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CHAPTER

12 Astrology and Astral Magic in Tantric Japan

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Abstract

Japanese Buddhism received and implemented a kind of Sinicized form of astrology from the ninth to tenth centuries. This type of astrology differed from the type of court omenology that had earlier been received from the mainland and was based on ancient Chinese concepts of astroterrestrial correspondences and related chiefly to concerns of the country as a whole, rather than to individuals. The new form of astrology, originating from Indian and Indo-Iranian sources in Chinese translation, could be used for timing rituals to maximize their efficiency or to predict the fate of an individual. The planets, now viewed as deities, also entered the Buddhist pantheon in Japan and became an important object of worship. New ritual forms were also received and developed, in which one could negotiate one's fate as it might be predicted based on astrology.

Keywords: Japan, astrology, tantra, Buddhism, calendars, uranography

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Historical Background

The history of East Asian astrology requires that we understand a lengthy web of integrated elements that incorporate materials from diverse ancient and medieval sources. To begin, the astrology of India was originally separate from the systems of astrology that emerged in Mesopotamia and Egypt. Ancient Indian astrology was primarily concerned with the movement of the moon relative to twenty-eight lunar stations (*nakṣatras*), the full list of which first appears in the Atharva Veda (Yano 2004: 333). Falk (2018: 532) suggests that the *nakṣatras* were originally used to estimate the time of delivery of infants, since the moon will pass through a *nakṣatra* ten times from the date of conception until delivery. Personal characteristics became associated with each of the *nakṣatras* and these varying features were assigned to people born under them. Another feature of the ancient Indian calendars are the periods of waning (*kṛṣṇa-pakṣa*) and waxing (*śukla-pakṣa*) of the moon. Each of these periods comprise fifteen *tithis* (lunar days). Each *tithi* has its own unique hemerological features, which can be either auspicious or inauspicious. This model of lunar astrology did not incorporate the planets, such as Saturn, Jupiter, and so on. Astrology as it existed in Europe and the Islamic world was largely horoscopy (i.e., the casting of horoscopes). Horoscopes are tables that indicate the positions of the planets relative to zodiac signs (Aries, Taurus, etc.) at a given point in time, such as the time of a person's birth, from which predictions are made, or alternatively to determine the optimal time to carry out an action. Horoscopy has its roots ultimately in Hellenistic Egypt, starting from the second century BCE. Pingree (1992: 560) describes Hellenistic astrology as "a union of aspects of advanced Babylonian celestial divination with Aristotelian physics and Hellenistic astronomy." Horoscopy requires not only systematic knowledge of planetary movements but also the mathematics to calculate the positions of stars relative to an exact terrestrial latitude. ↪ Horoscopy was later transmitted to Sasanian Iran and India between the third to fifth centuries, although the exact details of how all this unfolded remain unclear in many aspects. Indian astrology amalgamated their autochthonous system of *nakṣatras* with the zodiac signs and doctrines of Hellenistic astrology (Pingree 1997).

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Turning to China, it had its own unique model of astronomy and celestial omenology. Cullen (2011: 218–223) points out that the *Wu xing zhan* 五星占 (Prognostics of the Five Stars), which appears to date to the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) and was discovered in a tomb dating to 168 BCE, "is the earliest surviving Chinese document showing clear evidence of systematic consideration of planetary motions." The significations of the motions are also considered in order to prognosticate political and military developments. Such an interest in celestial omens fostered the development of astronomical and calendrical sciences in later centuries, which came under the strict domain of imperial governments. Celestial omenology in ancient China, we must observe, was concerned chiefly with the affairs of state and not individuals, which is in contrast to horoscopy and *nakṣatra* astrology, both of which address the fate and character of individuals.

Chinese astronomy was oriented around a system of twenty-eight lunar stations (*ershi ba xiu* 二十八宿) relative to the celestial equator. Although similar to the twenty-eight *nakṣatras*, a point that has led some scholars to argue for a common origin, these two models were, in reality, separate and developed independent of one another as demonstrated by Pankenier (2014). The Chinese calendar, which should be characterized as pan-Asian in character, follows a sexagenary cycle. This is a repeating cycle of sixty terms comprised of the earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支) and heavenly stems (*tiangan* 天干). This cycle records the passage of days and years. This system was utilized alongside a lunar-solar calendar, which is comprised of twelve lunar months (i.e., months defined by lunar phases), recurring intercalary months, and twenty-four solar terms (Wilkinson 2000: 176–187). The first day of a month falls on the New Moon (*shuo* 朔). The fifteenth day falls on the Full Moon (*wang* 望). This model was replicated in Japan, where it is attested in the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀, an early state history which was compiled in 720.

In the case of Buddhism, it is clear that, with few exceptions, Buddhists in India generally held a common belief in astrology, even though the deterministic premise of astrology technically contradicts the law of karma (e.g.,

outcomes are decided by one's actions, not the stars, according to the basic theory of karma). Indian Buddhist literature in its various historical stages reflects the gradual incorporation and development of what were originally foreign astrological concepts, such as the zodiac signs (Kotyk 2018a). The *vinaya* (monastic codes), several of which were translated into Chinese, prohibited monks and nuns from practicing astrology, but this was not because of any challenge to the validity of astrology itself—the main issue was that it was inappropriate for a renunciant to engage in such a worldly art (Kotyk 2017b). Early Brahmins shared negative sentiments toward astrology. Gansten (2011: 217) explains that “before the acculturation of horoscopic astrology proper, introduced from the Greek-speaking world in the first centuries of the Common Era, practitioners of astral divination were described in not very flattering terms by the authors of religious codes of law.” Gansten highlights the *Manusmṛti* (3.162) and *Baudhāyanadharmaśūtra* (2.2.15–2.2.16) as texts that regard astrologers as lowly persons. The former expressly forbids upper-caste astrologers from joining sacrifices, although divination itself was not regarded as invalid.

