

# TITLE: Lotus Origami & Emotions as Wisdom



*"Emotions are the radiance of the Buddha"*

*-Vimalakirti*

**TOPIC:** Lotus Origami Project

**BIG IDEA:** Just like lotuses grow in mud, our mind's emotions can give rise to wisdom.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:** How can wisdom arise from emotions? What are the ruling emotions and wisdoms of your Buddha Family?

**AGE GROUP:** All ages

<b>Know:</b> At the end of the unit, all students should know....	<b>Understand:</b> At the end of the unit, all students should understand that.....	<b>Do:</b> During this lesson, students will..
<b>This is actual knowledge they come away with. E.g.</b> Lotuses grow in mud. Our mind is capable of having strong emotions, awareness of thoughts and emotions. The mind is also capable of wisdom.	<b>This is the deeper take away</b> Each emotion can turn into wisdom with the injection of awareness.	<b>This is the actual activity that can be explained more below</b> Hear the story of Vimalakirti and fold an origami lotus. They will explore the dominant emotions of their Buddha family and the corresponding wisdom.

**Materials:** Origami paper, markers or pens.

## Activity description:

**Step one:** Have a discussion about Lotuses. Talk about how lotuses compare to the mind. Bring up what Vimalakirti tells Manjushri. Read what Rinpoche's commentary is on this passage in the sutra.

**Step two:** Break into Buddha families. Discuss what the dominant emotion and wisdom is of each family.

**Step three:** Choose the color origami paper associated with each Buddha Family Color. Fold the lotus, older kids and teachers helping younger kids. If there is time. Write an emotion on the bottom side of the lotus and a wisdom in the front.

### Which of the 7 intelligences are being activated?

- o Verbal/Linguistic – yes
- o Visual/Spatial - yes
- o Bodily/Kinesthetic - yes
- o Intrapersonal - yes
- o Interpersonal – yes
- o Musical/Rhythmic -no
- o Logical/Mathematical/Scientific (environmental) -yes

### Story for the teacher to tell while the kids color:

“Lotuses can only be found in wet mud, not where it’s dry” - *Vimalakīrti*

“Just as the lotus, born of mud, is not tainted thereby, So the lotus of the Buddha preserves the realization of voidness.” - *Vimalakīrti*

“From a more intellectual and practical perspective, emotions only become so-called emotions – ‘so-called’ is important here – when they are not accompanied by awareness. How does that work? Imagine you are peeing in the open air. Suddenly, you notice someone walking directly towards you. What is your automatic reaction? To stop peeing – it’s part of our conditioning. Similarly, when you feel extreme anger, jealousy and pride, if you inject even a drop of the virus of awareness into that emotion, it will get sick. And a sick emotion is what you need, because a sick emotion is a weak emotion. The problem is that most of us leave it far too late to inject ourselves, and that delay helps our emotions become enormously fat and surprisingly agile. This is why Buddha offered us this path, and it’s a path that can be distinguished from all others because simply being aware is entirely painless.

Most people expect that first injection of awareness to work immediately, but as it’s the first time in hundreds of lifetimes that we have applied awareness to our emotions, the effect will only last for a split second. We also expect every scrap of jealousy, or anger, or pride to disappear instantly and forever – and obviously, that doesn’t happen. It’s because we continue to experience emotions that some practitioners become disillusioned with their practice. Having spent so many years meditating and flattened hundreds of zafus, how is it possible still to feel jealous? It’s very discouraging.

Learn to be satisfied with consistency. Every time an emotion arises, just be satisfied that you remembered to inject it with that irritating virus of awareness. It’ll take a few years to see any observable effects, but in time, you will begin to notice your emotions as they arise and, eventually, you may even be able to laugh at yourself for feeling jealous in the first place. Jealousy isn’t the only emotion that can overwhelm you, all emotions can – feeling ridiculous, for example.

Beginners on the spiritual path have no idea what obstacles look like. Your responses to your emotional risings are like weeds in a flowerbed and unless you are a gardener you won’t know the difference. Learning to identify a weed as a weed will take time, but once you can do that, you are not doing badly.”

- DJKR

From the play:

VIMALAKIRTI asks MANJUSHRI an important question.

VIMALAKIRTI

My Prince, tell me, what makes Buddha  
'buddha'? What are the ingredients for a  
real buddha?

MANJUSHRI

My noble friend, emotions are the  
ingredients that make a Buddha.

VIMALAKIRTI

And a buddha's family?  
Ignorance, craving, desire, anger are a  
buddha's family.

VIMALAKIRTI

And where does the potential to become a  
buddha come from?

MANJUSHRI

If you try to plant a marigold seed in  
the sky, no matter how long you wait, it  
won't grow into a flower. Likewise, a  
Buddha will never arise from the  
uncompounded state. Buddha –  
enlightenment – will only arise where  
there's compounded phenomena.

