

The Iconography of the *Navagraha* in the Hindu Art of Northern India*

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Abstract: In the present paper, we present the iconography of the *Navagraha*, a classical nine-grouping of pan-Indian astrological deities. The origin of the *graha* can be traced back to the early Vedic literature, but the introduction of Hellenistic astronomy and astrology played certainly an important role in the development of the *graha* series in Indian astronomical and astrological treatises and in religious or iconographic texts. According to the textual references, the *graha* became important deities during the medieval era, and their cult became precisely developed. After the presentation of the textual sources about the elaboration of the *graha* series, we present the main mythical and iconographic aspects of the nine *graha* following their common order in the depicted series. Both of these studies introduce the presentation of the reliefs themselves.

We present the first known representations from Madhya Pradesh, dated of the beginning of the sixth century, which present a basic iconography. The basic iconography spread out to other regions of North India, such as Rājasthān and Gujarāt. Beside the basic iconography, we study the regionalisms of Eastern India. Then we present a certain kind of reliefs, in which the *graha* appear as secondary deities with other members of the Hindu pantheon. Regionalisms and depictions of the *graha* as secondary deities are a testimony of the importance taken by the *graha* in Hindu art and religion.

Keywords: Astronomy, astrology, iconography, Hinduism, planets, *graha*, Sūrya, Candra, Maṅgala, Budha, Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Śani, Rāhu, Ketu, North India, Central India.

The *Navagraha* (“*Nine graha*”) are a classical nine-grouping of pan-Indian astrological deities, the identity of which is debatable. The term “*graha*” itself is ambiguous: it signifies either “planet”, as commonly agreed, or “seizer”, the latter traduction making reference to the astrological influence of these deities who *seize* human destiny, according to the Indian beliefs. In this paper, we will not choose any of these translations, and use the term *graha* itself, which seems to combine both. The *Navagraha* were developed in the Hindu context, and were progressively admitted by Buddhists and Jainas during the medieval era. The nine members of the *Navagraha* series are Sūrya (the Sun), Candra (the Moon), the five planets commonly known in the classical Antiquity, Maṅgala (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Bṛhaspati (Jupiter), Śukra (Venus), Śani (Saturn), and two proper Indian entities, Rāhu (the demon of eclipses), and Ketu (the personification of comets).¹

The present article aims to give a survey based on the studies about the *graha* series and their iconography in the Hindu² art of Northern and Central India, from the first representations, at the beginning of the sixth century, to the apogee of the iconography of the *Navagraha*, in the medieval era (to the thirteenth century). At the end of this paper we give a table which summaries the general indications on the iconography of the *Navagraha* (Table 1).

*In the present paper, “Northern India” is considered in the largest sense of the term.

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¹As a convention, the names given to the nine *graha* in this study are the most often used in the many studies about *Navagraha*. For a complete list of their other names, see [8] or [20] pp. 249-255.

²For a study of the *graha* depictions in the Jaina context, see G.J.R. Mevissen’s works, and particularly [27] and [25].

In the rest of the introduction, we give a survey of the main studies about *Navagraha*, especially in the Hindu religious context³. Then, the paper will be composed of three parts. We first present the elaboration of the *graha* series in textual sources. After that, we indicate for each of the *graha* its main mythological aspects, and finally we summarize the development of the representations themselves.

Three main kinds of studies will be discussed below: general studies about *Navagraha*, studies about regional iconographic features of the *graha*, and finally, the western origins of the *graha* series.

The first paper about the *Navagraha* was written by J. Burgess in 1904 [8]. He proposed a short study of the *Navagraha*, but the main part of the article was composed of the long list of the different names of each of the *graha*, as found in miscelleneous textual sources. This paper was followed by G.R. Kaye's article in 1921 [17], and by A.K. Coomaraswamy's in 1923 [9]. Kaye realised the first general study of the *Navagraha*: his work gathers not only textual references about the cult of the *Navagraha*, but also many indications on the iconography of the *graha* and its variations, illustrated apart from few representations of *graha* panels and lintels. In 1948, J.N. Banerjea [2] gave place to the *Navagraha* in a study especially dedicated to *Sūrya*: he emphasized the importance of the *graha* in this context.

In the beginning of the 1960's, studies devoted to regional representations of the *graha* were developed, with the publication in 1962 of two articles, "Note on the *Navagraha* slab in the temples of Orissa" by P. Acharya [1], and "*Navagraha* slab of the Koṅṅarak temple" by P. Mukherjee [30] (the latter was followed by the paper on the same theme by K.S. Behera [4]). U.C. Dwivedi's paper about the *Navagraha* in the art of Bihār [14] gave a good illustration of the deepening of the study of the specific regional representations of the *graha*. D. Mitra [29], arguing the bearing of the Nava-Devā on the *Navagraha*, with a special attention to a complete presentation of the iconographic texts, studied a great number of sculpted *graha* reliefs with the main iconographic variations. Her study of the iconographic regionalisms is well developed and presents an interesting summary of the regional variations of the *graha* reliefs.

Another main direction of investigation was followed by D. Pingree: the occidental origin of the *graha* series. He published a study of the Hellenized Indian astrological texts [32] in which the seven *graha* group frequently appears. This work emphasizes the importance of the diffusion of the occidental seven planets series to India. Following Pingree's research, S. Markel [20] deepened the occidental influence in the development of the iconography of the *graha* series, arguing the importance of the occidental seven-day week in this development (the two articles written from his PhD thesis give a sum up of his work [21, 22]). S. Markel's PhD is also the most important gathering of iconographic documentation on the *graha* series, from the first representations (at the beginning of the sixth century) to the eighth century A.D.

The most recent works realised on the *Navagraha* are G.J.R. Mevissen's and deal with regional features of the *graha* (for example, [28]) and the corpus of the *graha* series as subsidiary deities (in a general⁴ context, [24])⁵.

³This presentation is non-exhaustive, and many works dealing *indirectly* with *Navagraha* are not included in the list, such as studies on *Navagraha* in the art of Nepal [33, 16], general studies on astrology or astronomy [7, 34], studies on the Indian calendrical system [10], or iconographic studies dealing occasionally with *graha* series [36]. The most important studies devoted to individual *graha* will be mentioned in section 2, in the section about this *graha*.

⁴For a study of the *graha* series as subsidiary deities in the Jaina religion, see [27] and [25].

⁵M. Kropf's master degree dissertation [18] is a religious study on the link of the *graha* with time and space. My master degree dissertation [37] is a synthesis on the iconography of the *graha* series in the art of North India from the first representations to the flourishing of the medieval depictions.

1 Elaboration of the *graha* series: textual references

In the present section, mainly based on Markel’s work [20], we describe the elaboration of the *graha* series, from the first Vedic occurrences of the term “*graha*” to the ritual prescriptions for the cult of the *Navagraha* in the *Yajñavalkyasmṛti*. We first describe the apparition of the *graha* in Vedic literature, then discuss the contribution of the Hellenised Indian astronomical treatises, and finally we show their diffusion to proper Indian texts. During the textual study, we will notice the different stages of the deification of the *graha* to the *Navagraha* series.

