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Buddhist astrology and astral magic in the Tang Dynasty

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Chapter 6
Astrology in Post-Tang East Asia

6.1. Dunhuang and Bezeklik

There are a number of specimens of art related to astral deities from among the Dunhuang manuscripts, demonstrating a continued interest in such figures well into the tenth century. Relevant examples of art are also seen in the caves of Bezeklik.

One of the prominent pieces of art related to astral deities from Dunhuang is the aforementioned painting entitled "Tejaprabhā Buddha and the Five Planets" from 897 (fig. 1.1). Another relevant specimen, mistakenly labeled in the British Museum catalog as "Talisman of the Pole Star", is dated to 926–975. Here Mercury, *not* the Pole Star, and Ketu are depicted with accompanying Chinese talismanic symbols (fig. 6.1). The female figure is depicted holding a brush and paper in the same form seen earlier during the Tang (fig. 5.13), and labeled as "Northern Deity Star" 北方神星. This label led to the erroneous modern understanding that this is the "spirit of the Pole Star".[1] In actuality, Mercury in Chinese lore is associated with the north, which is also expressly stated in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*.[2]

The function of this talisman is to bring about fortune and protection to whomever carries it. It promises that buddhas will appear before one's eyes, although the talismanic symbols are a Daoist concept. This document attests to the continued interaction between Buddhist and Daoist astral cults into the tenth century. The protective nature of this talisman furthermore points to the Sinicization of the planetary deities in that they transitioned from being demonic beings to becoming guardians.

Tejaprabhā also appears in Uygur artwork, in particular cave 18 at Bezeklik, in which he is depicted on a mural alongside the zodiac signs and planets. Russell-Smith states, "This Tejaprabhā composition is an important example of the links between the Uyghurs, Dunhuang, the Tanguts and central China. The compositional arrangement, and many of the ornamental details link this piece to tenth-twelfth century Dunhuang art, but it is recognizably the work of an Uygur artist."[3] This points to the continued interest in

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[1] Russell-Smith makes the same mistake in labelling this "Talisman of the Pole-Star". See Russell-Smith, "Stars and Planets in Chinese and Central Asian Buddhist Art from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Centuries," 117. Yu Xin points out this is Mercury: "Personal Fate and the Planets," 175–176.

[2] "Mercury is the child of the Black Emperor in the Northern Direction 辰星者北方黑帝之子." T 1308, 21: 427b7.

[3] She further notes that it is "very likely that the Bezeklik wall painting is the first known large-scale composition to depict Tejaprabhā with two seated attendant bodhisattvas in addition to a large retinue." As to the date of the painting, she suggests "it is unlikely to be later than the mid-thirteenth century as by that time the Haydu-Duwa rebellion had broken out, which eventually destroyed the Xizhou

Tejaprabhā outside Esoteric Buddhism after the Tang dynasty, even among non-Han Chinese cultures. Although these specimens of art reveal that Buddhist cults of astral deities continued after the Tang, written documents reveal that the actual astrology being practiced was, in fact, no longer Buddhist in character.[4] Astrological texts and horoscopes from Dunhuang continue to display the earlier Iranian influences. Several documents deal specifically with the astrology of the seven-day week, and employ the Sogdian names of the planets, while also integrating various Chinese elements.[5]

One of the most important documents related to astrology is Pelliot chinois 4071, which is an interpretation of a horoscope dated to 975, compiled by Kang Zun 康遵, who was likely a Sogdian in light of the surname Kang. This document provides an extensive interpretation of a birth chart, though the actual chart itself is not included among the extant folios.[6] This document illustrates the multicultural quality of Chinese astrology in this region and period. Isahaya and Lin in their survey of this document state that "this astral text consists of various astral traditions in terms both of region and religion. This fact confirms that Central Eurasia, where the text was recorded, encompassed various kinds of cultural elements."[7] Jao Tsung-i examined the document and identified some citations of the *Duli yusi jing*.[8] The horoscopy of the *Duli yusi jing* was therefore still studied even in a remote area such as Dunhuang, indicating that this text had become a standard work used by Chinese astrologers, a fact to which we shall shortly return. The astrological system of the horoscope employs the eleven planets introduced by Li Miqian, as well as Cao Shiwei's *Futian li*. It does not appear to cite any Buddhist texts. In light of the system employed and the texts cited in the horoscope, it has more in common with Daoist astrology than with the Buddhist astrology represented by the *Qiyao rangzai jue* (5.3). This Buddhist system is, to my knowledge, not present in any extant documents from Dunhuang. It therefore appears that while the cult of Tejaprabhā flourished, astrologers worked with non-Buddhist texts. One comes to the same conclusion when examining relevant Buddhist texts from central China during the Song period.

Uygur Kingdom." Lilla Russell-Smith, *Uygur Patronage in Dunhuang Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 106, 108.

[4] The primary documents related to astrology include Pelliot chinois 2693, 3081, 3403, 3247, 3247, 4071 and S. 95.

[5] For a survey see Yu Xin 余欣, *Shendao renxin: Tangsong zhi Dunhuang minsheng zongjiao shehuishi yanjiu* 神道人心: 唐宋之敦煌民生宗教社会史研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2006), 270–275. Pelliot chinois 3779 (*Tui jiuyao xingnian ronge fa* 推九曜行年容厄法), an astrological manual for the *navagraha*, refers to the planets as deities using their transliterated names from Sogdian. Gao identifies these as coming from Sogdian, but does not identify them as Iranian deities. Gao Guofan 高國藩, "Lun Dunhuang tangren jiuyao suanmingshu" 論敦煌唐人九曜算命術, in *Di-er jie guoji tangdai xueshuhui yilun wenji* 第二届國際唐代學術會議論文集 (Taipei: Wensi Chubanshe, 1993), 787.

[6] For a detailed survey of the text's contents see Niu Weixing, "On the Dunhuang Manuscript P.4071," 527–558.

[7] Isahaya and Lin, "Entangled Representation of Heaven," 170.

[8] Jao Tsung-i, "Lun qiyao yu shiyi yao," 771–793.

Fig. 6.1. Mercury and Ketu[9]

[9] Stein no. Ch.lvi.0033, British Museum 1919,0101,0.170. © Trustees of the British Museum. For discussion of this specimen see James Robinson, "Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism," *History of Religions* 48, no. 2 (2008): 154–158.

6.2. Astrology and Astral Deities: Song to Ming Dynasties

The popular practice of astrology continued into the Song and Ming periods. During the Song dynasty, eminent officials such as Liu Xigu 劉熙古 (903–976) and Chu Yan 楚衍 (d.u.) are noted in the dynastic history of the Song as being proficient with the *Duli yusi jing*, which demonstrates its continued popularity among elites after the Tang dynasty.[10]

In the early Song period, Faxian 法賢 (d. 1000) translated the *Nannijishipoluotian shuo zhilun jing* 難儞計濕嚩囉天說支輪經 (T 1312; ***Nandikeśvara-deva Teaches the Zodiac Sūtra*).[11] This short astrology manual describes natal and death predictions based primarily on the twelve zodiac signs and the specific *nakṣatra*–s (a twenty-seven system) subsumed under each zodiac sign, plus the domiciles.[12] The arrangement of *nakṣatra*–s under the zodiac signs is similar to that of the *Xiuyao jing*, but the allotment of spaces to each *nakṣatra* differs. A curious feature is that Dhaniṣṭhā 虛 is omitted, rather than Abhijit 牛, which is otherwise uninstanced in any extant Indian source. Each group of *nakṣatra*–s is "destined" towards devas 天趣, *rākṣasa*–s 羅剎趣 or humans 人趣 (*gati*). It appears that one's zodiac sign is determined by one's natal *nakṣatra*. This is a unique specimen of Indian astrological literature, but it appears it was not widely studied by Buddhists in China.

As to Buddhist practice of astrology in the Song, there is some indirect evidence that suggests this. An account reproduced in several Chan records reads as follows:

> 僧問: 若有一人，發真歸源，十方虛空，悉皆消殞，未審此理如何。師乃點指云: 子丑寅卯辰巳午未，一羅，二土，三水，四金，五太陰，六太陽，七計都。今日計都星，入巨蟹宮。寶峰不打這鼓笛。
>
> A monk asked, "I do not understand how an individual discovers the truth and returns to the origin; the ten directions empty with all vanishing." The master instructed, "*Zi*, *chou*, *yin*, *mao*, *chen*, *si*, *wu*, *wei*.[13] One: Rāhu. Two: Saturn.

[10] See *Song shi* 宋史, Zhonghua Shuju edn., vol. 26, 9101 & vol. 39, 13518.

[11] Nandikeśvara is understood as another name for Vināyaka / Gaṇapati 歡喜天 (Gaṇeśa) in modern East Asian scholarship, though no details about the deity are given in this text specifically. Nandikeśvara, who is never Gaṇeśa in Hindu literature, is one of Śiva's retinue. The original text from which this Chinese translation was produced was likely Śaivaite. The term *zhilun* 支輪 in the title means zodiac, given that corresponding terms in Sanskrit often include *cakra* or *maṇḍala* (*bhacakra*, *tārāmaṇḍala*, *jyotiścakra*, etc.). The first character appears to be used phonetically.

[12] Domiciles are a system in which one of the seven planets presides over each zodiac. This was an originally Hellenistic concept. It first appears in the *Xiuyao jing* (see table 4.6 above).

[13] The first six earthly branches.

> Three: Mercury. Four: Venus. Five: Moon. Six: Sun. Seven: Ketu. Today, Ketu enters Cancer. The jewel peak does not hit these drums and flutes.[14]

Although the significance of this passage within the Chan context is ambigious, it does, nevertheless, allude to horoscopy, and furthermore illustrates a familiarity with astrology. It does not necessarily mean that Chan monks were actively practicing astrology, but it does indicate a passive familiarity with the art.

Fatian 法天 (d. 1001) translated the **Grahamāṭrkā-dhāraṇī* 聖曜母陀羅尼經 (T 1303).[15] This sūtra sees the Buddha in the great city of Alakavatī surrounded by the planets and *nakṣatra*–s, among other beings. Vajrapāṇi states that the *nakṣatra*–s and planets are of coarse appearances, wrathful and harming beings, killing them and stealing their wealth, or hastening their physical decay, and therefore requests a secret protective method from the Buddha. The Buddha states that the wicked *nakṣatra*–s and planets, along with asuras and other such beings should be offered the finest *arghya* (scented water) and music in order to please them and eliminate the evils they bring about. The Buddha then teaches a *dhāraṇī* for making offerings to the *nakṣatra*–s and planets, followed by the *grahamāṭrkā-dhāraṇī*. This sūtra reveals a deep belief within contemporary Indian Buddhism in the power of astral deities, though it appears that this sūtra was also of little significance in East Asia.

We should also note that Buddhism in the Northern Song period incorporated the full set of eleven planets (the *navagraha* plus Yuebei and Ziqi; see 4.8 above) into representations of Tejaprabhā.[16] These deities become part of the Chinese Buddhist pantheon around the eleventh century. Yuebei in the *Kuyōtō zuzō* 九曜等圖像 (*Navagraha Images*),[17] and in specimens from Tangut Khara Khoto,[18] is depicted as either a man or woman carrying a sword and/or a severed head (in the *Kuyōtō zuzō* representation, the head is placed within a pan). This mostly corresponds to the

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[14] See *Xukan guzun suyu yao* 續刊古尊宿語要. X 1318, 68: 366b7-10. This story is found in the account of the master Zhan Tangzhun 湛堂準 (1061–1115).

[15] The text exists in Tibetan translation. See To. 660/997, 661/998, P.339/622, 340/623. It is the seventh text of the *Saptavāra* corpus (*Vasudhārā*, *Vajravidāraṇā*, *Gaṇapatihṛdayā*, *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*, *Parṇaśabarī/Prajñāpāramitā*, *Mārīcī*, and *Grahamāṭrkā*). For Sanskrit manuscript see Cambridge University Library (MS Or.1814.5). An earlier translation in Chinese was found at Dunhuang: *Zhuxingmu tuoluoni jing* 諸星母陀羅尼經 (T 1302). See Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (ed. Charles Muller): 聖曜母陀羅尼經.

