

MUDRA



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# INTRODUCTION

BY

A. J. D. CAMPBELL

IN the Spring of 1923, Miss Tyra de Kleen, the Swedish artist and traveller, held an exhibition of her water-colour drawings at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. They illustrated the ceremonial dances of the people, and the symbolic hand-gestures (*mudrās*) of the *Pedandas* (Priests), as they are performed at the present day on the Island of Bali, in the Netherlands East Indies. It was there that I first saw her work, and I was immediately impressed with the great importance such a series of studies must have for all students of religion and ethnology, as well as by the remarkable quality of the draughtsmanship. When, therefore, Miss de Kleen asked me to supply a forenote to the studies of the *Mudrās*, which she is now placing before a wider public in book form, I felt deeply gratified by her request—both on account of the intrinsic interest of the subject and also because I believe this book will prove to be a pioneer work and a foundation stone for future research in this little-known branch of religious symbolism. So far as I





As our knowledge of Antiquity grows wider, it becomes continually necessary to push ever further and further back the earliest date for the beginnings of maritime intercourse between the great nations of the past. Three thousand years B.C., is suggested by some authorities as a probable date for the first intercourse between Egypt, Persia and the further East. Inasmuch as the ships of that day were able to perform successfully long voyages of this kind, it is reasonable to suppose that sea-connection was established at an almost equally early period between India and the Islands of the Indonesian Archipelago. Be that as it may, it seems certain that North Indian settlers had reached Java, at least as long ago as the first century A.D. These settlers took with them to Java the prevailing form of Hinduism and possibly the beginnings of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Apart from the Animism of the aboriginal natives, Hinduism seems, however, to have been the dominant religion on the Island for about five centuries. The leader of this first immigration was Prince Aji Saka of Gujerat in Western India, whose ancestors had been of that Turki Saka race, which had invaded the Græco-Bactrian kingdom of Gandhara (N.W. India), about 140-130 B.C., and had later, under pressure from fresh hordes of oncoming Scythians (Kushans), settled in the Kathiawar district of Gujerat. Upon the break-up of this





Bali had formed a part of the Majapahit kingdom, and doubtless Javanese Hinduism and Buddhism had been introduced there at an early date, but, for the study of the *Mudrās* of the respective *Pedandas*, the great influx of late Javanese forms of the two religions, constitutes the true starting-point in Balinese history. Uncontaminated by the Muhammadanism which overran the Island of Java, the two religions have continued to this day, one as regards their basic goal, but separate in the ritual and implements used for its attainment.

Turning now to a comparison of the Buddhist series of *Mudrās* (Plates, pp. 3-29) with the Hindu (Shiva) series (Plates, pp. 30-61), it seems to me clear, that both rituals have for this basic goal, the (symbolic) attainment of *Yoga*, or Union with the Supreme Spirit in the Universe, by the performance of a series of exercises such as were taught in the ancient systems of Patañjali (200-150 B.C.) and other great *Gurus* of India. In the case of Buddhism of the type found in Bali, the Union is directed to the Cosmic Buddha Vairochana or to his active reflex the Dhyāni-Bodhisattva Samantabhadra ; in the case of Hinduism, to Union with Shiva, the efficient cause of all life and movement, spiritual and corporeal, in the Cosmos.

In the short historical survey given above, the Indo-Turki emigrants of the Saka clan were mentioned as those who introduced a developed form of the



In Tibet the *vajra* and *mudrās* are used by all classes and sects of the Buddhist community; in Japan they are the more exclusive preserve of the Shingon sect. Arthur Lloyd, in his book, *The Creed of Half Japan*, advances strong reasons for supposing that the doctrines and practices of the Shingon sect have been derived from the Ancient Gnostic and later Egyptian religions. If he is correct, it is within the bounds of possibility that the connecting link between the Ancient West and the Modern East will be found to be this very Saka people, with their pre-Indian home in Bactria, of which the Capital Balkh was a most important trade depôt for the caravans plying between the Mediterranean Sea and the Far East. With Gandhara-Udayana as radiating centre, and *Yogacharya* Buddhism as its particular belief, it is thus possible to link up those diverse countries of similar practice and cult-implements, Tibet, Japan and Bali.

The *Mudrā*, or Symbolic Hand-gesture is the physical presentment of some *Mantra* or magic formula, which is first recalled by the mind and articulated by the Mouth. By this threefold manner of expression, the three constituents of the human personality are simultaneously brought into activity, body (*mudrā*), soul (speech: sound) and spirit (memory). In examining these drawings of Miss de Kleen's then, it





supernatural efficacy as springing from the Divine Mind of the Supreme, personified by the god Thoth. A similar belief prevailed in India, where the great 'Architect of the Gods,' Visvakarma, was thought to have created and delivered to men the holy Devanagari (Sanskrit) Alphabet. Letters, their uttered sound, and their simulation by interlacements of the fingers, were on this account conceived to possess equally divine properties, as having in the first instance, proceeded from that Divine Mind with which the Devotee sought union by the practice of the *Yoga*-ritual, as illustrated in the present series of drawings. It does not seem an unreasonable assumption to suppose that in the mystery-schools of Ancient Egypt, Chaldea and India, where the Aspirant was trained by the severest exercises and a symbolic drama for eventual Union with the Cosmic Spirit, that the formulæ (*mantras*) of the exercises, the physical positions necessary, and the due enunciation of the Divine syllables, should have received their crowning 'seal' (*mudrā*) by an actual representation of letter or symbol upon the fingers, or by some gesture symbolising the particular power contained in the idea of the *mantra*, or in the God under meditation. It seems probable that it was in the Ancient Egyptian, Chaldean and Indian training-schools of 'Spiritual-Ascent' that the first *Yoga*-teaching originated. At a later date the





