

Dharma for a Healthy World

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My proposal is primarily concerned with Buddhism and healthy living but, as I hope the argument shows, it also addresses the other categories, though less directly. This is because the Dharma is itself a path to healthy living and, therefore, potentially to happiness and social progress.

At the centre of Buddhist teaching is the illusory nature of a separate, concrete, consolidated self. This illusion generates greed, defensiveness, and domination. It excludes, patronises, and subjugates

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the “other”. All the UN millennium aims can be seen in this light. This self/other division operates at intrapsychic and international levels – dimensions which in fact feed into one another.

Conversely, Buddhism promotes an ecology of mind and world;¹ and part of that very ecological vision is that individual and wider community cannot be artificially divided. “I am” because “we are”. We are implicated, i.e. enfolded, into one another. As Nagarjuna shows, most of our binary distinctions, many of which underpin conflict, whether internal or external, are provisional at best; and downright false at worst. As human beings, we live *as*, and share *in*, a radical connectedness.

It is tempting to say that this relationality is in direct contrast to both the fragmentary free-for-all of our technological/virtual world, on the one hand, and the fake coherence of globalisation, on the other; but we need rather to turn our focus onto how these apparent distinctions have developed. We do this by paying attention to the conditions of their emergence. Selfishness, instrumentalism, and exploitation and what lie behind them are best seen through and uprooted, rather than attacked head-on. That is the Buddhist way. Any other approach simply risks re-entrenching the dynamic of opposition that causes the problem in the first place.

Unless we are ourselves blinded by it, we can all see the sorry state of the world in which we live. We do not need official reports; but they are there for confirmation. The 2013 UN Report on Human Happiness informs us that 10% of the world’s population suffer from depression or anxiety. The report notes that the costs in both personal misery and economic waste are huge. In a world that increasingly knows the price of everything and the value of nothing, the yoking together, even there, of the human impact and the financial one might itself appear more evidence of the cause of the problem rather than simply its enunciation.

1. See also Bateson, G, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, New York: Ballantine, 1972

But perhaps I am quibbling. No Buddhist – no human being – could dissent from the UN Millennium Development Goals. They are all connected in their aim to move us towards a healthier and more socially progressive world. This would be a fairer, more equal one – where the rich few would not profiteer from the needs of the poor many – and that very equality would, as recent research has shown, mitigate many of the social ills that are, not coincidentally, spreading along with capitalism.² As noted above, Buddhist psychology offers its own insights into such a situation, one essentially based on the false distinction made between self and other, a distinction that readily moves into such damaging opposition, competition and exploitation.

Where *laissez-faire* capitalism actively promotes the three poisons of greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*), encouraging us to remain compulsive in our consumption and (self-)commodification; and globalisation promotes homogeny and conformity, the Dharma envisions, and enacts, a more profound and compassionate form of interdependence *and* respect for difference. Dependent arising (*paticca-samuppāda*), both within the individual and the world, and thusness (*tathatā*) go hand in hand. A full understanding and implementation of the teaching can lead to transformation at both the intrapsychic and international levels.

Capitalism is driven by the pursuit of profit (the “bottom line” has passed into the vernacular to indicate anything of fundamental importance) and – the flipside – the creation of debt. Buddhism alerts us to the near-ubiquity of greed and hate. We want things *for* ourselves and things that are *like* ourselves – that is the greed. We don’t want what is “other” or seems threatening to our sense of self and security – that is the hate. Underpinning these poisons is *taṇhā* – grasping, attachment to whatever aids our self-building. So why *do* we build ourselves up in such a way? Well, we have to go back to the first of the Four Noble Truths – that is, to *dukkha*, the pain of existence. There are realities in the human situation that we do not like and would

2. See e.g. Wilkinson, R & Pickett, K, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, London: Penguin, 2009

not choose to endure. But we do well to recall that these are noble truths – or *ennobling* ones. If we respond to these truths skilfully, instead of seeking escape from them, they can catalyse our spiritual development and our compassionate humanity.

The Buddha, we tend to think, sought to understand the nature of suffering and its cessation.³ It is truer to say that he sought to contain (*nirodha*) that which arises from suffering. He also laid great stress on conditioned arising and dependent origination. In such a situation of radical becoming, whatever defences and positions we build up will always be outdated. The static view must be modified to one integration, exchange and interaction – of hospitality to the other – rather than one of domination and accumulation. These teachings – the nature of suffering and the nature of conditioned reality – are in fact the two sides of the central message of Buddhism.

