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Bibliography
Preface

Simordhian Mithra came to Japan via the Central Asia in syncretism with Roman Mithras. The transcription of his name in Chinese character is “弥勒”, which Japanese Miroku, Korean Mireuk, Chinese pronounce Milo (Mî-la). He is not only a deity of Buddhism but also Milo-ism (China), Shintô (Japan) and Shugen-dô (Japan). His veneration took root so firm in the East Asia that in some sects he is Lord God (God Most High). (Tojo. An Introduction to the Simorghian Culture and Mithraism in the East Asia).

The myth of Roman Mithras contains three episodes about the bull. (1) pursuit of the bull, (2) slaying the bull and (3) sacred meal with Sol. They are so important that many bas-relieves and statues were made. Miroku also has a famous bull story. It is called “Ten Bull Pictures 十牛図”, widely used among Zen Buddhism even in today.

This article is a brief introduction of Ten Bull Pictures for researchers, revivalists and practitioners of the Simorghian culture and Mithraism (Mehrparasti).

1. Terminology
   Definitions of technical terms used in this article are introduced.

2. Ten Bull Pictures
   The origin and meditation of Ten Bull Pictures are surveyed.

3. Relation to the Simorghian Culture
   Ten Bull Pictures

4. Roman Mysteries of Mithras

Appendix 1: Roman Mysteries of Mithras on the Tree of Life
Appendix 2: List of Technical Terms
1. Terminology

Before giving explanation about each picture of Ten Bull Pictures, it would be necessary to give clear definition of technical terms which will be used in the explanations.

Table 1 shows correspondence among technical terms of Theosophy, Buddhism and Sufism. In the explanation, technical terms of Theosophy are used for the convenience of the western readers.

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<td>Âtmic body</td>
<td>Manashiki 末那識 Manas-vijnāna</td>
<td>Soul at peace (Nafs-e mutma’inna)</td>
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<td>Buddhic body</td>
<td>Sikiun 識蘊 Vijnāna</td>
<td>Soul of the Friend of God (Nafs-e qudsî)</td>
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<td>Mental body</td>
<td>Sōun 想蘊 Samjã</td>
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<td>Etheric body &amp;</td>
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<td>Nature (Tabî’at)</td>
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Logos

It is Universal Spirit (Spirit of God). It is the supreme Root of all beings. There is no individuality in it, no “I” nor “You”.

Monad

It is the first emanation (differentiation) of Logos. It dwells in Âkâsha. For Âkâsha is the lower part of Logos, when monad dissolves into Âkâsha, the seeker becomes one with the Universal Spirit. Famous Persian mystic Mansur al-Hallaj (ca. 858-922) said “Ana al-Haqq” (I am Universal Spirit) to express this mystic union with Universal Spirit (Rûmî. Fî-hi Ma Fî-hi, 52).

Âtmic body

It is the highest part of a human being and the root of individuality. It generates I-ness (ego) in a human being. The annihilation of I-ness is called fanâ’ in Sufism. It occurs in the 8th stage of Ten Bull Pictures.

Buddhic body

It is the second highest part of a human being. It is the source of love, compassion and intuition. It is sometimes symbolized by the moon.
Mental body

It is the dwelling place of human consciousness. Human consciousness descends to the astral body when he becomes intoxicated. It ascends to the upper bodies when he purifies himself and practices meditation.

Astral body

It is also called animal soul. It is the source of passion and emotional turmoil, which pollute neighboring two mystic bodies (mental body and ether body). When the seeker succeeds in pacifying his astral body, two things occur. (1) Mental body and ether body are released from astral pollution (his passion and emotional turmoil). (2) His consciousness is released from astral pollution and gains power to ascend to the higher bodies (planes).

Ether body and physical body

Etheric body forms and sustains the physical body by providing it with the vital energy. When the vital energy is exhausted, man can't maintain his physical body to die.

Other technical terms

Fanâ, bakâ, namu (nama), zikr, Tosotsuten, mir, etc are explained in the commentaries to the pictures.

2. Ten Bull Pictures 十牛図

The Meaning of the Name

Jû 十 means ten, gyû 牛 means the bull, zu 図 means painting, therefore Jûgyûzu 十牛図 means Ten Bull Paintings. Jûgyûzu is a set of ten pictures which represents the path to enlightenment in Zen Buddhism 禅宗.