*Complete Esoteric Tantra*, by the Udayana Guru, Padmasambhava, the great missionary to Tibet in the eighth century A.D. The list is given in Lt.-Col. L. A. Waddell's invaluable study of *Lāmaism* (p. 147). Among them, the following initiatory rites may be compared with Plates pp. 4-23. (1) 'The mode of placing the three mystic words—body, speech and thought,' symbolised, perhaps, by the Bell (sound : speech), the *Vajra* (thought : spiritual power), and the prescribed position of the Body; (2) 'The nectar (*Amrita* or Elixir of Immortality)—commanding Rosary,' Plates, pp. 8-9; (3) 'The jewelled rosary-guide for ascending,' Plates, pp. 10-13; other plates may correspond to the following: 'The secret counsels of the four Yogas,' 'The great root of the Heart,' 'The lamp of the three Dwellings,' and 'The water-drawing *dorje* (*vajra*),' perhaps Plates, pp. 6-7. The Hindu (Shaivite) series seems to have several *Mudrās* resembling those in the Buddhist ceremonial, especially Plates, pp. 30-37, 40-41. Others belong more definitely to the Hindu *Raja-Yoga* exercises, as in Plates, pp. 38-39, cleansing the fingers from impurity; Plates, pp. 42-43, consecrating the breath, voice and spirit; Plates, pp. 44-45, cleansing the body from the three root sins, *Raga* (lust), *Moha* (ignorance) and *Dveśa* (anger), by the exercise of *Prana-yama*; and finally, in Plates, pp. 48-49, the symbolic





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THE RITUAL HAND-POSES OF THE BUDDHA  
PRIESTS AND THE SHIVA PRIESTS OF BALI

BY  
TYRA DE KLEEN

With an Introduction by

A. J. D. CAMPBELL

*Assistant-Keeper in the Indian Section of the  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London*

WITH 60 FULL-PAGE DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

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# MUDRĀS

THE RITUAL HAND-POSES OF THE BUDDHA  
PRIESTS AND THE SHIVA PRIESTS OF BALI





know, there is only one other book on hand-gestures as an integral part of religious observance—that on the hand-gestures of the priests belonging to the Buddhist Shingon sect of Japan, published by the Musée Guimet, Paris.

Miss de Kleen draws attention to the fact, that the comparative study of *Mudrās* is practically, at present, a *terra incognita*. One finds mention of their use in many books, but of their actual representation in human ceremonial there is very little record. And yet the subject is profoundly interesting from several points of view—cult, history, mysticism—all of which require attention in order to arrive at a complete understanding of the meaning of these symbolic gestures. For certain phases in the use of *Mudrās*, the material is plentiful and easily accessible in the great Museums and National Libraries of London, Paris, Berlin and New York, and, of course, the standing monuments of the East. Sculpture, frescoe-paintings, Temple-pictures, etc., contain a vast wealth of material which only requires to be co-ordinated and focussed on this particular method of expression, in order to produce a work of permanent and world-wide import. Towards this goal, the self-denying and arduous researches of Miss de Kleen embodied in the present work, seem to me to be a most valuable and original contribution.



kingdom some centuries after, another and much larger expedition of Saka emigrants sailed for Java about the year 603 A.D., taking with them a fairly developed form of the Mahāyāna Buddhism, and also the architectural traditions of the Græco-Buddhist school of Gandhara.

These Sakas—for ever on the move, from their original home in Bactria and the Valley of the Oxus River, through Gandhara and Kathiawar to far-off Java, in the seventh century A.D.—give the key to the markedly strong similarity existing between the great Stupas of Taxila, Takht-i-Bahi and other sites in the Græco-Buddhist country of Kashmir, and the marvellous Stupa of Boro-Budur in Java, which was built during the second half of the eighth century A.D.

It may be said of Javanese Buddhism, that it had a wider acceptance than Hinduism between the fifth and tenth centuries A.D., but after that time Hinduism was reinstated as the official religion. As in India and Nepal, so in Java, Buddhism and Hinduism continued to live side by side, undisturbed by persecution or any sense of rivalry. About the year 1295 A.D., the great Hindu-Javanese dynasty of Majapahit came into power in Java, but was overthrown in 1478 by the Muhammadan invasion, before which the higher castes fled to Bali on the East, where their descendants live to this day.





Mahāyāna Buddhism into Java early in the seventh century A.D. This particular form seems to me to have been that of the *Yogacharya* school. The *Vajra*-sceptre or Club, held by the *Pedanda* in Plates, pp. 4-5, was probably the characteristic cult-implement of this school, and its use may have originated in the ancient kingdom of Udayana in the North of what is now Kashmir, which adjoined the Gandhara country, the first Indian home of the Sakas and the centre of Græco-Buddhist art.