Suffering is unavoidable – but there is choice as to how we respond. We may do so by clinging attachment to sense-pleasures (*upādāna*), either bodily pleasures or their equivalents (think: the “property porn” so prevalent in the West). In so doing we seek to build a false, enduring self (*bhāva*) to escape the flux and dissolution of temporality (*anicca*). If our self-construction fails, we may then indulge in non-becoming (*vibhāva*) or self-destructiveness⁴ which is, on one level, equally a form of self-attachment.

So what else can we do? “Don”t blink,” seems to be the teaching. In the *Sutra on Fear and Dread*,⁵ we learn that, immediately prior to his enlightenment, the Buddha went into the forest to face his fears. He sat with what arose in response to affliction. That led to his breakthrough.

So, what are *we* facing?

On a social and political level, our mainstream society – in terms of its implicit values (if such a positive word can even be used) –

3. Sutta Nipata

4. Saṃyutta Nikāya 61.11.6

5. Majjhima Nikaya 4

actually fosters the toxic realities discussed above and the compulsive grasping that underpins them. Rabid capitalism and other forms of national and international selfishness, competition and confrontation help to breed insecurities; but, then, advertising – another wing of the same system – promises a cure for them. You will be okay again if you are just that bit thinner or have a new phone or use a different toothpaste. Advertising feeds on desperation – *and* helps create it. It is a mass and massive evasion of truth. We are infantilised – made greedy and selfish and then partially soothed and placated. This is the world of instant gratification, inadequate relief and distraction. It is the world we seek to move beyond when we sit in meditation.

On a more personal level, as a Buddhist therapist working in both an inner city college and in private practice, I am reminded daily of the contortions we put ourselves through in our attempts to avoid the pain of life. It is always worth reminding ourselves that, in Buddhist thought, attachment can as easily be to what we wish to avoid/master as to what we wish to acquire. Most of the issues – a curious term that suggests release but feels like entrapment – that bring clients to therapy are unskilful attempts to deal with the difficulties of living – often by seeking escape. Attachment builds self and then we become attached to the self so built – even, paradoxically, if it is composed of pain; for pain is tangible compared to the threat of dissolution. The process of therapy is often one of facilitating a deconstruction of the illusory substantial self that began as a protection but ends as a prison.

The word Dharma is actually linked etymologically to the word “therapy” which is concerned with transformation; and we must concede that the ethical teachings of the Dharma these days often run counter to prevailing cultural norms. That is their great value. This is partly because there is an enduring myth at the heart of western philosophy, psychology and politics: one that posits completion, perfection and a clear-cut, solid, executive centre bolstered and protected by assets of some description. From a Buddhist perspective, completion is compromised by *anicca*: the world is one of process. Perfection, too, has to be highly qualified given the ubiquity of *dukkha*. And the idea of a controlling, substantial centre is undermined by the

realities of *suññatā/anattā* and is, moreover, so inherently exclusive that it can never produce a progressive, healthy world for all. Parts of the world cannot be neglected without causing detriment – to those who are excluded, of course; but also to the whole.

Swami Ajaya notes: “One of the most fundamental polar distinctions made by the growing child is *I/not-I*”.⁶ Both Buddhism and psychoanalytic object relations concur that “the “self” is literally constructed out of our object experience.”⁷ This is, of course, an entirely normal part of maturation and one should resist throwing out the baby with the bathwater. But, what has been called the “adult-eration” of the child is glossed by Ajaya as follows: “The bolstering of the ego is also carried out on a collective basis through the rituals of social institutions.”⁸ There is the same idea of diminution in Jung’s words: “All ego-consciousness is isolated; because it separates and discriminates.”⁹ It fails to acknowledge, let alone accept, the reality of our mutual dependence.

The extreme upshot of such cultural influences on development is that any notion of the common good has been lost to the ethos of “greed is good”. I was once told that westerners topple over because they are too head-centred. The teacher who said this was commenting on the over-intellectualism of the so-called developed world; but it is interesting to note that the word capital (as in capital-ism) is also derived from the Latin for “head” and, because so top-heavy, indicates a similar kind of imbalance. The word “kaput”, too, meaning broken or worthless, is a distant cognate. I have no wish to be a prophet of doom. But a clear-sighted acceptance of the problem *is* a necessary precursor to its solution - the Buddha knew this. He did not shirk from the bitter truths.

