Patterns of Destiny

Hindu Nāḍī Astrology

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Hindu Nāḍī Astrology

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नाडिग्रन्थानृषिविरचितान् केचिदाहुः सुसिद्धान् मूढग्राहं ग्रहफलपरं नाडिशास्त्रं तथान्ये।
सूक्ष्मार्थानां सततमननाद्वाक्यसंशोधनेन पूर्वाचार्यानहमपि पुनः पूजयाम्यग्रबुद्ध्या॥
नाडिग्रन्थेषु भिन्नेषु योगशक्त्या चिदम्बरे। विद्युतं विद्यया सार्धं हयग्रीवमुपास्महे॥

The Historical Point of View, put briefly, means that when a learned man is presented with any statement in an ancient author, the one question he never asks is whether it is true. He asks who influenced the ancient writer, and how far the statement is consistent with what he said in other books, and what phase in the writer's development, or in the general history of thought, it illustrates, and how it affected later writers, and how often it has been misunderstood (specially by the learned man's own colleagues), and what the general course of criticism on it has been for the last ten years, and what is the 'present state of the question'. To regard the ancient writer as a possible source of knowledge – to anticipate that what he said could possibly modify your thoughts or your behaviour – this would be rejected as unutterably simple-minded.

C.S. Lewis: *The Screwtape Letters*

Contents

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṃśanāḍī*
AV	*Atharvaveda*
BDhS	*Baudhāyanadharmasūtra*
BhGBh	*Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* of Śaṅkara
BJ	*Bṛhajjātaka*
BPHS	*Bṛhatpārāśarahorāśāstra*
BS	*Bṛhatsaṃhitā*
BSBh	*Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of Śaṅkara
CA	*Carmen astrologicum*
ChU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
ChUBh	*Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya* of Śaṅkara
CKN	*Candrakalānāḍī*
CS	*Carakasaṃhitā*
DhN	*Dhruvanāḍī*
DN	*Dīghanikāya*
GDhS	*Gautamadharmasūtra*
GN	*Gurunāḍī*
HR	*Horāratna*
HS	*Horāsāra*
JA	*Jātakābharaṇa*
JAN	*Jyotiṣārṇavanavanīta*
JKP	*Jātakakarmapaddhati*
JP	*Jātakapārijāta*
LJ	*Laghujātaka*
MBh	*Mahābhārata*
MD	*Muhūrtadīpikā*
MP	*Matsyapurāṇa*
MSa	*Mānasāgarī*
MSm	*Manusmṛti*
NCC	*New Catalogus Catalogorum*
NSW	*Nachträge zum Sanskrit-Wörterbuch*
PhD	*Phaladīpikā*
PM	*Praśnamārga*

S.a.	*sine annum* (no year)
S.l.	*sine locum* (no place)
SA	*Sārāvalī*
SAC	*Sarvārthacintāmaṇi*
TB	*Tetrabiblos*
TL	*Tamil Lexicon*
VM	*Vidyāmādhavīya*
VYJ	*Vṛddhayavanajātaka*
YJ	*Yavanajātaka*
YSm	*Yājñavalkyasmṛti*
YSu	*Yogasūtra*
YY	*Yogayātrā*

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1. INTRODUCTION

People who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like.

Abraham Lincoln

1.1. OBJECT OF THE STUDY

The object of this study is a Hindu divinatory practice known as *nāḍī* reading. I use the word *divinatory* here in a broad sense, akin to the definition given by Luck:

> Foretelling the future, interpreting the past, and, in general, discovering hidden truth (by way of clairvoyance, precognition, telepathy, and other such phenomena) was called *divinatio* by the Romans. The noun *divinatio* is derived from the verb *divinare* 'to predict', which is no doubt related to *divinus* 'divine' in the sense of "pertaining to a god or to the gods".[1]

It may not be out of place to remark initially that divination, whether sanctioned or condemned by religious authority, has been practised within every major religious tradition, and continues to thrive even today – within the boundaries of traditional religions as well as in the context of New Age or 'esoteric' spirituality, where it often plays a major part. This staying power of divination is no doubt largely due to its intimate relation to fundamental religious questions concerning fate and free will, divine intervention and retribution, etc., as well as to ritual observances of many kinds. The study of divinatory theory and practice therefore forms an important aspect of the study of religions past and present.[2]

[1] Luck 1985:229.

