

Vidushi Yadav

126340012

Animation (2012-2014)

IDC, IIT Bombay

Design Research Seminar

Study of Stereotypical Characters

Kathakali Dancers and the Role of Expressions in the Performing Art

Project guide:

Professor Phani Tetali



Approval Sheet

.....

The Research Project by Vidushi Yadav (Roll number, 126340012) is approved, in partial fulfilment of requirements of the Masters of Design degree in Animation in Industrial Design Centre of Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.



.....Project Guide

Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/ data/ fact/ source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

Signature.....

Vidushi Yadav

Name of the Student.....

Vidushi Yadav

Roll Number.....

12634012

Date.....

5/8/14.

Contents

1. Understanding Indian Classical Dance Forms
2. Terminology and Nomenclature of Indian Dance Forms
 - 2.1 Abhinaya
 - 2.2 Postures (Bhanga)
 - 2.2.1 Abhanga
 - 2.2.2 Samabhanga
 - 2.2.3 Atibhanga
 - 2.2.4 Tribhanga
 - 2.3 Mudras
 - 2.3.1 Abhaya Mudra
 - 2.3.2 Abhisheka Mudra
 - 2.4 Rasas (Aesthetics)
 - 2.4.1 Shringaram
 - 2.4.2 Hasyam
 - 2.4.3 Raudram
 - 2.4.4 Karunyam
 - 2.4.5 Bibhatsam
 - 2.4.6 Bhayanakam
 - 2.4.7 Viram
 - 2.4.8 Adbhutam
 - 2.4.9 Shantam
 - 2.4.10 Vatsalya
 - 2.4.11 Bhakti
 - 2.5 Kathakali Dance forms
 - 2.6 Kathakali Styles (Sampradayam)
 - 2.6.1 Vettathu
 - 2.6.2 Kalladikkodan

- 2.6.3 Kaplingadu
- 2.7 Five Elements of Kathakali
 - 2.7.1 Expressions
 - 2.7.2 Dance
 - 2.7.3 Enactment
 - 2.7.4 Song/Vocal Accompaniment
 - 2.7.5 Instrument Accompaniment
 - 2.7.6 Painting
 - 2.7.7 Literature
- 2.8 Acting in Kathakali
 - 2.8.1 Shringara
 - 2.8.2 Hasya
 - 2.8.3 Bibhatsa
 - 2.8.4 Rowdra
 - 2.8.5 Veera
 - 2.8.6 Bhaya
 - 2.8.7 Karuna
 - 2.8.8 Adbhuta
- 2.9 The Elaborate Make up of Kathakali (Vesham)
 - 2.9.1 Pachcha Vesham
 - 2.9.2 Kathi Vesham
 - 2.9.3 Kari Vesham
 - 2.9.4 Thaadi Vesham
 - 2.9.5 Minukku Vesham

- 2.10 Modifications of Basic Make up
 - 2.10.1 Chuvanna Thadi
 - 2.10.2 Karutha Thadi
 - 2.10.3 Vella Thadi
- 2.11 Stages Of Make up
 - 2.11.1 The I Stage
 - 2.11.2 The II Stage
 - 2.11.3 The III Stage
- 2.12 Kathakali Mudras
 - 2.12.1 Asamyutha Mudra
 - 2.12.2 Samyutha Mudra
- 2.13 Character Exploration
- 2.14 Conclusion
- 2.15 Bibliography and References.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to my guide Prof. Phani Tetali for enlightening me with his vast knowledge, experience and wise advises from time to time and always giving new ideas to me throughout the project. His valuable suggestions, inputs help me to shape up my project in a right direction. My heartfelt thanks to Ms. Shilpa Ranade, Prof. Nina Sabnani, Prof. Sumant Rao, Prof. Sudesh Balan and Mr. C. P. Narayan for their invaluable guidance and support.

I would like to thank Jaison Jacob, Ashwin Vasudevan, Tanushree Paul, Manisha Swarnkar, Riddhi Ranade, Shyam Wanare, Amol Thakur, without their concern and inputs, my work would not have been complete.

I am indebted to Medhavini Yadav, my sister and my mentor for always being there with a thousand ideas whenever I was lost. I would like to thank Edu Mohan for motivating me to work.

