

Planet Worship in Ancient India

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The aim of the present paper is first to explain the development of the concept of *graha* as ‘planet’¹ in ancient India, then to look at the rite of planet worship (*grahayajña*) in the group of ritual texts (*gṛhyasūtras*), and finally, to make clear the historical position of the section called *Grahaśānti* (appeasement for *grahas*) in the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, one of the most influential texts on *dharmaśāstra*.

1 *Grahas as heavenly bodies*

Putting aside references to *graha* in medical contexts,² the concept of *graha* as heavenly body experienced at least the following stages of development.

1. A demon which eclipses the Sun and the Moon was called *svarbhānu* and, probably, *graha* (from the Sanskrit root $\sqrt{\text{grah}}$, “to seize”).
2. The demon got the name *Rāhu* and, somewhat later, the tail of the truncated *Rāhu* was called *Ketu*.
3. Five planets were regarded as *grahas* because they possess man and do him harm.

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¹ When the word ‘planets’ without modification is used in this paper it is in its pre-Copernican sense, namely, it includes the sun and the moon with the five planets known to naked-eye astronomy. In Sanskrit texts, when ‘five planets’ excluding the Sun and the Moon are specifically intended, they are called *tārāgraha* (‘star-planets’) or *aṅgārakādi* (‘those which begin with Mars’).

² I have discussed this problem in Yano [2003].

4. The Sun and the Moon joined the *grahas*, and a group of seven *grahas*—or nine *grahas* including Rāhu and Ketu—was established, although the order of enumeration was not yet fixed.
5. The week-day order of the seven *grahas* (Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn) and the group of the nine *grahas* were established.

1.1 *Svarbhānu as an eclipse demon*

Since a solar or lunar eclipse is one of the most conspicuous heavenly phenomena, it is difficult to imagine that it escaped the attention of the Vedic poets. In fact a demon called Svarbhānu in *Ṛgveda* 5.40 can be interpreted as the cause of eclipses:

When the demon Svarbhānu wounded you by darkness, oh Sun (*sūrya*), the creatures watched as if they were bewildered, not knowing (their) place.³

When the demon Svarbhānu wounded the Sun by darkness, Atris found it out, because the others were unable to.⁴

This is the only occurrence of Svarbhānu in the *Ṛgveda* and there is no evidence that this demon was identified as *graha*. In the epics, however, Svarbhānu is explicitly called '*graha*'.⁵

1.2 *Rāhu and Ketu as grahas*

The *Atharvaveda* may be the oldest text where *graha* appears together with *rāhu*:

Weal for us be the planets (*grahāḥ*) belonging to the moon, and weal the Sun (*ādityā*) with Rāhu; weal for us smoke-bannered death, weal the Rudras of keen brightness. (AVŚ 19.9.10)⁶

³ yát tvā sūrya súarbhānus tamasāvidhyad āsurāḥ/
ákṣetravid yáthā mugdhó bhuvanāny adīdhayuh// (RV5.40.5)

⁴ yaṃ vai sūryaṃ súarbhānus tamasāvidhyad āsurāḥ/
átrayas tám ánv avindan nahí anye áśaknuvan// (RV5.40.9)

⁵ *Mahābhārata* 6.13.40ab: parimaṇḍalo mahārāja svarbhānuḥ śrūyate grahaḥ.

Rāmāyaṇa 3.22.11cd: jagrāha sūryaṃ svarbhānur aparvaṇi mahāgrahaḥ.

⁶ sám no gráhās cāndramasāḥ sám ādityás ca rāhuṇā/
sám no mṛtyúr dhūmáketuḥ sám rudrás tigmátejasah//

This is borrowed from Whitney's translation.⁷ He added a question mark when he translated *grahāḥ* (plural) as 'planets' in the seventh verse of the same hymn where the word is modified by 'moving in the sky' (*divīcarā*). In this quoted verse, however, he omitted the question mark. On the other hand, he thinks it 'extremely unlikely' that the 'smoke-bannered death' (*mṛtyur dhūmaketuḥ*) means a comet.

