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Buddhist astrology and astral magic in the Tang Dynasty

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Chapter 5

The Sinicization of Occidental Astrology: the Ninth Century

5.1. Popular Astrology in the Late-Tang

The ninth century witnessed the popularization of astrology and its associated practices of astral magic in China, not only amongst Buddhists, but also Daoists and literati. As Chan Man Sing has pointed out, this popular interest in astrology is reflected in the works of some late-Tang poets such as Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) and Du Mu 杜牧 (803–852).¹ Han Yu in 807 wrote the following poem entitled “Way of the Three Stellar Constellations” (*San xing xing* 三星行):

我生之辰，月宿南斗。
牛奮其角，箕張其口。
牛不見服箱，斗不挹酒漿。
箕獨有神靈，無時停簸揚。
無善名以聞，無惡聲以攘。
名聲相乘除，得少失有餘。
三星各在天，什伍東西陳。
嗟汝牛與斗，汝獨不能神。

On the day I was born, the Moon lodged in the Southern Dipper.
The Ox raised its horn, and the Basket stretched wide its mouth.
The Ox does not get yoked to a cart. The Dipper does not ladle out wine.
The basket alone has spirit. At no time does it stop winnowing.
No fine name by which to be known; no ill repute for which to be rejected
Name and reputation wax and wane; gains are but few, but losses aplenty.²
The three constellations individually in the sky, fifteen stars arrayed east to west.
Alas you, Ox and Dipper! You alone are unable to be inspirited!³

This poem expresses lament over the criticism that Han Yu suffered in life. His natal lunar station⁴ is the Dipper (*Dou* 斗), though it and the following station, the Ox (*Niu* 牛),

¹ Chan Man Sing 陳萬成, “Du Mu yu xingming” 杜牧與星命, *Tang yanjiu* 唐研究 8 (2002): 61–79.

² The basket seems to represent fate, which is impartial in sorting out his allotment of fortune and misfortune (in this case, referring to his reputation). Han Yu laments his fate of having a bad reputation.

³ *Changli xiansheng ji* 昌黎先生集, fasc. 4. See *Changli xiansheng wenji* 昌黎先生文集, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1994), 123. I must thank David Pankenier for helping me translate this poem.

⁴ Here the lunar stations as they are understood in Chinese are used, but the concept of a natal sign – be it a *nakṣatra* or a zodiac sign – is from occidental astrology.

have not figuratively served his interests. The preceding station, the Basket (*Ji* 箕), is an allusion to him having constantly winnowed, or dealt with, both criticism and praise. It further suggests that while his “natal lunar station” is the Dipper, his fate is actually elsewhere. This has not gone well, for he reports few gains, but many losses. As Liu Shaojun points out, the three lunar stations are “deployed” in an uneven formation, which is an allusion to the numbers of stars that individually comprise them. The Dipper and the Ox respectively consist of six stars, but the Basket consists of four. The stars, therefore, do not serve his advantage, being in such apparent disorder. The Ox and Dipper, he laments, fail to be as active and functional as the Basket. This poem does not indicate professional knowledge of astrology, but it does incorporate the concept of one’s natal lunar station or *nakṣatra*, indicating strong contemporary influences from popular astrology.⁵ According to Chan Man Sing, such references to one’s birth constellation or lunar station in poetry were almost unknown before Han Yu.⁶ This reflects the ongoing sinicization of *nakṣatra* astrology. In this case, the Chinese lunar stations, employed as functional equivalents of the Indian *nakṣatra*–s, are creatively incorporated into Han Yu’s poem.

When Han Yu was in his twenties and thirties, Li Su was active as a court astronomer in the capital, and the *Duli yusi jing* was translated into Chinese. Han Yu was, it seems, influenced by the rising popularity of astrology in these decades.

Chan Man Sing also points out that Du Mu, another eminent poet of the late-Tang, also had an interest in astrology. His self-composed epitaph (自撰墓銘), written towards the end of his life, reflects his knowledge of horoscopy. It reads as follows:

予生於角，星昴畢於角爲第八宮，曰病厄宮，亦曰八殺宮，土星在焉，火星繼木。星工楊晞曰「木在張於角爲第十一福德宮，木爲福德，大君子救於其旁，無虞也。」予曰「自湖守不周歲遷舍人，木還福於角足矣，土火還死於角，宜哉。」

I was born under Citrā, the stars of Kṛttikā and Rohiṇī constituting the eighth house in relation to Citrā, called the house of disease and distress; also called the eighth house of slaughter. Saturn was present there. Mars followed Jupiter. The astrologer Yang Xi said, “Jupiter in Pūrvaphālgunī, constituting the eleventh house of fortune in relation to Citrā; Jupiter is fortune, a great lord assisting at one’s side. There shall be no worries.” I say, “It has not been a full year since I was transferred from Huzhou⁷ to become chamberlain. It is enough that Jupiter will return to [the house of] fortune in relation to Citrā. It is suitable that Saturn and Mars will return to [the house of] death in relation to Citrā.”⁸

⁵ Liu Shaojun 劉韶軍, *Shenmi de xingxiang* 神秘的星象 (Shuquan Chubanshe, 1994), 76–77.

⁶ Chan Man Sing, “Du Mu yu xingming,” 62.

⁷ Reading *Hu shou* 湖守 as *Huzhou* 湖州.

⁸ *Quan Tang wen*, Zhonghua Shuju edn., vol. 8, 7823.

This excerpt in particular expresses a strong belief in astrological determinism.⁹ The system being described here is that of the twelve places, a technical feature of Hellenistic astrology to which we shall later return.¹⁰ What is important to note here is that a major late-Tang poet had written a piece so rich in astrological lore, derived from originally foreign sources. This is indicative of a familiarity with astrology found amongst contemporary literati.

As further evidence of the popularity of astrology, it seems that during the ninth century the highest levels of Chinese society, even the emperor, took an interest in horoscopy. This is suggested by the case of Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933), a Daoist adept who lived through the final years of the Tang dynasty.¹¹ Many of his writings are extant. Of particular interest are his shorter ‘sacerdotal supplications’ (*jiaoci* 醮詞), in which astrological elements appear. One of these is entitled *Sacerdotal Supplications Concerning the Sky for the Emperor* 皇帝周天醮詞, which is an astrological interpretation of planetary positions for the emperor. The first line reads, “I have heard that when the wind, rain, frost and snow are untimely, signs are indicated by the stars.”¹² Astrology was a core part of court culture in China, but Du Guangting’s type of astrology, which he evidently practiced at court, was heavily influenced by foreign ideas. For example, his *Sacerdotal Supplications on Saturn for Secretary Mashu Mu* 馬師穆尚書土星醮詞 appears to be remarks produced from a reading of an unfavorable horoscope. He states that “calamities pile up while illness lingers” as a result of “Saturn transiting through the *body sign* 身宮¹³ and a hidden planet¹⁴ passing through the root *nakṣatra* 本宿.”¹⁵ This particular passage expresses an understanding of what was originally foreign astrology, since Saturn here is understood as malefic and signaling hardship, whereas native Chinese astrology regards Saturn as signaling positive developments.¹⁶

⁹ Such sentiments are similarly directly expressed in works such as the aforementioned *Xitian yusi jing*. It states, “All disasters and fortunes are predetermined in human life. There is no fleeing from fate anywhere in heaven and earth 人生禍福皆前定，分數無逃於天地。” See Wan Minying, *Xingxue dacheng*, 438.

¹⁰ Although Schafer identified the significance of this passage and translated it, he did not identify the system behind it. Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T’ang Approaches to the Stars* (Floating World Editions, 2005), 60–61. Schafer mistranslated several things, such as *ba sha gong* 八殺宮 as the ‘Palace of Eight Killings’ (this actually refers to the eighth house of death), and *mu xing* 星工 as ‘artist’ (this actually means ‘astrologer’).

¹¹ Chan Man Sing points this out. See “Du Mu yu xingming,” 62–64.

¹² “臣聞風雨霜雪之不時則星辰示象。” *Quan Tang wen*, Zhonghua Shuju edn., vol. 10, 9777.

¹³ As noted above (4.7), the concept of the *body sign* appears in the *Lingtai jing*, being defined as the zodiac sign in which the Moon is present at one’s birth.

¹⁴ *An xu* 暗虛 refers to the unseen pseudo-planets of Rāhu, Ketu, Ziqi and Yuebei.

¹⁵ *Quan Tang wen*, Zhonghua Shuju edn., vol. 10, 9783.

¹⁶ Recall Li Chunfeng’s favorable prognostication concerning the rise of the Tang as a result of the position of Saturn. See 2.4 above.

The popularity of astrology throughout Chinese society in the ninth century fostered a number of developments within Buddhism, in which uniquely Chinese systems of Buddhist astrology and astral magic emerged. These Buddhist texts also display strong Daoist elements. This is unsurprising in light of the contemporary Daoist interest in astrology. To frame this development, we might recall the observations of Erik Zürcher, who pointed out that “it can be demonstrated that, as soon as we go below that top level [of elite Buddhism], quite another picture emerges, in which Buddhism loses much of its sharp contour, as it is absorbed into the surrounding mass of Chinese indigenous religion.”¹⁷ The astrological works to be discussed in this chapter were produced in such an environment. It is important to note here that Buddhist astrology became available to a wider section of the population in the late-Tang; it shifted from being practiced within the supervised confines of the elite sangha of the capital, as in Amoghavajra’s time, to a new popular environment, in which Buddhist astrologers were free to adopt new materials as they saw fit.

5.2. The Tejaprabhā and Sudṛṣṭi Cults

It becomes easy to explain the emergence of Buddhist astral deities in the late-Tang when we consider the contemporary state of astrology. One major development in Buddhist astrology that distinguishes the mid-Tang from the late-Tang is the notable development of major astrological deities in the latter period, during which time these deities were used as a means to counter undesirable astrological prognostications.

The cult of one such deity, *Tejaprabhā Buddha 熾盛光佛, arose in close connection with the Buddhist interest in astrology in China. The Tejaprabhā cult was, it seems, unique to China before spreading elsewhere in East Asia. Tejaprabhā is generally depicted or described alongside astral deities, in particular the planets in anthropomorphic forms. His *dhāraṇī* was also incorporated into astrological *sādhana*–s that will be discussed below.

There are actually no examples of a “Tejaprabhā Buddha” in Sanskrit literature, but nevertheless modern academic literature has continually used this name.¹⁸ A potentially related figure is Tejorāśi.¹⁹ This refers to the fourth *uṣṇīṣa* symbolizing the Tathāgata’s light removing the darkness of beings, i.e., the Tejorāśyūṣṇīṣa (*guangju foding* 光聚佛頂 or *huoju ding* 火聚頂). This is depicted as a man in the Garbhadhātu-

¹⁷ Erik Zürcher, “Perspectives in the Study of Chinese Buddhism,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 2 (1982): 173. Reproduced in *Buddhism in China: Collected Papers of Erik Zürcher*, ed. Jonathan Silk (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 276.

¹⁸ Academic literature renders *chishengguang* 熾盛光 as *Tejaprabhā*. This reading appears to date back to the catalog of Nanjō Bun’yū 南條文雄 of 1883 (p. 222).

¹⁹ I must thank Daniel Boucher for pointing this out to me.

maṇḍala.²⁰ His Chinese names are semantically similar to *chishengguang* 熾盛光, indicating a possible connection to the Tejaprabhā figure under present discussion.

As to the origins of the Tejaprabhā cult in China, one key work is the *Da shengmiao jixiang pusa shuo chuzai jiaoling falun* 大聖妙吉祥菩薩說除災教令法輪 (T 966; *Disaster Eliminating Edifying Dharma-Wheel as Taught by the Great and Holy Excellent Auspicious Bodhisattva*). Its alternate title is *Chishengguang Foding* 熾盛光佛頂 (*Tejaprabhā-buddhōṣṇīṣa*). The colophon states that this text was extracted from a certain *Wenshu dajihui jing* 文殊大集會經 (*Sūtra of Mañjuśrī's Great Gathering*), which cannot be identified.²¹ The colophon does not indicate the translator, but an editorial note in the Taishō text states that appended written remarks (*okugaki* 奥書) provide the following details:

中天竺國，大那爛陀寺，梵僧尸羅跋陀羅三藏，於興元府譯，筆受僧慧琳，于時貞元十二年。

Translated by the Indian monk from Mahānālanda Saṃghārāma in Central India, Tripiṭaka Master Śīlabhadra, at the Xingyuan-fu, with monk Huilin as scribe, in year 12 of Zhenyuan [796].

Although this text appears to be a translation of a manual describing a *maṇḍala* and set of mantras, an anomalous feature is that it mentions texts that had been earlier translated into Chinese. It states, “The Tathāgata has already explained [such matters] in sutras such as the *Sūryagarbha-parivarta* and *Candragarbha-parivarta* in the *Mahāsaṃnipata-sūtra*.”²² It also states, “It is best to write the name in Sanskrit, if possible. If one does not understand Sanskrit letters, it is also acceptable for the title to follow the local script.”²³ This suggests that the extant version of the work was modified in China, or perhaps that it was even composed there. My present reading would suggest that an original text was translated from Sanskrit into Chinese, and then modified slightly. When listing the *navagraha*, it translates Rāhu and Ketu as ‘eclipse deity’ 蝕神 and ‘comet’ 彗星 respectively,²⁴ which is an Indian definition, in contrast to later developments seen in China and elsewhere, in which Ketu is defined as the tail of Rāhu. It therefore seems likely that the text was written by an Indian.

The principal figure to be drawn in the *maṇḍala* is **Tejaprabhā-buddhōṣṇīṣa* 熾盛光佛頂. This is not strictly one of the thirty-two marks since the accompanying description mentions that “the many pores of the body emit great light.”²⁵ The *Tejaprabhā-buddhōṣṇīṣa* is therefore to be depicted as a fully represented Tathāgata,

²⁰ Somekawa, *Mandara zuten*, 110–111. T 1796, 39: 633c28-29.

²¹ T 966, 19: 342b12-13.

²² 如來，於方等大集，日藏月藏等經，早已宣說。T 966, 19: 342c11-12.

²³ 若能梵書其名，最爲上妙。若不識梵字者，隨方文字題之亦通。T 966, 19: 343a21-23.

²⁴ T 966, 19: 343c7.

²⁵ 畫熾盛光佛頂，身諸毛孔放大光明。T 966, 19: 343a26.

rather than as just the *uṣṇīṣa*. In addition to various bodhisattva and deity figures, astrological figures such as the *navagraha* and zodiac signs are also to be painted.²⁶ The following is also stated with respect to the time to carry out the ritual:

若有國界日月薄蝕，或五星失度形色變異，或妖星彗孛陵押王者貴人命宿，或日月虧損於本命宮中，此時應用此教息災護摩。

If the nation [experiences] a solar or lunar eclipse, or the five planets fall out of order, their forms and colors becoming strange, or if ominous comets infringe upon the natal *nakṣatra*-s of the ruler or important people, or if the Sun and Moon harm one's natal zodiac sign, then the apotropaic *homa*²⁷ of this teaching should be performed.²⁸

The translation date of 796 is significant because this was during a period in which horoscopic astrology was first being introduced into China. It was around this year that major astrological works, such as the *Duli yusi jing*, were translated into Chinese. Cao Shiwei was also active in developing his calendar, the *Futian li*. This appears to be the point in time from which the Tejaprabhā cult emerged in China. An earlier date for the beginning of the cult has been suggested. Sørensen states that Tejaprabhā was worshipped by Amoghavajra, citing the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (T 2061; *Song Dynasty Biographies of High Monks*). He claims that “the Ācārya was called upon by the Chinese emperor to worship Tejaprabhā and the astral gods on Mt. Wutai 五台山 in order to dispel the evil omen caused by a comet.”²⁹ However, the text in question actually mentions neither Tejaprabhā, nor astral deities:

五年夏有詔，請空往五臺山修功德，于時彗星出焉。法事告終，星亦隨沒。In the summer of year 5 [770], there was an imperial order. Amoghavajra was ordered to go to Mt. Wutai to cultivate merit. At the time, a comet appeared. As the ritual was announced as finished, the comet subsequently vanished.³⁰

²⁶ Image plate no. 13 of fasc. 58 of the thirteenth century *Asaba shō* 阿娑縛抄, a Japanese Tendai compendium of Mikkyō practice and lore, appears to be this *maṇḍala*. The accompanying inscription states that it was created in 1140 (year 6 of Hōen 保延) based on an earlier version from Tō-in 唐院. See TZ, vol. 9; image plate inserted between pages 30–31. See appendix 2 below.

²⁷ *Homa* is a religious offering burnt in a fire. It is traced back to earlier Indo-European culture. As Richard K. Payne points out, “Although sometimes spoken of – rather loosely – as a sacrificial ritual, since the offerings are destroyed in the fire, it is more appropriate to consider it a votive ritual. That is, the offerings are being conveyed to the deities in expectation of a *quid pro quo*. “Introduction,” in *Homa Variations: the Study of Ritual Change across the Longue Durée*, eds. Richard K. Payne and Michael Witzel (Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

²⁸ T 966, 19: 342c13–16.

²⁹ H. Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 240.

³⁰ T 2061, 50: 713a17–19.

The translation of the *Chishengguang dawei xiaozai jixiang tuoluoni jing* 熾盛光大威德消災吉祥陀羅尼經 (T 963; *Great Venerable Disaster Eliminating Auspicious Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Tejaprabhā*) is attributed to Amoghavajra, but as Liao Yang points out, it does not appear in Tang-era catalogs. It first appears in the *Qisha* 磧砂 canon (completed in 1322) as *Zuisheng wubi dawei jinlun foding chishengguang xiaozai jixiang tuoluoni jing* 最勝無比大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光消災吉祥陀羅尼經 (*Supreme Incomparable Great Venerable Golden Wheel Buddhōṣṇīṣa Tejaprabhā Disaster Eliminating Auspicious Dhāraṇī Sūtra*). A very similar text is *Foshuo dawei jinlun foding Chishengguang Rulai xiaochu yiqie zainan tuoluoni jing* 佛說大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光如來消除一切災難陀羅尼經 (T 964; *Buddha Teaches the All-Disaster Eliminating Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Great Virtuous Gold-Wheel *Buddhōṣṇīṣa-Tejaprabhā Tathāgata*). These two texts should be identified as Chinese compositions, since they refer to native Chinese “field allocation” astrology. The *Xu yiqiejing yinyi* 續一切經音義 (*Sounds and Meanings of All Sūtras Continued*), a Buddhist glossary of terms with pronunciations compiled by the monk Xilin 希麟 (d.u.) around 987, lists a similar title.³¹ The terms he defines appear to be derived from T 963 or T 964. There are earlier instances in Chinese of *Chishengguang* 熾盛光 (“luminous”) referring to buddhas or bodhisattvas, but these are unrelated to the Tejaprabhā cult.³² Evidence would therefore indicate that the starting point of this cult was 796 at the earliest. We can therefore conclude that Amoghavajra, who died in 774, had no role in the Tejaprabhā cult. The *Song gaoseng zhuan* does, however, tell us about a monk named Wuji 無迹 (843–925) who taught a Tejaprabhā ritual in the Guangqi 光啟 reign era (885–888), and later set up a Tejaprabhā altar for a government official who heard of the efficacy of the ritual. This source mentions “disasters of ‘field allocation’” (分野之災), which would refer to disasters predicted by native Chinese astrology, rather than foreign horoscopy.³³ This points to the amalgamation of the Tejaprabhā cult and native Chinese ideas by the late ninth century. T 963 and T 964 are therefore likely from the last decades of the Tang.

The Tejaprabhā ritual includes a *dhāraṇī* to be recited when facing astrologically unfavorable circumstances, which is why the cult likely also played a role in facilitating interest in other astral deities. The role of Tejaprabhā in which he presides over the planets and *nakṣatra*-s points to the Chinese fear of astral deities, and a widespread desire to counteract their negative astrological influences using magical means.

³¹ *Zuisheng wubi dawei jinlun foding chishengguang tuoluoni jing* 最勝無比大威德金輪佛頂熾盛光陀羅尼經 (*Supreme Incomparable Great Virtuous Gold-Wheel *Buddhōṣṇīṣa-Tejaprabhā Dhāraṇī Sūtra*). T 2129, 54: 962b22-23. See Liao Yang 廖暘, “Chishengguang Fo zaikao 熾盛光佛再考,” *Yishu-shi yanjiu* 藝術史研究 5 (2003): 329.