[16] See Liao Yang 廖暘, "Chishengguang Fo goutu zhong xingyao de yanbian" 熾盛光佛構圖中星曜的演變, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 86 (2004-04): 72–74. Versions of the Tejaprabhā *dhāraṇī* were also printed until at least the Ming dynasty in China. See Liao Yang, "Daweide Chishengguang Rulai jixiang tuoluoni jing benwen yanjiu" 《大威德熾盛光如來吉祥陀羅尼經》本文研究, *Dunhuang yanjiu* 敦煌研究 152, no. 4 (2015): 64–72.

[17] TZ vol. 7, 739–748. A collection of line drawings of astral deities kept at Tō-ji 東寺 in Kyōto. Produced in year 2 of Japanese reign era Chōkan 長寬 (1164).

[18] The State Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg. Item# XX-2424, XX-2450 & XX-2454.

description of Yuebei found in the *Yuanhuang Yuebei* 元皇月孛祕法 (*Secret Practice of the Primordial Lord Yuebei*), which is included in the *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 collection (DZ 1220; fasc. 215):[19]

> 姓朱，諱光，天人相，披髮裸體，黑雲掩臍，紅履鞋，左手提旱魃頭，右手杖劍，騎玉龍，變相青面獠牙，緋衣，杖劍，駕熊。
>
> Surnamed Zhu [Vermillion] with the honorific title of Guang [Luminous]. In the form of a celestial human, their hair is let down over their naked body. Their mass of black hair covers the navel. Red sandals. Their left hand holds the head of a drought demon. Their right hand holds a blade. They ride a jade dragon. In their modified form, [they display] a blue face with long fangs, a crimson garment and blade, while driving a bear.[20]

Such nude imagery is more likely to stem from an Indian or Near Eastern tradition than a native Chinese imagination, especially when we consider that this "planet" was said to have been introduced into China by a foreigner. Other descriptions of Yuebei, however, associate this deity with the native Chinese astral deity of Taiyi 太一, and moreover describe the icon in an entirely Chinese fashion.[21] This points to the sinicization of this figure, which suggests that the icon of Yuebei as a naked wielder of a sword is the earlier icon. In the Ming period novel *Yang Jiajiang yanyi* 楊家將演義 (*Drama of Yang Jiajiang*) by Xiong Damu 熊大木 (c.1506–1578), Yuebei, curiously identified with Xixia 西夏國 (the Tangut kingdom) is described as having a "naked red body" (赤身裸體) and "holding in her hand a skeleton" (手執骷髏骨).[22] In the Chinese imagination, this icon was perhaps associated with Xixia. At least one specimen from Khara-Khoto, a major Xixia city, depicts Yuebei in a form close to this.[23]

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[19] Unknown compiler. Dates approximately to the late Yuan, early Ming (14th century). See Hu Fuchen, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 416–417.

[20] The gender of the figure is not specified. DZ 1220, Wenwu Chuban edn., vol. 30, 335c.

[21] See *Dongyuan ji* 洞淵集 (DZ 1063) by Zhang Quanzi 長筌子 (fl. early 13th cent.). DZ 1063, Wenwu Chuban edn., vol. 23, 849b. As Liao Yang points out, the eleven planetary deities here are largely identical in description apart from the colors of their hats. Liao Yang "Chishengguang Fo goutu zhong xingyao de yanbian," 76.

[22] Xiong Damu 熊大木, *Yang Jiajiang yanyi* 楊家將演義 (Beijing: Baowentang Shudian, 1980), 174.

[23] Item #XX-2424 at the State Hermitage Museum shows Yuebei with a normal skin tone (see appendix 3 below). Her red garment is beneath exposed breasts. Her long hair is draped down the back. She appears to be holding a sword.

Fig. 6.2. Yuebei in the *Kuyōtō zuzō*. Fig. 6.3. Khara-Khoto Yuebei.[24]

A strong case can be made that this is a form of the Iranian Āl or Semitic Lilith, a demon common throughout the Near East, associated with illness, and the deaths of mothers and infants. The name Āl "apparently derives from Iranian *āl* 'red'." A related figure in the Jewish tradition is Lilith, a demon thought to kill children.[25] Panaino notes that "in Iranian folklore 'red ornaments' can be used also as an apotropaic means against the demoness Āl (Albasti), who, in her turn, is the 'red one' *par excellence*."[26] As James A. Montgomery explains, "The genus appears in the Babylonian incantations, as masculine and feminine, *lilu* and *lilit*, along with an *ardat lili*." With respect to the

[24] Item #XX-2450. 13th – 14th century. State Hermitage Museum.

[25] A. Šāmlū, "ĀL," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2011, available at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/al-folkloric-being-that-personifies-puerperal-fever.

[26] Antonio Panaino, "A Sogdian Wind between Paris and London," in *Commentationes Iranicae. Sbornik statei k 90-letiiu Vladimira Aronovicha Livshitsa*, eds. P. B. Lur'e and S. R. Tokhtas'ev (St. Petersburg, 2013), 299.

depiction of the deity he notes, "Nakedness and disheveled hair are standing descriptions of the Lilith, witch, etc."[27] The nudity of Yuebei seems to be associated with sexuality, since, according to the aforementioned Xing Yunlu (fl. 1580), Chinese astrologers "call this [Yuebei] the place [in the horoscope] where sexual energy manifests."[28] In medieval Jewish mysticism, Lilith's mount is the Tanin'iver, the "blind serpent".[29] In the Zohar (1:19b), the medieval classic of the Kabbalah, Lilith is said to seek out infants and kill them "when the moon is on the wane, as the light diminishes."[30] Although the Chinese Daoist text in question does not mention children, one of the magical practices described therein requires an ill person to cough on an inscribed letter.[31] It would therefore seem that Yuebei is associated with both the Moon and disease. These points all indicate that this icon can be traced back to a figure very close to the Iranian Āl or Semitic Lilith. If this Yuebei is indeed Lilith or a closely related deity, then it also very likely means that the astrological lore associated with the lunar apogee in Chinese translation is also of a foreign origin.[32]

Ziqi is depicted as male in courtly Chinese attire. I have not found any descriptions of his icon that would be suggestive of foreign influences. The *Shangqing shiyi dayao dengyi* 上清十一大曜燈儀 (DZ 198; *High and Pure Lamp Ceremony of the Eleven Great Planets*), which dates to the Yuan or early Ming period,[33] simply describes Ziqi in courtly Chinese attire with a solemn expression.[34] However, based on the fact that many of the icons surveyed above are Iranian in origin, and that the historical record states Ziqi was introduced from abroad, we can assume that Ziqi also likely included an icon when it was introduced.

Turning to the general Chinese history of astrology, the popularity of horoscopy continued until the Ming dynasty, but it seems that Buddhism had no role to play by this period. We should recall here the remarks of Song Lian (1310–1381) from the

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[27] James A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts From Nippur* (Philadelphia: Philadeplhia University Museum, 1913), 74, 158.

[28] 星家謂之淫氣孛之所在. See Xing Yunlu, *Gujin lü likao*, vol. 787, 682a11-12.

[29] Geoffrey W. Dennis, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic and Mysticism* (Woodbury: Llewellyn Publications, 2007), 154. See also Joseph Dan, *The Early Kabbalah* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1986), 180.

[30] Isaiah Tishyby, ed., *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 540–541. See also Daniel C. Matt, trans., *The Zohar*, vol. 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 148–149.

[31] DZ 1220, Wenwu Chuban edn., vol. 30, 336a.

[32] In modern Western astrology, the lunar apogee is also called Lilith. It appears that Sepharial (1864–1929), an English astrologer, was the first to introduce Lilith into European astrology, although this initially was connected to a purported second satellite of the Earth. It appears that Sepharial (1864–1929), an English astrologer, was the first to introduce Lilith into European astrology, although this initially was connected to a purported second satellite of the Earth. See Sepharial, *The Science of Foreknowledge* (Cosimo, Inc., 2006), 40. The later 20th century connection between the apogee and Lilith appears to be unconnected with any ancient or medieval sources.

[33] Hu Fuchen, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 309.

[34] DZ 198, Wenwu Chuban edn, vol. 3, 564b.

introduction of this study. He traced the origin of astrological prognostication of fate, in contrast to state astrology, to the translation of the *Duli yusi jing* based on what he had heard from his teachers.[35] He was intent on demonstrating the foreign origin of such astrology. This was meant to discredit its legitimacy in China. He ends his discourse by remarking that "in recent times great scholars all relish speaking to fortune tellers, but I absolutely refuse to do so. Is there also a basis for this? I say there is: 'The Master seldom spoke of fate.'"[36] Fortune telling was evidently still very much widely appreciated in the early years of the Ming dynasty.

In the Ming period, a number of major works on astrology were produced, some of which were preserved in the Daoist canon. The *al-Madkhal* by Kūšyār ibn Labbān (late 10th cent.), an introduction to astrology heavily dependent on Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*, was translated into Chinese in 1384 by foreign-born officials working at the Ming national observatory.[37] Another large work on horoscopy is the aforementioned *Xingxue dacheng* (*Great Compendium of Star Studies*) in thirty fascicles by Wan Minying. In the Daoist canon, the *Rumen chong lizhe zhong kanyu wanxiao lu* 儒門崇理折衷堪輿完孝錄 (DZ 1471; *Scholars' Record Perfecting Filial Piety Which Esteems Persuasion and Accords with Geomancy*), a manual of geomancy (*kanyu* 堪輿, i.e., *fengshui* 風水) of unknown authorship from the mid-Ming period,[38] includes a significant amount of material concerning horoscopy, some of which stems from the earlier Hellenistic system introduced during the Tang period. For example, the twelve earthly branches are equated to the twelve Jupiter stations, which in turn are identified by name as the twelve zodiac signs (Aquarius 寶瓶, Pisces 雙魚, etc).[39] As with the *Lingtai jing*, the *life sign* 命宮 and *body sign* 身宮 are respectively identified as the signs in which the Sun and Moon are present. The four *triplicities* are also defined. The twelve places are defined, but with the curious instruction that if the chart is nocturnal one is to count these from the sign in which the Moon is present (normally these are counted from the ascendant): I. Life 命宮, II. Wealth 財帛, III. Brothers 兄弟, IV. Estate 田宅, V. Children 男女, VI. Slaves 奴僕, VII. Wives 妻妾, VIII. Illness-calamity 疾厄, IX. Travel 遷移, X. Office–salary 官祿,

[35] Ren Jiyu, ed, *Zhonghua chuanshi wenxuan Ming wen heng*, 150–152.

[36] Ibid., 152. "近世大儒，於祿命家無不嗜談而樂道之者，而子一切摒絕之，其亦有所本乎？曰：有。子罕言命." The last remark is in reference to Confucius. See in the Zihan 子罕 in the *Analects* 論語 (9.1).

[37] Yano Michio, *Kūšyār ibn Labbā's Introduction to Astrology* (Tōkyō: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1997) , xviii. The original Arabic and Chinese are reproduced in this volume, along with an English translation of the Arabic.

[38] Hu Fuchen, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 398.

[39] As discussed above, equating the zodiac signs to sidereal lunar stations and Jupiter stations renders the zodiac system in question a sidereal zodiac, since the tropical zodiac must be strictly aligned with the equinoxes. This indicates that the tropical zodiac, while employed in late-Tang astrology, was likely forgotten by most Chinese astrologers in later centuries.

XI. Fortune 福德, XII. Appearance 十二相貌.[40] There was therefore a continuity of the horoscopic astrology that had been introduced during the Tang. What in the present day we would identify as Hellenistic elements were sufficiently naturalized in Chinese astrology so as to seem native and ancient to people in the fourteenth century, so much so that Song Lian had to argue that horoscopy was originally not from China.

