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Full Source: <http://www.english.fgs2.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/The%20Lotus%20Sutra.pdf>

**The Lotus Sutra**

The Lotus Sutra is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential sutras, or sacred scriptures, of Buddhism. In it, Shakyamuni expounds the ultimate truth of life to which he was enlightened. The sutra’s key message is that Buddhahood, the supreme state of life characterized by boundless compassion, wisdom and courage, is inherent within every person without distinction of gender, ethnicity, social standing or intellectual ability.

The Lotus Sutra is a teaching that encourages an active engagement with mundane life and all its challenges. Buddhahood is not an escape from these challenges but an inexhaustible source of positive energy to grapple with and transform the sufferings and contradictions of life and create happiness. As SGI President Daisaku Ikeda has written, the Lotus Sutra is ultimately a teaching of empowerment. It “teaches us that the inner determination of an individual can transform everything; it gives ultimate expression to the infinite potential and dignity inherent in each human life.”

Manjushri,

I see kings

going to visit the place of the Buddha

to ask him about the unsurpassed way.

5 They put aside their happy lands,

their palaces, their men and women attendants,

shave their hair and beard

and don the clothes of the Dharma.

Or I see bodhisattvas

10 who become monks,

living alone in quietude,

delighting in chanting the sutras.

Again I see bodhisattvas

bravely and vigorously exerting themselves,

15 entering the deep mountains,

their thoughts on the Buddha way.

And I see them removing themselves from desire,

constantly dwelling in emptiness and stillness,

advancing deep into the practice of mediation

20 til they have gained the fie transcendental powers.

And I see bodhisattvas

resting in meditation, palms pressed together,

with a thousand, ten thousand verses

praising the king of the doctrines.

25 Again I see bodhisattvas,

profound in wisdom, firm in purpose,

who know how to question the Buddhas

and accept and abide by all they hear.

I see Buddha sons

30 proficient in both meditation and wisdom,

who use immeasurable numbers of similes

to expound the Law to the assembly,

delighting in preaching the Law,

converting the bodhisattvas,

35 defeating the legions of the devil

and beating the Dharma drum.

And I see bodhisattvas

profoundly still and silent,

honored by heavenly beings and dragons

40 but not counting that a joy.

And I see Buddha sons

abiding in the strength of fortitude,

 taking the abuse and blows

of persons of overbearing arrogance,

45 willing to suffer all these,

and in that manner seeking the Buddha way.

I see bodhisattvas

 removing themselves from frivolity and laughter

and from foolish companions,

50 befriending persons of wisdom,

unifying their minds, dispelling confusion,

ordering their thoughts in mountain and forest

 for a million, a thousand, ten thousand years

in that manner seeking the Buddha way.

55 And I see Buddha sons

whose minds have no attachments,

who use this wonderful wisdom

to seek the unsurpassed way.

. . . (pg 41-42)

 The thoughts that are in the minds of living beings,

60 the different types of paths they follow,

their various desires and natures,

the good and bad deeds they have done in previous existences--

all these the Buddha takes cognizance of,

 and then he employs causes, similes and parables,

65 words that embody the power of expedient means,

in order to gladden and please them all.

Sometimes he preaches sutras,

verses, stories of the previous lives of disciples,

 stories of the previous lives of the Buddha, of unheard-of things.

70 At other times he preaches regarding causes and conditions,

uses similes, parables, passages of poetry

or discourses.

For those of dull capacities who delight in a little Law,

 who greedily cling to birth and death,

75 who, despite the innumerable Buddhas,

fail to practice the profound and wonderful way

but are perplexed and confused by a host of troubles--

for these I preach nirvana.

 I devise these expedient means

80 and so cause them to enter into the Buddha wisdom.

Up to now I have never told you

that you were certain to attain the Buddha way.

The reason I never preached in that manner

 was that the time to preach so had not yet come.

 . . . pg 97

85 As to the cause of all suffering,

it has its root in greed and desire.

If greed and desire are wiped out,

it will have no place to dwell.

 To wipe out all suffering-

90 this is called the third rule.

For the sake of this rule, the rule of extinction,

one practices the way.

And when one escapes from the bonds of suffering

 this is called attaining emancipation.

95 By what means

can a person attain emancipation?

Separating oneself from falsehood and delusion-

this alone may be called emancipation.

 But if a person has not truly

100 been able to emancipate himself from everything,

then the Buddha will say

he has not achieved true extinction,

because such a person

 has not yet gained the unsurpassed way.

Questions:

What is the main message of the Lotus Sutra? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What is a bodhisattva? What are some qualities of a bodhisattva?

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What is the source of suffering according to the Lotus Sutra?

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What is the goal of Buddhism?

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Write down a quote that best describes the essence of Buddhism to you.

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