Origin

The earliest Jûgyûzu was made in Sui 宋 dynasty (960-1279). There are many Jûgyûzus, however, Kakuan (Kou-an) 廓庵’s one is the most famous. Kakuan 廓庵 (fl. 1150) was born in He-chuan 合川 of Kansu 甘粛省. Kansu was a stronghold of Manichaeism. He lived in Hunan 湖南省.

There are earlier versions consisting of five or eight pictures in which the bull is black at the beginning, becomes progressively whiter and finally disappears altogether. This last stage is shown as an empty circle. But Kakuan, feeling this to be incomplete, added two more pictures beyond the circle to make it clear that the Zen man of the highest spiritual development lives in the mundane world of form and diversity and mingles with the utmost freedom among ordinary men, whom he inspires with his compassion and radiance like Miroku. (Nakamura et al. ed. Iwanami’s Dictionary of Buddhism, p391;
Fischer-Schreiber, Ingrid et al. The Shambhala Dictionary of Buddhism and Zen, p106-107)

Considering in these facts, there seems to be no denying the influence of Persian culture (Mithraism) in Ten Bull Pictures.

**The Story and the Commentaries**

The story is cited from Ueda & Yanagida’s *Ten Bull Pictures*. The commentaries are added by the author.

(1) **Seeking for the Bull 寻牛**

**Title**

Jin 寻 means to seek, gyû 牛 means bull, therefore jingyû 寻牛 means to seek for the bull.

**Picture**

The first picture shows a shepherd boy seeking for his lost bull.

**Commentary**

The boy is the symbol of a soul (consciousness) who begins to tread his self-seeking path. The lost bull is the symbol of his astral body.

(2) **Finding the Footprints 見跡**

**Title**

Ken 見 means to find, seki 跡 means footprint, therefore kenseki 見跡 means to find footprints (of the bull).

**Picture**

The shepherd boy is at a loss in the wilderness. A thick mist covered everything. He prays Miroku 弥勒 for protection and guide, repeating “Namu Miroku-butsu 南無弥勒仏*”.

**Commentary**

Footprints are the symbol of scriptures and commentaries. The thick mist is the symbol of the barzakh (veil) which covers the bull.

The seeker reads many books. The more he read, the more his knowledge becomes rich. But he can’t apply his abundant knowledge to his specific situation. He is so depressed that he prays Miroku (Mithras) for protection and guidance. By saying “Namu Miroku-butsu 南無弥勒仏*” repeatedly, his
consciousness recovers its stability. The origin of repeating the phrase is Iranian zikr.

*Namu Miroku-butsu* 南無弥勒仏: Namu 南無 is transcription of Persian word “nama”, which means “homage to”. It is widely used among Mahayana Buddhism. Miroku 弥勒 means Mithras, butsu 仏 means Buddha. Therefore it means “Homage to Buddha Mithra”.

(3) Seeing the Bull 見牛

**Title**
Ken 見 means to see, gyû 牛 means the bull, therefore kengyû 見牛 means to see the bull.

**Picture**
The shepherd boy sees the tail and the hind legs of the bull. He is running after the bull, but still can’t see the whole bull.

**Commentary**
This situation is the symbol of the seeker who got a clue to what he should do. During pursuit of the bull, he gradually recognizes he must catch the bull and tame it, but he forebodings it would be a tough work.

(4) Finding the Bull 得牛

**Title**
Toku 得 means to catch, gyû 牛 means the bull, therefore tokugyû 得牛 means to catch the bull.

**Picture**
The shepherd boy is catching the bull. The bull doesn’t follow his order. The bull resist violently against the boy. The struggle continues.

**Commentary**
This situation is the symbol of the seeker who is trying to pacify and tame his astral body. By pacifying his astral body, his passions and emotional turmoil will cease.
(5) Taming the Bull 牧牛
Title
Boku 牧 means to tame, gyû 牛 means the bull, therefore bokugyû 牧牛 means to tame the bull.

Picture
The shepherd boy successfully tamed the bull. The bull obediently follows the boy.

Commentary
This situation is the symbol of the seeker who succeeded in pacifying his astral body. His astral body is in perfect accordance with his mental body now.