In addition to works on astrology, the planets and asterisms appear as deities in the Daoist canon. As an example, in the *Zhongtian ziweixing zhenbao chan* 中天紫微星真寶懺 (DZ 1450), the *True and Precious Repentance of the Middle Heaven Faint Purple Star*, which was likely produced in the Ming dynasty,[41] we see the "Stellar Lord of Cancer" 巨蟹宮辰星君 invoked alongside the other eleven zodiac signs.[42] The zodiac signs are of Mesopotamian origin, but this belief in the zodiac signs as deities was originally of Indian origin. As to the appearance of zodiac deities in China, this belief dates back to the eighth century when it was introduced via the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*.[43]

6.3. Astrology in Korea, the Liao and Tangut Xixia

The impact of Buddhist astrology and astral magic was immense in the greater area of East Asia after the Tang dynasty. The kingdom of Koryŏ 高麗 (918–1392) on the Korean penninsula inherited and developed astrology from the Tang. As Sørensen notes, "When looking at the defining practices and beliefs of Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryŏ, one is immediately struck by the consistent and frequent references to astrology including the worship of the heavenly bodies."[44] Koryŏ Buddhists believed strongly in the destructive powers of planetary movements, and the ability of Buddhist deities such as Tejaprabhā to counteract them.

According to one account, in the year 984, a Khitan diplomat named Ye Lüchun 耶律純 (d.u.) was sent to Koryŏ where he heard of an unnamed 'national teacher' 國師, who was a specialist in astronomy. Despite offering precious gifts, and making repeated requests, the teacher did not meet with him until the king of Koryŏ ordered a meeting.

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[40] DZ 1471, Wenwu Chuban edn., vol. 35, 615a9-15, 613a7-18, 614b16-18 & 625a3-8. The name of the twelfth place here is curious. It also occurs in the *Ziweidou shu* 紫微斗數 (DZ 1485). Wenwu Chuban edn., vol. 36, 500b10. Valens states that the twelfth place signifies foreign lands, hostility, slaves, injuries, dangers, tribunals, disease, death and sickness. Vettius Valens, *Anthologies*, trans. Mark T. Riley, 80.

[41] Hu Fuchen, ed., *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 312.

[42] DZ 1450, Wenwu Chuban edn., vol. 34, 754b9-15.

[43] See TZ, vol. 2., 284–286. The Japanese Mikkyō traditions preserve the mantras and *mudrā*-s for each sign. See Somekawa (2013). The *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* commentary also mentions "deities of the twelve zodiac signs 十二宮神" (Taishō 1796, vol. 39: 634c13). As discussed in earlier chapters, India had a belief in the deities of the twenty-eight (or twenty-seven) *nakṣatra*-s. The deification of the zodiac signs occurred in India since there is no evidence that the zodiac signs were deified in the Hellenistic world.

[44] Henrik H. Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryŏ in Light of the Greater East Asian Tradition," *International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture* 7 (2006): 71.

The teacher taught Ye Lüchun an unconventional method of identifying associations between the seven planets, twelve earthly branches (in this case acting as functional equivalents for the twelve zodiac signs), and the twenty-eight lunar stations. The teacher states he was taught this method from a "strange man at sea" (海上異人).[45] Sørensen believes that this account "reveals that the Koreans were considered as being in possession of a superior form of astrology."[46] This conclusion, however, is problematic when we consider the absence of a name for the 'national teacher' in question, and the fantastical quality of the background story, all of which strongly indicate that this is not a historical account of a real meeting, but rather a fictional story used to justify a new astrological system at odds with contemporary systems. This account does, however, tell us about developments in the Liao 遼 (907–1125). It indicates an ongoing development of astrology well after the Tang period in the Liao state, rather than in Korea. The new system of astrology discussed in the dialog, purportedly obtained from a mysterious figure at sea who passed it onto an elusive master in a foreign country, alludes to a pressing concern of how to connect the twenty-eight lunar stations with the twelve zodiac signs, and that varying interpretations existed at the time. In other words, astrologers were developing the traditions they had inherited from the Tang period.

Although the story above is fictional, it is notable that a diplomat from the Khitan state is said to have inquired about astrology, since evidence reveals sufficient widespread interest in astrology in the Liao to inspire the painting of zodiac signs and lunar stations on tomb murals. Tomb paintings from the twelfth century displaying such astrological icons are found in Xuanhua 宣化 in modern Hebei. Sen argues that "Buddhist horoscopic astrology and esoteric *maṇḍalas*, popular in East Asia between the tenth and thirteenth centuries, inspired the drawings on Xuanhua tomb ceilings."[47]

Given the rich influence of Buddhist astrology in Korea and the Liao, it is unsurprising to also observe a similar development in the contemporary Tangut state of Xixia 西夏 (1038–1227). As noted earlier, among the art specimens from the Tangut city of Khara Khoto, there are several depicting figures such as Tejaprabhā and the eleven planets.[48] The presence of eleven planets likely indicates that the Daoist type of astrology was practiced, rather than the Buddhist system of nine planets, though the worship of astral deities within a Buddhist context was evidently a prominent practice. Kira Samosyuk states that the "Tangut attached great importance to both astronomy and astrology. The state administration of Xi Xia included a Department of Astrology based

[45] Chen Shu 陳述, ed., *Quan Liao wen* 全遼文 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1982), 92–93.

[46] Sørensen, "Esoteric Buddhism under the Koryŏ," 72–73.

[47] Tansen Sen, "Astronomical Tomb Paintings from Xuanhua: Maṇḍalas?" *Ars Orientalis* 29 (1999): 31.

[48] These are held in the Khara Khoto collection of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia. Available online: http://www.hermitagemuseum.org. See items X-2424, X-2426, X-2428, X-2430, X-2431ab, X-2450, X-2451, X-2452, X-2453, X-2454, X-2455, X-2481, X-2482, T.F/1052.

on the Chinese model." The Tangut culture built temples to heavenly bodies, and their Buddhist canon also included several works related to Tejaprabhā and the planets.[49] A version of the Tejaprabhā *dhāraṇī* closely related to the extant texts (see 5.2 above), for example, was translated from Chinese into Tangut.[50] Many of these features of Tangut culture can be traced back to the Tang dynasty, revealing the significant impact of Buddhist astrology and astral magic within the Tangut society.

6.4. Astrology and Astral Magic in Japan

There is abundant documentation concerning Buddhist astrology and astral magic in Japan. Japan took a deep interest in astrology, which includes both the Buddhist and native Chinese systems. The latter was incorporated into the Onmyōdō 陰陽道 tradition.[51] Japanese Buddhist astrology, which was rooted almost entirely in the Tang tradition, influenced religion, art, popular literature and even politics throughout the Heian and Kamakura periods (tenth to fourteenth centuries). However, various misunderstandings persist in modern scholarship.[52]

Buddhist astrology existed in two ways in Japan. First, Shingon and Tendai both used the *Xiuyao jing* as a means of determining auspicious days for the execution of rituals. This practice was part of both traditions from the beginning of Mikkyō in Japan in the early ninth century. We might call this "Mikkyō Astrology". Second, there emerged a separate lineage of Buddhist astrologer monks called Sukuyōshi 宿曜師, known collectively as the Sukuyōdō 宿曜道, who were specialists in horoscopy and astral magic throughout the Heian and Kamakura periods (tenth to fourteenth centuries). The *Sukuyōshi* were not strictly speaking practitioners of Mikkyō, and their practices must be understood as separate from Shingon and Tendai, since they operated as a separate community.

Prior to the introduction of Buddhist astrology to Japan, the country had already received texts explaining native Chinese astrology via the Korean peninsula. The *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (vol. 2, 179) reports that in year 10 (602) of the reign of Suiko Tennō 推

[49] Kira Samosyuk, "The Planet Cult in the Tangut State of Xi Xia The Khara Khoto Collection, State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 5 (1997/98): 354.

[50] An Ya 安娅, "Xixia wenyiben Chishengguang Rulai tuoluoni jing kaoshi" 西夏文譯本《熾盛光如來陀羅尼經》考釋, *Ningxia shehui kexue* 宁夏社会科学 182, no. 1 (2014): 108–114.

[51] The Onmyō-dō (also rendered On'yō-dō) was a lineage of occult specialists who practiced various forms of divination, magic, healing and geomancy, much of it rooted in earlier Chinese systems. They existed alongside and even competed with Buddhist astrologers in the Heian period. For a recent study see Yamashita Katsuaki 山下克明, *Onyōdō no hakken* 陰陽道の発見 (Tōkyō: Nihon Hōsō Shuppan Kyōkai, 2010).

[52] Athanasios Drakakis, for example, completely misunderstands the history and features of Buddhist astrology in Japan. Athanasios Drakakis, "Onmyōdō and Esoteric Buddhism," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras of East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech et al (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 683–690.

古天皇 (r. 592–628), Gwalleuk (Jp. Kanroku 觀勒), a monk from Baekje (Jp. Kudara 百濟), presented to the court "a calendar, as well as books on astronomy and geomancy, together with books on ancient Chinese astrology and divination 百濟僧觀勒來之, 仍貢曆本及天文地理書, 并遁甲方術之書也." These materials were studied by some students at the time.[53] In the following century, the worship of the aforementioned bodhisattva Myōken 妙見菩薩 (Sudṛṣṭi), the personification of Polaris (Jp. *hokushin* 北辰), flourished. The *Nihon ryōi ki* 日本靈異記, an account of Buddhist stories compiled by Kyōkai 景戒 (d.u.) around the year 822, reports that Shidehara Yamadera 信天原山寺 in Kawachi no Kuni 河内國 lit lamps as offerings to Myōken. The people of the Kinai 畿内 region annually made lamp offerings. During the era of Empress Abe 帝姫安部 (i.e., Kōken Tennō 孝謙天皇, r. 749–758), the local devotees made offerings of lamps, as well as money and valuables, to the custodian of the temple.[54] The belief in astral deities was therefore strong even before the later developments of the Heian period.

As mentioned earlier (4.5), Kūkai returned home in 806 with a copy of the *Xiuyao jing*, which is listed in his catalog of texts.[55] We will recall that Kūkai's biography, the *Kōya Daishi go kōden* by Shōken, states that calendar specialists in Japan were unaware of the concept of Sunday when Kūkai returned. Kūkai is therefore to be credited with first introducing the seven-day week to Japan. His expertise with the *Xiuyao jing* is also demonstrated by his remarks recorded in the *Hino'o kuketsu*. It is clear that Shingon was formally interested in astrology from its beginning. This was also the case with Taimitsu. Although Saichō does not appear to have taken an interest in astrology, the following generation of Tendai monks did. According to the Tendai monk Annen, copies of the *Xiuyao jing* were also brought to Japan by the Tendai monks Ennin in 847 and Enchin in 858. Ennin's biography, the *Jikaku Daishi den* 慈覺大師傳, produced by Minamoto no Fusaakira 源英明 (d. 939),[56] relates that in the spring of 849, Ennin requested permission

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[53] *Dunjia* (Jp. *tonkō*; also rendered as 遯甲) is mentioned in the *fangshu lizhuan* 方術列傳 (fasc. 82) of the *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (vol. 10, 2703). Dozens of works concerning *Dunjia* are cited in the *Sui shu* 隋書 (vol. 4, 1029–1032), the history of the Sui dynasty (581–617). These and the references to this art by Xiao Ji in the *Wuxing dayi* (172–175, 232) demonstrate that *Dunjia* was a widely-practiced system of Chinese astrology during this period. The *Wuxing dayi* itself also contains a great deal of Chinese astrological lore. The first mention of this work in Japan is in the *Shoku Nihon gi* 續日本紀, in which it is listed among compulsory works to be studied by state students in the year 757. It is also listed in the *Nihonkoku genzai sho mokuroku* 日本國見在書目錄, a catalog of books available in Japan, which was compiled by Fujiwara Sukeyo 藤原佐世 (847–898) in 891. See Nakamura Shōhachi 中村璋八, "Wa ga kuni ni okeru Gogyōtaigi no juyō ni tsuite" 我が國に於ける五行大義の受容について, *Komazawa Daigaku bungaku bu kenkyū kiyō* 駒澤大學文學部研究紀要 28 (1970): 11–12.

