liberation from suffering. It consists of the *wisdom* aspects: right understanding and right state of mind; the *moral* aspects: right speech, right action and right living; and the *concentration* aspects: right striving, right attention and right concentration (Wetlesen, 2000). Even though it is called a path, the eight parts are not to be accomplished in a specific order, but are rather in a relationship of mutual dependency so that improvements in one place may help one of the other parts. For instance, improved concentration may enhance wisdom that may in turn improve the moral acts.

Going into more detail, the first part of the *wisdom* aspects, right understanding, deals with understanding the “Four Noble Truths” and other related teaching that has to do with how all phenomena are transient in nature and are related to suffering. The second part, right state of mind, includes attitudes to avoid strong attachment, hate and violence against others. The *moral* aspects (right speech, right actions, and right living) resemble general ethical norms such as not to lie, steal, kill, and talk badly about others, and deal with not doing harm, but rather do acts that benefit others and oneself. In line with the earlier descriptions of karma, the intentions of the actions are seen as very important in Buddhism. Consequently, acts should preferably be motivated by “positive roots” (generosity, kindness, understanding), and may further benefit the most if they are done with non-egoistic motives and a lack of attachment. The *concentration* aspects (right striving, right attention and right concentration) deal with meditation understood in a wide sense. Although they are particularly focused on the practice of meditation, increased concentration and mindfulness is seen as important to help act in a right way in general.

In general, these guidelines, building on reason and the experiences of Gautama Buddha, deal with the body and the mind. There is a great emphasis on self-reflection, awareness and meditation as primary tools for development of individual peace. Meditation, which has a central role, exists in thousands of different forms, but may be broadly grouped into two groups according to Buddhism (Wetlesen, 2000). The first group is tranquillity meditation and is concerned with the development of concentration and a clear mind (Tulku, 1998). As such, it also includes learning to let thoughts and feelings that come into the mind pass through without interference, so that new thoughts and emotions are not generated. Often

a focus point, such as an idea or an object, is used in the meditation to help calm the mind. The second group is called insight meditation. It uses the developed concentration, or clear mind, for active examination and work on thoughts and emotions (Bornstein, 1989). In particular, it focuses on an understanding of all constituted processes or phenomena as impermanent, as associated with suffering, and as being “empty” of independent existence, but it may also focus on other related topics (Wetlesen, 2000). An example of insight meditation is active observation of the mentioned qualities in relation to selected constituent aspects of one’s body or mind. In general one may say that the meditation counters stress reactions by temporary relief through inducing a relaxed state and positive moods that may spill over to non-meditation activities and aid non-violent reactions. In addition, through insight meditation, it aims at attacking the root cause of suffering, and consequently reducing violent dispositions, by reducing attachment and need to identify with factors that do not have an independent existence.

As part of the Eightfold Path, the Dalai Lama emphasizes the practice of patience and tolerance to better react peacefully to situations that normally might give rise to anger, (Dalai Lama, 1997). Patience here refers to having a stable and peaceful state of mind, whereby one may react non-violently to different situations in a spontaneous manner. Such a state of mind is achieved with constant familiarity with own aversive emotions (e.g. by insight meditation), to decrease their strength, rather than employing defensive tactics. Developing attitudes of affection and compassion, for instance by meditation and prosocial behaviour, is seen to have positive effects on developing patience and tolerance. In these ways mental experiences may turn more positive, and suffering, the fuel of aggression, may be reduced.

5.5.4 Developing Empathy and Attitudes of Kindness

The above points on how to master aggression may also be seen as relevant to the development of prosocial attitudes and behaviour. For instance, reducing negative attitudes and emotional states will leave room for more positive attitudes and emotional states. Or as understood in Buddhism, patience and tolerance towards potentially aversive events strengthens capabilities of love and compassion (Dalai Lama, 1997). Yet, a few more points need to be made, with bases in psychological and Buddhist theory on how to specifically develop empathy and related attitudes of kindness and compassion. These relate largely to the

Dream of the Good's key principle of increasing awareness of connection between self and experience.

In terms of psychological research, *situational* empathy was induced in experiments either by creating a perception of similarity in values or by having the person actively trying to imagine the feelings of another person. Thus, feelings of connectedness are presumably associated with empathic feelings. Feelings of connectedness have like empathy been shown to induce helping, such as in a study by Margaret Clark in which people who felt a greater level of connectedness to their communities were more likely to experience a need to be socially responsible and to help others (Passer & Smith, 2001). For peaceful development, *dispositional* empathy and feelings of connectedness must be strengthened. These feelings further need to be broadened so that they are not limited to a specific in-group with which one identifies.

The Dream of the Good seeks to achieve increased feelings of empathy and connectedness by having people experience a close connection between themselves and the world (connection between self and experience). The book, "Dream of the Good" (Bornstein, 1998), brings into this discussion, among others, the philosopher Paul Brunton representing an idealistic world view, and Buddhist views, both emphasizing that we may not separate the world from our experience of it. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss whether the world is idealistic or materialistic in nature. It is relevant, however, that awareness of the world being closely linked to one's experience of it, and of one's experience having a potential to be changed, may foster stronger and more universal feelings of connectedness and empathy. For instance, becoming aware that negative qualities experienced as belonging to others may originate in and be projected from oneself may work to that effect, by creating understanding of the need to deal with aversive feelings in oneself rather than blaming others.

Psychological research shows that the world experienced via the senses involves mental creation, and that the mental representations are in turn subject to differences in individual experiences. For example, for visual perception (Passer and Smith, 2001) two-dimensional electromagnetic rays hitting the retina of the eye, becomes translated or created into three-dimensional pictures in the cortex of the brain, following the transmission via nerves and signal substances. In the creative process of perception (interpretation of the input) new information is seen to be compared with stored information from previous experience and is interpreted in light of this. This suggests that previous learning through past experiences affects one's experience of a situation, and in fact studies show that different cultural background may cause different interpretations of the actual content of pictures (see

Deregowski, 1973). Also, perception is seen liable to other psychological influences, such as the influences of our motives and expectations. An important factor in this respect may be that we can attend completely to only one thing, as shown in experiments (Passer & Smith, 2001). Our perception may thus cause us to experience sensory input differently. Yet it seems reasonable to expect that the greatest differences in experiences is of their attributed emotional content, that may be influenced by moods, projections and expectations. For example, an experiment by Harold Kelly (Passer & Smith, 2001) showed that whether the students were primed with negative and positive descriptions of a guest lecturer, heavily influenced whether they experienced him in a positive or negative way. In sum, examples are shown here of how one mentally creates one's experience of the world and how experiences may differ. Awareness of such factors is thus expected by the Dream of the Good to help increase feelings of connectedness and empathy, for instance by gradually increased awareness of unconscious content of one's mind leading to withdrawals of projections.

In Buddhist approaches, feelings of connectedness may be fostered by (insight-) meditation on people, and all other sentient beings, being the same at the level of everybody wanting to be happy and free from suffering. One may also meditate on others as having been one's mother in previous lives, or if one does not accept the occurrence of reincarnation, one may use powers of imagination to feel that others are close to oneself. Of particular relevance to strengthening abilities of empathy, that underlie positive acts, is meditation on the 'Four Immeasurables'. They consist of loving kindness, compassion, rejoice and equanimity (Wetlesen, 2003). These qualities refer to a universal scope of the feelings in the sense that they extend to all sentient beings. Thus, in a Buddhist context, loving kindness means wishing that all sentient beings have happiness, compassion means wishing that all sentient beings are free from suffering, rejoice means being happy for happiness obtained by all others, and finally equanimity refers to mental balance and not having partial attitudes towards some at the cost of others. In meditation on the Four Immeasurables one generally takes somebody for whom one feels love as a starting point. One brings the positive emotions for the person into one's consciousness, and then one mentally extends the positive emotions to others persons. First, one extends the positive emotions to a neutral person for whom one harbours neither negative nor positive feelings. Then one extends the positive emotions to a person that one dislikes, is angry at or hate. In this way one mentally strengthens empathy and attitudes of kindness for others at the expense of negative emotions.

5.6 Research on Practical Methods

To react non-violently in face of potential stressors one needs to reduce aversive or stressing feelings such as anger, fear, anxiety, sadness, pain, or other feelings of powerlessness that may be experienced in such a situations. These aversive feelings were in the discussed theory seen to be causes of violence and aggression. Thus, having low levels of stressing and disturbing feelings in the first place, as greater calm and well-being, should help a person to react positively and non-violently in stressing situations. This calm and well-being may in turn be obtained by practicing relaxation techniques.

This section will look at research, partly done in academic settings, on meditation, massage and qigong, which are commonly used relaxation methods employed by the Dream of the Good. This will follow after a more detailed look at stress and the relaxation response.

5.6.1 Stress and the Relaxation Response

Stressors give rise to a pattern of cognitive, physiological and behavioural reactions (Passer and Smith, 2001). As mentioned, Cannon discovered an instinctive stress response (Cannon, 1914). This ‘fight or flight’ response, believed to have evolved as a survival mechanism, would in stressful situations increase the activity of the sympathetic nervous system and release stress hormones (adrenaline, noradrenaline, cortisol and others), so as to increase heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, metabolic rate and blood flow to the muscles (Benson, 2000; Passer & Smith, 2001). In modern times, however, the ‘fight and flight response’, gearing the body to either fight an opponent or to flee, is found evoked by stressors that do not require a strong physical response. These types of stressors, previously described in relation to aggression in psychological and Buddhist theories, include frustration of not obtaining a goal, stress related to change, internal disturbing emotions and so on.

Prolonged or frequent exposure to stressors (if they are experienced as such) may cause chronic stress conditions in terms of hypertension (high blood pressure), damaged functioning of the body’s immune system and diseases related to these conditions. In terms of psychological effects, self-report scores show that the more negatively life events are experienced, the higher the experienced level of distress (Passer & Smith, 2001). One may expect causal relations in two directions. Stressing situations may cause distress in terms of various negative emotions, increasing likelihood of aggression. Also, the negative emotions may make one more liable to experience stress.

The autonomic nervous system, active in the fight and flight response, belongs to the involuntary nervous system. Yet, it has been discovered that the stress response of the autonomic nervous system can be quieted, and its effects counteracted, by a voluntary elicitation of the 'relaxation response' (Benson, 2000). The elicitation involves a mental focus point, such as silently or aloud repeating a sound, word, phrase or prayer, or a fixed gaze on, or visualization, of an object. At the same time a passive attitude is needed towards other thoughts and feelings that come into consciousness, so as not to get distracted and lose the focus (Benson, 2000). The original findings were from experiments with people practicing meditation. However, Benson has showed that the relaxation response may be elicited by a number of methods as long as a mental focus and a passive attitude towards distracting thoughts are kept. Included are prayers, yoga, qigong and even walking and jogging if it is carried out with a high degree of mental focus (Benson, 2000)

Benson shows that the relaxation response is different than the effect of sleep and its quieting effects are stronger (Benson, 2000). For example, metabolic rate (measured by oxygen consumption) is found to drop 10-20 % within first three minutes of meditation whereas the maximum drop during sleep is found to be 8% and occur after four to five hours. Alpha waves, slow brain waves, which are not frequently found in sleep, increase in frequency and intensity during the practice of meditation. Also, associated with a lowered activity in the sympathetic nervous system, is decreased heart rate and respiration, and the relaxation response have been found to decrease blood pressure in people where it is initially high. Psychologically, the majority of practitioners of the relaxation response have reported that its elicitation result in feeling calm and relaxed, and regular practitioners claim that they are more effective in dealing with situations that are likely to bring forth the fight and flight response.