The *Yogacharya* form of Buddhism was introduced into Tibet by the celebrated *Vajracharya*, or *Guru*, Padmasambhava, a native of Udayana, in the year 742 A.D., and it is recorded of him that by the use of magic *mantras* and of the irresistible *vajra*-sceptre, he quelled the terrible and malignant demons of the indigenous *Bon-pa* religion. It would seem that the *Vajra*-sceptre was unknown to Tibet before his arrival. From this same source of Udayana, one may perhaps infer, the *Yogacharya* system, with its accompaniments of the *Vajra*-sceptre and the use of *Mudrās*, spread through Tibet and China, eventually reaching Japan in the ninth century A.D. In all these countries, the *Vajra*, mystic *Yoga*, and the use of *Mudrās* is found in active use at the present day, just as it is in Bali, far-removed though it be from the countries mentioned above.









must be borne in mind that they represent only one, and that the lowest, of the three possible means of expression which form the complete rite.

The *Mudrā* illustrates visibly and materially a formula. The formula or *Mantra* is composed of short extracts from the Vedas ; of the names of spiritual Powers, benevolent or hostile, preceded and terminated by ' words of power ' ; or, lastly, of a series of unmeaning syllables, so selected and related that, when rapidly repeated in the prescribed manner, they set up definite vibrations in the body and the brain, producing well-defined and calculated states of consciousness. Many of the syllables thus employed are considered to possess magic properties, as, for instance, in the ceaselessly-muttered Tibetan Mantra ' Om.mani padme hum,' which is believed to resound through the Six Regions of Beings, helping towards their liberation from the Wheel of Rebirth. It is not wonderful if, as Miss de Kleen states, the animistic, devil-ridden peasants of Bali hold their *Pedandas* in reverence and fear, believing as they do that they possess the power to overcome their enemies of the mountains, streams and the vast lonely forests, by the magic power of *Vajra* and *mudrā*.

The Gods, and the High Initiates of Ancient Egypt had their ' Words of Power ' (*mantras*), and each letter or symbol of their Alphabet was potent with





*Yoga*-system took firm hold upon the Asiatic Gnostics, who are stated by Lloyd to have practised the use of *Mantras* and *Mudrās*, and it was thus carried Eastward along the great caravan routes to India, China and Japan, and from India by sea to Java and Bali.

The essential spiritual idea of the *Mantras*, in its passage through many countries and times was liable to become blurred or misunderstood, but the *mudrā* formed a *franca-lingua*, like the notes of music or the figures of mathematics, understood by all, and thus may often have been the most authentic expression of the rite. In the case of Bali, the native ' *Veda* ' -books are so corrupt that co-relation of their *mantras* with the original Sanskrit is extremely difficult. The *Mudrās* given in the present work may, therefore, prove the surest means of identification, when at some future date they are systematically compared with the *Mudrās* and their accompanying *Mantras* in use among other Buddhist and Hindu communities.

In the two series of Buddhist and Hindu (Shaivite) *mudrās* here illustrated, the earlier pictures deal with the consecration of the cult-implements, then of the various parts of the Officiant's person, thus leading to the consummation of the ceremony, symbolic Union (*Yoga*), with the Universal Spirit of the Cosmos. In the Buddhist series, there seems to be some correspondence with the rites given in a book entitled *The*



attainment of *Samādhī*, or super-conscious Union with Shiva (*Yoga*).

In the Buddhist practices of Tibet, Japan and Bali, each syllable of a *Mantra* is associated with a particular Colour, as for example in the above-mentioned Mantra '*Om.ma.ni.pa.dme.hum*,' where OM is white, MA is blue, NI is yellow, PAD is green, ME is red, and HUM is black. And to each finger is also assigned a colour, a sound, an element, and for some of them even, a Celestial Guardian. All these designedly constitute cross-checks to secure the right transmission of the Spiritual Idea expressed in the *Mantra* and the *Mudrā*; but of these the *Mudrā* is apparently the least variable of the three means of expression, thought, speech, and gesture.

A. J. D. CAMPBELL,

*Assistant-Keeper in the Indian Section of  
the Victoria and Albert Museum London.*



## MUDRĀS

### *Meaning of the Word.*

The language of the hands is probably the oldest in the world, its traditions reaching further back than those of the spoken word. As a means of expression there probably existed a symbolic and conventional art of gesture, before any artistic attempts in stone, clay, wood, or colours had been made.

In some parts of the world this symbolic language of gesture still survived, after the human mind had found the way to express itself also through words, art and music ; and it continued to develop parallel with the other means of expression. It is certain that in the most ancient rituals hand-movements played a great rôle. In some parts of the East they developed through the ages into the system of the so-called MUDRĀS.

'*Mudra*' is a Sanskrit word which means 'seal.' The designation of ritual hand-gestures by this word originates from a time, when the priests used to pronounce certain *mantras* (i.e., letters or syllables, which were supposed to produce a magic effect), at the same time accompanying the sound by imitating





the corresponding Sanskrit characters with their fingers, thus *sealing* the magic. With the higher Initiates this grew into a complicated and secret language, or rather languages ; for, after having abandoned the Sanskrit *motif*, the *mudrā* system diverged into different forms in different countries, as in Tibet, India and Japan. At a later date it was the Buddhist priests, in particular, who cultivated the use of *mudrās*.

### *Bali.*

One but little known place, where the ritual of *mudrās* has attained a remarkably high development, uncontaminated by missionary or other influences, is the small island of Bali, in the East Indian Archipelago. It is situated directly to the East of Java, eight and nine degrees south of the Equator, covering an area of about 2,095 square miles, with a population of rather more than one million inhabitants. This population is of mixed race, comprising Polynesian, Javanese and Hindu strains.