Understanding Indian Classical Dance Forms

All the Indian Classical Dance forms are derived and inspired from one another. To understand any dance form completely and holistically the basic understanding of the classical Indian dance form is important.

The four *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Puranas* etc. are said to be the basis for all streams of learning in ancient Indian culture and the influence of it can be seen in all the Indian forms of art. The sacred scriptures of the four Vedas (*Sama veda*, *Yajur veda*, *Rig veda* and *Atharva veda*) were said to be divine spiritual knowledge derived from the supreme power, they are said to be the words of God.

Elaborate and detailed references to the art of dancing are also described religiously in the *Rig Veda*, which was compiled around 1500 B.C. It proves that dance was one of the oldest forms of art in India. The basic art of dance resulted into the emergence of many classical dance forms including **Bharatnatyam**, **Kuchipudi**, **Kathakali**, **Mohini Attam**,

Kathak, **Odissi** and **Manipuri** and various other folk dances in India with the evolution of time.

It is believed by many curators that the art of dance was created by Lord *Brahma* (the Creator believed in Hindu religion), according to the *Natya Shastra* and *Abhinaya Darpana*, the treatises on dance, The *Natya Shastra* is the earliest Indian text in the history of performing arts. It was created by Lord Brahma on the request of Lord *Indra* and other gods as a form of entertainment. As the lower castes were not entitled to listen to the four Vedas, Lord Brahma created the *Natya Shastra* as the fifth Veda, which was open to all, irrespective of caste and creed.

It is said that before Lord Brahma created the *Natya Veda*, He entered a yogic trance in which he recalled the four *Vedas*. He drew literature from the *Rig Veda*, song from the *Sama Veda*, *abhinaya* or expression from the *Yajur Veda* and *rasa* or aesthetic experience from the *Atharva Veda*. These aspects are the four main Ingredients of the *Natya Veda*.

Indian dance is a blend of

Nritta: The rhythmic elements. It is the rhythmic movement of the body in dance. It does not express any emotion.

Nritya: The combination of rhythm with expression. *Nritya* is usually expressed through the eyes, hands and facial movements. *Nritya* combined with *nritta* makes up the usual dance programs.

Natya: the dramatic element. *Naatya* comprises *abhinaya*, depicting *rasa* (sentimental) and *Bhava* (mood). To appreciate *natya* or dance drama, one has to understand and appreciate Indian legends. Most Indian dances take their themes from India's rich mythology and folk legends. Hindu gods and goddesses like Vishnu and Lakshmi, Rama and Sita, Krishna and Radha are all depicted in classical Indian dances.

Classical dance is a combination of *bhava*, *raga* and *tala* (mood, melody and rhythm). The *Gati* or gait, is stylized for each classical dance form.

Terminology and Nomenclature of Indian Dance Form

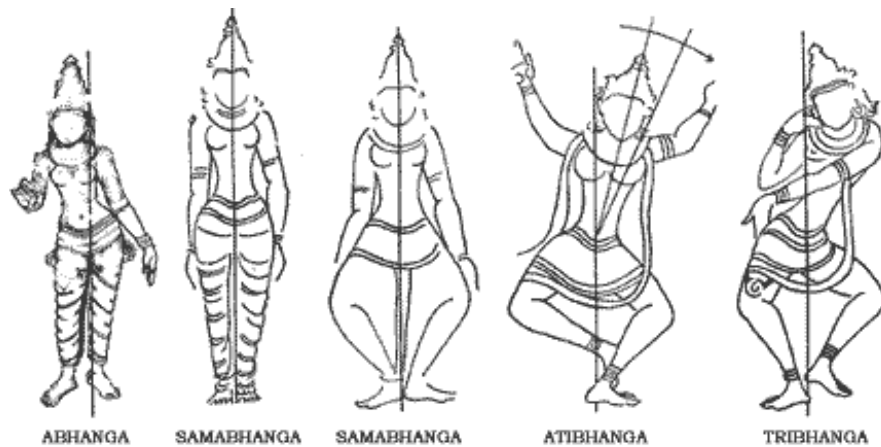
Abhinaya

Abhinaya is the rhythmic expression of moods, emotions and a narrative through the use of *Mudra* (hand gestures), *Bhanga* (postures of the body) and *Rasa* (facial expressions).