Vedic times. The first known textual reference to the term “*graha*” dates back to the *Rgveda* (generally dated ca. 1500-1000 B.C.) and refers to a demoness (*grāhī*), supposed to cause debilitating and deadly diseases to human beings.⁶ The aforementioned reference already links the term “*graha*” with a certain kind of prehension, which is an immaterial influence. The signification of this term echoes the future astrological influence of the *graha* series. However, if the term “*graha*” often means “seizer”, it also signifies “planet” from Vedic times, as in a passage of the *Atharvaveda* (dated ca. 1000-500 B.C., 19:9:7), which mentions “*the planets [grahāh] wandering in heaven*”.⁷

In most of the preceding studies, the term *graha* was often translated by “planet”.⁸ However, the textual documentation gathered by S. Markel [20] seems to show that the meaning of “seizer” was prevalent from the beginning, insisting on the influence exerted by the above mentioned entities. The meaning of *graha* as “seizer” would justify the presence of Rāhu and Ketu in the group of the *Navagraha*, both of them not being *planets*: the contemporary Indian astronomical treatises know the true nature of both of them. The great astronomer Varāhamihira, in his *Bṛhatsamhitā* (5:8-11), relates the true cause of eclipses, and thus the real nature of Rāhu,⁹ and the Vedic term *ketu*, which meant “light” or “rays of light”, came to the meaning “comet” in the late Vedic period.¹⁰ From the first Vedic textual references to the *graha*, it is thus apparent that they are not only astral phenomena, but also have an *immaterial* influence.¹¹ The influence exerted by the *graha* let us understand why they were progressively *deified*.

In Vedic times, the *graha* are not explicitly mentioned as a *series* of deities.¹² Some individuals of the future series are deified, such as Sūrya, Candra-Soma and Bṛhaspati, whereas some other members of the classical *Navagraha* series are not even mentioned, such as Śani.¹³ They are not considered as important elements in Vedic astrology: in the Veda and the Brāhmaṇa, there is an important series of twenty-nine astral deities, composed of the gods Sūrya, Candra, and the *Nakṣatra* (twenty-seven lunar asterisms). The latter series is specifically prevalent in Vedic astrology,¹⁴ and will be outstripped by the *graha* series in later times. However, according to S. Markel, there may already be an implicate reference in Vedic texts to the *graha* series through the metaphorical descriptions of heavenly phenomena.¹⁵ The *Rgveda* states: “*there are seven regions with their different suns*” (9:114:3). Another allusion to the five planets can be inferred in the “*five bulls [ukṣaṇah], which stand on high full in the midst of heaven*”. One could also suppose the inclusion of the five planets in the group of “*thirty-four lights of heaven*” as mentioned by the *Rgveda* (10:55:3), and in the thirty-four ribs of the ancient sacrificial horse (1:162:18).¹⁶

⁶[20] p. 201.

⁷[20] p. 172.

⁸For example, see [14].

⁹[20] p. 189.

¹⁰[21] p. 20.

¹¹For example, see the textual references given in [20] pp. 200-201.

¹²[20] p. 170.

¹³[20] p. 67.

¹⁴[20] p. 173 and [22] p. 175.

¹⁵[22] p. 175.

¹⁶[20] p. 175. For more details on the allusions to the *graha* in Vedic literature, refer to [20] p. 175.

Hellenistic astronomy and astrology. However, the implicit references to *graha* series remain doubtful, and remain quite poor in comparison to the corpus of Indian Hellenised treatises. The latter point out the importance of Hellenistic astronomy and astrology in the elaboration of the *graha* series, particularly in their personification. In the second half of the second century A.D., Indian astrology was influenced by Graeco-Roman astronomy and astrology and often presented a group of seven *graha* influenced by the series of the seven classical planets. The Hellenised Indian treatises presented a physiomy and a psychological character for the seven *graha* series. As shown by S. Markel, the *graha* series was enounced following the so-called *temporal order*, *i.e.* following the sequence of the weekdays, each of the first seven *graha* ruling on a particular weekday.¹⁷ Like the western seven-day week, the temporal order appeared in India at least from the fourth century onwards, as for the first time in the *Vṛddhayavanajātaka*, the astronomical treatise of Mīnarāja, written between ca. 300 and 325.¹⁸ Hellenistic astronomy and astrology, therefore, brought to the *graha* series two main elements: the attribution of a physiomy and psychological character to each of the seven first *graha*, and the enunciation of these *graha* following the *temporal order*.

Indian texts: diffusion and development of the *graha* series. From at least the end of the sixth century, descriptions of seven *graha* series, invariably enumerated following the temporal order, appear in Indian religious and iconographic texts. Progressively, Rāhu and Ketu were added to the grouping, and their addition became the *Navagraha* group, as the *Purāṇa* show from the fourth century onwards (they appear in the *Vāyupurāṇa* and the *Brahmāpurāṇa*) and generally the iconographic texts from the sixth century onwards. At the end of the sixth century, the descriptions of the *graha* in the Indian iconographic texts refer to the realization of images of the *graha*. The *Matsyapurāṇa* gives for example a prescription for the size of the *graha* images, which “*should be two fingers high (or, of the height of one’s own finger)*”.¹⁹ Some other texts clearly mention *cult images* of the *graha*. According to these medieval texts, the cult of the *graha* reached greater elaboration, as show the prescription of specific materials for the realisation of each of the *graha* images: in the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (297), “*the images of the planets should be made respectively of copper, crystal, red sandal wood, of gold for the two planets (Mercury and Jupiter), silver, iron, and bell-metal*”²⁰ Different kinds of cults were performed in order to propitiate the *graha* from the medieval era onwards. The *Grahayajña* (or *Grahayāga*) is a propitiation ritual especially used in the remote corners of Eastern India.²¹ As mentioned by the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (or *Yājñavalkyasūtra*),²² the “*grahayajña should be performed by one who desired peace and prosperity, ample rains (for his crops), long life and nourishment, and (by him) who wants to harm his enemies*”. Again, in the *Gayāmāhātmya* is a mention to a homage to the *Navagraha* in Gayā, to be performed at the sacred bathing tank of Uttaramānasa (2:49:5).²³ And finally, according to a proposition of S. Markel, there might be a connection between the *graha* and the *śrāddha* ceremonies, performed in honor of a deceased relative and one’s immediate ancestors.²⁴

The aforementioned texts let us trace back the evolution of the perception of the *graha* from heavenly phenomena to influent deities, whose benevolence is to be obtained by performing rituals. The astronomical treatises and iconographic texts give prescriptions for the realization of *graha* images, as mentioned in the present section and detailed in Table 1. The documents presented above have to be completed with the following study of the mythical corpus and the main plastic specificities of each *graha*.

¹⁷[20] p. 69.

¹⁸[20] p. 180.

¹⁹Cited by [20] p. 244.

²⁰Cited from [20] p. 205, cited also by [14] p. 112.

²¹[2] p. 95.

²²Cited by [14] p. 443.

²³[20] p. 16.

²⁴[20] pp. 15-17.

2 Mythological and iconographic aspects

The main mythological and iconographic features for each *graha* will be presented below, in the general order of the depiction on the reliefs, from the observer's left to his right, *i.e.* the temporal order²⁵. For each of the first eight *graha*, we present as an illustration one of the most important myths he is involved in, which either explain iconographic features or emphasize the consideration in which the mentioned *graha* was held. We do not cite any myth for Ketu since no such myth appears in any study until now. The size of the mythological corpus varies a lot from one *graha* to the other: for example, Sūrya's mythological corpus is very large, whereas Ketu's is very little. The reader will find a summary of the iconographic aspects presented in this section in Table 1.