Another etymological observation: the word economy originally

6. Swami Ajaya, *Psychotherapy East and West*, Pennsylvania: Himalayan Publishers, 1983, p127

7. Engler, J, in Walsh, R N & Vaughan, F, eds., *Beyond Ego*, Los Angeles: J P Tarcher, 1980, p118

8. Ajaya, op cit, p129

9. Ibid, p130

meant “management of the home”, of the place we live and feel we belong. How its sense has changed! Of course, we also find the prefix “eco-” at the beginning of the word ecology. And it is to a more *ecological* worldview, rather than an *ego*-logical one, that we need to return if we are not to continue killing our collective spirit with competition and better toothpaste. This perspective can – and needs to – apply internally as well as socially and internationally. We need to move from the constrictive, selfish “ego” (be that personal or national) to the fluid and inclusive “eco”, to develop a world that is fit and hospitable for all of us. Of course, for a Buddhist, cultivation of the *brahmavihāras* is one place to start; and, indeed, these antidotes to any toxic quality of being arise spontaneously when we gain insight into the seat and source of the poison.

That returns us to a major factor in that toxic source: our inclination to reify or concretise ourselves. This is consistent with the wider, and politically endorsed, social frenzy for commodification, for amassing material stuff and personal status. To be a person of substance used to mean having a reliable character; now it may well mean something else entirely – a deluded way of seeking a protective self-construct, one that is not relational, outward-directed or at all generous. When we weigh the self down like this, we make it static, unresponsive and defiantly uninclusive. We can see how the UN millennium aims that we are discussing are all, in their way, responses to this kind of greed and exclusivity. Buddhism helps us see how they are all interlinked to address a common bitter root.

Insight occurs when we realise that the self is not reified but a metaphor, mirage or fiction:

“according to Buddhist psychology, this understanding is liberating [...] The difficult emotions such as anger, fear, and selfish desire are all predicated on this misperception of self. When the representational nature of self is fully appreciated, therefore, these emotions lose their source of inspiration.”¹⁰

10. Epstein, M, *Thoughts Without a Thinker*, London: Duckworth, 1996, p154

For the Buddhist, there is actually nothing to relinquish other than our misplaced sense of reality. It can be useful to think of the “self” in this regard as more like a dynamic verb than a noun. This is one reason neurosis can be seen in Buddhist psychology as a kind of *koan*. *Koans* are riddling statements designed to loosen the stranglehold of conceptual knowledge. The *koan* is, in a sense, designed by the master as a meta-neurosis; for the question underlying all *koans* is “who is it that suffers?” “Bring me the self that would be liberated,” one student was challenged; and he could not do so.

If we battle during meditation with a reified self we may, even then, be exercising negative attachment. Fighting is not the answer. The *anattā* doctrine is perhaps the hardest of all Buddhist ideas for the westerner to accept – such is the value attributed here to the isolated individual. But, if one is prepared to explore what props up the illusion of selfhood, there is much to be gained; and, to repeat, from a Buddhist perspective, the only thing to lose is what never truly existed. The challenge is to see the protected and protective sense of self as not only restrictive in itself – a straitjacket of sorts – but also as the source of further trouble, for self *and* others. The (translated) terminology of Buddhism can be off-putting: emptiness has negative connotations in the West; but *suññatā* can just as readily be translated as “openness”.

Loss of self may suggest a fall into a psychotic void; but that formulation is also misleading if there is no permanent self to lose. David Loy uses the language of psychoanalysis to argue that our primary repression¹¹ is of this ultimate state of selflessness. All senses of self, even of subjectivity, are not necessarily relinquished, just held more lightly. And there are, of course, ego *functions* which remain in all their usefulness even in the enlightened. We don’t forget how to tie our shoes just because we have gained some insight into the nature of things. So, while the *Anattā-lakkhaṇa sutta* (the *Discourse on the Not-self Characteristic*) affords the ego/self no enduring reality at all, the “ego” is acceptable in Buddhism if it aids our basic functioning rather than undermines it with self-divisions.