Uvnäs Moberg may be said to expand the picture of the relaxation response. Based on extensive animal experiments and observations and measurements with humans, her hypothesis is that humans have a whole system of calm and connection, in which the hormone and neurotransmitter 'oxytocin' and the parasympathetic nervous system play vital roles (Uvnäs Moberg, 2003). Oxytocin is produced in a part of the hypothalamus, which is the part of the brain that controls the autonomic nervous system and influences the hormonal control system in the pituitary gland. Oxytocin is thus found to have a key role in regulating and modulating activities in major systems involving calm and connection. From experiments with oxytocin injections in animals, one has found lowered blood pressure, increased blood circulation to the skin, lower levels of stress hormones, improved nutrient uptake and storage,

weight increase and increased healing. In terms of behavioural effects one has found more social contact between individuals, stimulated and facilitated mating, rapid development of maternal behaviour, reduced anxiety, calming effects, facilitated learning and a diminished sensation of pain. Uvnäs Moberg states that most of these effects have been confirmed in humans, but not as results of experimental doses, but rather by observation of what occurs in connection with natural releases of oxytocin.

Based on these results the question arises of how to get a high level of oxytocin and consequently stimulate the system of calm and connection. Uvnäs Moberg shows that there are naturally high levels of oxytocin in the mother during breastfeeding, where the anti-stress effects include reduced blood pressure and levels of stress hormones, feelings of calm and openness to attachment. Prolonged pleasant touch (in contrast to heavy handed touch) has been found to induce anti-stress effect coupled with an increased oxytocin level in rats. The same is believed true for humans. However, research indicates that input to the other senses, smell, vision, hearing and taste, may also induce anti-stress responses as long as the input is experienced as pleasant. Much of the research, however, is done on the effect of touch, and in particular on massage. Effects of massage will be treated in more detail below. For now it is noted that adults receiving massage have lower blood pressure, heart rate and levels of stress hormones. Children are found to become calmer, more socially mature, have fewer physical complaints and not least be less aggressive. Finally, it needs mentioning that Uvnäs Moberg believes that physical exercise, meditation and related activities that are found to induce anti-stress responses, do so by the described mechanisms of the system of calm and connection involving increased levels of oxytocin.

The anti-stressing effects of relaxation methods seem well documented. Now, the question is how well the relaxation methods may contribute to peaceful (non-violent and empathetic) attitudes and behaviour through reduced stress and enhanced well-being. Below, research related to the methods of meditation, massage and qigong is discussed.

5.6.2 Research on Meditation

Results for the use of meditation will be reviewed by looking at studies by Benson in which the relaxation response was elicited. These studies used relaxation response techniques that may be characterised as meditation.

Studies on the use of relaxation response techniques on groups with chronic pain and hypertension have shown decreases in psychological symptoms of anxiety, depression and

hostility (Benson, 2000). Thus, feelings of powerlessness and possible motivators of violent behaviour are reduced. However, several studies have also been carried out in academic settings. In one experimental study, lasting one academic year, a relaxation response curriculum was introduced to high school sophomores (Benson et al., 1994). The study showed a significant increase in internal locus of control and a tendency towards higher self-esteem. The results are interesting since low-self esteem has been shown to be associated with negative behaviour (Benson et al, 1994). On the other hand, people with internal locus of control and high self-esteem are found to cope with stress in an active and more problem focused manner, to be less susceptible to social pressure, be happier and have fewer interpersonal problems (Passer and Smith, 2001). In this respect, the mentioned study did reduce inappropriate classroom behaviour according to anecdotal tales told by the involved teachers.

Another controlled study (Benson et al., 2000), also implementing the relaxation response in an academic setting, was done over a period of three years in a big Los Angeles Middle school (approx. 1750 students: 64% African American, 35% Hispanic; 6., 7. and 8. grade). In this study the students were subject to a relaxation response curriculum, taught by teachers who participated in the study, that included relaxation training, identification of stressors and training of attentive awareness. Clear results were seen for students exposed to two or more classes in which the teacher had been trained in the relaxation response curriculum. The average grades, work habits and cooperation increased for all three years, in many cases with statistical significance. Also, the higher the exposure was to relaxation response curriculum classes, the higher were the scores. The higher grades may be related to reduction in stress among students and teachers, as well as increased abilities to concentrate. The improved cooperation and work habits may be seen, at least in part, as improvements in prosocial behaviour. In fact, involved teachers reported improved communication and respect between teachers and students. Students on their part reported that they were better able to cope with life stresses at school, at home and in their neighbourhoods. This is particularly relevant as the students came from economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods in which exposure to violence tended to be high. Any reduced salience of the students' aversive feelings in potentially traumatic or stressing situations would reduce the risks of aggression on their part.

Practice of the relaxation response has also been found efficient in reducing use of alcohol and drugs. This is relevant as the use of alcohol and certain narcotics are found related to violent behaviour. Studies show that alcohol, for instance, is used in about 60% of the cases

of violent crime. (Quigley and Leonard, 2000). Though, it may be partially explained by non-causal effects, such as people belonging to subcultures prone to use of both violence and alcohol, controlled laboratory experiments show that use of alcohol increases the chances of aggressive behaviour.

In this respect, a retrospective study was done on 1450 practitioners of transcendental meditation (type of tranquillity meditation) to look at the effects of the practice on their use of alcohol and drugs (Benson, 2000). After 21 months 25% of the group were users of strong alcohol as compared to 60% at the start. During the same period the use of strong narcotics was reduced from 17% to 1% of the group. In general, the participants found that use of drugs and alcohol interfered with their meditation. However, as this study had limitations, it was followed up with a controlled study across selected high schools (Benson, 2000). Though, only a small portion of the students started practicing transcendental mediation, as it was apparently not an acceptable technique to them, the ones who did practice confirmed the findings of the retrospective study. In sum, these two studies suggest reduced risks of violence through practice of meditation, as the use of alcohol and drugs were reduced.

5.6.3 Research on Massage

How well does massage work for obtaining non-violent attitudes and behaviour? The anti-stress effects of massage, discussed above, are well documented. Many controlled empirical studies have been done at the Touch Research Institute in Miami, founded by Tiffany Field. As well as improvements in clinical conditions of patients participating in the studies, it has been demonstrated that massage generally has an anxiety reducing, depression reducing, calming and relaxing effects on children and adults (Field, 1998). These effects have even been shown to extend to the people giving the massage. For example, depression was reduced and self-esteem was increased in elders massaging infants.

Massage thus also reduces the salience of emotional stressors, which were found to increase the occurrences of aggression. However, the studies also show that physical pain (another stressor that increases the likelihood of violence) may be reduced by the use of massage. By administering massage to women giving birth, less medication was needed and fewer days were spent in the hospital. Massage also reduced the postoperative pain in a group of patients. In terms of chronic conditions, administering massage reduced the experience of pain in groups of patients suffering from juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, lower back pain and migraine headaches respectively.

The studies of Field and her colleagues are mainly on the effects of massage on people with a medical condition. However, one study looked at the effects of massage on stress in medical faculty and staff members (Field, 2000). The participants showed decreases in scores measuring anxiety and depression, which are internal stressors also shown to increase the risk of aggression. Further, they showed increased alertness, which was supported by changes in EEG patterns and improved performance (increased speed and accuracy) on a mathematical computation task. Increased alertness should help deal with potential stressors, and also help act in a more conscious and positive way, rather than letting oneself be influenced or dominated by unconscious negative mental content.

Moving to a school setting, massage has been shown to make the children less aggressive (Uvnäs Moberg, 2003). One controlled study in a pre-school showed that the children became calmer and more socially mature. After six months, at the end of the period when they received the massage, their behaviour had become less aggressive. They interacted better with their classmates and had fewer physical complaints. Further, a follow-up study after nine months showed that the effects had become even more pronounced.

In sum, these studies on massage show that the anti-stress effects of massage may reduce the salience of emotional and physical stressors thus reducing the risks of aggression. In particular, moods are found improved, which in turn increases the occurrences of helping according to theory. Also, alertness, cooperation and social attitudes may be improved, and importantly, aggressive behaviour may be decreased as seen in the pre-school study.

5.6.4 Research on Qigong

Qigong consists of doing bodily movements coupled with strong concentration. As such it may be seen as a coupling of meditation and physical exercises or “moving meditation”. It belongs to the group of methods that elicit the relaxation response (Benson, 2000). Studies have been done in Sweden regarding the effects of medical qigong. Medical qigong is one of five main groups of qigong (Xiulan, 2000). It has a basis in traditional Chinese medicine that is concerned with mental and physical health through a holistic way of thinking. The mentioned studies are done with the “Biyun method” which is a subgroup of medical qigong that uses natural breathing, natural focus of attention and natural movements.

In general the studies reviewed by Xiulan report improved medical conditions, more positive moods and reduced feelings of emotional stress, increased concentration and improved quality of sleep (Xiulan, 2000). It is unclear to what extent the studies employed

control groups, which is a limitation to the interpretation of the results. However, substantially improved conditions within the study groups are reported for most of the studies. In terms of medical conditions, in one study of rehabilitation of people on long term sick leave about half were rehabilitated back into part or full time employment. Whereas about 80% were unhappy with their physical functioning before the start, the number was reduced to 30% after having attended the course in medical qigong. Another study yielded a significant improvement in physical conditions for a group of women with fibromyalgia. This was coupled with improved mental characteristics such as enhanced mental well-being and increased self-confidence. The cited studies mainly focused on changes to physical and mental health, and not on the effects of aggression and prosocial behaviour. However, as discussed, improved moods were found to have a positive effect on empathy and prosocial behaviour, and reduced salience of stressors or aversive emotions would reduce the chances of aggression. Based on this it seems reasonable to suggest that physical and mental well-being obtained from qigong, as well as from meditation and massage, contributes to increased individual peace, or a capacity to react non-violently and empathically in different situations.

5.7 Summary of Theoretical Findings

The reviewed theory and research will in this section be summarized in terms of main findings pertaining to the research question, i.e. the potential to educate the individual for peace through teaching based on the Dream of the Good's key principles. The discussion will consequently concentrate on findings in relation to: 1) general potential for individuals to develop peacefully, 2) individual peace through increased awareness of connection between self and experience, and 3) individual peace through use of methods for calm and concentration.

In terms of the first point, for individuals to have a potential for peaceful development it means that something may be changed. In terms of psychological explanations of aggression, they were at biological, environmental and psychological levels. At the biological levels one is evolutionary equipped with a 'fight or flight response' (stress reaction) and many environmental conditions such as goal obstruction, adverse physical stimuli, and strong group mechanisms were found to increase the risk of aggression. However, one may have no or little control over biological and environmental factors. In contrast, on the psychological level much research pointed at aversive emotions arising in various situations increasing the risks of violent actions. A picture is created by viewing together psychological research findings on

induced aggression by aversive feelings in relation to goal obstruction and physical and environmental stressors (e.g. by Berkowitz), Isdal's theory of violence happening in response to aversive experiences of powerlessness, and anger and aggression arising from suffering in terms mental afflictions according to Buddhist theory. Based on this, tendencies of aggressive reactions may be reduced if aversive feelings are reduced or eliminated in relation to potentially stressing or provoking situations.

In terms of psychology, changing tendencies of aggressive reactions is encompassed in personality changes. Though the greatest potential for personality development exists in childhood, a meaningful capacity for change was found to be possible in adulthood. Also, the existence of psychological treatment aimed at improving negative mental conditions is itself an indication of possibility of peaceful change. However, in contrast to psychological theory that does not predict how big the potential for peaceful change is, Buddhist theory says that individual peace may be obtained fully by eradicating the mental causes of suffering, which are represented by mental unhappiness or discontent related to attachment and dispositions (karmic effects) formed by previous acts. In terms of the karmic effects Buddhist theory emphasizes the role of learning as positive acts are seen to create dispositions for positive acts and positive mental states in future. Psychological research also shows that learning through modelling and reinforcement may lead to prosocial attitudes and behaviour. In sum, there seems to be ample support for the potential of individual peaceful change, with Buddhist theory going the furthest by describing a possibility of fully obtaining individual peace.