Sūrya, the brightest and the oldest mentioned of the discussed astronomical entities, is by far the most important of the *graha* series. Numerous studies were devoted to him, among which should be cited J.N. Banerjea's works.²⁶ We should like to recall one of the numerous myths about Sūrya, showing the dangerous aspect of the deity whose heat consumes the worlds. Sūrya married Sañjñā, but the young wife could not stand the god's light. She hid in the forest, leaving to replace her a maid, Chāyā (*shadow*). Sūrya saw the trick and went for Sañjñā, who did not accept to follow him. To get his wife back, Sūrya let Viśvakarman, Sañjñā's father, cut the eighth part of his heat (effulgence).²⁷

Sūrya as a member of the *graha* series is generally depicted with the usual attributes, fixed from the Kushana period onwards: he wears boots, a waist girdle or chest armor (called *avyāṅga*, which enters the global definition avestan *aiwyañhana*),²⁸ a conical crown, a long tunic, and two full-blossomed lotusses held at shoulder level. He is sometimes endowed with a sword, hanging down from his girdle. His attendants²⁹ and wives can be represented close to him, wether as a little female figure standing between the feet, two female figures shooting arrows or two male attendants, Daṇḍin and Piṅgala, on Sūrya's both sides. When the *graha* are endowed with mounts, as a testimony of the great seven-horsed and single-wheeled chariot of his individual images, one or two horses can be depicted below the sun god. Figure 4 shows Sūrya's boots, chest armor, *kirīṭa-mukūṭa* and lotusses. On Figure 5, a horse is depicted as his mount on the pedestal.

Candra, in comparison to Sūrya and in spite of his great antiquity, was dedicated few iconographic studies. G. Bhattacharya [6] presented in his paper the main aspects of this deity, closely associated with the Vedic god Soma (the divine elixir). Candra's mythology is rather developed and one of the most important lunar myths is certainly his being cursed. He married the Nakṣatra (*"the immortals"*, *i.e.* the lunar asterisms), among whom he preferred Rohiṇī (*"the red one"*). The other neglected wives complained to their father Dakṣa, who cursed Candra to waste away. Then the wives felt sorry for their husband, and asked their father to stop Candra's waning. Dakṣa decided that he would wane for a fortnight and wax again the next one, and so forth (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa* VI, 7³⁰). The myth explains why the Moon often assumes the form of a crescent.

The crescent moon is the only specific feature of Candra's iconography. It can some-

²⁵This temporal order is not the only one displayed by the reliefs. Several possibilities occur, which are carefully described by G.J.R. Mevissen, for example in [24]. His classification of these dispositions in Jaina documentation ([27] pp. 376-394) is quite clear and extensive and would be very useful in the study of the Hindu reliefs. Among the orders, the (temporal) reversed, boustrophedon, clockwise and anti-clockwise should be cited.

²⁶The aforementioned [2] and [3].

²⁷*Viṣṇupurāṇa* 3,2; *Harivamśa* 41.

²⁸[20] p. 34.

²⁹In Sūrya's images as a *graha* and in his individual images as well, the most usual masculine attendants are Daṇḍin and Piṅgala. However, the presence of the Aśvins should sometimes be noted in both kinds of Sūrya's images. The unique Sūrya image of Mahisantosh is also to be mentioned, as it shows Sani (the son of Sūrya and Chāyā) and maybe Yamī-Yamunā (the daughter of Sañjñā) as attendants of the god (see [26], p. 133).

³⁰Cited by [34] p. 70.

times be seen behind his shoulders, for example in Orissan art.³¹ But this feature is quite seldom depicted. Most of the time, Candra's iconography does not differ from the representations of the next five (planetary) deities: wearing an ascetic hairstyle, he usually holds a water-vessel in the left hand and raises the right hand in a gesture similar to *jñāna mudrā* (see Figures 3 and 4). When the *graha* are endowed with mounts, Candra is often depicted with a *makara* (sea-monster), which emphasises his link with the liquid element.

Maṅgala. As reported by S. Markel, a demoness called Vikeśī (*hairless*) undertook severe penance addressed to Śiva in order to obtain hair. Śiva not only granted her wish, but married her. Some time after the wedding, as the couple was making love, Agni entered the room. Śiva became furious and began to sweat. Vikeśī swallowed some of this sweat and became immediately pregnant, but she could not stand Śiva's embryo and expelled it. It fell on the Earth, who gave birth to Maṅgala: therefore many of Maṅgala's names make reference to his birth from the Earth. Maṅgala's basic iconography is usually similar to Candra's, but the fact that Maṅgala is the son of Śiva and the Earth justifies the development of his specific eastern iconography, which links him with another son of Śiva, Kārttikeya. Maṅgala shares attributes with Kārttikeya: his representations often show the spear (Bihār, Bengal, western Bangladesh, see Figures 5 and 6), the specific necklace (*hāra*, see Figure 2), and the *śikhaṇḍaka* (tripartite hairstyle, see Figure 2), the two latter being specific attributes of a young god such as Kārttikeya.³² When the mounts of the *graha* are depicted, Maṅgala is endowed with a peacock, the specific mount of Kārttikeya.

Budha is the son of Tārā (Bṛhaspati's wife) and Candra. Tārā, who had been abducted by Candra, refused to tell the gods who, of Candra and Bṛhaspati, was the father of her son. The child forced her to answer and identify the father, Candra, who praised the child and called him *Budha*, "wise".³³

Like Candra and Maṅgala, Budha often displays the basic ascetic iconography (see Figures 3 and 4): he wears an ascetic hairstyle and carries a water-pot (sometimes a *kamaṇḍalu*) in the left hand, and the other hand is raised in a gesture similar to reassurance (*abhaya mudrā*). But Budha also displays specific iconographic features in the art of Eastern India. Budha, having a graceful flying hair, is generally depicted in Bihār, Bengal and Bangladesh with an arrow or a bow, and displays the *ālīḍha* posture.³⁴ Many indologists tried to explain the archer's iconography. D.Mitra saw in this specificity a link between Budha and the god Kāmadeva, the latter being represented as a swift archer and hunter.³⁵ The above mentioned assimilation would explain why Budha generally is depicted with a dog³⁶, which is the companion of hunters. P. Pal and D.C. Bhatthacharyya used a passage of a Buddhist text, the *Dhāranīsamgraha*, to justify the presence of the bow and arrow as *royal* attributes, Budha being presented as a *king* in the text.³⁷ S. Markel explained Budha's specific iconography by his link with divine solar archers as his presiding deities.³⁸ This *graha* has Nārāyana, a personification of solar energy or spiritual enlightenment³⁹ as his *adhidevatā* (principal presiding deity), and Viṣṇu, who has solar affiliations, and among which attributes is the bow, as his *pratyadhidevatā* (secondary presiding deity). This double protection state Budha as a solar archer dispersing

³¹For example, a lunar crescent can be seen behind Candra's shoulder on the lintel of the southern facade of the Lakṣmaṇeśvara temple of Bhubaneśvar, Puri district, Orissa, ca. 575. See [20], Figure 20.

