

# NEBOJ

aligning thoughts, words, and actions with the welfare of all beings

## The Lotus Flower

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### Welcome

Welcome and greetings my dearest, dearest friends, i do as always sincerely hope that i am finding you all in good health and high spirits not that it is easy i am sure you would say to be so at this time.

### Coffee With The Universe

So there we are dear friends the sound of an Italian coffee bar. Ahhh, lovely moments indeed, having a coffee, a brioche and a lovely chat with dear friends or family.

These days however, i am myself having coffee with the universe, imagine that? every weekday morning from Monday to Friday via my inbox. These are very short inspirational, enlightening messages. i have to say though that i do find them to be very clever. And one such message this week read:

Yup, right now! Let's do it together.

Breathe in... hold it... hold it... hold it a bit longer,

and then gently breathe out... a little more... there's still some air in there!

Welcome back.

By the way if you think you don't have time for this – that's when you could use it the most.

Think about that dear friends, 'that's when you could use it the most.' It's so true isn't it? Ensnaring oneself in the mindset of 'i don't have time.' Ahh but you see, you do have time—you simply perhaps choose to spend it on things that do not nourish your spirit, your body or your mind.

So do yourself a big favour, break yourself free and prioritize what matters most to your health to your well being and let go of the nonsense. What seems like 'no time' is actually misplaced energy. Reclaim it! And do not allow yourself to be trapped by time, discover for yourself the sacred economies of simplicity. So tell me dear friends... how will you spend your limited energies today?

### **Cat-Cow Yoga Pose**

Hey Diddle Diddle  
The Cat and the fiddle  
The Cow jumped over the moon.  
The little Dog laughed  
To see such fun  
And the Dish ran away with the Spoon.

Whilst this nursery rhyme, Hey Diddle Diddle or Heylidy Dydell as it was originally known as, may have its origin in historical satire, occult symbolism, or even psychological conditioning of children. Today however, dear friends let us isolate its most profound components—the Cat and the Cow –and explore their dual significance in a modern discourse on balance, transformation, and harmony. Just as these two entities were once entangled in rhyme, so too do they reflect opposing yet complementary forces in yoga philosophy.

In these past few months, I chanced upon a yoga posture of profound efficacy: The Cat-Cow Pose.

Although Tai Chi and Qi Gong are my daily regimen which are truly rejuvenating disciplines and ones that i really do enjoy. The Cat-Cow pose—with its dual motion of inhalation and exhalation, expansion and contraction—immediately harmonized and deeply resonated with my being which i practice now every day as an addition to my Tai Chi and Qi Gong.

I invoke the Cat-Cow pose first thing in the morning to loosen myself up for the day ahead after a night of lying in bed and again last thing in the evening, releasing any tensions that may have accumulated throughout the day. It only takes a few moments but i have found its benefits to be truly stupendous.

The cat-cow pose is one of the most fundamental yet profound yoga movements, particularly for spinal health, flexibility, and stress relief.

Unlike passive stretching exercises, cat-cow dynamically engages core muscles, improves circulation, and fosters mindful awareness—making it an ideal daily practice for individuals seeking to enhance physical well-being while cultivating mental clarity and it will leave you feeling revitalized and present.

And while on the topic of yoga i would like to bring to your attention the inspirational story of a remarkable woman, a centenarian yoga master and longevity icon, Charlotte Chopin a 103 year old active yoga teacher in France, who has been teaching yoga for over 40 years in Léré, a rural town in the Loire region of France.

Chopin first started learning yoga at 50, and has kept a regular practice since then, not really as a part of her fitness regime, but as a part of her life. In 1982, After 10 years of practicing, Chopin started teaching yoga. She holds classes three times a week out of a former police station.

Ms. Chopin's mantra for life is simple - finding joy in little things. A plaque on a cabinet in her living room reads, "Happiness is not about having everything you want, but loving what you have." She enjoys the yoga practices she does and finds happiness in little things.

So there you have it dear friends, aging gracefully while staying active, moving with ease, and thriving. Connecting nicely with our discussion above about 'i don't have time' and the discovering of the sacred economies of simplicity.

## **The Lotus Flower**

That is the wondrous and beautiful sound of the water harp 'suikinkutsu.'  
Suikinkutsu is said to be an idea developed by Japanese gardeners in the Edo period (1603-1867). And it is often found in traditional Japanese gardens, especially in tea ceremony gardens and the older temple gardens.

Listening to that calming, beautiful sound i humorously ask you dear friends, have you ever by chance heard the sound of a lotus flower blooming, have you? i'll be very honest with you and tell you straight up that i for one have not as i am sure you have not either.

The Vietnamese revere the lotus, where it is said that each morning at dawn the flowers reopen their petals and if you listen very carefully you can hear them open, it sounds like a great pop!

Japanese scholar and eco-humanitarian activist Kumi Kato, Professor at Wakayama University tells the wonderful story of the sound of lotus blossoms.

"One early morning in early summer, during the early Showa period, a group of people gathered near a pond in a central parkland to listen to the sound of a lotus flower opening. As the sonic frequency of the lotus opening (9-16 Hz) is much lower than the normal frequency range of 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz of human capability, it was clearly impossible for humans to actually hear the sound of the blooming. The gathering, however, was attended by people, who brought to the event their aesthetic appreciation of the lotus flower's subtle color, the softness of the petals, the reflection on the water,

the pleasant experience of the early morning breeze and the fact that the flower opens for only four days. In fact, it opens only for a few short hours in the early morning, and on the fourth day, the petals fall, ending the flower's short life. Lotus flowers in Buddhism are regarded as sacred and the sweet fragrance wafting in the gentle breeze is considered heavenly."