³² Liao, “Chishengguang Fo zaikao,” 330.

³³ T 2061, 50: 898a16-18.

Another figure to develop into a major astral deity within the Chinese Buddhist pantheon was Sudṛṣṭi 妙見. In East Asia, Sudṛṣṭi is the personification of Polaris.³⁴ The primary texts of his cult included the *Beichen Pusa tuoluoni jing* 北辰菩薩陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī Sūtra of the Polaris Bodhisattva*), *Beichen Miaojian zunxing wang pusa suoshuo tuoluoni jing* 北辰妙見尊星王菩薩所說陀羅尼經 (*Dhāraṇī Sūtra as Taught by the Venerable Star King Polaris Sudṛṣṭi*), and *Beichen Miaojian Pusa tuoluoni chengjiu gongde jing* 北辰妙見菩薩陀羅尼成就功德經 (*Sūtra of Attaining Merit [via] the Dhāraṇī of Polaris Sudṛṣṭi Bodhisattva*).³⁵ As Sørensen points out, the Japanese monk Ennin, who visited China between 838–847, observed worship of Sudṛṣṭi, which he recorded in his travelogue.³⁶ It does not appear that Sudṛṣṭi gained as much prominence as did Tejaprabhā in China, in light of the scarce references to Sudṛṣṭi in Chinese sources.

5.3. *Qiyao rangzai jue* 七曜攘災決 (T 1308): Mature Buddhist Astrology

The *Qiyao rangzai jue* (T 1308), the *Secrets of Seven-Planet Apotropaism*, is the only extant Buddhist manual of astrology from the ninth century. Although in the past it has been erroneously described as “non-Buddhist”,³⁷ it actually prescribes Buddhist activities such as sūtra recitation, and moreover in several places is based on the nominally Buddhist astrology of the *Xiuyao jing* attributed to Mañjuśrī. This text represents an amalgamation of Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Sogdian and ultimately Near-Eastern elements. It especially draws on the new astrological techniques, lore and iconography from Iranian sources that had become available in Chinese translation from the late eighth century,³⁸ demonstrating the aforementioned shift in Chinese astrology from Indian to Iranian sources around the time of Li Su’s career (see 4.6 above). It furthermore displays one of the key features of Tang Buddhist astrology: it employs Chinese astronomy (the astronomy of the text is almost entirely Chinese), while simultaneously depending on foreign astrological lore. This text provides much of the

³⁴ The *Qifo Bapusa suoshuo da tuoluoni shenzhou jing* 七佛八菩薩所說大陀羅尼神咒經 (T 1332; *Great Dhāraṇī Sūtra Taught by the Seven Buddhas and Eight Bodhisattvas*), a *dhāraṇī* collection purportedly from the Jin period (265–420) has the following: “I am the bodhisattva of Polaris, named Sudṛṣṭi. I wish to teach incantations to protect countries; what I do is quite special, thus I am called Sudṛṣṭi. I am foremost among the stars within Jambudvīpa.” 我北辰菩薩名曰妙見，今欲說神呪，擁護諸國土，所作甚奇特，故名曰妙見。處於閻浮提眾星中最勝。T 1332, 21: 546c23-547a1.

³⁵ Aruga Takumi 有賀匠, “Hoshi mandara to Myōken Bosatsu no zuzōgaku-teki kenkyū” 星曼荼羅と妙見菩薩の圖像學的研究, *Mikkyō bunka* 密教文化 2000 (204): 51. See also the texts cited in the *Kakuzen shō* 覺禪鈔. TZ, vol. 5, 397.

³⁶ Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang,” 239. Ennin’s travelogue is entitled *Nittō guhō junrei gyōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (*The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Dharma*). See Shanghai Guji edn., 3, 9, 22, 24, 35.

³⁷ Mak, “The Transmission of Astral Science from India to East Asia,” 67.

³⁸ The Iranian influences within this text were noticed by Édouard Chavannes and Paul Pelliot, “Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine,” *Journal Asiatique* 11, t. I (1913): 167–168.

advanced astrological techniques to which Amoghavajra's work only alludes, such as the drafting of a horoscope, which requires determining the past or present positions of the planets on a chart. It furthermore is the first extant Buddhist text to provide a complete system of astral magic to be used in coordination with astrological prognostications. Here we will first discuss the astrology of the text, followed by its astral magic.

The Taishō edition of the text is corrupted in places. There are, fortunately, alternate editions extant in private Japanese collections. One manuscript in the public domain, which I have consulted, is from the Shimoura Collection 下浦文庫 (13–471) at the Tōkyō University of Science 東京理科大学.³⁹

The *Qiyao rangzai jue* is attributed to a Brahmin monk 婆羅門僧 from western India 西天竺, named Jinjuzha 金俱吒. Mak suggests that this can be reconstructed as *Kamkuṭa, in which Kam is a variant of the Sino-Sogdian surname Kang 康, but this is unlikely based on phonetic grounds.⁴⁰ Moreover, Jinjuzha was clearly not the author, since the text describes him ordering down the deities of the twenty-eight *nakṣatra*–s 二十八宿神 to make inquiries.⁴¹ The text's contents are attributed to divine revelation, which is also a feature of a number of Indian *jyotiṣa* works, such as the *Sūrya-siddhānta* in which the contents are attributed to gods.⁴²

As to the composition date of the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, it was compiled sometime between 806, when its ephemeris for Rāhu commences, and 865, when Shūei brought it to Japan from China.⁴³ Although it does not appear in Chinese catalogs, instructions in the text demand that it be kept secret.⁴⁴ It is therefore unclear exactly what significance it

³⁹ Another manuscript from 1673, from Ōbaku-san Hōzō-in 黄檗山寶藏院, is held at Kyōto University's library (call no. Q||59||15). In the past, other manuscripts have appeared on the market in Japan, but I have been unable to view them.

⁴⁰ Mak, "The Transmission of Astral Science from India to East Asia," 68fn31. Schuessler IPA reconstructs in Middle-Chinese *jin* 金 as *kjəm* and *kang* 康 as *kʰaŋ*. The phonetic difference is too great to consider the former a phonetic variant of the latter. Also, *zha* 吒 is reconstructed as **tjək* (note the consonant ending)

⁴¹ "Now the western Brahmin monk Jinjuzha ordered down the deities of the twenty-eight lunar stations, and inquired after their auspicious and inauspicious qualities, while drawing their forms. He discerned the movements of the seven planets and apotropaic methods, as follows. 今西國婆羅門僧金俱吒, 命得二十八宿神下, 問其吉凶, 畫其形狀, 辨七曜所至, 攘災法, 如後." T 1308, 21: 426c3-5. There is a similar story in the *Qiyao xingchen bie xingfa* 七曜星辰別行法 (T 1309), attributed to the astronomer monk Yixing (see 5.7 below), in which Yixing draws down astral deities to similarly make inquiries.

⁴² Ebenezer Burgess, *Translation of the Sūrya-Siddhānta: A Text-Book of Hindu Astronomy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1935), vii–viii.

⁴³ It appears in his catalog of items brought back from China: 七曜攘災決一卷. See *Shin shosha shōrai hōmon tō mokuroku* 新書寫請來法門等目錄. T 2174A, 55: 1111b21.

⁴⁴ "There are many disasters related to the movements of the seven planets as above. Now there is unlimited spiritual efficacy when it comes to avoiding disasters based on the apotropaic methods of the Western Country. Do not transmit them to the unwise. 右七曜所至多有災害, 今依西國法攘之避厄神驗無極, 非智勿傳." T 1308, 21: 427b15-17.

had in China. Nevertheless, the level of literacy and basic astronomical knowledge required to understand the work indicates that an educated circle of astrologers made use of it.

The astronomy of this text is primarily Chinese in origin. The first line of text defines the equator as 365.25 degrees, which is an ancient Chinese parameter (the occidental tradition defines the equator as comprised of 360 degrees).⁴⁵ A table is included detailing the dimensions of the unequally spaced Chinese lunar stations 宿度法 (these are not Indian *nakṣatra*-s). According to Yano, the coordinate system of the text, reconstructed from details provided in the text as a whole, is the polar longitude system used in China since the Former Han Dynasty.⁴⁶ This coordinate system is used in the text's ephemerides. This is an entirely different system from that described in the *Xiuyao jing*, in which equally spaced *nakṣatra*-s are defined. The majority of the astrological lore, however, is non-Chinese. Chinese astrologers simply had to use the native astronomical system, since there was no alternative model available.⁴⁷

The text includes ephemerides in the Chinese ordering of Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Venus and Mercury (木火土金水), followed by Rāhu and Ketu. Internal evidence strongly suggests that these were adopted directly from Cao Shiwei's *Futian li* calendar or a work based directly on it. This is significant because to date the *Futian li* has been thought to be non-extant.⁴⁸ The addition of Babylonian 'goal-years'⁴⁹ directly indicates foreign influences in the compilation of these tables, and likely reflects Cao Shiwei's interaction with foreign figures such as Li Miqian.

Each table provides planetary positions for each of the twelve months. The first month or start of the year (*suishou* 歲首) appears to begin from *yushui* 雨水 (the 'rains', i.e., the second of the twenty-four solar terms).⁵⁰ As will be recalled from above (4.8), this was a unique feature of the *Futian li*. The epoch for the five planets is specified by a Japanese hand as year 10 of Zhenyuan 貞元, corresponding to Japanese year 13 of Enryaku 延暦 (794).⁵¹ Each ephemeris specifies constants for planetary movements that Yabuuchi has identified as being closest to the *Wuji li* 五紀曆 (*Five Periods Calendar*),

⁴⁵ T 1308, 21: 426b23.

⁴⁶ T 1308, 21: 427b18-c6. Yano Michio, "The Ch'iyao jang-tsai-chueh and its Ephemerides," 29–30.

⁴⁷ Recall that the *Navagraha-karaṇa* (4.6) had been translated in 718. It used the occidental system of 360 degrees, but it was never widely implemented.

⁴⁸ Weixing Niu, "On the Dunhuang Manuscript P.4071," 532.

⁴⁹ Babylonian goal-years are reoccurring planetary periodicities or cycles of movement from which predictions can be made. They were discovered in ancient Mesopotamia.

⁵⁰ Yano, "The Chi'yao jang-tsai-chueh and its Ephemerides," 29.

⁵¹ It seems likely that the epoch of the original *Futian li* was updated to a more recent year from which the ephemerides were compiled for the purposes of practicing astrology. It was only necessary to have tables going back a lifetime, rather than all the way to the year 660.

which was in official use between 762–783.⁵² We should recall that Cao Shiwei drafted the original *Futian li* for the seven planets between 780–783.

The ephemerides further specify the number of sidereal rotations (R) and number of synodic periods (A) in a number of years (Y) as follows.⁵³

Jupiter: 83 (Y), 76 (A), 7 (R).

Mars: 79 (Y), 37 (A), 42 (R).

Saturn: 59 (Y), 57 (A), 2 (R).

Venus: 8 (Y), 5 (A).

Mercury: 33 (Y), 104 (A).⁵⁴

The periodicity of a cycle is thus covered and will repeat itself almost identically (not withstanding axial precession, but adjustments could easily be made), which is why these ephemerides could be reused in later centuries, as indicated by the Japanese reign years marked above the tables (for instance, year 1 of Kantoku 寛徳 = 1044). There are similarities here with numbers in book IX of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, which Ptolemy (fl. 150 CE) ascribed to Hipparchus (c.150–125 BCE), who is thought to have transmitted Babylonian astronomy into Greece.⁵⁵ These are well-known Babylonian 'goal-year' periods. Ptolemy gives the following parameters:

Saturn: 59 (Y), 57 (A), 2 (R).

Jupiter: 71 (Y), 65 (A), 6 (R).

Mars: 79 (Y), 37 (A), 42 (R).

Venus: 8 (Y), 5 (A).

Mercury: 46 (Y), 145 (A).⁵⁶

The differences indicate this component of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* was not based on Ptolemy's work, but nevertheless it can be traced back to the same tradition upon which Ptolemy drew. The full range of Babylonian 'goal-years' provided by Hunger and Pingree are as follows.

Saturn: 59 (Y), 57 (A), 2 (R).

⁵² Yabuuchi, *Chūgoku no tenmon rekihō*, 182–183.

⁵³ A sidereal rotation is the orbit of a planet relative to the stars as seen from earth. A synodic period is the cycle in which a planet returns to an earlier position relative to another body, such as the Sun.

⁵⁴ Adapted from Yano, "The Chi'yao jang-tsai-chueh and its Ephemerides," 29. Yano points out that these numbers provide the mean lengths of Greek letter phenomena.

⁵⁵ Olaf Pedersen, *A Survey of the Almagest: With Annotation and New Commentary by Alexander Jones* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2011), 269–270.

⁵⁶ Adapted from Otto Neugebauer, *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2012), 604–605.

Jupiter: 71 (Y), 65 (A), 6 (R).
Jupiter: 83 (Y), 76 (A), 7 (R).
Mars: 79 (Y), 37 (A), 42 (R).
Mars: 47 (Y), 22 (A), 25 (R).
Venus: 8 (Y), 5 (A), 8 (R).
Mercury: 46 (Y), 145 (A), 46 (R).⁵⁷

Thus, apart from Mercury in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, the other listed numbers are ‘goal-year’ periods.⁵⁸ After Ptolemy, these periods also appear in various systems of astronomy around Eurasia, including India and Central Asia.⁵⁹ We can now state that they were also transmitted to China.

The second fascicle of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* includes ephemerides for Rāhu (93 years) and Ketu (62 years). Their epoch is year 1 of Yuanhe 元和, or Japanese year 1 of Daidō 大同 (806). As noted above (4.8), Song Lian stated that this was the epoch of Cao Shiwei’s *Luoji er yinyao licheng li* 羅計二隱曜立成曆 (ephemerides for Rāhu and Ketu). It is further noted by a Japanese scribe in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* that this epoch is 147 years after the (original) epoch. This almost exactly indicates the year 660, which was the epoch of Cao Shiwei’s *Futian li*.⁶⁰ Thus, these two ephemerides, and likely the others for the five planets in the first fascicle, are either based on or reproduced directly from Cao Shiwei’s work. According to Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223–1296) in his *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞 (*Account of Puzzling Studies*), the *Futian li* was “originally an Indian calendrical method 本天竺曆法.”⁶¹ Cao Shiwei had access to both Indian and Persian astronomers and texts, but in light of Song Lian’s account of Cao Shiwei having studied under Li Miqian, Cao Shiwei most likely learnt of these numbers from an Iranian source.

We should note the astronomical significance of the year 806. This year is also the epoch of the Kālacakra Tantra.⁶² As Edward Henning points out, “The relevant new Moon – on 24th March 806 CE – is at the end of an intercalary month. This combined with the fact that on the preceding full Moon there was a total lunar eclipse – an excellent

⁵⁷ Hunger and Pingree, *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia*, 168.

⁵⁸ Note: $33 / 104 = 0.317$ and $46 / 145 = 0.317$. The ‘goal-year’ parameters for Mercury are found in a later Chinese work by Liu Dingzhi 劉定之 (1409–1469), which provides the following numbers: Jupiter: 83 (Y), 76 (A), 7 (R). Mars: 79 (Y), 37 (A), 42 (R). Saturn: 59 (Y), 57 (A), 2 (R). Venus: 8 (Y), 5 (A). Mercury: 46 (Y), 145 (A). See Ren Jiyu, ed, *Zhonghua chuanshi wenxuan Ming wen heng*, 557.

⁵⁹ Hunger and Pingree, *Astral Sciences in Mesopotamia*, 168. David Pingree, “Legacies in Astronomy and Celestial Omens,” in *The Legacy of Mesopotamia*, ed. Stephanie Dalley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 135–137.

⁶⁰ Yabuuchi points this out. See Yabuuchi Kiyoshi 薮内清, “Tō Sō Shii no *Futenreki* ni tsuite” 唐曹士蔦の符天曆について, *Biburia Tenri Toshokan hō* ビブリア天理圖書館報 78 (1982): 5–6.

⁶¹ Wang Yinglin 王應麟, *Kunxue jiwen* 困學紀聞, in SKQS 845: 332.

⁶² The Kālacakra corpus dates to the early eleventh century from somewhere in northern India. See Francesco Sferra, “Kālacakra,” in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. I, ed. Jonathan A. Silk (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 341.

time for adjusting lunar-solar calculations – may well provide part of the reasoning why this date was chosen as an epoch. Also, on the day of the new Moon itself, there was a partial solar eclipse.”⁶³ Although the *Qiyao rangzai jue* predates the Kālacakra by around two centuries, the significance of the year 806 was likely apparent to Chinese astronomers in the ninth century.

In the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, Rāhu and Ketu are respectively designated as the head and tail of an eclipse deity 蝕神. This appears to be an Iranian concept, since there exists a parallel in the ninth-century Pahlavi *Bundahišn*, which is primarily a cosmography based on Zoroastrian scriptures.⁶⁴ Rāhu and Ketu in earlier iconography are depicted in different forms (see fig. 4.20 & 4.21). The *Qiyao rangzai jue* explains that Rāhu is unseen, and that eclipses are predicted from its union with the Sun or Moon. This is attributed to an Indian *Popimobu 婆毘磨步 (the original name is uncertain), and its difference from Chinese theory is noted.⁶⁵ Rāhu’s identity is that of the ascending node of the Moon, which is standard in Indian astronomy. However, as Yano discovered, Ketu in this text is the Moon’s apogee (Skt. *ucca*),⁶⁶ instead of its otherwise standard function as the descending node of the Moon. As he notes, there would be no need for an ephemeris for Ketu as the descending node, since it would just follow the opposite movement of Rāhu.⁶⁷ The text states that Ketu makes 7 rotations in a 62-year period; thus, one cycle is 8.85 years (i.e., the lunar precession).

Ketu as the apogee is additionally indicated by its variant name as *yue boli* 月勃力 (Schuessler IPA reconstructs the latter as *buət ljək*). As discussed earlier (4.8), in later literature the apogee is designated with the single character *bei* 孛, and included among the ‘eleven planets’ that were originally introduced by Li Miqian (or Li Biqian). Whoever compiled the *Qiyao rangzai jue* was therefore aware of the variant term that eventually became the standard word for apogee in Chinese. The etymology of this term, however, is uncertain, but it is possibly a phonetically transliterated foreign loanword, similar to the transliteration of Rāhu and Ketu into Chinese. The character *bei* 孛 can mean comet or abruptness, but this seems inappropriate for an invisible point of space, although granted one earlier meaning of *ketu* in Sanskrit is comet. The aforementioned *boli* 勃力, however, seems otherwise meaningless. The latter *li* 力 could be a scribal error for a character such as *kan* 勘 or *jia* 加 (reconstructed as *k^hām^c* and *ka* respectively in Schuessler IPA), in which case the term would phonetically approximate the Greek term

⁶³ Edward Henning, *Kālacakra and the Tibetan Calendar* (New York: The American Institute of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University, 2007), 226.

⁶⁴ D. N. MacKenzie, “Zoroastrian Astrology in the Bundahišn,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27, no. 3 (1964): 515.

⁶⁵ T 1308, 21: 442b3-d2.

⁶⁶ The lunar apogee is the point on the Moon’s elliptical orbit that is farthest from the earth. The perigee is point closest to the earth.

⁶⁷ Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, 186. See also “The Chi’yao jang-tsai-chueh and its Ephemerides,” 31–33.

apógeion (the initial *a-* is often dropped in Chinese), perhaps represented as a loanword in another language. The term as a binomial with no clear semantic meaning suggests it is a transliteration. Yano explains that in “Indian astronomy as well as in Greek astronomy, lunar anomaly was always counted from the apogee, while in Chinese astronomy the perigee was the initial point.” Thus, the tabulation of the lunar apogee “represents a tributary of Western tradition of astronomy, though with the confusing misnomer.”⁶⁸ The original statement in early sources that the concept (and presumably the term itself) was introduced from abroad is therefore reasonable in the absence of other evidence.

A major feature that demonstrates Iranian influences in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* is its system of twelve ‘places’ (Greek τόποι and Latin *loci*), a feature in Du Mu’s passage cited earlier (5.1).