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Indian astrology was initially introduced to China via translated Buddhist texts, in particular the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, although the astrological elements were relatively basic and impractical to implement without recourse to further material or experts, particularly since the astrometric definitions of the *nakṣatras* from India would have been alien to Chinese astronomers. The first version was translated by Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護; c. 239–316), titled *Shetoujian Taizi ershiba xiu jing* 舍頭諫太子二十八宿經 (*Sūtra of Prince Śārdūlakarṇa and the Twenty-eight Nakṣatras*), which he translated sometime between 307 and 313. The other version is the *Mātaṅga-sūtra* (*Modengjia jing* 摩登伽經). This translation is traditionally attributed to Lü Yan 律炎 and Zhiqian 支謙 in the year 230.¹ The style of translation and records in bibliographies, however, seem to indicate it was translated some time later, perhaps around the late fifth century by Guṇabhadra (Qīunabatuoluo 求那跋陀羅; 394–468). Hayashiya (1945: 541) already raised doubts about the traditional dating of the *Mātaṅga-sūtra*. This point was further taken up by Kotyk (2017c: 28). Zenba (1952) examined the *Mātaṅga-sūtra* in detail and noted a number of anomalous features, in particularly its gnomonic measurements which when calculated would give a position beyond the frontiers of even northern India, suggesting a point of observation in Central Asia. The text also has a number of details and information not found in the earlier version of the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, such as planetary revolution periods, which indicates that it was translated from a significantly revised source text. The *Mātaṅga-sūtra* foreshadows later practices of stellar worship (i.e., the worship of asterisms). For instance, the *nakṣatra* Kṛttikā (*mao* 昴) is presided over by Agni (*Huo shen* 火神) and yogurt (*lao* 酪) is to be offered to him (T 1300, 21: 404c10–404c12).² The astrological content of some sections in the *Mahāsaṃnipāta* (*Dafangdeng daji jing* 大方等大集經) has been examined by Zenba (1957) and Mak (2015). Therein the *Candragarbha-parivarta* (*Yuezang fen* 月藏分), translated by Narendrayaśas (Naliantiyeshe 那連提耶舍; 490–589) in 566, has the Buddha tell Brahma about the planets and zodiac signs, and how he orders them to guard over countries and people (T 397, 13: 373a21–373a29). Buddhist cosmology at this point in history was increasingly incorporating an active pantheon of astral deities including deified zodiac signs, which was unique to India (the zodiac signs were not deified elsewhere in antiquity). This development likely reflects growing interest in astrology among Buddhists. Buddhist cosmology, particularly that based on Abhidharma, regarded the sun and the moon as discs orbiting around Mt. Meru and the Four Continents, all of which was atop a flat disc-shaped surface. Buddhists in India never appear to have adopted spherical-earth cosmology.³

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Although astrology was explained to an extent in some Buddhist scriptures, Buddhists did not have a pressing need to study astrology in detail until the advent of early Vajrayāna, in which the timing of a mandala and rituals became a key factor, in large part perhaps explained by a growing appreciation for astrology in Indian society (Kotyk 2018b). The *Vairocanābhisambodhi*, which is an early example of this new system of Buddhist practices, dating to around the mid-seventh century, incorporates some astrological lore (Hodge 2003, 14–15: 88, 409). A copy of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* (the short title in Chinese is *Dari jing* 大日經) was acquired by the Chinese monk Wuxing 無行 (b. 630) and this version was translated by the Indian monk Śubhakarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏; 637–735) and Yixing—行 (673–727) in 724 (Kano 2015; Kotyk 2019e). Yixing compiled a commentary to this text sometime before his death in 727, based on the oral testimony of Śubhakarasiṃha.

This commentary is titled *Dari jing shu* 大日經疏 (Commentary the *Vairocanābhisambodhi*). The text includes a section that briefly outlines Indian astrology, primarily for timing the execution of rituals and the creation of a mandala (T 1796, 39: 617c22–618a19), that is, a model of hemerology (the practice of selecting auspicious days). Kotyk (2018c) translates this section and argues that this explanation reflects the astrological knowledge current at Nālanda, given that the outline is likely the voice of Śubhakarasiṃha himself for the most part. The importance of astrology in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* therefore highlights the growing incorporation of astrological concepts into early Tantric Buddhism.

The *Vairocanābhisambodhi* came as a package which included a mandala that depicted not only the principal Buddhist deities but also the planets, zodiac signs, and *nakṣatras*, albeit as minor figures located on the periphery. There are also unique *mantras*, *mudrās*, and seed syllables for each of these figures (Somekawa 2013: 170–239). These elements were preserved within Mikkyō lineages in Japan (i.e., Tōmitsu 東密, denoting the “Esoteric Teachings” of Shingon, and Taimitsu 台密, denoting that of Tendai). The original icons of the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* were preserved in an illustrated document titled *Taizō zuzō* 胎藏圖象 (Icons of the Womb Matrix), which is a collection of illustrations of figures. The postscript explains that the Tendai monk Enchin 圓珍 (814–891) copied these illustrations in the year 855 at the monastery Qinglongsi 青龍寺 in Chang’an in China. The first copy was produced in 1181, and another was created in 1194. The *Taizō zuzō* is therefore the third copy of the original brought by Enchin.⁴ These illustrations are possibly the closest versions we have to the originals produced under Śubhakarasiṃha’s direction around 724. The *Taizō zuzō* includes the planets and *nakṣatras* in anthropomorphic forms, as well as the zodiac signs (Sagittarius is a half-man half-horse bowman, which is the earliest known example of a creature resembling a centaur or satyr in China).⁵ These astral deities became part of the wider East Asian pantheon from this point in history. They became established in Buddhism and slightly later also in Daoism (for a discussion of the latter, see Kotyk 2021b).

The pressing need to understand foreign astrology with accessible materials and the growing importance of astrology itself for Buddhist purposes were likely the reasons underlying Amoghavajra’s (Bukong 不空; 705–774) creation of the first authoritative manual of Buddhist astrology in China. This manual is generally known by its abbreviated title, *Xiuyao jing* 宿曜經 (Sūtra of Constellations and Planets). The full title in the modern Japanese Taishō Canon can be translated as *Sūtra on Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva and the Sages’ Teaching on Auspicious and Inauspicious Times, Good and Evil Constellations and Planets* (Wenshushili Pusa ji zhuxian suoshuo jixiong shiri shan’e xiuyao jing 文殊師利菩薩及諸仙所說吉凶時日善惡宿曜經). Although the work is attributed to Mañjuśrī, there is little of anything specifically Buddhist in character within the text.

Zenba (1968) surveyed the version of this text in the Taishō Canon (T 1299) and pointed out that there is no extant Sanskrit original of it. Yano (2013) has demonstrated, however, that the version of this text in the Taishō likely postdates the Tang period, given its heavily modified content when compared to extant recensions which date back to the ninth century and were preserved in Japan. Yano also points to the monk Kakushō 覺勝 (n.d.) from Kōyasan 高野山, who collated the editions available to him and in 1736 compiled a critical edition of the *Xiuyao jing*. This edition is titled *Sukuyō yōketsu* 宿曜要訣 (Essential Key to Sukuyō). It was printed in 1897 by Wakita Bunshō 脇田文紹 as a typeset edition, *Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu* 宿曜經縮刷 (Typset *Xiuyao jing*). This version was used for the *Shukuyōkyō uranai shinden* 宿曜經占真傳 (The True Transmission of *Xiuyao jing* Divination), which is the *Xiuyao jing* with a modern commentary, published in 1908 by Wakahara Yūkitsune 若原敬經 (1854–1926).

Amoghavajra and a team of assistants compiled the first version of the *Xiuyao jing* in 759. The preface explains that the text was subsequently revised in 764 to produce a version more easily understood by Chinese readers (*Sukuyō-kyō shukusatsu* vol. 1: 4). The first fascicle is the revised work, while the second fascicle is the former version. The *Xiuyao jing* provides a diversity of astrological lore, including material related to the *nakṣatras*, zodiac signs, and seven-day week, but all of this was conceived within a flat-earth model of Mt. Sumeru and the Four Continents (Kotyky 2021c). The *Xiuyao jing* appears to have been the first manual in Chinese to explain and discuss the seven-day week in detail. The days of the week are given in Chinese, Persian, Sogdian, and

Sanskrit to facilitate inquiries about the day of the week (the week was observed by foreign peoples but not China at the time), but this also points to the likelihood of multicultural materials having been referenced (Yano 2013: 110). Enough information is given in the *Xiuyao jing* so that Chinese monks could determine, using their own calendar, auspicious days to carry out specific types of rituals. The text, however, also introduced natal astrology—that is, doctrines utilized to predict the fate and fortune of an individual based on their time of birth. In this case, the techniques do not constitute horoscopy, since a birth chart is not described (Kotyk 2018e: 11–17). Nevertheless, astrology for the purposes of prognosticating the future of an individual was novel to China at the time, since the ancient form of Chinese celestial omenology was chiefly concerned with the state and realm.

