Editor’s Note: Cross ventilation produces a breath of fresh air. It is desirable in a house and even in a magazine! In this spirit, we are featuring a series of short articles designed to make some of the basic building blocks and ideas of Vedic astrology more accessible to all. We anticipate that opening the Eastern Window can clarify the complementarity between great astrological traditions.

The Whole Is Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts

My grandson is a LEGO® whiz. I can’t make heads or tails of all those little pieces, yet he revels in understanding the dizzying possibilities that each one represents in combination with countless others. As he works with his “creativity box” of recycled pieces from decommissioned action heroes, he puts together new and incredible creatures from combos that look, for all the world, as though they would never amount to anything!

His Lego pieces are much like all the little bits and pieces represented in an astrological chart — the grahas (planets), bhavas (houses), and rashis (signs) — pieces that likewise have the potential to combine in all sorts of ways to produce a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Though most astrological techniques use these Lego-like pieces, Jyotisha has an extraordinary penchant for fitting them together in seemingly endless permutations that can predict pre-eminence, easy money, an orientation toward spirituality, great intelligence, artistic prowess, etc. These combinations are called yogas. The word “yoga” is from the Sanskrit root yuj, which means “to join, connect, or unite.” These yogas seem to have no equivalent in other astrological traditions.

Their sheer numbers in the root texts signal the prominence of yogas in Jyotisha. Almost every text has one or more chapters devoted to these combinations. My teacher asked us to memorize a new yoga every week, and we quickly realized that, at that pace, it would take multiple lifetimes to learn even a majority of the yogas.

Only a few in this vast ocean of combinations are distinguished with a name. Naturally, teachers and students gravitate toward these particular yogas, as it is easier to relate to something that has a name. It should be understood, however, that the named yogas are not necessarily the “best” ones.

A good place to enter this vast topic is to group together yogas that indicate, in a general way, a more or less common outcome, should they exist in a native’s chart. First and foremost, there are yogas that strengthen the Ascendant (lagna), and are therefore of primary importance.

The 1st house/Ascendant (these are equivalent) and its lord (lagnesh), show how well or how poorly a person utilizes the gifts indicated in the chart — the opportunities that arise during life, as well as the lessons learned from less-than-ideal circumstances. An example of poor utilization would be someone...
who repeats the same mistakes over and over while railing against their bad luck.

We will look at just two of the yogas in this category. Let’s begin with *Shubha Yoga*. Among its meanings we find auspicious, capable, fortunate, etc. The great Jyotisha text *Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra* opens its major yoga chapter with this very yoga. Its formation is disarmingly simple. It is said to occur when a natural benefic is in the Ascendant. So, the two Lego pieces are a benefic planet and the lagna. Snap them together and you get this yoga.

Scrolling through many charts, you will find many Shubha Yogas. My teacher’s favorite two words are “qualification” and “confluence.” All things astrological need to be examined on a scale ranging from “no results” to “amazing results.” The quality of the chart and the quality of the grahas that create the yoga hugely influence the outcome. Not all Shubha Yogas are created equal, and hence they need to be qualified.

If the Shubha Yoga sits in a chart with other yogas that point to the same result, the positive outcome will be much more pronounced. This is the principle of confluence.

Let’s put this simple yoga to the test by returning to the chart of Angelina Jolie. Notice that Venus is in her Ascendant without any other graha. (See Figure, previous page.) I highlighted this combination in the previous column (Aug./Sept. 2017), but I didn’t identify it as a yoga until now. This Shubha Yoga rises in value when distinguished from the legions of other possible weaker examples, such as malefic influences by *yuti* (residing in the lagna with Venus) or *drishti* (aspecting the Ascendant and Venus).

Also, note that the only aspect to the Ascendant and Venus is the special fifth (trinal) aspect of Jupiter in its own sign (*swa rashi*) of Pisces. So, Angelina’s Shubha Yoga–producing Venus is in the Ascendant without a malefic joining it or even aspecting it, while it receives an aspect from the strong benefic, Jupiter. This is a “real deal” Shubha Yoga that will deliver the goods!

But what about the confluence piece? This involves the second of the two yogas we will consider here, and has to do with borrowed strength — having a strong shoulder to lean on. In fact, it may be this yoga that gave rise to the time-tested precept that it is good if a graha has a strong dispositor (i.e., be in the rashi of a graha that is strong).

The *Parvata* (“mountain peak”) Yoga is from a text called *Phaladeepika*, and is formed when the dispositor of the ruler of the 1st (the dispositor of the lagnesha) is in its own rashi (*swa*) or its exalted rashi (*ucca*), while being located in a *kendra* (bhavas 1, 4, 7, 10) or a *trikona* (bhavas 1, 5, 9).

Angelina’s Parvata Yoga makes this clearer. Her Ascendant rashi is Cancer. Thus, the lagnesha, or ruler of her 1st bhava, is the Moon. The Moon is in Pisces, so Jupiter is the Moon’s dispositor. It’s as if the Moon is renting from its landlord, Jupiter. In this case, Jupiter is not only the landlord, but also the roommate of the Moon, since it, too, sits in the constellation of Pisces (*swa rashi*) and is therefore strong. And in a Cancer-rising chart, Pisces falls on the 9th bhava, which is a trikona.

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The Eastern Window

The Eastern Window

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So, we have a set of Lego pieces (the ruler of the 1st, the dispositor of the ruler of the 1st, a strong dispositor, a dispositor in a kendra or trikona) all put together in a perfect rendition of Parvata Yoga. The strength derived from this yoga empowers the native to actualize the auspicious indications in the chart and have the ability to work with and improve the inevitable areas of life where the rain falls.

Angelina’s chart demonstrates the good fortune of having a beautiful confluence of two very influential yogas for strengthening the lagna and all that it implies. We are assured that even though Angelina’s lagna lord, the Moon, is not particularly strong, it has a strong shoulder to lean on, and the lagna itself hosts an unblemished Shubha Yoga. This boost to the lagna lord and the lagna itself is more than enough to actualize all of the other amazing yogas, including yogas for pre-eminence and wealth, which abundantly grace her chart.

We will look into these yogas for success and pre-eminence in the next column.

Chart Data and Source

Angelina Jolie, June 4, 1975; 9:09 a.m. PDT; Los Angeles, CA, USA (34°N03’, 118°W15’); AA: BC/BR in hand.

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