³²The bodhisattva Mañjuśrī shares also the tripartite hairstyle and the specific necklace with Kārttikeya and Maṅgala.

³³[20] pp. 55-56.

³⁴[29] p. 16, see Figure 5.

³⁵[29] pp. 15-16.

³⁶In Central India, for example in the *graha* depictions of Khajurāho, another Budha mount can be found: an elephant or a *nāga*, as prescribed by some iconographic texts (See Table 1).

³⁷[33] p. 37.

³⁸Each *graha* is placed under the authority of two deities, principal (*adhidevatā*) and secondary (*pratyadhidevatā*). Those deities belong to the Hindu pantheon. For a list of the presiding deities, see [29] p. 27.

³⁹[20] p. 58.

ignorance.⁴⁰

Bṛhaspati is known from the *Rgveda*.⁴¹ He is the high priest of gods in Vedic literature; from post-Vedic literature onwards, he is the preceptor of gods and leads them in the battles against the demons. In numerous battles described in Indian literature, such as the battle for his wife abducted by Candra, he embodies wisdom and sacred learnings. Therefore his specific iconography does not differ much from the ascetic one as described for Maṅgala and Budha (Figures 3 and 4), with a few exceptions. The possible iconographic changes one could notice in his representations, especially in the art of Eastern India, is a beard, a moustache and a round belly, the latter emphasizing his rank as a brahman. He is sometimes endowed with a swan (Bihār and Bengal, see Figure 5), which is the specific mount of Brahmā, his *adhidevatā* according to the *Matsyapurāṇa*.

Śukra, as the preceptor of the demons, is the opposite and complementary figure of Bṛhaspati in the battles between the gods and the demons. An interesting event happened to Śukra during one of these battles: as the gods were overwhelmed by the demons because of Śukra's restoring them to life, Śiva made him abduct by the gods and swallowed him. After a thousand years in the god's stomach, Śukra, assuming the form of semen, went out of Śiva's body from his penis. The myth shows Śukra's specific link with the sexual element, which is affected by his astrological influence; but this particularity was not apparently repercussed on Śukra's northern iconography in the medieval period. Besides his basic ascetic iconography (see Figure 3 and 4), he displays the same specific iconography as the last preceding *graha*,⁴² being seldom pot-bellied. However, he was not attributed a swan, but a frog, his specific mount (see Figure 5).

Śani. The malevolence of Śani as a *graha* is echoed by the great number of myths in which he is cursed because of his evil influence. One of the most famous myths concerning his being cursed takes place after Gaṇeśa's birth. Śani, as the other gods, came and paid his respects to Pārvatī and the young boy, but he kept his eyes on the floor. As the offended goddess asked Śani why he would not look up at Gaṇeśa, he answered that he had been cursed with an evil eye by his wife. Pārvatī did not pay attention to Śani's dangerous curse and ordered him to look at her and her son. Forced to obey, Śani looked at Gaṇeśa's head, and his look set fire to it. Viṣṇu, as a replacement, put the head of a mated elephant on the child's body and restored Gaṇeśa to life. But Pārvatī cursed Śani to be lame (myth from the *Brahmavaivaratapurāṇa*.⁴³ The myth explains Śani's lameness, which echoes the particularly slow movement of the planet Saturn. Lameness is a quite early⁴⁴ and frequent feature in Śani's representations from the whole north India (in the way he stands or even *sits*), even when Śani has his basic iconography. Śani in Eastern India also has a specific attribute, a "long *daṇḍa* with a disk-like head".⁴⁵ Many identifications were proposed by the indologists for this attribute. It is either a foot of a bedstead or a cot-limb, a ritual bell or a monk's staff.⁴⁶ Some of these interpretations on Śani's specific attribute emphasize the negative influence or nature of this *graha*: the foot of a bedstead or cot-limb refers to the belief that, when Śani descends on a zodiacal sign, he grasps the foot of the bedstead of the natives of the sign and have them under his malevolent power.⁴⁷ The staff would also be an instrument for Śani to announce his malevolent presence.⁴⁸ When the mounts of the *graha* are depicted, Śani is generally endowed with a horse or ass, instead

⁴⁰For longer discussion about Budha's solar affiliations, see [20] pp. 58-59.

⁴¹[20] p. 60.

⁴²In the *Matsyapurāṇa*, the similarity between Bṛhaspati and Śukra's iconography is stressed on, as they share the same description.

⁴³Cited by [20] pp. 68-70.

⁴⁴According to G.J.R. Mevissen, "the earliest known representation of a lame Śani dates from ca. 575-600 A.D. and is found in a fragmentary panel from Sarnath near Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Markel 1995: 93-94, fig. 20)".

⁴⁵Cited from [29] p. 16.

⁴⁶For details on this attribute and its interpretations, see [20] pp. 70-73.

⁴⁷[33] pp. 37-38, cited by [20] p. 71.

⁴⁸[20] p. 73 and [33] p. 48.

of the buffalo which is prescribed for him because of Yama being his principal presiding deity (*adhidevatā*). Apart from Sūrya, Śani is the only *graha* who seems to have been worshipped independently in Eastern India, during the Pāla period⁴⁹.

Rāhu. In most of the studies, Rāhu is often merged with the ascending node of the Moon.⁵⁰ S. Markel dispersed this misconception in his paper on Rāhu and Ketu [21]. He based himself on two textual references to assume that the confusion of Rāhu and Ketu with ascending and descending nodes of the Moon originated from Middle Eastern traditions.⁵¹ Above all, Rāhu is the demon of lunar and solar eclipses and the *amṛta*-thief, both themes being linked. During the Churning of the Ocean of Milk, Rāhu, under the appearance of a god, tried to drink the *amṛta* (elixir of immortality). He was denounced by Sūrya and Candra to Viṣṇu, who decapitated Rāhu with his wheel-like weapon (*sudarśanacakra*), before the liquid could descend past the throat. The immortal demon's head fell roaring on the ground, and ever since Rāhu swallowed Sūrya and Candra to take his revenge.⁵² The myth justifies the usual iconography of Rāhu in the *graha* series. He is often represented as a single, ferocious face, with protuding eyes and a snarling mouth, or as a bust with empty hands in front of the chest. His hair is generally presented standing over the head (*ūrdhwakeśa*). A striking element in Rāhu's eastern iconography is this mount: an axle-tree. This element, which does not seem to be prescribed by any iconographic text, was justified by some scholars by the fact that Rāhu, as a cut-off body, could not move without this device.⁵³ He often holds different attributes in Eastern India, such as a lunar crescent or a solar disk (less often), or a double symbol merging the crescent moon and a lunar disk.

Ketu. In spite of his assimilation with the descending node of the Moon, Ketu is above all, as suggested by the etymology of his name, a personification of luminous astronomical phenomena, such as the comets. He is a relatively newcomer in the *Navagraha* series: he does not appear in the first depictions of the *graha*. His mythical corpus is very little: textual references remain very allusive about Ketu's mythology. He is known as the body of Rāhu⁵⁴. The *Bṛhatpārāśarahorā* (3:30), an astrological treatise written by Parāśara, states that Ketu is "*akin to Rāhu*".⁵⁵ Ketu's depictions are unstable: when he is represented, his images display four main possibilities, male or female, semi-reptilian or completely human. When the mounts of the *graha* series are depicted, no mount is clearly visible for Ketu. However, a shadow or foliate motif, which could link Ketu to the aquatic realm (Figure 5), can sometimes be noticed under his representations from Eastern India. The usual absence of mount for Ketu is another of the many testimonies which emphasises the difficulty of the inclusion of Ketu in the *graha* series.