The second point regarded a possible peace potential in relation to realizing a close connection between oneself and how the world is experienced (first key principle). Findings from psychological research support individual peace being increased with increased feelings of connection. Feelings of connection to a community were found to induce caring about community members. Also, feelings of connectedness were shown to induce empathy that in turn consistently is shown to induce helping, as well as reducing aggression in potentially provoking situations. One's experience was found influenced by creative and selective qualities of the perception, thus being subject to psychological influences. In line with this, positive moods were found to consistently induce prosocial behaviour; negative behaviour was found to be influenced by unconscious negative attitudes if one were not focusing on more positively held conscious attitudes. Also support was shown for the existence of projection of negative emotional content, thus allowing for prejudice and justification of aggressive actions. Awareness of these factors involving one's experience, may inspire or motivate for more prosocial actions such as helping shown to induce good mood, and work to

uproot negative elements of one's unconscious mind. Such initiatives will of course depend on the willingness, and commitment to do so, of each person, but it seems reasonable to suggest that improved awareness of these factors will increase the chances for doing so.

In terms of Buddhist theory increased awareness of the nature of our experiences is understood to reduce aggression, increase empathy and related attitudes and actions. Buddhism emphasizes an internalised understanding of how worldly phenomena, including our selves, do not have a real, in the sense of independently existing, existence. The world may not be separated from our experience, and we strongly attach to and define with transient phenomena, which in terms leads to suffering. Thus, awareness of this may lead to work towards reducing attachment at the basis of negative acts and experiences. Also, an understanding of how one relates to the future through the consequences of one's actions (karma) may lead to doing more positive acts. The whole Eight Fold Path (fourth Noble Truth about the path to cessation of suffering) deals with how future experience may be shaped by focusing on wisdom, moral acts and meditation. In meditation, for instance, the shapeable nature of experience may be taken into account, such as by meditating on the 'Four Immeasurables' for strengthening empathy and attitudes of kindness. In sum, based on psychological and Buddhist theory, increased awareness of connection between self and experience, in the ways discussed, may be expected to increase chances of prosocial actions and reduce chances of aggressive actions.

The third point regarded a possible peace potential in relation to methods of calm and concentration (second key principle). Reviewed theory described the 'relaxation response' as termed by Benson or 'calm and connection reaction' as termed by Uvnäs Moberg. This is a response that counters the physical and mental stress effects induced by the 'fight and flight' response. It was found induced by methods using stillness, concentration or touch, and as such includes the techniques of meditation, massage and qigong used in the Dream of the Good. Reviewed empirical studies on meditation (the 'relaxation response'), carried out in an academic setting, showed improved self-esteem and internal locus of control, improved grades, increased prosocial (cooperative) behaviour, and generally improved well-being and moods were reported. In general, according to findings of the discussed theory, the results were seen to reduce the likelihood of aggression and increase the likelihood of prosocial behaviour. Studies on massage did report reduced aggression in children in pre-school, as well as reduced depression and improved self-esteem in elderly people giving massage, generally reduced anxiety in groups with medical condition, and improved alertness in health staff. Studies on training medical qigong indicated a substantial effect in rehabilitation of people on

long-term sick leave, and in general improved medical conditions, more positive moods and reduced feelings of emotional stress, increased concentration and improved quality of sleep in groups with medical conditions.

Generally, these studies show that methods employing or eliciting calm and concentration may improve mood and reduce aversive emotions. Thus, they should according to reviewed theory increase the rate of prosocial behaviour and reduce the occurrence of aggressive behaviour. Indeed, prosocial or cooperative behaviour was shown to be increased and aggression was shown to be reduced in specific studies using meditation and massage in academic settings. Even though one should be careful to generalize as these studies have been done within specific class levels and schools, studies on relaxation response techniques seem to make a consistent picture. Generally, stress related symptoms, such as anxiety, various negative mental states, and various physical measures are reduced, and feelings of calm, well-being and alertness are created. Based on this consistency it seems likely that relaxation methods (based on calm and concentration) generally can have an important role across age groups and teaching settings in increasing individual peace, as a capacity for non-violent response and increased empathy and prosocial behaviour. In this respect, the 2500 year old Buddhist experiences with meditation does indeed suggest that the use of the relaxation response may be effective in creating tolerance and compassion so that one reacts non-violently to potential stressors.

In sum, psychological and Buddhist theories and research have yielded positive findings for the three stated points, though frequently to varying degrees, such as for the extent of a general peace potential. However, both perspectives provided much support for positive effects from application of the key principles. This was seen as enhanced a ability to react non-violently and as more empathy, kindness and prosocial behaviour, which reflect the operationalised research question. Inspiration for peaceful development, also part of the operationalised research question, was seen as likely to be increased through a greater awareness of connection between self and experience. Inspirational effects will be dealt with more thoroughly in the empirical study.

Based on the positive findings in relation to the research question, one should be able to realize a potential of the Dream of the Good to educate for peace by implementing its key principles in teaching. The empirical study, through interviews, will assess if this is done, and will review the experiences of the participants in the project in relation to the research question.

6 Empirical Study

Due to the evolving nature of Dream of the Good the use of qualitative interviews, as a form of naturalistic research, was found most apt for the empirical study. The dynamic nature related to the project's organic growth and the high internal variability in implementation of the project's key principles influenced this decision. Rigid experimental set-ups with control groups and probability samples would be difficult to set up, and even if set up and carried out successfully, such an experiment might not be representative of the project's internal variability. Also, experimental set-ups might not capture central aspects related to the natural settings, such as inspirational effects related to the project. Consequently, interviews were conducted to capture different school levels, students, teachers and resource persons, different ways of implementation and different methods that were used.

The interviews were conducted for two main purposes. First, the interviews aimed to reveal if the key principles of the Dream of the Good were implemented. If confirmed, the findings of the theoretical section will be relevant to the Dream of the Good interviewees as representatives of the project. Second, the interviews aimed to report involved people's experiences in terms of how teaching based on the key principles affected them. This was in order to indicate whether the Dream of the Good would educate for peace in the reviewed contexts. Additionally, as an implicit purpose, the interviews aimed to provide a picture of the Dream of the Good in practice.

6.1 Indicators

Five high level operational questions, here called indicators, were used to collect, analyse and report data during the interviews. The indicators are *perceived effects* due to teaching based on the *Dream of the Good's* key principles on:

1. **Awareness of *Connection* between *Self* and *Experience* (I1)**
2. **Feelings of *Calm*, *Concentration* and *Well-being* (I2)**
3. **Capacity for *Non-violent Response* to conflict and stress (I3)**
4. ***Empathy*, *Kindness* and *Harmony* (I4)**
5. ***Inspiration* for individual peaceful development (I5)**

Indicators 1 and 2 reflect the two key principles, in terms of what teaching based on them at first hand aims to obtain. Indicators 3, 4 and 5 deal with perceived effects on individual peace

by teaching based on the key principles. They are essentially the same as the questions operationalising the research questions, though they are worded slightly differently to fit the purpose of interviewing. As such ‘well-being’ has been added to I2 and ‘harmony’ has been added to I4 based on reviewed theory and expected interview findings. For the purpose of interview analysis and reporting the indicators were broken down into observable “sub-indicators” in the interview coding-scheme (Appendix A). In general the indicators are seen to be valid as they reflect Dream of the Good key principles, operationalisation of the research question and consequently also the reviewed theory.

6.2 Selection of Participants

The participants in the interviews were people involved in the Dream of the Good either as a teacher, student or resource person. The participants were obtained in cooperation with the Dream of the Good organizers in order to get a broad coverage in terms of school levels, practical methods, and ways of implementing the teaching based on the key principles. The Dream of the Good organizers thus suggested available teachers and other resource persons that could be interviewed. The suggested persons were interviewed unless their teaching based on the key principles did not add to the breadth of the coverage. The student participants were obtained by asking respective teachers to pick three to five students that would be comfortable about talking about their experiences of the teaching in an interview situation.

As a result, teachers and students at the levels of primary school, secondary school and upper secondary school were included⁸, as well as teachers for kindergarten and other resource persons (see appendix B). The interviews covered implementation of the key principles in teaching primarily through existential talks and other awareness raising, and through using the methods of stillness, meditation, massage, qigong and yoga. Also, the interviews covered a range of implementations of the Dream of the Good, and it was incorporated both as an elective course, as normal school classes, as integrated in normal school classes, and finally as being the basis of a general change programme in the case of kindergartens. In this way the interviews explored the research question in a number of different contexts.

⁸ The relation between schools and class levels: primary school (1st to 6th grade), secondary school (7th to 9th grade), upper secondary school (“gymnas”, 1st to 3rd grade) and kindergarten (prior to primary school).

Twelve interviews were conducted. Ten of these have been reported. An interview with two teachers focusing on holistic thinking of indigenous people (also part of the Dream of the Good) is not reported, as the interview proved to be premature in relation to the start of their teaching. Also, an interview with the international director of the Appeal Foundation, focusing on the relation to and understanding of the Dream of the Good, is not reported explicitly. Information obtained from this interview has rather been incorporated into appropriate sections of the thesis, and in particular as part of the background information.

The participants did not constitute a probability sample (statistically representative) of people involved in the Dream of the Good and were not intended to so. Yet, when considering the selection bias, it should be noted that interviewed teachers' common positive interest in the Dream of the Good may be expected to be representative of non-interviewed teachers involved in the project. This is likely because of the project's organic growth by mechanisms of inspiration. In other words one will normally not get involved and teach based on its key principles unless one has a positive attitude towards it.

In general, the interview results are not intended to provide evidence in a positivistic sense, but are intended to *indicate* if the Dream of the Good has a potential to educate for peace at different school levels, through different ways of implementation and through the use of different methods. The strength of these results will be discussed in the summary of this chapter.

6.3 Interview Process

6.3.1 Interview Guide

The interviews were done as semi structured interviews. Due to the large variability in how the Dream of the Good key principles were implemented, no structured set of questions would fit across all the interviews. The interview guide (Appendix C) was thus designed so that it included all the indicators⁹, with each indicator broken down into suggestions for questions. The context, including age group and way of teaching key principles, would determine how appropriate the premade questions were. Thus, the interviews were planned so that all the indicators would be covered, while letting the sequence of questions be free and adapting the

⁹ The indicators looked somewhat different when the interview guide was made. However, the five indicators used in analysis and reporting have just recombined the content of the original indicators. It is the presentation rather than the content that is changed.

individual questions to the situation. The interviews aimed for a good coverage through an open and naturally flowing, but controlled, conversation. The interview guide was tested in a pilot interview, and was subject to feedback by reviewers. Based on this some revisions were done in terms of the suggested questions.

A low rigidity in the interview style may cause biases according to various authors (Cohen et al., 2000). Potential biases will be discussed in the next section. However, as already mentioned, the interviews are not seen as an “exact science” (in a Western sense), but are intended to give a picture of experiences, or perceived effects, in various contexts of teaching based on Dream of the Good key principles.

6.3.2 Interviews

The interviews generally were held, without external listeners present, for 30 to 60 minutes. The duration was made dependant on the length of the answers in relation to the questions. The interviews were carried out in Norwegian and Swedish language. Standard ethical considerations, including informed consent, anonymity and considerations of consequences, were incorporated into the interviews (see section on ethical considerations). The interviews were recorded in order to capture the whole interview.