11. Loy, D, *Lack and Transcendence*, New York: Humanity Books, 2000, p11

Loy also argues that ego can, in fact, be defined as an attempt at self-begetting – at making oneself one’s own progeny. This points up the danger of spiritual materialism, too; of personal inflation; and, as we saw above, of self-commodification. Thus he can say, with echoes of Descartes’ self-sufficient consciousness:

“It is the quest to deny one’s groundlessness by becoming one’s own ground: the ground (socially conditioned and maintained but nonetheless illusory) we know as being an independent person.”¹²

It is worth repeating: our clamour for substance (psychic *or* political) is security-driven. It is understandable but misplaced and spiritually immature. Once the ego has arisen, its greatest threat is not to be; and so it bolsters itself as object-image.¹³ When we are relieved of such misconceptions, we can see the notional self for what it is:

“The self may be a project of deception, a masking of discontinuity and disintegration... a construction based on language, a cultural point of view on human life, expressing a desire for unity in the face of dissolution and death.”¹⁴

This is the crux of Buddhist thought: the ego is the image of self, creator of the image of self and maintainer of defences against threats to that image. In short, it seeks forlornly to protect us against *dukkha*. Because of this, as Welwood succinctly puts it, “ego, in some sense, is the *panic about egolessness*.”¹⁵ The ego’s contortions are like a parody of our enfoldedness in reality.

One of the aims, then, of meditation and some forms of therapy is for consciousness to relinquish its contraction on this illusory self, as if it were real and fixed: to expand beyond it. Certainly a key aim of Buddhist therapy is to “liberate the mind by enabling it to let go of

12. Ibid., See also Loy, D, “The Nonduality of Life and Death – A Buddhist View of Repression”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol 40, No 2, 1990, p157

13. Fromm, E, Suzuki, D T & De Martino, R, *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis*, London: Condor, 1993, p146

14. Young-Eisendrath, P and Hall, J, eds., *The Book of the Self*, as quoted in Watson, G, *The Resonance of Emptiness*, London: Routledge, 2002, p124

15. Welwood, *The Meeting of the Ways*, New York: Shoken Books, 1979, p109

the conditioned states.”¹⁶ Of course, attitudes and orientations, even defences, may be useful at one stage of life, but damaging and limiting if retained when no longer appropriate. Indeed, another principal aim of therapy is, surely, to allow mindful and useful response in the moment rather than unconscious reaction to it. That is certainly true of meditation and is facilitated by “unconditional presence” or “beginner”’s mind”;¹⁷ and fostered by the “stop” and “see” of *samatha* and *vipassanā*. Far from any diminishment, one glimpses a more spacious way of being: “In the beginner”’s mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert”’s there are few.”¹⁸ George Kelly”’s idea of personal constructs might be compared to the Buddhist notion of *saṅkhāras*; and Kelly himself uses the term “permeability” for the facility to be open to new elements¹⁹ and less rigid. We have to let the “other” in. In any real sense, we are enriched when we do. Some rare, evolved people manage to grow into such a way of being; it is hoped that some countries will, too, one of these days.

All this explains why “techniques to help us shift the universal delusion that we are each a separately existing self-entity”²⁰ are central to Buddhist practice and therapy:

“the Buddha taught intensive mindfulness practice as a means of dissolving the perceived splits between mind and body, subject and object, and awareness and its objects.”²¹

Another key feature of such practice is that it allows the emotions to “speak freely to us without the censorship that might arise if I regard the emotion as “me”.”²² Our wish for control is mitigated, our desire to get “one up” on life (be that ourselves or others) – to borrow a phrase from Alan Watts – is lessened. Stephen Schoen, a gestalt therapist,