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Natal astrology prognosticates various aspects in a person's life, including lifespan, misfortune, and hardship. In the decades following Amoghavajra, this concern about fate appears to have prompted interest in apotropaic practices to mitigate or ward off baneful events or otherwise to enhance longevity. The genesis of the cult of so-called Tejaprabhā (Chishengguang Fo 熾盛光佛) is likely best explained by a growing interest in astrology among Buddhists in China. The first text in Chinese to introduce this figure is the *Da shengmiao jixiang pusa shuo chuzai jiaoling falun* 大聖妙吉祥菩薩說除災教令法輪 (Disaster Eliminating Edifying Dharma-Wheel as Taught by the Great and Holy Excellent Auspicious Bodhisattva), also titled 熾盛光佛頂 (*Tejaprabhā-buddhōṣṇīṣa?). The colophon itself does not provide a date or translator but an editorial note in the Taishō text (T 966) records written remarks (*okugaki* 奥書) from the original manuscript. It is said that the “Indian monk, Tripiṭaka Master Śīlabhadra from Mahānālanda Saṃghārāma in Central India 中天竺國大那欄陀寺梵僧尸羅跋陀羅三藏,” in the year 796 translated the work (347, n. 20). This text includes a *pūja* (ritual), instructions for painting a mandala, and an array of mantras to be utilized when facing inauspicious astral omens.

The name “Tejaprabhā” is not attested in any extant Sanskrit source and was, it seems, devised by Nanjio Bunyiu (Nanjō Bun'yū 南條文雄; 1849–1927) based on the Chinese titles of texts retranslated into Sanskrit, which he provides in *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka* (Nanjio 1883: 222; Kotyk 2019d: 612). Mak (2018: 241–242, n. 64) shows that the typical mantra of this “Tejaprabhā” is recorded in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, in which the mantra is called Jvāloṣṇīṣa (Blazing Tuft); thus Jvāloṣṇīṣa is possibly the original Indic name of the Tathāgata in question. A medieval Japanese source, the *Byakuhō kushō* 白寶口抄 (Oral Instructions on the White Treasure), recorded by Ryōson 亮尊 (taught by Ryōzen 亮禪; 1258–1341), gives *lo-ka-jva-la* in Siddhaṃ script as the Sanskrit name (TZ vol. 7: 243b23). This might be reconstructed as *Lokajvāla (i.e., Light of the World), but this name is not found in any other source and could be a translation from Chinese into Sanskrit. Modern scholarship in the Anglosphere and Japan continue to use the name Tejaprabhā.

Tejaprabhā became a widely worshipped deity across East Asia. One often cited example from the art record is a painting titled “Tejaprabhā Buddha and the Five Planets” (熾盛光佛并五星圖), which was painted by Zhang Huaixing 張淮興 (n.d.) in the year 897 (Stein no. Ch.liv.007, British Museum 1919,0101,0.31). An important ritual text of this cult was the *Chishengguang dawei de xiaozai jixiang tuoluoni jing* 熾盛光大威德消災吉祥陀羅尼經 (Great Venerable Disaster Eliminating Auspicious Dhāraṇī Sūtra of Tejaprabhā), whose translation is attributed to Amoghavajra. Liao Yang (2003: 329), however, points out that it does not appear in Tang-era catalogs. Jōnen 靜然 in the *Gyōrin shō* 行林抄 (Summary of a Forest of Practices), compiled in 1154, notes that this text was brought to Japan by a Chinese merchant in 907 (year 7 of Engi 延喜). This date is noteworthy since the text was apparently unknown to the Shingon and Tendai monks who collected materials several decades earlier in China (T 2409, 76: 84b19–22).

The ninth century saw the translation of horoscopy into Chinese from Indo-Iranian sources. One key Buddhist text in this regard is the *Qiyao rangzai jue* 七曜攘災決 (Secrets of Seven-Planet Apotropaism). This text does not appear in any Chinese canon or bibliography but was preserved in Japan and reproduced in the Taishō Canon. The *Qiyao rangzai jue* provides everything necessary to cast a basic horoscope and then interpret it, including ephemerides (tables indicating the positions of planets over periods of time), descriptions of planetary orbits, a

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table of solar terms, and some general astrological lore. There is more to the text, however, than only astrology. Mantras for the planets are also given, as well as basic rituals with which one can ward off baneful planetary influences. Two sets of planetary icons, which are to be drawn, are also described, 𐤎 yet these differ entirely from what we observe in the aforementioned *Taizō zuzō*. One set bears close resemblance to depictions of the planets in medieval Arabic and Persian manuscripts (e.g., Venus as a lute-player, Mercury as a scribe, Saturn as an elderly hunched-over man, and Mars as a red warrior). Kotyk (2017a) has suggested an Iranian heritage for these icons on the basis of comparative iconographical data, as well as the fact that Sogdian loanwords (the names of the planets) are given in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, although firmly establishing a Sasanian origin is presently impossible due to the fact that no known representation of the planets from Sasanian times is extant. The paucity is due to the fact that Zoroastrianism viewed the planets as demonic in nature (Panaino 2015). Kotyk (2017a, 2017c) also pointed out the strong parallels between the astral magic of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* and that of medieval Islamicate and European traditions. The same type of astral magic and astrology was adopted by Daoists but modified for their own purposes (Kotyk 2021b).

Shūei's 宗叢 (809–884) inventory also records one text, grouped together with the others related to astral science, titled *Duli yusi jing* 都利聿斯經. With regard to this text, the *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (59.1548), a revised history of the Tang compiled by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072) and Song Qi 宋祁 (998–1061) in 1060, explains that “during the Zhenyuan period [785–805], the *duli* diviner Li Miqian transmitted it from Western India. A certain Qu Gong translated the text 貞元中, 都利術士李彌乾傳自西天竺, 有璩公者譯其文. The *Duli yusi jing* is not extant, but Ishida (1950) first identified fragments of the text. Yano (2013: 160–164) proposed that the *Duli yusi jing* might have been a translation of Claudius Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* from the second century CE. Mak (2014) convincingly demonstrated, however, that the *Duli yusi jing* was, in fact, most likely based on the work of Dorotheus of Sidon, a first-century CE Hellenistic astrologer. Kotyk (2018e) further documented some of the specific Hellenistic doctrines that are apparent in a variety of Chinese and Japanese sources, which stem from the *Duli yusi jing*.