The interviews were experienced by the author as open exchanges of information, and should as such, according to Kvale (2001), allow relevant information to be more easily shared and not withheld. However, even so the sources of bias during the interviews may be many. In general sources of interview biases may stem from attitudes, expectations and observations of the interviewer, various characteristics of the interviewees, question wording and misperceptions and misunderstandings on both parts (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). However, in light of this “bleak picture” in terms of obtaining trustworthy results, it should be noted the notion of bias is itself problematic to the degree that existence of an objective truth in the social space independent of the subject is assumed. Such an objective truth may not be observed. Consequently, the interviewees’ direct experiences (subjective truth), for instance of calm during the practice of relaxation techniques, will be taken as real and not be subject to a discussion of bias.

However, above mentioned causes of biases remain and were addressed in the interview style. Thus, as prescribed by Kvale (2001), care was taken to use non-leading questions to obtain information, and use interpretive and leading questions to confirm the answers and understand them in relation to the indicators. Regarding characteristics of the

interviewees, various cognitive errors, such as primacy effects, recency effects and attitudinal biases, may cause distortions to memory and attribution of causes (Passer and Smith, 2001). These distortions were sought minimised by primarily focusing on perceptions of immediate and short-term effects from the teaching based on the two key principles. Finally, biases related to characteristics of the author were addressed through interviewee validations of transcriptions and other measures discussed in the following sections.

6.3.3 Transcription and Analysis

The transcriptions were done based on the audio recordings. They were done in Norwegian in a fluent written style seeking to represent the meaning in the conversations. The accuracy of the transcriptions, as a representation of the conversations' meaning, were checked by sending the transcripts to the interviewees for validations. They were asked to do any corrections they saw as necessary and approve the manuscript before use in the report. The response rate was 40% for this validation task. These transcripts were approved for use without changes. The individual interview reports (as presented below) were also sent to the participants, to allow for any corrections in the reported information. No corrections were given.

The transcribed interviews were analysed by means of categorization (Kvale, 2001). The text was categorized according to the defined indicators by using them to label the different responses. Information that did not pertain directly to the defined indicators received a code for 'other'. A separate person, who was familiar with the work with this thesis, coded 3 of 10 interview transcripts for a small inter-reliability check¹⁰. Finally, for each interview, the responses pertaining to the individual indicators were grouped for the reporting in order to ensure a comprehensive coverage at this stage.

6.3.4 Reporting

The interviews were reported in terms of experiences pertaining to the indicators. An exact reproduction of the interviewees' meaning is by nature not possible both because of necessary

¹⁰ This check gave a score of 63 %. Small overlaps between the indicators and interpretational possibilities of lengthy answers probably limited the score. In any case, the overall picture based on the findings is not seen to be affected, though it may be possible to argue in some cases that individual responses better fit different indicators. However, this is not a quantitative study concerned with exact counts of individual responses. Furthermore, the interview reports to large extent show how the author coded in relation to the indicators.

selections and different characteristics of individual readers. In any case, most important to this thesis is not to have quantifiable results, but rather to show whether there are positive or negative responses according to the indicators, and give examples showing the nature of the responses. The answers will show, as mentioned, whether the reviewed theory is relevant to the interviewees and the nature of the interviewees' experiences with teaching based on the Dream of the Good key principles.

Best possible reproductions of the interviews are sought by giving adequate descriptions of the contexts including information assessed to be most relevant, by pointing out whether relevant experiences were expressed once or several times, and by showing if there were contradictory comments. Regarding the latter, the interviewees were generally asked if they had negative experiences in relation to the teaching. If not reported, no contradictory comments were made regarding experiences in relation to the indicators.

Also, for the interviews with the students, which were done with groups of three to five persons, it is difficult to know with certainty to what degree the given answers were representative for all present students because of the dynamics of a naturally flowing interview. However, for the questions asked to all of them (most questions), the others would often add a confirmative yes to comments with which they agree, or if they did not agree, express different experiences. Further, a seemingly open atmosphere during the interviews should reduce group effects causing comments to conform to each other, though it cannot be ruled out. In general, care was taken to report both confirmative and non-confirmative experiences pertaining to the indicators. As this is not a quantitative study, an exact count of different experiences across the interviewed students is beyond the scope.

6.3.5 Ethical considerations

As alluded to, standard ethical concerns (see Kvale, 2001) of informed consent, confidentiality and consideration of consequences were ensured in relation to the interviews. Informed consent was obtained by informing about the aims and the plans for the research and the possibility of interviewees retreating from the interview at any time. Also, validation and approval of interview transcriptions were part of this. Coding names and schools at the transcription stage helped to ensure confidentiality.

Consideration of the consequences for the interviewees was seen to relate primarily to the interview situation. The intimacy and the topic of the interview would increase the likelihood of revealing information normally perceived as personal by the interviewed. This

required empathic attitudes and sensitivity from the author as an interviewer, and was probably helped by the author's pre-awareness of personal information potentially being revealed. Further, the confidentiality helped ensure that personal information is not identified, and the interviewees' reviews of transcribed interviews allowed for changes in the interview texts.

6.4 Interview Results

Below, ten interviews are reported in seven sections. In three of the sections two interviews are reported. This applies to two instances where both students and the teacher have been interviewed and to the section on experiences of resource persons. The other sections contain one interview. The sections' headings denote school level, which key principle(s) that have been primarily focused on¹¹, and finally how the Dream of the Good key principles were integrated in the teaching. In the interview reports citations have been translated from Norwegian to English. Sending the interview reports to the respective interviewees allowed for corrections should the meaning of given answers be incorrectly or badly represented. As mentioned, no corrections were given.

6.4.1 Primary and Secondary School – Relaxation based Elective Course

At this school an elective course focusing on physical and mental health was held. The course was held for one group in 6th grade consisting of nine students (9 girls) and for one group in 8th grade consisting of 20 students (17 girls and 3 boys). The term long course consisted of one and half-hour weekly sessions, and the interviews were done after nine sessions for the 6th graders (the 8th graders counted 7 sessions). Up to that point the course had consisted of an introductory session including massage, qigong and review of student expectations; second session with nature walk and qigong; third session focusing on fitness, stretching and walking; and the next six sessions focused largely on yoga. Two interviews were held: the first with five students from the 6th grade group, and the second with their teacher. Main findings with respect to the indicators will be elucidated below.

¹¹ 'Connection' is used to denote the first key principle regarding awareness of connection between self and experience. 'Relaxation' is used to denote the second key principle regarding calm and concentration.

Interview no. 1 – Students

The interview was held with the teacher present, due to her request, while an open communication seemed to be preserved. Also, when asked about negative experiences associated with the teaching, the teacher left in order not to restrict the students' answers.

The students repeatedly reported a sense of calm, concentration and well-being (I2) from the exercises of yoga, relaxation, and nature walks. For instance, from practicing *yoga* the following comments concerned well-being: *“It has hurt a little to do some exercises, but I have felt great afterwards”* and *“I have had some problems with pain in my back. But now it is completely gone. I have become better”*. Also, in relation to relaxation exercises, whereby they would lie on the floor, listen to quiet music and receive instructions from the teacher, they said: *“One does not think of anything else. One enters a separate world. One lies there without thinking and forgets all around”* and *“One forgets all homework and things that one should have done”*. In general, the students expressed that the sessions served to reduce feelings of stress. To inquire about duration of the obtained calm, they were also asked if reduced feelings of stress during the sessions would spill over to the time afterwards. The answers to this were: *“Yes”* (by all or most); *“Nearly all week one feels much calmer”*; *“It is very good because we have these sessions on Mondays”*¹². There were no comments contrary to the ones of calm, concentration and well-being.

In terms of capacity for non-violent response to conflict and stress (I3) several students said that increased feelings of calm might help them in handling stressing or provoking situations, such as when being treated unfairly. Nobody expressed the contrary view. The following was said for how calm obtained at the sessions on Mondays helped tackle stresses later in the week: *“One becomes more harmonic and also feel a little happier if things are difficult. One does not become so easily stressed and irritated over things one would usually react to.”* When asked for an example of this, the answer was: *“I don't become as irritated at mum's nagging.”*

Regarding empathy, kindness and harmony (I4), the students reported that the exercises served to create a harmonic atmosphere. In addition, the students in the group, who came from two classes, were integrating with each other. They expressed that they had got to know each other better. Also, their teacher had been perceived as nervous during the first session, but they said this had changed: *“Now we know each other, and there is a calm and*

¹² The students said that the school days normally were associated with a certain amount of stress.

peaceful atmosphere each time we meet up.” In line with this picture, the author experienced the five students as a harmonious group during the interview.

Finally, the last indicator (I5) was about inspiration from teaching based on the Dream of the Good key principles, and most relevant here is the key principle regarding methods for calm and concentration. When asked if they would continue after the end of the course to practice learned relaxation methods, several of the students answered affirmatively and none answered negatively. One student also considered applying to participate in the course again the following term.

Interview no. 2 – Teacher

The interview with the teacher focused on her experience of how the elective course affected the students and on how she felt it had affected herself. The former will be dealt with first.

The teacher’s comments both confirmed and complemented experiences expressed by the students. No contradicting comments were given. She gave one illustration for the indicator for calm, concentration and well-being (I2) by recounting a student’s tale of how, after a stressful day, calm and relaxed feelings were created during a session, and would persevere for the rest of the day. However, a large share of the comments regarded harmony in the group (I4), which is probably more easily observable. Harmony in the group, for the 8th graders, was illustrated by comments like: “...*Last time was like a yoga session for me too. I did everything myself. I could never have done that without a good atmosphere.*” For the group in 6th grade she said: “*For me it feels like a big family. Especially in the group in 6th grade we are only 9 people. (...) Perhaps I have missed something, but I have never heard anyone say anything negative.*” These comments were qualified by saying that this kind of atmosphere was not an instant effect during the first session, but it rather developed during the course of the sessions. Students coming from different classes increasingly interacted, and the students’ calm and cooperation gradually became good enough to enable also her to fully take part in the exercises, rather than having to monitor the students.

Regarding herself she had been practicing simple yoga exercises on her own for sixteen years. She expressed several perspectives that showed of an awareness of a connection between self and experience (I1). For instance, she said that she had to be calm and not be stressed herself in order to influence her students in a good way, and she emphasized a relation between physical, mental, and social well-being. She referred to research showing that children who give each other massage do not beat each other.

In terms of calm and well-being (I2), the latter two years, she had not practiced yoga and expressed that she then had not felt the same calm as during previous years of practice. Also, regarding the sessions with the students, she said she would feel the same way after a session as did the student she referred to (above), who said that feelings of calm and relaxation persevered for the rest of the day. In terms of how feelings of calm had helped her react non-violently to stressing situations (I3), she gave the following tale: *“After a session with the group in 8th grade I walked home while feeling very calmed and relaxed. (...) I was on the footpath while four mopeds came driving towards me, and I was forced off the path. It was not fun, but I was quite relaxed about the whole thing. (...) Had it been another day I would have become very scared”*. Although, anger might not have been her instant reaction, traumatisation and feelings of fear were seen to increase the chances of anger and aggression at a later point in time, as discussed in the theoretical section.

Expressing empathy (I4), the teacher said she wanted the students to feel less stress in school, which is what motivated her in the first place to introduce the course. She wanted the students to have physical, mental and social well-being, thus also allowing them to concentrate better in other courses. Also, she said that feelings of empathy motivated her to tell people who would talk behind somebody’s backs that she had no interest in listening. The interview did not establish what affected her development of empathy, but it is noted that it coincided with an awareness of connection between self and experience, described above.

Finally, inspirational effects (I5) were commented on. She said that teaching the elective course inspired her to learn more. She was currently attending a course in kundalini yoga, and had earlier applied for funds for attending a course in massage. Also, another teacher had become inspired by her teaching of the course and had implemented a similar elective course in 7th grade. Interestingly, though the source of inspiration is not known, quite a few more students had applied for the elective course (of the interviewed teacher) than there were room for.

