

## Mandala of the Five Buddhas






Mandala is ‘Circle’ in Sanskrit and here refers to a sacred geometric figure inscribed in a circle. This is usually a square, but could be a hexagon, as in the Mandala of Vajrayogini, or a series of triangles as in the Hindu “Sri Yantra”.

The Five Buddhas are said to be aspects of Shakyamuni Buddha arrayed in a mandala as a square of circles oriented to the cardinal directions, along with a central Buddha called Vairocana, the ‘Radiant’ the white light Buddha. At the bottom of the diagram is the blue Buddha, Akshobhya, the ‘Unshakeable’, in the East. To the left is the yellow Buddha, Ratnasambhava, ‘Jewel Born’ in the South. Above is the red Buddha Amitabha, ‘Boundless Light’ in the West. To the right is the green Buddha Amoghasiddhi, ‘Unobstructed Success’ in the North.



*The Five Wisdom Buddhas: centre Vairocana, top Amitabha, right Amoghasiddhi, bottom Akshobhya, left Ratnasambhava. The*

### Imagery symbolism of the five Dhyani Buddhas

Deity	Color	Direction	Gesture (mudra)	
Vairochana	white	Center	Dharmachakra Turning the Dharma-wheel (teaching)	 A white Buddha figure seated in a meditative posture, holding a golden wheel (Dharmachakra) in his right hand. He is surrounded by a white halo and sits on a lotus throne.
Akshobhya	blue	East	Bhumisparsa Earth-touching	 A blue Buddha figure seated in a meditative posture, with his right hand touching the ground. He is surrounded by a blue halo and sits on a lotus throne.
Ratnasambhava	yellow	South	Varada Bestowing, giving	 A yellow Buddha figure seated in a meditative posture, with his right hand in the Varada mudra (gesture of boon-giving). He is surrounded by a yellow halo and sits on a lotus throne.
Amitabha	red	West	Dhyana Meditation	 A red Buddha figure seated in a meditative posture, with his hands in the Dhyana mudra (gesture of meditation). He is surrounded by a red halo and sits on a lotus throne.
Amogasiddhi	green	North	Abhaya Fearlessness	 A green Buddha figure seated in a meditative posture, with his right hand in the Abhaya mudra (gesture of fearlessness). He is surrounded by a green halo and sits on a lotus throne.








The mudra that is exhibited by blue Unshakable Akshobhya is called the ‘Earth Touching’ mudra. That associated with yellow Jewel Born Ratnasambhava is the ‘Giving’ mudra. Boundless Light Amitabha has the ‘Meditation’ mudra; Unobstructed Success Amoghasiddhi has the ‘Fearlessness’ Mudra. The central Buddha Vairocana makes the ‘Teaching’ mudra (Dharma Wheel).

These 5 Buddhas have many other attributes that comprise a web of meanings. For example:

<b>Physical symbolism of the five Dhyani Buddhas</b>				
<b>Deity</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Sense</b>	<b>Medical/physical</b>	<b>Organ</b>
Vairochana	space	sight	energy channels	heart
Akshobhya	water	sound	blood flow	kidneys
Ratnasambhava	earth	smell	flesh	spleen
Amitabha	fire	taste	body heat	liver
Amogasiddhi	air	touch	inner winds	lungs

<b>Mental symbolism of the five Dhyani Buddhas</b>		
<b>Deity</b>	<b>Delusion</b>	<b>Enlightened Mind</b>
Vairochana	ignorance, delusion	All-encompassing Dharmadatu Wisdom
Akshobhya	anger, hatred	Mirror-like Wisdom
Ratnasambhava	pride, miserliness	Wisdom of Equality
Amitabha	desire, lust	Discriminating Wisdom
Amogasiddhi	jealousy, fear	All-accomplishing Wisdom

**More symbolism of the five Dhyani Buddhas**

Deity	Family symbol and family	Syllable	Vehicle	Aggregate
Vairochana	Wheel  Tathagata	OM	dragon	form (Skt. rupa)
Akshobhya	Vajra  vajra	HUM	elephant	consciousness (Skt. vijnana)
Ratnasambhava	Jewel  ratna	TRAM	horse or lion	sensation (Skt. vendana)
Amitabha	Lotus  padma	HRIH	peacock	perception (Skt. sanjna)
Amogasiddhi	Double vajra  karma	AH	Garuda	impulses (Skt. Samskara)

There are mantras for each Buddha:

Om Vairocana Hum

Om Vajra Akshobhya Hum

Om Ratnasambhava Hum

Om Amideva Hrih

Om Amoghasiddhi Ah Hum

The associate female Buddhas correspond to the 5 material elements. Thus:

Vairocana/ Vajradhatishvari- space

Akshobhya/ Locana- water

Ratnasambhava/ Mamaki- earth

Amitabha/ Pandara- fire

Amoghasiddhi/ Tara- air

Finally, there are five associated Bodhisattvas:

Vairocana-Samantabhadra

Akshobhya-Vajrapani

Ratnasambhava-Ratnapani

Amitabha-Avalokiteshvara ( Chenrezi )

Amoghsiddhi-Vishvapani

Prepared for Nalanda Institute Olympia by  
Bob Harris