3 Development of the representations

The present section is devoted to the development of the basic iconography of the *graha* series, which originated in Madhya and Uttar Pradesh. The basic iconography, presented through some relevant reliefs, developed in other regions, particularly in Western India. Beside the basic iconography, from the seventh century onwards, Eastern India developed its specific iconography, which will be discussed below. Then we discuss representations of the *graha* as secondary deities on reliefs depicting other Hindu deities as the main subject

⁴⁹[28] p. 133. For an extensive study of Śani, see [28].

⁵⁰The lunar nodes were known by Graeco-Roman and Arabian astronomies. The Moon describes in the sky an apparent arc of a circle which crosses twice the *ecliptic*, another arc of a circle described by the movement of the Sun. These intersections are the ascending and descending nodes.

⁵¹[21] pp. 20-21.

⁵²Cited from [20] pp. 77-78.

⁵³[29] p. 20.

⁵⁴For example, in the *Harivaṃśa* (4259).

⁵⁵[20] p. 240.

of the relief. The latter kind of reliefs show the importance taken by the *graha* in Hinduism, from the eighth or ninth century onwards in the art of North India.

Development of the iconography of the *graha* series.

The most detailed study on the early iconography of the *graha* series is S. Markel's article [20]. According to his work, the very first representations of the *graha* date back to the early beginning of the sixth century, in the area of Madhya-Pradesh, and especially in the area of Eran. The first known representation of a *graha* series is carved on the great Varāha (Viṣṇu's boar incarnation) of Eran, dated to ca. 500-505 (Figure 1). On the chest of the monumental boar, just above the metal support, stand seven figures. The series begins on the viewer's left with Sūrya, recognizable by his two lotusses held at shoulder level and his tunic.⁵⁶ The six next deities are unrecognizable from one another: they wear a small loincloth, their hair is tied in a bun, and they raise the right hand in a gesture of reassurance. The other hand carries a water vessel at waist level. The same ascetic iconography can be noticed on a fragmentary lintel of Nāchnā Kuṭharā, Panna district, dated ca. 500 (Figure 2). Sūrya's left knee is visible, in a squatting position, and he holds a lotus bud in the left hand. The remaining *graha* are shown seated (Rāhu except) with the right or left knee alternatively upraised. The right hand, holding the rosary, is in a gesture of reassurance, and the left hands holds a water vessel. A circular nimbus is represented behind each of the seated figures. On the right of the last figure, Rāhu is represented as a large head in profile with two arms cupped together on his right. He has protuding eyes, long curled hair, and his mouth grins under a thin moustache.

The first known relief representing the nine *graha* comes from the neighbouring region of Uttar-Pradesh, and was dated from ca. 600 (or slightly later) by S. Markel (see Figure 4 and [20] p. 122). As in the preceding reliefs, Sūrya, with a head-dress of *kirīṭa-mukūṭa* type, wears a chest armor and boots. He squats and holds two lotusses in the hands. The next six *graha* show the same ascetic iconography as mentioned above. Rāhu is represented as a three quarters head, with the arm in profile and the hands cupped to his right. On Rāhu's left, Ketu is depicted with a woman's bust on a serpentine tail, raises the right hand in a gesture of reassurance, and seems to hold with the left hand a vessel by the neck. This is a very early representation of Ketu since the majority of the representations of Ketu date no earlier than the second half or the end of the seventh century.⁵⁷

The aforementioned reliefs define the basic iconography of the *graha* series as elaborated in Central India, in Madhya and Uttar-Pradesh regions: Sūrya, wearing the *kirīṭa-mukūṭa*, chest armor and boots, holds two lotus buds in the hands raised at shoulder level. The next six *graha* share the same ascetic iconography: the hair tied in a bun or in a *jaṭā-mukūṭa*, they raise the right hand in a gesture of reassurance, and the other hand carries a water vessel. Rāhu is represented as a head, with an arm in profile, or as a bust cut-off at hips-level with the arms in front of the chest. Ketu is seldom depicted until the second half of the seventh century: his main features often change, but he is generally represented as a human's bust on a serpentine tail. From this basic iconography, the depictions will develop regional features, as will be discussed below.

Regionalisms.

The basic iconography spread out to neighbouring regions: Gujarāt and Orissa from the second half of the sixth century onwards, Rājasthān and Bihār, from the seventh century onwards, Bengal and Himachal Pradesh, from the ninth century onwards.⁵⁸ In western regions such as Gujarāt and Rājasthān, the basic iconography stated by Central India is generally used, with some variations in the representation of Ketu, who sometimes assumes a human form.⁵⁹ In spite of these changes, the western iconography of the *graha* is highly dependent on the basic iconography as defined above. The most important iconographic

⁵⁶[20] p. 113.

⁵⁷[20] p. 119.

⁵⁸[20] pp. 20-21.

⁵⁹See for example [20] Figures 39, 46 and 47.

changes occur in Eastern India. In this specific area, the *graha* were particularly worshipped, as inductible by the mentions of special cults to the *graha* in the aforementioned texts (Section 1). The main iconographic particularities in the representations of these regions will be discussed below.

We can identify an “apogee” of the *graha* representations in Bihār or Bengal from the ninth or the tenth century onwards, and from the seventh or the eighth century in Orissa (with the representations of the *graha* from Bhubaneśvar). At that time, the reliefs representing *graha* show the highest iconographic complexity and accomplishment: each *graha* is endowed with specific attributes and mounts. The Asutosh Museum (Calcutta) houses a tenth century *graha* panel (Figure 5) which originated from western Bengal and displays most of the particular features of the eastern iconography of the *graha*. On the basis of the panel, we will present below this particular iconography, and discuss the main variations noticeable in the other parts of Eastern India.

The nine *graha* are here preceded by Gaṇeśa, who sometimes appears on the *graha* reliefs from at least the ninth century onwards in most of the regions of India.⁶⁰ The association of the god with the *graha* is natural: as the remover of obstacles, it is quite normal to find him next to the *graha*, giving to the series an auspicious nature. The elephant-headed god is represented with the left hand resting on an axe, the other hand holding a rosary.

Next to him is represented Sūrya, endowed with his usual attributes, wearing the *kirīṭa-mukūṭa*, the sacred thread of the Hindus, a dhoti, boots, and holding two lotusses.

Candra is depicted with a *kirīṭa-mukūṭa* (as Budha, Śukra and Śani),⁶¹ and holds a water-pot in the left hand and makes the *jñāna mudrā* with the right palm.

Maṅgala makes the same gesture, holds in the left hand a spear which links him with Kārttikeya. This attribute is not to be found in the art of Orissa, where Maṅgala’s relationship with Kārttikeya is stressed on by the *śikhāṇḍaka* and the *hāra* that the *graha* wears in the depictions of that region (see Figure 2).

Budha is here endowed with his whole specific iconography, shared by Bihāri representations as well: standing in a graceful pose, Budha has a flying hair, a bow resting against the left arm, and holds an arrow in both hands.