(6) Returning Home Riding the Bull 騎牛帰家
Title
Ki 騎 means to ride, gyû 牛 means the bull, ki帰 means to return, ka家 means home, therefore kigyûkika 騎牛帰家 means to return to home riding on the bull.

Picture
The shepherd boy returns to his home, riding on the back of the bull. He is playing the flute victoriously.

Commentary
This situation is the symbol of the seeker who succeeded in purification of his astral body. Riding on the bull is a symbolic expression of perfect accordance with his astral body.
By the pacification of his astral body, his ether body is also purified.
Returning home playing the flute is a symbolic expression of the end of the first half of meditation. The objective of the first half of meditation is to develop and purify his buddhic, mental, astral and ether body.
(7) Forgetting the Bull 忘牛存人

Title

Bô 忘 means to forget, gyû 牛 means the bull, zon 存 means to exist, nin 人 means person, therefore bôgyûzon nin 忘牛存人 means that a person exists forgetting the bull.

Picture

The shepherd boy returns to his daily life (the mundane world) and forgets the bull. The moon, taking bull’s place, begins to attract his consciousness. He raises his gaze upward toward the moon for the first time since he started his self-seeking.

Commentary

By pacifying his astral body, his consciousness was released from emotional turmoil. It affords his consciousness to ascend to his higher subtle bodies. Forgetting the bull and seeing the moon is a symbolic expression of this situation.

(8) Forgetting the Person and the Bull 人牛倶忘

Title

Nin 人 means a person, gyû 牛 means the bull, gu 倶 means both, bô 忘 means to forget, therefore ningyûgubô 人牛倶忘 means to forget both the person and the bull.

Picture

One day, the shepherd boy forgets both himself and the bull.

Commentary

This situation is called “fanâ*” in Persian sufism. Fanâ means annihilation of the individual ego. The seeker’s consciousness ascends to Tosotsuten 都率天*. Before entering Tosotsuten, the consciousness of the seeker loses its grip of I-ness. As soon as he loses I-ness, his consciousness dissolves into Universal Spirit (Hakk).

*fanâ: Its Japanese translation is muka 無化 and/or jigaômetsu 自我消滅. Mu 無 means null, ka 化 means -lify/-lize, therefore muka 無化 means nullify (annihilation). Ji-ga 自 means individual, ga 我 means ego, shô-metsu 消滅 means extinction, therefore jigaômetsu 自我消滅 means extinction of individual ego.

*Tosotsuten 都率天: Tosotsu 都率 is transcription of Sanskrit “Tusita”, which means the Sun
sphere. Ten 天 means heaven (sphere). Therefore Tosotsuten means the Sun sphere. His consciousness ascends to the Atomic plane and finally loses its grip of I-ness and melt into ākāsha. This is the fanā.

(9) Returning to the Root 返本還源

**Title**

Hen 返 means to return, bon 本 means the Root (Hakk), gen 還 means to return, gen 源 means the Source (Fountain, Hakk), therefore henbongengen 返本還源 means to return to the Root.

**Picture**

The consciousness of shepherd boy wonders joyously in Universal Spirit. The richness of Universal Spirit is expressed as a beautiful landscape in the picture. For there is no individuality, there is no one in the picture.

**Commentary**

This situation is called “bakā*” in Persian sufism. Bakā means wandering within ākāsha. The seeker enjoys eternal life within ākāsha. Monad wanders in ākāsha. For there is no individuality, monad and ākāsha are one. Monad enjoys mystic unity.

* bakā: Its Japanese translation is shōyō 逍遥. Both shō 逍 and yō 遙 means to wander, therefore shōyō 逍遥 means wandering.

(10) Entering the Mundane World to Give Hand 入鄽垂手

**Title**

Nit 入 means to enter, ten 鄽 means shop (symbol of the mundane world), sui 垂 means to give, shu 手 means hand, therefore nittensuishu 入鄽垂手 means to enter the mundane world to give hand (to the people).

**Picture**

After returning from bakā, the shepherd boy finds that he becomes Bu-dai, an avatar of Miroku (Mithra). He goes out to the town and begins to save people.

**Commentary**

The seeker becomes Miroku-tenze 弥勒転世. Miroku 弥勒 means Mithra, ten 転 means to reincarnate, ze 世 means the mundane world, therefore Miroku-tenze 弥勒転世 means Miroku reincarnated in the mundane world. He is a Persian mir (imam).

