

The Movement having Roots in the Sky

Sangharakshita, abridged from The Bodhisattva Ideal Q&A, Tuscany 1984

You should not take the Bodhicitta literally, as a sort of doctrine or theory. By saying that it is a myth one means that the term Bodhicitta refers to an experience, a transcendental experience if you like, which cannot be adequately described in conceptual terms.

The words myth or symbol suggest that the Bodhicitta is something which is emotionally moving, which stirs us on a much deeper level than that of the intellect or the ordinary waking consciousness. The term myth or symbol suggests something that has a definite impact on us, something that we cannot simply think about.

So one could speak of the Bodhicitta as constituting the myth of the Movement. Actually what one sees as the Movement, materially, is only a tiny fraction of what is happening. Something else is happening on some other level, on some other plane, which is infinitely vaster.

What one sees of the Movement that we call the FWBO is just a tiny part, a very limited manifestation, of that: a working out of that 'myth' on a particular level, at a particular time, in a particular set of circumstances.

The Movement has its existence or its being on this other level which we call the mythical or, if you like, the archetypal or the symbolic, and is a sort of bodying forth of that. If it merely existed on the material plane, then it would probably wither away pretty quickly. It needs to have really deep roots – roots so to speak, in the sky – if it is to survive at all.

Thus one needs to have one's roots in the sky instead of in the earth; and when one speaks of the myth of the FWBO one means something like this, that it has its roots in the sky, so one can't really understand it without reference to the sky.