

CHARACTERISTIC OF LOTUS AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEVEN FOOTSTEPS OF BUDDHA

Pham Thi Kim Trinh*

**Ph.D. Research Scholar, Nalanda University, Nalanda, Bihar, India*

***Corresponding Author:**

Abstract

The Lotus is a symbol of noble, purity, and immaculateness. It grew out of dirty mud but has risen in a strong, pure, and beautiful way. Hence, the image of the lotus flower has been used a lot in the scriptures of Theravāda and Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Therefore, the seven steps of the Buddha were taken as metaphors for those immaculate lotus flowers. The lotus flower has the following eight wonderful properties: Uncontaminated, the freshness of the world, patience, complete combination, pure, righteous, non-persistent, and reality.¹

Keywords: *Buddhism, Lotus flower, Footsteps, sutra, etc, ...*

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- ¹1. Uncontaminated: Although the lotus flower grows from mud, its nature does not have the foul smell of mud. (This is for living in the middle of the world but not being polluted).
 2. Freshness of the world: It is slang. The special thing here is that where the lotus grows, the water is not cloudy. (Example for the freshness of the world).
 3. Patience: Lotus is a type of herb (the root of one's present lot planted in a previous existence), that is, the type that sprouts from the roots of the previous year. (This exemplifies the virtue of patience.)
 4. Complete combination: The lotus flower has petals that cover the lotus mirror, which is very round and beautiful. (This is typical of the enlightened nature of each being.)
 5. Pure: Lotus flowers usually bloom in mid-summer and non manage very hot. (This is an example of the paradox between life.)
 6. Righteous: The body of the lotus branch grows upright. (This is typical of the straightness of body and mind.)
 7. Non- persistently: The lotus flower is straight, but the intestines are empty. (This only shows the virtue of abandonment, not being stubborn).
 8. Reality: When the flower fades, it buds into fruit and has seeds. On the contrary, when the lotus flower blooms, there is already a mirror with seeds available. (Just for cause and effect always go together).

INTRODUCTION

The seven is a very significant number, it is referenced in the philosophical treatises of both Eastern and Western schools of thought. This is due to the fact that seven is a perfect number. The notion of Eastern philosophy states that the number seven is the number that represents perfection and that it is this perfection that encompasses the entire cosmos. The seven fundamental laws of time and space serve as their guiding foundation. The Bible states that God created the cosmos in six days, and on the seventh day, God slept after having created everything. According to Jewish custom, seven is a lucky number; as a result, the religion celebrates seven main masses throughout the course of the year.

The Buddhist texts make frequent reference to the number seven as being emblematic of the Buddhist ethos. According to the philosophy presented in the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, the number seven is symbolic of the incorporation of all aspects of the universe, including those located above, below, inside, outside, right, left, and in the middle of the spectrum. There is not a single domain, from the tiniest particles like microscopic dust to the largest mountains like *Mount Sumeru*, that deviates from the rule that all things must add up to seven.

Content

The Dharma of the Buddha imparts knowledge about the number seven, including the following examples:

- The seven fundamental elements are as follows: earth, water, fire, wind, space, and knowledge.
- The seven sacred abilities are as follows: belief, exertion, precepts, moral values, literature, and discharge.
- The seven different assemblies are as follows: monks (*Bhikkhus*), nuns (*Bhikkhunīs*), *Sikkhamānā*, novices (*Sāmaṇera*), laymen devotees (*Upasakas*), and laywomen devotees (*Upasikas*).
- The seven Buddhas: *Vipaśyin* Buddha, *Śikhy* Buddha, *Visvabh* Buddha, *Krakucchanda* Buddha, *Kanakamuni* Buddha, *Kya* Buddha and *Shakyamuni* Buddha.
- The seven Holy Fruits: *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgami*, *Arahant*, *Pratyekabuddha*, *Bodhisattva*, and *Buddha*.
- The seven factors of Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya*): Investigation (*Dhamma-Vicaya*), Effort (*Viriya*), Joy (*Pīti*), Tranquility (*Passadhi*), Mindfulness (*Sati*), Concentration (*Samādhi*), and Equanimity (*Upekkha*) are the Seven Bodhi sections.

