

## NURTURE OR NATURE—PLANETS IN CANCER

**As we evolve, we come the realization that not only are we as individuals capable of recognizing our own creative potentials, but we also awaken to the reality that no one else can give them to us. No one else for that matter can truly absolve us from our own errors and no one can save us. We may be inspired by others and may even be led to the doors of wonderful, deep-seated spiritual revelations by others. But only we can open those doors ourselves and only we can manifest the courage to go through them—for the doors on the Path are many as are the tests on each of their thresholds. --A.O.**

A baby is not born into life completely free and innocent, a new entity just waiting to receive its impressions from its parents and environment. These circumstances of birth only serve to (re)awaken the latent karma already present within the auric field and nascent personality of that newly born entity. Each of us is born to continue developing certain energetic patterns, completing some, healing others, improving where improvement is required by the soul, and definitely making mistakes that invoke new karmic situations. All of these circumstances plant the seeds for future endeavors both in the present and in future incarnations.

Even if a person doubts the reality of reincarnation, there is still not a child that is born on Mother Earth who does not carry within his or her genetic code an ancient history. This is the history of the human race in general and his or her biological karma more specifically. We carry both our own tribal and family memory within us as well as the racial memory of all of humanity. We are one. This memory is stored in the Soul, and the more conscious a person becomes during the course of his or her lifetime, the more the Soul awakens that history in the conscious mind. Thus the development of consciousness not only reveals our personal karma but the collective karma of the entire human race as well. This is why we are told in the Ancient Wisdom that the soul-centered human being never feels like a “stranger in a strange land” for everyone we meet is our brother or sister.

Cancer is the sign of foundations, roots, tribe, home, and by extension the keynote of our relationship to the collective consciousness of the Human Family. In traditional, exoteric astrology, the ruler of this sign is the Moon and the life is centered in the solar plexus located and intimately connected to the navel and the psychic umbilical cord that keeps one tied seemingly forever to the karma of one’s immediate family. In his incredible book, *Esoteric Astrology*, the author (known to his students as “The Tibetan Master”) gives the following phrase to describe the Moon-ruled Cancerian: “*Let isolation be the rule, and yet—the crowd exists.*” This sentence implies that when a person’s life is totally centered in the personality, her destiny is to experience isolation and loneliness. Such a state will continue in various degrees until that individual learns how to emerge from the emotional and mental subjectivity that clouds her ability to see outside of her total identification with her personal self. Until then, it is very difficult to connect with others. A tension in the life is needed, an awakening to the reality of the Soul. The latter may also be symbolized by the Moon but on the level of The Cosmic Mother and not

one's biological "mommy." Being tied to mommy is like being tied up like a mummy! The Soul cannot breathe and consciousness is entirely limited.

The Tibetan Master in the same work, also gives us a phrase to describe the more evolved and soul-centered Cancerian: "*I build a lighted house and therein dwell.*" In this he implies that the *illusion* of separateness eventually gives way to the illumination that comes with our identification with the universality of life. It is then that the soul-centered individual becomes the channel for the "Mother of the World," Who when expressed through Cancer, gives unlimited and inexhaustible nourishment to all sentient beings, to all the forms and creations of Life. Thus in soul-centered, esoteric astrology we say that Cancer is ruled by Neptune, Lord of all the oceans. The symbolism here is quite clear: When we have fully emerged from the amniotic fluid surrounding the embryo and are no longer imprisoned by our biological karma, we emerge into the universal waters of Life. We are then capable of total compassion and understanding for others (and ourselves!) and even if alone, are never, ever lonely.

We only feel unnourished when the Mother inside of ourselves is sleeping due to our unconsciousness of Her presence. Imelda Marcos was the wife of the last dictator of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos. She was egocentric, corrupt, and selfish. She was also a Cancer and as a child suffered from poverty, such poverty that she didn't have a pair of shoes until she was seven years old. One of the primary personality characteristics of Cancerians is that they hoard and collect. The phrase, "Put something away for a rainy day," was invented with Cancer in mind. Mrs. Marcos collected shoes. By the time she was "dethroned" she had no less than 3000 pairs of shoes stored in several rooms in her palace and two full-time servants just to take care of them! No matter how many hundreds of millions of dollars she had, no matter how many thousands of pairs of shoes, her solar plexus identified Cancerian self always thought of herself as a shoeless child. And she never got over it. Her palace had thousands of lights but was never illuminated by consciousness. It was always darkened by the shadow of her undernourished personality. Her Moon was never full.