Bṛhaspati presents also all the specific features of his representations in Eastern India (in Bihār and Orissa too): he wears the *jaṭā-mukūṭa*, a pointed beard and a moustache, and has a round belly, on which one can notice the sacred thread (shared by the other *graha*, in central and western regions too). He carries a water-pot in the left hand, making the *jñāna mudrā* with the other one.

Śukra’s hands hold the same attribute and gesture as Bṛhaspati, but his thin physiomy clearly differs from the preceding *graha* ones.

Śani is represented in a four flexions position, which emphasizes his lameness (in Bihār too). The right hand is in *jñāna mudrā*, and the other carries his special *daṇḍa*, which is always ended with a roundish top, but is sometimes longer and reaches the floor. As far as we know, this *daṇḍa* does not appear in Orissan art.

Rāhu is depicted as a bust and his hands are cupped together in front of the chest, as in other parts of India. In the above mentioned example (Figure 5), he holds a little crescent, as often in Bihār art. The size of the crescent often varies, and may fill the arms of the demon. It is sometimes replaced by a double symbol, composed of two little roundish elements visible in Rāhu’s palms (Bihār and Bengal). The demon can also hold a disk and a crescent, mixed or separated, as in examples from Bengal and Bangladesh. Finally, Rāhu may also hold two crescents, as in the famous reliefs of Koṅārak. Rāhu’s hands are placed on a wheeled axle-tree, the specific attribute of Rāhu in both of Bihār and Bengal-Bangladesh arts. This attribute is seldom, if ever, represented *just above* Rāhu’s hands in Bihāri reliefs: it is most often placed on the socle next to the mounts of the

⁶⁰[6] p. 86.

⁶¹Hairstyles are most often *jaṭā-mukūṭa*, as far as we know, for Candra, Bṛhaspati, Śukra and Śani.

graha. Ketu is depicted with a serpentine tail, a human's body and a serpent hood over the head. He is not represented with the hands joined in a gesture of devotion, but carries a sword in the right hand, as in examples from Bihār and Orissa (particularly the reliefs from Koṇārak). In the other hand is a shield, perhaps more specific from Bengal. Ketu can sometimes hold a lamp, as in examples from Bengal-Bangladesh and in the depictions from Koṇārak. Under Gaṇeśa and the *graha* are representations of at least nine visible mounts. The first two, from the viewer's left to his right, are usual: a rat (Gaṇeśa) and a horse (Sūrya). A ram (?) is atypically attributed to Candra, whose mount is usually a *makara*. Maṅgala shares Kārttikeya's attribute, the peacock, and Budha a dog, which is the hunter's companion. The next mounts are Bṛhaspati's swan, borrowed from Brahmā's iconography, Śukra's frog, Śani's horse or ass, and Rāhu's wheeled axle-tree. Under Ketu is a foliate pattern, which might relate to the link of the *graha* with the aquatical realm. The mounts often appear in Bihār and Bengal-Bangladesh arts, sometimes in other parts of India, such as Madhya-Pradesh, in the period of the building of the great temples of Khajurāho.⁶²

Graha as secondary deities.

A remarkable feature of the importance taken by the *graha* series is the development, from the seventh or eighth centuries⁶³, of the presence of the *graha* series as secondary deities on reliefs representing other important deities of the Hindu pantheon. The first study of these particular reliefs is given in [20].⁶⁴ G.J.R. Mevissen's recent work ([24]) presents an interesting focus on the feminine images of this corpus. However, such documents remain little studied, in spite of the precisions they add to the function of the *graha*. The latter are significantly generally depicted on a row on the top of sculptures representing Sūrya, Viṣṇu on Śesa, Tapasvinī Pārvatī, Śiva and Pārvatī's wedding, Varāha, or the "Reclining Mother and Child" reliefs⁶⁵.

"There might have been two reasons for the selection of the *graha*s as subsidiary deities: their auspicious influence on birth, destiny and proper maintenance of life, i.e. their astrological significance; and their cosmographical symbolism as the deities of time and space"⁶⁶ The influence of the *Navagraha* is particularly important in human's life at birth time, when the *graha* seize the newly-born child's destiny, and preside over his future. Therefore the *graha* are often represented on the so-called "mother and child" reliefs, which are supposed to be linked with birth. In this context, the *graha* are sometimes accompanied with Gaṇeśa, but also with a *śivaliṅga*, like in an eleventh century relief from the National Museum, New Delhi (Figure 6). Such an association is justified by C. Sivaramamurti: "According to tradition, Gaṇeśa conducts the child out of its mother's womb and Śiva protects him during life".⁶⁷

Astrology in Ancient India is an important and well-known science, often illustrated by Indian literature. The consultation of the position of the *graha* is crucial for the choice of the most auspicious time for the celebration of important moments of life and their related rituals. Therefore the *graha* can also be found, not only in the context of birth, but also on reliefs such as the "Śiva and Pārvatī's wedding" panels, or on "Pārvatī's penance" sculptures. The frequent presence of the *graha* series as secondary deities is a testimony of their importance in the Hindu context, next to the *lokapāla* (guardians of the quarters of space) or the *matṛkā* (mother goddesses) series, which also appear on reliefs as secondary deities.

⁶²For an extensive study of regionalisms, refer to [29] and [20].

⁶³[24]: "In the late 7th century the association of the *graha*s with Devī can first be traced in North Bihar".

⁶⁴[21] pp. 17-20.

⁶⁵These reliefs are globally represent serene deities or scenes. However, the *Navagraha* appear on the depiction of a naked Cāmuṅḍā from Candrabhāga (Rājasthān), mentioned in [24].

⁶⁶[24], i.

⁶⁷[35] p. 74.

4 Conclusion

The term “*graha*” appears in Vedic literature, and some of the future members of the *Navagraha* series are already deified in Vedic times, such as the sun-god Sūrya, Soma-Candra and Bṛhaspati. However, Hellenistic astronomy, astrology, and the introduction of the occidental seven-day week, played an important role in the elaboration of the seven *graha* grouping. The “Hellenised” *graha* series, in which each of the seven first was endowed with a physiognomy and psychological character, was progressively enriched with Rāhu and Ketu in Indian iconographic and religious texts. The latter mention several kinds of cults devoted to the *Navagraha*, and many medieval texts give precise prescriptions in order to propitiate the *graha* by appropriate rituals.

As a testimony of the developing devotion to the *graha* in India, representations of the *graha* series, appeared in Madhya Pradesh at the beginning of the sixth century, spread out to other regions. From the eighth century onwards, iconography displayed particularly greater specificities in the depictions from Eastern India, and *graha* series appeared as subsidiary deities on the top of reliefs representing important gods from Hindu pantheon.