[54] G 17: 90–91. As Yamashita points out, this indicates that worship of Myōken flourished during the Nara period. His cult was prominent in Japan, but never achieved the same prominence on the mainland. See Yamashita Katsuaki 山下克明, *Heian jidai no shūkyō bunka to onyō-dō* 平安時代の宗教文化と陰陽道 (Iwata Shoin 岩田書院, 1996), 292.

[55] See *Go shōrai mokuroku* 御請來目錄 (T 2161, 55: 1062a23-24).

[56] There are three separate versions of this biography and differing scholarly opinions on their chronology. See Saitō Enshin, *Jikaku Daishi Den = The Biography of Jikaku Daishi Den* (Tōkyō: Sankibō

to commence production of a Vajra-dhātu-maṇḍala 金剛界曼荼羅. Ennin accordingly identified day eight of the fifth lunar month as a *kanro nichi* 甘露日 or "Day of Amṛta".[57] This "Day of Amṛta" derives from the *Xiuyao jing*, in which it is defined as a Sunday when the assigned *nakṣatra* of that day is Hasta 軫. On such days, it is auspicious to carry out sacred acts, such as receiving initiations (*kanjō* 灌頂), building temples, receiving precepts, studying scriptures, ordaining as a monk and practicing the path (see table 4.5 above). It is clear that the *Xiuyao jing* was a common text for Shingon and Taimitsu from their respective beginnings.

The Shingon monk Shūei, whom we mentioned above (4.7), was responsible for bringing the first manuals on horoscopy to Japan, namely the *Duli yusi jing* and *Qiyao rangzai jue*, when he returned in 865. Shūei lists them in his catalog as miscellaneous books (*zōjo* 雜書), while remarking that "the assorted works above might not be gates of Dharma [i.e., Buddhist works], but they are held as important in the world."[58] Although this indicates that horoscopy was, in fact, widely practiced in China at the time, there is nothing to suggest that Shūei himself practiced it. There is moreover no evidence indicating that any Japanese monk in the ninth century practiced horoscopy. The first accounts of it being practiced appear in the following century, which we will discuss below. Here, the point to bear in mind is that Mikkyō astrology, based primarily on the *Xiuyao jing*, was satisfactory for determining the most auspicious days to carry out rituals (i.e., hemerology). Neither Shingon nor Tendai appear to have formally incorporated horoscopy into their respective systems of practice.

Astrology was an essential component to Mikkyō from its beginning, but their belief in astrology was not necessarily fatalistic, since magical means were available to avert prognosticated disasters. The background behind this was the earlier connection in China between Buddhist astrology and the worship of astral deities, such as Tejaprabhā. With respect to the introduction of Tejaprabhā to Japan, Ennin's catalog of items brought back from China includes a "Tejaprabhā altar diagram" (Chn. *Chisheng tan yang* 熾盛壇樣) as one fascicle (T 2167, 55: 1084c8). The *Asaba shō*, a thirteenth century Tendai compendium of Mikkyō practice and lore mentioned earlier (5.2), records that in 849 (year 2 of Kashō 嘉祥), Ennin established a Tejaprabhā practice at Sōji-in 總持院 (TZ vol. 9, 42a6–9). It furthermore states that this ritual, described at length in the *Asaba shō*,[59] is a secret of the school (Tendai), being precious to the nation, and not practiced at Tō-ji 東寺 (TZ vol. 9, 24c3–5). It appears that the long-form Tejaprabhā ritual was

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Busshorin, 1992), 17–19. For a comprehensive study, see Saeki Arikiyo 佐伯有清, *Jikaku Daishi Den no kenkyū* 慈覚大師伝の研究 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1986).

[57] Z 8-2: 691b5-8. In the modern calendar this corresponds to June 6th, 849. For English translation, see Saitō, *Jikaku Daishi Den*, 56. Saitō, however, does not translate *kanro nichi*.

[58] T 2174A, 55: 111b20–c1.

[59] This long-form ritual is loosely connected to T 966. It incorporates material from a variety of sources. Fascicles 58–59 of the *Asaba shō* specifically discuss the procedure for worshipping Tejaprabhā and its early history in Japan.

primarily practiced within Tendai. The transmission of Tejaprabhā and texts concerning astrology and astral magic also introduced to Japan worship of planetary deities in their Iranian-Mesopotamian forms, a strong feature of the Chinese Tejaprabhā cult. These deities are most well-known in Japan through the *Bonten kara zu* 梵天火羅圖 (TZ vol.7, 695).

There appears to have been some innovation in Japan, in light of the *Kuyōtō zuzō* (TZ vol. 7, 738), produced in 1164, which includes a line drawing of Tejaprabhā as a Tathāgata aflame, standing atop two lotuses, and holding a bowl and monk's staff,[60] as well as drawings of the planetary icons. This standing representation is unknown among Chinese sources, but appears to be based on depictions of Yakushi Nyorai 藥師如來, i.e., Bhaiṣajyaguru.[61]

Innovation on the part of Japanese Buddhists with respect to the interpretation of the planetary icons is evident. The Iranian-Mesopotamian, as well as the zoomorphic icons, were authenticated through creative interpetations of their features. The *Byakuhō kushō* 白寶口抄, by Ryōson 亮尊 (taught by Ryōzen 亮禪; 1258–1341), for instance, provides the following interpretation of the Iranian-Mesopotamian icon of Mercury:

> 水曜者，北方作業，即水精也。彼體總顯然煩惱。煩惱如水，是顯示貪愛，行相誠似水，故云: 神形如黑蛇也。蛇水精也。北方前五識作業，故表彼戴猿冠，猿散亂物故也。持紙筆，記煩惱異熟，記功德之佛果義也。
> Mercury is active in the northern direction. It is the essence of water. Its body completely manifests afflictions. Afflictions are like water. This manifests craving. Its form truly resembles water. Therefore, it is said that the deity's form is like that of a black snake. A snake is the essence of water. In the northern direction, the prior five consciousnesses[62] are active, which thus expresses [the icon's] wearing of a monkey hat, since the monkey is a distracted animal. Holding paper and brush has the meaning of recording the maturation of afflictions, and the fruit of buddhahood from merit.[63]

With respect to this unique interpretation of the icons of Mercury in the *Byakuhō kushō*, the grammar and vocabulary usage of the cited passage are highly suggestive of a Japanese composition. For example, using *xianran* 顯然 as a transitive verb is unusual in Chinese. Also, *xingxiang* 行相, *qian wu shi* 前五識, and *yishu* 異熟 are terms derived from Yogācāra (Hossō-shū 法相宗) texts in Chinese translation. Neither the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, nor any other Chinese astrological work of the ninth century, display such

[60] For a later replica of this see TZ vol. 7, 750.

[61] Su Jiaying 蘇佳瑩. "Nihon ni okeru Shijōkō Butsu zuzō no kōsatsu" 日本における熾盛光佛圖像の考察, *Bijutsushi ronshū* (2011) 11: 114–117.

[62] The five sense consciousnesses, which come prior to the last three of the eight consciousness in Yogācāra.

[63] TZ vol. 7, 307a23-27.

influences from the Yogācāra lexicon, indicating that this interpretation of the icon is very likely Japanese in origin. This points to further Japanese development of the astral magic received from China.

The various astral deities are also discussed in various medieval Mikkyō compendiums. For instance, as discussed earlier (5.4), the *Gyōrin shō* cites works that describe the planetary deities. The mantras of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* are also cited in the *Gyōrin shō* (T 2409, 76: 226a09–11). The *Dainichi kyō sho en'ō shō* 大日經疏演奧鈔 – notes on the commentary of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* by Gōbō 杲寶 (1306–1362) – also cites the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, along with the *Kuyō hiyraku* and *Xiuyao jing*, in a discussion of the qualities of the planets, and the astrological significances of their movements throughout the twelve zodiac signs (T 2216, 59: 59a10–16). These discussions demonstrate the continued firm belief in astrology among Mikkyō specialists well into the medieval period, in addition to the widespread interest in appeasing astral deities.

Buddhist astral magic also incorporated elements derived from Daoist texts, which to some extent was a result of interactions with Onmyōdō.[64] A primary characteristic of the Daoist material is its main focus on the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which are believed to govern human longevity. The incorporation of such beliefs into Buddhist practice occurred already in the late-Tang (see 5.10 above). In this system, the seven stars are associated with the twelve earthly branches (Ch. *di zhi* 地支). The star presiding over an individual's life is determined by the earthly branch of the sexagenary cycle for the year when they were born. The *Ono rokuchō* 小野六帖, by the Shingon monk Ningai 仁海 (951–1046), prescribes this same model in its explanation of a "Ritual for Offering to the Primordial Star" (*Ganjinku sahō* 元辰供作法) under the section detailing rituals for asterisms, titled "Private Remarks on Sukuyō" (*sukuyō shiki* 宿曜私記).[65] Ningai also cites the *Kara zu* and *Qiyao rangzai jue*. The magic with which he was familiar therefore clearly consisted of Chinese, Indian and Iranian elements, which by his time had become fully digested within the framework of Mikkyō practice. The mature system of Mikkyō astral magic became called *Hokuto hō* 北斗法 ("Ritual of the Northern Dipper"), which, despite the name, also incorporates the planetary, zodiacal and *nakṣatra* deities. Hayami suggests that features of astral magic identifiable with Onmyōdō are apparent in the tenth century, but that during the eleventh century the *Hokuto hō* was systematized as a specifically Mikkyō practice.[66]

In light of the widespread belief in astral deities and astrology in Japan during the Nara and early Heian periods, it is unsurprising that such interests would lead to the formation of a community of professional astrologers capable of practicing horoscopy, arguably the most complex system of astrology, to which we now turn.

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[64] Yamashita, *Heian jidai no shūkyō bunka to onyō-dō*, 298.

[65] T 2473, 78: 98a2–3

[66] Hayami Tasuku 速水侑, *Heian kizoku shakai to bukkyō* 平安貴族社會と佛教 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1976), 97.

6.5. Sukuyōdō Horoscopy

Although by the end of the ninth century, Japan possessed the necessary texts to cast horoscopes, including even Cao Shiwei's *Futian li*, it appears that the country still lacked professional astrologers. Horoscopy requires not only basic astronomical knowledge in order to produce a horoscope, but also familiarity with astrological doctrines in order to interpret it and make predictions. The role of Buddhism in the transmission of such knowledge foreshadowed the emergence of later astrologer-monks, the Sukuyōshi. The "Mikkyō astrology" discussed above ought to be considered separate from the horoscopy practiced by the Sukuyōshi, since horoscopy was the exclusive art of the Sukuyōshi.

The first documented calendrical specialist with the *Futian li* in Japan was the Tendai monk Nichi'en 日延 (d.u.). Nichi'en was a disciple of the Tendai monk Ninkan 仁觀 (d. 934), who also had a background in calendrical science.[67] Sometime around the mid-tenth century, the Onmyōji Kamo no Yasunori 賀茂保憲 (917–977) voiced his concerns that the *Senmyō reki* 宣明暦 state calendar (brought to Japan in 859, and adopted from 862) had been in use for well over a century, and that a new calendar had probably been adopted on the mainland. He recommended that Nichi'en be sent to acquire and study a new calendar. Nichi'en departed in 953. He arrived in the state of Wuyue 吳越, where he studied and retrieved a version of the *Futian li* and ephemerides (Ch. *licheng* 立成), which he brought back in 957. Nichi'en's trip to China is detailed in a document entitled *Daizaifu jinja bunsho* 大宰府神社文書, dated to around 1053. It was rediscovered by Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三 (1907–1997) in 1954 at Daizaifu Jinja 大宰府神社 in Kyūshū. Nichi'en also carried with him works of the Tiantai school, which had been lost in China.[68] The *Senmyō reki* was not abandoned, and continued to be used until the Edo-period, but the *Futian li* was used by the Sukuyōshi throughout the Heian and Kamakura periods.[69]

Although Nichi'en played such a crucial role in transmitting the necessary knowledge to practice horoscopy, according to the encyclopedic early Kamakura-era

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[67] Yamashita Katsuaki 山下克明, "Sukuyō-dō no keisei to tenkai" 宿曜道の形成と展開, in *Kōki sekkan jidaishi no kenkyū* 後期攝關時代史の研究 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1990), 488–489.