The sixteenth century commentator Sāyaṇa had no qualms about interpreting *grahāḥ* as 'the planets beginning with Mars', but I see no strong reason to support him. What is clear here is only that the Sun and the Moon in this context are 'one who is seized' either by *graha* or by Rāhu and they themselves are not the 'seizers'.

Since the expression *nákṣatram ulkābhīhataṃ* ('the meteor-smitten asterism') is found in the ninth verse of the same hymn, it seems that the author of the hymn intended to give mantras for appeasing the inauspicious phenomena in the sky.

Besides the passage of the *Atharvaveda* quoted above, the oldest text which mentions Rāhu as an eclipse demon is the *Chandogya-Upaniṣad*, where is said "Just like the Moon who was released from Rāhu's mouth..."⁸ The *Maitrāyaṇī-Upaniṣad* enumerates Rāhu and Ketu along with Saturn (*śani*) as one of the semi-deities.⁹ The date of these portions is problematical.

What has been shown above is that there is no strong evidence in Sanskrit literature of the Vedic period which shows the identification of *grahas* as planets. People in the Vedic period might have watched those stars whose behavior was different from those of the fixed stars, but they failed to classify them as a group of *graha* or planets. It is only after the period of Greek settlement in Bactria (third century B.C.) that explicit references to planets are attested in Sanskrit texts.

1.3 The oldest reference to planets

The *Arthaśāstra*, a book on politics ascribed to Kauṭilya who was a minister of Mauryan empire and sometimes compared with

⁷ W.D. Whitney [1962, Vol.2, 914].

⁸ ChUp 8.13.b: *candra iva rāhor mukhāt pramucya ...*

⁹ MaitUp 7.6a: *śanirāhuketūragarakṣoyakṣanaravihagaśarabhebhā dayo 'dhasād udyanti.*

Machiavelli, is one of the oldest texts which explicitly mentions Jupiter and Venus by the names Bṛhaspati and Śukra, respectively:

Its ascertainment (is made) from the position, motion and impregnation of Jupiter, from the rising, setting and movements of Venus and from the modification in the nature of the sun. From the Sun (is known) the successful sprouting of seeds, from Jupiter the formation of stalks in the crops, from Venus rain.¹⁰

The date of the text has not been well established. Probably its oldest part was composed about two hundred years before the Christian Era. It is evident that this passage concerns weather prognostics. Pingree [1981,10] regards such prognostics as of Babylonian origin.

1.4 *Nine grahas without fixed order of reference*

The *Gārgyajyotiṣa* (somewhere near the start of the current era)¹¹ arranges the nine *grahas* in the following strange order: the Moon, Rāhu, Jupiter, Venus, Ketu, Saturn, Mars, Mercury, and the Sun. Here Ketu (almost always in plural form) is not yet a name for the tail of Rāhu but for comets. The great epic *Mahābhārata* abounds in the enumeration of *grahas*,¹² but the order of the enumeration is not fixed, nor is the week-day order attested. Ketu is not always included in the group of *grahas*. Often it is called *dhūmaketu* ('smoke-bannered', see above) and no reference to the single 'Ketu' without similar modification is found in the *Mahābhārata*. These evidences show that there was a period in India when all the nine *grahas* were known but the order was not yet fixed.

¹⁰ Arthaśāstra 2.24.7-8: tasyopalabdhir bṛhaspateḥ sthānagamana-garbhādānebhyaḥ śukrodayāstamayacārebhyaḥ sūryasya prakṛtīvaikṛtāc ca. sūryād bījasiddhiḥ, bṛhaspateḥ sasyānām stambakaritā, śukrād vṛṣṭiḥ. iti.