Preparing the synthesis about the iconography of the *Navagraha* revealed that a lot of work remains to be done on the *Navagraha*. For example, the study of the *Navagraha* depictions in Deccan or South India would certainly be very fruitful. A precious study would consist in pointing out the differences between the *graha* depictions from a particular religious context to the others. Recently, G.J.R. Mevissen studied the *graha* depictions in the Jaina context⁶⁸. In spite of Markel’s article [21], an individual iconographic study on Ketu, but also on Rāhu would probably clarify our knowledge about these entities. Another interesting field of research would be the study of the depictions of the *graha* series as secondary deities, which would give a better understanding of the importance and function of these deities in Ancient India⁶⁹. Such studies would certainly testify the importance of the *graha*, who seize human’s destiny and thus were propitiated by the devotees at any important moment of their lives, in medieval times as nowadays:

*“May Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, the Sun, the Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Rāhu and Ketu make the morning auspicious for me”.*⁷⁰

Abbreviations for the texts used in the summary table of the *Navagraha* attributes⁷¹

- AgP : Agnipurāṇa.
- App : Aparājita-prichchhā.
- Bhp : Bṛhatpārāśarahorā.
- Dn : Dīpārṇava.
- MtP : Matsyapurāṇa.
- Nk : Nirvāṇa-kalikā.

⁶⁸See [27] and [25].

⁶⁹A first study of the images of female deities with *graha* figures was recently presented by G.J.R. Mevissen in [24].

⁷⁰Cited from [17] p. 72.

⁷¹The texts used in this table originate from Hindu, but also Buddhist and Jaina contexts, when their citation seemed to be relevant.

- NpY : Nishpanna-yogāvalī.
- Rm : Rūpa-maṇḍana.
- Sp : Śilparatna.
- Spk : Śilparatnākara.
- SkP : Skandapurāṇa.
- Vsp : Vāstu-sāra-prakaraṇa.
- VdP : Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇa.

	TEXTUAL SOURCES		REPRESENTATIONS			
	attributes and physi- onomy	Mounts	General attributes	Particular at- tributes	Poses	Mounts
Sūrya	-Reigns, lotus, sword, boots, armor chest (AgP), girdle (VdP), two or four arms -Lion banner (VdP) -Rājānī, Nisprabhā, Uṣā, Samdhya, Sāyā, Aruṇa, Daṇḍin, Piṅgala (AgP)	-Seven horsed chariot (AgP) -Single wheel (AgP)	-Two full-blossomed lotusses -Boots -Kṛīṭa-mukūṭa, chest ar- mor, tunic	-Wives or attendants	- <i>Sama-pada</i>	-One or more horses, with or without a char- iot
Candra	-Water-vessel and rosary (AgP), <i>soma</i> water-vessel (Vsp), <i>amṛta</i> water-vessel (Dn), four arms (VdP) -Mace (MtP, SkP) <i>abhaya</i> <i>mudrā</i> (AgP) and <i>varada</i> <i>mudrā</i> (MtP) -Kānti, Śobhā (VdP) -Lion banner (VdP)	-One horsed chariot (MtP) -Ten horsed chariot (VdP, SkP) -Third wheel with a hun- dred rays (SkP)	-Water-vessel and rosary, <i>jaṭā-mukūṭa</i> -Gestures: <i>jñāna</i> and <i>ab-</i> <i>haya mudrā</i>	-Crescent (Orissa and neighbour regions)	-Neutral	- <i>Makara</i> , fish and ram (?)
Maṅgala	-Rosary and spear (AgP, MtP, SkP), four arms (MtP) -Mace (MtP) - <i>Varada mudrā</i> (MtP) -Trident (SkP)	-Eight horsed chariot (VdP, SkP), ram (App)	-Water-vessel and rosary, <i>jaṭā-mukūṭa</i> -Gestures: <i>jñāna</i> and <i>ab-</i> <i>haya mudrā</i>	-Spear (Bihār and Ben- gal) - <i>Śikhhaṇḍaka</i> and spe- cific necklace (Orissa) - <i>Matuluṅga?</i> (Bihār)	-Neutral	-Peacock (Bihār, Ben- gal, Bangladesh), <i>makara</i> (Madhya-P)
Budha	-Bow and rosary (AgP), ar- row (NpY) -Sword, shield, mace and <i>varada mudrā</i> (MtP) - <i>Varada mudrā</i> , <i>abhaya</i> <i>mudrā</i> (SkP). Four arms (MtP), like Viṣṇu (VdP)	-Eight horsed chariot (VdP, SkP) - <i>Sarpa</i> (App), swan (Vsp), lion (Sp)	-Water-vessel and rosary, <i>jaṭā-mukūṭa</i> -Gestures: <i>jñāna</i> and <i>ab-</i> <i>haya mudrā</i>	-Arrow, bow and fly- ing hair (Bihār, Ben- gal, Bangladesh)	-Neutral or <i>alāḍha</i> (Bihār and Bengal)	-Dog (Bihār and Ben- gal) -Snake or elephant (Madhya-P)
Bṛhaspati	-Water-vessel and rosary (AgP, MtP) -Staff and <i>varada mudrā</i> (MtP) -Book (VdP) - <i>Daṇḍa</i> (SkP) -Four arms (MtP)	-Eight horsed chariot (VdP), elephant (Spk), swan (App)	-Water-vessel and rosary, <i>jaṭā-mukūṭa</i> - <i>jñāna mudrā</i> and <i>abhaya</i> <i>mudrā</i>	-Round belly, mous- tache, beard (Eastern India)	-Neutral	-Swan
Śukra	-Like Bṛhaspati (MtP), water-vessel and rosary (AgP) - <i>Nidhī</i> (VdP), book (VdP)	-Ten horsed chariot (VdP, SkP) -Frog (App)	-Water-vessel and rosary, <i>jaṭā-mukūṭa</i> -Gestures: <i>jñāna</i> and <i>ab-</i> <i>haya mudrā</i>	-Sometimes, round belly (Eastern India)	-Neutral	-Frog
Śani	-Bow (MtP, SkP) and arrow (MtP), two (VdP) or four (MtP) arms - <i>Varada mudrā</i> (MtP) and rosary (VdP) - <i>Khinkhira</i> (AgP) -Veigns	-Vulture (MtP), iron chariot drawn by eight serpents (VdP) or eight horses (SkP), buffalo (App, Rm), and tortoise (NpY)	-Water-vessel and rosary, <i>jaṭā-mukūṭa</i> -Gestures: <i>jñāna mudrā</i> and <i>abhaya mudrā</i>	-Staff- <i>Khinkhira</i> (Bihār, Bengal, Bangladesh)	-Neutral, often limp- ing pose, standing or seated	-Horse or ass (Eastern India)
Rāhu	-Half of a crescent moon (AgP), Sūrya and Candra (NpY) -Sword and shield (MtP) -Spear and <i>varada mudrā</i> (MtP), <i>argha mudrā</i> (Nk) -Terrible mouth (MtP), head joined to a single arm: empty hand on the right (VdP)	-Blue lion (MtP) -Iron chariot (SkP) or sil- ver chariot (VdP), drawn by eight horses	-Cupped hands (<i>argha</i> <i>mudrā</i> or <i>tarpaṇa mudrā</i>) -Hair standing (ūrdhvakeśa)	-Two symbols, two crescents (Orissa) and double symbol (Bihār and Bengal) -Hands in a water- vessel	-Head, with one or two arms, or bust	-Two wheeled axle- tree (Bihār, Bengal, Bangladesh)
Ketu	-Lamp (AgP), sword (AgP), Mace (MtP) and <i>varada</i> <i>mudrā</i> (MtP), rosary and water-vessel (Nk) -Akin to Rāhu (Bhp) -Serpent tail (App), distorted face (MtP) -Like Maṅgala (VdP), <i>añjali</i> <i>mudrā</i> (App), rosary and water-vessel (Nk)	-Ten horsed chariot (VdP), vulture (MtP, Sp)	- <i>Añjali mudrā</i> -sometimes water-vessel or rosary, same gesture as the other <i>graha</i>	-Sword and lamp (Eastern India), shield (Bengal)	-Serpentine tail and hu- man bust, male or fe- male -Anthropomorphic, man or woman	-Nothing, or foliate mo- tif or clouds (Bihār, Bengal, Bangladesh)

Table 1: Summary of the attributes of the *Navagraha*.