Table 5.1. Twelve Places in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*⁶⁹

	Chinese	Translation	Indian Equivalent	Iranian Equivalent
I	命宮・命位	Life	<i>tanu</i>	<i>gyānān</i>
II	財宮・財物	Wealth	<i>dhana</i>	<i>kīsagān</i>
III	兄弟	Brothers	<i>sahaja</i>	<i>brādarān</i>
IV	田宅	Estate	<i>suḥṛt/bandhava</i>	<i>pedištān</i>
V	男女	Children	<i>suta</i>	<i>frazandān</i>
VI	僮僕	Servants	<i>ripu</i>	<i>waštagān</i>
VII	妻妾・夫妻	Marriage	<i>jāyā</i>	<i>wayodagān</i>
VIII	疾病・病厄	Illness	<i>mṛtyu</i>	<i>margān</i>
IX	遷移	Travel	<i>dharma</i>	<i>kārdāgān</i>
X	官位・官祿	Rank	<i>karma/āspada</i>	<i>mayān ī asmān</i>
XI	福相・福德	Fortune	<i>āya</i>	<i>farroxān</i>
XII	困窮・禍害	Distress	<i>vyaya</i>	<i>dušfarragān</i>

This is a key component to early Hellenistic astrology. The twelve places are twelve static demarcations of the ecliptic through which the zodiac signs and planets move. In other words, the stars and planets move but the twelve places as spatial sections of the ecliptic remain static. The first place, the eastern ascendant, is positioned at the eastern horizon, and the subsequent place are counted counterclockwise. Predictions are made based on the zodiac signs and the planets occupying each place. The terms in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* (table 5.1) are significant because, as Itō points out, the Chinese

⁶⁸ Yano, “The Chi’yao jang-tsai-chueh and its Ephemerides,” 31.

⁶⁹ Adapted from Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, 51.

renderings of the place names are semantically closer to the Iranian equivalents than the western or Latin names available to him.⁷⁰

The twelve places originally emerged from an earlier system of eight places, which itself was based on an even earlier system, in which the ecliptic was divided into four quadrants. This included the ascendant, midheaven, the setting-point and the point exactly opposite the midheaven. As Tester points out, this earliest system possibly originated in the Egyptian division of the ecliptic. He states, “For the ancient Egyptians, the Sun and stars are strong and young in the east, rise to their greatest power in the midheaven, and decline into age and weakness in the west.” The first quadrant was related to youth, the next to adulthood, and so forth.⁷¹ Thus, this component of Hellenistic astrology, which was adopted and naturalized into Chinese astrology, originally had deep connections to Egyptian culture. The *Qiyao rangzai jue* also incorporates material from Chinese and earlier Indian sources, such as material drawn directly from the *Xiuyao jing*, which proves that the *Xiuyao jing* continued to be circulated and studied well into the ninth century. The Indian content includes diagrams of the *nakṣatra-puruṣa* or constellation-man.

Fig. 5.1. *nakṣatra-puruṣa*



The image on the left shows the precise parts of the body which correspond to twenty-eight *nakṣatra*-s in the same locations on the right. Such a chart is not visually represented in the *Xiuyao jing*. This concept is Indian and appears in Sanskrit literature.⁷²

⁷⁰ Itō Gikyō 伊藤義教, *Perushia bunka toraikō* ペルシア文化渡来考 (Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1980), 224. Itō perhaps drew from the work of MacKenzie, “Zoroastrian Astrology in the Bundahišn,” 526.

⁷¹ Tester, *A History of Western Astrology*, 25.

⁷² The arrangement of correspondences differs from that in *adhyāya* (chapter) 105 of the *Bṛhat-saṃhitā* of Varāhamihira. Panditabhbhushana V. Subrahmanya Sastri and Vidwan M. Ramakrishna Bhat, *Varahamihira's Brihat Samhita with an English Translation and Notes* (Bangalore City: V. B. Soobbiah

Some of the *nakṣatra* lore is also derived from the *Xiuyao jing*. In addition, the *nakṣatra* assignments for the new 朔 and full 望 moons (Chinese lunar days 1 and 15 respectively) are from the calendar in fascicle 1 of the original *Xiuyao jing*, in which the text assigns the twenty-seven *nakṣatra*-s to Chinese lunar days, allowing for easy conversion between the Indian and Chinese calendars (see table 4.8). Other notable Indian features of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* include the associations between planets and tastes (Skt. *rasa*),⁷³ and a full range of mantras for the *navagraha* and other astrological purposes.⁷⁴

Native Chinese astrology is also incorporated into the *Qiyao rangzai jue*. The system of ‘field allocation astrology’ (2.4) employed in the text includes a listing of the astro-terrestrial correspondences between the twenty-eight lunar stations and ancient Chinese countries.⁷⁵ As discussed earlier, the system was originally entirely sino-centric, but it changed over time. Yixing (4.1) took into account both of China’s major river systems, which reflected the southern expansion of Chinese civilization since the Warring States period.⁷⁶ The *Qiyao rangzai jue* appears to take into consideration Yixing’s reforms in light of the fact that it includes the southern region of Changsha 長沙,⁷⁷ indicating that the author used updated sources, rather than classical or even early Sui-Tang works.

To summarize, the astronomy of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* is almost entirely based on the Chinese system, but it still incorporates foreign elements such as goal-years, Rāhu as the ascending node of the Moon, Ketu as the lunar apogee, and an Iranian system of the twelve places. Based on the internal evidence, the calendar of the text was most likely directly adopted from Cao Shiwei’s *Futian li*, a popular calendar which, while not endorsed by the state, nevertheless was employed by commoners. We can infer that this calendar was designed with astrology in mind, since Rāhu and Ketu had been incorporated. This integration of multiple systems indicates the extent to which foreign elements had become assimilated into Chinese astrology.

and Sons, 1946), 794–795. In the *Bṛhat-saṃhitā*, the description runs from the feet to the head, whereas in the *Xiuyao jing* it is from the head to the feet. As noted by the *Bṛhat-saṃhitā* translator, the custom when describing divine beings is to commence from the feet, whereas with humans it is from the head.

⁷³ Mars: Hot flavor, spicy. Mercury: Sour (vinegar), bitter. Venus: Hot, astringent, sour (vinegar). Jupiter: Fragrant, sweet. Saturn: Salty, bitter, sour. T 1308, 21: 427c26-428a3. We know that these associations are not from China because the five flavors (五味) associated with the five elements (五行) differ from this model.

⁷⁴ T 1308, 21: 428b23-429a6. These mantras are also found Buddhist astral magic texts which include the *Xiuyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌 (T 1304), *Beidou qixing humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (T 1310) and *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (T 1311). These will be explored below. The Indian source of these mantras, if one existed, is uncertain.

⁷⁵ T 1308, 21: 448c5-d1.

⁷⁶ Pankenier, *Astrology and Cosmology in Early China Conforming Earth to Heaven*, 278–279.

⁷⁷ Changsha as a territory on the southern frontier was not part of the original system of ‘field-allocation’ astrology.

5.4. Buddhist and Daoist Astral Magic in the Late-Tang

The shift toward Iranian sources of astronomy and astrology in the late-Tang is additionally evident from the astrological iconography described in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*. It describes two sets of icons (in the first and second fascicles respectively), which are not of Chinese origin. I label these as the “zoomorphic” and “Iranian-Mesopotamian” respectively. Aside from the icons of the Sun and Moon in the second set, all of these are largely different from the “Indian” *navagraha* icons depicted in the *Taizō zuzō* (table 4.1). The icons of the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, in contrast, are of a Near Eastern origin. They were transmitted through an Iranian medium in light of the Sogdian loanwords that accompany them (see table 5.4).

The zoomorphic set of icons is described in the first fascicle (table 5.2). Although these are not depicted in the text, visual representations are found in the Japanese *Kuyō hiryaku* 九曜秘曆 (*Secret Calendar of the Nine Planets*).⁷⁸ These are the only known representations of the zoomorphic set of icons within the extant art record.

The lion-headed figure is especially noteworthy because such a figure representing a solar deity has no identifiable parallel in Chinese or Indian iconographies. In India, Sūrya is represented in a fully anthropomorphic form. In Vedic literature, the solar deity rides in a chariot drawn by seven horses.⁷⁹ A lion-headed deity associated with the Sun does, however, exist in Egyptian mythology: Sekhmet, known as the Eye of Ra (Ra the Sun god). The eye of the creator could be identified with the Sun disc.⁸⁰ Even if this is not Sekhmet specifically, there are many examples of lion-headed figures,

⁷⁸ Included in TZ, vol. 7, 769–773. This work is comprised of text explaining the astrological features of each day of the seven-day week, while providing the accompanying mantras for each planet, and illustrations of the planetary deities. The material is drawn from Tang-era Buddhist texts. It is uncertain if the text was originally from China or compiled in Japan, though I favor a Chinese composition given the absence of any anomalous Chinese grammar or vocabulary that would indicate Japanese authorship. The manuscript copied by Sōkan 僧觀 in year 2 of Tenji 天治 (1125) was based on an earlier copy from year 3 of Tengyō 天慶 (940). See appendix 5. It was therefore composed sometime before 940 (see New York Metropolitan Museum of Art #1975.268.4). Later manuscripts, however, seem to indicate that the author was Kōzen 興然 (1120–1203). The anthropomorphic depictions wear Chinese attire; thus, the depictions are of an East Asian imagination, rather than being direct copies of anything from abroad. For relevant studies see Nakano Genzō 中野玄三, “Kanchiin shozō *Kuyō hireki* ni tsuite” 觀智院所藏九曜秘曆について, *Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan kenkyūshi* 東京國立博物館研究誌 218 (1969): 13–24. Manabe Shunshō 真鍋俊照, “Karazu no zuzō to seiritsu” 火羅圖の圖像と成立, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 印度學佛教學研究 30, no. 2 (1982): 324–329.

⁷⁹ Michael Witzel, “Vedic Gods (Indra, Agni, Rudra, Varuṇa, etc.),” *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, eds. Knut A. Jacobsen, Helene Basu, Angelika Malinar and Vasudha Narayanan. Brill Online, 2016.

⁸⁰ Geraldine Pinch, *Handbook of Egyptian Mythology* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2002), 128–131.

including Ra the solar god, among the figures personifying stars, decans⁸¹ and planets depicted on the ceiling of the Temple of Hathor at Dendera in Egypt of the Greco-Roman period (see fig. 5.9 and 5.10).

It was in this late period in Ancient Egyptian history that Hellenistic astrology emerged and rapidly developed into what would later spread across Eurasia. Alexandria was the birthplace of Hellenistic astrology. It is therefore plausible that a related icon like this could have been transmitted through texts dealing with astrology. Astrology was widely practiced in Sasanian Iran, and Sasanian rulers hosted Greek or Greco-Syrian and Indian scholars in their realm.⁸² The Sogdian loanwords in Chinese (table 5.4) indicate that Iranian astrological lore was transmitted by Sogdians who practiced Iranian astrology. This was the likely medium through which iconography from the Near-East could have been transmitted eastward to China.

Table 5.2. Zoomorphic Icons of the <i>Qiyao rangzai jue</i> (fasc. 1)	
Descriptions ⁸³	<i>Kuyō hiryaku</i> Depictions ⁸⁴
形如人而似獅子頭人身，著天衣，手持寶瓶而黑色。 [Sun] A form like a man, but a head like a lion with a human body. Wearing a heavenly garment. The hand is holding a jeweled vase black in color.	 Fig. 5.2. Sun

⁸¹ Decans were originally thirty-six Egyptian constellations that were eventually merged with the twelve zodiac signs. These appear in extant Japanese horoscopes (see 6.5).

⁸² Pingree, *From Astral Omens to Astrology: From Babylon to Bīkāner*, 39.

⁸³ T 1308, 21: 426c6–427b5.

⁸⁴ All *Kuyō hiryaku* images courtesy of ARC Collection, Ritsumeikan University. Genpō 賢寶 (1333–1398) manuscript. Compare with icons by Sōkan (appendix 4).

形如天女，著青天衣，持寶劍。
[Moon] A form like a heavenly lady
wearing a blue garment, holding a jeweled
sword.



Fig. 5.3. Moon

形如象黑色向天大呼。
[Mars] A form like an elephant, black in
color, crying out to the sky.



Fig. 5.4. Mars

形如黑蛇有四足而食蟹。
[Mercury] A form like a black snake,
having four legs, and eating a crab.



Fig. 5.5. Mercury

形如人，人身龍頭，著天衣，隨四季色。

[Jupiter] A form like a man. A man's body and dragon's head, wearing a heavenly garment. The color changes according to the four seasons.



Fig. 5.6. Jupiter

形如天女，手持印，騎白鷄。

[Venus] A form like a heavenly lady, in her hand holding a seal, riding a white fowl.



Fig. 5.7. Venus

形如婆羅門，騎黑沙牛。

[Saturn] A form like a Brahmin, riding a black ox.



Fig. 5.8. Saturn

Fig. 5.9. Dendera ceiling.



Fig. 5.10. Dendera ceiling (Ra the Sun god second from left).⁸⁵



The zoomorphic icons detailed above did not become the primary set of icons representing the planetary deities in East Asia. The second set of icons, i.e., the Iranian-Mesopotamian icons (table 5.3), which exclude the Sun and Moon, share many similarities with the astrological icons of Islamic art.⁸⁶ These icons are entirely different

⁸⁵ See plate 41 (figures S 19a–17) in Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts III. Decans, Planets, Constellations and Zodiacs* (Plates). The bottom image is not included in the plates. I must offer my thanks to Mick Palarczyk for pointing out Ra in the bottom image. Photos of Dendera courtesy of Paul Smit (© Paul Smit).

⁸⁶ In Islamic astrological art Mercury is a young male scribe writing on a scroll, Venus is a female musician, Mars is a warrior, Jupiter is a sage or judge and Saturn is a dark-skinned scantily clothed old man with a pickax. See Stefano Carboni, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 6. See fig. 1.2. “Planets of the ‘Aja’ib al-makhlūqat (Wonders of

from the Indian icons as their source was actually Iranian. The Iranian tradition itself was based on an earlier Mesopotamian model with Hellenistic influences. As will be discussed below, the colors of these deities, and the apotropaic rituals against the planets, all strongly suggest that the tradition associated with these figures, at least in part, goes further back to practices of Greco-Egyptian magic. This stands in contrast to the conclusion of Takeda Kazuaki, who argued that this set of icons was uniquely developed in China.⁸⁷ However, Takeda's conclusion must be reconsidered in light of evidence to the contrary. Lilla Russell-Smith is correct in suggesting that anthropomorphic representations of the planets "became popular only after the arrival of Buddhism."⁸⁸ The icons to which she refers were actually transmitted through an Iranian medium.

Table 5.3. Iranian-Mesopotamian Icons of the <i>Qiyao rangzai jue</i> (fasc. 2)	
Descriptions⁸⁹	<i>Kuyō hiryaku</i> Depictions
金：其神是女人，著黃衣，頭戴鷄冠，手彈琵琶。 Venus: The deity is a lady wearing a yellow garment, with a fowl hat on her head, plucking a <i>pipa</i> [lute].	 Fig. 5.11. Venus

Creation)" above. It appears that the first scholar to identify these Chinese icons with Islam and Iran was Chen Wancheng 陳萬成 in 2010. See Wu Yanwu 吳燕武, "Wuxing ershiba xiu shenxing tu gongnengkao," 《五星二十八宿神形圖》功能考, *Xin meishu* 新美術 34, no. 12 (2013): 31. Yu Xin (2011) also points out the Hellenistic and Iranian precedents behind the icon of Mercury. Yu Xin, "Personal Fate and the Planets," 186.

⁸⁷ Takeda Kazuaki 武田和昭, *Hoshi mandara no kenkyū* 星曼荼羅の研究 (Kyōtō: Hōzōkan 法藏館, 1995), 191.

⁸⁸ Lilla Russell-Smith, "Stars and Planets in Chinese and Central Asian Buddhist Art from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Worship of Stars in Japanese Religious Practice*, ed. Lucia Dolce (Bristol: Culture and Cosmos, 2007), 99.

⁸⁹ T 1308, 21: 449a3-b12.

木：其神如老人，著青衣，帶猪冠，容貌儼然。

Jupiter: The deity is like an elderly man, wearing a blue garment and a swine hat, with a dignified appearance.



Fig. 5.12. Jupiter

水：其神女人，著青衣，帶獲冠，手執文卷。

Mercury: the deity is a lady wearing a blue garment and a monkey hat,⁹⁰ her hand grasping a scroll.



Fig. 5.13. Mercury

⁹⁰ Reading *huo guan* 獲冠 as *yuan guan* 猿冠.

作銅牙赤色貌。帶噴色驢冠。著豹皮裙。四臂：一手執弓，一手執箭，一手執刀。

[Mars] The deity is of a red mineral color, wearing a donkey hat of a furious [red] color, and a leopard skin skirt. Four arms: one hand holds a bow, one hand holds an arrow, and one hand holds a blade.



Fig. 5.14. Mars

土：其神似婆羅門，色黑，頭帶牛冠，一手柱杖，一手指前，微似曲腰。

Saturn: The deity is like a Brahmin, black in color. On his head he wears an ox hat. One hand grasps a cane, while the other hand points forward. His back seems slightly bent.



Fig. 5.15. Saturn

There is another set of Iranian-Mesopotamian icons that are described in the fragments of a lost work entitled *Fantian qiyao jing* 梵天七曜經 (**Brahmadeva-saptagraha-sūtra*). These fragments are preserved in the Japanese *Gyōrin shō* 行林抄 (T 2409; *Summary of the Forest of Practices*), a compendium of Buddhist lore and rituals by the Hieizan 比叡山 monk Jōnen 靜然 (d.u.) in 1154. Nothing is known about this *Fantian qiyao jing* since it does not appear anywhere else. Although the title might suggest an Indian origin, the icons described therein are similar to those provided above. They are therefore of an Iranian origin. Jōnen also quotes a certain *Huatu* 畫圖 or “painting” that appears to be text cited from a painting or an otherwise unidentified manual prescribing the forms to be drawn. These descriptions are as follows:

Mars:

**Brahmadeva-saptagraha-sūtra:*

老本云：形如少壯丈夫。面目嗔怒。著豹皮衣裝。右手抱刀，左手忿怒五指。鬚髮豎麗。其身赤色。首戴金兜印。火星之像也。

The old⁹¹ version states, “The figure is like that of a strong young man. His face is angry. He wears a leopard skin garment. His right hand holds a blade. His left hand [displays] wrathful five fingers [a *mudrā*?]. His hair and beard are kempt. His body is red in color. He wears atop his head a gold headpiece. The image of Mars.”⁹²

Huatu “Painting”:

右一手持手，一手持箭二支。右一手持刀，一手持弓。虎皮裳，開足立。On the right, one hand is grasping (?), and one hand holds two arrows. On the right one hand holds a blade, and one hand holds a bow. With a tiger skin skirt, he stands legs apart.⁹³

Mercury:

**Brahmadeva-saptagraha-sūtra:*

梵本云：形如學生兒童子，著青衣，乘青聰馬。天衣珠寶裝飾。水星之像也。The Indian text states, “The form is like a student child wearing a blue garment, and riding a blue piebald horse.”⁹⁴ He is adorned in heavenly garments and precious stones. The image of Mercury.”⁹⁵

⁹¹ *Lao* 老 (“old”) here is likely a scribal error for *fan* 梵 (“Indic”).

⁹² T 2409, 76: 464c06-09.

⁹³ T 2409, 76: 464c13-14.

⁹⁴ Reading *cong ma* 聰馬 as *cong ma* 驄馬

⁹⁵ T 2409, 76: 464c17-18.

Huatu “Painting”:

右手執筆，左手執紙。開左右手立。

In the right hand holding a brush. In the left hand holding paper. Standing with both hands spread apart.⁹⁶

Jupiter:

**Brahmadeva-saptagraha-sūtra:*

梵本云：形如長君子，著禮衣，帶冠冕，乘一黑猪。面目仁者，如令之判史，右之諸侯也。

The Indian text states, “His form is like that of a chief lord, wearing formal attire and cap, while riding a black pig. His face is noble like a state minister or the lord of the right.”⁹⁷

Huatu “Painting”:

胸間左右手相並，捧盛花一坏立。

Both hands parallel at the chest. Standing while holding a cup⁹⁸ full of flowers.⁹⁹

Venus

**Brahmadeva-saptagraha-sūtra:*

梵本云：形如婦人，裝以綵衣，面目似笑。乘一白師子。金星之像也

The Indian text states, “A form like that of a lady wearing a variegated garment, with a slight smiling expression. She rides a white lion. The image of Venus.”¹⁰⁰

Huatu “Painting”:

左手執琵琶頭，右手彈弦。

Left hand holding the head of a *pipa* and right hand plucking¹⁰¹ strings.¹⁰²

⁹⁶ T 2409, 76: 464c21.