Some centuries ago Bali was populated by a Polynesian people called the Bali-ago. Their religion was purely animistic. The whole of nature was populated with spirits : *devas*, good or indifferent spirits ; and *kalas* or *butas*, evil spirits.

When Muhammadanism conquered Java in the fifteenth century (1478 A.D.), and the ancient Hindu





dynasty of Majapāhit had fallen, that part of the Javanese people which was unwilling to exchange its Hindu civilisation, religion and art for those of Islam, fled to Bali. The lower classes alone remained, who, having no culture to save, were thus indifferent to the change. The emigrants to Bali included the best elements of the Javanese nation: the Brahmins, carrying their sacred books into safety; the Hindu and Buddhist priests of different ranks; the princely families and the aristocracy; and, lastly, the artists, since Islam prohibits the representation of any living form in its art.

These settled in Bali, where Islam did not penetrate. Even to-day, there are only a few small villages in Bali, where Muhammadanism of a special type called 'Bali-islam,' prevails.

The indigenous inhabitants, the Bali-ago, were at first treated as slaves by the new invaders. At a later date they were given their freedom and gradually mingled and blended with the Javanese. This accounts for the fact that the Javanese of Bali, despite their acceptance of the four-caste system of the Hindus, with the rest of their religion, did not apply it so strictly as was the case in those lands, India and Persia, where it was maintained in its sharp-cut purity.

Thus in Bali a man may marry any woman of his own caste, a lower caste, or even of an out-caste, and



the children belong to the caste of the father. But a woman may only marry a man of her own caste or of a higher one. In former times a woman marrying a man of a lower caste than her own was sentenced to death. Nowadays she has to submit to some less severe punishment, beside losing her own caste.

The Javanese had been accustomed to obtain their priests from India and this practice continued after their settlement in Bali. The Hindu priests remained on the island and married, thus introducing the Hindu type, which is still prominent among the Brahmin caste of Bali.

The blending of these three elements, Hindu, Javanese and Polynesian, created a human type, nobler and more intelligent than that of Java. The Balinese possess great physical beauty, being tall, slender, and very graceful, with skins of a fine, bronze-brown colour. Their long black hair is often wavy, unlike the horse-hair straightness of Malay and Javanese hair.

Their character is gentle and good-natured, happy and open-minded, full of humour and childlike playfulness. A prominent feature, especially among the men, is a childish vanity, a desire to adorn themselves, to please and to look beautiful in daily life, as well as in their dances and pageants. This tendency





is combined with a great artistic sense in general. The art of the Balinese as it appears in their temple-architecture, sculpture, painting, handicrafts, and most of all, in their acting and dancing, is of a high standard. It is strongly conventionalised, and closely adheres to its old traditions, which explains why Bali has no individual art, but only a pronounced Balinese style, which has remained the same for centuries. Art and religion are closely connected. Religion plays a very important part in the life of the Balinese and enters into everything they do.

### *Personal Experiences.*

It was in order to study the sacred dances of Bali, that I landed on this island in 1920.

In Java, when a guest at the wedding of the Prince of Mangkunegaran to the daughter of the Sultan of Jokyakarta, I met the Rajah of Bali, Gusti Bagoos Jilantic. He had come to Java for the wedding, bringing with him some Balinese actors and dancers to perform. On this occasion I was struck by the very high artistic value of these scarcely-known dances, peculiar to this small island, where the symbolism of gesture and movement, especially of the hands, has attained a rarely high development. I then decided to make a closer study of





these dances and went to Bali in order to remain there for some time.

By staying in Bali, studying its sacred dances and being present at many temple-festivals, I also had the opportunity of witnessing the temple-ceremonies performed by their priests, or so-called *pedandas*, and I was specially fascinated by their *mudrās*. Having inquired at the Dutch Government's library in Batavia for any literature upon Balinese *mudrās*, I was informed that no such books existed, as the subject had never been studied. Some twenty-five years ago the Musée Guimet of Paris, published a volume on the *mudrās* used by two of the Buddhist sects of Japan.\* This is about the only exhaustive work on any sort of *mudrās* existing, but it contains no comparative study on *mudrās* in general.

After having made rough sketches and notes of *mudrās* exactly as I had observed them during the temple services, I became increasingly attracted by this subject. I tried to approach the priests in order to get them to demonstrate their *mudrās* slowly, so as to get an exact idea of each of them separately. I was determined not to leave Bali until I had got the

\* Si-đo-in-dzou. Gestes de l'officiant dans les cérémonies mystiques des sectes Tendai et Singon (Bouddhisme japonais). D'après le commentaire de M. Horiou Toki, supérieur du temple de Mitran-dji. Avec annotation et introduction par L. de Milloué, Conservateur du Musée Guimet. Paris 1899.





priests to pose for me and to unveil the secret symbols of their *mudrās*.

This proved to be a very difficult task, beset with obstacles of all kinds. Although the Balinese in general are a polite and hospitable people, the *Pedandas* showed themselves very reserved, sometimes obviously hostile, as soon as they got to know my intentions or suspected them.

Then I applied to Gusti Bagoos Jilantic, the Rajah of Bali, who had on various occasions politely offered me his services, in case there should be anything he could do for me. Now I went to him and told him my greatest desire: to paint two *Pedandas*—one, a priest of Buddha, and one, a priest of Shiva—in their full attire and with all their cult-implements; to get them to pose for me and to demonstrate their *mudrās*, explaining their hidden, symbolical meaning.

