

## LOTUS BLOSSOM PHILOSOPHY

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The symbol for Buddhism is the Lotus Blossom. The Lotus Blossom grows out of the muddy mud. Its roots are in the muddy mud. Out of the mud comes this beautiful flower. It comes out of the ground that supports all living things.

At the height of its profuse bloom one can clearly see the flower and the seeds at the same time. This is the connectedness of cause and effect. Everything is connected to everything else. Nothing stands outside of it. Everything is connected. This is called the principle of dependent origination. Everything is dependent upon everything else. Nothing is independent. Nothing exists unconditionally and absolutely everything exists in dependence upon other things.

The Lotus Blossom arises out of the earth. It returns to the earth. The Buddha once said this arises that arises this decays that decays. This is impermanence and change. The world itself is change. One might think that the world is changing but that would imply that there is something permanent and something that changes. This would imply a substance philosophy that is permanence and unchanging. By saying the world is change makes it clear that everything is impermanence and change that is process philosophy. With process philosophy everything is impermanence and change. Nothing stands outside of it. This means that if there were an absolute and it did enter into change it too would be changed.

Nothing perishes and withers away with death. It is just a different form of existence. Indians say: I am that; you are that; that all this is that; and that is all there is. Buddhists say: This arises, that arises; this decays, that decays. Both are saying this is that. When one does not make a separation between this and that one comes to know that there is oneness to it all. This and that are one.

When one comes to understand that nothing exists outside of the oneness of it all one does not have to search for anything or cling to anything. This is the existential realization that there is nothing to cling to and no need to cling to anything. Existence and non-existence are one. They are two different names for the same process. Existence and change are one and the same.

All craving, greed and selfishness arises from the illusion of the enduring self. But since there is no abiding or enduring self there is nothing to cling to. Insight into this leads to freedom. In the end there is nothing to

get, there never was any need to get anything and there never was anything to realize because you are it.

There are three themes that cut across and run through all religions: kindness; compassion; and unselfishness. Substance philosophy or religions claim that one should live all three. But to be unselfish is a problem. One needs to save the self to be saved by an absolute in the end. There is then a separation between their ontology and their ethics, what one is and what one ought to be.

With Buddhism one can be unselfish because there is nothing to cling to and nothing to save. By grounding ethics in a true ontology one can be ethical. In such a grounding, knowledge, wisdom, freedom and conduct are inseparable.

With Lotus Blossom philosophy that is grounded in the earth, knowledge, discipline and non-attachment are the roots of beauty and freedom. When standing on this shore looking toward the other, one can see it by getting rid of ignorance; this shore is the same as that other shore.