[2] As noted by Smith 1991:282f., a cultural preoccupation with divination is not, as often popularly assumed, a sign of lacking modern or scientific outlook: 'In fact, two of the cultures of the world *least* interested in divination appear to be the traditional Australian Aborigines and the American Plain Indians. On the other hand, in the twentieth century West, where science seems to be something of a god, divination and magical practices are surprisingly prevalent. [...] Like science, divination is concerned with natural phenomena and predictable, ordable processes; but like religion, it relies heavily on faith and presupposes some sort of personal connection with the constantly unfolding but mysterious patterns of cosmic change.'

Although literally 'pertaining to the gods' or to the divine, the term *divination* is not necessarily limited to those forms of prophecy in which a personal deity or spirit is believed to communicate through human or non-human agents. Zuesse, suggesting a threefold typology, terms such varieties *possession divination*, the two remaining types being *intuitive divination*, in which the diviner directly perceives the thing divined, and *wisdom divination*, in which he 'decodes impersonal patterns of reality'. While Zuesse assigns a considerable number of techniques to the possession category, I would argue that, in the Hindu context at least, most of these are in fact viewed by their practitioners as 'reflecting the operation of impersonal laws within a coherent divine order' – that is to say, as forms of wisdom divination.[1]

Daiva 'divine', a Sanskrit cognate of *divinatio*, appears in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* as a branch of learning – 'soothsaying' or 'the science of portents'[2] – together with such disciplines as mathematics, theology, astronomy, etc. Several of these bear a close relationship to Vedic religious praxis – not least the astronomy, which also contained a fair measure of astral divination, though of a less elaborate variety than the horoscopic astrology later imported from the Hellenistic world.[3] In the later language especially, *daiva* generally means 'fate, destiny', and the epithet *daivajña* 'knower of fate' is used of diviners, particularly astrologers.

Astrology or *jyotiṣa* is the most prestigious and encompassing form of Hindu divination, permeating Indian society today as it has done for centuries: from its universities – where, as part of current Hindutva efforts and amidst much upheaval, astrology was recently introduced as an academic discipline – to the matrimonial columns of its daily papers. Horoscopes cast at birth

[1] Zuesse 1987:375ff.

[2] ChU 7.1.2–4: Olivelle 1998:259; Radhakrishnan 1992:469. The latter rendering is presumably based on Śaṅkara's gloss: *utpātajñānam* 'knowledge of omens' (ChUBh ad 7.1.4).

[3] The term *horoscopic* refers to the use of the ascendant or rising sign (Gk. ὡροσκόπος 'hour marker'), by which the heavens are divided into twelve segments or 'houses'; cf. Chapter 4.

are kept for life, road maps of the future: 'To one who does not have his birth chart, revealing the good and evil results [of previous action]', says a 17th century author, 'life is as dark as a house at night without a lamp.'[1]

As it happens, this particular author was not strictly speaking a Hindu, but a Jain; what has just been termed 'Hindu divination' is in fact practised by the laity of most or all religious denominations in India. And although such practices are repeatedly forbidden to ascetics – a fact testifying in itself that the fortune-telling Indian *sādhu* (holy man) is no recent phenomenon – these strictures do not reflect any doubt as to the validity of divination, but rather mark it as a worldly and perhaps not wholly respectable occupation.[2]

The many non-astrological forms of divination prevalent in classical as well as modern India are generally subsumed under the heading of *jyotiṣa* or *jyotiḥśāstra* and regarded as its auxiliary branches (*śākhā*). Astrological texts often devote a number of chapters to such arts as auspices (*śakuna-śāstra*), chiromancy and physiognomy (*sāmudrika-śāstra*), oneiromancy (*svapna-śāstra*), geomancy (*vāstu-śāstra*) and pneumomancy (*svarodaya-śāstra*). Of these, *śakuna-śāstra*, like the English words *auspices* and *augury*, originally referred to the observation of certain birds (Skt. *śakuna*, Lat. *avis*), but has widened into a generic term for the interpretation of omens. In a somewhat

[1] MSa 1.11:
yasya nāsti kila janmapatrikā yā śubhāśubhaphalapradarśinī /
andhakaṃ bhavati tasya jīvitaṃ dīpahīnam iva mandiraṃ niśi //

[2] Olivelle 1995:127ff. contains several such instances, including MSm 6.50:
na cotpātanimittābhyāṃ na nakṣatrāṅgavidyayā /
nānuśāsanavādābhyāṃ bhikṣāṃ lipseta karhicit //
'[The ascetic] should never seek to obtain alms by [reading] signs and omens, by knowledge of the stars and of [signs on] the body, or by teaching and debate.' Similar injunctions are found in Buddhist and Jain sources. Qvarnström 2002:113n refers to the Jain *Uttarādhyayanasūtra* (8.13) as denying *śramaṇa* (ascetic) status to diviners; similarly, the Buddhist *Brahmajālasutta* (1.21ff.) of the DN lists a large number of divinatory techniques practised by some *śramaṇas* but denounced by Gotama as 'low arts' (*tiracchānavijjā*) and 'wrongful livelihood' (*micchājīva*). For further discussion on the religious status of astrologers, cf. chapter 3.