A few days later the Rajah, courteous as ever, invited me to his palace to meet two *Pedandas*, who were going to pose for me. This was repeated several times, and I filled pages and pages in my sketch-books with studies from these *Pedandas*. But after some time I discovered that it was all wasted work, for the *Pedandas* had intentionally deceived me. The draping of their garments and ribbon, the crossing of their feet, the arrangement of their cult-implements and the





*mudrās* themselves—all deviated from what I had noted in their temple ceremonies. As the Balinese are full of humour, the priests themselves enjoyed the excellent joke of misleading me, whilst fulfilling their purpose of keeping their secrets to themselves. It was the countenances of the surrounding children and servants that first aroused my suspicions. Then, comparing my studies from the posing models with my notes made in the temples, I found out their imposture. There was nothing else to be done than to destroy the erroneous studies and begin anew.

At a festival in the Rajah's palace I met the PUNGAVAS of Bali, who are native chiefs over one district. One of them, the Pungava of Sidemen, invited me to come and stay as a guest at his residence, far in the interior of the island, and high up in the mountains, a place far removed from all external influences. He offered to show me the beautiful dances and pageants of his village people. And he gave me to understand that through him I could obtain the opportunity of knowing a good deal about the *Pedandas* and their mysteries, as he himself belonged to the Brahmin caste (unlike most Pungavas, who belong to the Kshatryas) and had many relatives among the priests. With the habitual vanity of all the Balinese, he expected me to paint beautiful pictures of him and





to present them to him, as well as to write about him in the European papers. I accepted his invitation, and after one whole day's adventurous and fatiguing journey on horse-back, arrived at his remote hill-station. Here the very best clay hut and some servants were placed at my disposal, and I availed myself of his kind hospitality for some time.

The Sidemen people were genuine. Some of them had never been outside their district and had never seen a white person before. They were all thoroughly friendly and good-humoured during my stay. Through the Pungava I made the acquaintance of many of the local *Pedandas*. This time I was careful not to show myself too inquisitive at first, but tried rather to arouse their curiosity about Christian ritual. The Roman Catholic ceremonial especially, seemed to interest them, because of its many analogies with their own. On scraps of paper I used to make sketches for them, representing churches, altars, Catholic priests in their vestments and with their cult-implements, etc., etc., which they eagerly examined and discussed. In return they gradually began to tell me about and to show me their own, and I was careful not to let them deceive me again. But my new friends did not attempt to do this. We became on the best of terms; they were open and trustful and even willingly posed for me in their ritual attitudes and *mudrās*. As a result I left





Sidemen with over a hundred sketches and studies, part of which I used later, after having made sure that they corresponded with my further studies in other parts of Bali. The erroneous studies were all destroyed, and those that I was not certain of, I marked with a sign of interrogation, keeping them by me, but not using them.

Soon after this, I had a still better opportunity of pursuing my studies of the *mudrās*, this time in a most comfortable way. I met a Dutch Government official, Mr. P. de Kat Angelino, residing at Gianjar, in Bali. He had been living on this island for eight years, knew both the Balinese and their language intimately, and was exceedingly popular among them. Beside his official work he had ethnological interests and had been studying and writing about the social and religious life of the Balinese. I, being a foreigner in the Dutch Colonies, and having no means of proving whether my studies were ethnologically reliable, in a subject so little explored, thought it wise to get some local authority to approve them; so with this object in view, I showed my work to Mr. de Kat Angelino. As my subject was closely related to his own lines of research, he became deeply interested and offered me his assistance in my further studies. Mr. and Mrs. de Kat Angelino invited me to come and stay at their house in Gianjar, as there was no other





accommodation for travellers in the place. For ten days I enjoyed their hospitality, during which time everything was made as easy and comfortable as possible; they got excellent priest models to come to their home to pose for me and to give me valuable information about their ritual. Among these visitors were several high Initiates, whilst my *Pedanda* friends in Sidemen had been but priests of ordinary rank.

One Buddhist priest lent Mr. de Kat Angelino his 'Veda books' (a Balinese corruption of the real Hindu Vedas), which threw a new light on this peculiar blend of Buddhism and Hinduism. Some priests of Shiva lent him their sacred books used by priests. One SENGGUHU (exorcist, Pl. pp. 59-60) gave him a copy of his *Mantras*. It was far from easy to get the *Pedandas* to reveal their secrets—even in a very limited degree—and it required exceptional tact and skill on the part of Mr. de Kat Angelino. Other persons who were of great help to us were a native Prince, I Deva Ngurah Agung, the Ruler of Gianjar, and a native chief, the Pungava (Chief) of Ubut, not far from Gianjar. They both gave their assistance in a friendly and generous way.

Unfortunately, however, Mr. de Kat Angelino soon after had to leave for Europe on account of his health, and was thus forced to interrupt





these studies which had fascinated him more and more. Very much of the technical information upon the *mudrās* and ceremonial, in this Preface, was obtained from him.

The language of the above-mentioned Balinese Vedas and other sacred books was a mixture of corrupt Sanskrit, old Javanese (*Kawi*) and modern Balinese, and presented great difficulties to Mr. de Kat Angelino in interpreting them. In 1922 he met in Holland a Javanese scholar, Raden Ngabehi Purbatjaraka, a great oriental linguist, attached to the University of Leiden, through whose knowledge it became possible to translate these Balinese Veda-books and to throw light on many obscure points in this religion.