[68] See Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, "Nyū Goetsu sō Nichi'en den" 入吳越僧日延傳, *Nihon rekishi* 日本歷史 82 (1955): 58–63. Momo Hiroyuki 桃裕行, "Nichi'en no *Futenreki* seirai" 日延の符天暦齎來, in *Ritsuryō kokka to kizoku shakai* 律令國家と貴族社會, ed. Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1969), 395–420. For details on the Tiantai texts carried by Nichi'en see Momo Hiroyuki, "Nichi'en no Tendai kyōseki no sōchi" 日延の天台教籍の送致, in *Taigai kankei to shakai keizai: Mori Katsumi hakushi kanreki kinen ronbun shū* 對外關係と社會經濟 : 森克己博士還暦記念論文集 (Tōkyō: Hanawa Shobō, 1968), 101–113.

[69] Momo, "Nichi'en no *Futenreki* seirai," 400–408.

Nichū reki 二中歴 (unknown author), Nichi'en is listed as a Rokumeishi 禄命師 (master of fortune telling), rather than as a Sukuyōshi (under the *ichi nōreki* 一能歴 heading; fasc. 13, 56).[70] The first Sukuyōshi listed in the *Nichū reki* is Hōzō 法藏 (905–969).[71] In the year 961, Hōzō engaged in a debate with the Onmyōji Kamo no Yasunori over the asterism believed to constitute the natal asterism (*honmyō suku* 本命宿) of Murakami Tennō 村上天皇 (926–967; r. 946–967). This debate also dealt with the day when the appropriate ritual was to be executed (*honmyō jitsu* 本命日). As Yamashita points out, the *Ono ruihi shō* 小野類秘鈔 by Kanshin 寛信 (1084–1153), and the *Byakuhō kushō*, cite the written reports by Hōzō and Kamo no Yasunori, from which we can gain a clear understanding of their respective positions as follows.[72]

Murakami Tennō was born on the second day (*tei gai* 丁亥) of the sixth lunar month in year four of the reign era Enchō 延長 (926). In the sexagenary cycle, this year landed on *hei jutsu* 丙戌. Kamo no Yasunori proposed that *hei jutsu* be regarded as the day when the ritual was to be executed. As to the natal asterism, he referred to the table of the *Xiuyao jing* (table 4.8), in which the twenty-seven *nakṣatras* are assigned to each day of the lunar calendar. In this case, 6/2 corresponds to Aślesā 柳.[73] Hōzō, however, disagreed with both points. He proposed that the ritual was to be executed on the actual day of birth according to the sexagenary cycle (*tei gai*), and that the natal asterism be determined based upon the *nakṣatra* in which the Moon was actually lodged at the time of birth. In the end, a third party, Yoshino Nichizō 吉野日藏 (d.u.),[74] presented a judgment on the matter in three fascicles, in which the natal asterism would be determined by Hōzō's explanation, while the day of the ritual would be determined by Kamo no Yasunori's explanation. This is recorded in the *Asaba shō* and *Gyōrin shō*.[75]

There are two important things to note about this debate. First, in this case, Hōzō is referring to Chinese lunar stations in practice, but the astrological lore involved is based upon that of the Indian *nakṣatras*. Second, Hōzō is disregarding the table in the revised version of the *Xiuyao jing* (see table 4.8 above), and instead relying on more accurate methods of calculating the true position of the Moon. Amoghavajra's team produced said table likely as a means of facilitating Chinese use of the Indian calendar

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[70] Rokumei (Ch. *Luming* 禄命) could be understood as astrology in Chinese and Japanese contexts. Even if Nichi'en did practice astrology, he was not regarded as a Sukuyōshi. For details, see Momo, "Nichi'en no *Futenreki* seirai," 410.

[71] After Hōzō, the following men are listed as Sukuyōshi: Rigen 利源(原), Ninsō 仁宗, Ninso 仁祚, Nintō 仁統, Fusen 扶宣, Chūin 忠允, Ryōtan 良湛, Zōmyō 增命, Shōshō 證昭, Genso 彦祚, Nōsan 能算, Shōshō (靜)清昭, Gōshun (桓)恒舜, Kokkū 國空, Songen 尊源, Kensen 賢暹, Kyōzō 慶增, Ryōyū 良祐, Myōsan 明算, Shinsan 深算, Nichikaku 日覺.

[72] SZ 36: 85–86. TZ vol. 7, 297b1–c4 & 334b8–335a26. Yamashita, "Sukuyō-dō no keisei to tenkai," 492.

[73] *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu*, vol. 1, 13.

[74] The identity of this figure is uncertain. There was another Nichizō in the tenth century who lived 905–967, but it is unclear if this is the same man.

[75] TZ vol. 9, 457b15–19 & T 76, no. 2409, 458c8–11.

without having to employ calculations or redesigning Chinese observational astronomy to accommodate the *nakṣatra* parameters, but with the result that the Moon only nominally "lodges" in the assigned *nakṣatras*. Experts in calendrical science and astronomy, however, would have noticed the discrepancies between observed positions and the table. Hōzō did not necessarily face any serious objections to his decision to employ a scientific approach, since the first version of the *Xiuyao jing* from 759 states that "the *nakṣatra* in which the Moon is present constitutes the corresponding *nakṣatra* convergence 夫取宿直者, 皆月臨宿處, 則是彼宿當直."[76] This early preference in the Sukuyōdō tradition for accurate calculations is still apparent in a later horoscope (see below).

We should note that Kanshin states, "I am unaware of the basis [of Hōzō's conclusion]. This was not received from a teacher's instruction, being something he reached via his unique views 未知所據, 是則不受師說, 獨見所致."[77] This points to the early innovation of Sukuyōdō, and its divergence from mainstream Mikkyō. The latter it seems regarded the *Xiuyao jing* as not only a canonical text, but also one that was originally taught by Mahāvairocana.[78]

Hōzō being traditionally identified as the first Sukuyōshi is reasonable, given that one of the first references to Sukuyōdō itself is found in Hōzō's report quoted in the *Ono ruihi shō*.[79] The appended suffix of *-dō* 道 is likely in emulation of the then long-established Onmyōdō. At this point, Sukuyōdō as an identifiable lineage or community does not appear to exist yet, but shortly after Hōzō's time, we see, as pointed out earlier, reference to "Sukuyō" in Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji monogatari*, which suggests that Sukuyōdō as an identifiable and moreover significant community emerged between 969, when Hōzō died, and the first or second decade of the following century. The first references to Sukuyōdō and Sukuyōshi within the journals of aristocrats date to the early to mid-eleventh century.[80] Yamashita also points out that Sukuyōshi, primarily hailing from Kōfuku-ji 興福寺, became especially active among the aristocracy starting in the late tenth century. Sukuyōshi also officially participated in state management of the calendar between 995–1038. After 1038, they continued to debate with calendrical experts at court, in particular with respect to predicting eclipses.[81]

The Insei (1086–1185) and Kamakura periods (1185–1333) were a time of great activity for Sukuyōdō. Toda notes that during the later years of the Insei period,

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[76] *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu*, vol. 2, 7. Yamashita, "Sukuyō-dō no keisei to tenkai," 494.

[77] SZ 36: 85b6-7. Same remarks quoted by Ryōzen (TZ vol. 7, 335b11–13).

[78] The *Xiuyao jing* was originally attributed to Mañjuśrī when it was compiled by Amoghavajra, but Kanshin (SZ 36: 85b15-86a2) states that it was originally taught by Mahāvairocana. He states that it was then transmitted to Śākyamuni, Mañjuśrī, Brahmā, the *ṛṣi* of Gandhamādana ("sages of the fragrant mountain"; Jp. *kōzan sennin* 香山仙人), the *denbō sanzō* 傳法三藏 (Amoghavajra and Huiguo 惠果) and finally to Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師 (Kūkai).

[79] SZ 36: 86a17.

[80] Toda Yusuke 戸田雄介, "Kamakura bakufu no Sukuyōshi: toku ni Chinyo ni tsuite" 鎌倉幕府の宿曜師：特に珍誉について, *Bukkyō Daigaku daigakuin kiyō* 佛教大學大學院紀要 35 (2007): 46.

[81] Yamashita, "Sukuyō-dō no keisei to tenkai," 508–511.

Sukuyōdō started placing particular emphasis on apotropaic rituals as a means of countering astrologically prognosticated calamities, in addition to paying more attention to predictions concerning death specifically.[82] Two primary lineages of Sukuyōdō emerged and remained active through to the Kamakura period: the Chin-ryū 珍流 (variant: 弥) and San-ryū 算流.[83] These lineages stem from two prominent Sukuyōshi who were active during the Insei period: Chinga 珍賀 (b. 1129) and Kyōsan 慶算. Chinga was the son of Chinya 珍也 (b. 1083), a Sukuyōshi of Hōryū-ji 法隆寺.[84] Chinga, however, was based out of Kyōto, where, sometime before the year 1165, he built the Hokutokōrin-in 北斗降臨院 at Kiyomizudera 清水寺.[85] Kyōsan was of Onjō-ji 園城寺, and was an innovator of Sukuyō rituals. The two men knew each other. Chinga produced an astrology report for Gotoba Tennō 後鳥羽天皇 (r. 1183–1198), but his errors were later corrected by Kyōsan.[86] The presence of these astrologers at the highest level of Japanese society indicates the appeal of horoscopy at the time.

An important specimen related to Sukuyodo preserved in the depository of Kōzan-ji 高山寺 in Kyōto from the Insei Period is the *Sukuyō senmon shō* 宿曜占文抄. This twenty-seven page document in its extant form is a collection of notes recopied in year 4 of the Bunji 文治 (1188) by the Sukuyōshi Shinsan 深算, who was active in the early twelfth century.[87] This document contains astrological lore drawing upon Buddhist scriptures, in addition to often baffling commentary regarding how to reconcile the various lunar and solar calendrical systems prescribed in various Buddhist and non-Buddhist texts (the latter includes the *Duli yusi jing*). This text illustrates that Sukuyōdō in this period had not attempted to produce any systemized doxography or orthodox canon of texts, which stands in contrast to established Buddhist schools.

During the Kamakura period, some Sukuyōshi were active in Kamakura. One of better documented Sukuyōshi of this period was Chinyo 珍譽 (b. 1167), who was also a Waka 和歌 poet. Some of his Waka poems are included in the *Chinyo Hōin waka* 珍譽法印和歌 (Z 16-1: 348–350),[88] appended to which is Chinyo's lineage line. Chinyo's

[82] Toda Yusuke 戸田雄介, "Sukuyōdō no inseiki: Chinga to Kyōsan wo chūshin ni" 宿曜道の院政期 : 珍賀と慶算を中心に, *Bukkyō Daigaku daigakuin kiyō* 佛教大學大學院紀要 34 (2006): 29–32.

[83] Yamashita, "Sukuyō-dō no keisei to tenkai," 502–503.

[84] According to an inscription (*okugaki* 奥書) on the *Qiyao rangzai jue* in the collection of Sakai Ukichi 酒井宇吉, Chinya was the 119th Sukuyōshi of Japan. In 1116, he formally transmitted said text. See Kanechiku Nobuyuki 兼築信行, "Chinyo to sono seikei" 珍譽とその世系, *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 國文學研究 (1999) 129: 36. It is clear that by the early twelfth century there had already been several generations of astrologers in Japan. See also Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, 166.