⁹⁷ T 2409, 76: 464c25-27.

⁹⁸ Reading *huai* 坏 as *bei* 杯.

⁹⁹ T 2409, 76: 465a02.

¹⁰⁰ T 2409, 76: 465a05-06. The lion mount is significant because the goddess Ištar, associated with Venus in Mesopotamia, is often pictured with a lion. See table 5.4 below. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. “Ishtar”, accessed January 03, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Ishtar-Mesopotamian-goddess>.

¹⁰¹ Read *chan* 禪 as *tan* 彈.

¹⁰² T 2409, 76: 465a10.

Saturn

**Brahmadeva-saptagraha-sūtra*:

梵本云：形如老波羅門師，手執錫杖，著黑袈裟，乘一黑牛。衣以金銀裝束。土星之像也

The Indian text states, “A form like an old Brahmin master. In his hand he holds a monk’s staff. He wears a black *kāṣāya*, and rides a black ox. His robe is decorated with gold and silver. The image of Saturn.”¹⁰³

Huatu “Painting”:

右手執錫杖，左手立臂申，掌執乘牛。

His right hand holding a staff, and his left hand extended outward. He drives and rides an ox.¹⁰⁴

These Iranian-Mesopotamian icons stem from the greater pan-Eurasian tradition of assigning specific gods to each of the planets. The association between the planets and gods was originally a Mesopotamian custom, which was later adopted by the Greeks, Persians, Indians and finally the Chinese from the late-Tang period. See table 5.4.

Table 5.4. Planetary Deities – Correspondences ¹⁰⁵					
Planet	Greek	Akkadian	Middle Persian	Sogdian ¹⁰⁶	Sogdian (Chinese) ¹⁰⁷
Mars	Ares	Nergal	Wahrām	<i>wnx’n</i> [Unxān]	雲漢
Mercury	Hermes	Nabû	Tīr	<i>tyr</i> [Tīr]	啞
Jupiter	Zeus	Marduk	Ohrmazd	<i>wrmz’t</i> [Urmazt]	溫沒斯
Venus	Aphrodites	Ištar	Anāhīd	<i>n’xyδ</i> [Nāxid]	那頡
Saturn	Kronos	Kajamānu	Kēwān	<i>kyw’n</i> [Kēwān]	鷄暖

¹⁰³ T 2409, 76: 465a13-15.

¹⁰⁴ T 2409, 76: 465a19-20.

¹⁰⁵ Table adapted from Antonio Panaino, “Cosmologies and Astrology,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, ed. Michael Strausberg and Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina (John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 253. Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, 110.

¹⁰⁶ Nicholas Sims-Williams pointed out to me that the Sogdian terms are transcriptions of the planet names directly from Middle Persian, hence the italicization here. Private communication. July 25th, 2016.

¹⁰⁷ These transliterations are taken from the *Qiyao rangzai jue*.

It is therefore unsurprising that Mars in the Chinese tradition is depicted as a warrior (Nergal is a war god), and Mercury as a scribe (Nabû is the god of scribes). The planetary deities worshipped within the context of Chinese Buddhist astrology were in effect largely adapted from a Zoroastrian model. The Chinese never associated their native deities with the planets in the same way as cultures to the west did, but rather they adopted foreign iconography and loanwords for the new planetary deities.¹⁰⁸

This specific practice of worshipping planetary deities can be traced back to the Hellenistic tradition of magic. There are similarities between the colors of the deities described above and the stones used to represent the planetary deities in the Greco-Egyptian tradition of astrology. As Evans' study explains, astrologers in Alexandria represented the planets using specific types of stone on a 'horoscope board'.¹⁰⁹ A Greek papyrus (PGM CX 1–12) text, translated by Betz, lists the prescribed stones as follows:

Make the Sun gold, the Moon silver, Kronos [Saturn] of obsidian, Ares [Mars] of yellow-green onyx,¹¹⁰ Aphrodite [Venus] of lapis-lazuli streaked with gold, Hermes [Mercury] of turquoise; make Zeus [Jupiter] of a [dark blue] stone, but underneath of crystal.¹¹¹

The colors of the stones for Saturn, Mars, Mercury and possibly Zeus correspond to the prescribed colors of the icons above. Similar color assignments are also found in Indian literature, specifically the aforementioned *Yavanajātaka* (2.3), which Pingree notes were "fairly standard in Greek astrology: the Sun with coppery red, the Moon with silver, Mars with red, Mercury with green, Jupiter with yellow, Venus with white, and Saturn with black."¹¹²

In light of these parallels, it is unsurprising that the tradition of astral magic as seen in the late-Tang, which we will discuss shortly, also shares many parallels with that found in the medieval Arabic and European occult traditions that are based on the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, i.e., *The Aim of the Sage*, otherwise known by its Latin translation the *Picatrix*. Chinese astrologers, I argue, were hitherto unrecognized heirs to an effectively global practice of astral magic stretching from East Asia to Europe.

To put this into context, the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* is a manual of astrology and magic, which Pingree identifies as having been written in Spain sometime in the mid-eleventh century. He notes that "the unknown compiler of the *Ghāyat* had available for his use in

¹⁰⁸ Note that worship of astral deities was a major part of native Chinese court religion. There are several prominent astral deities in the Chinese pantheon, several of whom were worshipped at court. See 2.4 above.

¹⁰⁹ Evans, "The Astrologer's Apparatus," 1–44.

¹¹⁰ Evans gives "reddish onyx" for Ares. See Evans, "The Astrologer's Apparatus," 4.

¹¹¹ Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), 312.

¹¹² David Pingree, "Indian Planetary Images and the Tradition of Astral Magic," 3.

Spain in the middle of the eleventh century much of the Arabic literature on the esoteric sciences that had been produced in Syria and Mesopotamia, but nothing that had been written after the year 1000.”¹¹³ This text also relies to some extent on Iranian lore, even citing the names of the planets in Persian.¹¹⁴ The *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* was translated into Spanish, albeit with some issues of mistranslation, between 1256 and 1258 at the court of Alfonso the Wise (1221–1284), and sometime shortly thereafter a Latin translation of the Spanish was produced.¹¹⁵ In subsequent centuries, the “influence of *Picatrix* on the magical traditions of the Western world was immense. Much of the significant scholarly occultists of the late Middle Ages appear to have drawn on it, or on material borrowed from it by other authors.”¹¹⁶ There are parallels, such as the colors associated with the planets, in other ancient texts on astrology, including the *Anthologies* by Vettius Valens, a manual on horoscopic astrology, though these are not works on astral magic.

The impact of astral magic in Islamic cultures and medieval Europe is already recognized, but the significance of it in East Asia has scarcely been recognized. The reality is that both Buddhism and Daoism were influenced by this Near Eastern tradition of astral magic.¹¹⁷ The foremost example of this is the apotropaic ritual against Saturn. The *Qiyao rangzai jue* prescribes the following ritual:

到宿命宮，宜鑄可長四寸，曲腰，三衣，瓶鉢。土直日平坦，以黑瓷瓶盛之，於臥處頭邊，以油麻油灑於頂上。經三年止盡供養。持熾盛光一字王真言，涅槃經，般若經十卷或百卷。宜燒安悉香，著白上衣及帶雄黃朱砂及屠刀。打作環帶之，可重四兩。鷄緩日平坦以絹畫之，供養好食菓子。帶黑色者爲上。至心啟告：鷄緩國王，某甲君王如護弟子，伏願護命去災。所供養物宜自食之。

[When Saturn] moves into [one’s] *nakṣatra* and natal house, one should cast [an image of Saturn] about 4 inches tall: bent back, three robes, bottle and bowl. On Saturdays at dawn, take a black porcelain bottle and fill it. Place it at the head of

¹¹³ Pingree, “Some of the Sources of the *Ghāyat al-hakīm*,” 2.

¹¹⁴ Panaino notes their names appear in corrupted Arabic spelling: Kēwān, Hurmuz, Bahrām, Mihr, Anāhīd, Tīr, Māh. In Latin they read as Kayhven, Harmiz, Baharam, Maher, Anyhyt, Tyr, Mehe. See Panaino, “Cosmologies and Astrology,” 254.

¹¹⁵ David Pingree, “Between the Ghāya and Picatrix I: The Spanish Version,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 44 (1981): 27–56. For the Latin edition see David Pingree ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm* (London: University of London, 1986).

¹¹⁶ Greer, John Michael and Christopher Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix: Liber Rubeus Edition* (Adocentyn Press, 2010–2011), 11.

¹¹⁷ The influence of Near Eastern traditions on Chinese religions has been discussed to some extent. Peter Yoshirō Saeki in 1937 already identified what appear to be Syriac Christian prayers in the form of transliterated incantations in a Tang Daoist text, the *Lǔzu quanshu* 呂祖全書. See P.Y. Saeki, *The Nestorian Documents and Relics in China* (Tōkyō: Maruzen, 1937), 400–407. For a recent relevant study see Zeng Yangqing 曾陽晴, *Tangchao hanyu Jingjiao wenxian yanjiu* 唐朝漢語景教文獻研究 (Taipei: Huamulan Wenhua, 2005), 35–38.

where one sleeps and drip sesame oil atop its crown. After three years, the offering will be complete.¹¹⁸ Recite the Tejaprabhā single-syllable king mantra,¹¹⁹ the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-mahāsūtra* and the *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, either in ten fascicles or one-hundred fascicles. One should burn Persian incense, wear a white outer garment, and on the belt carry realgar, cinnabar and a dagger. Make a loop and attach them. They can overlap several times. On days of Kēwān [Saturn] at dawn paint him [his image] on silk and make offerings of good foods and fruits. It is superior to wear the color black. Sincerely speak: “King Kēwān! May I [*stating one’s name*] be guarded by you, Lord, like a disciple. I beseech you to guard my life and halt calamities!” One should personally eat the offerings that were given.¹²⁰

The aforementioned *Kuyō hiryaku* contains a very similar ritual for Saturn, but does not prescribe any scriptures to be recited.¹²¹ The Daoist *Chengxing lingtai biyao jing*, which we discussed earlier (4.7), provides a very similar apotropaic ritual for Saturn while citing a source text:

又九執經云：宜以犁具鑄鐵鑄，作一土星真形，長七寸，以黑磁甕盛之，置於臥床頭安之。每於雞緩直日平坦時，以黑油麻汁瀝頭上，經年乃去之。如畫之供養，亦得以隨年果子供養，帶黑色者，尤妙。咒曰：雞緩是我君主，某臣僕願加祐護，次以度災厄。然後，拜之供養訖，自己食之。好食酸苦等。宜看八陽經，帶雄朱，燒安息香，著皂衣，不入惡神廟，忌食牛肉，忌角器等。

Furthermore, the **Navagraha Sūtra* states that one is to cast, using plow iron, one true image of Saturn, seven inches tall. Take a black porcelain jar and fill it. Place it [the image] at the head of one’s bed. On every day of Kēwān [Saturday] at dawn, drip black oil and sesame broth on its head. After [three?] year[s] remove it. If painting [the image of the deity] and making offerings, one must also offer it fruits throughout the year. It is especially excellent to wear the color black. The incantation: “Kēwān is my lord; I [*stating your name*], your retainer, beg your protection and liberation from distress.” Afterward, having paid respects and provided the offerings, personally consume them. [Offer] good foods, sour and bitter in flavor. One should read the *Eight Yang Sūtra*.¹²² Carry realgar and

¹¹⁸ Three years is roughly enough time to accommodate the transit of Saturn through a single zodiacal sign.

¹¹⁹ It is unclear to which mantra or *dhāraṇī* this refers.

¹²⁰ T 1308, 21: 449b2–12.

¹²¹ TZ, vol. 7, 772.

¹²² Presumably one of the modified Daoist versions of the *Foshuo ba yang shenzhou jing* 佛說八陽神呪經 (T 428) or *Foshuo tiandi ba yang shenzhou jing* 佛說天地八陽神呪經 (T 2897): *Taishang Laojun shuo anzhai ba yang jing* 太上老君說安宅八陽經 (DZ 634) or *Taishang Laojun shuo buxie ba*

cinnabar. Burn Persian incense. Wear black garments. Do not enter the temples of evil gods. It is taboo to eat beef. It is taboo [to use] vessels made of horn.¹²³

Kēwān is the Middle Persian or Sogdian name of Saturn, which immediately indicates an Iranian source for this ritual. Saturn in non-Chinese astral magical literature is universally associated with black, or a very dark color such as “burned wool” (*lana combusta*), as in the *Picatrix*.¹²⁴ This associated color is also applied to associated stones, such as Obsidian, as noted above. This is different from Chinese lore, in which Saturn is associated with the color yellow.¹²⁵ The *Picatrix* similarly associates black clothing with Saturn (*omnes pannos nigros*).¹²⁶ Also, “plow iron” (犁具鑄鐵) above is likely connected to the association between the god Kronos and agriculture. The *Picatrix* states that Saturn rules over “those that work with the earth, plowing, digging, extracting minerals, ...” and among metals he rules over “lead, iron and all metals that are black and smell bad.”¹²⁷ The prescribed Persian incense (*anxi xiang* 安息香)¹²⁸ is identified by Cullen and Lo as styrax benzoin.¹²⁹ Styrax is also the prescribed incense for Saturn given in a Greco-Egyptian papyrus (PGM XIII. 17–22): “the proper incense of Kronos is styrax, for it is heavy and fragrant.”¹³⁰ This is also so in the *Picatrix*, which gives “strong cassia and storax” (*fortiter cassiam et storacem*).¹³¹

The description of Saturn in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* as a dark Brahmin carrying a staff corresponds to the depiction of Kronos on magic stones in the Greco-Egyptian tradition of astrology.¹³² One engraving of Kronos (fig. 5.16) shows him as a man hunched over, reaping wheat with the sickle that he used to castrate his father Ouranos.

yang jing 太上老君說補謝八陽經 (DZ 635). The latter two especially are apotropaic texts employed to resolve problems in a dwelling brought on by disturbed earth spirits. See Christine Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face: Scripture, Ritual, and Iconographic Exchange in Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008), 14.

¹²³ DZ 289, Wenwu Chubanshe edn., vol. 5, 30c2-10.

¹²⁴ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 140. For Latin see Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 97.

¹²⁵ Saturn and earth are associated with the Yellow Emperor 黃帝. See also T 1308, 21: 427a15.

¹²⁶ Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 91.

¹²⁷ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 133. The Latin reads, “et ex magisteriis laborare terram, arare, fodere, extrahere mineras ... et ex metallis plumbum, ferrum et omnia nigra et fetida.” Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 91.

¹²⁸ Also rendered as *anxi xiang* 安息香.

¹²⁹ See appendix 1 in Christopher Cullen and Vivienne Lo, *Medieval Chinese Medicine: The Dunhuang Medical Manuscripts* (Routledge, 2004).

¹³⁰ Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation*, 172.

¹³¹ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 134. For Latin see Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 91.

¹³² The cult of Kronos flourished in Alexandria throughout antiquity, the heartland of astrology. See J.N. Bremmer, “Greek Fallen Angels: Kronos and the Titans,” in *Greek Religion and Culture: the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 82–83.

As seen above (fig. 5.15), Saturn is described as having a bent back (*quyao* 曲腰). The cane or staff he holds appears to be the original sickle modified into the new item. One later portrayal of Saturn in India, stemming from Iranian sources, portrays him carrying a staff, being dark in color, and sometimes riding a bull, such as in the *Lagnacandrikā*, a Hindu astrological work composed by Kāśinātha in the first half of the sixteenth century in northern India (fig. 5.17). This is similar to the East Asian tradition, in which Saturn is either riding a bull or wears a “bull hat”. As to the bull in the *Lagnacandrikā*, as Pingree notes, this is neither the white-humped bull Nandī, the mount or *vāhana* of Śiva, nor the buffalo of Yama.¹³³ Parker’s study notes that throughout Egyptian history, Saturn was always known as ‘Horus bull of the sky’ or ‘Horus the bull’.¹³⁴ In late-period texts he is often depicted as a bull-headed god.¹³⁵

Fig. 5.16. Kronos Stone¹³⁶



Fig. 5.17. *Lagnacandrikā* Saturn¹³⁷



In light of the above connections to the Greco-Egyptian tradition, I would tentatively propose that Saturn’s bull here is Horus the Bull as a representation of Saturn.

It should be noted here that in the Japanese *Genzu mandara* 現圖曼荼羅 version of the Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala, the depiction of Saturn is of the Iranian type (fig. 5.18), and

¹³³ Ibid., 13.

¹³⁴ R.A. Parker, “Ancient Egyptian Astronomy,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series A, Mathematical and Physical Sciences* 276, no. 1257 (1974): 60.

¹³⁵ Neugebauer and Parker, *Egyptian Astronomical Texts III*, 178–179.

¹³⁶ Kronos as reaper. Haematite. Département des Monnaies, Médailles et Antiques, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. From Evans, “The Astrologer’s Apparatus,” 17. Photograph and right to reproduce courtesy of James Evans.

¹³⁷ See appended plate 5b in Pingree, “Indian Planetary Images and the Tradition of Astral Magic.” In the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, Saturn is “black, on a tortoise, bearing a staff.” Ibid., 7.

not of the original Indian type (compare with fig. 4.19). This version of the *maṇḍala* is to likely be traced back to Huiguo 惠果 (746–806), who was Kūkai’s teacher in Chang’an. In other words, this is not the original *maṇḍala* that Śubhakarasiṃha prescribed in the 720s.¹³⁸ During the course of its evolution, it clearly was influenced by the new Iranian sources, which possibly indicates that Buddhist teachers, such as Huiguo, were increasingly familiar with the newly imported astral magic.¹³⁹

Fig. 5.18. Saturn 土曜.¹⁴⁰



The *Qiyao rangzai jue* and Daoist *Chengxing lingtai biyao jing* both include practices against the other visible planets. As with the Saturn ritual, it is clear that these two texts draw upon the same foreign material. Comparing how the Buddhists and Daoists approached this material is instructive, especially in the following ritual against Mars in the Daoist text:

¹³⁸ See Nakano Gishō 中野義照, “Genzu Taizō mandara saigai-in no kōsō” 現圖胎藏マンドラ最外院の構想, *Mikkyō bunka* 密教文化 88 (1969): 6.

¹³⁹ Further evidence of the influence of foreign astrology in this form of the *maṇḍala* is suggested by the name “White Ram” (*baiyang gong* 白羊宮) for the zodiac sign Aries. It can be inferred that this term comes from the *Duli yusi jing* since it appears in the aforementioned *Xitian yusi jing*. See Wan Mingyong, *Xingxue dacheng* (SKQS 806: 436a16). In the *Taizō zuzō* and *Taizō kuzuyō* (TZ, vol. 2, 284 & 559), Aries is simply *yang gong* 羊宮 (the Ram). See also Somekawa, *Mandara zuten*, 183.

¹⁴⁰ TZ, vol. 1, 789. See also Somekawa, *Mandara zuten*, 211.