16. Brazier, D, *Zen Therapy*, London: Constable, 1995, p77

17. Welwood, J, *Toward a Psychology of Awakening*, Boston: Shambhala, 2000, p141

18. Suzuki, S, *Zen Mind, Beginner”’s Mind*, New York: Weatherhill, 1998, p21

19. Claxton, G, *Wholly Human*, London: Routledge, 1981, p116

20. *Ibid*, p97

21. Epstein, M, *Thoughts Without a Thinker*, London: Duckworth, 1996, p146

22. Welwood, J, ed., *Awakening the Heart*, Boston: Shambhala, 1983, p84

calls neurosis “egoitis” – inflammation of the ego – and describes it as “swollen” with defensiveness. He also calls this a “congested [...] gathering together of oneself”²³ – and the very terminology suggests that, as the ego expands, the level of openness to experience and otherness diminishes. The root of *suññatā* means “swollen” – not with narcissism or power but with possibility. There *is* hope. The dualism (which always risks objectifying the other) that has persisted in its various forms in western thought from Plato, through Descartes, Kant and Husserl, is undermined by Buddhist teaching. Language – itself a dualistic construct of subject acting on object – may struggle to convey the intertwining, interpenetration and interbeing of “self”/“other” or “self”/“world”, but we would do well to heed Nietzsche’s warning and not make a “god of grammar”.

Buddhist psychology generally stresses the importance of such shifts in perspective, with an accent on context, connection and reciprocity. It implicitly endorses Gandhi’s advice: the best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. One could, of course, reverse the terms: the best way to lose yourself is to find yourself in the service of others. Buddhist psychology also promotes empathy (e.g. in therapist and client) as a way of reducing narcissism. This involves the ability to set aside self-preoccupation to more fully inhabit (and understand) the world of another. Enlightenment in this sense may be thought of as moving beyond somebody *and* nobody towards everybody.

In such a materialistic world as ours, another word of warning is in place. We have to be vigilant about applying a materialist logic of gain to spiritual insight. In states of spiritual materialism, the ego may, however paradoxically, wish to remain as witness to its own dissolution, wishing to enjoy the spiritual boons that its own extinction promises. That will not do. That is a quasi-political pretence of selflessness – almost worse than honest self-regard. One has to see through such machinations

23. Schoen, S, “Gestalt Therapy and Buddhist Teachings”, in Boorstein, S, ed., *Transpersonal Psychotherapy*, New York: SUNY Press, 1996, p197

But when the shackles of assumed selfhood are *genuinely* loosened, whether individually or collectively, we can be more fluid and responsive to life. For a Buddhist, we move from non-self-acceptance (i.e. an absence of self-acceptance in the pursuit of a fixed identity defended against emergent phenomena) to non-self acceptance (i.e. *anattā*).

Mark Epstein writes:

“It is through the mindfulness practices that Buddhism most clearly complements psychotherapy. The shift from an appetite-based, spatially conceived self preoccupied with a sense of what is lacking to a breath-based, temporally conceived self capable of spontaneity and aliveness is, of course, one that psychotherapy has also come to envision.”²⁴

It is in the subtle textures of mindful awareness that we realise the true nature of *anicca*, of our existence not in time but *as* time – as Dogen’s *uji* or time-being. The nature of bodily reality – its moods, rhythms and sensations – does not allow us to remain in the static world of concepts and defensive, or oppressive, positions.

Collective delusion is personal delusion writ large. We see the same fearful greed and hate, the same clinging to national status, and exercise of prejudice and coercion. The collective identity becomes all-consuming: defended against life and aggressive to others.²⁵ But the solution, too, can be applied collectively: an ecology of interpersonal and planetary relations.

This returns us to the central (or, we might say, centrifugal) notion of co-dependent arising (*paticcasamuppāda*), sometimes represented by the image of Indra’s net. At each knot of the net is a jewel which reflects all the other jewels. It is a world-view we have already touched on: one with complex layers of interweaving and reciprocity. We are responsible for one another, folded into the whole. This may, on one

24. Epstein, M, op cit, p145

25. See Loy, D, Money, Sex, War, Karma, Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2008

level, offend our narcissism; but, on another, it affirms our sense of connectedness. We may still be touched by the infinite; but we are as much its focus as source. A rule of thumb of therapy argues that it is a way of completing our passage to maturity, from dependence to independence to this kind of interdependence. And when we learn this, we can also appreciate why Buddhism is more about insight than injunction. It does not need aggressive didacticism. When we have “right understanding”, “thou shalt” becomes predictive rather than imperative. Healthy living follows naturally.