6.4.2 Secondary School - Connection and Relaxation based Obligatory Course

This private school with 110 students from 6th to 8th grade had an obligatory two-hour weekly course aimed at increasing the respect and empathy for oneself and others. The course focused on creating understanding and respect for one’s similarities and differences. The different perspectives presented during the sessions were given equal value. The course would start every time with 30-45 minutes of relaxation training in the form of massage. Existential

questions and life philosophy was discussed. The students did different exercises like leading each other blindfolded, drawing a map over one's life up to now, and drawing one's possible future life on a sweater, all aimed at developing perspectives and confidence in oneself and others.

The course had been run for about a term at the time of the interview. One interview was held, with five students (two boys and three girls) from 6th, 7th and 8th grade. It was held with their teacher present at the end of it due to her own request. No change was noticed in the students' openness after her arrival.

Interview no. 3 – Students

Regarding awareness of connection between self and experience (I1) the students expressed many perspectives. Their discussions of existential questions had included the topics of what happens after death, of what the meaning of life is, and what God is. The students' experiences with this teaching included the following comments: *“When one thinks about these questions one gets to know oneself better, and then one can learn to know others better and be a better friend”*; *“One may have been thinking in the same way for years. But when one explores what one thinks about something and hear what others think about it, then one learns that there are many different ways to think about something”*; and *“One gets a larger perspective.”* In addition, they said: *“Everybody is of equal worth, but we are still different”* and *“One changes all the time”*.

In these quotes, relating to the indicator of connection between self and experience (I1), the students expressed improved understanding of themselves and others, enlarged perspectives, understanding of individual differences, and awareness of the changeability of experiences. Also, related to consequences of one's actions for future experiences, they said: *“In these lessons one learns to understand to treat others the way oneself wants to be treated. Otherwise, one cannot expect others to treat one well.”* These quotes are seen as representative of what the interviewed students' said. However, it should also be noted that they said that not all other students in their group seemed to internalise these perspectives, as some saw the sessions more as free period from school activity.

Reported effects on calm, concentration and well-being (I2) relate to their practice of massage. Two types of experiences with massage were expressed: *“I think it feels good to receive massage. One becomes more relaxed and calms down. One does not get as stressed in school”* and *“For me it is unpleasant to receive massage. It feels strange. But I like to give massage. I think it is good that we do it.”* The first quote expresses experienced calm and

well-being while the second one suggests that it is not necessarily easy to receive massage. Uncomfortable feelings or mental discontent may instead come into awareness. However, as discussed in the theoretical section, anti-stressing effects have also been shown for persons administering massage to others. This would be expected to apply to the person here who did not like to receive massage but liked to administer it. Other relevant comments concerned the creation of a quiet atmosphere and mental well-being, and partly soothing of physical pain in the form of headache. Also, the concentration level was seen to increase. The students would work better in the following lesson and would be quieter. In sum, there were positive experiences in relation to the indicators, but there were differences in how well massage was received.

How their capacity for non-violent reactions was affected (I3) was commented on in relation to massage. The students said that any feelings of stress would be reduced during massage, thus reducing the risks of violent reactions in the “right” circumstances. This was qualified by adding that massage did not always reduce stress and that feelings of stress return after some time. Yet, importantly, after the massage the students found it easier to tackle situations that would normally give rise to aversive feelings. How long they experienced the effects was in this case not investigated.

The students expressed through a number of comments that they were affected in terms of empathy, kindness and harmony (I4). As discussed above, they found that awareness of connection between how they treated others and how they could expect to be treated in return affected them to treat others in a good way. Affirmative answers were obtained when asked if the teaching helped increase their capability to mentally step into the shoes of others (empathy). The students said they would be more aware of what they were doing. In terms of harmony in the group the students said they had become closer, as illustrated here: *“One gets close when one gives each other massage. One is not afraid. One reach the other in a different way”*; and *“In other schools one is afraid of everybody one doesn’t know. In this school one knows almost everybody”*. It was said that a comparatively small size of the school might contribute to knowing each other better, yet this school was seen as qualitatively different from state schools (not having this teaching) where one would be afraid of older students. It was also said that discussing existential questions had a positive effect on empathy and harmony, and it was expressed that learning to know oneself made it easier to think about others. In general, the students said that people in the group were understanding, and emphasized that one must accept the differing views of others. They expressed that they

could freely say what they felt. When they were asked if there ever were heated discussions during their sessions, the answer was a unanimous no.

Lastly, in terms of inspirational effects of the Dream of the Good key principles (I5) two students said that they would like to continue with massage and one student said that he would like to study related philosophical aspects. Also, the interviewed students all expressed positive experiences with the course on a general level, though some saw specific tasks, such as writing essays, as laborious or less enjoyable.

6.4.3 Secondary School - Language Course with Integrated Relaxation

At this school with a stated health oriented profile, a teacher had integrated a relaxation method, namely massage, in elective language classes at 7th, 8th and 9th grade. The integration of massage was initiated after participation in a Dream of the Good theme day for teachers, and had been practiced for about two months at the time of the interview. The students had been taught to massage each other's back, neck, head and arms, and massage sessions were held once a week for about 15 minutes. The students were given the option of whether they would practice massage or do school work during the fifteen minutes. From observation, when the author was present in a class, a majority practiced massage, whereas some did not. One interview was held in which the teacher was the participant. Below, the teacher's observations of how primarily massage, but also a talk by the Dalai Lama, affected the students will be discussed. Then, how the teacher felt affected herself by exposure to the key principles of the Dream of the Good will be addressed.

Interview no. 4 – Teacher

The teacher expressed that the class generally became quieter after doing massage, although it did not always happen. This seems likely to be an effect of the students experiencing calm and concentration (I2). A short conversation during the class with three students also pointed in this direction. They expressed feelings of calm, well-being and increased concentration upon receiving massage. Presumably related to effects of concentration, the teacher said that since she introduced massage in her language classes, there were good results and near zero failure rates at tests in her classes at 7th, 8th and 9th grade. This was in contrast to previous worse results. Although a connection between increased concentration from practicing massage and good grades cannot be shown in this context, it may well have been the case. It would be in

line with the discussed empirical study where improved grades were achieved for the students practicing relaxation techniques.

The teacher expressed several times, as in the following passage, that the practice of massage created empathic behaviour and harmony (I4) among the students: *“They help each other more and are more “buddies” in their behaviour towards each other. Girls and boys have more contact, and don’t sit completely separated. Those who come from separate classes mix too.”* The students were also reported to become more cooperative in relation to the teacher and more open to learning. The teacher said she connected better with the students to whom she gave massage.

In terms of inspirational effects (I5), the teacher said that several students would tell her that they looked forward to the next massage session. Also, many students came to listen to a talk in Stockholm by the Dalai Lama on individual peace philosophy. The teacher said that many students kept talking about him and several had read books by him after the talk.

In terms of experiences relating to herself the teacher expressed increased awareness of connection between self and experience (I1), as well as inspiration, from reading books by the Dalai Lama and other authors about being positive and showing compassion. She said: *“I have started to look more inside myself than outside myself. How can I do positive things, if I am not a calm person? And how do I influence my students? (...) I must look at how I can influence myself internally, and at how I can influence my students. What I have read by the Dalai Lama and some other authors is about being positive and showing compassion, and I try to live by that. I think it works.”* Thus she expressed an increased tendency to focus on a connection between her state of mind and how she influences others. Also, regarding awareness of connection, she found that stressed students easily become noisy and aggressive.

Little, if anything, was said about her own experiences of calm and concentration (I2) from practicing massage. However, she did say that her partner’s insomnia disappeared by giving him massage in a period of strong emotional stress. Related to the indicator for non-violent reactions to stressors (I3), she told that she had become better to handle stress during classes, and in this context pointed out the importance of seeing the positive things in a situation. Regarding empathy (I4), the above paragraph on increased awareness between self and experience, and also other comments, showed that she was inspired to act in an empathic and positive way. She mentioned that she tried to influence negative people, such as complaining teachers, positively. She would for instance bring freshly baked bread to work to share with her colleagues.

Finally, regarding inspirational effects from practicing massage (I5), she said doing massage in classes slowly was spreading to other teachers. One colleague was already practicing it and another one was interested. When she at the end was asked if she had anything negative to say about practicing massage in school, the answer was no.

6.4.4 Upper Secondary School - Relaxation based Elective Course

At this school an elective course focusing on physical and mental health was held. The course lasted for one term and consisted of 42 hours of mental and physical activity and eight hours of theory, thus totalling 50 hours. The content included qigong, meditation, massage, yoga, and various physical sports. At the time of the interview there had been a strong focus on qigong with about 7-10 hours practice at school. The elective class totalled 26 students, 23 girls and 3 boys, who were in their first and second years at upper secondary school (gymnas). Two interviews were held – the first with five students, and the second with their teacher. Below, main findings with respect to the indicators are discussed.

Interview no. 5 – Students

The interview with the students was held without the teacher present. Due to the students' availability, the majority of the interview was done with three students, but another two joined for the last third of the interview.

Regarding awareness of connection between self and experience (I1), the students expressed awareness of factors that may affect their physical and mental well-being, and of how their way of being might affect others. They expressed that the elective course was a way to learn which activities or relaxation techniques might affect positively their mental and physical well-being. Further, through several comments, they expressed that by being happy and content oneself one is enabled to make others happy. The interview did not reveal whether awareness of these aspects was increased during the elective course. However, as the course focused on connection between mental and physical health, and also had elements of teaching relating individual peace to peace in society, it seems likely that awareness of these aspects were increased.

Regarding effects on calm, concentration and well-being (I2), numerous comments related to how they were affected positively, and in no cases negatively. For instance, when asked about their practice of qigong, it was said: *“I think it is really good. Everybody can do it and become really concentrated and really shut off all thinking – and get a feeling of inner*

calm.” Through the gradual learning of the qigong exercises they reported increased feelings of calm and concentration as they progressed with the practice. They also said that the feelings would spill over so that they afterwards would feel reduced stress and have better concentration during studying.

A few comments related to the capacity for non-violent response to conflict and stress (I3). Practice of qigong was said to help reduce stressing feelings associated with studying for a test. Stressing feelings would be quieted, and the calm was said to last for a while after doing the exercises. The following was one of the clearest examples: *“I have a feeling of increased calm afterwards. If I am in a very bad mood one day and do qigong, then I can feel afterwards that I have calmed my self and my frustration. I feel a little like a different person.”* Apart from reduced stress in connection with studying, the comments did not clearly show perceived changes in dealing with stressing or provocative situations. They did, however, reveal how the students were able to calm feelings of stress and frustration, which in turn, according to discussed theory, reduce the chances of any aggressive reactions.

In terms of the perceived effects on empathy, kindness and harmony (I4), the students’ comments concerned interaction within the elective class and were along the lines of a good and friendly atmosphere. In particular the practice of qigong was said to contribute to this effect, as shown in this passage: Student: *“When one practices together, feelings of togetherness arise. By this at least I experience some understanding of others.”* Author: *“So you experienced increased harmony and feelings of togetherness?”* Student: *“Yes, definitely.”* Author: *“During the actual exercises?”* Student: *“Yes, coupled to the concentration one feels.”* Here, as discussed in theory, feelings of connectedness to the others and empathy are coupled. So they are also in this comment: *“When we as a group train together, we get a good group feeling. I don’t think anybody in the group could do anything bad towards any of the others. So some changes happen in this way”*. Again, it should be noted that harmony and empathic feelings were seen to develop gradually, rather than as an instant effect.

In terms of inspirational effects (I5), the students expressed that previous experiences with relaxation techniques, such as tai chi, yoga, and other relaxation training, inspired their choice of this elective course. During the course they would practice qigong at home between classes and come to extra practices outside normal class hours. It should be noted, however, that some on the elective course would not take part in the qigong in the first place, since the qigong practice was optional. Regarding motivation to continue with similar activities after the end of the course, they expressed that they wanted to do so, but it would depend on time

available and felt need. Also, a student expressed that relaxation techniques and a focus on both physical and mental health should be a part of the regular (obligatory) fitness lectures.