Bu-dai 布袋 (Hotei) is a Zen monk, said to have lived in the late Tang 唐 (Tô) dynasty.
(705-907) (10th century). His name comes from his wandering through the towns with a hempen beggar’s sack on his back. According to the Chinese legend Bu-dai is an avatar of Milo 弥勒 (Miros=Mithra). He showed his true image when he died. His wandering preaching reminds us of wandering dervish of Sufism.

3. Relation to the Simorghian Culture

Simorghian Attestation

Ten Bull Pictures is a Miroku Buddhism version of the Simorghian tradition. It is attested by comparison with the following works which retains the Simorghian tradition:

- Avicenna’s mystic story “the Recital of Bird”
- Nezâmi-e Ganjavi’s poem “Haft Paykar”.
- Attâr’s best known work “the Conference of the Birds”
- Suhrawardi’s mystic story “the Treatise of the Birds”
- Rûmî’s Mathnawi

*Avicenna: Latinized name of Ibn Sina, c. 980-1037. Persian polymath, physician and philosopher.
*Suhrawardi: Shahâb ad-Dîn Yahyâ as-Suhrawardi, 1155-1191. Persian theosophist, philosopher.

Attâr

In Attâr’s poem thirty birds journey through seven valleys to meet Simorgh. Thirty birds are the symbolic expression of seekers. The seven valleys are the symbolic expression of seven spheres. Simorgh is the symbol of Hakk (Universal Spirit). The following citation is the crucial moment of their journey:

A new life flow towards them (thirty birds) from that bright
Celestial and ever-lasting Light:
Their souls rose free of all they’d beebe before:
The past and all its actions are no more.
Their life came from that close, insistent sun
And in its vivid rays they shone as one.
There in the Simorgh’s radiant face they saw
Themselves, the Simorgh of the world –with awe
They gazed, and dared at last to comprehend
They were the Simorgh and the journey’s end.
They see the Simorgh –at themselves they staring,
And see a second Simorgh standing there:
They looked at both and see the two are one,
That this is that, that this, the goal is won.
(Attar, The Conference of the Birds, p219)

The mystic union with the Simorgh is the same kind of mystic union as Ten Bull Pictures.

One of characteristic features of the Simorghian tradition is its symbolism of birds. It is retained in Roman Mithraism. Roman Mithraism put bird name to its lowest and highest initiation ranks. The name of the lowest rank is Corax (Raven), and the name of the highest rank is Aquila (Eagle). The initiate begins his journey as a raven and ends it as an eagle. This scheme is quite parallel with Attâr’s poem. Althou birds don’t appear in Ten Bull Pictures, the step by step ascension of initiation ranks in Roman Mithraism has great similarity to the meditation steps in Ten Bull Pictures (4. Mysteries of Roman Mithraism).

Rûmi

In the Rûmi ‘s Mathnawi the ascension of a soul is explained as follows:

I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as a plant and rose to an animal,
I died as animal and I became Adam (Man),
Why should I fear? When was I less by dying?
Yet once more I shall die as Man, to soar among the angels;
But even from the state of angel
I must pass on: all except God doth perish.
When I have sacrificed my angel-soul,
I shall become what no mind ever conceived.
I shall become Non-existence.
Non-existence saith to me in organ tones,
Verily unto Him we shall return.
(Rûmî. Mathnawi III, 3901-06; Iqbal. The Life & Work of Jalaluddin Rumi, p200)

In the verse the soul ascends by transmigration from a mineral to God (Universal Spirit), via vegetable, animal, human-being and angel. This step by step ascension corresponds seven layers of Table 1.

4. Mysteries of Roman Mithraism

The Correspondence

Although the system of Roman Mithraic initiations is not a system of meditation, there seems to be a sort of correspondence between it and Ten Bull Pictures. The Table 2 shows the result of a consideration on the correspondence. It seems to me the correspondence can’t be accidental, for both systems developed from the same Iranian tradition. The following is a speculation on the correspondence.

