28 Constellations-Misused in Date Selection

The “28 constellations” is the most widely used system for date selection in the Chinese culture and Astrology and it is commonly found in the Tongzhu or Chinese Farmer's Calendar. Most of the Feng Shui practitioners nowadays apply this method to select auspicious date to perform important Feng Shui activities while some use its components to analyze birth charts and use it in association with the 81 combinations of Xuan Kong Flying Stars without truly understanding the root of this theory.

Chinese Astrology adopted the 28 constellations date selection from India following the introduction of Buddhism to China around the 1st and 2nd centuries CE. The 28 star constellations are divided into four clusters, with each cluster made up of seven constellations. The four clusters represent the 4 cardinal directions (north, south, east and west) and each cluster is associated with one of Four Celestial Animals or Emblems namely the black tortoise, red phoenix, green dragon and white tiger.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Directions</th>
<th>28 Stars</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Good Events</th>
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<td>Horn</td>
<td>Wedding, Travel, Clothes, Pillar, Moving</td>
<td>Funeral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
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<td>Neck</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>禳 (Făng)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>心 (Făng)</td>
<td>Room</td>
<td>Worship, Moving, Travel</td>
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</table>
While it is apparent that the Chinese studied the Heavens, they did not have the sophisticated tools that are available today, but they realized some very important astrological aspects, concerning the relationship between sun, moon, star constellations and other planets in the belief that their motions affect human beings. The Chinese astrological perspective associates each of these 28 constellations with a deity who controls each day and also has the power to influence each activity of every life on earth.

The Luo Pan compass which has many different rings that represent celestial observations, also represent the 28 constellations. The 28 lunar mansion or “Xiù” are degrees of latitudes the Moon crosses.
during its monthly journey around Earth. You will find in the Luo Pan starting from the East, Jiao “Lunar Mansion #1” or Horn, going around in the lunar yin sequence or counter clockwise direction. In this way, you will find all the star constellations associated with the western palace are in the west and so on, which coincides with the real astronomical observations. Because of the differences in the amount of time the moon passes through these lunar mansions, some a few hours while others a few days, it is reflected proportionally in the varying amount of space or degrees it occupies in the Luo Pan.

Although the 28 constellations and the moon’s passage through it during its monthly journey around the earth are real astronomical observations, over time, in the study of Chinese astrology, they assigned one day of the 28 day cycle of the Moon to each constellation because of the difficulty and inability by most practitioners in the past to calculate precisely the position of the Moon in relation to the real asterisms. This is similar to the representation in the Tongzhu or Chinese Farmer’s Almanac, where the days of the week are configured to the 28 days of the lunar month providing a simple, easy to use, lunar almanac, that was available to everyone. Interestingly, the first asterism falls on a Thursday.

A good example is when the day that the position of the moon is aligned with the constellation named “Horn”, the first of the 28 constellations, is supposed to be good for wedding, travel, clothes, erecting pillars and moving house but this day will be bad for finishing projects and funerals. So if you wish to use the “Horn” day for your Feng Shui activities, it may be available for only a few hours of the selected date. After that the moon will already have transited to the other constellations on that very same day. If you assume that you can use that whole day, you will make a big mistake for your Feng Shui purpose!

It is clear that the transcriptions depicted in most if not all Almanacs no longer accurately represent the naturally occurring astrological observed data and can only be considered symbolic. The actual constitution of “heavenly Qi” represented during these transition times are no longer accurate and therefore cannot be used to realize auspicious time. Furthermore, it is an astronomical fact that the orbit of the moon around the earth is completed in approximately 27.3 days, not 28 days! The differences accumulate month by month up until
now without the adjustment for more than 200 years. The last adjustment was done by Emperor Qianlong (Born: September 25 1711, Died: February 7 1799) whose grandfather Emperor Kangxi by the way also had great interest in Western sciences, especially Mathematics and Astrology. He ordered all his astronomers and Feng Shui Masters to rearrange Astronomy's facts and data to make it more accurate.

Actually there are many different almanacs used for date selection in Feng Shui schools since thousand years ago. Different schools use different factors to determine a lucky or bad day for a special event. As a result, a lucky day from one school might be an unlucky day from another school.

Like the 28 star constellations, most of the Chinese astrological principles and theories are rooted on real astronomical observations. To use these 28 constellations properly for date selection or birth analysis, it is imperative to have the correct and exact position of the moon as it passes through each of the mansions or xiu while orbiting the earth. This would require accurate astrological charts and tables and complex mathematical calculations in which during the imperial times were only available to a select group of people. Until adjustments are made to the lunar almanacs, consider their information symbolic because it no longer bears relationship to the real character of “heavenly qi” that we need for accurate and effective date selection.

I recommend to all my students avoiding using the 28 constellations date selection for any purpose.

Master Mas. Scientific Feng Shui Master & Researcher

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Note: The first Chinese calendar was created in the Xia Dynasty around 2,205 B.C. In the early Qin Dynasty around 246 B.C., the almanac information was beginning to develop. The main objective is to try to identify the time and to categorize the season for agricultural purposes. In the later Han Dynasty around 25 A.D., there were many almanac theories to confuse the people in the society. An emperor announced to follow the Five Element theory when the conflict erupted amongst these theories. The Chinese farmer's almanac matured around Song Dynasty around 960 A.D.)