What a beautiful evocative passage...

And the Venerable Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche said:

"In Tibetan Buddhism, the sound of a lotus blooming is described as a 'silent symphony'—a call to awaken from spiritual sleep."

And why i mention this dear friends, is that synchronistically as i was concluding a piece of writing this past week where in the final section i was pondering a suitable image that would represent 'joy' and 'celebration' when out of nowhere didn't i have one of those, 'download' moments and the 'lotus flower' popped into my mind.

And interestingly too even synchronistically this correlates with an experience i had some time ago when i was an overnight guest with some dear friends in the vicinity of the city of Modena in the region of Emilia Romagna. It was a most wondrous and beautiful evening, the company, the food, the wine were all quite exquisite. Really lovely, a lovely, lovely evening!

i stayed in the daughter's room who had by then flown the nest and set up her own home. But the room had been preserved as if the daughter was still present, an altar to frozen time, nothing it seemed to me had been touched, nor moved nor removed. Roma's football heroes posters hung on the wall. The study desk and chair with shelves above supporting a solitary lamp, a large humorous poster of a cat and a mouse snoozing together in a hammock, inspirational quotes placed strategically on the wall around the study table, and many more such items that would sum up the average teenager's bedroom wouldn't you think? But i remember sensing a wonderful energy within the room, it was an energy that lifted and inspired me, extremely calming. There was a calendar at eye level as you sat on the chair, just above the desk and it had a picture of a blooming lotus flower. i took a photo of this picture and never, never would i have thought then, that i would be using this very same photo for my piece of writing and as a heading image for this broadcast, incredible, incredible!

The lotus holds great significance not only in Buddhism but also Hinduism, and (JANE-ISM) Jainism.

In Buddhism, the flower can represent the spiritual journey toward purity, resilience and spiritual ascension. It is one of the most profound symbols in Buddhist teachings. While often misperceived as merely a beautiful bloom, this sacred plant embodies deep spiritual truths that have shaped Buddhist philosophy for over 2500 years.

Jainism's lotus philosophy: rising above suffering through non-attachment and purity.

The lotus, you see, grows in murky, muddy, stagnant waters- a metaphor for the human experience in a world filled with suffering, ignorance, and craving. Yet, despite its roots embedded in filth, the lotus rises above the surface to bloom into one of nature's most exquisite flowers. The plant's leaves remain untouched by the mud, symbolizing how an enlightened mind remains unspoiled by worldly attachments, even when immersed in human suffering, aligning with Jainism's core teaching: "You are not the mud—you are the lotus"

Whilst Hinduism's lotus is a profound philosophical symbol representing the intersection of creation (Brahman), destruction (Rudra), and transcendence (Vishnu).

"The higher self rises above the muck"—a call to cultivate spiritual discipline amid digital and physical decay. The lotus's ability to grow in contaminated water mirrors how truth-seeking individuals can thrive in a corrupt system.

Hinduism's lotus is not just an aesthetic or spiritual metaphor—it is a living philosophy of creation, destruction, and transcendence, rooted in the belief that divine consciousness pervades all existence.

Just as a lotus blooms regardless of its environment, individuals can cultivate inner purity through:

right living  
right speech  
right intention

Mirroring the Buddhist concept of "non-self" – the idea that one's true nature is pure consciousness, not contaminated by external circumstances.

The lotus undergoes a dramatic transformation, emerging from darkness into light—a process that aligns with Buddhist practices of meditation, mindfulness, and moral discipline. The root's descent represents the initial plunge into ignorance, where one is unaware of the nature of suffering. The stem's rise, mirrors the path to wisdom through study, reflection, and ethical conduct.

The blossoming symbolizes enlightenment, when one realizes the Four Noble Truths and achieves liberation from saṃsāra (the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth). Unlike many plants that would wilt in such an environment, the lotus thrives—a lesson in resilience.

The lotus teaches us:

1. Suffering is a teacher—embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, not victimhood.
2. Cultivate inner purity—practice ethics, meditation, and wisdom to rise above worldly distractions.
3. Reject materialism—just as the lotus thrives without artificial help, true happiness comes from within, not external possessions or status.
4. Embrace impermanence—like a lotus that blooms and fades, accept change rather than resisting it.

The lotus is more than mere flora; it is an archetype of human potential. It reminds us that even in the darkest circumstances (stagnant, muddy water = suffering), we can rise above through moral discipline, wisdom, and resilience.

As one modern Tibetan Buddhist master remarked:

"The lotus is the highest fruit of Buddhism. In the river of samsara (the cycle of birth and death), it stands for purity, grace, and the possibility of transcendence."

And there is Goddess Lakshmi the revered Hindu deity of Wealth, Fortune, Beauty, Power, and Prosperity who can be seen with a lotus flower in each hand whilst sitting upon a lotus.

The lotus dear friends does not grow faster by fighting the mud—it grows stronger. In an era where engineered chaos seeks to drown us in fear and division, we must remember:

True growth comes from within. The sound of your own lotus blooming will be the sweetest symphony you will ever hear.