Although Cancer is a watery sign, the Crab inhabits both land and sea. It does indeed come forth as we all do, from the collective matrix of the ocean, gains its nourishment from sea plants and creatures, yet must keep a strong relationship to the beach. A Cancer individual is the same. The Cancer man or woman is intimately in tune with the psychic currents that play in and out of their reality. Nevertheless, Cancer must reach out to the earth for its security and breath. It exists in a psychic sense within the waters, but cannot survive if exclusively in this element. Cancer must seek out its port of anchorage in the rocks and sand of earth. A hint of this relationship may be found when we see that the Moon is exalted in that earthiest of signs, Taurus.

Cancer is forever seeking a home base and on the level of the personality, the physical home (or its lack), domestic harmony (or chaos), food and nourishment (or the fear of lack and starvation) are of major importance to this Child of the Moon. The Moon rules the past and a Cancer never forgets his childhood (nor anything else that triggers his emotions!). If the personality-centered, Moon-ruled Cancerian can hoard, be incredibly

selfish and egotistical, and based in the insatiable need for personal security, the Neptune-ruled Cancerian is quite different. This is an ever-nurturing, generous, giving person who totally embodies the glyph for the sign ♋. This is a pictogram of the two breasts, the part of the body ruled by this sign. It speaks about the rhythm of giving so that when one breast is empty of milk, the other is filling up in preparation to nurture. Thus the soul-centered Cancerian is ever secure in her foundation as a Child of the Mother/ Soul, ever filled with the necessary nutriments to feed a hungry humanity. Her milk is love and love is consciousness.

Now let us examine the meanings of the planets when in Cancer:

**Sun in Cancer:** The Cancerian native is extremely impressionable and has an incredible “sensual memory.” Marcel Proust, the Cancerian author of “Remembrances of Things Past,” a work of thousands of pages, was triggered into undertaking this monumental work by the smell of a cookie! Cancer has a love of the old (or at least an attachment to same) and must learn to how to clean his emotional house on a very regular basis. This requires the release of old thoughts, grudges and feelings that may have nothing whatsoever to do with the present moment. Cancer can take from the past the needed well-learned lessons of life, but must apply these to the present and live in the now.

**Moon in Cancer:** This position is incredibly powerful for it is the natural sign rulership of the Moon. Childhood and especially the relationship to one’s mother will play a very important role throughout one’s life. The Moon-in-Cancer native must feel secure in her own environment. There is a distinct urge to make every place in which she lives a real home. A person with the Sun in Gemini and the Moon in Cancer for example may move around and frequently changing houses and locations but will always make sure to bring along something that once put in place says, “This is my house, this is what is familiar to me.” Aspects from other planets to the Moon in Cancer will tell the astrologer much about the individual’s primary psychological motivations in life.

**Mercury in Cancer:** Sensual memory and sentimentality, especially those thoughts and images connected with childhood will play a very important part in the person’s life. This is a highly imaginative and impressionable person, one who has to remember to live in the “now.” So much of the way one communicates is tied into the past, that the person has to take care that his opinions are his own and not those that are only learned and passed on from one’s family. This is a person who thinks through his feelings, so that the objective, rational thinking processes is often overshadowed by one’s moods.

**Venus in Cancer:** This is a very nostalgic and sentimental person; one tends to become very attached to persons, places and things. The need to have a harmonious family life is quite important, as is the esthetic quality of one’s domestic surroundings. The romantic urge is intimately connected with the need for emotional and economic security. There is also the tendency to hold on to childhood friendships throughout one’s life and loyalty to the people from one’s past is also a strong characteristic of this planet/sign combination.

**Mars in Cancer:** This is a lifetime in which courage has to be cultivated. As a rule, the martial drive toward the aggressive outward expression for personal achievement is curtailed by a certain degree of timidity. The individual has to feel secure in his surroundings in order to project his desires. This is also true when it comes to sexuality as this natural urge is intimately linked with one's emotional mood. This is a person who has a hard time separating the need for nurturing with his sexual orientation. He is profoundly seeking his psychological and emotional security within his sexual needs, thus making the area of sexuality a highly complex issue in life.