Several other texts that deal with astral magic were composed during the late Tang, many of which were brought to Japan. One of the prominent texts is the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* 梵天火羅九曜 (**Brahma-hora-navagraha*), which is attributed to Yixing, who died in 727. The *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* gives mantras for the planets, illustrations, and astrological lore. The attribution to Yixing was already questioned by Chavannes and Pelliot (1913: 167), who suggested a date of 874 based on data in the colophon of the text. Osabe (1963: 256–261) also questioned the attribution. Mollier (2008: 141), in contrast, refers to the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao* as Yixing's “outstanding astrological treatise” and identifies it as “a synthesis of Chinese and Indian traditions.” Kotyk (2018f: 16–20) argues for the existence of a historical Yixing that must be contrasted to a pseudo-Yixing. Various texts, including the *Fantian huoluo jiuyao*, were attributed to this pseudo-Yixing. In any case, astrologers and clerics in the ninth century utilized this text as a means to ward off negative planetary influences, so the attribution was arguably only to enhance the prestige of the practice.

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The other astral texts attributed to Yixing, all of which were preserved exclusively in Japan, include the *Xiuyao yigui* 宿曜儀軌 (Ritual for the Asterisms), *Beidou qixing* 𐤎 *humo fa* 北斗七星護摩法 (Homa Ritual for the Seven Stars of the Big Dipper), and *Qiyao xingchen bie xingfa* 七曜星辰別行法 (Special Practices for the Seven Planets and Stars). The last one is particularly unique since it illustrates and describes thirty spirits which cause diseases on the day of the month assigned to each one. Moreover, asterisms are assigned to each of the spirits. The text explains measures to be carried out to halt the ill effects of these dangerous spirits. These include, for instance, offerings of alcohol and lamps. The names of these spirits in transliterated Chinese are of uncertain origin (they are not obvious transcriptions of Sanskrit, Turkish, Persian, or Arabic). The illustrations, which are connected to lunar stations, are unlike anything seen elsewhere in the earlier extant textual or iconographical record in China. The figures include various bestial and zoomorphic figures. However, illustrations of jinn, as found in Persian, Arabic, and Turkish manuscripts—such as the *Kitāb al-Bulhān* from the fourteenth-century

example—are similar to these.⁶ The figures illustrated in the Chinese text are often drawn with nails inserted into them. The text explains this practice as follows:

教人眼見諸鬼形，於鬼形上下釘手，明日收禁之。患人當日差訖。與出却其釘，鬼既得放更不敢到於門焉。

It was taught that if someone sees the figures of spirits with their eyes, they should nail the top and bottom of the figure of the spirit, and then the next day bind them. The victim will be healed [from the illness caused by the spirit] that day. Having removed the nails, the spirit will be released, and they shall not dare come to one's home.

(T 1309, 21: 456c29–457a2)⁷

The connections between these spirits and asterisms, as well as the utilization of nails to control and banish them, are elements similar to what is found in jinn lore. Omidasalar (2000) states that “the jinn are especially afraid of iron, and anyone who manages to insert an iron needle in their bodies or clothes, gains control of them because their great fear of iron prevents them from pulling the needle out of their persons or attire.” Although it is possible that the spirits in the Chinese text are based on jinn lore, their origin remains uncertain.

The Introduction of Buddhist Astrology to Japan

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The introduction of Buddhist astrology to Japan was preceded in earlier centuries by the Chinese system of astronomy (Jpn. *tenmon* 天文) and the related calendrical science (Jpn. *koyomi* 曆). There appears to have been an earlier autochthonous system of timekeeping in preliterate Japan. One Chinese account of Japan from the third century explains that the people simply followed a habit of plowing during spring and 𠂔 harvesting during autumn while remaining ignorant of the seasons as they would have been defined in the Chinese system. Tanisaki (2016) theorized that a solar calendar was originally used before the adoption of the lunar-solar Chinese calendar.⁸ In addition, Goto (2021) has surveyed the extensive native star lore of the Japanese archipelago and demonstrated that rich skylines existed that did not stem from Chinese or Buddhist origins. In any case, these indigenous systems did not evidently affect later systems of astronomy and calendrical science in Japan in any significant way, which were based on the Chinese model (twenty-eight lunar stations, years comprised of twelve lunar months plus intercalary months, etc.) with no reference to an indigenous system, although Japanese names were assigned to the twenty-eight lunar stations, so there likely existed names for some of the constellations associated with the lunar stations before the wholesale adoption of the Chinese calendar in Japan. The *Wamyō ruiju shō* 倭名類聚抄 (Digest of Classifications of Japanese Words), a Japanese dictionary compiled around 931–938 by Minamoto no Shitagō 源順, gives the following definition of the *kanji* 昴 (the Pleiades):

宿耀經云昴星六星，火神也，音與卯同。和名須八流。

The *Xiuyao jing* states that the stars of *Mao* are comprised of six stars and that it is [associated with] the fire god. The pronunciation is the same as *mao* [Jpn. *bō*]. The Japanese pronunciation is *Subaru*. (1.3)

Subaru is the Japanese name for the Pleiades, which also is connected to one of the Chinese lunar stations. The Japanese appellation *Subaru* was naturally assigned to it. It is additionally noteworthy that the *Xiuyao jing* had an impact on early Japanese lexicography, which demonstrates that the text was read outside Mikkyō circles (i.e., outside Shingon and Tendai).

With respect to the introduction of astronomy and calendrical science from the mainland, the *Nihon shoki* (vol. 2: 179) records that in the year 602, the monk Gwalleuk (Jpn. Kanroku 觀勒) from Kudara (Baekje 百濟) arrived at the Japanese court and presented a calendar and works on astronomy. This arguably marks a significant

point in history from which astronomy and also its associated practices of divination became a known part of aristocratic culture in Japan. Later, the *Engi shiki* 延喜式 (Procedures of the Engi Era; 16.4), compiled in 927, describes a vocation titled *Tenmon hakushi* 天文博士 (Academician of Astronomy). They were to monitor the heavens for anomalous phenomena. Japan already possessed a grasp of Chinese astronomy during the period when Buddhist astrology was introduced.

Buddhist astrology in Japan formally commences with Kūkai 空海 (774–835), the founder of Shingon, when he brought back with him from China a copy of the aforementioned *Xiuyao jing* in 806. The text is listed in his inventory of items, which was recorded upon returning to Japan (T 2161, 55: 1062a23–1062a24). We know that Kūkai read and understood the *Xiuyao jing* in detail, in light of an oral explanation of how to approach short months (months with twenty-nine days) and intercalary months in relation to the lunar stations assigned to each day of the month. This explanation is preserved in the ㄣ *Hino'o kuketsu* 檜尾口訣 (T 2465; The Oral Testimony at Hino'o), which was compiled by Kūkai's disciple Jichie 實慧 (786–847) of Tōji 東寺 (T 2465, 78: 30c13–30c26).

