

***The Moon's Nodes
at Birth
by Dane Rudhyar***

The nodal axis of the planets and the Moon is the line of intersection between the plane in which a planet accomplishes its revolution around the Sun and the plane of the ecliptic (or zodiac) in which the Earth performs its yearly motion also around the Sun. In the case of the Moon's nodes, the revolution is not around the Sun, but around the Earth.

At the north node the Moon passes from the hemisphere (half-cycle) of south latitude (south of the plane of the ecliptic) to that of the north latitude; and the opposite occurs at the south node. The entire nodal cycle of the Moon is said to begin at the north node. The meanings attributed to the north and south nodes — also to the two hemicycles which these begin — are derived from the basic significance given in our civilization since the dawn of history to **any motion directed toward the north**. Northward motion is motion toward the spirit; southward motion is motion from the spirit, which may mean either the release of spirit toward earthly manifestation (spiritual Incarnation, sacrifice, the fall of the seed to the ground) or a withdrawal away from spiritual values or from a condition of integration (thus, decay, disintegration, excavation of unassimilable elements and refuses).

Considering the north node of the Moon as a "point of intake" (in ancient symbolism the Dragon's Head) and the south node as a "point of release"; (the Dragon's Tail) — or in a more strictly biological and functional sense, as "mouth" and "organs of evacuation", (also the procreative organs) — the problem, however, is to define what it is that is taken in and released.

There is a problem, because the answer to the question depends whether a strictly geocentric or a strictly heliocentric approach is taken. In dealing with ancient man's attempt — during the "vitalistic" Ages — to find some kind of principle of order in the startling phenomena of eclipses, I have taken the archaic geocentric approach according to which the nodal axis represents the relationship between the solar and the lunar polarities of Life. What happens at the nodes when the Sun and the Moon form characteristic eclipse — alignments in which there is an extraordinary unification of these two polarities. Generally speaking, the north node, or Dragon's Head, is a point at which the solar spirit is penetrating the lunar instrumentalities of Life. The power absorbed is solar power; the Moon absorbs it. The Earth is the field in which the two polarities of life operate at all times, either for construction (anabolic action) or destruction (catabolic action).

From the modern, heliocentric, astronomical point of view the situation is entirely different, at least on the surface. The plane of the ecliptic is not the plane of the apparent early motion of the Sun as much as it really is the plane of the Earth's orbit. The nodal axis of the Moon links therefore the Moon-plane and the Earth-plane. Whatever energies are being absorbed by human beings on the Earth are therefore **lunar energies**; and the north node symbolizes the intake by earth-nature and by man's earthly personality of the power of the Moon.

However, the meaning of the Moon, in the sun-centered modern approach to the entire solar system, becomes also different from that it had in the old "vitalistic" cosmologies and astrology. The Moon is now the one satellite of the Earth; more significant still, the

symbolical sphere traced by the Moon in her motions around the Earth's globe is like a womb or electro-magnetic field. It is the Mother-envelope and the Mother is the symbol of protective agencies, and in general of the faculty of adjustment or adaptation to the constant challenges of the outer and inner environment.

This faculty, this power to meet the demands of embodied existence and, in so doing, to gain experience and "food" of all types, is what today the Moon represents. It is this power which earth-born organisms absorb at the "point of intake," the north node. And so we have the following description of the meaning of the Moon's nodes and nodal hemicycles:

North Node: Point of intake. Earth-nature is open to and receives the Moon's energies.

South node: Point of release. The results of the assimilation by the living earth-organism (or personality) of the Moon's energies are exteriorized, or (when negative)' are evacuated or repudiated.

Hemicycle beginning with north node: During this period, when the Moon has north latitude, her power is absorbed, then (especially around the point of maximum north latitude) assimilated by the personality. New faculties or powers are built.

Hemicycle beginning with south node: As the Moon moves in south latitude, earth-nature lets go of the results of the assimilation process (whether these be "seed" or "manure"); however, **after** the point of maximum south latitude is reached and the Moon moves again northward, the organism or personality becomes repolarized in expectation for a new period of intake.