Interview no. 6 – Teacher

The answers by the teacher supported and complemented the answers from the students. None of the teacher's answers were understood to contradict the students' ones. When answering how she experienced the effects on the students, she based it both on the present elective course, which was half finished, and on previous completed courses. In terms of awareness of connection (I1) she also experienced that the students became more aware of the connection between mental and physical health. Generally, on practicing qigong and other relaxation techniques, she found them to become calmer and reduce their activity level. She found that they became more aware that striving for achievement not necessarily would make them happy, but the latter could rather be achieved by reducing their stress level. An illustrative example concerned one of her students, with high demands on herself and a mother going on grand expeditions to the North Pole and the like, who had expressed: *“I have discovered that it is the small things that matter in life”*. She attributed this kind of effect to increased awareness and to clarity of mind obtained through practice of relaxation exercises.

Generally, she found the students to become calm, concentrated and happy (I2) by doing relaxation exercises. She perceived them to get an inner calm and mental balance. As did the students, she also experienced a development of this as the courses progressed: *“The first time we meet the students' faces appear stiff. There is no life in their faces. After maybe three or four weeks I see open and lively faces, and then they come and talk to me.”* She qualified this by saying that some students open up fast and some more slowly.

Regarding the students' capacity for non-violent reactions to stress (I3) she confirmed the students' comments of qigong and other relaxation techniques functioning to calm feelings of stress and frustration, which in turn reduce chances of aggression according to the reviewed theory. This confirmation was based on student feedback as well as observation. Regarding the teachings' effects on harmony (I4) she described a harmonic atmosphere where the students would be concentrated and interested. It would be easy to reach the students without the use of many words. She said that qigong with its combination of inner calm from concentration and slow movements would make the students open up: *“I can get laughter and reach students I didn't know before because they are in balance. They experience stillness and are present. When they leave they are happy and content and say goodbye to me.”*

Finally, relating to inspirational effect of the elective course (I5), she said that half of the students practiced qigong at home most days. Also, students would ask her for an extra practice session to improve their concentration before an academic test in another class.

Comments were also given for experiences relating to her self, following her own exposure to mental health concepts and use of relaxation techniques. She had since 1994 worked with introducing health focused fitness classes in school, first through own studies and research, and then had gradually implemented it in school. She said that she had obtained an increased insight into what is important, such as listening to oneself and becoming happy by working for others well-being, rather than striving for things that are not really important. These and other comments related to increased awareness of connection between self and experience (I1).

Regarding how relaxation techniques had worked for her in creating calm, concentration and well-being (I2), she said that they in general had helped to experience less stress. However, initially she had used the increased energy she obtained to work more and involve herself in more projects related to health based fitness training. Thus she had been pushing her self too much, but had adjusted after a while. Concerning empathy (I4), she expressed that her main motivation was to use health based fitness training that included relaxation techniques to reach all the students. She wanted to also reach the students that generally are not doing well, so that they can feel better and be happy in school. However, the interview did not reveal clearly how she perceived that her level of empathy had developed. Here it is just noted that she showed much empathy, through her attitudes and actions of implementing mental health training in the elective courses.

In terms of inspiration from her exposure to, and teaching based on, the Dream of the good key principles (I5), it is noted that her general motivation for this type of work seemed strong. She wanted to expand her introductory elective course to an in depth course, and she saw affecting mental and physical well-being at an individual level as what mattered most in order to affect peace and non-violence at the level of society.

6.4.5 Kindergarten – Connection and Relaxation based Teaching

This section covers the interview of a teacher (preschool teacher) who had been working with the Dream of the Good in two kindergartens. First, she had worked for eight years in a small kindergarten with eight children in need of special attention. They came from homes where

there were social and psychological problems. Then she had worked for two years in a large kindergarten, in an affluent area and with resourceful parents, which consisted of five departments, each having twenty children.

In the small kindergarten the Dream of the Good was implemented within an inclusive programme in which psychologists participated. In the large kindergarten, it built on the work in the small one and the Dream of the Good key principles were implemented initially by the teacher, and then gradually spread to the other three teachers in her department. The used methods were largely the same in both kindergartens. Awareness of 'connection' was focused on – having the children take the other's perspective thus teaching empathy. The children were given massage by the teachers and taught to massage each other. They practiced stillness and meditation-like relaxation exercises. Generally, the work focused much on having the children get closer to their inner selves, recognize their feelings, learn empathy and learn to express negative feelings in a non-violent manner.

The following primarily focuses on the large kindergarten, and the comments concern this one unless stated otherwise. For the small kindergarten experiences are reported in relation to massage and empathy, as this was commented on during the interview.

Interview no. 7 – Teacher

In terms of 'connection' between self and experience (I1), the teacher saw it as easy for the children, as compared to adults, to change their patterns of thought to enable them have peaceful relations with others: *“The children seem to have it (this capacity) in them, if we stimulate them to think in these ways. I see it is a possible road to peace in the world.”* One of the ways that the children were taught about relating to each other was by focusing on the concept of being a “good buddy”. The children showed awareness of this by being able to fill the concept of good buddy with meaning when asked. Though, perhaps more important, they showed active use of the concept when playing: *“Stop! Don't do that. If you do it you are not a good buddy.”* Also, as mentioned above, the children were taught to relate based on their own feelings, by stillness allowing for better awareness of their inner selves, and by empathy work with focus on own and other's perspective. Related to this, the teacher said she experienced increased own thinking on the part of the children. She said they would discuss existential topics often based on questions raised by themselves.

In terms of calm and well-being (I2) the teacher said she experienced the children as calm and relaxed after receiving massage, which often was done accompanied by relaxing music and a created calm atmosphere. Their queuing up evidenced their liking of it. Also, she

said that when they massaged each other the group would quickly become calm, and the rest of the day would also be calmer. However, she pointed out that not all children would necessarily be able to receive massage. In the small kindergarten, with the children in need of special attention, some children were scared and had difficulties in lying down receiving massage. As such, having the children receive massage was a goal in itself. It was achieved by the massage being voluntary and through a long-term development whereby the individual child would gradually accept more parts of the body being massaged and/or a buddy administering it. The teacher also said that use of a “to-be-quiet-game” and relaxation exercises created great calm. The latter included leading the children’s imagination through telling of tales where they would meet a “helper”, e.g. as an animal, that later might provide them inner support. The effects of this may not be seen directly, but may affect awareness of connection between self and experience discussed above.

When asked about effects on the children’s aggression (I3), the teacher said that it was reduced. However, the answers focused more on development of the children’s empathy (I4). In this respect, the children were experienced to have more empathy with each other based on the work. The teacher said this was achieved in the small kindergarten, with the children in need of special attention, in spite of the children having psychological “scares”. They were said to show more concern for each other. For instance, the children would normally demand each other’s attention, but when somebody was sad or crying the others would give that child space so he or she could be taken care of by one of the grown-ups.

Also, in the large kindergarten, with children of resourceful parents, the teacher perceived the children to treat each other in a better way (I4). Interestingly she found these children to initially have less empathy than the children in the small kindergarten (after the latter were exposed to the Dream of the Good), thus showing the need for developing their empathy. She gave examples of how empathy was developed, for instance by asking the children to take the other’s perspective, ask for forgiveness and accept forgiveness. For instance, by attending to situations when somebody cried both involved children were asked what happened, as in this example: Teacher: “*What did you think when you hit him? What do you think it felt like for him?*” Child: “*I didn’t mean it. I fell*” Teacher: “*OK, but can you make it better? Can you become good buddies again?*” As they were said to often apologize at this point, but often without looking at each other, they were asked to do it while looking each other in the eyes, and the other was consequently asked if he would accept the apology. She was thus seemingly able to influence the children to reconcile and speed up its happening.

Finally, in terms of inspirational effects of the work based on the key principles of the Dream of the good (I5), she had several comments. She was herself inspired by being able to work with the children at a deep level, which she saw as the only way to affect real change. The other teachers in her department had gradually become interested in the work, which she initiated, and had started to take part in it. She perceived that the other teachers, who initially would not bother when the children cried, had started to care more for the children. In terms of the children themselves they would as mentioned queue up for massage, and she perceived them to be inspired by looking at life in different ways, as they did when they discussed existential questions.

6.4.6 Kindergarten – Connection and Relaxation based Change Programme

In five kindergartens in a Swedish city (under common management), a change programme based on the key principles of the Dream of the Good had run for about two years. These kindergartens totalled about 80 teachers (preschool teachers) and about 350 children.

The background for the change programme was a situation of many teachers on long-term sick leave, high level of stress, and poorly structured division of labour in the kindergartens. The programme aimed to improve this situation by creating calm and increased awareness of how one relates to others, to the environment and to peace (awareness of connection). The main tools included ‘Inner Leadership’, a psychologist developed ‘Dream of the Good’ module (based on a book with the same title) focused on having a conscious way of relating to the world, and the practice of massage whereby also the children were massaging each other. In addition, meditation and qigong exercises were practiced at common meetings and individual stress handling plans were established. Personal development was focused on through study groups and half yearly review talks with the rector, and a development plan for the kindergartens, in which goals and organisational responsibilities were made clear, was created.

Reported experiences of the change programme, at the level of rectors, teachers and children, are discussed below. The reported experiences is first of all based on an interview with the two rectors responsible for all five kindergartens, but they are also based on a report of the change programme’s implementation in two of the kindergartens¹³.

¹³ The report may be accessed by contacting the author of this thesis.

Interview no. 8 – Rectors

In terms of connection (I1) the rectors said that they had become more aware of how their thoughts and behaviour affect themselves, and of how one influences each other. As such the importance of leading oneself in a good way, and be a clear and positive person, was emphasised in order to lead others in a good way. According to one of the rectors, leading others should involve making people feel seen, get positive feedback, and feel welcome and safe. In terms of the teachers, examples of increased awareness of connection were shown in reported answers to a question of what they had learnt (from the report). These comments included an increased awareness of how one act, which seems likely to have applied to most of the teachers following the focus on inner leadership, and increased awareness of how own and children's stress might be handled through massage, stillness and other methods.

In terms of obtained calm, concentration and well-being (I2) there was a striking result in the number of people on long-term sick leave being reduced from eight to one. The long-term sick leave was seen to be mainly stress related. Here, in the words of the rector: *“Today only one person on (long-term) sick-leave remains, who has arthritis which is not job related. It is thus a clear effect that people have returned to work, and that they enjoy doing their jobs...”* Also short-term sick leave was strongly reduced. The rectors said that the effects of using massage, stillness and other relaxation generally had a good effect on the teachers in terms of creating calm and well-being. Also the teachers' comments in the report were coherent with this picture. For the children the practice of massage was likewise reported to have positive effects, as expressed by one of the rectors: *“For the children I think the effects are strongest in the groups that have practiced massage the longest. One can see that children groups where massage has been practiced for about two years have become much calmer. They have few conflicts. There is not much of the unprovoked violence that may occur in children groups.”* Thus, important in the context of this thesis, as well as the increased calm, the children are observed to become less violent (I3).

In terms of how empathy and harmony is affected in the children groups (I4), the rectors found it to be increased, and especially in the groups that had practiced massage the longest. The children were seen to care more for each other. This was also described in the report: *“We see happy and confident children that can interact, play and show compassion for each other”* and *“We see self reliable children that can take on responsibility and be a part of the group”*.

Related to inspirational effects of the change programme (I5), the children were reported to enjoy both giving and receiving massage. Above, the teachers were said to enjoy

their jobs, and many of the teachers' comments in the report on personal learning are coupled to positive descriptions of how the change programme is experienced. Based on the positive effects of the programme including stress and sick leave reductions, and the positive effects on the children, one of the rector's writes in the report: *"All this makes one joyful and happy at work and gives a will to keep working for the Dream of the Good."* Also, representatives of the municipality, responsible for the kindergartens and initially negative to the change programme, were now said to be proud, as the change programme had resulted in the nomination for a national Swedish quality price.