Table 2. Seven Initiation Ranks of Roman Mithraism

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<th>Corresponding Ten Bull Pictures</th>
<th>Mysteries</th>
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<td>Saturn</td>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>Major mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heliodromus</td>
<td>Chidô 治道</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>(8), (9)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perses</td>
<td>Suiko'ô 醉胡王</td>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>(7)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>Shishi 獅子</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>Minor mystery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miles</td>
<td>Kongô 金剛</td>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>(4), (5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nymph</td>
<td>Gojo 吳女</td>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corax</td>
<td>Karura 迦樓羅</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>(1), (2)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commentaries

Corax

Corax is the first stage of Mithraic initiation. Entering into this stage, the initiate leaves the mundane world and begins his spiritual life under the protection of Mercury. He gains knowledge by reading books and learning under his seniors. This stage corresponds to (1) Seeking for the Bull 寻牛 and (2) Finding the Footprints 見跡 of Ten Bull Pictures.

In gigaku 伎楽, Corax is called Karura 迦樓羅, which means crow.

*gigaku 伎楽: It is a ritual masque of Roman Mithraism. According to Shokunihongi 続日本紀** (A Sequel to the History of Japan), Mimashi 味摩之 of Bêkje 百済** brought gigaku from south China district Go 吳 in 612 AD. He organized a group of boys (gigakudan 伎楽団) and performed ritual dance in major Buddhist temples. It was incorporated into National
** Ritiual Institution Utainoinotsukasa 雅楽寮 in 701 AD. (Ogawa. A Study in Mithraism, p65)

** Shokunihongi 続日本紀: Edited by Sugano Mamichi 菅野真道 and Fujiwarano Tsugutada 藤原継縄 in 797 AD. 40 vols.

** Bëkje 百濟: See Tojo. An Introduction to the Simorghian Culture and Mithraism in the East Asia

**

Nymph

The initiate in Nymph becomes a bride of Mithras. His consciousness gains stability by becoming a bride of Mithras. He is requested to practice celibacy under the protection of Venus. Having a certain period without sexual involvement will make his consciousness stable enough to resist any kind of sexual passions. This is the preparation stage for Miles. This stage corresponds to (3) Seeing the Bull 見牛 of Ten Bull Pictures. Becoming a bride of Mithras is equivalent to the homage to Miroku.

In gigaku 伎楽, Nymph is called Gojo 呉女, which means Persian woman (girl). Go 呉 is equivalent to ko 胡, and means Persian. Jo 女 means woman and/or maid. It is a name reflecting the meaning of Nymph (bride of Mithras). In Gigaku Pater 呉公 and Nymph 呉女 make a pair: Persian Lord (Mir) and Persian maid, Mithras and his male bride.

Miles

The initiate in Miles is requested to prove his warrior quality in the initiation rite. Meditations like “taming the bull”, “descent to Hade (Underworld)”, “slaying the dragon” seem to have the equivalent function to the rite of Miles.

In the meditation, the initiate descends into Hades (Underworld) under the protection of Mars. For his consciousness is stable, he can overcome any kind of spell and the dragon, when he encounters it in Hades. A spiritual warrior overcomes his astral body which is symbolized by a bull in Ten Bull Pictures. This stage corresponds to (4) Finding the Bull 得牛 and (5) Taming the Bull 牧牛 of Ten Bull Pictures.

In gigaku 伎楽, Miles is called Kongô 金剛. Kongô means Deva king, who is the conqueror of death and the keeper of the gate to the Heaven.

Leo

The initiate in Leo gains body of fire and becomes immortal under the protection of Jupiter. The immortality is the reward for the initiate who succeeded to prove his warrior quality by a certain heroic act (such as taming the bull or slaying the dragon) in his journey. This stage corresponds to (6) Returning Home Riding the Bull 騎牛帰家 of Ten Bull Pictures.

In gigaku 伎楽, Leo is called Shishi 獅子, which means lion. Shishi is also called Shôsha 笑者, Shôsha 勝者 and Kôsha 輝者. Shô 笑 means laughing, sha 者 means one (man), shô 勝 means victory and kô 輝 means shining, therefore Shôsha 笑者 means the laughing one, Shôsha 勝者 means the victor, Kôsha 輝者 means the shining one.

Perses

The initiate becomes Perses. Perses is a son of Perseus (=Mithras). Becoming a son of Mithras is a proof of his consciousness being raised into buddhic plane. This stage corresponds to (7) Forgetting the Bull 忘牛存人 of Ten Bull Pictures.