使赤油麻七粒，赤稻五粒，赤小豆三粒，赤驢尾七莖，赤銅屑少許，以緋袋子盛，緋線子繫在臂上，大吉。又若畫其形供養，吉。又轉度人經，及消災經，及帶緋頭鬚朱砂，即於雲漢曰爲之。寶命經云：乘赤馬，著赤衣。在身須七處刺出血。又刺出赤驢血。當火見曰爲災時，造八角壇，於四面四角頭，各著四方箭，箭上繫四方色。續時，己身上血並赤驢血，與檀末相調，瀝於壇上。上又以赤油麻油燈五方，五盞燈樹皆須赤。前來所用，袋用緋索子，繫在臂上，帶頭鬚吉。又九執經云：取隨年五果，木柴，隨年甘草兩數，并前功德焚之。在臂上帶赤銅釧。南壇下置水一甕。午上立竿懸赤旛。埋赤炭六斤。

It is greatly auspicious to fill a crimson bag with seven pellets of red sesame, five pellets of red rice, three pellets of red little beans, seven red donkey tails, and a small amount of red copper bits, and then attach it to one's arm with a crimson string. It is also auspicious to paint its [Mars'] image and make offerings. Also, on days of Unxān [Tuesdays], recite the *Liberating Men Scripture* and *Eliminating Calamities Scripture*,¹⁴¹ and wear crimson cinnabar [color] in one's hair and beard. The *Jeweled Fate Scripture*¹⁴² states, "Ride a red horse, and wear red clothing. On the body one must pierce seven places and extract blood. Also, pierce and extract the blood from a red donkey. When there is a calamity on a day when Mars appears, build an octagonal altar. Attach arrows [pointing to] the four directions at the four corners on four sides. Atop the arrows attach the colors of the four directions. At 20:00,¹⁴³ blend together one's own blood and the blood of the red donkey with powdered sandalwood incense, and drip it atop the altar. Also, place oil lamps of red sesame oil at the five directions. The five lamp supports all must be red. As employed earlier, it is auspicious to [prepare] a bag, using crimson string to attach it to the arm while wearing [red cinnabar coloring] in one's hair and beard." Also, the *Navagraha Sūtra* states, "Together with the earlier practices, take throughout the year the five fruits [peaches, pears, apricots, chestnuts and jujubes],¹⁴⁴ firewood and two bundles of sweet grass,¹⁴⁵ and burn them. Attach to the arm a red copper bracelet. Under the southern altar place one

¹⁴¹ This is perhaps referring to the *Taishang Laojunshuo xiaozai jing* 太上老君說消災經 (DZ 631), which is of unknown authorship. The text is said to halt calamities if recited. See Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian* 中華道教大辭典 (Beijing: Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Chubanshe, 1995), 286.

¹⁴² The identity of this text is uncertain.

¹⁴³ Reading *xu shi* 續時 as *xu shi* 戌時 since the former is likely a scribal error. *Xu* corresponds to Aries, which is ruled by Mars.

¹⁴⁴ These fruits are all reddish in color.

¹⁴⁵ This likely refers to licorice plant.

jar of water. Raise a red banner in the southern direction. Bury six catties of red charcoal.”¹⁴⁶

Unxān 雲漢 is a Chinese transliteration of the Sogdian name for the planet Mars, which itself is a transcription of the Middle Persian name Wahrām (table 5.4).¹⁴⁷ As discussed above, Mars is associated with Tuesday in the seven-day week. The standard seven-day week is a Greco-Egyptian creation that became standard throughout medieval Eurasia and Africa. The association between Mars and the color red is present in both Chinese and foreign sources, which is likely due to its visible appearance in the sky. For example, in the *Wuxing dayi*, Mars is “the essence of fire; its place is the southern direction, presiding over summer; it is the son of the Red Emperor.”¹⁴⁸ In the *Picatrix*, Mars is associated with red (*rubeum*) metals (i.e., red bronze or copper) and red sandalwood (*sandalum rubeum*).¹⁴⁹ Similar substances are found in the above passage. The *Qiyao rangzai jue*, likely drawing on the same foreign sources as the above Chinese, gives ‘purple sandalwood incense’ (紫檀香) for Mars.¹⁵⁰ Gideon Bohak notes that within Greco-Egyptian magic “the extensive use of donkey parts in aggressive magic (since the donkey was associated with Seth-Typhon) are all Egyptian in origin, and their pervasiveness in the Greek Magical Papyri certainly could be used as evidence for a strong Egyptian influence on their magical rituals.”¹⁵¹ This possibly indicates an association between Seth (a god of war) and the planet Mars here.

Although the *Qiyao rangzai jue* describes the icon of Mars, and prescribes flavors and types of incense for Tuesdays, it does not describe any of the blood magic that we find in the Daoist version of the ritual. Native Chinese religious practice, especially that of the state cult, included ritualized slaughtering of animals for sacrifice. Daoism, however, originally avoided blood sacrifice. As Terry F. Kleeman explains, “Taoists saw the performance of blood sacrifice as a crime punishable by the heavenly tribunal.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁶ DZ 289, Wenwu Chubanshe edn., vol. 5, 30b1-14.

¹⁴⁷ D.N. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 86. Panaino, “Cosmologies and Astrology,” 253.

¹⁴⁸ “熒惑，火之精，其位南方，主夏，赤帝之子。The ‘Red Emperor’ here is one of the Five Heavenly Emperors 五天帝。Xiao Ji, *Wuxing dayi*, vol. 1060, 249.

¹⁴⁹ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 134–135. For Latin see Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 92–93.

¹⁵⁰ T 1308, 21: 449a29.

¹⁵¹ See Gideon Bohak, “The Diffusion of the Greco-Egyptian Magical Tradition in Late Antiquity,” in *Greco-Egyptian Interactions: Literature, Translation and Culture, 500 BCE – 300 CE*, ed. Ian Rutherford (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 365.

¹⁵² Terry F. Kleeman, “Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China,” *Asia Major*: 7, no. 1 (1994): 201.

The above ritual against Mars does not strictly call for sacrifice, but the use of blood very likely would have been regarded as unorthodox within institutionalized Daoism.¹⁵³

The ritual against Jupiter (禳木法) in the *Chengxing lingtai biyao jing* indicates strong Iranian influences. The planet Jupiter in Hellenistic and Indian astrology is regarded as benefic and signaling good fortune, in which case it begs the question why there would need to be a means of counteracting the influences of Jupiter. This might initially appear to be due to certain astrological configurations involving Jupiter that are regarded as unfavorable, but, in reality, this negative status of Jupiter reflects the fact that all of the planets within the Iranian tradition, including even Jupiter, named after the chief Zoroastrian deity of Ahura Mazda (Ohrmazd), were demonized and called ‘retrograde’ (*abāxtar*), ‘non-star’ (*nē axtar*), and ‘bandits’ (*gēg*).¹⁵⁴ The ritual in the *Chengxing lingtai biyao jing* reads as follows:

取白豬毛七莖，以白袋盛，繫左臂上。忌食豬肉。不得殺生命。又以白銀一兩，鑄作真形，供養看經。不得入神廟及吊死問病。供養一切道人吉。
Fill a white bag with seven bundles of hair from a white boar, and tie it to one’s left arm. It is taboo to eat pork. One must not take life. Also, cast a true image with one tael of white silver. Make offerings and read scriptures. One must not enter temples, ritually mourn the dead, or visit the ill. It is auspicious to make offerings to all Daoists.¹⁵⁵

In a Greek papyrus, the stone of Zeus (Jupiter) is to be made “of a [dark blue] stone, but underneath of crystal.”¹⁵⁶ Vettius Valens gives “grey verging on white” for Jupiter.¹⁵⁷ In the *Picatrix*, Jupiter is associated with white clothes (*pannis albos*), emerald (*smaragdum*), white and yellow stones (*lapides albos et croceos*), and crystal (*cristallum*). The relevant passage in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* associates “fragrant and delicious fruits, and fresh ginger (香美菓子生薑)” with Jupiter. In the *Picatrix*, Jupiter is similarly associated with a sweet flavor (*et ex saporibus dulcia*).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ There are exceptions in Daoist literature, in which blood is used in magical rites. See Asano Haruji, “Offerings in Daoist Ritual,” in *Daoist Identity: History, Lineage, and Ritual*, eds. Livia Kohn and Harold D. Roth (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), 284–286.

¹⁵⁴ Panaino, “Cosmologies and Astrology,” 253–255. There are examples in Indian literature of all the *navagraha* being associated with malicious beings, and regarded as harmful, such as the **Grahamāṭṛkā-dhāraṇī* 聖曜母陀羅尼經 (T 1303), in which a mantra is taught in order to please wicked astral deities, which seems to include even Jupiter and Venus. The context and prescribed offerings of this work, however, are different from the Iranian material at hand.

¹⁵⁵ DZ 289, Wenwu Chubanshe edn., vol. 5, 30c11-15.

¹⁵⁶ Betz, ed, *The Greek Magical Papyri*, 312.

¹⁵⁷ Vettius Valens, *Anthologies*, 1.

¹⁵⁸ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 134. Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 92. T 1308, 21: 449a16. Elsewhere in the text Jupiter is specifically associated with sweetness: 木愛香羔. Here *gao* 羔 is an error for *gan* 甘. T 1308, 21: 428a1.

As with the ritual for Saturn above, the prohibited activities are those associated with the deity. The taboo against pork is similarly a means of avoiding the animal associated with the planet. It seems that one is to avoid these activities as a means of warding off the undesirable influences of a planet, whereas carrying out the associated activities would attract the attention of the planetary deity.

In the *Picatrix*, the animals associated with Jupiter are “all animals that are beautiful and valued for their appearance, those which are sacrificed, and all inoffensive, clean, and precious animals.”¹⁵⁹ It does not list pigs among these. From an Islamic perspective, any sort of swine would be considered unclean especially in a dietary context,¹⁶⁰ but in older cultures such as Zoroastrianism this was not the case.¹⁶¹ In the Chinese above, it seems that the proscription against killing, which in this context likely refers to animal sacrifice, is the opposite of a normal activity associated with Jupiter. Jupiter is associated with Thursday, an auspicious day, so presumably sacrifices are best carried out under the influence of this planet. In other words, normally animal sacrifices were associated with Jupiter, but in this apotropaic ritual one is to avoid such things to ward off undesirable influences, just as with Saturn one is to avoid the temples of wicked gods and the consumption of beef, both of which are normally associated with Saturn. The Buddhist version repeats the injunction against killing and the consumption of pork.¹⁶² This proscription would have been agreeable in a Chinese Buddhist context, but, in actuality, refraining from killing in this context was originally unrelated to compassion or vegetarianism.

Sogdian Nāxid 那頡 corresponds to Ištar, a Mesopotamian goddess of war, but also of procreation and sex, being helpful and spreading happiness and joy.¹⁶³ The *Picatrix* associates Venus with “playing instruments that are good to listen to (*et pulsare instrumenta boni auditus*)”, “making stringed instruments (*cordas instrumentorum facere*)”, as well the colors “sky blue and gold tending a little to green (*colorem celestinum et colorem auri declinantem aliquantulum ad viridem*)”.¹⁶⁴ As a way of avoiding her influence, the *Qiyao rangzai jue* prescribes wearing “yellow clothing, and

¹⁵⁹ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 134. The Latin reads, “et ex animalibus omnia animalia formosa et in eorum formis posita, ex quibus sacrificia fieri solebant, et omnia animalia non offendencia, limpida et nitida ...” Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 92.

¹⁶⁰ Richard Foltz, *Animals in Islamic Tradition and Muslim Cultures* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006), 25, 131.

¹⁶¹ Foltz states with respect to pigs in Zoroastrianism that “[t]he status of the pig is unclear; in the *Nērangestān* section of the Avesta, pigs are among the animals listed for sacrifice, while some later texts proscribe this, perhaps reflecting the encroaching influence of Semitic cultures.” See Richard Foltz, “Zoroastrian Attitudes toward Animals,” *Society and Animals* 18 (2010): 374.

¹⁶² T 1308, 21: 449a14-15.

¹⁶³ Leick, *A Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Mythology*, 96–97.

¹⁶⁴ Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 135–136. Pingree, ed., *Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*, 93–94.

treasures such as gold and jade” while avoiding communication with ladyfolk for there the possibility of disasters arising from jealousy and speech.¹⁶⁵

Sogdian Tīr 𐰽𐰺 corresponds to the Mesopotamian Nabû, the god of scribes and writing.¹⁶⁶ As Panaino notes, “The god of the planet Mercury, Tīriya in western Iran, a protector of the scribes, as in the parallel cases of Thoth-Mercury in Egypt and Nabû - Mercury in Babylon, probably was associated with Tištrya, but after the (later) demonization of the planets he became a demon.”¹⁶⁷ The correspondence here with the Egyptian Thoth is highly significant and actually explains the “monkey hat”. As my colleague, Joseph P. Elacqua, pointed out to me, one of the animals closely associated with Thoth is the baboon. Thoth was a god of scribes and “according to one hymn to Thoth, the eye of the baboon watched out for scribes who abused their skill by applying it to illicit self-gain.”¹⁶⁸ It is clear that the Chinese icon is a union of Iranian, Egyptian and Hellenistic features, but its female gender is anomalous. This female representation is perhaps related to the fact that in astrology Mercury is regarded as both male and female.¹⁶⁹

An alternative explanation to the associated animals might be found with the Chinese concept of the ‘thirty-six beasts’ 三十六禽, which divides each of the twelve earthly branches into three separate animal associations. The earthly branch *shen* 申, whose animals includes two types of apes and a monkey (狢, 猿, 猴), corresponds to the zodiac sign of Gemini, who in horoscopy is ruled by Mercury. Similarly, one of the animals of the earthly branch *si* 巳 is a snake 蛇. This earthly branch corresponds to Virgo, who is also ruled by Mercury. This is a tempting explanation for the animal associations discussed above, but the problem is that Mars is associated with a donkey (not one of the thirty-six beasts), and the icon of Saturn atop a bull (*chou* 丑, one whose animals is the bull 牛, corresponds to Capricorn, who is ruled by Saturn) is found in the late Indian text, the *Lagnacandrikā* (see fig. 5.17). Moreover, these animal associations are apparently derived from translated texts. Whatever similarities between the icons at hand and Chinese lore is therefore likely – albeit quite remarkably – coincidental.

The *Chengxing lingtai biyao jing* also includes a ritual against the hidden planets, which in this case refers to Rāhu and Ketu. This ritual is not included in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, though in light of the foregoing discussion, Buddhist authors were likely aware of it. Although it does not specifically name Rāhu and Ketu, it can be inferred that the ritual is directed against them:

¹⁶⁵ T 1308, 21: 449a7-8.

¹⁶⁶ Leick, *A Dictionary of Ancient Near Eastern Mythology*, 123–124. Yu Xin (2011) also points out the Hellenistic and Iranian precedents behind the icon of Mercury. Yu Xin, “Personal Fate and the Planets,” 186.

¹⁶⁷ Antonio Panaino, “TIŠTRYA,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2005. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tistrya-2>.

¹⁶⁸ George Hart, *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses* (Routledge, 2005), 158.

¹⁶⁹ Erica Reiner, *Astral Magic in Babylonia* (American Philosophical Society, 1995), 6.

經云：以屠宰煞鐵打作釧，如蛇形以口銜尾，帶左臂上，著緋衣，忌夜食及黑處行。取高岡上土一斗，置床下，別取黃土一斗煮熟，送餵長生鵝鴨食之，大吉。

The scripture states, “Craft a bracelet from the iron of a butcher, like a snake with its mouth swallowing the tail. Wear it on the left arm. Wear crimson garments. It is taboo to eat at night, and travel to black places. It is greatly auspicious to take one peck of soil from a high ridge and place it beneath [one’s] bed, while separately taking one peck of yellow soil and boiling it before feeding it to long-lived waterfowl.”¹⁷⁰

The image of a snake alludes to Rāhu and Ketu, conceived of as the head and tail of a serpent or dragon. This has a parallel in the ninth-century Middle Persian *Bundahišn*, which explains a cosmography based on Zoroastrian scriptures, in which the ascending and descending nodes of the Moon are described as the head and tail of a dragon.¹⁷¹

Fig. 5.19. Rāhu in the *Kuyō hiryaku*.



Fig. 5.20. Ketu in the *Kuyō hiryaku*.



In the Buddhist *Qiyao rangzai jue*, Rāhu and Ketu are called the head and tail of the eclipse deity (蝕神頭, 蝕神尾).¹⁷² One name for Rāhu in two Chinese Buddhist

¹⁷⁰ DZ 289, Wenwu Chubanshe edn., vol. 5, 30c11-15.

¹⁷¹ D. N. MacKenzie, “Zoroastrian Astrology in the *Bundahišn*,” 515.

¹⁷² T 1308, 21: 442b3 & 446b1.

sources is ‘yellow banner’ 黃幡.¹⁷³ However, this is likely a mistake, as one earlier meaning of *ketu* is ‘banner’.¹⁷⁴ In the *Śivadharmaśāstra*, a text of Śaivism which Peter Bisschop dates to the 6th or 7th century, Rāhu is described as “like black collyrium” (*nīlāñjananibhaḥ*).¹⁷⁵ This of course indicates an ultimately Indian origin for anything related to Rāhu and Ketu, but in the case of this astral magic in Chinese, its source is Iranian. Iranian astrology brought together Greco-Egyptian and Indian elements, hence the amalgamation of both of these as seen in Chinese translations of Iranian material.

The icons of Rāhu and Ketu within Chinese Buddhism were also transformed under Iranian influences. In the *Kuyō hiryaku*, Ketu is clearly indicated by name and depicted seated atop a dragon. Rāhu in this document is depicted seated atop a bull (figs. 5.19 and 5.20), which corresponds to *gōzihr*, i.e., a Middle Persian “epithet of the moon, ‘bearing the seed, having the origin of cattle’ (or, ‘the ox’).”¹⁷⁶ This stands in contrast to the Indian icons (see chapter 4.3 above). In the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao*, Rāhu and Ketu are both depicted with serpents. These transitions in depicted forms reflect the shift from Indian to Iranian sources of astrology in the late-Tang.

It is uncertain who specifically was responsible for translating this astral magic into Chinese, though a figure such as Li Miqian discussed above (4.7), who was proficient in Hellenistic astrology, likely facilitated this transmission to some extent. He does not, however, appear to have been a translator. It seems probable that Nestorian, i.e., East-Syrian, Christians had a role to play in the transmission of such knowledge. Syriac Christianity had a significant presence across Central Asia, and thus served as the likely intermediary between the Near East and China for this sort of knowledge.¹⁷⁷ We know that a certain Nestorian clergyman named Adam 景淨 (d.u.), who composed the inscription of the Nestorian stele of 781,¹⁷⁸ interacted with Buddhists, and even translated Buddhist literature.¹⁷⁹ The following account from 800 by Yuanzhao records this:

請譯佛經。乃與大秦寺波斯僧景淨，依胡本六波羅蜜經譯成七卷。時爲般若不閑胡語，復未解唐言，景淨不識梵文，復未明釋教。雖稱傳譯未獲半珠。... 察其所譯理昧詞疎。且夫，釋氏伽藍，大秦僧寺，居止既別，行法全乖。景淨應傳彌尸訶教，沙門釋子弘闡佛經，欲使教法區分，人無濫涉。

¹⁷³ Taishō vol. 21, 1308: 442b3 & 1311: 459b27.

¹⁷⁴ Ketu is also defined as banner in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* commentary: “Ketu is properly translated as banner. The banner star refers to comets 計都正翻爲旗，旗星謂彗星也。” Taishō vol. 39, 1796: 618a15-16.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Bisschop, trans., *Śivadharmaśāstra* (forthcoming).

¹⁷⁶ D. N. Mackenzie, “GŌZIHR”, *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2012. Available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/gozihr>.

¹⁷⁷ For a relevant survey see Erica Hunter, “Syriac Christianity in Central Asia,” *Zeitschrift Für Religions- Und Geistesgeschichte* 44 (1992): 362–368.

¹⁷⁸ T 2144, 54: 1289a5.

¹⁷⁹ In modern academia, this was first noticed by Takakusu. See *Takakusu Junjirō* 高楠順次郎. “The Name of ‘Messiah’ Found in a Buddhist Book,” *T’Oung Pao* 7 (1896): 589–591.