Application to Natal Charts

Because the nodes are results of the interaction of two orbital planes they must always be considered as the two ends of a line or axis. It is the axis which counts, and also the entire process defined by the "cycle of latitude" cut in two by this nodal line. North and south nodes have meaning properly only within the sweep of the entire cyclic process — just as the mouth and the rectum have meaning in terms of the entire progress of food-assimilation, or metabolism.

Indeed, all cycles of latitudes represent processes of metabolism, the assimilated products being the type of energy of which the planet whose nodes are being considered is the (symbolical) source or outlet. It must not be forgotten, however, that even in the most modern approach to the solar system the planets still represent agencies which **differentiate** the one basic energy radiated by the Sun. Lunar energy is therefore still, at root, the Sun's energy, a reflected and "lunarized" aspect of it. Planets are outlets of energies, rather than real sources. There is only one source of energy: the Sun.

The Moon's nodal axis has been considered an "axis of fate;" and much of personal fate indeed is a function of the personality's ability to adapt itself to the demands of life and society in its environment. Any factor in the total makeup of personality closely involved in the operations of this process of lunar adaptation is singled out by this involvement, which reacts thus upon the feelings, the moods, the psychic sense, the mental ability to "sense" situations and people — all derived from the basic lunar power of adjustment to the environment.

Thus, the manner in which the Moon's nodal axis is related in a birth-chart to the planets, to the horizon and meridian, and to any other natal factor or axis (the nodes of other planets, the Parts, etc.) is of the greatest significance. First of all, the Moon's nodes axis divides the natal chart into two hemispheres; and every natal factor acquires a general meaning by its position on one side or another of this nodal axis. The hemisphere which is located between the north node and the south node in **the usual order of zodiacal signs** (Aries, Taurus, Gemini, etc.) represents the zone of assimilation and anabolic, up-building activity. The other hemisphere, from south node to north node, is the zone of either positive or negative release — release of seed-elements, or of unassimilated refuses.

We discussed recently in the pages of this magazine the **U. S. chart** erected for July 4, 1776, 5:13 P. M. In this chart the Moon's north node is on Leo 7 1/2°, the south node on Aquarius 7 1/2° — and the Moon on Aquarius 27° 12'. Thus, the Moon has passed her south node and has an increasing south latitude; she is at her phase of maximum release or exteriorization. The typical American individual indeed releases and exteriorizes the lunar ability to adjust to the challenges of his environment, and this in an unusual manner; but this ability was actually built in his ancestral European past, after some centuries of concentration on intellectual analysis and on the ambition to master earth-materials by stressing the ego's will to conquest.

The nodal axis passes (in the Sagittarius rising chart) through the second and eighth houses — thus stressing the factor of resources and management of resources. The second house refers to the resources of the individual and the way he uses them; and it carries the south node emphasis. The American individual is characterized by the way he releases (and frequently wastes!) his resources. What he fails often to see is that these resources and the positive lunar power of mastery over circumstances **are built in his national eighth house**; that is, as a result of partnership, commerce and commingling of efforts. America was built through partnerships and the fruits thereof; the individuals as such released her wealth, and often squandered it. Now the Government and large-scale organizations do the same — perhaps because the recently revealed Pluto is in the second U. S. natal house and fairly near the Moon's south node.

In the north node hemisphere of the U. S. chart we find Neptune, Saturn and Pluto; in the south node hemisphere, all other planets. This may seem puzzling; but all it means, from the point of view I present here, is that the American people are building, or can best build, new powers of adaptation to the challenges of our modern world, through the use of

the Neptune, Saturn and Pluto functions — which can be said succinctly to mean: through federation and faith in distant horizons, through a strong framework of law and ego-power, through large-scale management and integration of production. The U. S. Uranus, Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Sun, Mercury, are, on the other hand, basically polarized in the direction of the exteriorization and release of the lunar power **which had been acquired in the ancestral past of the American people.**

In this sense, the south node refers to acquired tendencies, to innate gifts, and to the instinctive, nearly automatic type of activity through which these inherited tendencies, gifts, abilities are released quite spontaneously. To bank too heavily upon these inherited powers, and especially to **take them for granted** is very often to follow the way of "self-undoing." It may also mean the spontaneous exercise of "genius." In both cases, character often fails to develop, because of lack of real "self-exertion" — self-exertion being one of the characteristic attributes of the north node type of activity. Character is built at the north node; innate talents, or genius, or charm is released at the south node.