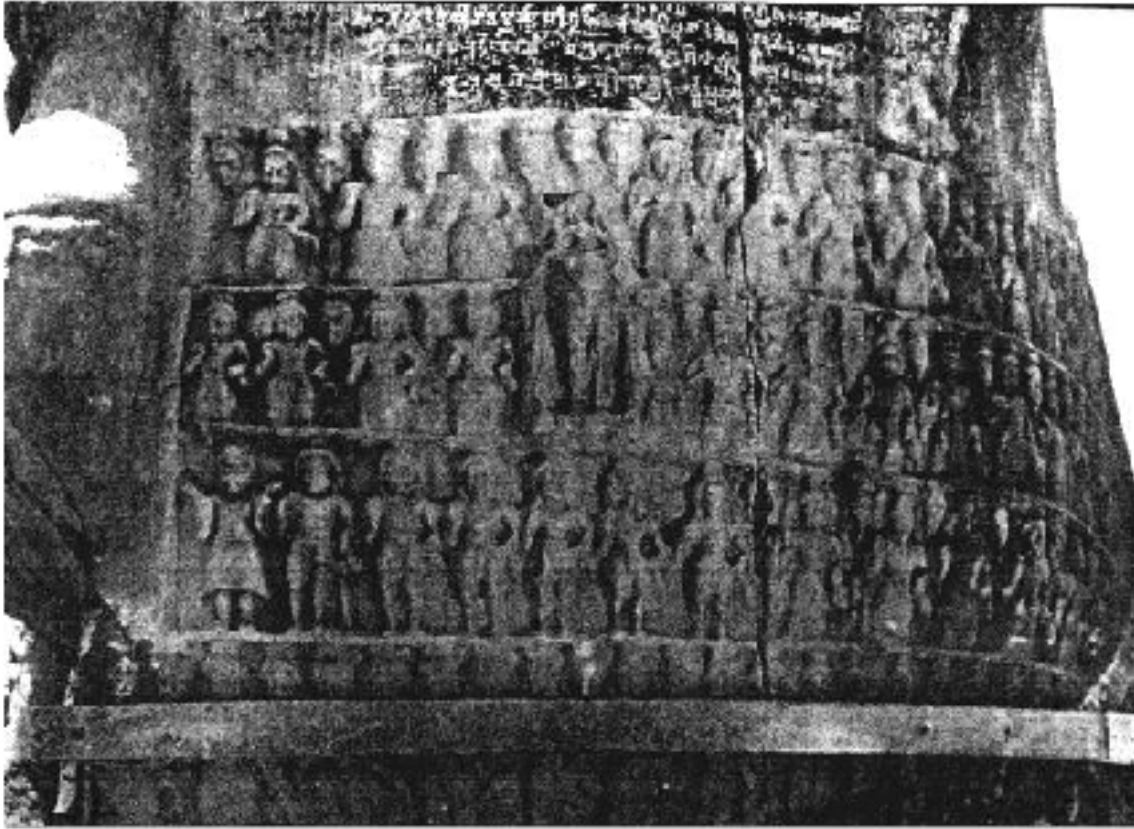


Figure 1: Detail of seven *graha* on theriomorphic Vāraha. Eran, Sagar district, Madhya-Pradesh, India, c. A.D. 500-505. Sandstone. Dimensions unknown. From [22], Figure 1 (photograph courtesy American Institute of Indian Studies).



Figure 2: Maṅgala, detail of a *graha* lintel from the Svarṇajāleśvara, eastern door, Bhubaneśvar, Puri district, Orissa, ca. 600-610. Sandstone. Drawing after [13], Figure 11.



Figure 3: Eight *graha* on a lintel, Nāchnā-Kuṭharā, Panna district, Madhya-Pradesh, ca. 500-510. Sandstone. Height 20 cm, length 100cm. From [20] Figure 16 (photograph courtesy Prof. Joanna G. Williams).



Figure 4: Nine *graha* on a lintel. Uttar-Pradesh, ca. 600 or slightly later. Red sandstone. Height 11.4cm, length 76.2cm. Spink and Son (M610/A). From [20] Figure 21.

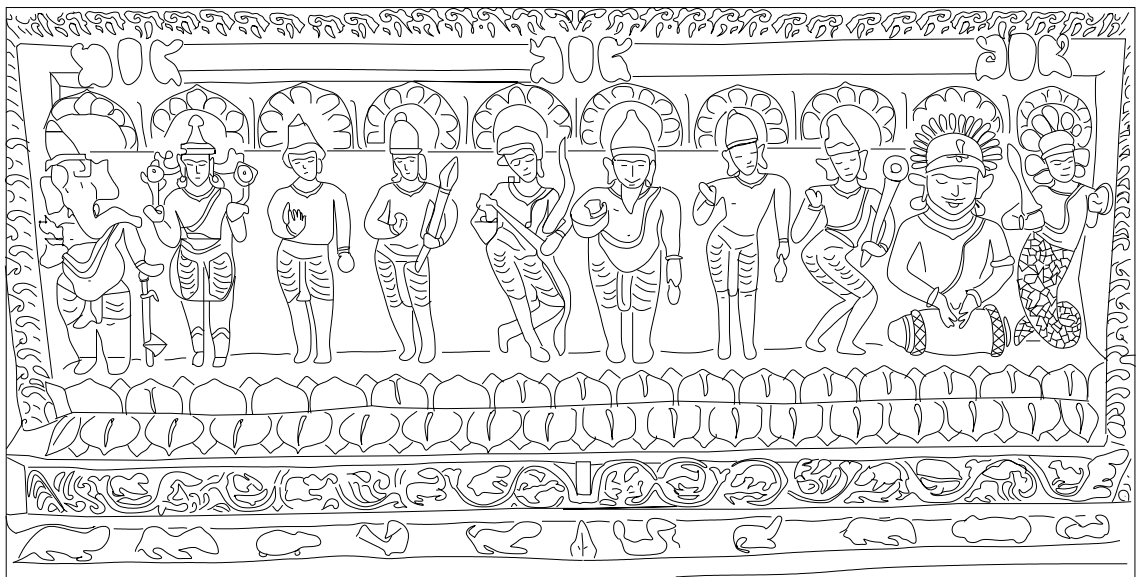


Figure 5: *Navagraha* with Gaṇeśa on a panel, basalt. Kankandighi, Sunderbans district, western Bengal, tenth century. Asutosh Museum, Calcutta. Drawing after [23], Figure 1 p. 290.



Figure 6: Reclining Mother and child, or Śiva *Gṛhapati*, Bengal. Pāla, eleventh century. National Museum, Delhi (59.34) (author's photograph).

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