

# **L8: Buddhist Sculpture and Architecture-Focus on Caves**

**A COURSE ON INDIAN ART AND CULTURE**

# Buddhist Mudras

- In Indian sculptural art, images are the symbolic representations of divinity whose origin and end is expressed through the religious and spiritual beliefs.
- **Dharmachakra Mudra**-It is also called as the gesture of '**Teaching of the Wheel of Dharma**' that **describes one of the most important moments** in the **Buddha's life as he performed the Dharmachakra mudra in his first sermon in Sarnath** after he attained enlightenment. It is performed with the help of both the hands which are held against the chest, the left facing inward, covering the right facing outward.
- **Dhyan Mudra**- It is also known as **Samadhi or Yoga mudra**. It is performed with the help of two hands which are placed on the lap and place the right hand on the left hand with stretched fingers (thumbs facing upwards and other fingers of both the hand resting on each other.) This is the characteristic gesture of **Buddha Shakyamuni, Dhyani Buddha Amitabh and the Medicine Buddha**.



# Buddhist Mudras

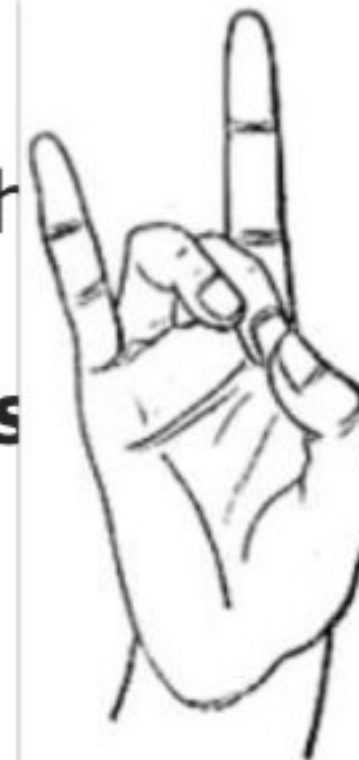
**Bhumisparsha Mudra**-This gesture is also known as “**touching the Earth**” which **represents the moment of the Buddha's awakening** as he claims the earth as the witness of his enlightenment. It is performed with the help of the right hand, which is held above the right knee, reaching toward the ground with the palm inward while touching the lotus throne.



**Varada Mudra**- This mudra **represents the offering, welcome, charity, giving, compassion and sincerity**. It is performed with the help of both the hands in which palm of right hand facing forward and fingers extended and left hand palm placed near omphalos with extended fingers.



**Karana Mudra**- This gesture **signifies the warding off evil** which is performed by raising the index and the little finger, and folding the other fingers. It helps in **reducing sickness or negative thoughts**.



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**Vajra Mudra-** This gesture **denotes the fiery thunderbolt** that **symbolizes the five elements, i.e. air, water, fire, earth, and metal.** It is performed with the help of right fist, left hand forefinger, which placed by enclosing the erect forefinger of the left hand in the right fist with the tip of the right forefinger touching (or curled around) the tip of the left forefinger.



**Vitarka Mudra-** It **signifies the discussion and transmission of the teachings of the Buddha.** It is performed by joining the tips of the thumb and the index fingers together while keeping the other fingers straight, which is just like to Abhaya Mudra and varada mudra but in this Mudra the **thumbs touching the index fingers.**



**Abhaya Mudra-** It is a **gesture of fearlessness or blessing that represents the protection, peace, benevolence, and dispelling of fear.** It is performed with the help of right hand by raising to shoulder height with bent arm and the face of palm will be facing outward with fingers upright whereas the left hand hanging down while standing. This gesture is characteristic of **Buddha Shakyamuni** and **Dhyani Buddha Amoghasiddhi.**



# Buddhist Mudras

- **Uttarabodhi Mudra**-This gesture denotes the **supreme enlightenment through connecting oneself with divine universal energy.** It is performed with the help of both the hand, which placed at the heart and the index fingers touching and pointing upwards and the remaining fingers intertwined.
- **Anjali mudra** - It is also called '**Namaskara Mudra**' or '**Hridayanjali Mudra**' that represents the **gesture of greeting, prayer and adoration.** It is performed by pressing the palms of the hands together in which the hands are held at the heart chakra with thumbs resting lightly against the sternum.





**THANKYOU!**

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