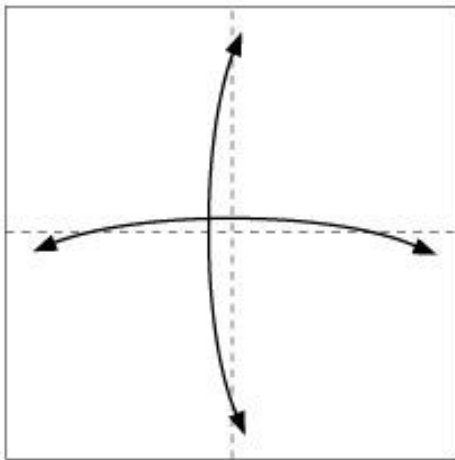
VIMALAKIRTI

Which must be why we treat all compounded  
phenomena with such respect, even though  
we know it is impermanent.

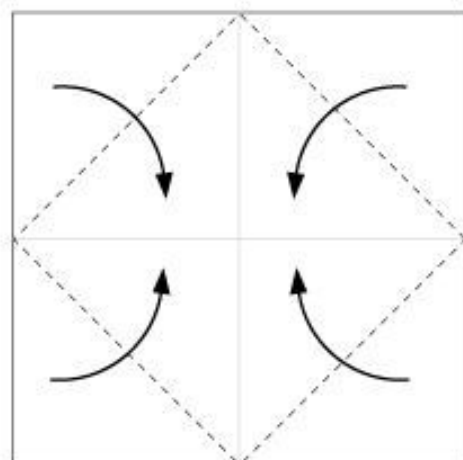
MANJUSHRI

In the same way that we have to risk  
diving into the ocean to find precious  
pearls, it is impossible for mind to  
attain omniscience without immersing  
itself in the ocean of passions.

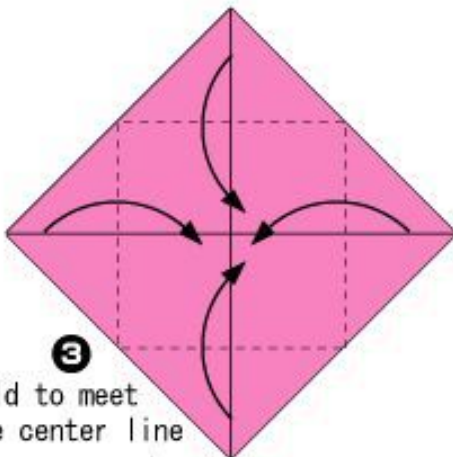
**Closing contemplation and meditation:** Sit in a circle. Decide where to place our lotuses in our room. Ask the students  
to remember to be aware of their emotions throughout the day.



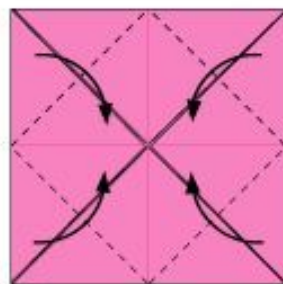
**1** Fold in the dotted lines to make creases and fold back



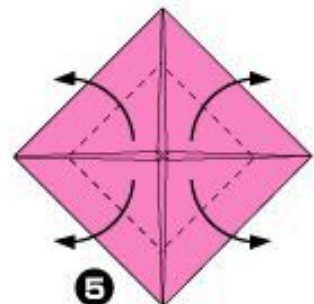
**2** Fold to meet the center line



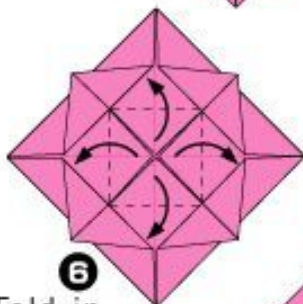
**3** Fold to meet the center line



**4** Fold to meet the center line



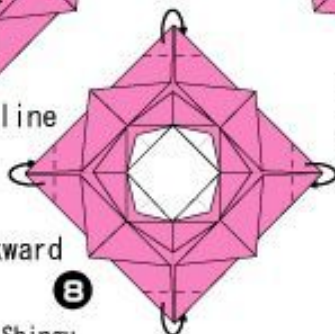
**5** Fold in the dotted line



**6** Fold in the dotted line

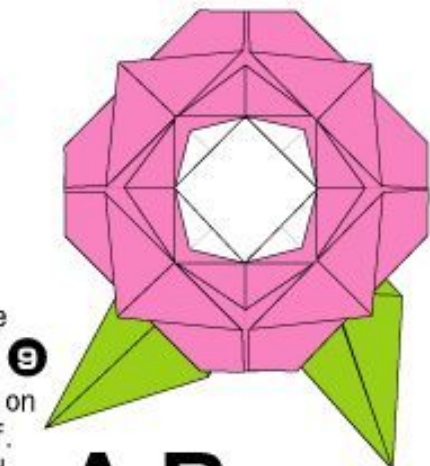


**7** Fold in the dotted line



Fold backward

**8**



**9** It puts on the leaf. finished

**A Rose**

\*Traditional  
Diagram: Fumiaki Shingu