In gigaku 伎楽, Perses is called Suiko’ô 醉胡王, which means intoxicated Persian king.
Sui 醉 means intoxicated, ko 胡 means Persian and ô 王 means king. Suiko 醉胡 (Intoxicated Persian) reminds us of famous Persian mystic-poet Hâfez.

Heliodromus

The initiate is allowed to have an experience of mystic union with Mithras through fanâ and bakâ under the protection of Sol. In the meditation the initiate rides on a chariot of Sol drawn by four white horses. Sol the driver of the chariot takes him to the Sun, where he meets Mithras in the majestic radiance. This stage corresponds to (8) Forgetting the Person and the Bull 人牛俱忘 and (9) Returning to the Root 返本還源 of Ten Bull Pictures.

In gigaku 伎楽, Heliodromus called Chidô 治道, which is a name reflecting the meaning of Heliodromus.

Aquila (Pater)

Aquila is the highest stage of Mithraic initiations. Those who succeeded to attain mystic union with Mithras become Perseus, namely a magus. Another name for a magus is mir (Miroku-tenze 弥勒轉世). This stage corresponds to (10) Entering the Mundane World to Give Hand 入鄽垂手 of Ten Bull Pictures.

In gigaku 伎楽, Pater is called Gokô 呉公, which means magi. Go 呉 is equivalent to ko 胡, and means Persian. Kô 公 means lord. Therefore Gokô 呉公 means lord of Persian, namely mir.

Remark

By reading the meditations introduced in chapter 8 (p105·144) and a commentary on Mithra and the ox (p80·81) in The Mysteries of Mithras (Nabarz), readers will get a more general view of Mithraic tradition.

Consideration on the Structure

It is possible to divide Ten Bull Pictures into two parts, the minor and the major mystery (Table A1). The minor mystery consists of picture (1) to (7). Its objective is to gain sound soul and body by developing and purifying buddhic, mantal, astral and ether body. The major mystery consists of (8) to (10). Its objective is to ascend to the Sun sphere (Tusita heaven) to meet with Miroku in order to be in mystic union with Him.

The same structure can be found in Mithraic initiations of Roman Mithraism. The lower four ranks correspond to the minor mystery of Ten Bull Pictures, the upper three ranks to the major mystery of it. Table 2 shows detailed correspondence. Those who succeeded in the major mystery become magi in Roman Mithraism, Miroku-tenze (mir) in Ten Bull Pictures.
Appendix 1: Roman Mysteries of Mithra on the Tree of Life

Mapping onto the Tree of Life

We can reconfirm and gain more deep understanding about the structure of the Roman Mysteries of Mithra, when we map Mithraic initiation ranks and mystic bodies onto the Tree of Life of Qabbalah. Fig. 1 is the result of mapping using planets as keys. Table 3 shows correspondence in detail.

![Fig 1. Tree of Life](image)

Table 3. Tree of Life

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<td>Kether</td>
<td>Stars</td>
<td>Pater (Aquila)</td>
<td>Logos</td>
<td>Mithra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chokmah</td>
<td>Zodiac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cautes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Binah</td>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cautopates</td>
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<td>Sun</td>
<td>Heliodromus</td>
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<td>Corax</td>
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<td>Malkuth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Man</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Note on Table 3
*Seven week-day gods: Saturnus (Binah) represents Godhead and belongs to Seven week-day gods. They mediate the Godhead and man.

The Left and Right Pillars –Four Lower Ranks

At first glance we can find that the lower four ranks are mapped onto the left and right pillars symmetrically, upper three ranks onto the central pillar. It is this structure that is the Qabbalistic expression of Mithraic initiations.

Corax and Nymph

On the tree of life Hod-Corax is paired with Netzach-Nymph at the base of the left and right pillars.

The initiate develops his mental body in Corax, his buddhic body in Nymph. His mental body develops its intellectual and analytical function by reading books and learning under his seniors. His buddhic body develops its synthetic function of love by becoming a bride of Mithras in Nymph. The initiate gains the necessary power to overcome and tame his astral body in Miles.

Miles and Leo

On the tree of life Geburah-Miles is paired with Chesed-Leo at the middle of the left and right pillars.

The initiate conquers to tame his astral body after a long and tough struggle in Miles. He purifies his ether body in Leo. The purification of ether body is easy for the source of pollution (astral body) was already purified.