In addition to the illustrations of the number seven that were presented earlier, the birth of the Buddha is documented in both the “太子瑞應本起經” (Kinh Thái Tử Thụy Ứng Bản Khởi) and the “*Laywomen-pure conduct- Saddharma Sutra*”, a product of Thuy Ung's birth. The birth of the Buddha is described in the *Laywomen-pure conduct- Saddharma Sutra* as follows: It is marked by the seven-step process of lotus blossoming.

1. The first step Buddha took was to glance to the East and then he made the following statement: “That East is the torch that lights the ultimate route for sentient beings in all sectors” (The Eastern region orients sentient entities to entrench themselves). The Buddha explained the path to enlightenment by comparing it to the position of the sun as it rises.
2. After the second step, Buddha turned his attention to the south and said: “The south is the field of blessings and serenity for sentient beings to sow and reap” (The Southern quarter azimuth sentient beings with the field of blessedness). The Buddha traveled to the South to teach sentient creatures how to turn bad karma into good by spreading wisdom and teaching them how to carefully analyze reality. This enabled them to understand how to change their karmic trajectory.
3. In the third and final phase, the Buddha looked to the West and said: “The West only tells living beings how to neutralize the motive of birth and death, end the final birth” (The Western region in the direction of sentient beings to the final body). The West is represented by the sun going down, which implies complete mental tranquility or absolute mental perception.
4. In the fourth stage, the Buddha took a look at the North and declared: “The North only demonstrates to all sentient beings that we have gained the highest level of righteous enlightenment” (The Northern quarter in the direction of sentient creatures fell to attain *Anuttara-sammāsambodhi*). At this point, the Buddha started to spin the wheel which represents the dharma. He is analogous to a psychiatrist in the sense that he is familiar with the mental illnesses that affect sentient beings. Whoever is gravely ill will be saved by him first. Because of this, he proceeded to the fifth phase, which was to approach life existence according to a way as to modify fate.
5. In the fifth stage, the Buddha looked down and declared: “Under that direction, I will help living beings conquer the occult force to overcome suffering” (Under quarter in the direction of living beings is heterosexual to overcome demons). Because of his compassion for human beings who are suffering from a great deal of suffering as a result of bigotry, greed, anger, etc., so he arbitrarily declared the truth to let everyone in turn give up those attachments.
6. In the sixth stage, the Buddha made a directional gesture toward the upper direction and stated: “The upper quarter is exclusively for living beings who are living in line with the five personalities and practicing ten wholesome karmas” (The upper quarter in the direction of sentient beings taking refuge in heaven and earth). These are the wholesome karmas that one must engage in if one wishes to be liberated from their state of misery or suffering (*dukkha*).
7. And finally, the seventh step: The Buddha pointed up with one hand, pointed down with one hand, and said: “Heavenly in the whole world, only one-self. Immeasurable birth and death, the end of *Nibbāna*”. I am drifting in the three realms of the six paths, all controlled by the self, and coming to this life is my last birth. The Buddha pointed up with one hand, pointed down with one hand, and said: “Heavenly in the world, only oneself.”

Conclusion

In a nutshell, the lotus is a type of flower that possesses a multitude of remarkable qualities that other types of flowers do not. Because of this, the image of the lotus has been used as a metaphor for the Buddha's footsteps, in addition to being used in other contexts within the canonical texts of Buddhism, such as the *Lotus Sutra*. And since seven is a very significant symbolic number, it has been used to represent the seven stages that the Buddha went through on his path to enlightenment. If any of us aspire to reach the same level of enlightenment as the Buddha, we will need to follow in his footsteps and complete all seven stages.

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