This small book is not meant to be anything more than a short and incomplete introduction to the subject of *mudrās* in Bali—that small island where the ancient ritual gestures of the two great Indian religions have been, perhaps, preserved by tradition in greater purity than in any other part of the East.



*Pedandas.*

The majority of the Balinese priests or so-called *Pedandas* would class themselves as priests of Shiva, the rest as Buddhist priests. But in Bali Buddhism and Shivaism differ very little from each other, both having assumed peculiar forms, differing from the earlier and purer forms of these religions which were brought over by the Hindus. Both have assimilated elements from the Polynesian animism of the aboriginal Bali-ago. The religion of the Balinese lay-population is neither Buddhism nor Shivaism, but remains to-day, as in the past, a nearly pure animism. For the people, the whole of nature is thronged with *devas* and *butas*—good and evil spirits—which they worship, erecting temples and shrines to them, and appeasing and bribing them with offerings. They know nothing of the secret rites of the *Pedandas*, and do not try to penetrate them. But they honour and reverence their *Pedandas* as superhuman beings ; and they even fear them, believing the *Pedandas* to be possessed of magic powers.

The *Pedandas* sell holy-water, the so-called *Toja-tirta*, to the people ; they lead in the temple-festivals and at the ceremonies connected with cremation ; they are physicians ; they act as judges at the native law-courts ; and they are teachers, especially for the sons of princes.



According to de Kat Angelino, a young man who wishes to become a *Pedanda*, must begin early to study the sacred books, which are accessible to any Balinese. The priest-aspirants usually study them for many years and are no longer young when they become priests. Certain restrictions in the priestly life and diet also deter the Balinese from becoming priests, until they have first enjoyed their youth—for anything in the nature of asceticism is uncongenial to the Balinese character! After prolonged study, and as soon as he decides to become a *Pedanda*, the aspirant applies to a Guru, or teacher, who adopts him as his son. In due course, he is consecrated and enters holy orders with many ceremonies.

There are also priestesses, the so-called *Pedanda-Istri* (Pl. pp. 40-41), who are allowed to marry none but a priest; a priest, however, may marry any woman.

The *Pedandas* for the most part belong to the Brahmin caste, although this is not an absolute necessity. It is, however, the general rule, especially with the Buddhist priests, who take a higher rank than the priests of Shiva.

In everyday life a Buddhist priest is recognisable by his short-cut hair and by a fresh flower worn over each ear; a priest of Shiva by his long hair tied up in



a knot, into which fresh flowers are stuck. In the temple ceremonies the so-called *Maveda*, the Buddhist and Shaivite priests read different *vedas* and *mantras*, perform different *mudrās*, and some of their cult-implements differ.

### *Cult-Implements.*

Most of the ritual implements of the Balinese *Pedandas* have analogies with those used in other ritualistic religions. For instance, there is a remarkable analogy with those of the Roman Catholic Church; both Bali and Rome have the censer, the chalice, the rosary, the hand-bell, holy-water, and the small, lighted oil-lamp. Both wear white when officiating; whilst, the *stola* of Rome corresponds with the *Selimpet* of Bali—that broad, black or white band worn by the *Pedanda* over his left shoulder, which is twisted round his breast and hangs down in front and behind. The Catholic mitre may perhaps be compared with the Balinese *bavah* of crimson cloth (Pl. pp. 30-39).

Beside the above-mentioned objects the Balinese Buddhist priests have the *Badjra* (the *vajra* of Tibet), representing the thunderbolt of Indra (Pl. pp. 4-5, in the priest's left hand). It is of brass with the ends formed of four inturned darts around a central straight dart.





Another implement in the Buddhist priest's outfit, not found in that of the Shaivite priest, is the *canti*, a sort of brass flag on a stand, which is turned toward the four cardinal points during the murmuring of prayers and *mantras*. The Buddhist priests also employ small cups of varying shape and material, sometimes of silver and gold incrustated with precious stones, to hold rice-grains and scented powder used with the *mudrās*. In place of the Buddhist priests' cup, the priests of Shiva use the *Sivamba* (= 'Shiva's water'), and a *lota*-like glass bowl containing holy-water, the *toja-tirta*, which they sprinkle on the people with the *sesirat* (Pl. pp. 34-35). The latter is made either of silver or of bamboo, grass or the leaves of the lontar-palm, sometimes with a fresh flower stuck on it. One of the small cups, next to the *sivamba*, contains powdered *chendana* wood, which is thrown on the burning censer, the *phasepan*, to make a sweet scent. The brass lamp, the *pedipan* (Pl. pp. 32-33), filled with cocoanut oil, is mostly used on grand occasions, when the *Pedanda* wears his full attire. It is also called *Surya* (= 'the sun'), and is decorated with a *Nāga* (cobra) and a small bull (*Nandi*).

The cult-implements are arranged in strictly prescribed order in front of the *Pedanda*, as shown in the drawings; with the priests of Shiva, they are on





two dishes or tazza-stands, except the brass bell (*Ghanta*), which has its place on a basket or wooden box at his left side ; with the Buddhist priests they are placed on a small table, the *rarapan* (Pl. pp. 8-15 and 18-21), or on both the *rarapan* and the two tazza-dishes, or else they rest directly on the ground.

The Shaivite priests wear a string of the holy *Alang-alang* grass tied round the head during the *maveda*.

