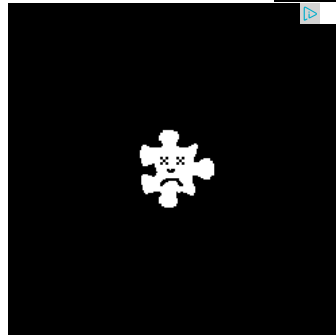


SEARCH

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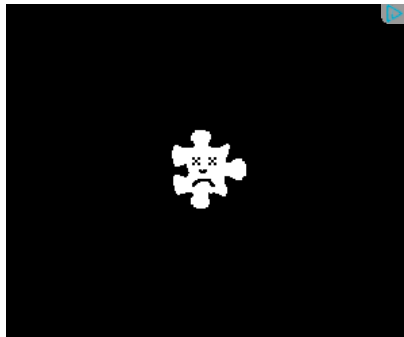
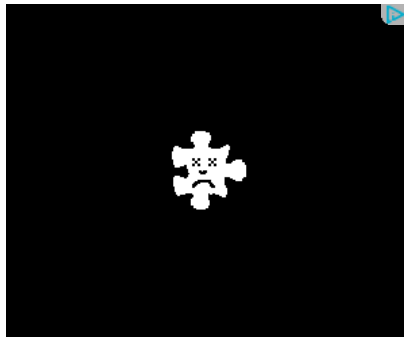


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On the most basic level, the lotus is a symbol of beauty and purity. This is partly due to the magnificence of its blossom, but also because of its unusual habitat. The lotus plant grows in thick mud beneath substantial amounts of water, usually in lakes or swamps. Since a flower of such beauty emerges from these types of environments, seemingly untouched by dirt or stain, it's easy to see it as something pure rising above something profane. Since the petals of the flower open during the day and close up at night, the lotus has also acquired solar symbolism (the opening and closing of the petals is analogous to the rising and setting of the sun). In many religious traditions throughout Asia, the lotus is a central symbol, appearing in numerous stories and fulfilling many different roles:

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- [Gingrich: Obama's Most Dangerous Precedent](#)
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The lotus is a very prominent cultural symbol in India and is associated with many aspects of belief systems. For example, Brahma, the supreme god of Hinduism, was born from a lotus, and a lotus flower is one of the four attributes of the god Vishnu (along with the mace, chakra and discus). Even prior to the development of mainstream Hinduism, the lotus was an important symbol in Indian religious beliefs. The Vedic sun god Surya holds a lotus in each hand, one representing the sunrise and the other representing the sunset.

Hinduism and Buddhism both share the concept of chakras, a series of seven energetic points that are aligned along the body. Stimulation of these various chakras is an important aspect of certain types of meditation, and visual representations of the chakras usually take the form of lotus flowers; each one possesses a different number of petals, as well as a different color, to signify where on the body it is located:

Muladhara: The Root Chakra- red, four petals

Swadhisthana: The Sacral Chakra- orange, six petals

Manipura: The Solar Plexus Chakra- yellow, ten petals

Anahata: The Heart Chakra- green, twelve petals

Vishuddha: The Throat Chakra- blue, sixteen petals

Ajna: The Brow Chakra: indigo, two petals

Sahasrara: The Crown Chakra: violet, one thousand petals

Buddhism regards the lotus as one of the “Eight Auspicious Symbols” or “Eight Precious Things” of the faith, and the flower figures prominently in much of their artwork; Buddhist figures and deities are sometimes depicted as sitting on a lotus throne, again emphasizing purity and enlightenment emerging from profanity and ignorance. The famous Buddhist mantra (prayer chant) “Om Mani Padme Hum” is dedicated to Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, and roughly translates as “the jewel is in the lotus”. Imagery based on lotus flowers is also sometimes included in the design of Buddhist mandalas, which are essentially abstract representations of the universe that function as microcosms.

China was another location where the lotus flower held important symbolism. In the capacity of Buddhism, much of this symbolism was imported from India (for example, the male bodhisattva Avalokitesvara became the female Guan Yin in China), but the Chinese had beliefs of their own regarding the lotus. He Xian-gu, the only woman among the famous “Eight Immortals” of Taoist belief, was associated with the lotus flower, and the Chinese also saw the lotus as a visual metaphor for the female genitalia. When Chinese and Indian philosophies later penetrated into Tibet, the lotus in the latter capacity was paired with the vajra, or diamond thunderbolt, as an image of union.

In ancient Egypt, the lotus was also a flower that held a central place in religious beliefs. Although the flower that the Egyptians knew as the lotus was not actually the same plant known throughout Asia (botanically it was a species of water lily), it still held much of the same symbolism as its Asian counterpart. Solar worship was a major aspect of the Egyptians’ belief system, and the opening of the lotus’ petals during the day and their closing at night was seen as analogous to the death (setting) and rebirth (rising) of the sun. Stylized lotus buds and flowers often served as decorative capitals (the topmost

component) of architectural columns, and the land of Egypt itself was sometimes compared to a lotus, with the Nile River forming the stem and the wide, triangular delta region in the north forming the flower (just look at a map and you'll see).

**Graphical characteristics:**

Asymmetric, Open shape, Colorful, Contains curved lines, Has no crossing lines.

**Categories:** [Chinese Symbols \(/category/47\)](/category/47), [Egyptian Hieroglyphs \(/category/14\)](/category/14), [Plants, Trees and Flowers \(/category/58\)](/category/58), [Religious Symbols \(/category/5\)](/category/5).

**Lotus (/symbol/2227)** is part of the [Buddhist Symbols \(/group/28\)](/group/28), [Hindu Symbols \(/group/29\)](/group/29), [Taoist Symbols \(/group/30\)](/group/30) groups.

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### More symbols in [Buddhist Symbols \(/group/28\)](/group/28):



[Chakra \(/symbol/1974\)](/symbol/1974)



[Conch \(/symbol/204\)](/symbol/204)



[Coral \(/symbol/2235\)](/symbol/2235)



[Endless knot \(/symbol/205\)](/symbol/205)



[Endless Knot \(/symbol/2680\)](/symbol/2680)



[Enso \(/symbol/2815\)](/symbol/2815)

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### More symbols in [Hindu Symbols \(/group/29\)](/group/29):



[Ajna: The Brow Chakra \(/symbol/383\)](/symbol/383)



[Anahata: The Heart Chakra \(/symbol/385\)](/symbol/385)



[Om Symbol \(/symbol/1353\)](/symbol/1353)



[Banana \(/symbol/2754\)](/symbol/2754)



[Boar \(/symbol/2663\)](/symbol/2663)



[Coconut \(/symbol/2224\)](/symbol/2224)

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### More symbols in [Taoist Symbols \(/group/30\)](/group/30):

Taoism (modernly: Daoism) is a philosophical and religious tradition that emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao (modernly romanized as "Dao"). The term Tao means "way", "path" or "principle", and... [read more » \(/group/30\)](/group/30)



[Jade \(/symbol/2321\)](/symbol/2321)



[Lotus \(/symbol/2227\)](/symbol/2227)



[Peach \(/symbol/2215\)](/symbol/2215)



[Stag \(/symbol/2240\)](/symbol/2240)



[Yin and Yang \(/symbol/211\)](/symbol/211)