**Jupiter in Cancer:** We know that Jupiter is the planet that stimulates the urge for expansion through religion, philosophy and travel. We also know that Cancer is the sign of the home. Putting these things together, we come to the logical conclusion that people with this sign/ planet combination do not travel very far away from home as a rule. Yet within their house, there can be a huge library of books about foreign places. Jupiter in Cancer people are strongly influenced by the religion in which they have been raised—their parents' beliefs are their beliefs. Yet the soul-centered person with this combination is one who knows that all of humanity is her family and that all religions like all people are essentially one. Jupiter however is in exaltation in this sign. Thus, the more highly evolved person with Jupiter in Cancer will have a highly compassionate nature, one that is inclusive of all philosophical traditions, even if that person still practices the faith of her forbearers.

**Saturn in Cancer:** Saturn is said to be in detriment in this sign and with good reason. The inner psychological structure is highly conditioned by the past, especially in terms of one's relationship to early environmental conditions. If Saturn is afflicted in this position, especially by the square, opposition, inconjunction, or conjunction with the Moon, the individual will have a hard time building a life that is not somehow intimately connected with an emotionally injured childhood. If Saturn is well aspected however, the individual will make the most out of his or her early family background. Should Saturn be in strong and positive aspect with Venus, Jupiter or the Moon and the Second or Eighth House is also involved, inheritance is likely. But even if this is the case, it is the past more than the present that conditions the future.

**Uranus in Cancer:** The last time this occurred was between June 1949 and June 1956. This is the postwar generation, one who found themselves growing up in the 1960s and 1970s when the nature of tribe and family were evolving into completely different forms than they took before World Wars I and II (considered by many esotericists as one very long and costly tragedy). As the "Father of Archetypes," Uranus engenders entirely new concepts into human consciousness and so it was for this Uranus in Cancer generation. The family unit will never be the same again and Uranus in Cancer people embody this rebellion against the past. Many individuals with Uranus in Cancer, especially those with Jupiter also in this sign (May 24, 1954 to June 12, 1955) have a profound interest in astrology, metaphysics, and comparative religion. This is due to the fact that the combination of Jupiter/Uranus/Cancer leads a person to embracing a very universal approach to large scale, inclusive, and ancient philosophies and belief systems. The next time Uranus will be in Cancer will be from August 2032 to August 2039.

**Neptune in Cancer:** The last time this planet/sign combination was found in natal horoscopes was between July 20, 1901 to December 25, 1901 and then again from May 23, 1902 to July 19, 1915. One could imagine that our parents or grandparents or for some our great-great grandparents were highly sensitive people when it came to issues surrounding family. These were people who held very deep idealistic aspirations and images about family life, sometimes such feelings were more of a dream than a reality. A number of such individuals were quite psychic, a number of others very superstitious, but all had deeply held spiritual convictions and connections. The next time Neptune is in Cancer (its sign of exaltation) will not be until the second half of the 21st century.

**Pluto in Cancer:** This planet/sign combination last appeared in charts from July 9, 1913 to December 27, 1913 and then again from May 27, 1914 to October 9, 1937, and finally from November 26, 1937 to August 3, 1938. This combination will not reappear until well into the 22nd century. Briefly, Pluto in Cancer speaks about the regeneration of roots and foundations. When acting harmfully, Pluto destroys and degenerates. Families were literally blown up and torn apart during Pluto's passage throughout WWI. Later in the 1930's, families were economically shattered during the Great Depression. Finally, Pluto in Cancer brought in the era of fascism in Japan, Italy, Russia and Germany. The reader should remember that the shadow side of Pluto rules gangsterism and the underworld. It is also a First Ray planet that when applied to humanity's "left-handed path" rules the wrong use of governmental will and power. Yet we should also remember that positive Pluto gives humanity the power to restore and regenerate. Thus it was the great task of people born with Pluto in this position to rebuild the world after the great catastrophes mentioned above.

© Alan Oken, All Rights Reserved