Meaning of Buddha’s Poses

Nearly every Buddha image is made in one of these postures which one can easily be identified by the position of the hands. Each of these positions can be associated with a moment in the Buddha’s life that has an important lesson.

**Dispelling Fear**  The Buddha hand is raised with the palm facing outwards and fingers extended in a universal gesture of protection, benevolence, and peace.

**Teaching**  The Buddha hand is raised with the palm facing outwards and index finger forming a circle with the thumb.

**Teaching the First Sermon**  Both of the Buddha hands are together at the chest with fingers on one hand forming a circle representing the “wheel of law” and the other touches the wheel to set it in motion which symbolizes the beginning of Buddhist teaching.

**Meditation**  Both the Buddha hands are resting together on the lap. This gesture represents the perfect balance of thought and tranquility.

**Calling the Earth to Witness**  With both palms inwards, the right hand of the Buddha touches the ground and “calls the earth to witness” the Buddha’s enlightenment. This gesture represents the unshakable faith and resolution and is the most common posture.

**Passage to Nirvana**  The reclining Buddha representing the Buddha’s death. This posture represents the complete peace and detachment from the world.

**Offering or Wish Granting**  Hand points down with palm facing out. This gesture represents the offering of Buddhist teaching to the world. Sometimes the teaching, and its benefit, is symbolically represented by a small piece of medicinal myroloban fruit.

See hand diagrams at: [www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/mudras.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/mudras.htm)