Finally, it should be noted that the effects of focusing on connection and practicing relaxation really cannot be separated from organisational measures such as better-defined responsibilities and personal development plans. Thus, the change programme seems best understood as an integrated whole where the key principles of the Dream of the Good lie as a basis.

6.4.7 Resource Persons – Connection and Relaxation based Experiences

This section presents experiences of two fairly young resource persons that have been exposed to the key principles of the Dream of the Good for a number of years. As such they are intended as examples of how a somewhat longer-term involvement with the Dream of the Good may be experienced. The first part presents the experiences of a teacher in her thirties, who also was at a theme day for teachers and was starting to teach her students relaxation. The second part presents the experiences of a young person of about 20 years, who had been participating in discussions of existential questions on the Dream of the Good peace films.

Interview no. 9 – a Teacher's Experiences

This teacher expressed having an interest in the Dream of the Good key principles, and in particular of how one 'connects' to the world, since early on: *"Since I was a teenager I have thought a lot about ways to relate to my life, others and myself"*. She said she had experienced many personal problems including early loss of two family members and self-destructive behaviour, which had influenced her to engage in personal development. She had read much about life philosophies and peaceful development. She had received help in terms of therapy, also said to have increased her self-understanding. Further, she had engaged in much empathy motivated work including working as a nurse and being a volunteer at a centre for people

experiencing crisis. Also, she was starting to teach the Dream of the Good to her students through the use of stillness. This section focuses on her experiences in relation to herself.

Generally she expressed that increased awareness of connection between self and experience (I1) had helped her development. When asked if her view of herself had been changed, she answered: *“Dream of the Good ideas and trying to find and listen to my inner self has changed my life radically. I probably had the ability to listen to my inner self initially, but I have been suffering for many years with destructive behaviour in the form of an eating disorder. These kinds of thoughts have existed in me – I could not be as bad as I experienced myself. They have helped me back in a way.”* Thus she also expressed that changed self-understanding had helped confirm her own worth (increased self-esteem) and well-being (I2). Important in this context, giving up self-destructive behaviour represents stopping violence (I3) directed against herself.

A large part of her comments concerned a developed ‘awareness of connection’. Her awareness of connection between self and experience dealt much with developing empathic behaviour (I4). The following is an example: *“The only thing that I think really matters is how I act and try to relate to others – that I in daily life try to do positive things. It enriches me.”* She thus said that she did positive things for others also in part to affect own happiness. This is also shown here: *“I do not do it only with an altruistic motivation. I also do it with an egoistic motivation, but in a positive way”*.

Her positive acts towards others included recently introduced short periods of stillness, aiming to reduce the students’ stress, in her 8th grade language classes. Though she had initial observations of increased calm, perhaps more significant was a general harmony in the class, said to exist in the first place, whereby people were open, sincere and kind to each other, and not taking on roles. This harmony may well have been a reflection of her empathy and sincerity. In this respect, she did express awareness of how teachers may affect the students: *“If we as teachers are not afraid, unsure and have much anger and negativity in us, then I believe that we may meet the students in a totally different way. For us not to feel threatened or hurt I think we must have an inner feeling of own worth.”*

In terms of inspirational effects (I5) she generally emphasized how the good in others was a source of inspiration, as shown here: *“Thinking that something else than the material world exists has to a large degree helped me cope with life. I feel I have had much proof of people’s love, kindness and generosity. The good things in life have helped me move on, even if I have experienced life as difficult.”* Similarly, she said that meeting people who are happy and who know themselves made her feel well and inspired for personal growth, and she was

inspired from having read several books on personal development by Anna Bornstein and others. Particularly, related to the Dream of the Good as a project, she found that it introduced concrete ways to work with young people, and that it was very good for its ideas to reach schools.

Interview no. 10 – A Young Person’s Experiences

This young man, about 20 years old, said he had been interested in the key principles associated with the Dream of the Good since he was about 10 years old. In his own words: *“I have mostly contemplated over what life is about, rather than reading about it. Since I was small I have felt that reality is not the way we perceive it. There is something else behind...”* Based on this interest for the reality of experience, or ‘connection’ he had read books by Paul Brunton about exploration of the mind, by Anna Bornstein about inner peaceful development, and other books on related themes. He had also more recently started doing relaxation techniques regularly through the practice of meditation.

In relation to ‘connection’ (I1), he said that he clearly perceived his reading and meditation to have influenced him to understand other people better and see them in a different way. He qualified this by saying that he felt torn between two different personalities – in periods being an ego-less person seeing the good in all others and at other times being a slave of his feelings prone to anger. Also, regarding existential talks, he said they were a way to get behind peoples’ roles and see that they possess good qualities inside: *“... All people have something to give even if one doesn’t think so. People can seem very superficial but that may be caused by their life experiences.”* Finally, in terms of connection he also expressed that anger always had internal causes, so that he would look inside when anger arose.

Regarding calm, concentration and well-being (I2) he described meditation as an “oasis in his daily life”, and further as: *“It is an inner world of calm and clarity. It gives insights regarding oneself. It is important. Meditation is something all people should do”*. On how this obtained calm affected his ability to react non-violently (I3), he said: *“One feels calm afterwards. Right after meditation one feels very calm and mentally sharp and it is very hard to become angry. One feels very clear and it is not easy to be influenced by outer circumstances. One feels a greater presence.”*

Regarding empathy, kindness and harmony (I4), he answered in this way when questioned if he developed empathy: *“I think based on empathy every day. I think about other people’s situations. I try to be empathic and experience myself as empathic, even though I am not always able to be in this way.”* Other comments regarding helpful acts, such as joining a

group to help spread the Dream of the Good and having a generally strong motivation to help others, build on this picture. He also commented on how he experienced harmony to be created by the existential talks in which he participated: *“There was a good atmosphere. The second time (he participated twice) I experienced strong concentration, like a meditative state of mind. It was simply good. It was a good discussion and everybody were really nice and open.”*

Finally in terms of inspiration (I5) he expressed strong inspirational effects based on different parts of the Dream of the Good such as participating in existential talks, books like Anna Bornstein’s “Inner Adventure” on peaceful development, and a talk by the Dalai Lama in Stockholm June 2003. About the Dream of the Good he said: *“There are many good forces behind the project. There are many good people, also youths, who want to promote it. It is a good project and I hope it continues”*. For his own part he said: *“I want to continue working to develop myself and practice meditation. (...) What I want to do most of all is to help others.”* He expressed that for him individual peaceful development was the only way to affect peace in society.

6.5 Interview Summary

This summary gives an overview of the interviews and presents and discusses the main findings regarding the indicators. Table 1, below, summarizes the reported interviews.

Table 1 – Interview Overview

Interview No.	School Level / Other	Primary Focus: Key Principles	Way of Implementation
1, 2	Primary and Secondary	Relaxation	Elective Course
3	Secondary	Connection and Relaxation	Obligatory Course
4	Secondary	Relaxation	Integrated in Language Course
5, 6	Upper Secondary	Relaxation	Elective Course
7	Kindergarten	Connection and Relaxation	Basis in Teaching
8	Kindergarten	Connection and Relaxation	Basis in Change Programme
9, 10	Resource Persons	Connection and Relaxation	Longer Term Exposure

The key principles that were primarily focused on related the reviewed cases of the Dream of the good to the discussed theory. In all the cases relaxation was part of primary focus through use of methods such as massage, stillness, meditation, yoga and qigong. ‘Connection’ was

part of primary focus in four of the cases through focusing on topics like existential questions, inner leadership and other's perspective. However, also in the cases where 'connection' was not so explicitly or strongly focused on, the interviews revealed elements of raising awareness of a connection between self and experience, at least on the part of the teachers. This included awareness of how calm and concentration may affect well-being and behaviour, relation between mental and physical well-being, and role of own well-being in ability to treat others well. Based on this, the discussed theory is found to be relevant to the reviewed cases of the Dream of the Good as they all focused on relaxation and also on connection to a smaller or larger degree.

High-level interview results, for perceived effects in relation to the indicators, are summarized in table 2. Note that if two results are displayed, the first relates to how the students are affected and the second to how the teacher is affected. Conversely, if only one result is displayed, the results were the same (at the displayed high level) in both cases, or experiences for only one part were reviewed.

Table 2 – Summary of Interview Results

Int. No.	Dream of the Good Implementation	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5
1, 2	Primary and Secondary School – Relaxation based Elective Course	--/+	+	+	+	+
3	Secondary School – Connection and Relaxation based Obligatory Course	+	m	+	+	+
4	Secondary School – Language Course with Integrated Relaxation	--/+	m	--/+	+	+
5, 6	Upper Secondary School – Relaxation based Elective Course	+	+	+	+	+
7	Kindergarten – Connection and Relaxation based Teaching	+	m	+	+	+
8	Kindergarten – Connection and Relaxation based Change Programme	+	+	+	+	+
9, 10	Resource Persons – Connection and Relaxation based Experiences	+	+	+	+	+

I1 = Awareness of Connection between Self and Experience, I2 = Calm, Concentration and Well-being, I3 = Capacity for Non-Violent Response, I4 = Empathy, Kindness and Harmony, I5 = Inspiration for individual peaceful development / '+' = Positive findings in relation to indicator, '-' = Negative Findings in relation to indicator, 'm' = Mixed Findings in relation to indicator, '--' = No information obtained in relation to indicator

Table 2 shows whether there were positive, negative, mixed or no findings in relation to the indicators. The actual nature and strength of the responses were shown in the reported interviews. The first two indicators, awareness of connection (I1) and calm, concentration and well-being (I2) reflect what teaching based on the two key principles at first hand aim to obtain. As such their results should show, in this context, whether the conditions are present

for positive results for indicators I3, I4 and I5, which in turn pertain directly to the research question.

There were no findings related to awareness of connection (I1) on behalf of the students in two of the cases. This may be due to relaxation being primary focus of these courses and/or the right interview questions not being asked¹⁴. On the contrary, the teacher in each case appeared to have a developed awareness of factors understood to affect connection between self and experience. In terms of calm, concentration and well-being (I2) there were three cases of mixed findings, specifically relating to massage. In the first case a student did not like to receive massage although she liked to administer it and saw it's use as important. In the second case the class would normally calm down upon doing massage but not always, and in the third case kindergarten children with psychological problems initially had difficulties in accepting massage, although its effects on children's calm and well-being generally were described as good. Thus massage, although generally seen to create calm and well-being, might be difficult to receive for some, possibly because it initially might bring feelings of stress or distress into attention. Reported experiences regarding the other relaxation methods were exclusively positive. Also, in the case of the kindergarten change program, the striking result of reducing the number on long-term sick leave from eight to one was achieved, though not only relaxation methods played a part in this case. In general, with the qualifications mentioned above, there were positive results for the first two indicators.

In terms of capacity for non-violent response (I3), empathy, kindness and harmony (I4), and inspiration for individual peaceful development (I5), which correspond to the operationalisation of the research question, there were positive findings for all the interviews apart from one. In that interview no specific information relating to the students' capacity to react non-violently was obtained. In terms of I3 and I4, the participants to various extents experienced an enhanced capacity to handle stressful situations in a calm and non-violent way, harmony to be created within classes and schools, and empathy and prosocial behaviour to be increased. In the case of kindergartens, aggressive and prosocial behaviour was observed to be reduced and increased respectively among the children. In terms of I5, the expressed inspirational effects were in the form of motivation to: continue practicing relaxation, deepen understanding of connection, work to become peaceful, help others to develop peacefully, and motivation to attend ongoing courses based on the key principles.