Peculiar to Bali is the great rôle played by fresh flowers in the religious ceremonies. Many of the *mudrās* are performed with a bloom between the fingers, and after each *mudrā* the blooms are flicked towards the four points of the compass, until the surrounding ground becomes sprinkled with petals. A little time before the beginning of the *maveda* the flowers are picked, generally by some member of the priest's own family, or, at any rate, of his own caste. The most sacred flower used for this purpose is the *Champaka* (Pl. p. 48), yellow or white, the shape of which recalls the edelweiss of Switzerland ; it grows, however, on high trees ; then there are also the sweet-scented *Camboja*, the *Kenyan*, the *Jempeering* and the crimson *Hybiscus*.

Night flowers are used in the Temples of Death, dedicated to Batara (goddess) Durga, the demon of destruction. When a *Pedanda* prays at night, he also uses night flowers.





*Maveda.*

Reading the *maveda*,—i.e., the saying of prayers and *mantras* accompanied by *mudrās*—takes place early every morning in the *Pedanda*'s own open-air oratory (Pl. p. 58), and very often later in the day in some village temple. After having made his ablutions and dressed in his white linen garment, the *Pedanda* sits down, cross legged, on a mat or cushion, his face turned eastward, on his lap a prayer-napkin (corresponding to the 'mappula' of the Catholic priests) which is sometimes white, sometimes of *prada*. This is of red or coloured silk, with ornaments of leaf-gold glued on by hand. He begins by consecrating the water, which thus becomes the *toja-tirta* ('holy water').

During the *maveda* the priest's head, body and legs remain immovable as a statue, and his eyes are half closed, while only his arms and hands move. In a half-singing voice he murmurs passages from the Balinese *vedas*; and also *mantras*, which are magic formulæ composed of sounds and syllables, accompanied at the same time by the *mudrā* proper to them. The recitation of the *maveda* may last from twenty minutes up to three hours, and the *Pedanda* may use only a small part of the *mudrās* existing.





*The Drawings.* (The numbers refer to the *pages* of the illustrations at the end of the book.)

In the following drawings the *mudrās*, where the hands are wide apart, are represented by the whole figure, each pose being viewed from the front and from the side. For those *mudrās* where the hands are close together, the hands alone are drawn, also as seen from the front and from the side. Pl. pp. 3-29 represent the *mudrās* of the Buddhist priests; 30-61 those of the priests of Shiva.

1. Frontispiece (see Album, p. 30).

3. At the cremation of a prince a white cotton band is fastened to the corpse, lying on the bamboo erection (*vadah*), which is to be set on fire. This ribbon hangs down to the ground, and thus symbolises the tie still binding the man's soul to the earth. The soul is not supposed to leave the body until the particular moment when the flames begin to devour it. This band has the shape of a *Nāga* (snake). When the *vadah* is lit, a Buddhist-priest with a bow shoots four flower-pointed arrows towards the four points of the compass, and then one arrow on to the *Nāga's* head. At the very moment when the band is shot away, the soul is set free.



According to Purbatjaraka, the Buddhist priest here represents Kama, the god of love, shooting off his flower-decorated arrows.

4-5. The *Pedanda* takes up the hand-bell (*ghanta*) and the double 'thunderbolt' sceptre (*vajra*), originally a symbol of the Hindu god, Indra.

6-7. The *Pedanda* dips a flower in the *toja-tirta* (holy-water), contained in the *sivamba*, in order to sprinkle it on himself, on the people and on the surrounding ground.

8 to 13. Different *mudrās* with the rosary or *genitri*, made of fruit-stones or of glass beads; in the middle it has a glass *linga*. Generally it has 108 stones or beads.

14-17. Rest- and meditation- *mudrās*, repeated between others, in order to collect new powers.

18-19. The *Vajraraksa mudrā*.

20-23. Not ascertained.

24. (1) The name of this *mudrā* is *musti*, as far as I know the only *mudrā* common to Buddhist and Shaivite *Pedandas*. Different explanations of its meaning are given. One priest of Shiva told me, the



joining of the three fingers meant *Trimurti*, the trinity of Brahmā, Vishnu and Shiva. A Buddhist priest told me, it meant the joining of the masculine and feminine principle. (But possibly it symbolises the *Tri-ratna*, i.e., Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. A.C.)

30-39. The first five poses of the priests of Shiva represent them in full canonicals, such as are used on great occasions at festivals in temples, or in princely houses, etc. They wear rosaries and strings of beads round their bodies, wrists and ears. The five variations of the *bahva* (mitre), represented here, were collected by me in different parts of Bali. The dark part of the *bavah* is of crimson cloth. The light part is of gilded buffalo-hide, except in Pl. pp. 38-39, where it is of hammered sheet gold. In Pl. pp. 30-31, the golden part is mounted with small red stones, or '*merahs*' (a sort of jade?) often used by the Balinese on *kris*-handles, etc.

30-31. NYANGKEPIN. The *Pedanda* holds the *ghanta* (bell) over the incense in order to purify it through the magic of fire, before he begins ringing.

32-33. NARPANA-MANTRA. A *mudrā* reserved for great occasions.

34-35. MESIRAT. The *Pedanda* dips the *sesirat* in the *toja-tirta* and sprinkles it around him.



36-37. TRITATTVA-MUDRĀ. Resembles the Buddhist *mudrā* in Pl. pp. 14-15, but is executed with the opposite hands.

38-39. TATKARASODHANA. Purifying the hands. A symbolical action for driving out the impurity through the finger-tips (for the congregation). The *Pedanda* rubs along each finger, repeating a different formula for each of them. Compare Pl. p. 55.