Abhinaya has been described in *Abhinaya Darpana*, a medieval work on histrionics by *Nandikeswara*. Costume, make-up and jewellery, that aid the performer in expressing mood, emotion or dramatic elements of Abhinaya, is known as *Aharya Abhinaya*. Gestures and stances that aid Abhinaya are called *Angik Abhinaya*.

Postures (Bhargas)

The ideal postures of the body are depicted in the *Shilpa Shastra* and there are 4 types of *Bhargas* (postures), the deviations of the body from the central erect position.



These four *bhangas* are: *Abhanga*, *Samabhanga*, *Atibhanga* and *Tribhanga*.

Abhanga signifies "off-center", a term for a slightly askew standing position.

Samabhanga is the equal distribution of the body limbs on a central line, whether standing or sitting.

Atibhanga is the great bend with the torso diagonally inclined and the knees bent.

Tribhanga is the triple bend with one hip raised, the torso curved to the opposite side and the head tilted at an angle.



Abhisheka Mudra in Buddhist images



Abhaya mudra depicting protection and reassurance

Mudras

The *Mudras* (hand-gestures) complement *Abhinaya*, which is expressed through facial expression and body gestures.

Abhayamudra and *Abhishekamudra* are the two varieties of *Mudras*.

Abhaya mudra with its palm-upraised gesture, is an expression of protection and reassurance.

Abhisheka mudra with its sprinkling hand gesture is commonly seen in Buddhist images.



Artist enacting the different Rasas

Rasas (Aesthetics)

There are 9 major classical categories of emotions or *Rasa*, called *Navarasas* for Abhinaya. They are *Adbhuta* or wonder, *Bhaya* or terror, *Bhibatsa* or disgust, *Hasya* or humour, *Karuna* or pathos, *Rudra* or anger, *Shringara* or love, *Vira* or heroism and *Shanta* or peace. Except Kathakali, most classical dances do not explore the full ranges of rasas today, but restrict themselves to *Shringara* rasa and *Bhaktibhava* (devotion).

The concept of rasa is fundamental to many forms of Indian art including dance, music, musical theatre, cinema and literature, the treatment, interpretation, usage and actual performance of a particular rasa differs greatly between different styles and schools of *abhinaya* (performance), and the huge regional differences even within one style

- **Śringāram** (शङ्गारं) Love, Attractiveness, Beauty.
- **Hāsyam** (हास्यं) Laughter, Mirth, Comedy.
- **Raudram** (रौद्रं) Fury.
- **Kārunyam** (कारुण्यं) Compassion, Mercy.
- **Bībhatsam** (बीभत्सं) Disgust, Aversion, Hatred.

- **Bhayānakam** (भयानकं) Horror, Terror.
- **Vīram** (वीरं) courage, bravery, Heroic mood.
- **Adbhutam** (अद्भुतं) Wonder, Amazement.
- **Shāntam** Peace or tranquility.

In addition to the nine Rasas, two more appeared later (esp. in literature)

Additional rasas:

- **Vātsalya** (वात्सल्य) Parental Love
- **Bhakti** (भक्ति) Spiritual Devotion



Kathakali Dance Form

Kathakali is the most uniquely interpretative dance governed by dramatic dynamics, including an elaborately defined code of body kinetics, which combine with beautifully eloquent gestural representation and precise and sophisticated movement.

Kathakali means story-play (katha: story, kali: play). It is a highly stylized classical dance and drama evolved in southern part of Kerala. The main emphasis of this very ancient dance form, dated back to 17th century are precisely done make-up of characters, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion.

It originated during the 17th century, around 400 years back and has evolved with time with much more refined gestures and added contemporary themes apart from the stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana which is commonly used as stories or popular themes in performances.



Kathakali Styles (*Sampradayam*)

These are leading Kathakali styles that differ from each other in subtleties like choreographic profile, position of hand gestures and stress on dance than drama and vice versa. Some of the major original Kathakali styles included:

1. Vettathu Sampradayam
2. Kalladikkodan Sampradyam
3. Kaplingadu Sampradayam

Five Elements of Kathakali

Kathakali is considered to be the combination of five elements of fine art

1. **Expressions** (Natyam, the component with emphasis on facial expressions).
2. **Dance** (Nritham, the component of dance with emphasis on rhythm and movement of hands, legs and body).
3. **Enactment** (Nrithyam, the element of drama with emphasis on "mudras", which are hand gestures).
4. **Song/vocal accompaniment** (Geetha).
5. **Instrument accompaniment** (Vadyam).