The Central Pillar –Three Upper Ranks

After making sound basis for ascending by developing and purifying buddhic, mental, astral and ether body keeping symmetry in the lower four ranks, the initiate raises his consciousness to the monadic plane to meet with Mithras (Yazdan* Mithra). His consciousness ascends from Yesod (Perses) to the supreme triangle (Keter-Chokmar-Binah: Pater) via Tiphereth (Heliodromus). Before going over the abyss, his consciousness leaves its grip of I-ness to enter into fanâ (mystic union with Mithras).

*Mazdan: It means “God Most High” in Persian.

Mithraic Godhead on the Tree of Life

Godhead 1: Mithras, Cautes and Cautopates

This idea is inspired by the Godhead (main three deities) of Jôdokyô (Pure Land Buddhism). The Godhead comprise Amitâbha (or Amitâyu), Avalokiteśvara and Mahâsthâmaprâpta. Avalokiteśvara stands on the right of Amitâbha, Mahâsthâmaprâpta on
the left. Their Persian name is known from Manichaean text (Klimkeit, Hans-Joachim. Gnosis on the Silk Road, p5; Lieu, Samuel N. C. Manichaeism in Central Asia & China, p70-71).

Mithra, Sraosha and Rashnu appears in a group as three Judges in the Zurwanite Bundahishn (Zaehner, Zurvan A Zoroastrian Dilemma, p317).

Considering in these points, it seems that Kether symbolizes Mithras, Chokmah Cautes, Binah-Catopates. Cautes stands at the top of Pillar of Mercy, Cautopates stands at the top of Pillar of Severity.

Ain Soph (the Limitless) symbolizes infinite Zurwan. Man knows it in the mystic union with Mithras.

Table 4. Godhead of Pure Land Buddhism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Japanese</th>
<th>Persian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amitāyus</td>
<td>Muryōju</td>
<td>無量寿 Zurwan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amitābha</td>
<td>Amida</td>
<td>阿弥陀 Mithra and/or Ahura Mazda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avalokiteśvara</td>
<td>Kannon</td>
<td>観音 Sraosha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahāsthāmaprāpta</td>
<td>Daiseishi</td>
<td>大勢至 Rashnu</td>
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</table>

There are two merits in this idea:

1. It has compatibility with Mithraic tradition in Jōdokyō (Pure Land Buddhism).
2. It can map Mithras, Cautes, Cautopates and the seven week-day gods on the Tree of Life keeping consistency.

*Jōdokyō 浄土教: Jō淨 means pure, do土 means land, kyō教 means teaching, therefore Jōdokyō means Teaching of Pure Land, namely Pure Land Buddhism.

Note 1

Amitābha rides on a peacock. Yezidi’s Melek Tawus (Azazel) has a halo of unfolded peacock tail feathers. His title means “Peacock King” in Kurdish.

Note 2

Metatron (Methratton, Mithraton, Mittron), who is likely to be Jewish Mithras, is the lord of Briah (World of Creation), presiding over Kether (Mathers. The Kabbalah Unveiled, plate IV, between p30 and p31).

Godhead 2: Zurwan, Mithras and Az

This idea is inspired by Blavatsky’s Isis Unveiled, vol. 2 (p567, p507-508) and Collected Writings, vol. 3 (p464) and Fig. 2.

Mithras is depicted as a youth entwined by a snake surrounded by the zodiac. His name is divided into two parts, namely Mithr(a) and As(Az). Chokmah symbolizes Mithr(a) surrounded by the Zodiac. Binah symbolizes As (Az) the snake entwining Mithr(a). Therefore Chokmah-Binah symbolizes Mithr(a)-As the God entwined by a snake surrounded by the Zodiac. Kether is the symbol of Zurwan (Ain Soph), which man can know in the mystic union with Mithras. This idea is full of rich imagery.

Nabarz’s meditation for Pater would help you to understand bakā in Zurwan (Nabarz. The Mysteries of Mithras, p137-144).
Fig. 2 Mithras entwined by a snake surrounded by the Zodiac  
(From The Mysteries of Mithra, by Frantz Cumont)

**Godhead 3: Manichaean System**

In Manichaeism Kether symbolizes Wâxš zîndag (the Great Spirit), who is the spirit of Zurwan. Chokmah symbolizes Mihryazd (Father of Life, the Living Spirit). Binah symbolizes Zindagân Mâdar (Mother of Life) and Šahrbed (Šahrevar, Xšathra).