[85] Kanechiku, "Chinyo to sono seikei," 37.

[86] Toda, "Sukuyōdō no inseiki," 32–33, 36–37.

[87] Ujiro Takafumi 宇代貴文, "Enkeishiki hokuto mandara kō: Kōzan-ji zō *Sukuyōsenmonshō* wo megutte" 圓形式北斗曼荼羅考 : 高山寺藏『宿曜占文抄』をめぐって, *Bijutsushi ronshū* 美術史論集 (2012) 12: 96.

[88] The last Waka in this collection mentions Sukuyō specifically (Z 16-1: 349b7).

predecessors here include his father Chinyō 珍耀 (1148–1184)[89] and his grandfather Chinga, the latter specified as having descended from Chinya. Chinyo served the Kamakura Bakufu as a Sukuyōshi following the Jōkyū War in 1221, in particular between the years 1223–1246, when he was called upon to perform rituals directed at the seven planets.[90] Toda points out that accounts in the *Azuma kagami* concerning rituals related to astral anomalies increase following the Jōkyū War.[91] Chinyo's service as a ritualist specialized in astral magic during these two decades demonstrates that the belief stemming from earlier centuries in the power of astral deities remained consistent and strong among Japanese elites.

Turning to the horoscopy practiced by the Sukuyōshi, we can see that it is a direct heir to the horoscopy practiced in late-Tang China, and therefore offers a picture of what was earlier practiced in China. As a key specimen of the horoscopy of Sukuyōdō, we might examine the *Sukuyō unmei kanroku* 宿曜運命勘錄.[92] This document is a horoscope and accompanying interpretation for a man born on the 21st of January in the year 1113 at around 1:20AM.[93] At the time it was produced, he was forty-one years old, so the document at hand can be dated to around the year 1152. Its astrological doctrines can be compared with those of another Japanese horoscope, the *Sukuyō go-unroku* 宿曜御運錄, which was produced around the year 1312 for an individual born in 1268, who at the time was forty-four or forty-five years old.

The horoscope of 1113 states that 165,428 days have elapsed since the epoch of the calendar that was used in the calculations, which indicates a start date of around the year 660. 660 is the epoch of the *Futian li*.[94] Similarly, the *Sukuyō go-unroku* for the year 1268 states that 222,245 days have elapsed (equaling 608.89 modern years of 365 days), giving us the starting year of 660. The planetary positions of the *Sukuyō unmei kanroku* are listed by the degrees of Chinese lunar stations, and displayed on a circular table,

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[89] Murayama assumes that Chinyō 珍耀 is also Chinzen 珍善, but as Kanechiku points out, the basis for this claim is unclear, and moreover untenable. See Murayama Shūichi 村山修一, *Nihon Onmyōdō shi sōsetsu* 日本陰陽道史総説 (Tōkyō: Hanawa Shobō, 1981), 309. Kanechiku, "Chinyo to sono seikei," 37.

[90] Ibid., 38–39. Kanechiku draws on accounts of the *Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡, which records historical events between 1180-1266.

[91] Toda, "Kamakura bakufu no Sukuyōshi," 50–51.

[92] Briefly discussed by Toda, "Sukuyōdō no inseiki," 30–31. It appears the Toda was unaware of the rich Iranian and Hellenistic elements in this document. Also see Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, 188–197.

[93] The 25th day (戊申) of lunar month 12 in year 3 of Ten'ei (壬辰) corresponds to the 21st of January of the year 1113 CE, based on the calculations of the site http://moon.confusionindex.com/pc/calendar/27/. Yano, however, states that the horoscope is for the 15th of January, 1113. See Yano, *Mikkyō senseijutsu*, 192. The 21st of January seems more accurate based on the specified planetary positions of the chart compared to a modern simulation (Astrolog 6.10), although there is a significant discrepancy with the Moon's position. The scientific accuracy of this horoscope is unimportant to the present discussion, since we are primarily concerned with the doctrines employed in its interpretation.

[94] Momo, "Nichi'en no *Futenreki* seirai," 404–406.

which I have converted into a more easily readable format using modern astrological symbols (fig. 6.4).

The inner circle shows the twelve earthly branches. In this case, they represent the twelve Jupiter stations, which are used as functional equivalents for the twelve zodiac signs, a convention that can be traced back to Yixing's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* from the 720s (see 4.2 above). The next circle shows the twelve zodiac signs, together with their respective planetary rulers. The next circle shows the positions of the nine planets, which are placed relative to the lunar stations, presented in the next circle, in which they are positioned. East Asian astronomy is based on Chinese lunar stations, which is why the twelve zodiac signs became twelve divisions of lunar stations (the exact parameters are shown in table 4.9 above). The outermost circle shows the twelve places, and whether they are considered auspicious, as well as the twelve earthly branches as directional markers (*bō* 卯 indicates east). The twelve places, discussed earlier (table 5.1 above), are also indicated. In the translated table below, for ease of reference I have indicated the places with Roman numerals, but it should be noted that the Chinese names of these places are also significant. This circular table is similar to that found in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, but the zodiac signs as they align with the lunar stations differ, as do the names of the zodiac signs and twelve places. In light of the Iranian origin of horoscopy in East Asia, it is likely that the terms of the 1113 horoscope at hand also derive from an Iranian source: I. "Lifespan" 壽命位, II. "Wealth" 財庫位, III. "Brothers" 兄弟位, IV. "Estate" 田宅位, V. "Children" 男女位, VI. "Slaves" 奴僕位, VII. "Marriage" 夫妻位, VIII. "Illness" 疾病位, IX. "Travel" 遷移位, X. "Prosperity" (or "Career") 官祿位, XI. "Fortune" 福德位. XII. "Disaster" 禍害位.

The exact numerical values of planetary positions are not indicated in the chart itself. These are listed separately. They use fractions, and are therefore more precise than the ephemerides provided in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, which indicates that Sukuyōshi employed more precise calculation methods, rather than merely relying on ephemerides. The position of the Moon is furthermore not derived from the aforementioned table of the *Xiuyao jing*. This brings to mind Hōzō, who insisted on a more precise method of calculating the position of the Moon, a convention that evidently became standard in Sukuyōdō.

The scientific value of this horoscope has been pointed out in the past.[95] What interests us at present is that it is was produced with astral magic in mind. Following the planetary positions, the significant points on the chart are listed, to which "prayers and offerings should be constantly made 常可令祈供" (Z 31-1: 430b5).

[95] Nakayama Shigeru, *A History of Japanese Astronomy: Chinese Background and Western Impact* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 60.

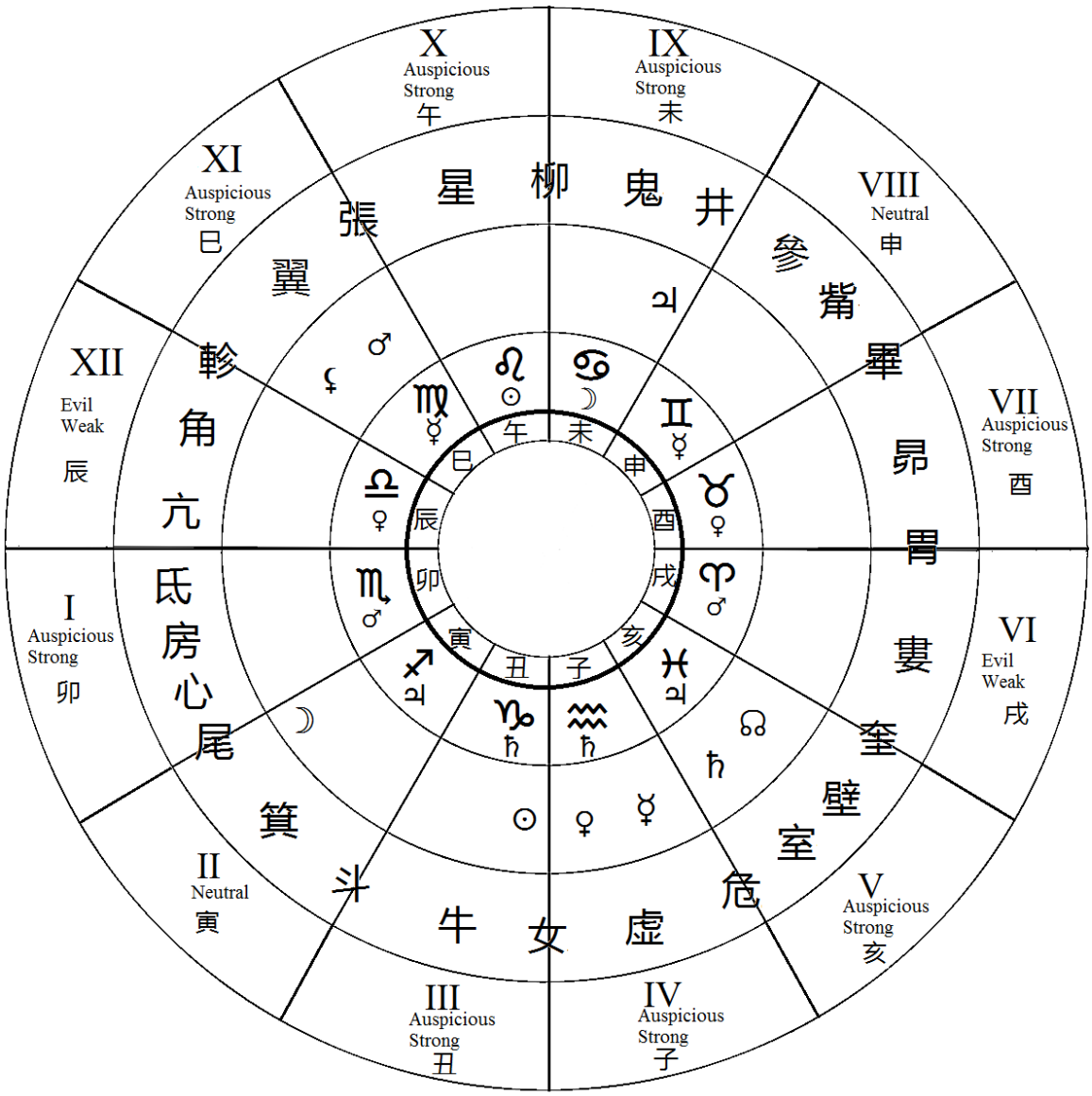

Fig. 6.4: *Sukuyō unmei kanroku* horoscope. **Planets**: ☉ Sun, ☽ Moon, ♂ Mars, ☿ Mercury, ♃ Jupiter, ♀ Venus, ♄ Saturn, ☊ Rahu, ☋ Lilith (Ketu).[96] **Zodiacs**: ♈ Aries, ♉ Taurus, ♊ Gemini, ♋ Cancer, ♌ Leo, ♍ Virgo, ♎ Libra, ♏ Scorpio, ♐ Sagittarius, ♑ Capricorn, ♒ Aquarius, ♓ Pisces. **Earthly branches**: 子 *shi*, 亥 *gai*, 戌 *jutsu*, 酉 *yū*, 申 *shin*, 未 *bi*, 午 *go*, 巳 *shi*, 辰 *shin*, 卯 *bō*, 寅 *in*, 丑 *chū*.

[96] Lilith in astrology is the lunar apogee. In East Asian Buddhist astrology, Ketu was redefined as the lunar apogee (see 5.3 above).