Apart from these five elements there are these two additional elements which are also very significant in a Kathakali performance:

6. **Painting** (Chithram).

7. **Literature** (Sahithyam).

Kathakali dance is a highly evolved dance form with many layers to it and is commonly called as total theatre because it is the only dance form which uses all the nine kinds of rasas (aesthetic). It is a visual art because the performers don't use any dialogues, they mime. The remarkable use of mudras and bodily movements make it a dance form of universal appeal. Their elaborate costumes and painstakingly done make up make their performance larger than life and magical to look at.

Kathakali is inspired from the ancient South Indian dance forms like Koodiyattam, Krishnanattam, Theyyam, Kalaripayattu etc. Movements of Kathakali are adopted from Bharata Natya Shastra with some modifications.

Kathakali is male dominated. Still some Kathakali groups include female artists. One of such groups is the one in Kerala temple town of Tripunithura.



Kathakali actor applying make-up



Actors during a dance performance

There are about 101 Kathakali stories. The stories were composed for the whole night in the old times. But due to the increasing demand for the concised versions, now the plays are composed for 2-4 hours instead of the whole night.

Important stories enacted in Kathakali are 'Nala Charitham' (Story from Mahabharatham about King Nala and his wife Damayanthi), 'Duryodhana Vadham' (Another story from Mahabharata about the killing of Duryodhana by the Pandava brother Bhima in Kurukshetra), 'Kalyanasowgandhikam' (Bheema's encounter with Hanuman when the former set out in search for the flower Kalyanasaugandhikam for his wife Draupadi), 'Keechaka Vadham'(Story of the killing of Keechaka by Bhima when the Panadavas were in disguise), 'Kiratham' (Story of Arjuna and Lord Shiva's fight), and 'Karna Shapadham' (story of Karna from Mahabharata).



Acting in Kathakali

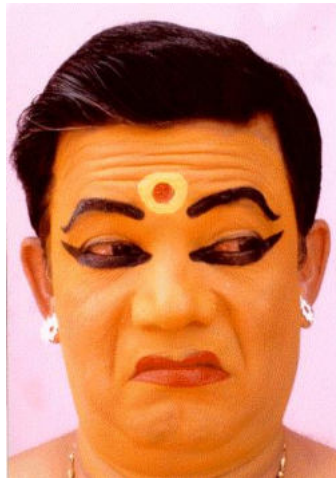
A Kathakali actor uses immense concentration, skill and physical stamina, gained from regimented training based on Kalaripayattu, the ancient martial art of Kerala, to prepare for his demanding role.

The intensive Kathakali training lasts for 8-10 years. In Kathakali, the story is enacted purely by the movements of the hands (called *mudras* or hand gestures) and by facial expressions (*rasas*) and bodily movements.

Dancers undergo special practice sessions to learn control of their eye movements.



Shringara



Haasya

The Elaborate Study of All the *Rasas* in Kathakali performances:

Shringara:

Shringara means love and beauty, this is the emotion used to represent things that are perceived as beautiful and things that evoke love to the human mind. This is the most frequently used in all the art forms. Love between friends, a mother and child, the teacher and the disciple or the love between a man and a woman. A woman waiting for her lover finds wide portrayal through beautiful melodies.

Hasya:

It is the emotion expressing joy. It depicts simple light heartedness or notorious laughter and in between everything. Krishna's childhood when

He used to be the most notorious but beloved kid of Gokul is the most common topic of this rasa.



Bhibatsya



Rowdra



Veera



Bhaya

Bhibatsya:

Bhibatsya means disgust. The sickening emotion that nauseates us. When prince Siddhartha, as a young nobleman, saw sickness, poverty, death for the first time he was moved with disgust.

Rowdra:

Rowdra is anger and all its forms. Lord Shiva, the destroyer, is thought of as the master of all disharmony and discord. Shiva performing tandav the violent dance creates havoc in the three worlds.

Veera:

Veera is heroism and bravery. It represents self-confidence, Manliness and self-righteous fearlessness. Courage and intrepidity in the face of all kinds of odds is heroism. Lord Rama is typically the model of this Rasa.

