

MUDRAS

FOR AWAKENING THE FIVE ELEMENTS



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INTRODUCTION

M*udras for Awakening the Five Elements* is a unique deck of 40 colorful cards illustrating 35 mudras and 5 element cards. Mudras are subtle hand gestures commonly used in yoga and meditation practices to direct energy and expand consciousness. The mudras chosen for this deck were specifically selected to awaken the energy of the five elements within. It has been widely recognized that mudras deliver numerous benefits for both physical and mental health. Many positive results that can be obtained through the practice of mudras include reducing anxiety and supporting the immune system for more vibrant health and wellness. By directing the breath and awareness, mudras can deliver healing and energy to particular areas of the human body.

Practicing mudras offers us an important avenue for affecting the mind and emotions in positive ways. Some of these benefits include greater mental clarity, peacefulness and optimism. Many find it amazing that you can change your outlook, your health and your mood with these simple hand gestures. Mudras are portable and perfect for multi-tasking—but do take time to practice and become aware of sensations as they arise. It can take just a few minutes anytime of the day to

recharge, renew and balance energy. They are amazing tools for assisting in shifting your body and mind in a simple and easy way. Mudras allow us to create a space for healing our physical bodies as well as to awaken the five elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space (Ether).

AWAKENING THE FIVE ELEMENTS

The concept of the five elements has deep roots in many systems of healing, spirituality, philosophy and science. For thousands of years, man has acknowledged his connection to and affinity with nature. When we speak about awakening the five elements, we are offering ourselves an invitation to connect to the Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space (or Ether) within us. According to yoga philosophy, everything is created from and everything contains the five elements. The five elements are regarded as the building blocks of all matter—each with unique qualities and attributes.

The Indian holistic system of healing medicine known as *Ayurveda* teaches that we are a microcosm, and there is a universe within each of us. We are also influenced by the external environment, the macrocosm.

Simply put, we are all composed of our own unique combination of Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. In this way, we are also affected by the outer elements as we experience them. The phrases “she’s really grounded” or “he has his head in the clouds” are familiar references to how we manifest our unique five-element selves. People with a lot of Earth and Water (they may be solid, grounded, move a bit slower and be more down to earth) may need to add a little more Air and Space elements so that they can lighten up. In the outer world, it might mean more heart-opening yoga, invigorating breath work, or spending time hiking to the top of a mountain. Practicing specific mudras can be an easy way to assist this balance as well. Finding the balance within is as important as finding balance in your outside environment. The inner elements are affected by the outer elements.

Mudras for Awakening the Five Elements deck and book set is designed to work alongside our first mudra deck, *Mudras for Awakening the Energy Body*. Together these decks offer a rich resource of mudras for activating the energy body through the centers called chakras and enlivening the five elements. You will find endless ways to blend the two decks and create many possible combinations, intuitive insights and self-healing practices. The cards are presented in similar

format and can inspire you to mix and match mudras for elements and chakras in your own, individual way.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY OF MUDRAS

Mudras are described as gestures, attitudes or symbols expressed through the hands, body or face. In traditional usage, mudra expressions expand the breath, consciousness, and energy systems of the user. There are hundreds of mudras from the spiritual traditions of India and Tibet. Many of these are mudras for the hands, but also include gestures of the eyes, face and body. Commonly used in the practice of yoga and meditation as a tool to channel higher energies into the body, mudras are very often paired with *pranayama* (breath work), *asana* (physical postures) and recitation of mantras. Many spiritual traditions depict the great masters holding a hand mudra, which we have come to associate with wisdom and knowledge. The *Gayatri Mantra* (a sacred Sanskrit chant) is supported through a specific series of hand mudras that are used before and after recitation. In fact, hand mudras are used in religious, spiritual and artistic traditions throughout the world.

3. FIRE ELEMENT

Tejas

Yoga Poses: Standing squat, Plank, Boat pose

Sense: Sight

Energy Center: Solar plexus chakra

Symbols: Lion, Ram, Snake, Yellow triangle, Sunlight and
Candle flame

Rules: Digestive system, Stomach, Spleen and Pancreas

Qualities: Heating, Transforming, Intense, Light
and Energetic

Practice: Balancing the Fire element is vital to our digestive health, energy and drive. Many people find their Fire element out of balance—too much Fire can bring digestive distress and aggressive behavior and too little Fire leaves us unmotivated and lacking direction. Vigorous activity such as running and cycling can ignite our physical energy. Breath work, sun gazing and inner-light meditation can also inspire the light to shine. Listening to energizing music, eating ginger, turmeric and warming foods all can stimulate your inner fire. Choose any of the Fire element cards to ignite your own flame.