

There are 24 Basic Mudras (hand gestures) in the "Hasthalakshana Deepika", the book of hand gestures, which Kathakali is followed. There are 'Asamyutha Mudras' (that is shown using single hand) and 'Samyutha Mudras' (mudras shown in double hands) in each Basic Mudras, to show different symbols. Considering all these Mudras and their separations there are totally 470 symbols used in Kathakali. (The details of each Mudra are given down)



1. Pathaaka (Flag)



2. Mudraakhyam



3. Katakam (Golden Bangle)



4. Mushti



5. Kartharee Mukham (Scissor's sharp point)



6. Sukathundam (Parrot's peek)



7. Kapidhakam (The fruit of a tree)



8. HamsaPaksham (Swan's wing)



9. Sikharam (Peak)



10. Hamsaasyam (Swan's peek)



11. Anjaly (Folded hands in Salutation)



12. Ardachandram (Half moon)



**13. Mukuram**  
(Mirror)



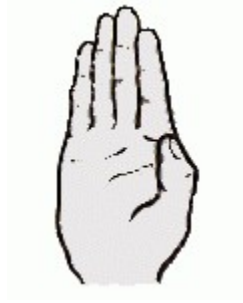
**14. Bhramaram**  
(Beetle)



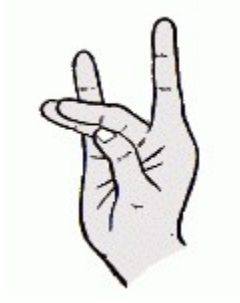
**15. Soochimukham**  
(Needle's sharp point)



**16. Pallavam**  
(Sprout)



**17. Thripathaaka**  
(Flag with three colours)



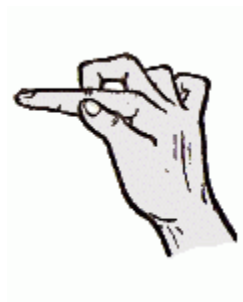
**18. Mrigaseersham**  
(Deer's head)



**19. Sarpasirassu**  
(Serpant's head)



**20. Vardhamanakam**  
(Seedling)



**21. Araalam**  
(Curved)



**22. Oornanabham**  
(Spider)



**23. Mukulam (Bud)**



**24. Katakaamukham**

## 1. Pathaaka (Flag):

There are 36 double hand symbols and 10 single hand symbols using this Mudra. Totally 46.

### Double Hand Symbols:

1.Sun, 2.King, 3.Elephant, 4.Lion, 5.Ox, 6.Crocodile, 7.Arch, 8.Climbing Plant, 9.Flag, 10.Series of waves, 11.Path, 12.Hell, 13.Earth, 14.Hip, 15.Pot, 16.Multi-storied building, 17.Evening, 18.Noon, 19.Cloud, 20.Anthil, 21.Thigh, 22.Servant, 23.Travel, 24.Wheel, 25.Stool, 26.Lord Indra's weapon, 27.Gate Tower, 28.Rampart, 29.Vehicle, 30.Peaceful, 31.Crooked, 32.Door, 33.Pillow, 34.Trench (ditch), 35.Leg, 36.Bolt

#### Single hand symbols:

1.Day, 2.Movement, 3.Tongue, 4.Forehead, 5.Body, 6.That thing, 7.Noise, 8.Messenger, 9.Sandbank, 10.Sprout,

## **2. Mudraakhyam:**

There are 13 double hand symbols and 12 single hand symbols using this Mudra.Totally 25.

#### Double hand symbols:

1.Growth, 2.Movement, 3.Heaven, 4.Ocean, 5.Thick, 6.Forgetting, 7.Everything, 8.Announcement, 9.Thing, 10.Death, 11.Meditation, 12.Sacred Thread, 13.Straight

#### Single hand symbols:

1.Mind, 2.Thought, 3.Desire, 4.By oneself, 5.Remaining, 6.Wisdom, 7.Creation, 8.Life, 9.Defame, 10.Future, 11.No, 12.Fourth

## **3. Katakam (Golden Bangle):**

There are 20 double hand symbols and 9 single hand symbols using this Mudra.Totally 29.

#### Single hand symbols:

1.Flower, 2.Mirror, 3.Female, 4.Offering holy materials to the sacrificial fire while chanting 'manthras', 5.Sweating, 6.A little, 7.Quiver, 8.Smell, 9.Which one

#### Double hand symbols:

1.Vishnu (God), 2.Krishna (God), 3.Balaraman  
4.Arrow, 5.Gold, 6.Silver, 7.A female demon, 8.Sleep, 9.Main woman, 10.Godess of wealth, 11.Veena, 12.Stars, 13.Chain, 14.Lotus/ water, 15.Demon, 16.Crown, 17.Weapon, 18.Peculiarity/ special news, 19.Chariot, 20.With

## **4. Mushti:**

There are 25 double hand symbols and 15 single hand symbols using this Mudra.Totally 40.