In **Queen Victoria's** case, the "inner" planets (Mercury, Venus) and the Sun and Moon are in the north node hemisphere; all "outer" planets (from Mars to Pluto) in the south node hemisphere. She had to build her own inner life and personality; but her ancestral position, her outer life, and all the powers of her realm made of her a great personage.

Most typical is the case of **Mussolini**; for in his birth-chart all planets are in the south node hemisphere. In a sense, he was merely an exteriorization of his ancestral, national past. He was entirely dominated by his or his people's **karma**. His natal Sun-Mercury conjunction was moreover in square to the nodal axis at the very apex (or bottom) of this south node hemisphere — the point of maximum south latitude of the Moon; the point of final self-emptying and disintegration in chaos.

Lenin's birth-chart offers another interesting illustration, with Saturn, rising in Sagittarius, the only planet in the north node hemisphere. He built his power and character with Saturnian authority, fanaticism and ruthlessness; but made himself the "Father" of one third of the world's population in travail of a new social order — whether for good or ill, is not the point here.

Planets at the Nodes

A planet in conjunction with one of the Moon's nodes affects profoundly the capacity in an individual to take in and deliver lunar power — or we might say, to "metabolize" (absorb, digest, assimilate and perhaps repudiate in parts) his experience. The planet may either color the quality of this assimilation process, or set a special field for its most characteristic, destiny-establishing operations.

In Governor Warren's chart Pluto is only 8 minutes of arc away from the Moon's north node in the fifth house. It sets a political and administrative stage for his life-lessons in adaptability. In General Marshall's chart, not only Mercury is one degree away from the Moon's north node, stressing his intellectual approach and the correlative power of mind

necessary for an Army Chief of State, but he was actually born the day of a partial solar eclipse (Sun and Moon conjunct, some 13 degrees ahead of the north node). In the birth-chart of Nikolai Svernik, official head of state (but of course not actual ruler!) in Soviet Russia, we find Saturn conjunct a tenth house north node. A tenth house conjunction of Neptune and north node represents the musical emphasis in the life and personality of Arnold Schoenberg, the iconoclastic composer — and of the American composer, also a great pioneer, Charles Ives. The same conjunction (with Pluto one degree away) in the chart of Gabriel Pascal, the eminent motion picture director (associated with G. B. Shaw), led him to the Neptunian field of the films.

The Sun's proximity to either one of the Moon's nodes, usually reveals an eclipse before or after birth. **H.P. Blavatsky** was one instance, and the configuration is over-emphasized in **Karl Marx' chart**, as he was born during a solar eclipse, also at the north node. There, the two basic expressions of a positive soli-lunar (or earth-moon-sun) relationship, a "new moon" and the north node, are combined. The power of integration along a line of destiny becomes a driving force in the personal life; all else is subservient to it.

A solar eclipse at the south node, in an individual's chart, means theoretically a forceful release of character and an over-insistent projection of inherited gifts or powers. The great Persian Prophet, **Baha'u'llah**, had his Sun rising conjunct the south node and the star "North Scale." His Moon was 40 degrees ahead. There had been a total solar eclipse at the south node, three days before his birth. **The Bab**, his "Herald," was born also one day after a south node eclipse of the Sun and at dawn.

I mentioned last year the general significance of the conjunction of the natal Moon with one of her nodes, and the related emphasis upon the "Mother Image," if not the actual mother, in the growth (or failure to grow!) of the ego and personality. Dependence upon the mother (or a substitute) is usual, in one form or another, with the natal Moon at the north node. If at the south node, the trend is toward either a repudiation of the mother and her influence, or the transformation of the actual mother-relationship into a transcendent psychic Image which becomes the channel for the stressful release of the psychic energy (cf. **Nietzsche's case**, his relation to Cosima Wagner, his powerful Anima complex, etc. — and also the case of **Richard Wagner** himself); or a powerful yearning for being an actual mother and exercising maternal authority over physical or intellectual-spiritual children.