Bhaya:

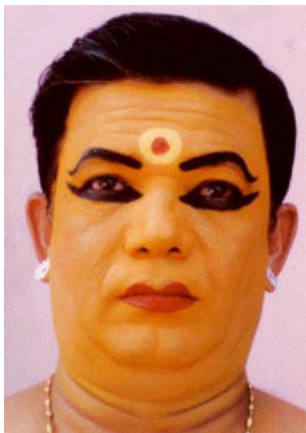
Bhaya is fear. The Subtle and mysterious anxiety caused by understanding the power of evil, the feeling of being overwhelmed and helpless and the fear of death.



Adbhuta



Karuna



Shaanta

Karuna:

Karuna is grief and compassion. The feeling of unspeakable tragedy and despair, utter hopelessness and heartbreak, the sorrow caused by parting with a lover, the anguish caused by the death of a loved one are all example of *karuna rasas*

Adbhuta:

Adbhuta is wonder and curiosity. The feeling of awe evoked by something divine and supernatural, remarkable power of beauty or something which is never seen or imagined before.



Kathi (Knife)



Pachcha (Green)

The elaborate Make-up of Kathakali (*Vesham*)

One of the most breath-taking elements of Kathakali is its elaborate make-up code.

The make-up can be classified into five basic sets namely

Pachcha Vesham

Kathi Vesham

Kari vesham

Thaadi Vesham

Minukku Vesham

The modifications in the basic set of makeup include:

Vella Thadi (white beard) used to depict *Hanuman* (the Monkey-God)

Pazhuppu, which is majorly used for Lord *Shiva* and *Balabhadra*.

Colour symbolism reflects certain categories of emotions and *gunas*. The green colour represents *Saattvika* reveals godliness, white represents spirituality. Red represents *Rajasic* reveals violence. Black represents



Thadi (beard)



Kari (Black)

Tamasic reveals evil. Yellow represents the combined character of *Saatvika* and *Rajasic*.

Thadi Vesham (Beard make-up)-

- ***Chuvanna Thadi*** (Red Beard) given to excessively evil character
- ***Karutha Thadi*** (Black Beard) signifies the character of a forest dweller or a hunter
- ***Vella Thadi*** (white beard) given to superhuman characters like hanuman

It takes nearly three to four hours to complete the make-up which is done in stages, and the duration varies according to the character and complexity of the costume.

The First stage

Theppu is the first stage where the artist himself applies the basic facial paintings.

The Second Stage

Chuttikkaran (make-up man) puts the *Chutti* which forms the second stage of make-up.



Minukku (Prettying Up)



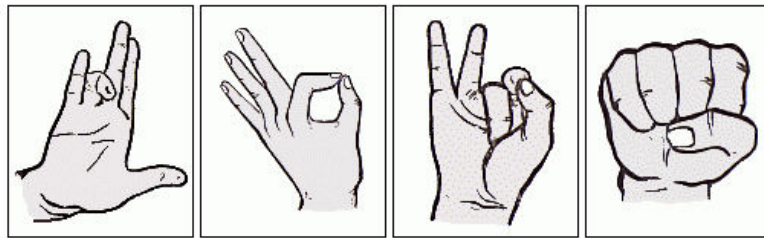
Artists applying make-up

The Chutti plays a crucial role in differentiating the characters and their personality and has the following basic classification: Pacha (green), Kathi (knife), Thadi (beard) and Kari (black).

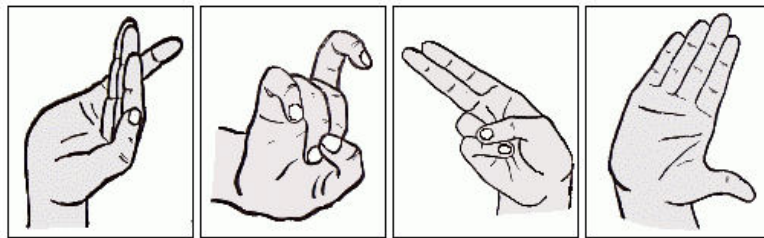
All the colours used in the make-up are obtained from natural substances and herbs. For example, the red and yellow colours are made by powdering stones like *Chaayilyam* and *Manayola* respectively. A mixture of lime and rice flour serves for white. The green colour is produced by mixing *Manayola* and *Neelam* (blue). Coconut oil is used as the base for mixing these stone powders. Another stone, *Chenchilyam* is powdered and applied in order to protect the skin from burns. *Kanmashi* or *Kajal* is prepared by burning gingelly oil. *Kumkumam* or saffron is also used for the make-up.