Table 5 Manichaean Deities mapped onto the sephiroth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sephiroth</th>
<th>Planet</th>
<th>Manichaeism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kether</td>
<td>Stars</td>
<td>Wâxš zîndag (the Great Spirit, the Spirit of Zurwan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chokmah</td>
<td>Zodiac</td>
<td>Mihryazd (The Living Spirit, Father of Life) and Xröštåg Yazd (Sraosha)*1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binah</td>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td>Zindagân Mâdar (Mother of Life)*2 and Azdegaryazd (Rashnu)*3 and Šahrbed (Šahrevar, Xšathra)*4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesed</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td>Dahìbed (Vahman)*4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geburah</td>
<td>Mars</td>
<td>Wisbed (Bahrâm)*4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiphereth</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Mihryazd (The Third Messenger)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netzach</td>
<td>Venus</td>
<td>Zandbed (Ârmaiti)*4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hod</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td>Mânbed (Tîr)*4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesod</td>
<td>Moon</td>
<td>Xradêšahr (Jesus the Splendour) and Kanîg rôšn (Maiden of Light, Amurdâd*4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malkuth</td>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Ohrmizd (particles of Light)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1: In Manichaean myth Xröštåg Yazd (Sraosha) is closely linked to Mihryazad (M98/991; Klimkeit. Gnosis on the Silk Road, p340-341, p227).
*2: She is the mother of Ohrmizd (Ahura Mazda) (ibid. p224, 227)
*3: In Manichaean myth Azdegaryazd (Rashnu) is closely linked to Mother of Life (ibid, p340-341, p227).
*4: see Bivar. The Personalities of Mithra in Archaeology and Literature, p27

Microprosopos symbolizes Mihryazd’s sons (Šahrbed, Dahibed, Wisbed, Zandbed, Mânbed). Xradēšahr (Jesus the Splendour) and Kanig rōšn (Maiden of Light) are the syzygy gods emanated from Mihryazd (the Third Messenger).

The Godhead comprises Wâxš zîndag (the Great Spirit), Mihryazd (Father of Life) and Zindagân Mādar (Mother of Life). It (the Godhead) emanates a spirit (of Love) on the Sun (Tiphereth). This spirit is called the Sun God Mithra (the Third Messenger).

Manichaean system covers both Godhead 1 and 2. If we choose Wâxš zîndag, Mihryazd and Zindagân Mâdar as Godhead, then it corresponds to Godhead 2. In Both mapping Kether is the symbol of Zurwan. Chokmah is the symbol of Mithra. Binah is the symbol of female principle (Az in Godhead 2, Mother of Life in Godhead 3). If we choose Wâxš zîndag, Xrôštâg Yazd (Sraosha) and Azdegaryazd (Rashnu) as Godhead, then it corresponds to Godhead 1.
## Appendix 2: List of Technical Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin &amp; Sanskrit</th>
<th>Japanese (Pronunciation)</th>
<th>Chinese (Pronunciation)</th>
<th>Literal Expression</th>
<th>Persian</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adamas</td>
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<td>降魔勝使</td>
<td>Wisbed (Bahrâm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Álaya-vijñâna</td>
<td>Arayashiki</td>
<td>阿頼耶識</td>
<td>Hakk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amitâbha</td>
<td>Amida</td>
<td>阿弥陀</td>
<td>Mithra and/or Ahura Mazda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amitâyus</td>
<td>Muryôju</td>
<td>無量寿</td>
<td>Zurwan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>annihilation</td>
<td>Muka, jigashômetsu</td>
<td>無化, 自我消滅</td>
<td>fanâ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Atlas</td>
<td>Jizômeishi</td>
<td>地蔵明使</td>
<td>Mânbed (Tîr)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Kannon</td>
<td>観音</td>
<td>Sraosha</td>
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<tr>
<td>avatar of Mithra</td>
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<td>弥勒転世</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bêkje, Kudara</td>
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<td>ushi, gyû</td>
<td>niu</td>
<td>gav</td>
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<td>Father of Life</td>
<td>Seimeinochichi</td>
<td>生命の父</td>
<td>Mihryazd</td>
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<td>Finding the Bull</td>
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<td>得牛</td>
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<td>Finding the Footprints</td>
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<td>shōyō</td>
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