In **President Truman's chart**, the north node is rising, with the Moon below it and thus having already entered the realm of north latitude; and it is a most powerful Moon, alone in the below-the-horizon hemisphere. It was stirred by a south node solar eclipse at the time of his popular **personal** success and re-election in the fall 1948. He had known how to show, character and to identify himself personally with the fate of his nation — a transcendent Mother-Image replacing his most influential mother, who had passed away. The south node eclipse released the energy of what he had built.

In **Henry Wallace's case**, the Moon's nodes axis coincides instead with his natal meridian. With the north node at the fourth house cusp his positive focus of adaptation is in

the inner life, the home; the south node focus releases the power, gained in the inner life, in the public, political (Capricorn) sphere. In contrast, we have **Mahatama Gandhi** with the north node at his natal Mid-Heaven. Politics was his line of greatest personal exertion; the development of his inner life, the harvest of an ancient past.

The Nodes in the Houses

The nodal axis may coincide also with the cusps of two opposite, and complementary, houses of the natal chart. In these cases, the affairs and types of experiences signified by these houses tend to become productive of results upon which the destiny of the person rests. This does **not** mean that everything in the fields of these houses is "fated" and beyond the person's will or power of choice. It means that, there, the forever lasting civil war between the past and the future, between the compulsions (real or imagined) of yesterday and the decisions which alone can build creative tomorrows, is finding its main battlefield. There, decisions are made, or fail to be made; the results are either a creative life, or a fateful sense of failure or guilt which (unless courageously overcome) spells spiritual regression.

Even if the nodal axis does not fall on the exact location of house cusps, its position in any pair of opposite houses gives a special type of emphasis to these houses. Where the north node is — the house, the sign of the zodiac — there **progress through personal self-exertion** is most likely to be made. Where the south node is, there **habits** are more likely to be formed, or followed; it is the "line of least resistance," but also of least exertion. It is easy to act in terms of the type of activities signified by the south-node emphasized house or zodiacal sign; but this very ease may mean a taken-for-granted attitude which tends to defeat the deeper or higher (because most creative) purpose of the Self, the God-within. It may also mean an impersonal or super-personal release of power, or genius.

In both the cases of the "spiritual geniuses," the Persian Prophets aforementioned, the south node is just above the Ascendant. The individuality of such beings was super-personal, the power of an ancient past released through personages of extraordinary power and completely inborn wisdom and actual knowledge. In contrast we see a **John Barrymore**, with the north node below the natal horizon in the first house, seeking to build up his personality, to progress as an individual, reaching occasionally high, but pulled back by a seventh house south node — by habitual associates, by an intemperate yearning for love, and by a deep sense of inner insecurity — again centered at his seventh house where Jupiter and Pluto in Taurus square a nearly exact conjunction of Sun and Venus at the chart's nadir.

In the chart of the great French poet, **Victor Hugo**, we see the north node conjunct Mercury in the fifth house. He dramatized himself, as well as became a great playwright — this was the field of his progress; he was a hard worker. His enthusiasm for social ideals and reform shows, on the other hand, in his eleventh house south node. He fought for social causes, was exiled, dramatized his exile. He remains known mostly as a great literary and

theatrical genius; yet also as the poetic voice of the French humanitarian movement and of 19th century liberalism. Thus, the north node and south node, the fifth and eleventh house meanings, are balanced and integrated in an unusually creative life.

In the chart of the French socialist leader and statesman, Leon Blum, we have the opposite setup, with the north node in the eleventh house, the south node in the fifth house. Here personal progress, integration, the field of intense and sustained efforts is the field of social ideals and reform — the making of great dreams come true. The field of least resistance and of greatest ease is the fifth house — that is, a way of meeting life's challenge by personal self-projection, by self-dramatization, by gambling freely with self and others.

Such nodal characterizations naturally must not stand alone. What they indicate is both very deep and subtle; factors often unrevealed by outer living and public behavior. To discover what is truly positive spiritual progress in a man's life, and what is an easily successful release of ancient abilities and inherited gifts, is often very difficult. To know what is a great talent based on strong personal efforts, and what is spontaneous genius flowing **through** the personality without perhaps adding greatly to personality or character — this is even more difficult. Yet to the psychologist, to the counselor and spiritual guide, such a knowledge may prove essential. The study of the Moon's nodes axis at birth will give them invaluable clues.