They requested that he [Prajña] translate Buddhist scriptures. Together with the Persian monk Adam of Da Qin-si,¹⁸⁰ he translated the *[*Mahāyāna-naya-]ṣaṭ-pāramitā-sūtra* in seven fascicles based on a Hu¹⁸¹ edition. At the time Prajña did not understand the Hu language or Chinese, while Adam understood neither Sanskrit nor Buddhism. Although they were said to have translated it, they had yet to obtain the half-pearls [i.e., convey the correct meaning]. ... Upon investigating what had been translated, the reasoning was found to be unclear and the vocabulary off. The Buddhist monastery and Da Qin monastery were to keep their residences separate, and their practices entirely apart. Adam should transmit the teachings of the Messiah, while Buddhists shall propagate Buddhist scriptures, so as to keep the doctrines separate, and the communities from excessive intermingling.¹⁸²

In light of the period in which Adam was active, and his proficiency in the “Hu language” and Chinese, as well as his interest in esoteric non-Christian subjects, we might speculate that it was Adam himself who first translated this type of astral magic into Chinese. Adam in another Nestorian source is said to have translated thirty texts.¹⁸³ Even if the translator was not Adam, we know that Sogdian Christian clergymen were active in Luoyang. We can imagine that some of these men would have possessed the language skills to translate astral magic.¹⁸⁴ Knowledge of languages including Sogdian,

¹⁸⁰ Da Qin 大秦 in this period refers to the Levant. The 781 stele reads, “The angel [Gabriel] proclaimed good news, and the Virgin [Mary] gave birth to the Sage [Jesus] in Da Qin. A luminous asterism indicated an auspicious sign. The Persian [wise men] observed its brilliance, and came to present gifts.” 神天宣慶，室女誕聖於大秦；景宿告祥，波斯覩耀以來貢。T 2144, 54: 1289a19-20. Nestorian churches were originally called ‘Persian temples’ 波斯寺 due to the original missionaries in 635 having come from Persia, though in 745 an imperial edict had them renamed to Da Qin-si 大秦寺. Fasc. 49 of the *Tang huiyao* 唐會要, compiled in 961 by Wang Pu 王溥 (922–982), records an imperial edict from year 4 of reign era Tianbao 天寶 (745), which states that the scriptural teachings of Persia 波斯經教 had come from the country of Da Qin, and thus the churches in the two capitals, which had earlier been called ‘Persian temples’, would be renamed as ‘Da Qin temples’ (*Tang huiyao*, 1011–1012). All other provinces and counties where such temples existed were to follow suit, indicating that such churches existed across China. This decree is also recorded in fasc. 32 of the *Quan Tang wen*, compiled by Dong Hao 董誥 in 1814 (vol. 1, 357a6-9).

¹⁸¹ It is uncertain to which language *Hu* 胡 refers. In this case it presumably refers to a Central Asian language, such as perhaps an Eastern Iranian language.

¹⁸² T 2157, 55: 892a7-15.

¹⁸³ This remark about Adam is found in the colophon of the *Zunjing* 尊經, i.e., the *Diptychs* in one fascicle. This is an anonymous work from the early tenth century. It provides the names of saints such as David, Hosea, Peter, and Paul. It lists several presently non-extant texts including the Books of Moses 牟世法王經, Zechariah 刪河律經, Epistles of Saint Paul 寶路法王經 and Revelations 啟真經. The Nestorians in China had access to a number of texts from the Near East. See T 2143, 54: 1288c23-24. For details on the text see Toshikazu S. Foley, *Biblical Translation in Chinese and Greek: Verbal Aspect in Theory and Practice* (Brill, 2009), 7–8.

¹⁸⁴ A Christian stele was erected in 814 in Luoyang 洛陽. It was unearthed in 2006. This stele demonstrates that in the early ninth century a Nestorian church was present in Luoyang and that Sogdian

Middle Persian and Syriac would have been necessary in translating Christian texts, and the only capable institution in China in this respect was the Nestorian church. As noted above, Pingree identifies Syrian sources in the *Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm*; thus, it is conceivable that similar Syrian sources were transmitted to China via Christians from the Levant, much in the same way as the *Duli yusi jing*.¹⁸⁵ We might speculate that Zoroastrians in China might also have had a role to play, but they did not translate their literature into Chinese, and their hand in the translation of astral magic seems unlikely.¹⁸⁶

The foregoing discussion brings with it some implications that must be addressed, especially with respect to astrological iconography in China. One key specimen in this respect is the “Painting of the Deities Forms of the Five Planets and Twenty-Eight Lunar Stations” 五星二十八宿神形圖, presently in the possession of the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts 大阪市立美術館. This painting, extant only as a single fascicle, includes the five planets, but only twelve *nakṣatra* icons, with the other icons having been included in another fascicle. The medieval Japanese *Nijū-hachi suku zuzō* 二十八宿圖像 (TZ vol. 7, 776–800) includes fourteen of the twenty-eight *nakṣatra* icons, but no inscriptions.¹⁸⁷

In the painting at hand, we see Jupiter as an animal-faced man in a white robe riding a boar, Mars as a six-armed donkey-faced man riding a red donkey with multiple weapons in his hands, Saturn as a bearded Indian man of a dark complexion riding a black bull, Venus as a female figure in a yellow robe riding a phoenix with a phoenix cap, and Mercury as a scribe in a bluish-green robe wearing a monkey hat. These icons are clearly of the Iranian-Mesopotamian type.

The text running alongside the icons also explains apotropaic rituals against the planets in the same manner as we saw in our earlier discussion. In the sacrifice to Mars, for instance, one will use bloody meat, alcohol, a copper vessel, red silks, weapons and drums when sacrificing the victim.¹⁸⁸ The offerings to the other planets also follow the Iranian model.

One problem, however, is that this painting, which was originally owned by the Song court, is attributed to Liang Lingzan. We will recall from earlier (4.1) that he

clergymen served there. See Moribe Yutaka 森部豊, “An Introduction to the Luoyang Nestorian Stone Pillar and Their Value as Historical Resources” 中國洛陽新出景教經幢の紹介と史料的价值. *Higashi-Ajia bunka kōshō kenkyū* 東アジア文化交渉研究 5 (2012): 351–357.

¹⁸⁵ Mak concludes that “the Greek astral science exemplified by the *Yusi jing*” was imported into China by the East-Syrian Christians. Mak, “*Yusi Jing*,” 130.

¹⁸⁶ For a recent survey of Zoroastrians in East Asia see Aoki Takeshi, “Zoroastrianism in the Far East,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism*, ed. Michael et al (John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 147–156.

¹⁸⁷ The inscriptions for the apparently lost icons are preserved in the Qing-era *Midian zhulin* 秘殿珠林 (SKQS 823: 677–681).

¹⁸⁸ 熒惑星神食火。祭用血肉酒，器用赤銅，幣用赤，殺牲啖血祭，具戰器鼓舞，然後祭之。忌哭泣，善事熒惑。矯暴公子。熒惑廟可致軍門。 See Jin Weinuo 金維諾, *Zhongguo meishu quanji huihua-bian 2: Sui-Tang Wudai huihua* 中國美術全集繪畫編 2: 隋唐五代繪畫 (Beijing: Renmin Meishu Chubanshe, 1984), 50.

worked together with Yixing on rebuilding the court's armillary sphere in the 720s. Later this painting was attributed to the earlier painter Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (fl. 502–519).¹⁸⁹ Modern scholars continue to debate over the identity of its original creator.¹⁹⁰ I argue that neither of these men were its creator. If either of these men were the actual artist behind this piece, we would have evidence of Iranian icons in China in the sixth or early eighth century, but this is highly problematic.

First, there is no corresponding literary evidence within Buddhist or Daoist literature to support the thesis that these icons were known in China during these periods. This piece is only mentioned from the Song dynasty. Liang Lingzan, even if he had been familiar with foreign astrological icons, most certainly would have known the Indian icons introduced by Śubhakarasiṃha, under whom Yixing worked (see 4.3 above).

Also, we must bear in mind that there was a trend in the late-Tang of attributing astrological works to Yixing. In fact, as we will discuss shortly, a number of texts dealing with astral magic from the ninth century are attributed to Yixing. In the case of the painting in question, it seems that it was convenient to attribute its production to Yixing's close colleague.

With respect to the depictions of the twenty-eight lunar stations, we can compare them with the Japanese *Nijū-hachi suku zuzō*. As an example, the icons of Nü 女星神, corresponding to the *nakṣatra* Śravaṇa (see figs. 5.26 & 5.27). What is the original motif behind this goat-headed figure? These icons appear to be derived, at least in part, from zodiacal lore. This can be inferred based on the fact that the lunar station Nü in Chinese astronomy is subsumed under the zodiac sign Capricorn (see table 4.9). Similarly, the icon of Niu 牛 (Abhijit) also bears horns (fig. 5.28), and this lunar station is also under Capricorn. This points to a Hellenistic, rather than Indian, motif, since Capricorn in India was understood as a *makara*, depicted as a fish-like creature (fig. 4.10 above). Similarly, Wei 尾 (Mūla), depicted as an archer (fig. 5.29), and Qi 箕 (Pūrvāṣāḍhā), depicted as a man mounted on a horse (fig. 5.30), are subsumed under Sagittarius. Another obvious example is Shi 室 (Pūrvabhādrapadā), depicted as a man atop two fish (fig. 5.31), which is subsumed under Pisces. The icon of Liu 柳 (Aślesā), however, is a man atop a dragon (fig. 5.32), which reflects the Indian association of Aślesā with Nāgas,¹⁹¹ but incorporation of Indian elements would be normal within an Iranian context. It is therefore clear that the two documents at hand stem from an Iranian tradition, most likely having been introduced into East Asia during the ninth century.

¹⁸⁹ Jin Weinuo, *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, 12–13.

¹⁹⁰ See Mao Xiangyu 毛翔宇, “Zaoqi Zhongguo huihuashi gainian de hefaxing yi Zhang Sengyou wei zhongxin de jianyao” 早期中國繪畫史概念的合法性--以“張僧繇”為中心的檢討, *Rongbao zhai* 榮寶齋 (2010-10): 117–118. Yu Xin accepts the traditional attribution: “Personal Fate and the Planets,” 184–185.

¹⁹¹ The *Xiuyao jing*, for example, gives the snake deity Śeṣa for Aślesā. See *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu*, vol. 1, 19, and Yano, “*Mikkyō senseijutsu*,” 91.

“Painting of the Deities Forms of the Five Planets and Twenty-Eight Lunar Stations”
五星二十八宿神形圖.

Fig. 5.21. Saturn.

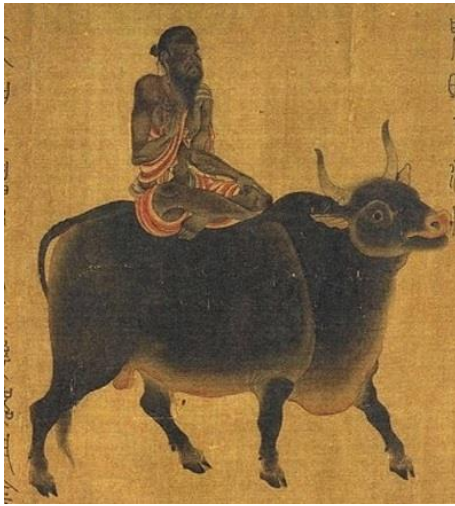


Fig. 5.22. Jupiter.



Fig. 5.23. Venus.



Fig. 5.24. Mercury.



Fig. 5.25. Mars.





Fig. 5.26. Nü / Śravaṇa (Osaka)

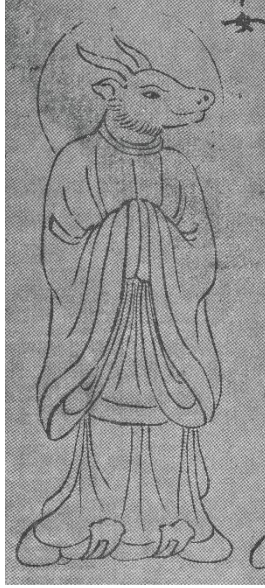


Fig. 5.27. Nü / Śravaṇa



Fig. 5.28. Niu / Abhijit



Fig. 5.29. Wei / Mūla



Fig. 5.30. Qi / Pūrvāṣāḍhā



Fig. 5.31. Shi / Pūrvabhādrapadā



Fig. 5.32. Liu / Aślesā

5.5. The Legendary Yixing

There are several *sādhana*-s (sets of tantric instructions) in the Taishō canon incorporating both Buddhist and Daoist astrological components, attributed to either Yixing or Vajrabodhi. The works attributed to Yixing include the *Xiuyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌

(T 1304; *Ritual for the Asterisms*),¹⁹² *Qiyao xingchen bie xingfa* 七曜星辰別行法 (T 1309; *Special Practices for the Seven Planets and Stars*), *Beidou qixing humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (T 1310; *Homa Ritual for the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper*) and the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (T 1311; **Brahmadeva-hora-navagraha*). None of these, however, were actually written by Yixing. The attributions of T 1309 and T 1311 to Yixing were already called into question by Chavannes and Pelliot in 1913.¹⁹³ As we will explore below, these works are from the ninth century, composed by unknown authors, who attempted to legitimize the texts by attributing them to a plausible authority of the past.

The attribution of these works to Yixing has been doubted by other scholars including Osabe (1963)¹⁹⁴ and Lü Jianfu (2009),¹⁹⁵ but Xiao (1991),¹⁹⁶ Mollier (2008),¹⁹⁷ Sørensen (2011)¹⁹⁸ and Keyworth (2011)¹⁹⁹ have all regarded them as actually his works. In addition to objections by Osabe that Yixing probably would not have written such works given his background in astronomy and orthodox Mantrayāna, there is sufficient internal evidence within these texts to demonstrate that they could not have been compiled in their present forms by Yixing, who died in 727. Such evidence includes anachronistic citations of texts postdating his death. In light of the growing interest in foreign astrology in the early ninth century, and the hybridization of Mantrayāna and Daoist practices throughout the last century of the Tang dynasty, along with the first datable references to these works in Japanese sources, it can be securely established that these works were all produced sometime during the ninth century.

The dating of these works helps to establish an accurate chronology explaining the development of Buddhist astrology in the Tang. This also disproves the position, held by Xiao and Mollier, that there were significant Daoist influences evident within Mantrayāna during the 720s. It does, however, reveal how some Buddhist authors in the ninth century were free to combine Buddhist and Daoist elements in their practices that increasingly incorporated invocations and worship of astral deities, with close attention

¹⁹² This text does not appear to be directly related to the *Xiuyao jing* (4.5).

¹⁹³ Chavannes and Pelliot, “Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine,” 167.

¹⁹⁴ Osabe Kazuo, *Ichigyō zenji no kenkyū*, 256–261.

¹⁹⁵ Lü Jianfu 呂建福, *Mijiao lunkao* 密教論考 (Taipei: Kongting Shuyuan, 2009), 347–349.

¹⁹⁶ Xiao Dengfu, “Cong Dazheng zang suoshou Fojing zhong kan Daojiao xingdou chongbai dui Fojiao zhi yingxiang” 從《大正藏》所收佛經中看道教星斗崇拜對佛教之影響, *Taizhong shangzhuan xuebao* 台中商專學報 23 (1991): 105–123.

¹⁹⁷ Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 141–146.

¹⁹⁸ Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang,” 235–237. With respect to T 1311, Sørensen states, “Strictly speaking, this text is not by Yixing but recapitulates instructions said to have come from him.” *Ibid.*, 243, fn. 57.

¹⁹⁹ George A. Keyworth, “Yixing,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 344.

paid to astrological timing. As Osabe suggests, these works are, in fact, a valuable resource for understanding popular Mantrayāna in the late-Tang.²⁰⁰

Before discussing each of these texts, we should first clarify why Yixing was the most suitable figure to whom these works could have been attributed. As explained earlier (4.1), the historical Yixing was an eminent Buddhist monk and court astronomer who assisted in translating some major Mantrayāna works, while also drafting the new state calendar. He furthermore had a hand in updating the system of state astrology. There is no credible evidence to suggest that he was engaged in astral magic of the type we see in the texts attributed to him. By the ninth century, however, a number of fantastical tales had been composed, and from these there emerged a legendary image of Yixing (a “pseudo-Yixing”). For instance, the early aforementioned Japanese biographies of Yixing by Kūkai and Saichō state that when Yixing’s mother was pregnant with him, she had a halo of white light on her forehead. After giving birth, the halo moved to the forehead of the child.²⁰¹ We therefore know that such fantastic stories were already being told around the turn of the ninth century.

Tales of Yixing as an extraordinary monk are also found in non-Buddhist literature from the late-Tang. The *Kaitian chuanxin ji* 開天傳信記 (*Kaitian Record of Accounts*), written by Zheng Qi (鄭綰; d.899), includes a story about the ghost of Yixing visiting his master Puji.²⁰² Yixing is referred to with the title of “Celestial Master” (*tianshi* 天師), a title often used for Daoist adepts. This story also appears in the *Minghuang zalu buyi* 明皇雜錄補遺 (*Supplement to the Assorted Records of Minghuang [Xuanzong]*), compiled in 855 by Zheng Chuhui 鄭處晦 (d.u.),²⁰³ and the *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (*Miscellaneous Morsels from Youyang*), compiled by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (d. 863) in 860.²⁰⁴ It seems that Yixing’s legendary image also became appropriated within the Daoist community, in light of the Tang history reporting that Yixing met with an erudite Daoist adept named Yin Chong 尹崇 (d.u.). Yixing, we are told, borrowed from him the *Taixuan jing* 太玄經 (*Scripture of the Great Mystery*) by Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BCE - 18 CE), an ancient divination manual. He returned home with the book, and after several days revisited Yin Chong. Yin Chong admitted that the work was profound and that after many years of investigation he still was unable to entirely understand it. Yixing stated that he had mastered its teachings and subsequently produced two works, the *Dayan xuantu* 大衍玄圖 (*Profound Diagram of the Dayan*), and what appears to be its key, the *Yijue* 義決 (*Key to the Meaning*), to show to an astonished Yin Chong. Yixing was declared to be a “later born Yanzi 顏子” (i.e., Yan Hui 顏回, the foremost disciple of Confucius, known for his intelligence). Yixing apparently acquired fame for himself as a

²⁰⁰ Osabe, *Ichigyō Zenji no kenkyū*, 256–257.

²⁰¹ *Shingon fuhō den*, 63, and *Naishō buppō sōshō kechimiyaku fu*, 239.

²⁰² Zheng Qi 鄭綰, *Kaitian chuanxin ji* 開天傳信記, in SKQS 1042: 845–846.

²⁰³ Zheng Chuhui 鄭處晦, *Minghuang zalu buyi* 明皇雜錄補遺, in SKQS 1035: 523.

²⁰⁴ Duan Chengshi 段成式, *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎, in SKQS 1047: 677.

result of this, but the veracity of such a laudatory story is doubtful, and it is likely a fictional account designed to elevate the status of Yixing's purported works on the *Yijing* within a Daoist context, or as a way of simply attributing works to Yixing.²⁰⁵

Another tale relating Yixing's intellectual prowess is told in the *Jiu Tang shu*, explaining that Yixing ended up at Guoqing-si 國清寺 on Mt. Tiantai 天臺山 after a long search for instruction in the number theory of the *Yijing* (*dayan* 大衍).²⁰⁶ Yixing stood outside the gate, hearing from inside mathematical calculations being performed (presumably with counting rods). A monk inside told his disciple, "Today there should be a disciple coming from afar in search of my arithmetic. I reckon that he has arrived at the gate. Surely, isn't there someone to let him in?" He then got out an abacus, and again said to his attendant, "The disciple will arrive when the waters in front of the gate turn back and flow westward." Yixing requested teachings, and was subsequently fully instructed in the relevant techniques. The water outside the gate then, sure enough, turned back and flowed westward.²⁰⁷ This account appears to stem from Yixing's work with the *Yijing*, rather than having any actual relation to his Buddhist activities. This same story with minor variations is also told in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, though it states that Yixing was in search of arithmetic (*suanshu* 算術), rather than the number theory of the *Yijing* specifically.²⁰⁸

In light of these fictional accounts, it is easy to imagine why Yixing would have been the likely candidate to which such works could have been attributed in an attempt to legitimize or elevate them.

We will now discuss the features of each such text, and attempt to approximately date them, while explaining their significance with respect to the development of Buddhist astral magic in the ninth century.

5.6. *Xiuyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌 (T 1304)

This text is a compilation of mantras, *mudrā*-s and instructions on the astrological timing of certain practices. An item of the text's vocabulary is specifically cited in the *Shittan yōketsu* 悉曇要訣 (T 2706; *Siddham Essentials*), written sometime after 1101 by the Tendai monk Myōkaku 明覺 (1056–c.1122),²⁰⁹ but otherwise it is not directly cited anywhere else in the Taishō, although the *navagraha* mantras in both transliterated

²⁰⁵ *Jiu Tang shu*, Zhonghua Shuju edn., vol. 16, 5112. Note that none of the works on the *Yijing* attributed to Yixing are extant.

²⁰⁶ This number theory is based on the number 50.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 5113.

²⁰⁸ T 2061, 50: 732c26-a4.

²⁰⁹ T 2706, 84: 547b17.

