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The Language of Gesture

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COLLECTANEA.

THE LANGUAGE OF GESTURE.

(*Folk-Lore*, vol. xxx., p. 312 *et seq.*)

WITH reference to Mr. H. A. Rose's note on "The Language of Gesture," it may be of interest to say that Bengali dictionaries commonly cite and describe the 22 commonest *mudrās* used by Hindus when praying, bathing, and performing other ceremonial rites.

These are as follows :—

- (1) *aṅkuṣa*, "elephant goad"; palm presented upwards; forefinger curved.
- (2) *dhenu*, "milch cow"; hands joined upwards, palm to palm; thumbs and fingers touching, but fore and middle finger of right hand and third and little finger of right hand crossed.
- (3) *nārāṇa*, "iron arrow"; palm presented, forefinger straight; others bent.
- (4) *kūrma*, "tortoise"; right hand superposed on left; palms downwards; right forefinger touches left thumb; tip of right little finger touches tip of left forefinger; other three fingers of left hand close round right hand.
- (5) *avagunṭhana*, "veil"; right hand with palm downwards; forefinger extended but slightly bent; other fingers closed.
- (6) *gālinī* (meaning not given); left hand superposed on back of right hand, fingers extended and separated, in contact with those of right hand.
- (7) *matsya*, "fish"; left hand superposed as above, but the two thumbs sticking out on each side; fingers of upper hand superposed on those of lower hand.

- (8) *cakra*, "wheel"; hands clenched, thumbs incurved; knuckles of the two hands touching.
- (9) *śankha*, "conch"; fingers of right hand clasping thumb of left hand; fingers of left hand placed straight upwards against knuckles of right hand.
- (10) *gada*, "club"; tips of forefingers joined, thumbs and other fingers closed.
- (11) *padma*, "lotus"; the two hands curved and approached to each other to indicate the globular form of the lotus.
- (12) *leliḥā*, "serpent" (?); thumb and forefinger touching; little finger extended.
- (13) *āvāhani*, "inviting"; hands joined at edge, palms upwards, thumbs turned inwards over palms.
- (14) *sannidhāppanī*, "approaching"; fists closed and brought together, knuckle to knuckle.
- (15) *sambodhi*, "addressing"; similar, but thumbs bent under fingers.
- (16) *sammukhikarāṇa*, "presenting"; palms upwards, hands side by side, fingers bent, enclosing thumbs.
- (17) *yoni*, "vulva"; thumbs side by side downwards, little fingers curved so as to show tips on each side of thumbs.
- (18) *triśula*, "trident"; three middle fingers of right hand raised; thumb and little finger bent.
- (19) *vara*, "boon"; right hand held downwards with palm presented, thumb and fingers straight.
- (20) *abhaya*, "fearless"; left hand raised, palm presented; fingers straight.
- (21) *mṛga*, "deer"; left hand held out; middle finger and thumb straight, other fingers bent.
- (22) *sthāpanī*, "depositing"; same as *āvāhani*, but with hand held downwards.

Perhaps some Hindu member of the Society will kindly explain what the ritual meaning of these gestures is.

J. D. ANDERSON.