#### Double hand symbols:

1.Driver of chariot, 2.Prefix, 3.Beauty, 4.Purity, 5.pirit of Ghost, 6.Binding, 7.Qualification, 8.Condition, 9.Ankle, 10.Pulling, 11.Tail of the animal (a whisk), 12.Destroyer/ Yama, the god of death, 13.Mud, 14.Medicine, 15.Curse, 16.Swing, 17.Gift/ donation, 18.Circumambulation, 19.Digging, 20.Giving up, 21.Lance, 22.Heroism, 23.Hot (Sunor fire)/ grieve, 24.Vomiting, 25.Delivery/ child birth,

#### Single hand symbols:

1.In vain, 2.Extreamely, 3.Filupon, 4.King's advisor, 5.Crossing, 6.Bearing, 7.Donation, 8.Consent, 9.Victory, 10.Bow, 11.we, 12.Single sentence, 13.agedness, 14.Robbing, 15.Food

## **5. Kartharee Mukham (Scissor's sharp point):**

There are 16 double hand symbols and 10 single hand symbols using this Mudra.Totally 26.

#### Double hand symbols:

1.Sin, 2.Tireness, 3.Male member of Brahmin caste, 4.Fame, 5.Skull, 6.House, 7.A religious vow, 8.Purity, 9.Bank, 10.Dynasty, Bamboo, 11.Hunger, 12.Hearing, 13.Telling, 14.Gathering, 15.End, 16.Hunting

Single hand symbols:

1.You, 2.Word, 3.Change of mood/ time, 4.Gradation, 5.We, 6.Human being, 7.Face, 8.Enmity, 9.Child, 10.Mongoose

**6. Sukathundam (Parrot's peek):**

Double hand symbols:

1.Goad, 2.Bird, 3.Engagement

**7. Kapidhakam (The fruit of a tree):**

There are 10 double hand symbols:

1.Net, 2.Doubt, 3.Tail feather of a peacock, 4.Drinking, 5.Touching, 6.Prevent, 7.In the open expanse of land, 8.The outer side, 9.Descend, 10.To step

**8. HamsaPaksham (Swan's wing):**

42 single hand symbols and 11 double hand symbols can be shown using this Mudra.

1.Moon, 2.Air, 3.Kamadeva, 4.Gods, 5.Mountain, 6.Valley, 7.Everyday, 8.Relatives, 9.Bedding, 10.Rock, 11.Happiness and comfort, 12.Chest, 13.Female breast, 14.Cloth, 15.Vehicle, 16.Lie, 17.Lying down, 18.Falling, 19.Croud, 20.Beating, 21.Covering, 22.Spreading, 23.Found, 24.Coming, 25.Salutation, 26.Game, 27.Sandal, 28.Embrace, 29.Follow, 30.Escaping, 31.Reach, 32.Mace, 33.The cheek region, 34.Shoulder, 35.Hair, 36.Humility, 37.Blessing, 38.Sint, 39.Thus, 40.Fish, 41.Worship, 42.Tortoise

Double hand symbols:

1.You, 2.Sword, 3.Anger, 4.Now, 5.I, 6.In front of, 7.Axe, 8.Light, 9.Calling, 10. Getting nearness  
11.Prevent

**9. Sikharam (Peak):**

8 single hand symbols:

1.Walking, 2.Legs, 3.Eyes, 4.Sight, 5.Path, 6.Search/ detection, 7.Ears, 8.Drinking

Duble hand symbols using this Mudra are Garudan (a hawk in Purana), Swan and Jatayu.

**10. Hamsaasyam (Swan's peek):**

This Mudra can show 8 double hand symbols:

1.Iris, 2.Smoothness, 3.Dust, 4.Whiteness, 5.Blue colour, 6.Red, 7.Mercy, 8.Hairs of the body

4 single hand symbols:

1.Beginning of the rainy season, 2.Hair of the head, 3.The line of hair on the abdomen, 4.The three folds of skin above the naval of a woman

**11.Anjaly (Folded hands in Salutation):**

15 Double hand symbols:

1.Excessive rain, 2.Vomiting, 3.Fire, 3.Horse, 4.Loud noise, 6.Light, 7.Hair, 8.Ear-ring, 9.Heat or sorrow, 10.Anxiety, 11.Always, 12.Blood, 14.River, 15.Flowing

2 single hand symbols:

1.Twigs of the tree, 2.Anger

Totally 17 symbols using this Mudra.

## **12.Ardhachandram (Half moon):**

There are 9 double hand symbols and 4 single hand symbols using this Mudra.