more restricted sense, *śakuna-śāstra* deals with the cries and movements of a plethora of wild and domestic animals – perhaps most commonly, as noted by White, dogs.[1]

The pride of place thus given to astrology is presumably due at least in part to its 'scientific' character, by which I mean not only its complexity and systematic nature, but above all its claims to objectivity; for divinatory arts vary in their degree of dependence on the diviner. Scrying (gazing at a smooth surface such as a crystal ball or a bowl of ointment), for instance, is a wholly subjective art: the images seen and interpreted by the scryer are not visible to anyone else. Divination based on external phenomena such as the flight of birds is, in this sense, more objective; but the focus is still on the unique and non-repeatable observation of the diviner. The planetary positions at a person's birth, on the other hand, may be calculated any number of times by different astrologers, with – ideally at least – identical results. A personal ability on the part of the astrologer to apply the various rules of interpretation is still called for; but this is predominantly an intellectual skill, rather than a mystical or magical one.

Nāḍī reading, too, is generally described as a form of astrology – though, as we shall see, this designation may not apply in an equally strict sense to all branches of the art – and it is my belief that its power of fascination lies precisely in the supreme objectiveness that it claims to achieve. The role of the diviner, or *nāḍī* reader, is here minimized: he is neither the locus nor the interpreter of the signs, but merely the mouthpiece of ancient sages or divinities who, endowed with a minute knowledge of astrological principles, are believed to have set down in writing the details of the client's life long before the birth of either reader or client.

Although studies by western scholars on any form of Hindu divination are few enough, the astrological systems merit particular attention, as the past two decades have seen a huge increase in popular western interest in *jyotiṣa* (often misnamed 'Vedic' astrology). Following the decline of astrology in 17th

[1] White 1995:288.

century Europe, interest in the art was first rekindled two centuries later, largely through theosophical influence.[1] But while India certainly deserves her share of the credit or blame for inspiring this development, it was towards the resurrection of *western* astrology (in a modernized and, be it said, rather less sophisticated form than before) that the nineteenth-century enthusiasts strived. Today, however, unmistakably Hindu astrological readings can be had in major cities throughout the western world – readings not only based on Hindu techniques and couched in Hindu terminology, but presupposing a Hindu ontology (including belief in *karman*, rebirth, and the Hindu pantheon) and often culminating in prescriptions of Hindu ritual observances aiming at the propitiation of various deities, such as the chanting of *mantras*, performance of *pūjā* (ritual worship) or *homa* (fire sacrifice), etc. Practitioners are often, though by no means always, affiliated with various Neo-Hindu organizations, some of which take an active part in arranging both readings and subsequent ritual remedies at decidedly upmarket prices.

In the wake of this recent westward expansion of what one might call mainstream *jyotiṣa*, there has come also an awareness of the phenomenon of *nāḍī* reading. Year by year a growing number of western clients, not least from the German-speaking areas, visit the Indian 'palm-leaf libraries' to discover their destiny; occasionally, a *nāḍī* reader will even make a tour of Europe or North America, giving readings. Popular books and articles as well as television documentaries have been produced on the subject; but so far, no scholarly studies.[2]

1.2. Purpose and scope

My original intention was for this study to focus more or less exclusively on the theory and practice of *nāḍī* divination, particularly on a certain group of Sanskrit *nāḍī* texts. I soon

[1] On the importance of theosophy for the development of western esoteric lore from the late 19th century to the present, see Hammer 2001:59ff. *et passim*.

[2] See, for instance, York 1995; Ritter 1998; Holt 1998; Krassa & Habeck 1999; Zeyen 2000. Perhaps needless to say, a great deal of information and misinformation on *nāḍīs* is also available on the Internet, where a few *nāḍī* readers even offer online readings payable by credit card.

realized, however, that the understanding of those texts presupposed an understanding of classical Hindu astrology, in its technical aspect as well as its relation to the larger Hindu worldview, and that no reliable and readily available introductory text on this subject existed to which readers could be referred.