- “本命星廉貞星. Natal star: Alioth.” The man was born in a *shin* or *tatsu* 辰 year, which is associated with the star *Renshin* (Ch. *Lianzhen* 廉貞) in the Big Dipper constellation (i.e., Alioth). This is the Daoist convention discussed earlier, which is outlined in the *Ono rokuchō* by Ningai (T 2473,78: 2473b4-13).
- “本命辰壬辰神. Natal sexagenary [deity]: deity of *Jinshin*.” The deity presiding over the sexagenary year of birth. In this case, that of *Jinshin* 壬辰 (29th of 60 in the cycle).
- “本命宿尾宿. Natal *nakṣatra*: Mūla *nakṣatra*.” The position of the Moon at birth was 4.93 degrees of the lunar station Wei 尾, but for astrological purposes, this refers in practice lore-wise to the *nakṣatra* of Mūla.
- “本命宮蝎虫. Natal zodiac sign: Scorpio.” The zodiac sign rising at the eastern horizon at birth (i.e., the ascendant), and occupying the first place. The 1268 horoscope, however, defines the “natal zodiac sign” based on the sign in which the Moon was present, which perhaps indicates that such definitions were variable.
- “本主宮人馬宮. Natal presiding zodiac sign: Sagittarius.” The zodiac sign in which the Moon was present at birth.[97] This is not listed in the 1268 horoscope. Presumably if the individual was born during the daytime, the Sun would determine this, since the Moon determines the triplicity rulers (*sanbō shu* 三方主) in a nocturnal horoscope (i.e., for someone born at night), and the Sun determines them in a diurnal chart.[98]

Triplicity, we will recall (4.7), is an early astrological convention, in which the twelve zodiac signs are divided into four even sets of three signs each. In the present case, the triplicity rulers of three of the twelve places are identified:

- “本命位三方主: 火金月. Triplicity rulers of the natal place: Mars, Venus, Moon.”
- “榮祿位三方主: 木日土. Triplicity rulers of the place of prosperity: Jupiter, Sun, Saturn.”
- “福德位三方主: 月金火. Triplicity rulers of the place of fortune: Moon, Venus, Mars.”

The first refers to the rulers of the ascendant. The second is derived from the zodiac sign occupying the tenth place, which concerns prosperity (in thise case, Leo). The third is derived from the zodiac sign occupying the eleventh place, which concerns fortune (in this case, Virgo). The underlying motive behind listing these planets is

[97] One complicating factor is that the Moon is located in 4th degree of Wei 尾, which is within the parameters of Scorpio (see table 4.9). Sagitarrius starts in the 6th degree of Wei. The diagram (fig. 6.4), however, places the Moon on the other side of the dividing line, making it look as if it is in Sagittarius. In light of the reality of axial precession, the parameters for the zodiac signs relative to the solar terms would have been updated by a few degrees by the twelfth century.

[98] See Chris Brennan, *Hellenistic Astrology: the Study of Fate and Fortune* (Denver: Amor Fati Publications, 2017), 496. This definition is also given in the appended notes in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* (T 1308, 21: 452b5-6). Also, the *Lingtai jing* states, “For any diurnal birth, look to the zodiac sign in which the Sun is present to determine this. For a nocturnal birth, look to the zodiac sign in which the Moon is present to determine this. It is then regarded as the ruler. 凡晝生, 看日所在之宮, 以定之. 夜生, 看月所在之宮, 以定之, 而為主也.” DZ 5, no. 288, 22c10–11.

evidently to identify those governing fortune and longevity, so as to properly direct one's prayers. This suggests a source – perhaps a text of astral magic – other than material derived from Dorotheus, whose extant work does not touch on magic.

The document then provides some quite instructive prose regarding the perception of astrology within a Buddhist framework. The astrologer who composed this was evidently concerned with reconciling the idea of karma with astrological determinism, i.e., the view that the stars above signal or cause events in the world:

> 人倫受生，尊卑貧富寔，雖業因之所，災禍[99]福榮曩襄，猶是宿曜之所掌也。生同行年，誰無好惡，生好宮好曜者，自有福佐，屬惡宮惡曜者，自招禍殃。然而凡人無識。
>
> When people receive life, although social status and fortune are within the scope of karmic causes, the changes of misfortune and prosperity are also within the grasp of the *nakṣatra*–s and planets. Who of those born in the same year are without agreeable and disagreeable [experiences]? Those born with a favorable zodiac sign and planets have their support for fortune, while those under an unfavorable zodiac sign and planets bring about their own catastrophes. However, ordinary people are unaware [of this].[100]

The astrologer who composed this recognizes that favorable and unfavorable experiences in life should be attributed to past karma, but at the same time suggests that the astrological circumstances of one's birth also ought to be considered. The language of this prose indicates that astrological factors are not deterministic, since the individual is "supported" for fortune under favorable stars, or otherwise bring about their own calamities owing to having been born under unfavorable stars. The author here is carefully avoiding any conclusion that would suggest strict fatalism, which would violate the conventions of karma.

The rest of the document is a commentary on the horoscope at hand, which is divided into five sections to be discussed separately.

Section 1 (*ten shō* 天性) of the horoscopic commentary deals with predictions concerning the inherent personality and fortune of the client in question. This section directly cites, by name, Dorotheus (*Yusi jing* 聿斯經) – a fact that was first pointed out by Ishida (1950) – as well as the *Xiuyao jing*. Although direct correspondences between the citations of the *Yusi jing* and Dorotheus are difficult to identify, some of the basic ideas are found to be common. For instance, the conjunction of Venus and Mercury:

[99] Read [畐+利] as 災.

[100] Z 31-1: 430b7-10.

聿斯經云:「金水同宮，即令能仁，兼有學藝，作文章」。

The *Yusi jing* states, "Venus and Mercury in the same zodiac sign makes one benevolent, together possessing learning and craftsmanship, producing writings."[101]

Dorotheus explains that Venus with Mercury makes a man "adorned with culture and words, loquacious in poetry because he will compose pleasing [and] beautiful words."[102]

Section 2 (*yō fuku* 榮福) of the horoscopic commentary deals primarily with predictions related to the economic prosperity of the client in life. This perhaps points to one of the underlying motivations behind the emergence of astrologer-monks in Japan: forecasting financial and material success in a person's life, which is to say, offering counsel on mundane, rather than strictly religious, matters.

This section cites the *Xiuyao jing* (*Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu*, vol. 1, 6–7) and *Sūryagarbha-parivarta* 日藏分 of the *Mahāsaṃnipata-sūtra* (T 397, 13: 278c13–14), although it seems these are abridged notes, rather than full citations, which perhaps indicates that the astrologer wrote his interpretation using notes, rather than the original texts in full. This section also cites the *Duli yusi jing* when referring to the aspects of the planets. Aspect, we will recall (4.7) is defined as a geometrical relationship between two planets on a horoscopic chart that is thought to signify something. The Japanese horoscope at hand appears to employ 'sign-based' system of configurations,[103] rather than precise distances measured by degrees. In the horoscope at hand, *trine*, for instance, would be identified when three zodiac signs of space separate two planets. As an example of aspect in the present horoscope, the configuration between Jupiter and Saturn is explained as follows:

又云:「土與木三合，在強位，足財物，有田宅產業。…」
Also, [the *Yusi jing*] states, "When Saturn and Jupiter are in *trine*, and [Jupiter] is in a strong position, he will have much wealth, possessing fields, buildings and productive enterprises. …"[104]

This appears to have a direct parallel in Dorotheus: "If Saturn aspects Jupiter from *trine* while Jupiter is in a good place, then it indicates an abundance of property and land and

[101] Z 31-1: 431a13–14.
[102] Pingree, *Dorothei Sidonii Carmen Astrologicum*, 223.
[103] Brennan notes, "Sign-based configurations occur when planets are located in signs that are configured according to one of the recognized configurations." See Brennan, *Hellenistic Astrology*, 296–298.
[104] Z 31-1: 432a1-2.

trees and buildings and mosques."[105] The integrity of technical horoscopic lore was clearly kept relatively intact in its transmission eastward across Asia.

As in the Hellenistic tradition, here emphasis is placed on triplicity. Dorotheus states, "I tell you that everything which is decided or indicated is from the lords of the triplicities."[106] In a similar fashion, the astrologer at hand offers the following commentary:

> 諸運，皆以三方主定初中後年運。榮祿位三方主者，木同[107]土也。□木星在先[108]位 ... 少之時，依大人愛寵，吉榮盛也。第二主目[109]天子，雖在无力位，與木星對望，是雖非過分，榮盛年目[110]如御運也。第二[111]主土星，在吉位中，日以後，榮祿繁昌歟。但件土星與羅睺星同宮，與計都星對望。臨期可妨也。...
>
> As to fortunes, the fortunes of early, middle and later years are all determined via the triplicity rulers. The triplicity rulers of the place of prosperity are Jupiter, the Sun and Saturn. [The first ruler] Jupiter is in an auspicious position. … When young, you will have been favored by a great man. It was auspicious and bountiful. Although the second ruler, the Solar Deity, is in a powerless position,[112] it is opposite Jupiter. Although not overly much, your fortune is one of flourishing years and ease. The third ruler, Saturn, is in an auspicious position and behind the Sun, perhaps indicating prosperity and thriving? However, Saturn is in the same zodiac sign as Rāhu, and opposite to Ketu. When the time comes, there could be hindrances.[113]

Here the astrologer interprets the general level of prosperity that the client might expect throughout life based on the planetary rulers associated with Leo, which in the chart occupies the tenth place (the place of rank and prosperity). In general, the positions of the three associated planets are favorable, though it is pointed out that Saturn is within the same zodiac sign as Rāhu and opposite to Ketu, two malefic planets. Rāhu and Ketu, of course, were not part of Hellenistic astrology, since they are originally Indian, but later they were adopted in Iran. This point stands to highlight that the horoscopy of Sukuyōdō was not so much Hellenistic as it was Iranian in practice. The astrologer here identifies

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[105] Pingree, *Dorothei Sidonii Carmen Astrologicum*, 212.

[106] Ibid., 162.

[107] Read *dō* 同 as *nichi* 日.

[108] Read *sen* 先 as *kichi* 吉.

[109] Read *moku* 目 as *nichi* 日.

[110] Read *moku* 目 as *ji* 自.

[111] Read *ni* 二 as *san* 三.

[112] Based on the horoscopic table, the Sun is actually in an auspicious position, but the Moon is in a "powerless" or "neutral" position in the adjacent zodiac sign. It seems the astrologer might have been mistakenly looking at the position of the Moon.

[113] Z 31-1: 432a15–b5.

further possible issues in the horoscope, but offers a practical solution to deal with the unfavorable prognostication:

> 但福德位，在火星與計都星同宮，土羅二星對宮，仍福佐成妨。件惡星旁常令祈供者，尤可宜也。
> However, in the place of fortune, there are Mars and Ketu within the same zodiac sign, and Saturn and Rāhu in an opposite zodiac sign, subsequently becoming hindrances to the support of fortune. It would be especially advisable to make constant prayers and offerings to said evil stars.[114]

The client is advised to carry out rituals aimed at the malefic planets that are understood to indicate misfortune or obstacles in life. Again, this is another example highlighting that Sukuyōshi did not believe in any strict fatalism.

Section 3 of the horoscopic commentary discusses the forecast lifespan of the client. Ten methods for predicting lifespan are cited, but the astrologer settles on suggesting that "rulers of the vital signs" (*myōkū shu* 命宮主)[115] are Venus and Mercury. This seems to refer to Gemini (ruled by Mercury) occupying the eighth place (the "place of illness"), Libra (ruled by Venus) occupying the twelfth place (the "place of disaster"). These are said to both be in auspicious and strong positions, hence a long lifespan is signaled, but this is complicated by the position of Rāhu, which is in *trine* to the first place (the "place of lifespan"). It also aspects the "Moon zodiac" (*getsu kū* 月宮). The significance of the zodiac sign that houses the Moon is presumably related to the concept, as defined in the *Lingtai jing*, that the "the sign in which the Moon is present is the bodily sign (Ch. *shen gong* 身宮)" (DZ vol. 5, no. 288, 23b8–9). As noted above (4.7), in Hellenistic astrology, the Sun is associated with the mind, and the Moon with the body. Thus, the integrity of the ancient doctrines is well-preserved even in medieval Japan.