¹¹ The *Yugapurāṇa*, a part of the *Gārgya-jyotiṣa*, was edited and translated by John E. Mitchiner, Calcutta 1986. According to Mitchiner the sage Gārgya who narrates the two verses Mbh.13.18.25-6 may be Garga himself, who is the author of the *Gārgya-jyotiṣa* consisting of 64 divisions.

Cf. Pingree [1981, 71]: 'In the early fourth century Garga was named as an authority on omens along with Parāśara by Mīnarāja in his *Vṛddhayavana-jātaka* (67,5).'

¹² MBh.2.11.20; 3.3.19; 6.3.11-17; 13.151.12 etc. Thanks are due to my friend Prof. M. Tokunaga, by whom the whole text of the *Mahābhārata* was digitized.

To this period belongs the *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, one of the Buddhist texts contained in the *Divyāvadāna*. The passage which is our present concern runs as follows:

Now, oh Puṣkarasārin, I will talk about *grahas*. Hear about them. They are Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Mercury, Mars, Sun, and the Lord of stars (Moon).¹³

1.5 *The week-day order of grahas*

It was only after the transmission of Hellenistic astrology that the order of the seven planets in India was fixed in that of the week-days. This order is the outcome of a combination of the Greek cosmological idea of concentric spheres and the Egyptian belief in the deities presiding over each of the 24 hours (ῥοα in Greek, which was transliterated as *horā* in Sanskrit). In order to get the present order of the week-days, the geocentric spheres must be arranged in the (descending) order of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon. Then when the "lord" of the first hour of the first day is taken to be Saturn, the lord of the second is Jupiter, that of the third Mars, of the fourth the Sun, of the fifth Venus, etc., until the lord of the twenty-fifth hour—i.e., the first hour of the second day—is found to be the Sun. In the same way, the lord of the forty-ninth hour is the Moon, and so on. This order was known sometime in the second century B.C., but the evidence of the earliest use of the week-day belongs to a considerably later period. Ptolemy (fl. A.D. 150) used the order of the concentric spheres, but nowhere in his works does he mention the week-days or the week-day order. The first usage is found in Dio Cassius (born A.D. 155), and it was at the end of the second century that the week-day became a civil custom.¹⁴ According to Pingree,¹⁵ Vettius Valens (in A.D. 120) refers to the days of the week beginning with Sunday.

¹³ *Śārdūlakarṇāvadāna*, p. 53: atha khalu bhoḥ puṣkarasārin grahān pravakṣyāmi. tac chrūyatām. tadyathā śukro bṛhaspatiḥ śanaiścāro budho 'ṅārakah sūryas tārādhipatiś ceti.

It is interesting to note that the week-day order of the seven planets is found in a passage in one of the Chinese translations of this text. See my forthcoming article 'Scientific Relation between China and India' in the *Enciclopedia Italiana Storia della Scienza*.

¹⁴ Jacobi [1876, 306].

¹⁵ Pingree, *Yavanajātaka*, II, p. 405.

The first Sanskrit text which describes Greek astrology in a systematic way is the *Yavana-jātaka* or "Greek Genethliology." The original text (now lost in Greek) was first translated into Sanskrit prose in A.D. 149/150 and it was versified in A.D. 269/270 by one Sphujidhvaja.¹⁶ The prose version is no longer extant. Sphujidhvaja enumerates seven planets on many occasions, but it is only toward the end of the work (chapter 77) that the week-day order is attested. This order does not seem to have been widespread in that period in India. Neither Rāhu nor Ketu appears in the *Yavana-jātaka*. About a half century later, however, Mīnarāja in his *Vṛddhayavana-jātaka* (or "Greater Greek Genethliology," about A.D. 300–325) describes the planets in the order of the week-days, together with Rāhu, without mentioning Ketu.¹⁷ Varāhamihira (mid-sixth century) does not identify Ketu as the tail of Rāhu but as comets. According to him some people counts 101 Ketus while others say it is 1000.