¹⁴ It might have been difficult for young students to put these perspectives into words, unless they were used to talking about them.

It should be noted that findings of experienced effects on I3 and I4, to a large degree dealt with immediate and short-term effects from increased calm, concentration and well-being (I2) obtained from practicing relaxation methods. Thus, it may be necessary to keep practicing relaxation methods in order to keep experiencing these positive short-term effects on the ability to react non-violently and act in an empathic and kind way. However, regarding increased awareness of connection (I1), it involves to some degree changes in one's patterns of thinking, which in turn influence how one relate to others and oneself. One's patterns of thinking and reacting extend in time, described in the theoretical section by psychology of learning, by the very definition of personality (as relatively enduring ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in response to life situations), and by karma in Buddhism. Thus it seems likely that increased awareness of connection (I1) may affect more stable and longer-term changes. For instance, in the kindergarten where the children were taught to be more aware of own feelings and take other's perspectives, more empathic behaviour and reduced aggression was observed as a gradual development. Also the longer-term involvement of the interviewed resource persons of the Dream of the good, apparently yielding some of the stronger results, was accompanied by a strong awareness of a connection between self and experience.

It should also be noted that the results for I4 (empathy, kindness and harmony), often appear somewhat stronger than for I3 (capacity for non-violent response), at least in the case of teenagers and grownups. This may have to do with aggression in these groups, especially in its overt forms, probably to a large degree being inhibited by factors like social norms and consideration of consequences, as discussed earlier in the theoretical section. Thus, increased individual peace may be more easily observed as positive findings in relation to I4. On the other hand, for kindergarten children, who may be expected to have less acquired inhibitions, reduced overt aggression was observed. In any case, both I4 and I3 are both important as operationalisations of the research question, and as expressions of individual peace as defined. For the latter empathy, kindness and harmony (I4) refer to the positive part of the peace definition, whereas reductions in aggressive acts (I3) correspond to increases in negative peace.

Finally, regarding I5 (inspiration for peaceful development) most participating teachers and resource persons had been involved in individual peaceful development for some time. Thus, the teaching based on the Dream of the Good key principles might easily inspire them. To inspire people previously not involved in some way in personal peace work

probably represents a bigger challenge. In this respect, some of the interviews covered students and kindergartens having the key principles incorporated into obligatory teaching, thus encompassing everybody in these groups. There were various positive findings regarding inspiration in relation to these groups or to people who were part of them. Though a number of non-interviewed persons in these groups may not have been inspired, the findings generally suggested inspirational effects for many people.

In sum, there were positive results in relation to the indicators. As alluded to, the results may not be used as evidence from a Western scientific viewpoint, as the interview study was done in a naturalistic setting without control groups and with a non-probability sample. In addition there may be different interview biases as previously discussed. However, in terms of experiences among the interviewed persons, a picture of predominantly positive effects was created. This will be seen to support the existence of a positive peace potential of the Dream of the Good among the interviewed people, as well as among kindergarten children and students in the case of teacher observations. Further, in terms of coverage, these interviews covered school levels ranging from kindergarten to upper secondary school. The key principles were incorporated in teaching as separate modules, as either obligatory or elective course, or were part of a regular course. A wide range of methods of relaxation and ways of creating awareness of connection were employed. This then suggests a possibility for Dream of the Good to educate for peace in these types of settings and with these methods.

7 Conclusions

The research question regarded the potential of the Dream of the Good – through teaching based on its key principles (‘awareness of connection between self and experience’ and ‘calm and concentration’) – to educate for peace at an individual level. The research question was operationalised as effects on the individual’s: capacity to react non-violently; empathy and kindness in attitudes and behaviour; and inspiration for individual peaceful development. The operational questions in turn corresponded to indicators I3, I4 and I5 of the interview study.

In the theoretical section, the review of theory and research provided positive findings (previously summarized) in relation to the research question. Psychological theory and research on relaxation methods provided findings of reduced likelihood and occurrences of anger and aggression, and increased likelihood and occurrences of empathic attitudes and prosocial behaviour. Buddhist theory likewise, and apparently most strongly, provided findings of positive effects in relation to these expressions of individual peace. Buddhist theory also described a general potential of fully obtaining individual peace. In this respect, reviewed psychological theory more moderately described the existence of a general capacity, also among adults, for meaningful change.

The empirical study (previously summarized), based on qualitative interviews, supported the findings of the theoretical section. Based on teaching incorporating the key principles, the participants generally experienced enhanced ability to react non-violently in situation of stress and conflict (I3), and increased empathy, kindness and harmony (I4). Also, reduced aggression and more prosocial behaviour were observed among kindergarten children. Regarding inspiration for individual peaceful development (I5), the participants generally found it to be positively affected. This was either as a motivation for peaceful development in general, or as inspiration for practicing methods seen to lead in such a direction. A picture was created of predominantly positive findings from the interviews.

It should be noted that, in this thesis, aggression and violence were found related to the degree to which one experiences aversive emotions in various situations. Similarly, kind and prosocial behaviour were found related to positive mental states including good moods and empathic feelings. Based on both the reviewed theory and the conducted interviews, teaching based on the key principles was indeed found to reduce aversive emotions and induce more positive mental states. Thus, necessary conditions for reduced aggression and violence, and increased empathy and prosocial behaviour, were created. Consequently, the interviews did yield findings, of various strengths, of these expressions of individual peace.

In this thesis, some of the strongest research findings (in a Western scientific sense) were apparently as reduced aggression among kindergarten children. Due to their low age they seem likely, as discussed earlier, to be less influenced by social norms, as compared to older persons. This makes overt aggression easier to observe among them. In contrast, the older teenage students and teachers, participating in the interviews, rather experienced an increased ability to react non-violently and calmly in potentially stressing or provoking situations. Also, a larger share of the findings from the interviews with these students and teachers concerned increases in experienced empathy, prosocial behaviour, and harmony in the taught groups. It seems that if there is little aggression in the first place, peaceful changes may be more clearly manifested as changes to the positive expressions of individual peace.

It should also be noted that the two key principles seem, as previously discussed, likely to be different in terms of effectiveness over time. Relaxation methods, focusing on calm and concentration, were found to induce improved mental states and well-being. Thus, in the immediate and short term, “spill-over effects” from the improved mental states and well-being may increase the ability to react non-violently and act empathically. On the other hand, increasing the awareness of a connection between self and experience involves a change in patterns of thinking and reacting in various situations. Consequently, this latter key principle seems likely to affect longer-term changes in terms of individual peace.

In sum, the conclusion will be to suggest that the Dream of the Good may educate for peace at the individual level. To what extent it may do so will be left to the individual reader to assess, as one’s view of this will necessarily depend on the weight one attributes to the findings from the used perspectives and research methods. Overall, the findings, including both the reviewed theory and the empirical study, were from different cultures, different school levels and different ways of implementing the key principles in the teaching. This in turn suggests that the Dream of the Good may educate for individual peace across the reviewed cultures, settings, and different ways of teaching.

Finally, the positive findings of this thesis were much in terms of an enhanced ability to react non-violently and of an increased level of empathy and kindness in attitudes and behaviour. Based on the positive findings in relation to these aspects of the research question, an important task may be to look deeper into the mechanisms of inspiration. If teaching based on the Dream of the Good’s key principles educates for individual peace, as this study suggests, it becomes an important task to inspire more school leaders and teachers to get involved with such teaching.

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Appendix A – Interview Coding Scheme

I1: Awareness of Connection between Self and Experience

Awareness of following factors:

- Unconscious influences (projections, unconsciously controlled actions)
- Role of awareness (e.g. high awareness giving more consciously controlled actions)
- Thought, emotional and behavioural dispositions
- Factors influencing perception of a situation (e.g. selective attention, emotions, learning)
- Connection between mental, physical, and social experiences (e.g. of mental, physical and social well-being)
- Consequences of actions to own and others' experiences (e.g. immediate effect on state of mind, long-term effects on dispositions, return of good willed and bad willed actions)
- Existence of roles.
- Changeability of experiences

Also included are changes to:

- General level of awareness
- Understanding of oneself and others

I2: Calm, Concentration and Well Being

- Feelings of calm (calm, stillness, little disturbing thoughts)
- Feelings of concentration (incl. academic achievement as an indirect measure)
- Feelings of physical and mental well being

I3: Capacity for non-violent response to conflict and stress

- Reactions to potentially stressing or provoking situations
- Ability to tackle difficult feelings

I4: Empathy, Kindness and Harmony

- Empathy
- Prosocial attitudes (caring, kindness, compassion, positive intent)
- Prosocial behaviour (helping, cooperation, supporting)
- Group Harmony (good atmosphere, feelings of nearness to others, friendship)

I5: Inspirational for individual peaceful development

- From teaching based on key principles
- From persons teaching based on key principles

Appendix B – List of Interviews

School Level / Other	Primary Focus: Key Principles	Way of implementation	Interv. No.	Interviewed Persons	Reported (Yes /No)
Primary and Secondary	Relaxation	Elective Course	1	5 students in 6 th grade: girls	Yes
			2	Teacher	Yes
Secondary	Connection and Relaxation	Obligatory Course	3	5 students in 6 th to 8 th grade: 2 boys, 3 girls	Yes
Secondary	Relaxation	Integrated in Language Course	4	Teacher	Yes
Upper Secondary	Relaxation	Elective Course	5	5 students: girls	Yes
			6	Teacher	Yes
Kindergarten	Connection and Relaxation	Basis in Teaching	7	Teacher	Yes
Kindergarten	Connection and Relaxation	Basis in Change Programme	8	2 rectors	Yes
Resource Person	Connection and Relaxation	Longer Term Exposure	9	Teacher	Yes
Resource Person	Connection and Relaxation	Longer Term Exposure	10	Contributor in films	Yes
Resource Person		Supporting Dream of the Good	11	Int. Director “Appeal Foundation”	Reported implicitly
Primary and Secondary	Connection	Integrated in teaching	12	2 teachers	No

School levels: primary school (1st to 6th grade), secondary school (7th to 9th grade), upper secondary school (“gymnas”, 1st to 3rd grade) and kindergarten (prior to primary school).

Key principles: ‘Connection’ is used to denote the first key principle regarding awareness of connection between self and experience. ‘Relaxation’ is used to denote the second key principle regarding calm and concentration.

Appendix C – Interview Guide

The interview guide is semi structured. Below are *suggestions* for questions that relate to teaching of the Dream of the Good key principles.

Background questions:

- What pulled you towards the Dream of the Good?
- How do you understand the Dream of the Good?
- How have you been involved in the Dream of the Good so far?
- Have you done similar things before?

Experience of calm, concentration and harmony:

- Has the involvement changed you in any way?
- Is harmony created?
- Does one get closer to each other?
- How do you experience practicing the methods?
- How do you feel after practicing the methods?
- Have the methods influence how you are able to handle other activities?

Empathy, compassion, awareness of connection:

- Do changes happen to the way you see others?
- Does your view of yourself change?
- Have you been influenced to think or act more positively towards others?
- Does calm and concentration affect how you experience others?

Capacity for non-violent response to conflict and stress:

- How do you tackle difficult feelings?
- Have there been changes in how you tackle difficult feelings?
- How do you deal with being unfairly treated?
- How would you react if somebody insults you or somebody in your family?
- Has there been any change to how you react in these situations?

Motivation for and belief in individual peaceful development:

- What do you think of the methods and the tools?
- Do you have any negative experiences with the project and its methods?
- Will you continue to use the methods on your own?
- What effect do you think the project has on creating peace in society?

Specific methods and tools:

- Which method do you like the most?
- Why do you prefer this method?
- Which method do you like the least?
- Why do you not like this method as much?
- How did you experience the talk by the Dalai Lama?

Overall impression:

- What is your overall impression of the Dream of the Good?