Not only was the *Xiuyao jing* necessary for the timing of rituals according to Buddhist astrological conventions as laid down by Amoghavajra, but the text also introduced to Japan the concept of the seven-day week. Shingon scholars traditionally credit Kūkai with introducing the seven-day week. The *Kōya Daishi go kōden* 高野大師御廣傳 (Extensive Biography of the Kōya Great Master), written by Shōken 聖賢 (1083–1147) in 1118, explains that

before the Daidō reign era [806–810], calendar experts did not know of Sunday. This is why there was confusion about astrological auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. People often violated this. After the Great Master [Kūkai] returned to court, he transmitted this practice 大同以往, 曆家無知密日, 是故日辰吉凶雜亂, 人多犯之. 大師歸朝之後, 傳此事.

(Z 8-2: 661b14–661b17; Yamashita 1990: 488)

This cultural memory likely reflects the reality that before the advent of Mikkyō, there was no compelling reason for Japanese clerics, or the court for that matter, to observe the seven-day week (the civil calendar, in contrast, divides the month into three segments called *jun* 旬, each comprised of ten days). The concept of the week served in religious contexts, while the civil calendar based on the Chinese model remained mainstream in timekeeping.

Astrology was also important to the early Tendai tradition. Although Saichō 最澄 (767–822) does not seem to have taken an interest in the subject, Enchin records the *Xiuyao jing* in his inventory of items from China in the year 857 (T 2172, 55: 1098b8). Takada (1992: 40–56) points out that Enchin wrote some titles related to the *Xiuyao jing*: *Sukuyōkyō gishū* 宿曜疑集 (Compilation of Concerns on *Xiuyao*) and *Sukuyōkyō mondō* 宿曜經問答 (Questions and Answers on the *Xiuyao jing*). Enchin also lectured on the *Xiuyao jing* at the age of thirty.

Astral Magic in Early Heian Period (794–1185)

The inventory of items brought back from China by the Tendai monk Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) in 847 includes what appears to be an altar diagram for Tejaprabhā (*Shijō dan yō* 熾盛壇樣) (T 2167, 55: 1084c8). Annen 安然 (b. 841) in his *Sho ajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄 (Mantrayāna Works of the Ācāryas) records that this item was brought by Ennin and lists it under diagrams of mandalas (*mandara to* 曼荼羅圖). The *Asaba shō* 阿娑縛抄, which is a Tendai compendium of Mikkyō practice and lore from the thirteenth century includes what appears to be a copy of this ㄣ mandala (reproduced as image plate no. 13, fascicle 58 in *Taishō zuzō* 大正圖像 edition of *Asaba shō*). The *Asaba shō* also records that Ennin was responsible for establishing the practice of Tejaprabhā in Japan, explaining that in year 2 of Kashō 嘉祥 (849), Ennin—named Jikaku Daishi 慈覺大師—carried out the related rituals at Sōji-in 總持院 (TZ vol. 9: 42a6–42a9). Elsewhere in the *Asaba shō* we read, “It is said that this practice is secretly held by the mountain order [Enryaku-ji]. It is a sacred treasure of the state. The [*Shijū*]chō *ketsu* states that the Tejaprabhā practice is not cultivated at Tō-ji 此法山門之秘鍵, 國家之珍重也云々. 帖決云熾盛光法東寺不修之云々” (TZ vol. 9: 24c3–24c5). According to this statement, the longer form of the ritual involving Tejaprabhā was unavailable to Shingon. See discussion of astral magic in Yamashita (1996: 298–305).

An important manual of astral magic is the *Kuyō hiryaku* 九曜秘曆 (Secret Calendar of the Nine Planets). This text includes both text and illustrations of the planets in both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic forms. The illustrations are of particular interest and small details can differ in the extant recensions. There is a typeset version with the accompanying illustrations in the modern *Taishō zuzō* (TZ vol. 7: 769–773). There is also a copy by Sōkan 宗觀 (1125) held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (item# 1975.268.4) (see fig. 12.1). Another is in the ARC Collection, Ritsumeikan University, which was copied by Genpō 賢實 (1333–1398). Nakano (1969) surveyed a version stored at Kanchiin 觀智院 in Kyoto.



Figure 12.1. Leafs of *Kuyō hiryaku*. NYC Met. The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard, and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers, Harris Brisbane Dick, and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, and The Annenberg Fund Inc. Gift, 1975. 1975.268.4. <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/45616>

The *Kuyō hiryaku* provides mantras for each of the planets alongside lore regarding each of them, which also includes Rāhu and Ketu. The days of the week are discussed, as well as the specific activities to carry out or avoid on each one, given that a planet with specific characteristics rules over each day (e.g., Venus rules over Friday). Various procedures are described for each of the days of the week, in particular wearing clothing colored to match the planet presiding over the day. This practice highlights the ㄣ importance of the seven-day week in Mikkyō. The content of the *Kuyō hiryaku* appears to be pieced together from multiple sources, but it is uncertain whether it is a Chinese or Japanese composition. Similar content is found in texts from the Tang period. The ritual for Saturn in the *Kuyō hiryaku* is similar to that found in the *Qiyao rangzai jue*, as well as the Daoist *Chengxing lingtai miyao jing* 秤星靈臺秘要經 (Scripture of the Secret Essentials of the Compass Spiritual Terrace). The latter is a fragmentary collection of apotropaic spells to ward off planetary influences. It appears to have been compiled within a few decades after 898 (Kalinowski 2004: 337–338; Kotyk 2021b: 95–97).

Suffumigations of specific aromatics are utilized in these spells. The longer procedure for Saturn in the *Kuyō hiryaku* calls for burning *kokkō* 黒香, “black incense” (TZ vol. 7: 772a28), but the other versions of the ritual give *anxi xiang* 安息香 (T 1308, 21: 449b2–449b12; DZ vol. 5: 30c2–30c10; Kotyk 2017c: 53–55). Although *anxi* 安息 can refer to Parthia—it is a Chinese transcription of Aršak—in this case it is better understood as “the incense which placates.” As to the identification of this aromatic, Laufer (1919: 464–465) wrote, “Under the term *nian* (or *an*)-*si hian* 安西香 the Chinese have combined two different aromatics—an ancient product of Iranian regions, as yet unidentified; and the benjoin [tree resin] yielded by the *Styrax benjoin*, a small tree of the Malay Archipelago.” Yamada (1976: 131) later noted the different Sumatran and Thai species. However, the resin of the tree *Styrax benzoin* (commonly called styrax) is indigenous to Southeast Asia, not India. When translating Indian sources, *anxi xiang* refers instead to either *guggulu* or bdellium, which are types of aromatic resins (Kotyky 2020b). As to whether styrax or bdellium was available in Japan, the use of imported incense in this context would have posed a problem in Japan, since it is uncertain how much of these aromatics would have been available. The *Hishō mondō* 祕鈔問答 (Questions and Answers on the Secret Digest) by Raiyu 賴瑜 (1226–1304), for instance, states that *anxi-xiang* is *kurara* 久良羅 (T 2536, 79: 468a17–468a19), which is *Sophora flavescens* or *Sophora angustifolia*, the shrubby sophora, in modern taxonomy.⁹ *Kurara* is unrelated to *guggulu* and *Styrax benzoin*, but it is a plant native to Japan. It seems likely, therefore, that substitutes were used, since the originally prescribed aromatics were largely unavailable in Japan. The use of substituted items in Japanese rituals can also be observed in other contexts.¹⁰

Another major astral deity in Japan was Myōken Bosatsu 妙見菩薩 (Skt. Sudṛṣṭi Bodhisattva), who personifies Polaris, the North Star. Sørensen (2011: 127) remarks:

Although this important astral god would appear to have an Indian identity, he exists in a variety of forms, some of which were evidently created in Heian Japan after the ninth century. The presence of Sudṛṣṭi in China can be documented as far back as the middle of the Nanbeizhao, but no icons from this early period have yet been identified.