Finally, there is reference again to magic: the astrologer advises that prayers and offerings ought to be directed to Rāhu and Ketu, so as to ensure that the client reaches his "original lifespan" (*hon ju* 本壽), which the astrologer predicts to be sixty-four years. The document does not explain how this number is determined.

Section 4 of the horoscopic commentary deals with "various fortunes" (*sho un* 諸運), which is subdivided into three sub-sections: disciples, slaves and friends. The subsection on disciples indirectly reveals that the client is a monk. It explains that the ruler of the fifth place is an auspicious planet in a good position, therefore the client will

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[114] Z 31-1: 432b10-12. The character *katagata* 旁 here is an honorary suffix indicating that the preceding noun is plural.

[115] The definition of *minggong* 命宮 in the *Lingtai jing* differs: "The vital sign is the zodiac sign-*nakṣatra* in which the Sun [is present] at birth 以太陽所生之宮宿爲命宮." DZ vol. 5, no. 288, 23c6. In the Japanese horoscope, this would only refer to Capricorn, which is ruled by Saturn. Moreover, the ascendant (the "place of lifespan") is Scorpio, which is ruled by Mars. Venus and Mercury, however, rule over the eighth and twelfth places, both of which relate to death and injury.

have many disciples. Normally, the fifth place signifies matters related to children (*danjo* 男女), but as the astrologer notes, in "Dharma households" (*hōke* 法家), disciples are seen as sons. In the present horoscope, the fifth place is occupied by Pisces, which is ruled by Jupiter, a benefic planet, in an auspicious position, although the astrologer also warns that Saturn and Rāhu in the fifth place might indicate issues with some disciples.[116]

Section 5 of the horoscopic commentary deals with developments in the life of the client from the ages of forty-one to fifty-seven. The present year is noted as *jin-shin* 壬申 (1152), when the client is forty-one years of age, but he would have been turning forty in Western reckoning.[117] The "great annual zodiac ruler" (大行年宮主) is identified as Saturn. The ruler for age forty-two is Jupiter, forty-seven is the Sun and forty-nine is Venus. It is from this sequence that we can infer the astrologer is using the originally Hellenistic system of "time lords", most likely derived from Dorotheus: "When a native is born, the lord of the year is the lord of the house [ascendent] in which the native was born. Thus count from the ascendent a year for each sign until you teach the year which you desire; the lord of that house is the lord of the year."[118] When the client was born, the ascendant was Scorpio, which counts as year one, and so counting forty zodiac signs counter-clockwise, we arrive at Aquarius, which is governed by Saturn, followed by Pisces, which is governed by Jupiter; forty-six is Leo, ruled by the Sun; and forty-eight is Libra, ruled by Venus. It is noteworthy here that integrity of this concept endured within Sukuyōdō, which itself demonstrates that this tradition retained the doctrines of the *Duli yusi jing*. There was, however, an alternative way of reckoning annual rulers, which is defined in the appended notes of the document.[119] The *Sukuyō go-unroku*, in contrast, uses this alternative way of determining the planet ruling over the year of the individual in question: the client's forty-fifth year is associated with Jupiter, and his forty-sixth with Rāhu.[120] The difference in technique for determining the annual planetary ruler may reflect the lineages or even the personal preferences of the astrologers.

As to the significance of the annual ruler in the 1113 horoscope, in the case of Saturn, the astrologer warns that in the present year could see illness and calamity given the malefic nature of Saturn. He also discusses the transits of planets over the coming years, and their significance to the client's horoscope. For example, in the year of *hei-shi* 丙子 (1156), Jupiter is forecast to be in Pisces (i.e., its own zodiac sign), which promises

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[116] Z 31-1: 433a17–b8.

[117] The discrepancy of one year here is a result of calculating from the Chinese reckoning.

[118] Pingree, *Dorothei Sidonii Carmen Astrologicum*, 245.

[119] Z 31-1: 437a7–10. Here the planet presiding over the year employs the *navagraha*. Rāhu: ages 1 and 10. Saturn: ages 2 and 11. Mercury: ages 3 and 12. Venus: ages 4 and 13. Sun: ages 5 and 14. Mars: ages 6 and 15. Ketu: ages 7 and 16. Moon: ages 8 and 17. Jupiter: ages 9 and 18. This same system is explained in further detail in the *Byakuhō kushō* (TZ vol. 7, 314b25-315a1).

[120] Horoscope text reproduced in Momo, "Sukuyō kanmon shū" 宿曜勘文集, 148–149. See also the details of the *Byakuhō kushō* (TZ vol. 7, 314c), in which the age of forty-one is associated with the Sun, and not Saturn.

to be an auspicious year, but Rāhu will infringe upon the natal *nakṣatra* of the client, requiring that he be quite cautious, especially in the sixth and seventh lunar months.

One last noteworthy feature of the 1113 horoscope is its reference to the decans. Decans are "simply the thirds of the zodiacal signs, i.e., sections of the ecliptic of 10° lengths. Historically the decans go back to Egyptian lists of 36 constellations which were drawn up many centuries before the introduction of the zodiac."[121] One system of the decans assigns planets to each decan – the ordering of which is Chaldean, i.e., Babylonian[122] – is explained by Firmicus Maternus, an astrologer who lived in the mid-4th century CE, and wrote a Latin work on astrology titled *Mathesis* (the decans are defined in II.IV, "De Decanis").[123] This "Chaldean" ordering of the planets follows the assumed distances of the planets relative to the Earth from a Geocentric perspective: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, the Moon. In Chinese, decans are indicated by the character *du* 度 ("degrees"). We know that the horoscope at hand is referring to the decans based on the parallels with Firmicus. For example, "Venus is positioned in its original degrees 金在本度 (Z 31-1: 431a15)." If we look at the horoscopic chart, Venus is located in the first third of Aquarius. Firmicus states, "Aquarii primus decanus Veneris est, secundus Mercurii, tertius Lunae (*Mathesis* vol. 1, 45)." The first decan of Aquarius is ruled by Venus. Similarly, "Saturn is positioned in the degrees of Jupiter 土在木度 (Z 31-1: 432a7)." Saturn in the horoscope at hand is positioned within Pisces. Firmicus states, "In Piscibus primus decanus Saturni, secundus Iovis, tertius Martis." The second decan is Jupiter. Finally, "Jupiter is positioned in the degrees of Mercury 木在水度 (Z 31-1: 433b5). Jupiter is positioned in Cancer. Firmicus states, "Cancri primus decanus Veneris est, secundus Mercurii, tertius Lunae." The second decan is Mercury.

The *Sukuyō go-unroku* uses the same vocabulary as the *Sukuyō unmei kanroku*, but it does not actually refer to the standard decans. For example, it states that "Mercury is in its original degrees 水在本度," but Mercury is in Leo, and the decans of Leo are Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. Similarly, twice it states that "Venus is in the degrees of Jupiter 金在木度 (146–147)," but Venus is in Virgo, and the decans of Virgo are the Sun, Venus and Mercury. We might speculate that the astrologer might simply have erred here, rather than using a different system.

What can we learn from Sukuyōdō horoscopy? It is a blend of Buddhist, Daoist, Iranian and Hellenistic concepts, representing a thoroughly developed system of astrology inherited from late-Tang China. It is clear that the astrologer who produced the 1113 horoscope felt a need to defer to traditional texts, rather than relying on personal interpretation. It is of course noteworthy that he relied most often on the non-Buddhist

[121] Neugebauer and Hoesen, *Greek Horoscopes*, 5.

[122] Greenbaum, *The Daimon in Hellenistic Astrology*, 228.

[123] This is not to say that Firmicus Maternus was ever translated into Chinese. His definitions, which are standard in Hellenistic astrology, are simply referred to here since they are clearly presented in Latin.

Duli yusi jing, only occasionally citing canonical Buddhist texts. This brings to mind the remarks of Momo,[124] who stated that Sukuyōdō actually relied primarily on *Duli yusi jing*, rather than the *Xiuyao jing*, despite the common misunderstanding of modern scholars who assume "Sukuyō" must be derived from *Xiuyao jing* (*Sukuyō kyō* in Japanese), and therefore primarily based on this text.

One important feature of horoscopy that is not found in this horoscope, however, is the concept of *lots* (Greek: κλῆροι), which are defined in the *Lingtai jing* (see 4.7 above). The absence of the lots from the Japanese horoscopes at hand is curious, but perhaps is merely due to preferences.

The client whose horoscope was cast was a monk – presumably from Kōyasan[125] – who recently turned forty. It seems that he was concerned with worldly matters, such as his long-term financial security, projected lifespan, and disciples (regarded as the equivalent of sons). There is nothing in the horoscopic commentary that points to an interest in forecasting spiritual attainments or religious learning. The apotropaic magic prescribed in this document is also meant to halt worldly misfortunes, not remove obstacles to religious practice and attainments.

This discussion above has demonstrated the importance of horoscopy in Japanese society and Buddhism during the Heian and Kamakura periods. Unlike elsewhere in the world, horoscopy was the exclusive domain of Buddhist monks in medieval Japan. After examining the various technical features of the two extant horoscopes, it is clear that the tradition stemming from Dorotheus was very strong even in Japanese astrology, at least until the fourteenth century.

6.6. Conclusion

The lasting impact of Buddhist astrology in East Asia was clearly immense after the tenth century, which is evident from the religious, art and literary records of Song and Liao China, the Tangut state of Xixia, Korea and Japan. The legacy of Buddhist astrology, however, was to a large extent ultimately forgotten. We might recall here Song Lian's account cited in the introduction of this study, in which he traced astrology, specifically the practice of divining the fates of individuals, back to the translation of the *Duli yusi jing* in the Zhenyuan era (785–805). He only identified it as the "art of Brahmins", and inferred that it was from the "Western Regions" based on the presence of the transliterated terms Rāhu and Ketu. This is highly instructive because it demonstrates that in Song Lian's time in the fourteenth century, the role of Buddhism in the transmission of astrology into China had been forgotten. Horoscopic astrology was

[124] Momo Hiroyuki 桃裕行, "Sukuyōdō to sukuyō kanmon" 宿曜道と宿曜勘文, *Risshō shigaku* 立正史學 39 (1975): 1, 17.

[125] An inscription at the end of the document (Z 31-1: 438a6–7) states the document was copied in year 2 of the reign-era Hogen 保元 (1157) by the Bettō 別當 (steward) of Kōya Ōjō-in 高野往生院.

known to Song Lian, but the rich Indian *nakṣatra* lore found in Buddhist texts was perhaps mostly unknown to the elite literati of his time.

It is worth noting that horoscopy based on the Hellenistic *Duli yusi jing* was studied in China for a period of time longer than Indian *nakṣatra* astrology. In Japan, however, it was the reverse: horoscopy was practiced between the tenth to late fourteenth centuries, whereas the *Xiuyao jing*, a manual primarily comprised of *nakṣatra* astrology, has been in constant use from Kūkai's time in the early ninth century until the present day. It is still studied in Japan as a popular system of astrology. The key element in this regard is Esoteric Buddhism. In Japan, Mikkyō employed the *Xiuyao jing* as an indispensable canonical text, whereas Chinese Buddhists had less and less need to formally observe astrology after the Tang, which is best explained by the rise of Chan and Pure Land traditions, in which astrology was unnecessary. Here we might recall the conclusion drawn from our earlier discussion in chapter three of Buddhist astrology in China from the fourth to seventh centuries. Although Chinese Buddhists had access to Indian astrology in these centuries, they had no pressing need to observe it until the introduction of Mantrayāna in the eighth century. It seems that Mantrayāna was the key factor in motivating Chinese Buddhists to practice astrology. After the Tang dynasty and the demise of Mantrayāna lineages in China, there was less need to observe astrology, and thus texts like the *Xiuyao jing* fell into obscurity. Worship of astral deities such as Tejaprabhā, however, which had originally been prompted by Buddhist fears of negative astrological influences or malefic planets conceived of as sentient entities, continued throughout China, as is evident from the art record.