The oldest Indian inscription which gives a date with the week-day is that referring to the month of Āṣāḍha, the 12th day of the bright half-month (śukla-pakṣa), the day of Suraguru, which corresponds to Thursday, 21 July, A.D. 484.¹⁸ The first astronomical text which defines the week-day is the *Āryabhaṭīya* of Āryabhaṭa (born A.D. 476). His definition is:

These seven Lords of the *horā* beginning with Saturn are (more and more) speedy in this (descending) order (of the concentric spheres). Every fourth one in order of swiftness is the Lord of the (succeeding) day (which begins) with the sunrise.¹⁹

What we can safely say is, therefore, that the week-day and the order of the days of the week gradually became known to Indian people at the end of the third century, and it was about a century later that it became widespread.²⁰

¹⁶ This text was first edited by D. Pingree.

¹⁷ *Vṛddhayavana-jātaka*, ed. by D. Pingree, Gaekwad Oriental Series, Nos. 162 and 163, 1976.

¹⁸ Cf. J.F. Fleet; *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. 3, pp. 80–4.

¹⁹ *sapta ete horeśāḥ śanaīscarādya yathākramam śighrāḥ/*
śighrakramāc caturthā bhavanti sūryodayād dinapāḥ// (ABh 3.16)

²⁰ After finishing this paper I was informed by Prof. Toshifumi Goto of Stephen Markel's paper: 'The Genesis of the Indian Planetary Deities', *EAST and WEST*, ISMEO, Vol. 41, Nos. 1–4, December 1991, pp. 173–88, which touches upon some of the problems which I have discussed.

Thus all the passages in Sanskrit texts which describe planets in the week-day order should be dated later than the end of the third century; several examples of such passages will be given below.²¹ Old elements are of course preserved and repeatedly appear in the later texts, so we cannot use such elements as the means of fixing the lower limit of the date of a document, while new elements can surely serve as the criterion to judge the upper limit of the text, or at least the part of the text, which contains them.

2 Texts on Planetary Worship

The Hellenistic concept of planetary deities exerting influence on human beings and their deeds must have been very appealing to the Indian people. It did not take long before the planets assumed the name *graha*, because they 'possess' man and have a benefic and malefic influence. Now Indian ritualists had to devise some ritual rules to prevent the evil influence of *grahas*. This was how the rite of appeasing *grahas* (*grahaśānti* or *grahayajña*) suddenly emerged. The rules, which were codified in Sanskrit, found a due place in a group of the supplementary texts (*pariśiṣṭa* or *śeṣasūtra*) of the *gṛhyasūtras* (rules for domestic rites).²² The following *gṛhya* texts describe in some way or other the ceremony of planetary worship:²³

Jaiminigr̥hyasūtra 2.9,
Bodhāyanagr̥hyas̥eṣasūtra 1.17,
Āgniveśyagr̥hyasūtra 2.5,
Vaikhānasagr̥hyasūtra 4.13–14,
Āśvalāyanagr̥hyapariśiṣṭa Chapter 2,
Āśvalāyanagr̥hyapariśiṣṭa pp.313–324,
Hiraṇyakeśigr̥hyas̥eṣasūtra 1.3.10,
Kāthakasam̐karaṇa 4, 5, 6 (*Grahabrāhmaṇa*).

The same rite is found in the *Śāntikalpa* belonging to the *Atharvaveda* and in the *Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa*. Later it became one of

²¹ Other examples are: *Rāmāyana* 1.17 (Rāma's horoscope), *Mudrārākṣasa* 4.19 (horoscopic prediction), and a part of the *Atharvaveda-pariśiṣṭa*.

²² For this group of texts, see Einoo [1993], p. 61.

²³ I owe much to Shingo Einoo and Yasuke Ikari for bibliographical information on the *gṛhya* texts.

the topics of the manuals of professional astrologers, for example, the *Bṛhadyātrā* of Varāhamihira, Chapter 18. Some Purāṇa texts also contain chapters describing similar rites: *Matsyapurāṇa*, Chapter 93 (Grahāśāntivarṇanam), and Chapter 239 (Grahayajñā-dīnāṃ vidhānavarṇanam), *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* 2.105, *Agni-purāṇa* 266, *Garuḍapurāṇa* 100, *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa-Uttara* 141, *Pa-dmapurāṇa* 5.82.