Myōken was more popular in Japan than in China, although Ennin in his travelogue to China, *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡禮行記 (Record of Travel to the Tang in Search of the Dharma) does record witnessing the painting of this deity in China (B18, no. 95: 18a5–18a6). Aruga (2000) wrote a reliable and detailed study on Myōken.

Horoscopy and Astral Magic in Japan: Sukuyōdō

Genji monogatari 源氏物語 (Tale of Genji), written by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 (c. 973–c. 1014), is an early witness to the tradition of Sukuyō 宿曜 as an identifiable community. They make predictions in chapters one and fourteen (vol. 1: 45; vol. 2: 106). The full name for this tradition is Sukuyōdō 宿曜道 (Way of Lunar Stations and Planets), which was comprised of astrologer-monks from various sects. Murasaki conceivably had some contact with these individuals during her life, which would have been an early stage in the history of Sukuyōdō. Momo (1969: 410) points out that the *Nichū reki* 二中歴 from the Kamakura period (unknown authorship) lists Hōzō 法藏 (905–969) as the first Sukuyōshi 宿曜師 (Sukuyō Master). It is important to note that neither Kūkai nor Enchin is included in this list, even though they were the early users of the *Xiuyao jing* (Jpn. *Sukuyō kyō*) in Japan. Sukuyōdō ought to be treated as separate from Shingon and Taimitsu, since it fell under neither sect. In light of this point, it is also a question whether Sukuyōdō would fall under Mikkyō. The lines of succession in Sukuyōdō were separate from Mikkyō (Kanechiku 1999). There is no consensus on whether Sukuyōdō falls under Mikkyō. There is, in reality, comparatively limited modern scholarship on Sukuyōdō, since it has often been discussed in its role as a counterpart to the better documented Onmyōdō 陰陽道 (Way of Yin and Yang), or as a minor element in *Genji monogatari* and other novels.¹¹

Sukuyōdō was primarily comprised of three aspects: the study of astronomy and calendrical science, casting of horoscopes, and practice of astral magic. There was no single or uniform calendar for calculating the positions of the planets. The Chinese state designed and implemented calendrical reforms, which usually included an adoption of a new calendar altogether. Yixing, for example, compiled the *Dayan li* 大衍曆, which was in use between 729 and 761 in China. This same calendar was used in Japan between 764 and 862. There were, however, unofficial or popular calendars produced. One of these was the *Futian li* 符天曆 (Calendar which Tallies with Heaven) by Cao Shiwei 曹士蒨 (d.u.). The *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (58.670), a history of the five post-Tang regimes compiled in 1053, records that during the Jianzhong 建中 (780–783) era, Cao Shiwei compiled the *Futian li*, but that it only circulated among commoners. Cao Shiwei sometime thereafter created new material to accommodate Rāhu and Ketu (the ascending node of the Moon and, in this context specifically, the lunar apogee both treated as pseudo-planets, although Ketu is normally the descending node of the moon). The reason for this was most likely an interest in astrology (Momo 1975: 14–15; Kotyk 2017c: 42–43). Although the *Futian li* is not extant, Takesako (2016) has reconstructed its parameters based on available data from other sources. Also, the ephemerides in the *Qiyao rangzai jue* appear to be derived from the *Futian li*, based on their epochs (Yabuuchi 1982: 5–6; Kotyk 2017c: 42–43).

p. 286 The *Futian li* is significant to Sukuyōdō because this was primarily the calendar which they employed, as already emphasized by Momo (1975: 17). The *Futian li* appears in ↳ the *Nihonkoku genzai sho mokuroku* 日本國見在書目錄, titled *Tō shichiyō futenreki* 唐七曜符天曆 (National Diet Library ed., 33). This bibliography of texts available in Japan was compiled by Fujiwara Sukeyo 藤原佐世 (847–898) in c.891. The *Futian li* was therefore available in Japan sometime before 891, although it is uncertain who brought this edition and when (Momo 1969: 397). The first known Japanese expert to work with the *Futian li* was the monk Nichi'en 日延 (fl. 953–957) of Tendai. Nichi'en left for China in 953, where he arrived in Wuyue 吳越 and studied the *Futian li*. He then brought this back in 957. He was also responsible for transporting Tiantai texts from Japan that had earlier been lost in China.¹² His trip is documented in a text *Daizaifu jinja bunsho* 大宰府神社文書, which was identified by Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三 (1907–1997) in 1954 at Dazaifu Jinja 大宰府神社 in Kyushu (Takeuchi 1955; Momo 1969).

The aforementioned texts dealing with astrology and calendrical science were necessary for the casting of horoscopes. Sukuyōdō was the exclusive lineage in Japan to offer this service. As Momo and Yamashita have explored, the primary sources used in horoscopy in Japan included the aforementioned *Qiyao rangzai jue* and *Duli yusi jing*. The *Xiuyao jing* was consulted, but since it does not discuss the casting of horoscopes, it does not appear to have been the main work used in Sukuyōdō. It is often assumed that Sukuyōdō must have been based chiefly on the *Xiuyao jing* (*Sukuyō-kyō* in Japanese).

Shūei brought back to Japan with him copies of the *Qiyao rangzai jue* and *Duli yusi jing*, as well as ephemerides. Shūei lists these as “miscellaneous books” (*zōjo* 雜書) and comments, “Although they are not Dharma practices, they are held as important by the worldly 雖非法門世者所要也” (T 2174A, 55: 1111b20–1111c1) (Yano 2013: 160). He expresses a clear awareness that these texts were not designed for awakening or specifically Buddhist practice, but nevertheless their utility was recognized. Shūei was not a known expert in astrology. Sukuyōdō and the casting of horoscopes appears later on in Japanese history. Toda (2007: 46) observes that the early references to Sukuyōshi and Sukuyōdō in the private journals of aristocrats date to around the early to mid-eleventh century. Yamashita (1990: 508) notes that Sukuyōshi, mainly from Kōfukuji 興福寺, became particularly active among the aristocracy starting from the late tenth century.