### Double hand symbols:

1.If, 2.For what, 3.Helplessness, 4.Sky, 5.Blessed man, 6.God, 7.Memory, 8.Grass, 9.Hair of a man

### Single hand symbols:

1.Starting, 2.Smiling, 3.What (This can be done with single and double hands), 4.Contempt

## **13. Mukuram (Mirror):**

There are 11 double hand symbols and 9 single hand symbols using this Mudra.Totally 20.

### Double hand symbols:

1.Tusk, 2.Seperation, 3.Forlimb, 4.Waist, 5.Vedam, 6.Brother, 7.Pillar, 8.Mortar, 9.Speedy, 10.Devil, 11.Growth

### 9 single hand symbols:

1.Dissenting person, 2.Beetle, 3.Ray, 4.Anger, 5.Excellent, 6.Bangle, 7.Neck, 8.Armllet, 9.Negative

## **14. Bhramaram (Beetle):**

### 5 Double hand symbols:

1.Wing of a bird, 2.Song, 3.Water, 4.Umberlla, 5.Ear of the elephant

### 4 Single hand symbols:

1.Demi-god (Gandharva), 2.Birth, 3.Fear, 4.Weeping

## **15. Soochimukham (Needle's sharp point):**

### 10 Double hand symbols:

1.Broken, 2.Jumping up, 3.Universe, 4.Lakshmana, 5.Fall, 6.The other thing, 7.Month, 8.Eyebrow, 9.Loose, 10.Tail

### 16 Single hand symbols:

1.One person, 2.What a pity!, 3.Dull, 4.Another, 5.Plural, 6.Ear, 7.A digi of the moon, 8.In olden times, 9.This man, 10.These people, 11.Kingdom, 12.A little, 13.Witness, 14.Give up

## **16. Pallavam (Sprout):**

### 9 Double hand symbols:

1.The weapon of Lord Indra, 2.Mountain peak, 3.Ears of cow, 4.Length of the eye, 5.Male buffalo, 6.Pestle made of iron, 7.Spear, 8.Horn, 9.Circling

### 6 Single hand symbols:

1.Distance, 2.Pledge, 3.Fume, 4.Tail, 5.Cane, 6.Grain

## **17. Thripathaaka (Flag with three colours):**

### 6 Double hand symbols:

1.Sunset, 2.Commencement, 3.'Hey', 4.Drinking, 5.Body, 6.Begging

## **18. Mrigaseersham (Deer's head):**

### 2 Double hand symbols:

1. Animals, 2. The supreme being

## **19. Sarpasirassu (Serpant's head):**

### 9 Double hand symbols:

1. Sandal, 2. Snake, 3. Slowness, 4. Worship of god using 8 substances, 5. Vomiting, 6. Saint, 7. Swinging of elephant's ears, 8. Escaping, 9. Massage

Apart from these symbols, this Mudra is used to show the symbols, Sprinkle, clapping hands, breaking skull of the elephant, chertishing, giving water to god and message of wrestlers.

## **20. Vardhamanakam (Seedling):**

### 6 Double hand symbols:

1. Ear-ring of a female, 2. Diamond necklace, 3. Knee, 4. One who practices Yoga, meditation, 5. Drawn, 6. Man look aftering the elephant

### 3 Single hand symbols:

1. Whirlpool, 2. Navel, 3. Well

## **21. Araalam (Curved):**

### 5 double hand symbols:

1. Fool, 2. Tree, 3. Wedge, 4. Bud, 5. Sprout

## **22. Oornanabham (Spider):**

### 7 Double hand symbols:

1. Horse, 2. Fruit, 3. Tiger, 4. Butter, 5. Snow, 6. Plenty, 7. Lotus flower

## **23. Mukulam (Bud):**

1. Fox, 2. Monkey, 3. Fading, 4. Forgetting

## **24. Katakaamukham:**

### 6 double hand symbols:

1. Blouse, 2. Servant, 3. Hero, 4. Wrestler, 5. To shoot arrows, 6. Arrest

The symbol of 'addressing' anybody is showed using the Mudra Hamsapaksham.

In "Mushti" when the small finger is straightened gets "Baana" Mudra. Using this can show the symbols like oppose, Stop!!, coming, future etc.

### There are two types of Mudras:

1. Samaana Mudras (Same Mudras):- That is, the same Mudra is used to show two different symbols. For example the Mudra "Karthareemukham" is used to show both the symbols 'Time' and 'Near'.

2. Misra Mudras (Mixed Mudras): That is, some symbols are shown using two different Mudras in both hands. There are 68 Mixed Mudras. For example to show the symbol 'Indra', the Mudra "Sikharam" in one hand and the Mudra "Mushti" in the other hand; for 'Sivan' the Mudras used are "Mrigaseersham" and "Hamsapaksham"; etc.