Dependent origination – as expounded by Nagarjuna – means that every phenomenon is empty, i.e. contingent, void of independent self-nature (*svabhāva*). This is another way of saying that we should – unless we are to live in stunted delusion – stop reifying the processes of life. As the popular adage puts it: the best things in life are not things. Yet this is not a picture of a vague, utopian interconnectedness.²⁶ It calls for something more radical – the realisation of *anattā*, a complete seeing-through of the self-construct, what Carl Rogers calls self-concept. The self does not, with this new insight – but with its greed and hunger for inflation still intact – merely identify itself with the world or something more nebulous still (like the “cosmos”). It, rather, *disidentifies* from everything – for any kind of identification is predicated on identity. We do not relinquish self by seeking to see it continue absorbed into a prelapsarian and unified mush.

With this understanding, relations, too, inevitably – whether interpersonal or international – are seen to be dynamic, in a state of flux, constantly renewing and reconfiguring themselves. Because they are not predictable and are so fluid, there is vulnerability in genuine encounter with other people. Dialogue is, therefore, seen as the art of “taking the risk of communicating.”²⁷ We do not impose ourselves on others and treat their culture as if it were a failed attempt to be ours.

26. Thanissaro, B, “Romancing the Buddha”, Tricycle, 2002 (sourced at <http://www.tricycle.com/feature/romancing-buddha>)

27. Madison, G B, *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty*, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1981, p300

Human beings, like everything else, exist in the complex current of experience; but, unlike everything else, we also reflect on and organise our experiences. This presentation is an instance of that; as are the UN's aims. We should not seek to eliminate either aspect of our being in the world. Whether we call the former "process" and the latter "structure", or "becoming" and "being", or, as Spinelli does, "worlding" and "worldview",²⁸ or even, as we find in Buddhism's *Heart Sutra*, "emptiness" and "form", they are related aspects; but, rather than being opposites that can be played against one another (so that one is primary and dominant), they are more like the two sides of a coin. It is, as ever, the reification of the one (the former in the pairs given) in the aggressive interests of the latter that is the source of misrepresentation *and* of many of our problems. Shoring up ourselves, in whatever way, keeps others out and promotes the attitude of "self vs. other; or "us vs. them".

One need not be a Buddhist to see the potential liberation in a facilitated exploration of our rigid and conditioned reactions to the world and our experience of it. On a personal and therapeutic level, the client's problem, her "issue", is created and held in place by a series of conditions. By examining how the client participates in the relationships she has – with others, including the therapist, and with herself – she can, within the containment offered by the therapeutic space (a microcosm of life), both sit with her feelings, inclinations and reactions in her current mode of being *and* experiment with other, more fruitful, ways of engaging and attending.

On a more social and collective level, *all* the UN Millennium Goals aim for a movement from the selfish and self-protective to the relational and inclusive, beyond that "us and them" mentality. I say "self-protective" but that very tendency brings with it all manner of protection rackets directed at others, and restrictions set on *their* growth and development. This works neither in the best interest of self *or* other – simply because, as that crude distinction shows, it seeks to ignore their interdependence.

28. Spinelli, E, *Practising Existential Psychotherapy: the Relational World*, London: Sage, 2007, p19

“Therapy” itself means “to attend to” – to pay care-full attention to. This is pertinent whether we are talking about it at a personal or national or international level. Each is implicated in the other – as in Indra’s Net. Yet we learn to fear our own lack of substance. And although there is no foundation to the fear we have (the fear that we have no foundation), the fear is real enough as a feeling. And, even though we lack nothing in our so-called “nothingness” we look to the wrong things to bolster ourselves and give us ballast.

There is, then, a difference between toxic “want”, as gratuitous and compulsive craving (*tanhā*), and want as legitimate need; and, in order to see it and to address it, we need to realise our interdependence as that which potentially supports us all rather than that which some of us can exploit.

Even though, as a therapist, I often see emotional problems that *are* exacerbated by socio-economic factors, I am reluctant to reduce all the problems of the world to economics. Giving too much power to economics is a feature of the problem, not its solution. A basic humanity and willingness to care are more fundamental. Our attitudes and values underpin what we allow economics to do. Economics are not set in stone. They are a cultural phenomenon. But, since Freud certainly, the psyche itself *has* been seen in economic terms. If our current world economic system implies a sickening see-saw of debt and false promises (that toothpaste again), a Buddhist understanding of self offers freedom from any sense of lack and the real promise that that brings – potentially, to everyone.

For if one person loses, we all lose.

[Buddhist terms given in Pali]