In the Purāṇic texts the planets are sometimes arranged in a different geocentric order from the lowest to the highest: to wit, the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Saturn. This strange order is based on the Purāṇic cosmology. In some chapters including those on the *grahayajña*, however, the week-day order is found.

2.1 *The Grahayajña section of the Gṛhyasūtras*

Many varieties of the order of the nine *grahas* are found in the section of the rite of worshipping *grahas* (*grahayajña* or *grahapūjā*) in the *gṛhyasūtras*.²⁴ Thus the time in which this rite originated belongs to the fourth stage mentioned above. Even in the same text we can find different arrangements in different contexts. Table 1 shows this variety in the three texts *Jaiminigr̥hyasūtra* (JGS), *Vaikhānasagr̥hyasūtra* (VGS), and *Āgñiveśyagr̥hyasūtra* (AGS).

Let us look at JGS 2.9. In five cases (i.e., contexts 3, 4, 8, 10, and 11) the seven planets are arranged in the order of the Sun, Mars, the Moon, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. This seems to have been the original order. When the colours attributed to *grahas* are mentioned, they are classified as red (the Sun, Mars), white (Venus, the Moon), yellow (Mercury, Jupiter), and black (Saturn, Rāhu, Ketu). This order was followed by the *Baudhāyanagr̥hyasūtra* in all contexts and by AGS in this particular context. But the same text of JGS shows the week-day order in three contexts (i.e., 5, 6, and 7). Such parts definitely belong to the later period, as was shown in the previous section. Interpolations of this kind are frequently found in other texts, for instance, the *Parīśiṣṭa* and the *Śāntikalpa* of the *Atharvaveda*.

²⁴ Among the *gṛhya* texts, the week-day order is attested in: *Baudhāyanadharmaśūtra*, JGS, VGS, AGS, *ĀśvGP*, and *KāṭhS*.

context	JGS 2.9	VGS 4.13.14	AGS 2.5
1. naming	—	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>	—
2. colour	<i>SuMaVeMoMeJuSaRK</i>	[<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>]	<i>SuMaVeMoMeJuSaRK</i>
3. place	<i>SuMaMoMeJuVeSaRK</i>	<i>sve sve sthāne</i>	—
4. banner	<i>SuMaMoMeJuVeSaRK</i>	<i>krameṇa</i>	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>
5. devatā	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>	—	—
6. adhide- vatā	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>	[=JGS]	—
7. region	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>	—	—
8. faggot	<i>SuMaMoMeJuVeSaRK</i>	<i>krameṇa</i>	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>
9. odana	<i>SuMaMoJuVeMeSaRK</i>	<i>krameṇa</i>	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>
10. mantra	<i>SuMaMoMeJuVeSaRK</i>	[=JGS]	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>
11. gifts	<i>SuMaMoMeJuVeSaRK</i>	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>	<i>SuMoMaMeJuVeSaRK</i>
12. altar	—	<i>MoVeRMaSaKJuMeSu</i> ²⁵	—

Table 1: Order of Navagrahas in Gṛhya Texts²⁶

It is also evident from this table that the *grahayajña* section of VGS and AGS belong to the comparatively later period. Especially to be noted is the use of the word *krameṇa* ('in the order <of the weekday>') in VGS. Such a term was necessary here since the author explicitly stated that he would follow the order of *grahas* at the beginning of the paragraph. It was because the order was thus fixed that VGS could even omit the word *krameṇa* when enumerating the *grahas* concerning the color, *adhidevatā*, and *mantra*. The expression '*sve sve sthāne* (in their own place)' in the third context also presupposes the established order.