There are only two extant horoscopes with accompanying commentary from medieval Japan, which were produced for clients born in the years 1113 and 1268, respectively. These documents are titled *Sukuyō unmei kanroku* 宿曜運命勘録 and *Sukuyō go-unroku* 宿曜御運録. Momo (1990: 131–151) reproduced these in his volume on calendrical science but earlier had published a study on them (Momo 1975). The *Sukuyō unmei kanroku* was reproduced in the *Zoku gunshoruijū* 續群書類從 of the twentieth century, but it is beset with typographical errors and Momo's critical edition is preferred. Yano (2013: 188–197) and Kotyk (2018d: 59–70) also discuss these

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horoscopes in detail and point out the astrological doctrines which were originally Hellenistic in origin. The scientific value of the 1113 horoscope was pointed out by Nakayama (1969: 60). The Japanese horoscopes can be further compared to a horoscope from Dunhuang (P. 4071) to better grasp how horoscopy was employed in East Asia. The main difference between Japanese and Chinese forms of horoscopy from this general period is that the Japanese used nine planets (the seven visible planets, Rāhu and Ketu), while the Chinese used eleven: the aforementioned nine plus Ziqi 紫氣 and Yuebei 月孛.¹³ These two, like Rāhu and Ketu, are immaterial “planets” used for astrological purposes. Ziqi tracks intercalary months while Yuebei is the lunar apogee (Kotyk 2018d: 71–79).

These three extant horoscopes all discuss birth charts with an interest in predicting the future of the client in question. Various astrological doctrines are employed toward this end. However, the Japanese practice of horoscopy was not limited to prognostication. The horoscope of 1113 lists off the asterisms presiding over the chart in various capacities and then states, “Prayers and offerings should be constantly made 常可令祈供” (Momo 1990: 134). This reveals that astrology was connected to a belief in sentient astral deities but also that fate could be negotiated through ritual means. Astral magic was clearly utilized alongside horoscopy.

Yamashita (1990: 488) observes that the Mikkyō interest in calendrical science around the mid-tenth century stemmed from a move toward stellar worship. Yamashita (1996: 307–308) also argues that increasing engagement in star worship was a response to the failing *Ritsuryō* 律令 (i.e., statist legal) system. This, in turn, led to uncertainties for both the ruling aristocracy and the Tennō (Emperor). There was another important catalyst which helps explain the development of Sukuyōdō. As Yiengpruksawan (2015) has pointed out, the Japanese (and the rest of the world) on May 1, 1006 witnessed one of the largest supernovae in history (SN 1006). This subsequently facilitated major cultural and sociopolitical changes. It was within such circumstances that professional astrologers would have been especially important, especially if they could offer ritual services. Sukuyōdō was active throughout the Kamakura period (1185–1333). Toda (2006, 2007, 2008) and Akazawa (2007) have explored Sukuyōdō and its evolution in this period. Sukuyōdō and the associated practice of horoscopy ceased to exist in Japan toward the late fourteenth to early fifteenth centuries, which is explained by the demise of their patrons (Yamashita 1996: 319–368).

Astral Iconography

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The production of illustrated icons of planets and asterisms were an element of star worship in Japan. One prominent example is a painting of Saturn (*Doyō* 土曜) as a single deity, held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Saturn is depicted as an old bearded Brahmin in sandals and a few layers of robes with a bull’s head for a cap (see fig. 12.2). This object dates to the twelfth century. Saturn holds a crook, the top part of which resembles a sickle, not unlike traditional depictions of Kronos in Greco-Roman antiquity. He holds a text in the other hand. This icon appears to be based on a set of Chinese drawings of the planets in anthropomorphic forms, which were developed based on earlier models. The document *Kuyōtō zuzō* 九曜等圖像, “Icons of the Nine Planets, etc.” held at Tōji (reproduced in TZ vol. 7: 737–747) includes these figures. Saturn and the other planets are similarly depicted in Tangut Xixia representations from Khara-Khoto held in the State Hermitage Museum of St. Petersburg (for a survey, see Samosyuk 1997/1998).



Figure 12.2. Iconographic drawing of Saturn (Doyō). 12th century, Japanese. NYC Metropolitan Museum of Art (1975.268.15). The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard, and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers, Harris Brisbane Dick, and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, and The Annenberg Fund Inc. Gift, 1975.
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/45617>

Another form of star worship, which was uniquely developed in Japan, was star mandalas (*hoshi mandara* 星曼荼羅), in which the planets, lunar stations, zodiac signs, seven stars of the North Dipper (*hokuto* 北斗), and/or thirty-six beasts (*sanjūroku kin* 三十六禽) are depicted. These mandalas were either rectangular or circular in form. Aruga (2000: 32) notes that the rectangular originate in Tōmitsu (Shingon) between 947 and 957, while the circular stem from Tendai between the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The foremost study on

these is a monograph written by Takeda (1995). Ujiro (2012) discusses this form of mandala with particular reference to the examples of the Big Dipper. The Metropolitan Museum of Art possesses a circular star mandala (2020: 391), which was studied by Kotyk (2019c) who argues that based on the irregular configuration of planets relative to the zodiac signs that this reflects a horoscope which would date to around October 3, 1225, but not all specimens reflect this type of configuration and instead simply represent the totality of asterisms (see fig. 12.3 for an example of the latter). This would presumably be the time of birth for the patron who commissioned the piece. The reason for this configuration was likely to facilitate rituals on behalf of the client. Kotyk furthermore points out that the lunar stations depicted therein are the Vedic deities (Śiva, Viṣṇu, etc.) traditionally associated with the *nakṣatras*.

The various astral figures became part of the core of Buddhist iconography in Japan. The *Butsuzō zui* 佛像圖彙 (Collected Buddhist Icons) by Tosa Hidenobu 土佐秀信, which was printed in 1690, includes all the asterisms, but caution must be exercised since the depictions of the lunar stations ought to be compared to those of the *Goma rodan yō* (Chn. *Humo lutan yang* 護摩爐壇樣; *Fire Altar Specifications for the Homa*). This text was brought to Japan by the monk Jōgyō 常曉 (d. 867) in 839. It contains a diverse array of information including astrological lore (Kotyk 2018e: 14–16). The illustrations of the lunar stations and planets are also important iconographical examples of astral deities, with the former being based on Vedic deities (Aruga 2000: 50; Kotyk 2019c).



Figure 12.3. Rectangular star mandala. Undated. Wellcome Collection. Wellcome Library no. 47129i.
<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/zs4v9qzz>

Later Developments

Although a robust and sizable practice of horoscopy with large texts continued to exist in China, none of the works from the Yuan and Ming periods seem to have been brought to Japan until the early modern period. Nevertheless, Sinological studies can gain much from comparing Chinese and Japanese materials, especially since the Japanese faithfully preserved much material—textual and iconographical—that was otherwise lost in China.¹⁴

In modern Japan, there is a popular tradition of astrology called Sukuyō, which is based largely on the *Xiuyao jing*. Following the printed editions of the *Xiuyao jing* by Wakita Bunshō (1897) and Wakahara Yukitsune (1908), there were published various explanatory manuals that often also touch on other divinatory practices. For example, Wakita Aiyama 脇田愛山 (1915) published *Nijū-hachi shuku kikyō hōkan: katei nichiyō* 廿八宿吉凶寶鑑: 家庭日用 (Precious Mirror on the Fortunes of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Stations: Daily Household Use). The

postwar popular tradition of Sukuyō seems to have especially flourished after Komine Yumiko 小峰有美子 published in 1982 a manual titled *Sukuyō kyō nijūshichi suku senseihō* 宿曜經二十七宿占星法 (Divination Techniques for the Twenty-Seven Lunar Stations of the *Xiuyao jing*). This was followed by a number of other books on the topic by different authors. These were published for popular consumption. These authors often trace their art back to Kūkai ↵

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and identify with Sukuyōdō, but their practice does not appear to be endorsed by Mikkyō lineages. There are no anthropological studies that document modern Sukuyō, although it is a noteworthy movement. Sukuyō has also grown on the internet where it has a significant presence.

