

The Three Dharmic Myths

Development, Surrender, Discovery

Based on a paper by Subhuti 2003

<http://madhyamavani.fwbo.org/10/threemyths.html>
 Diagram by Jnanamitra 2020

I believe all three myths are necessary to a healthy spiritual life, and in order to make spiritual progress (if you'll pardon my partiality to the language of self-development!) one must somehow incorporate all three into one's approach (Subhuti)

If caught in the back of a myth, move to the front of another one

"The Buddha takes me over from outside"
 * Giving yourself up to a larger consciousness, lying beyond you.
 * Through the practice of Puja.
 * By becoming familiar with Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in a relationship with Buddha's Sadhana practices—developing that involve the visualisation of a Buddha or Bodhisattva

the Myth of Self-Surrender

The Front

The back

- * We can mistake an ecclesiastical hierarchy for a spiritual hierarchy—surrendering ourselves to charismatic but morally shallow leaders whom we naively believe to embody spiritual perfection.
- * Can also lead to moral and spiritual laziness

"I become the Buddha by sustained effort over ages."
 * We must exert will in order to move up the ladder of spiritual evolution
 * The spiritual life must be led by the individual systematically and with discipline
 We must renounce certain things, and cultivate others.

The Myth of Self-Development

The back:

- Dependency:- If we don't achieve the 'results' that we hoped for, the self-development myth may make us fall into dependency—"I'm not good enough".
- Conceit:- If one judges oneself successful, it easily leads one into conceit—a muscular triumphalism that proclaims 'I did it my way'.

The Front

If caught in the back of a myth, move to the front of another one

* Can also lead to antinomianism—the idea that moral rules are superficial things that wise and noble spirits can feel free to disregard

- * A tendency to mistake one's intellectual understanding for spiritual experience
- * Can also lead to moral and spiritual laziness.

The Back

The myth of Self-Discovery /Emergence

The Front

- * We discover the Buddha has been 'inside' all the time.
- * Although we may completely forget the higher self, the higher self never forgets us. But at the same time—this is the mystery—we are it.
- * There is, in reality, nothing to attain or surrender: Buddhahood is already there within each of us, and we simply have to recognise it.

If caught in the back of a myth, move to the front of another one

Caution
 All ideas are only an approach to the truth, not the truth itself.