The seventh context (region) gives us interesting information about the ancient Indian concept of the geographical division of their land. The first Sanskrit text which mentions the classification of the regions in India according to the ruling planets is the *Vṛddhayavanajātaka* of Mīnarāja ²⁷ belonging to the mid-fourth century.

3 The Grahasānti section of the Yājñavalkyasmṛti

3.1 The rites for Vināyaka and planets

The *Grahasānti* section of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (YS 1.295–309) is immediately preceded by the section called *Vināyakakalpa* (YS

²⁵ Grouped by 5 altars. cf. ŚāntiK 11.1f.

²⁶ Abbreviations: Su=Sun, Mo=Moon, Ma=Mars, Me=Mercury, Ju=Jupiter, Ve=Venus, Sa=Saturn, R=Rāhu, K=Ketu. The week-day order is italicized.

²⁷ VYJ 2.9–10. Pingree ed. I, page 11.

1.271–294) which prescribes a rite to be offered to Vināyaka. The two rites are closely related to each other. We observe three stages of development of the concept of Vināyaka(s).²⁸

1. Four Vināyakas in the *Mānavagr̥hyasūtra* who are all evil and inflict harm upon men.
2. Those with double functions, causing obstacles and removing them.
3. A single Vināyaka, son of Ambikā, who is identified with Gaṇeśa, the remover of obstacles. This is the very Gaṇeśa who is usually invoked at the outset of Sanskrit texts.

That YS belongs to the second stage is evident from YS 1.271:

Vināyaka was committed to the rulership over the *gaṇas* by Rudra and Brahmā <respectively> for the purpose of *destruction and success* of enterprises.²⁹

In the third stage, when Vināyaka was identified with Gaṇeśa, the rite of *vināyakaśānti* faded away and it was absorbed in the new rite of *grahaśānti*.³⁰ That the two functions of Vināyaka were taken over by *grahas* and Gaṇeśa can be conjectured from the following statement in YS 1.293–294:

Thus worshipping Vināyaka and *grahas* according to rules, one gets the <good> results of *karma* and gets the highest bliss. One who <pays> worship offering <golden> *tilaka*³¹ to the Sun as well as to the great Lord Gaṇapati (Gaṇeśa) gets success.³²

²⁸ Kane (HDhS II-1, pp. 213–216) admits the first two stages.

²⁹ *vināyakaḥ karmavighnasiddhyartham viniyojitaḥ/
gaṇānām ādhipatye ca rudreṇ brahmaṇā tathā//*

³⁰ One of the later texts which describe Vināyaka rite is the *Nilamatapurāṇa*, a Kashmirian purāṇa of probably the ninth or the tenth century. Cf. NM 604, 698–700, 842, 847, and 990. It is interesting that 'gaṇeśa', occurring only in NM 994 and 1033, plays a small role in NM. For a detailed study of Gaṇeśa, see Robert L. Brown, ed. *Ganesh*, State University of New York Press, 1991. See also Yano [1994].

³¹ The meaning of *tilaka* is not clear to me. I follow the *Mitākṣara* commentary.

³² *evam vināyakaṃ pūjya grahāṃś caiva vidhānataḥ/
karmanām phalam āpnoti śriyaṃ cāpnoty anuttamām//
ādityasya sadā pūjām tilakaṃ svāminas(*) tathā/
mahāgaṇapateś caiva kurvan siddhim avāpnuyāt//*

(*) In the *Bālakṛīḍā* commentary Viśvarūpa reads *tilakasvāminas*.

The close relationship of the two rites is also attested in the *Mānavagṛhyasūtra* (2.14). The *Śāntikalpa*, just like YS, refers to *graha* at the end of *Vināyakakalpa* (SK 10.7). It is to be noted that both the *Mānavagṛhyasūtra* and the *Śāntikalpa* enumerate *grahas* in the weekday order.