The Third Stage

Uduthukettu is the third stage in dressing. Stiff tapes of white cloth are wound around the waist, with the help of others and are bound together with another piece of cloth, the Kacha. Ulluvaal, Puramvaal, Pattuvaal etc. are the different cloth pieces used for the elaborate bulky skirt.



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)

Kathakali Mudras

There are 24 Basic Mudras (hand gestures) in the "Hasthalakshana Deepika", the book of hand gestures, which Kathakali is followed.

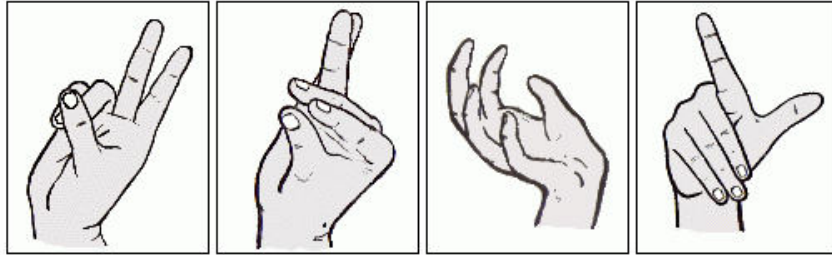
'Asamyutha Mudras'

Mudras shown using single hand

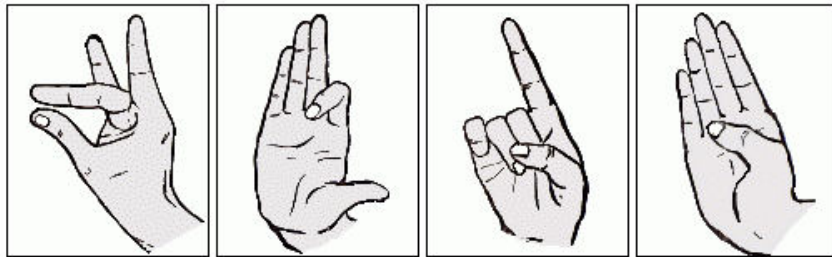
'Samyutha Mudras'

Mudras shown in double hands in each Basic Mudras, to show different symbols.

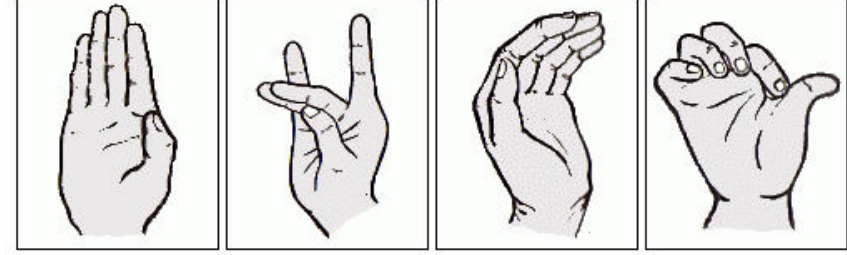
Considering all the permutations and combinations of all the Mudras and their separations there are totally 470 symbols used in Kathakali.



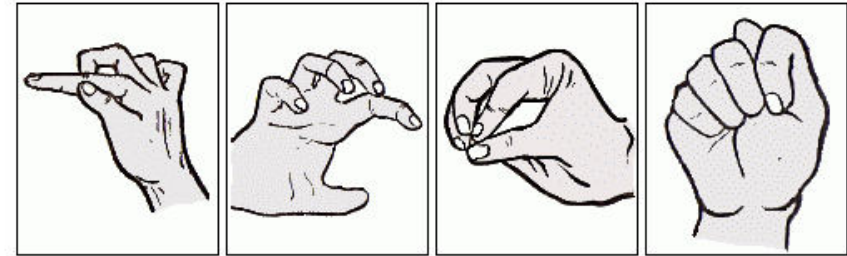
9. Sikharam (Peak) 10. Hamsaasyam (Swan's peek) 11. Anjaly (Folded hands in Salutation) 12. Ardhachandram (Half moon)



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