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Conclusion

The survey in this chapter has shown the significance of astronomy, astrology, calendrical science, and astral magic in the history of premodern Japanese Buddhism, in particular Mikkyō, which comes under the umbrella of “Tantric Buddhism” in scholarly discourse. Buddhists in India from early on incorporated into their practice some amount of native astral lore, which at the time was based on the *nakṣatras*. Later, as Indian astronomy was influenced by Hellenistic sources, Buddhists also adopted the zodiac signs and planets, both of which are unattested in early Buddhist literature. Following the advent of practices based on mantras or *dhāraṇīs*, Buddhists in India, perhaps following a wider trend, also came to view astrology as an essential component in the timing of their rituals.

Astrological lore originating from Indian sources was translated into Chinese in various stages from at least the fourth century CE, but it was only with Amoghavajra’s *Xiuyao jing* that the Chinese Buddhist world had access to an authoritative manual in Chinese that could be used for timing Buddhist rituals. Unlike earlier models of Buddhist practice, the new “tantric model” expressly required observance of astrology to determine when it was optimal to carry out the *pūjas* necessary for rapid awakening. The *Xiuyao jing*, in turn, spurred wider interest in other forms of astrology, especially horoscopy, and from this the gates opened to non-Indian systems. Horoscopy inevitably predicts calamities in a person’s life; hence there was clearly a contemporary interest in any sort of ritual or magical means with which one could avert the disasters brought about by the planets.

Japanese monks in the ninth century who sought training in esoteric practices brought back with them texts such as the *Xiuyao jing*, but also other materials related to ritual practices directed at asterisms. The Sinicized systems of foreign astrology were transmitted to Japan and thereafter implemented relatively quickly, starting from at least the time of Kūkai in 806 when he returned to Japan. Astrology in this context also included the seven-day week.

The texts and illustrations related to astrology became foundational for later Japanese developments, such as star mandalas, which were used in acts of worship, and extended rituals for astral deities, such as Tejaprabhā. The planets as members of the Buddhist pantheon also came to have a prominent role in Japan in large part due to astrology. In the late tenth century, we see the emergence in Japan of Sukuyōdō, a unique community of astrologer-monks, who not only cast horoscopes for their clients but also offered guidance on the ritual means with which one could negotiate prognosticated ↵ fate. Astrology, practiced in both Sukuyōdō and Mikkyō, became a prominent art throughout the Heian and Kamakura periods. These developments during the medieval period are still relevant today in Japan, although research is required regarding how, for example, astral deities are worshipped in modern Mikkyō, and how astrology is treated in practice in Shingon and Tendai today.

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Abbreviations

DZ

Daozang 道藏. Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshan, 1986.

T

Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大藏經. 100 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭 et al., eds. Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1934. Digitized in CBETA (v. 5.2) and SAT Daizōkyō Text Database.

(<http://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/satdb2015.php>).

TZ

Taishō zuzō 大正圖像. 12 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Ono Genmyō 小野玄妙, eds. Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan Kabushiki Kaisha, 1932–1934. Digitized in SAT Taishōzō Image DB

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Notes

1. The *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (*Bibliography of Buddhism in the Kaiyuan Era*) of 730 records that in Huanglong 2 (黃龍二年), Lü Yan translated four texts, which included the *Mātaṅga-sūtra*, in the city of Yangdu 楊都 (T 2154, 55: 487c21–487c22).
2. For a study on the identification and uses of dairy products in East Asian Buddhism, see Kotyk 2021d.
3. For a comprehensive survey of Buddhist cosmology, see Sadakata 1997. For a discussion of the celestial deities in relation to flat-earth cosmology in Buddhism, see Kotyk 2021a. For further discussion of Chinese Buddhism and astronomy, see Kotyk 2020a.
4. See E-Museum Japan, accessed June 30, 2021. http://emuseum.nich.go.jp/detail?langId=ja&webView=&content_base_id=100034&content_part_id=0&content_pict_id=0.
5. See also comparable icons in *Taizō kuzuyō* 胎藏舊圖樣 (TZ vol. 2: 477–566).
6. Bodleian Library MS. Bodl. Or. 133. University of Oxford.
7. Read *shou* 手 as *zhi* 之.
8. This theory might explain the discrepancies between some regnal years in the *Kojiki* 古事記 (compiled in 712) and *Nihon shoki*. Tanisaki argues that the compilers of these two histories likely struggled with converting over the earlier calendrical dates into a new model, following the introduction of foreign calendrical models, particularly starting from the Asuka Period (592–710). This was a time when the Japanese court moved increasingly toward a Sinicized form of centralized government.
9. See numerous encyclopedias available on <https://kotobank.jp/>.
10. Dairy products were available in Japan from the seventh century but appear to have vanished around the late Heian period. Buddhist rituals can call for the use of butter, milk, yogurt, and ghee, for which substitutes were used when dairy was unavailable. See Kotyk (2021d: 6).
11. Momo (1964), Yamashita (1988), Kanechiku (1999), Toda (2006), Ujiro (2012), and Akazawa (2007) have specifically written on the history of Sukuyōdō in Japanese. Kotyk (2018d) was the first comprehensive study of Sukuyōdō in English. These

studies address the lineage development, practice of astrology, and rituals carried out by Sukuyōshi. Sukuyōdō has been mischaracterized in the past. Drakakis (2011, 684), for instance, claims that “Sukuyōdō intermingled with the already existing forms of Chinese astrology based on yin-yang and five-agents doctrines, but also with Daoist thought and practices. It is in this form that this complex of doctrines and practices was transmitted to Japan, where it was further developed.” A survey of the extant literature of Sukuyōdō would demonstrate that there is little in the way of Chinese metaphysics or patently Daoist elements in their texts.

12. For discussion of these Tiantai texts, see Momo (1968), Brose (2006: 53–56), and Kotyk (2020c: 374–375).
13. For discussion of the Dunhuang horoscope, see studies by Jao (1984), Niu (2016), Isahaya and Lin (2017), and Kotyk (2018e: 79–81).
14. Horoscopy in China evolved, but to a large extent remained rooted in the doctrines that were introduced during the Tang period, many of which were also carried over to Japan. Reconstructing the horoscopy of the Tang period requires reference to both Japanese and later Ming sources. At the same time, grasping the doctrines employed in Japan requires reference to the extant Chinese sources in detail. For a survey of the history of horoscopy and its doctrines in Classical Chinese, see Kotyk 2018e. For an overview of astrology in the Ming period with a comparison to European, particularly English, horoscopy, see Kotyk 2019a. For a survey of medical astrology in Classical Chinese, see Kotyk 2019b.

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