3.2 *The date of the Yājñavalkyasmṛti*

At the time when the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* was composed the week-day order of the planets was well established. Thus it is for brevity's sake that YS refers to the order of *grahas* by expressions such as 'in order' (*kramāt*: YS 1.297d, 302d, 306b), 'in the order of *grahas*' (*grahakramāt*: YS 1.305a), and 'according to the number' (*yathāsaṃkhyam*: YS 1.300d). Thus we can say that the upper limit of this section of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* is the beginning of the fourth century. This fact was first noticed by Jacobi [1876].

3.3 *Contents of YS 1.295–308*

In what follows a summary of the *grahaśānti* section of the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* is given. Almost all the verses in this section are quoted by the *Agnipurāṇa* (AP) and the *Garuḍapurāṇa* (GP) and some verses by the *Matsyapurāṇa* (MP), the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (BPU), and the *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa* (VD). Table 2 at the end of this paper shows the collation.

295 Purpose of the rite:³³

The object of *grahayajña* is not only to get wealth and happiness but also for the purpose of 'cursing' (*abhicāra*) enemies.

296 Names of *grahas*:

The nine *grahas* are enumerated in the week-day order plus Rāhu and Ketu. This verse is indispensable since in the rest of this section this order is presupposed and the nine *grahas* are referred to only by this order instead of by their names. The names are standard ones: *sūrya* (Sun), *soma* (Moon), *mahīputra* (the son of the earth, i.e., Mars), *somaputra* (the son of the Moon, i.e., Mercury), *bṛhaspati* (Jupiter), *śukra* (Venus), *śanaiścara* (Saturn),

³³ This verse is quoted by the *Bhaviṣyapurāṇa* (141.2), and the *Matsyapurāṇa* (93.1).

Rāhu, and Ketu.

	East			
	Mercury arrow	Venus pentagon	Moon square	
North	Jupiter oblong	Sun circle	Mars triangle	South
	Ketu triangular flag	Saturn bow	Rāhu winnowing basket	
	West			

Figure 1: *Navagrahamāṇḍala*

297–299 Images of and offerings to *grahas*:

The materials which are used to compose the images (*pratimā*) of the *grahas* are prescribed: red copper (Sun), crystal (Moon), red sandalwood (Mars), gold (Mercury and Jupiter), silver (Venus), iron (Saturn), lead (Rāhu), and white copper (Ketu). Such prescriptions for the planetary images are not found in *grhya* texts except in the *Āśvalāyanagrhyapariśiṣṭa* (2.3)³⁴ where the materials are almost the same as those in YS, the only difference being the use of saffron for Mercury instead of gold. According to the *Śāntikalpa* (13.3), red copper (Sun and Mars), gold (Mercury and Jupiter), silver (Moon and Venus), and black iron (Saturn, Rāhu, and Ketu) are used.

Instead of making the statues one can draw the figures representing *grahas* in a *maṇḍala* (YS 1.298). The figures to be drawn are not prescribed in YS, but they seem to have been a common knowledge since almost all the *grhya* texts agree on the following figures: circle (Sun), square (Moon), triangle (Mars), arrow (Mercury), oblong (Jupiter), pentagon (Venus), bow (Saturn),

³⁴ athārcanāṅgāni tāmraṃ sphaṭikaṃ raktacandanam kuṅkumaṃ suvarṇam tad eva rajataṃ lohaṃ siṁsakaṃ kāmśyam iti navapratiṃdravyāṇi ...

winnowing basket (Rāhu), and triangular flag (Ketu).³⁵ These drawings are to be located as shown in Figure 1.

300–301 Prayers (*mantra*) to *grahas*:

While the offerings prescribed in the preceding verse are presented, one should recite the *mantras* which are prescribed in these two verses. When we compare the *mantras* used in different texts, we get the impression that the *mantras* utilized in *purāṇa* texts are mostly common with those in the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, while they are different from those used in *gṛhya* texts.