Chinese and Siddham script are provided in the *Betsugyō-shō* 別行鈔 (T 2476; *Summary of Special Practices*) by the monk Kanjo 寬助 (1052–1125).²¹⁰

As Lü Jianfu has pointed out, one element indicating that this is not the work of Yixing is an anachronistic citation of the eight-syllable mantra for Mañjuśrī.²¹¹ The *Wenshu bazi yigui* 文殊八字儀軌 (T 1184; *Ritual for the Eight Syllables of Mañjuśrī*), which first provides this mantra in Chinese, was translated in year 4 of reign era Changqing 長慶 (824), close to a century after Yixing's death.²¹² Additionally, the *Xiuyao yigui* prescribes esoteric practices that were introduced after Yixing.

四大惡曜，所謂火曜，土曜，羅睺，計都，最重。眾生是時，修諸福業，廣施仁慈，或依文殊八字真言，或依熾盛光佛頂，或依被葉衣觀音，或依一字王佛頂。立大息災護摩壇場，各依本法念誦供養。一切災難自然消滅。

The four great evil celestial bodies are Mars, Saturn, Rāhu and Ketu. They are severest. Beings at this time [when these bodies infringe upon certain *nakṣatra*-s, should] cultivate various meritorious karmas, make extensive offerings, and show benevolence and compassion; or they rely on the Eight Syllable Mantra of Mañjuśrī; or they rely on Tejaprabhā Buddha; or they rely on Parṇasābarī Avalokitēśvara; or they rely on the Single Syllable King Buddha-Uṣṇīṣa. Establish a great *homa* altar for eliminating disasters. Carry out recitations and make offerings according to each respective method. All calamities will naturally dissipate.²¹³

As discussed above, the practices related to Tejaprabhā Buddha, so far as present evidence suggests, were first introduced in 796. The catalog of Yuanzhao assigns the **Parṇasābarī-avalokitēśvara-bodhisattva-dhāraṇī-sūtra* 葉衣觀自在菩薩陀羅尼經 (T 1100) to Amoghavajra.²¹⁴ The sūtra's colophon states that Amoghavajra was at Da Xinshan-si 大興善寺 when he translated it.²¹⁵ He resided there from 756 for the duration of the An Lushan rebellion (755–763).²¹⁶ These elements all postdate Yixing's death.

An additional issue with attributing any of the content of the *Xiuyao yigui* to Yixing is its incorporation of Daoist elements, a feature seen in the other works attributed to him. There is no evidence that Chinese Mantrayāna during Yixing's lifetime actually made use of any Daoist practices. Chinese Mantrayāna was in its infancy, and under the direct supervision of Indian monks in the 720s. It is therefore difficult to imagine Yixing

²¹⁰ T 2476, 78: 183a03-184a24.

²¹¹ Lü Jianfu, *Mijiao lunkao*, 348. The mantra reads: om āḥ vī ra hūṃ kha ca raḥ 唵 阿 味 羅 吽 佉 左 洛.

²¹² T 1184, 20: 784b17-18.

²¹³ T 1304, 21: 423b23-27.

²¹⁴ T 2157, 55: 936b24-25.

²¹⁵ T 1100, 20: 447a7-8.

²¹⁶ Martin Lehnert, "Amoghavajra," 352.

combining Buddhist and Daoist practices in such an environment, such as what we see in the following passage:

先奉供虛空藏，文殊，普賢，延命，帝釋，毘沙門等菩薩天等。後勸請九曜，二十八宿天，北斗之中本命屬星，及以泰山府君司命司祿供之。祈乞除災延命消除厄害之事。

First make offerings to the bodhisattvas and devas Ākāśagarbha, Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, *Life Extension [Avalokitēśvara],²¹⁷ Indra and Vaiśravaṇa. Then invoke the *navagraha*, the devas of the twenty-eight *nakṣatra*-s, the star associated with one's birth in the Big Dipper,²¹⁸ as well as the Magistrate of Mount Tai, Siming and Silu [i.e., the gods overseeing life and fortune] to whom offerings are made. Pray to eliminate disasters, extend life and dissipate calamities.²¹⁹

Similar hybridization with Daoist ideas is found in another astral *sādhana*, the *Beidou qixing humo miyao yigui* 北斗七星護摩祕要儀軌 (T 1306; *Secret Essential Ritual for the Homa of the Big Dipper's Seven Stars*), which is attributed to lectures given by a certain Guanding 灌頂 of the translation office at Da Xingshan-si 大興善寺.²²⁰ This text professes a belief that one's fate is tied to the judgment of the Big Dipper, and also mentions the god overseeing life (*Siming* 司命) in a citation of a divination manual, the *Luming shu* 祿命書 (*Book of Fate Calculation*).²²¹ The *Beidou qixing humo miyao yigui* states that this deity frequently reports the misdeeds of people to the Celestial Emperor 天帝. We are then told this is why the Tathāgata has provided such a *homa* ritual for short-lived beings with sparse merit in the later age. It states that those making offerings can “purge the death register and restore the life register 削死籍還付生籍.”²²²

While the historical Yixing had nothing to do with such practices, the integration of Daoist elements into Buddhist practices is quite informative about the religious developments in the late-Tang, in which Buddhist and Daoist practices related to star worship and astral magic were combined like this. Daoist literature also borrowed from

²¹⁷ *Yanming* 延命 (“extend life”) appears to be a noun. Judging from the context, Guanyin 觀音 might have followed, but was lost due to scribal errors. See 1067, 20: 132b25-c13.

²¹⁸ The earthly branch associated with the day of one's birth determines which one of the seven stars will govern the individual's longevity. This is a native Chinese concept. See 5.10 below.

²¹⁹ T 1304, 21: 423a25-28.

²²⁰ Mollier suggests that this is referring to a title ‘Master of *abhiṣeka*’, but I believe this is referring to either Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra or Huilang Guanding 慧朗灌頂 (a disciple of Amoghavajra and his lineage successor). See the lineage description: T 2035, 49: 295b12-14. Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 143.

²²¹ T 1306, 21: 425a4. This work was a divination manual for calculating a person's fate in life. The *Jiu Tang shu* lists it as comprised of twenty fascicles, compiled by Liu Xiaogong 劉孝恭 (d.u.). See *Jiu Tang shu*, Zhonghua Shuju edn., vol. 6, 2044. It is not extant.

²²² T 1306, 21: 425a3-16.

Buddhism as discussed earlier. This furthermore affirms the previously cited remarks of Zürcher, who pointed out that “Buddhism loses much of its sharp contour, as it is absorbed into the surrounding mass of Chinese indigenous religion” when we go below the top level of elite Buddhism. In these works, orthodox concepts such as karma were overlooked in favor of a form of divine or astrological determinism.

5.7. *Qiyao xingchen bie xingfa* 七曜星辰別行法 (T 1309)

This work is an illustrated demonology manual that addresses the symptoms of spirit possessions according to the *nakṣatra* or star with which the day is associated. This particular system of identifying asterisms with the days is not found elsewhere. It is not the system devised by Amoghavajra in the *Xiuyao jing*.

This work is attributed to Yixing, though the first reference to it is in the catalog of texts brought back to Japan in 847 by Eun 惠運 (798–869).²²³ Whoever wrote this work attempted to legitimize it by providing a story describing the source of its information. It tells us that early in the Kaiyuan era (713–741), Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 went on an expedition. He brought along Yixing, who suddenly summoned down the spirits of the stars. The deities of the twenty-eight *nakṣatra* assembled, and Yixing learned of the illnesses caused by spirits on specific days (thirty spirits are mentioned, so this is not referring to the Indian *nakṣatra* calendar). This teaching was provided initially to the emperor Xuanzong, but later someone procured it from a ‘powerful warrior’ and it was subsequently transmitted to future generations.²²⁴ Needless to say, all of this is fictional. It does, however, suggest that whoever wrote this story wanted to address doubts about the authenticity of the magic of the text.

This text has features in common with Daoist works that visually represent undesirable entities that reside in the body.²²⁵ Non-Buddhist practices such as burning money and offering meat and wine as sacrifices are described in detail. As an example, we might cite the following:

²²³ One of the eight Japanese monks who went to Tang China 入唐八家. T 2168a, 55: 1088b11.

²²⁴ T 1309, 21: 452c5-13.

²²⁵ For a study of this see Shih-Shan Susan Huang, “Daoist Imagery of Body and Cosmos,” *Journal of Daoist Studies* 3 (2010): 57–90.

Fig. 5.33. Star Spirit



星宿直日，鬼名萬松石。此日是此鬼行病，令人行不得，或寒熱不定。是此鬼所爲。屬此星宿。以紙錢一百貫清酒，祭日行酒滿七遍止。不得令白衣人來，縱來不須遣坐，亦不得令此人知祭法。所來者，鬼替患人代命之人也。切須知之。

Convergence with the *nakṣatra* of *Maghā:²²⁶ The spirit is called Wan Song Shi. On this day, this spirit causes disease, making people unable to walk; or it causes them to have an unstable temperature. This is the work of this spirit. It belongs to this *Maghā *nakṣatra*. Use a hundred strings of paper money, and pure alcohol. On the sacrifice day, offer the wine seven times. One must not let a white robed person come. Even if they do come, they must not be given a seat. One must also not let this person know of the method of sacrifice. The spirit will take the life of those who come in place of the victim. This must be understood.²²⁷

This work displays colloquial non-literary Chinese features, such as *dao* 道 (to “say”), which is an indication of popular Buddhism, rather than the elite Buddhism of Yixing’s time, in which the classical register was exclusively employed. One anachronistic element is *mi ri* 密日 (otherwise *mi ri* 蜜日), which is the popular term for Sunday derived from the Sogdian *myr*. While the custom of a seven-day week is mentioned in the seventh century in Chinese Nestorian literature, as discussed earlier, the seven-day week was still not commonly understood among the Chinese even when the first version of the *Xiuyao jing* was produced in 759. Moreover, the earliest use of Sogdian in a Buddhist

²²⁶ In light of the foreign origin of this material (see below), this likely does not refer to Chinese lunar stations.

²²⁷ T 1309, 21: 453c13-18.

context based on available materials can be traced to the *Xiuyao jing*.²²⁸ It is highly unlikely that Yixing would have had knowledge of, or use for, Sogdian loanwords.²²⁹

As to the foreign origin of the lore found within this text, its internal evidence indicates an Iranian source. We must first note that hemerology of this sort is attested in Zoroastrian traditions.²³⁰ There are altogether thirty spirits listed in the text at hand, though not all of these are *nakṣatra*-s, which likely indicates a non-Indian source, since the Indian model is strictly either a system of twenty-seven or twenty-eight *nakṣatra*-s. The names of the spirits are transliterated into Chinese, but it is unclear from which language they are derived. They are not Sanskrit, and the characters used to transliterate the names differ from those used in transliterations of Sanskrit. The name of the spirit for what appears to be Polaris (辰星) in reconstructed Middle-Chinese is *pək p^{hu}âc* 百破 (Schuessler IPA), which possibly corresponds to the Middle Persian *mēx ī gāh* for Polaris.²³¹ The icons are drawn in a Chinese fashion. These are entirely different from the way *nakṣatra*-s in anthropomorphic forms are depicted in Indian sources (see fig. 4.23 above). These icons are likely from an Iranian source, since icons of the twenty-eight *nakṣatra*-s, including some similar to those depicted in the Chinese text at hand, are also described in the *Picatrix*, though their names and descriptions are different.²³² Zoroastrianism had a magical practice of *nērang*-s (incantations or charms) that were connected to the invocation of stars and planets.²³³ Al-Bīrūnī (973–c.1052), a Muslim author on astronomy and astrology, also reports on a Persian practice of writing on papers to ward off scorpion stings on specific days. These papers were then attached to doors in the evening, although he notes this was not originally a Persian custom.²³⁴ In light of the above features, this practice of drawing images of deities as a means of warding off evil, found in the Chinese text in question, likely stems from an Iranian source.

Assigning malevolent deities to specific days on the calendar was also a feature of at least one popular almanac from Dunhuang (Or.8210 / P6), which is dated to 877 (fig.

²²⁸ T 1299, 21: 398a28-b6.

²²⁹ Chavannes and Pelliot explain that in 719, a year when Yixing was alive, the Yabghu of Tokharistan presented a Manichaean leader (*mushe* 慕闍) to the Chinese court, who was adept in astronomy. “Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine,” 152–153. There is no evidence, however, that this individual influenced Chinese astronomy or astrology, or interacted with Yixing for that matter. Sending an astronomer was likely a result of court interest in foreign astronomy, as demonstrated by the Indian families (see 4.6 above).

²³⁰ See Antonio Panaino, “Lunar and Snake Omens Among the Zoroastrians,” in *Officina Magica: Essays on the Practice of Magic in Antiquity*, ed. Shaul Shaked (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 73–89.

²³¹ T 1309, 21: 456c9. MacKenzie, *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*, 56.

²³² See Greer and Warnock, trans., *The Picatrix*, 286–293.

²³³ See Antonio Panaino, “Two Zoroastrian Nērang and the Invocation of the Stars and the Planets,” in *The Spirit of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of Ahmad Tafazzoli*, eds. Touraj Daryaee and Mahmoud Omidisalar (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2004), 196–218.

²³⁴ Al-Bīrūnī, *The Book of Instruction in the Elements of the Art of Astrology*, trans. R. Ramsay Wright (London: Luzac & Co., 1934), 182. It does not appear that the Persians received this custom from China.

5.34).²³⁵ In this document, five spirits or demons are listed according to days of the ten stems (十干), which form part of the Chinese sexagenary cycle. The ten stems are combined with the ten branches (十二支), creating a cycle of sixty days. Each day is comprised on one stem, so the spirit associated with that stem will be active on the corresponding day. This, however, differs from the model of the *Qiyao xingchen bie xingfa*, which indicates that various systems were employed in the late-Tang. There is no evidence to indicate any such system was in use in Yixing's time.

Fig. 5.34. Or.8210 / P6



5.8. *Beidou qixing humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (T 1310)

This *sādhana* of one fascicle attributed to Yixing includes the aforementioned astral mantras, in addition to their accompanying *mudrā*-s. Additionally, a short Tejaprabhā ritual is appended to the main body. This text in its present form therefore postdates Yixing. The earliest Japanese sources available in the Taishō that specifically cite it include Jitsuun 實運 (1105–1160) in the *Shoson yōshō* 諸尊要抄 (T 2484; *Essentials of the Deities*),²³⁶ and Ejū 惠什 (12th cent.) in the *Shōgo shū* 勝語集 (T 2479; *Compilation of Superior Words*).²³⁷ A similar text entitled *Beidou qixing humo yigui* 北斗七星護摩儀軌 (*Home Ritual for the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper*) of one fascicle is noted in a footnote in the Taishō as having been listed in a variant version of the Mikkyō text catalog by Annen. Annen's catalog was compiled in year 9 of Gangyō 元慶 (885).²³⁸

²³⁵ See plate 1 in Roderick Whitfield, "Four unpublished paintings from Dunhuang in the Oriental collections of the British Library," *The British Library Journal* 24, no. 1 (1998).

²³⁶ T 2484, 78: 313c14.

²³⁷ T 2479, 78: 216a27.

²³⁸ See note at T 2176, 55: 1129a22.

It does not specify the author, though at the very least it confirms the existence of such *homa* rites for the Big Dipper available to the Japanese by the late ninth century.

As in the *Xiuyao yigui*, there are also present some clearly Daoist elements:

觀爐中有七  嚕字，變成北斗七星。所謂本命星置中心，六星爲伴，即胡跪合掌，向爐啟曰：「至心奉啟，北極七星，貪狼巨門，祿存文曲，廉貞武曲，破軍尊星，爲(某甲)，災厄解脫，壽命延長，得見百秋，今作護摩，唯願尊星，降臨此處，納受護摩，刑死厄籍，記長壽札，投華爲座。」

Visualize within the fire altar seven *ru* syllables transforming into the seven stars of the Big Dipper. One's natal star²³⁹ is placed in the center with the other six stars accompanying it. Bend a knee with palms together. Face the fire altar and state the following: "Sincerely do I reverently address the Seven Stars of the Northern Pole: the honored stars of Dubhe, Merak, Phecda, Megrez, Alioth, Mizar and Alkaid. For [name]'s benefit, may you liberate me from disasters, and extend my lifespan. May I witness a hundred autumns. Now I perform this *homa* rite and implore the honored stars to descend here to receive this *homa*. Purge²⁴⁰ the register of death and distress, and inscribe long life. I throw down flowers for your seats."²⁴¹

This same concept of invoking the seven stars for apotropaic purposes is found in Daoist texts such as the *Taishang xuanling Beidou benming yansheng zhen jing* 太上玄靈北斗本命延生真經 (DZ 622; *Highest True Scripture of Natal Longevity Extension by the Profound Big Dipper*).²⁴²

One feature that aids in chronologically placing the work in our timeline is the *mudrā* and accompanying *dhāraṇī* for "praising" (讚嘆). This *dhāraṇī* is transliterated into Chinese without any accompanying *siddham*, though a garbled rendering in *siddham* is provided for the same *dhāraṇī* in the *Daheitian shenfa* 大黑天神法 (T 1287; *Dharma of Mahākāla-deva*), a ritual for Mahākāla of an unknown composition date.²⁴³ Fortunately, Jōnen in his *Gyōrin shō* provides a critical evaluation of differing manuscripts available to him, and proposed solutions to deciphering this *dhāraṇī*.²⁴⁴ Based on his notes, I tentatively reconstruct it as follows (note that this is *not* orthodox Sanskrit).²⁴⁵

²³⁹ This is determined based on a Chinese reckoning. See 5.10 below.

²⁴⁰ Read *xing* 刑 as *kan* 刊.

²⁴¹ T 1310, 21: 458b9-16.

²⁴² This work is likely from the Northern Song period, but the material dates back to an earlier time. See Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 295.

²⁴³ T 1287, 21: 357b20-c4.

²⁴⁴ T 2409, 76: 409c13-410a33.

²⁴⁵ The original Sanskrit verse might not have been composed by a native Sanskrit speaker. It is possible that it was produced simply by bringing together vocabulary.

阿演都 泥嚩 左誡 素囉 緊那囉那囉 乞鑠迦囉那 野鉢囉 嚩囉 達麼 藥哩
 多地伽囉 尾達麼左 鉢囉捨麼 操企也 儺銘多 部多 銘多 鉢羅迦捨夜 怛儺
 賀 室囉麼拏也 馱𧰨
 ayantu deva bhujaga asura kiṃnarendra śakradayā pravara dharma kṛtādhikārā
 buddhaṃ vacaḥ praśama saukhya nimitta bhūta mita prakāśya tadiha śravaṇyai
 dharmam²⁴⁶

Jōnen also provides the different names of this *dhāraṇī*, which includes “Sanskrit Letter Praise to the Eight Groups of Devas and Nāgas” 梵字天龍八部讚 and “Sanskrit-Chinese Praise to the Eight Groups of Devas and Nāgas” 梵唐兩字天龍八部讚.²⁴⁷ The former appears in the catalog of texts brought to Japan by Kūkai in 806.²⁴⁸ The latter was brought by Ennin in 847, which is indicated by Annen’s aforementioned catalog.²⁴⁹ This indicates that the *dhāraṇī* was brought to Japan only in the last century of the Tang, suggesting that it was available in China perhaps only a few decades prior. The *dhāraṇī* appears in other texts in the Taishō of unknown origins: the *Yaoshi yigui yiju* 藥師儀軌一具 (T 924C; *Single Ritual for Bhaiṣajyaguru*),²⁵⁰ which has a note at the end stating that it was brought to Japan by Dengyō Daishi 傳教大師 (i.e., Saichō), and the *Yanluo Wang gong xingfa cidi* 焰羅王供行法次第 (T 1290; *Procedures for the Yamarāja Pūjā*),²⁵¹ which is attributed to a Tripiṭaka master Amoga 阿謨伽三藏 (*Amoghavajra?).²⁵² There are many texts attributed Amoghavajra, but the lack of supporting details or catalog references to it suggests that it postdates Amoghavajra. There is therefore no evidence that this *dhāraṇī* existed in Yixing’s time.

Based on the above points, we can tentatively suggest a composition date of the *Beidou qixing humo fa* in the early ninth century. The attribution of this text to Yixing is problematic. Nevertheless, this text is a specimen of late-Tang esoteric literature, in which elements from various sources, both Buddhist and Daoist, were readily brought together in the development of a unique Chinese system of astral magic.

