

A CEYLON
PRESS TINY
GUIDE

A
CHECKLIST
TO LORD
BUDDHA'S
11 CLASSIC
HAND
GESTURES

LORD BUDDHA



1 THE “ANJALI MUDRA” EASIEST

For those looking to make an easy start on the Byzantium symbolism of the hand gestures of Lord Buddha, The Anjali Mudra is a perfect place to start. Press your palms together at heart level, thumbs resting on the chest – and you have done it, made a 1 on 1 respectful gesture of greeting.

2

THE “KARANA MUDRA”

MOST POSITIVE

Bad day? Low self-esteem? Bothersome devils? Not for nothing is this hand gesture of Lord Buddha probably the most used and powerful. Raise the index and little finger and fold all other digits. In one sweep you have made the sign to ward off evil, negative thoughts – and demons.

3
THE “VAJRA
MUDRA”
MOST CENTRING

The Mudra that symbolizes, with inimitable simplicity, the unity of all Buddhist beliefs. In this relatively dynamic piece of Buddhist hand gesturing, the erect left hand of the forefinger is closed into the right fist, and the tips of both fingers are curled together.

4
THE
“BHUMISPARSHA
MUDRA”
MOST POPULAR

Touching the earth, this mudra is formed when all right-hand fingers extend to touch the ground, so symbolising the Buddha's Enlightenment. The upturned left hand on the lap signifies the union of skilful means, and wisdom.

5

THE “DHYANA MUDRA”

MOST RESTFUL

Best known as the Meditation Mudra, this piece of symbolic Buddhist hand gesturing is made with one or both hands resting on the lap. It envisages the practitioner meditating on Buddhism’s abundant body of “Good Laws” which can be used to attain spiritual perfection.

6
THE
“DHARMACHAKRA
MUDRA”
MOST FAMOUS

Possibly the most complicated, the “Wheel of Dharma” takes practice. The thumb/index finger of both hands touch tips as a circle: the union of method & wisdom. The 3 extended free left hand fingers symbolize Buddha, the Dharma (the doctrine of universal truth), and the Sangha (Buddhist order). The extended right fingers symbolize the Hearers who practice the teachings; the Solitary Realizers who cultivate merit/wisdom; and the Mahayana Great Vehicle of Buddhist traditions/philosophies.

7

THE “ABHAYA
MUDRA”
MOST ENERGIZING

Considered to be the most energizing of all Lord Buddha’s mudra, The Abhaya Mudra is known as the gesture of fearlessness, and is said to dispel fear, and invoke peace. This hand gesture is formed with the right hand raised to shoulder height, arm bent and palm facing outward with the fingers upright and joined. The left hand rests down.

8

THE “VITARKA
MUDRA”
MOST INTELLECTUAL

Known colloquially as the Discussion Mudra, this artful piece of symbolism is concerned with talking about and communicating Buddhist teaching. This Buddhist hand gesture has thumb and index finger touching, and the remaining fingers pointing straight, both hands occupied with the same action.

9

THE “JNANA
MUDRA”
FAIRLY DIFFICULT

One of Lord Buddha’s most winning symbolic hand gestures. Thumb tip and index finger touch as a circle and face inward. In this simple bit of symbolism, you have the signal for wisdom and spiritual enlightenment.

10
THE
“UTTARABODHI
MUDRA”
MOST DIFFICULT

For those looking to play in the big league, the Uttarabodhi Mudra is one of the most profound symbolic hand gestures made by Lord Buddha. Index fingers touch and point up; all other fingers entwine at heart level. This is the gesture of supreme enlightenment, made possible by connecting yourself with divine universal energy.

11
THE “VARADA
MUDRA”
MOST COMPLICATED

One of Lord Buddha’s more complicated pieces of hand symbolism, but well worth the study. Let your left hand hang at the side of your body, palm open, facing forwards with all fingers extended – and you have a perfect representation of charity and compassion, with each finger donated to a different virtue: Generosity; Morality; Patience; Effort; and Meditative Concentration.

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Contrary & creative, Sri Lanka built a tropical Versailles as the West constructed in wattle & daub. When the Cold War ebbed, its own began. The Ceylon Press *History of Sri Lanka* - in eBook and Podcast - unpicks its serpentine history.

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And least it gets too serious, enjoy the off-grid *Jungle Diaries* blog & Podcast; and *Archaeologies*, the blank verse diaries of an occasional hermit.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Swarbrick is a publisher, planter, hotelier, hermit, and writer.

He was born in Colombo and raised, with few concessions to modernity, in India, Singapore, and the Middle East. Cornish, he gained his degrees on the Celtic fringe: at the Universities of Wales, and Stirling, prolonging an introduction to accepted working hours for as long as was decently possible.

Having worked at News Corp's HarperCollins UK as board director for various otherwise homeless departments including sales, art and marketing; and HarperCollins India, he ran Hachette's consumer learning division. Prior to this, he launched Oxford University Press's first commercial online business, Oxford Reference Online.

When the doubtful charms of boardroom bawls, bottom lines, and divas diminished, he returned to Sri Lanka, the land of his birth hundreds of years earlier, to rescue a spice plantation and set of art deco buildings that had gone feral in the jungle.

Today, as The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel, it has become one of the country's top ten boutique hotels, run by the kindest and most professional of hospitality teams; and overseen by several small schnauzers.

It also helps fund The Ceylon Press, set up to make Sri Lanka's rich and complicated story, a mystery to many, and a secret to most, more accessible. The Press' books, companions, podcasts, blogs, and guides are freely available at theceylonpress.com. The Press also publishes Poetry from the Jungle, a podcast that recasts the orthodox view of the world's best poets and poems.

ABOUT THE FLAME TREE ESTATE & HOTEL

"It's absolute paradise," wrote one guest recently; "I would fly back to Sri Lanka simply to stay in this place for a couple more days."

Centered on a 25-acre organic spice and timber plantation, The Flame Tree Estate & Hotel has been renovated and furnished with art & antiques; its healthy menus fusing street food with fine dining.

Its 1,000 high rocky hills stalled the Dutch army in 1765; and until the civil war the estate stretched over 100 acres with 3 working elephants.

Today its restored plantations grow cardamom, turmeric, ginger, cloves, pepper, cocoa; rubber, coffee, vanilla; cinnamon, coconuts - and scores of trees from ebony to sapu – best enjoyed from the vantage point of the hotel's infinity pool. Visit www.flametreeestate.com.

It also houses and funds The Ceylon Press whose books, companions, podcasts, blogs, and guides are freely available at theceylonpress.com.

A GIFT FOR READERS

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GeneralManager@flametreeestate.com