India's Diwali Celebration: Lakshmi

Directions: Identify and explain the significance of each symbol found in the image of Lakshmi. Describe its relationship to the celebration of Diwali and to Indian daily-life.
ACTIVITY KEY: India's Diwali Celebration: Lakshmi

- The four arms represent four directions in space symbolizing omnipresence/omnipotence of the goddess Lakshmi.
- The four hands represent the four ends of human life: dharma/righteousness, kama/genuine desires, artha/wealth, and moksha/liberation from birth and death. The front hands represent the activity in the physical world and the back hands represent the spiritual activities that lead to spiritual fulfillment.
- Elephants represent worldly wealth. The idea is that someone who is devote to their faith should not focus on material things, but should share their wealth with others which helps people and brings personal happiness and fulfillment.
- The spraying of water and movement of hands indicates activity- doing things in service to others is important for fulfillment. Continuous self-effort, in accordance to one's beliefs/faith, will lead to both material and spiritual prosperity.
- The golden vessels denote wisdom and purity.
- Lotus flower- symbolizes being in this world, but not of this world. Enjoying life and achievements, but not becoming obsessed with it. Just as the lotus flower is in the water, but not soaked by it.