302–303 Faggots to be burned:

These two verses prescribe different faggots to be burned for *grahas* with offerings of honey, ghee, *dadhi*, and milk. It is interesting to note that some of the faggots (i.e. *parāśa*, *khadira*, *pip-pala*, and *śamī*) mentioned here are also used in the *Suśrutasamhitā* in the context (Uttaratantra chapters 27–37) of curing the diseases caused by *grahas*, which, in this case, are not planetary.

304–305 Cooked rice (*odana*) to be offered to *grahas*.

306 Gifts to priests:

It seems that when a specific *graha* was chosen as the object of appeasement, the gift (*dakṣiṇā*) prescribed for each *graha* was to be given to the priest(s) who performed the *śānti* ritual.³⁶

307 Specific *graha* to be appeased:

It is not necessary to appease all the *grahas* at one time. Instead, one should perform this rite intending it for the specific *graha* who is regarded as exerting malefic influence on him. This is exactly the idea of astrological propitiation which is still alive in modern India. A *graha* should be worshipped when it is 'in a bad state' (*duḥstha*). This word seems to presuppose knowledge of horoscopic astrology. According to the *Mitākṣara* commentary, a planet has bad influence when it is in 'the eighth house', i.e. the 'house of death', as is taught in the standard manuals of astrology.

308 Closing verse:

That this rite was especially intended for kings is evident from this concluding verse. The same can be said about *Vināyakakalpa*.

³⁵ These figures are seen in the modern booklets of planet worship (*grahapūjā*) which one can purchase at Hindu temples.

³⁶ *Dakṣiṇā* related to Rāhu and Ketu show some variation.

Cf. YS 1.275ab: ‘The prince who was possessed by him (i.e. Vināyaka) does not attain the kingdom’. It is also to be noted that what is taught in the following part of YS concerns king’s government (*rājadharmā*).³⁷

That the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* set a model of planet worship for some later texts is clear from Table 2. The collation of parallel passages was made pāda (quarter-verse) by pāda; those passages marked with an asterisks are slightly different from YS.

³⁷ The *Mitākṣara* text adds one verse (which we number as 308’) after 308. The *Bālakrīḍā* and *Aparārka* do not contain this verse. ŚāntiK 18.5 concludes with a verse which is almost identical to 308’.

topic	YS 1	AP 164	GP 1.101	MP 93, VD 1.101, BPU 141
purpose of rite	295ab 295cd	1ab* 1cd*	1ab* [1cd]	YS=MP 2ab≈BPU 2ab YS=MP 2c*d*≈BPU 2cd
names of <i>grahas</i>	296ab 296cd	2a*b* 2cd	2a*b[=AP] 2cd	
images	297ab 297cd	3ab 3c*d*	3ab 3cd*	
<i>navagraha-maṇḍala</i>	298ab 298cd	4a*b* 4cd	[4] [5] 5ef	
offerings	299ab 299cd	5ab* 5cd	6ab 6c*d	
mantra	300ab 300cd 301ab 301cd	6ab 6cd 7ab* 7cd	7ab 7c*d* 8a*b* 8c*d*	
faggots	302ab 302cd 303ab 303cd	8ab* 8cd 9a*b 9cd*	9ab* 9c*d — 10ab*	YS=MP 27ab=VD 2ab=BPU 30cd YS=MP 28cd=VD 2cd=BPU 31ab YS≈MP 28ab AP = MP 28cd
cooked rice	304ab 304cd 305ab 305cd	10ab* 10c*d 11a*b 11cd	10cd 11a*b 11c*d —	
gifts to priests	306ab 306cd	12ab* 12c*d*	12ab* 12cd*	
results	307ab 307cd 308ab 308cd 308'ab 308'cd	13a*b 13c*d* 14ab 14cd	[12ef concl.]	YS=VD 10ab YS≈VD 10cd; YS 307d≈MP 80c YS=VD 9ab YS≈VD 9cd YS 308'=ŚāntiK 18.5

Table 2: Purāṇic Parallels of YS 1.295–308 (*grahasānti*)

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