40-41. NGAGEM GHANTA—NGAGEM PUSPA. Corresponds to Pl. pp. 4-5, the Buddhist priest using the *vajra*, where the priest of Shiva uses the *puspa*, or flower. This drawing represents a *Pedanda-istri*, or priestess. The priestesses perform exactly the same *mudrās* as the priests ; only the position of the legs differs, owing to the custom, that Balinese women do not sit with crossed legs like the men.

42-43. MUTER GENITRI. The *Pedanda* draws the *genitri* (rosary) thrice through his hands : once for the breath, once for the voice, once for the spirit. This is called *Dhyāna-yoga*. (Union by contemplation.)

44-45. PRANA\*-YĀMĀ (=Breath-control). This Balinese *mudrā* is called by the same name as the breathing exercise in the Hindu Raja- and Hatha-yoga

\* Prāṇā is not strictly Breath, but the vital-energy in the breath. It is the Energy in the Universe. A.C.



systems, where it plays a very great part in acquiring occult psychic powers. This regulation of the breath is done by closing one nostril with two fingers while evenly and silently drawing-in the air through the other; retaining the breath as long as possible; and then closing the other nostril while breathing-out through the first. During *maveda*, the *Pedanda* does not do the breathing itself, but only makes the gesture of it. This is repeated four times: his two fingers touch first one nostril, then the other, then the tip of his nose twice.

46-47. NITIP-TOJA. The *Pedanda* drinks a few drops of the *toja-tirta* from the hollow of his hand, in order to purify himself internally (for the congregation).

48-49. NGILI-ATMA. The *Pedanda* takes a white champaka-flower with both his hands, touches his body with it, describes half a circle upward through the air and places the flower in his hair. The flower symbolises the soul. The seat of a man's soul is believed to be his stomach. The seat of a god's soul is his head. While reading his *maveda* the *Pedanda* identifies himself with Shiva and becomes a god for the time. (*Dhyāna-yoga*.) This is symbolised by removing his soul (the flower) from his stomach to his head. After the *maveda* is finished, the *Pedanda*



reverses the *mudrā*, receiving the human soul again in its proper dwelling-place, the stomach. He then flicks the flower away and becomes a man again.

50 (1). NGAGEM-SEKAR. The same *mudrā* without the flower is called 'musti' (Pl. p. 24, 1). The priest of Shiva first holds a flower over the incense, then forms the *mudrā* with his hands saying the *mantra*, and finally flicks the flower away. He repeats this four times towards the four points of the compass. (? The preliminary purification of the soul.)

50 (2). NGAGEM SEKAR—NGAGEM GHANTA. Compare Pl. pp. 40-41.

51 (1 and 2). TALA BEDANA. 1, Shiva creates heaven; 2, Shiva creates earth.

52 (1). NGILI ATMA or MERTA KRANA. The *Pedanda* takes a flower, and dips it in the rice (representing vital power), and in the sweet-scented *chendana* powder. Then he holds it first over the incense, and then between his interlaced fingers, while he pronounces the *mantra*. (2) NUNTUN ATMA. Then he turns it downwards and throws the consecrated flower into the *sivamba* (holy-water vessel).

53 (1). BANG NETRA. Consecration of the eyes.  
(2). KEPOK PETIK. Clapping the hands.



54 (1). NARACA. (2). MABASMA. The *Pedanda* takes some sacred *chendana*-wood powder in his left hand, murmuring a *mantra*, then dips one finger of his right hand in it and touches himself on the top of his head, between his eye-brows, on the front of his neck, on his two shoulders, two elbows and on other joints, thus preparing his body for union (*yoga*) with Shiva.

55 (1 and 2). TATKARASODHANA. Compare Pl. pp. 38-39. It is sometimes done with a flower, sometimes without. The *Pedanda* strikes along the inner side of his hand and along each finger separately, in order to drive out the impurity through each finger-tip. This is done for the congregation, as the *Pedanda* himself is already pure.

56 (1). SIVIKRANA. The union (*yoga*) of man with the god Shiva. (2). ANTESANA.

57 (1). NENGARAGHANTA. Preparation for ringing the Prayer-bell. It counts as a distinct *mudrā* from the actual ringing of the bell (*ghanta*). After having sprinkled the *ghanta* with holy-water, the *Pedanda*, generally with a bloom between the fingers of his right hand, strikes the clapper thrice against the bell, until he starts it ringing. As long as the bell is ringing





he sings his prayers instead of murmuring them.  
(2). AGHORA. The opening lotus? The *mantra* accompanying this *mudrā* is : 'Glory to the one who does not inspire fear.' (*Aum am aghoraya namah.*)

58. A Shaivite *Pedanda*, after the daily morning service in his own oratory, receiving village people, who come to buy *toja-tirta* and to have their hands sprinkled with it.

60-61. A SENGGUHU, or Exorcist. He is a priest of the *Sudra* (peasant) caste, who's profession is to expel *butas* and *kalas* (evil spirits). While he is reading the *maveda*, in the same way as a *Pedanda*, some boys or young men, usually his sons, make noises with special instruments, used only for the purpose, in order to frighten away the *butas*. The instruments represented are : (1) the *Sanhka*, or conch-shell ; (2) *Kul putih*, a small drum (*damaru*) with lead pellets fastened to leather thongs, which hit against the drum-skins by swinging the drum ; (3) the *ghantarang*, a chime of bells.

62. A separate drawing of the GHANTARANG.



## PLATES

















































































































































































































