²⁴⁶ T 1310, 21: 458b4-8.

²⁴⁷ T 2409, 76: 409c13-14.

²⁴⁸ T 2161, 55: 1063c18.

²⁴⁹ T 2176, 55: 1130b22.

²⁵⁰ T 924c, 19: 32c18-22.

²⁵¹ T 1290, 21: 376a17-21.

²⁵² Kiyota notes the possibility of the *Yaoshi yigui yiju* being a Japanese composition. His reconstruction of the *dhāraṇī* differs considerably from my own. See Kiyota Jakuun 清田寂雲, “Shaka-zan (ōshin-zan) to shoten bongo zan: tenryū hachi-bu zan no yakkai nit suite” 釋迦讚(應身讚)と諸天梵語讚: 天龍八部讚の譯解について. *Tendai gakuho* 天臺學報 24 (1982): 24–28. I must thank Joseph P. Elacqua for providing me with Kiyota’s article.

5.9. *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (T 1311)

This work, the **Brahmadeva Hora Navagraha*, is another manual providing mantras and assorted astrological lore, complete with illustrations of the planetary deities, as well as an appended Daoist ritual for worship of the Big Dipper that includes characteristically Daoist features. Angela Howard in her study of a scroll²⁵³ containing text from the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* states that “the text of the Horā Diagram truly reflects the merging of traditional Chinese ideas with the newly imported foreign astrological notions.”²⁵⁴ The first reference to the text in Japan is from between 890–953.²⁵⁵ Its preface indicates that the content of the text is based on lectures by Yixing (*xiushu* 修述), but this would mean attribution, not authorship. This is contrary to Mollier’s statement that this is “his outstanding astrological treatise.”²⁵⁶ Already in 1912, however, Édouard Chavannes and Paul Pelliot dated the text to around 874.²⁵⁷ This dating can be established based on the colophon of the text:

大唐武德元年起戊寅，至咸通十五年甲午，都得二百五十七年矣。
From year 1 of Wude [618] (15th year in the 60 year cycle) in the Great Tang to
Xiantong 15 [874] (31st year of the 60 year cycle) it has already been 257 years.²⁵⁸

The original manuscript upon which the Taishō version was based also included a comment at the top stating the following:

一行禪師開元十五年入滅至咸通十五年，凡百五十年，是則此八十五字文後人所加。

From Chan Master Yixing dying in Kaiyuan 15 [727] to Xiantong 15 [874] it was about 150 years, whereupon these 85 characters [the preface] of writing were added by a later individual.²⁵⁹

²⁵³ The *Karazu* 火羅圖 of Tō-ji 東寺 in Kyōto. See TZ, vol. 7, 693–704.

²⁵⁴ Angela Howard, “Planet Worship: Some Evidence, Mainly Textual, in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” *Asiatische Studien* 37, no. 2 (1983): 119. Birnbaum suggests that the diagram “may have been used as a teaching device; I suspect that it also was employed as a sort of charm to aid in maintaining harmony in times of astrological stress.” For a relevant discussion see Birnbaum, “Introduction to the Study of T’ang Buddhist Astrology,” 12–16.

²⁵⁵ Takeda Kazuaki 武田和昭, “Tō-ji hōbodai-in kyūzō hoshi mandara to zanketsu ni tsuite” 東寺實菩提院舊藏星曼荼羅圖殘闕について, *Mikkyō bunka* 183 (1993): 12.

²⁵⁶ Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 141.

²⁵⁷ Cited in Howard, “Planet Worship: Some evidence, Mainly Textual, in Chinese Esoteric Buddhism,” 107. Chavannes and Pelliot, “Un traité manichéen retrouvé en Chine,” 167.

²⁵⁸ T 1311, 21: 459b6-7.

²⁵⁹ See T 1311, 21: 459, note 5.

This appears to be an attempt to legitimize the attribution of the text to Yixing, but internal evidence demonstrates that any attribution to Yixing remains problematic.

The text states that all sorts of disasters are a result of not venerating stellar icons and being unaware of having transgressed against the stars.²⁶⁰ Such beliefs are never evident in Yixing's time. Moreover, as Lü points out, the system of 'field allocation astrology' (*fenye* 分野) in this text is contrary to that which was devised by Yixing.²⁶¹ While Yixing was perhaps venerated by Daoists after he died, primarily as a result of his work with the *Yijing*, the opinion of Osabe is that such a figure so heavily involved in Buddhist Tantra under Śubhakarasiṃha, and simultaneously enjoying a career as a professional astronomer, would not have drafted such 'unorthodox works'. Additionally, the text uses Sogdian vocabulary (for instance, Venus: *na xie* 那頤 = *n'xyδ*), casting additional doubts that Yixing could have had any role in the composition of the work.²⁶²

The icons of the five planets are also of the Iranian type (similar to those in table 5.3), while the Sun, Moon, Rāhu and Ketu are of the Indian type. The original Indian depictions of the *navagraha* as found in the *Taizō zuzō* (table 4.1) differ from these icons. Yixing would have been familiar with the icons as depicted in the *Taizō zuzō*, but not these Iranian icons that were introduced into China long after he had died. Another feature that immediately identifies this as postdating Yixing is an anachronistic citation of the *Duli Yusi jing*, which we will recall was translated between 785–805 (see 4.7 above):

韋斯經云：凡人只知有七曜，不晴虛星號曰羅睺計都，此星在隱位而不見，逢日月即蝕，號曰：蝕神。計都者，蝕神之尾也，號豹尾。

The *Yusi jing* states, "Everyone only knows of there being seven planets. They are unclear about the abstract stars called Rāhu and Ketu." These stars are in hidden positions, and do not appear. There are eclipses when it [Rāhu] meets with the Sun or Moon. It is called an eclipse deity. Ketu is the tail of the eclipse deity, called the leopard's tail.²⁶³

The definition of Ketu in this text also differs from that provided in Yixing's commentary cited earlier (4.2). Here Ketu is defined as "the leopard's tail" (*bao wei* 豹尾) and "the tail of the eclipse deity" (*shi shen zhi wei* 蝕神之尾). In Yixing's commentary, however, Ketu is defined as a comet and banner, which is the original Indian meaning.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ "Disasters and losses are all a result of not venerating the stellar icons, and being unaware of having transgressed the stars 災害殃咎迷塞澁，皆由不敬星像，不知有犯星辰。” T 1311, 21: 462a15-16.

²⁶¹ Lü, *Mijiao lunkao*, 348.

²⁶² Osabe Kazuo, *Ichigyō Zenji no kenkyū*, 256–261.

²⁶³ T 1311, 21: 461c28-462a2. If the *Duli yusi jing* was a work of Dorotheus, then the inclusion of the Indian concepts of Rāhu and Ketu would be problematic, though the tradition of 'eleven planets' as introduced from abroad by Li Miqian (Li Biqian) clearly incorporated these two planets.

²⁶⁴ "Ketu is properly translated as banner. The banner star is a comet 計都正翻爲旗。旗星謂彗星也。” T 1796, 39: 618a15-16.

In light of the aforementioned evidence within the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao*, a composition date of around the mid-ninth century before 874 is most likely. Nothing from this work can be credibly attributed to Yixing. This text is another specimen of popular esoteric Buddhism from the ninth century. It highlights the extent to which Chinese Buddhists could adapt non-Buddhist materials and practices. In this case, even Iranian elements were readily integrated. The attribution to Yixing was, as with the other surveyed works, simply an attempt to legitimize these materials.

5.10. Worship of the Big Dipper

One prominent feature of the astral *sādhana*-s discussed above is the inclusion of rituals directed at the stars of the Big Dipper (*beidou* 北斗).²⁶⁵ Buddhist astrologers in China readily absorbed the native belief that the Big Dipper governs longevity. The *Beidou qixing yanming jing* 北斗七星延命經 (T 1307; *Sūtra of Life Extension by the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper*)²⁶⁶ reveals the extent to which such a belief was incorporated within the Buddhist framework, for the Buddha himself is quoted as follows:

若有比丘僧，比丘[尼]，宰官，居士，善男子，善女人，若貴若賤，大小生命，皆屬北斗七星所管。... 若善男子善女人，須知北斗七星管人生命。Whether bhikṣu sangha, bhikṣu[nī sangha], officials, laymen, good men, good women; whether rich or poor; longevity is under the control of the seven stars of the Big Dipper. ... Whether a good man or a good woman, one must understand that the seven stars of the Big Dipper govern the lives of people.²⁶⁷

Although the colophon in the Taishō text states that it was brought to the Tang court by a ‘Brahmin monk’ 婆羅門僧, it is accompanied by a depiction of the Big Dipper and the deities with associated talismans in the Chinese fashion (fig. 5.35).

Each star is assigned one or two of the twelve earthly branches. One is to write and carry the talisman associated with the corresponding earthly branch under which one was born. Despite the presence of such Daoist elements, this text remains a Buddhist scripture, as the Buddha is the narrator, addressing this teaching to Mañjuśrī. Each of the

²⁶⁵ In India the Big Dipper is comprised of the *saptarṣi*, ‘Seven Sages’, though this is unrelated to the Chinese Buddhist conception in the present discussion.

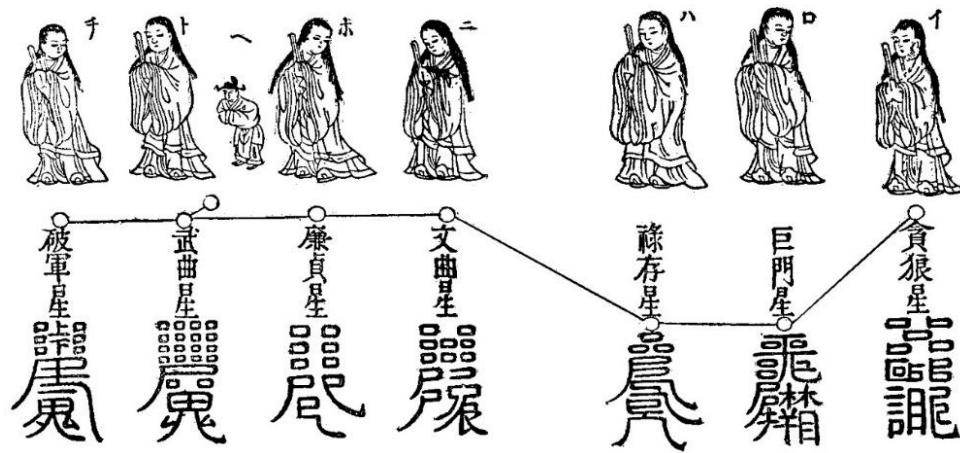
²⁶⁶ For a translation and brief remarks see Charles D. Orzech and James H. Sanford, “Worship of the Ladies of the Dipper,” in *Tantra in Practice*, ed. David Gordon White (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 389–392. For a discussion of a related Mongolian text see Johan Elverskog, “The Mongolian Big Dipper Sūtra,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 29, no. 1 (2006): 87–123.

²⁶⁷ T 1307, 21: 426a18-b10.

seven stars are additionally associated with one of the seven forms of Bhāiṣajyaguru.²⁶⁸ This raises the question of how buddhas would be responsible for one's longevity (normally karma would be the determining factor), but there is no attempt to reconcile earlier Mahāyāna conceptions of buddhas with these new beliefs.

Here a development away from proper astrology can be discerned. The belief of this work is that it is not astrological determinism that governs human fate, but rather astral deities of Chinese origin are believed to control life and fortune. This reveals the extent of the sinicization of popularized esoteric Buddhism in the late-Tang, in addition to the ongoing popular interest in astral magic.

Fig. 5.35. Goddesses of the Big Dipper



There has been some debate concerning the time when this text appeared. Needham suggested that Yixing might have written it,²⁶⁹ but, in reality, no source ever attributes it to him, and there is no evidence to support such speculation. Herbert Franke pointed out the existence of Yuan-era (1271–1368) translations of the text in Tibetan, Uighur and Mongolian, while suggesting a composition date of a Chinese prototype between 1281–1313. He states, “The version in the Tōkyō, Kyōto, and Taishō canons is very late because it is a reprint of a Japanese edition printed in the summer of 1802 by the monk Kaidō (1751–1810). In other words, a Chinese prototype of the *Pei-tou ching* appeared seemingly out of nowhere about 1300.”²⁷⁰ Sørensen in his discussion of Big Dipper worship in Korean Buddhism refuted this position by pointing out the existence of citations of the sūtra in Shingon manuals, such as the *Kakuzen shō* 覺禪鈔 (*Summary by*

²⁶⁸ These appear to be drawn from the *Yaoshi liuliguang qifo benyuan gongde jing* 藥師琉璃光七佛本願功德經 (T 451), translated by Yijing 義淨 (635–713). See Liao, “Chishengguang Fo zaikao,” 350.

²⁶⁹ Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. III: *Mathematics and the Sciences of the Heavens and the Earth*, 283.

²⁷⁰ Herbert Franke, “The Taoist Elements in the Buddhist *Great Bear Sūtra* (*Pei-tou ching*),” *Asia Major* 3, no. 1 (1990): 91–92.

Kakuzen), which dates from the early thirteenth century. Sørensen cites the aforementioned texts attributed to Vajrabodhi and Yixing, stating that “the presence of Northern Dipper worship within an esoteric Buddhist context shows that it had become an integrated element in its rituals by the early 8th century.” He suggests that the *Beidou jing* “could have been in circulation around the middle of the 8th century, or perhaps slightly later.”²⁷¹ Mollier accepts this conclusion,²⁷² but in light of the earlier discussion with respect to texts attributed to Yixing and the progressive development of Buddhist astral magic, I disagree with Sørensen and Mollier. I would suggest that this work was likely composed in the early ninth century at the earliest.

There are examples of similar material found in Daoist works. The *Taishang xuanling beidou benming yansheng zhenjing* 太上玄靈北斗本命延生真經 (DZ 622) provides some of the same lore as the Buddhist text in question, such as the associations between earthly branches and specific stars of the Big Dipper.²⁷³ Sørensen notes that “from a brief comparison it can readily be established that the Buddhists borrowed some passages as well as the central ideas from it.”²⁷⁴

In light of the content of the *Beidou jing* and the astral *sādhana*-s surveyed above, it is indeed clear that Buddhist incorporation of the Big Dipper cult into their magical system was to a large degree a result of their interactions with Daoism in the ninth century, but one factor overlooked by past scholars is the widespread popularity of astrology in the late-Tang in all religious circles. Buddhist interest in Indian and Chinese astral deities, I argue, was also in part tied in with their practice of astrology and desire to change an undesirable prognosticated destiny. This meant appeasing astral deities of various types who were believed to govern human fates. It was only natural for Chinese Buddhists to incorporate the Big Dipper cult into their religious practice.

²⁷¹ Henrik H. Sørensen, “The Worship of the Great Dipper in Korean Buddhism,” in *Religions in Traditional Korea*, ed. Henrik H. Sørensen (Copenhagen: Seminar for Buddhist Studies, 1995), 72–79. Elsewhere Sørensen states, “Great Dipper worship in the Buddhist context would appear to date from the early Tang dynasty, and the practices, as seen in the earliest related texts, bear witness to considerable influence from Daoism.” Sørensen, “Astrology and the Worship of Planets in Esoteric Buddhism of the Tang,” 237. I disagree with this conclusion that Buddhists were engaged in any type of significant star worship in the early Tang. There is no credible evidence to substantiate this claim.

²⁷² Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 138.

²⁷³ As Franke points out, the *Wuxing dayi* by Xiao Ji in the Sui cites a *Huangdi doutu* 黃帝斗圖 (*Dipper Diagram of the Yellow Emperor*), in which the seven stars are associated with the earthly branches. These associations therefore existed before the Tang dynasty. *Ibid.*, 103–104. These are also found in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* (brought to Japan in 865) discussed above (5.3). T 1308, 21: 452a25–26.

²⁷⁴ Sørensen, “The Worship of the Great Dipper in Korean Buddhism,” 74.

5.11. Conclusion

There were several developments that characterize Buddhist astrology in the last century of the Tang in contrast to that practiced in the eighth century.

First, the transition to Iranian sources of astrological methods and lore was a result of translation work carried out by ethnically Iranian figures active at court, and unidentified Sogdian astrologers. These men introduced new lore, iconography and techniques. Much of these materials, as demonstrated above, can be traced back to the Hellenistic tradition of astrology. Many elements of the connected system of astral magic that became popular in the ninth century originated in the Near East. This type of astral magic is similarly found in medieval Arabic and European sources, most notably the *Picatrix*. Chinese Buddhists were therefore, in effect, part of a global interest in astrology and astral magic.

Buddhists followed a popular trend in Chinese society, in which various communities, including literati, Daoists and Buddhists, took a deep interest in astrology, in particular horoscopy, which toward the end of the ninth century was increasingly based on the Hellenistic type with rich Iranian influences. This was enabled through the use of popular calendars, most notably the *Futian li*, which either in full or in part was directly incorporated into the Buddhist *Qiyao rangzai jue*. Regardless of the vinaya proscriptions to which Chinese monks were nominally subject, many of them evidently practiced astrology. Japanese monks such as Shūei also felt it important to import such astrology to Japan, which appears to reflect the contemporary Chinese Buddhist interest in the art.

Another major development in this century was the emergence of cults centered on astral deities, such as Tejaprabhā, Sudṛṣṭi, the *navagraha*, and the seven stars of the Big Dipper. Although there was a precedent for the *navagraha* deities to be presented in anthropomorphic forms as early as the 720s in the Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala, they were minor figures and functioned more as symbols.²⁷⁵ In the ninth century, the planets were regarded as sentient entities who could be appeased, or even deceived; one might also employ a variety of mantras to alleviate undesirable influences attributed to them.

It was easy within such a context for Chinese authors to incorporate Daoist worship of the Big Dipper, given that the stars of the constellation, much like the planets in occidental astrology, were believed to have a direct effect on human fate. The depth of the sinicization of foreign astrology and astral magic is demonstrated by the development of *homa* rites for the stars of the Big Dipper alongside the incorporation of Daoist concepts.

²⁷⁵ The commentary to the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* has the following: “Among the *navagraha*, the Sun represents originally pure bodhicitta, which is the body of Vairocana. The Moon represents the practices of bodhi 就九執中，日喻本淨菩提心，即是毘盧遮那自體，月喻菩提之行。” The five planets are said to grasp or hold various parts of the mandala. T 1796, 39: 618c18-20.

Four of the extant *sādhana*-s surveyed above are attributed to Yixing. In contrast to the opinions of some modern scholars, it has been shown in detail that these cannot be from his time and instead, as Osabe originally pointed out, they are specimens from late-Tang popular esoteric Buddhism.²⁷⁶ Yixing was the logical figure to whom these texts could be attributed in light of his career as an astronomer, his work reforming the native Chinese system of ‘field allocation’ astrology, and his contribution to the introduction of Mantrayāna in China.

To summarize, Buddhist astrology in Tang China evolved from basic hemerology and natal predictions rooted in Indian astrology to a complex system incorporating additional Iranian and Chinese elements that was increasingly concerned with addressing harmful influences brought on by sentient astral deities, the development of which prompted the emergence of cults centered on the benevolent Buddhist astral deities Tejaprabhā and Sudrṣṭi. There existed a parallel Daoist interest in astrology and astral magic that influenced Buddhist practices. The impact in subsequent centuries in China and elsewhere in East Asia was immense. The following and final chapter examines this lasting legacy of Buddhist astrology.

²⁷⁶ Mollier’s study in particular uncritically accepts the attributions to Yixing. Her study also accepts the questionable account in the *Jiu Tang shu* that he studied under a Daoist adept. She states, “One can therefore speculate that the Buddhist monk, faithful to his past, judged the Taoist cult of the Beidou worthy to be transmitted in its authentic form and under its original designation. ... In assuring the promotion of the Great Dipper cult and embracing it in the Buddhist fold during an epoch when the ‘foreign’ religion had regained an aura of sanctity in court circles, he perhaps intended to use it as an instrument of ideological propaganda.” See Mollier, *Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face*, 144–145. Such speculation is rooted in incorrect assumptions, and completely misunderstands the origins of the relevant texts. These texts tell us nothing about the historical Yixing, but they do, as Osabe Kazuo noted, illustrate the popular image of Yixing in the late-Tang.