Over the past several decades some excellent work has been done on the history of Hindu astrology, particularly by Pingree, whose primary interest has been the transmission and development of the exact sciences (including *jyotiṣa*) in India and elsewhere.[1] But for a synthesis of the actual system and methodology of Hindu astrology, I could locate only a single scholarly source: Türstig's *Jyotiṣa: das System der Indischen Astrologie*.[2] Apart from being of limited availability and accessible only to readers of German, the emphasis of this work is largely on the catarchic or electional (*muhūrta*) branch of astrology, making it less suited as an introduction to the art of genethlialogy or natal astrology (*jātaka*) with which the *nāḍīs* are chiefly concerned.[3] I therefore found it necessary to broaden the scope of my study so as to include a discussion of the theoretical framework and basic *modus operandi* of Hindu astrology.

The purpose of the present work, then, is to examine the system of *nāḍī* divination, particularly as evinced in certain Sanskrit texts discussed below, and with special attention given to its underlying beliefs and worldview; and, preparatory to this, to outline the foundation of classical Hindu astrology on which

[1] See Pingree 1970–, 1976, 1978, 1981, 1997.

[2] Of popular works on this subject, there is of course no shortage; among the literally hundreds of English-language titles on the market, some of the most readable introductory texts are Raman 1986; Bhat 1988; Ojha 1995; deFouw & Svoboda 1996.

[3] While Türstig does include a translation of a *jātaka* text (SA) in addition to one on *muhūrta* (VM), his synopsis of natal horoscope interpretation is very brief, and his overall presentation tends strongly towards catarchic astrology – e.g., in describing the signs of the zodiac (*rāśi*) as 'less important' to Indian astrology than the lunar mansions (*nakṣatra*), a statement which would be highly misleading if applied to genethlialogy (Türstig 1980:349). For definitions of these technical terms and of the various branches of *jyotiṣa*, cf. Chapter 4.

the *nāḍī* system rests and its relations to Hindu thought generally.

1.2.1. Nāḍī: *term and concept*

In his survey of Sanskrit astrological literature, Pingree refers to the *nāḍī* genre merely in passing:

> It would not be possible to close this discussion of the literature on *jātaka* without reference to one of the most notorious texts of this genre, which has had numerous offshoots. This is the vast collection of thousands of potential horoscopes assembled under the name Bhṛgu-saṃhitā, and presented in the form of a dialogue between Bhṛgu and Śukra. [...] The earliest dated manuscript was copied in 1645; I doubt that the work antedates the sixteenth century. The manuscript copies all originate in North India, where some extraordinarily diligent fellow compiled it. A similar collection found in South India is the mammoth Saptarṣi nāḍi in Tamil.[1]

There are in fact a large number of South Indian *nāḍī* texts in existence, in Sanskrit as well as Tamil (and reportedly in other Dravidian languages). The NCC lists numerous Sanskrit astrological texts containing the word *nāḍī*, some of which exist in single manuscripts, others in multiple copies. Few if any have been microfilmed or otherwise made publicly available.

What, then, are the defining characteristics of *nāḍī* divination? The lowest common denominator of the various practices so called appears to be the fact that predictions for a client's future, answers to his or her questions, etc., are purportedly read out from a pre-existent, physical text (generally in the form of palm-leaf manuscripts) – thereby, as pointed out above, minimizing the apparent involvement of the *nāḍī* reader and increasing the objective status of the reading.[2] Nor are the texts so used considered subject to the symbolic interpretation of the diviner, as is necessarily the case when texts of a basically non-divinatory nature, such as sacred scriptures, are used for oracular purposes (a common practice in many cultures, including the Christian

[1] Pingree 1981:96f.

[2] A 'grey area' would seem to be the so-called *jīva-* ('living') *nāḍīs*, believed to be inhabited by a deity or *ṛṣi* (sage) who at the time of reading manifests the text on an otherwise blank page!

west).[1] On the contrary, a *nāḍī* reading is ideally so specific as to be applicable to one client only; indeed, many *nāḍī* readers claim that their texts supply not only the name of the person consulting the text, but even those of his or her parents, spouse, etc.

As an example of the genre, a modern author relates this 'test reading' (miniature biography) of Mohandas K. Gandhi, allegedly included in the *nāḍī* text *Satyasaṃhitā*:

> The native will be born in a holy city on the Coast of the Ocean. His father will be a Dewan or Prime Minister. At the age of 20 he will go to a foreign country. His mother will die at the [native's] age of 22 in his absence. His father will die when he is 16. He will have four sons of whom three will be engaged. He will marry at 13. At 32, he will be a lawyer. He will consider the whole world as his family; will always speak the truth and will be pure hearted. Pride and arrogance will not touch him. There will be no distinction between his thoughts, words and deeds. While living as a *Grihastha* or house-holder he will live as a hermit at heart. At 62, he will be very unhappy when running through the period of [the planet] Rahu. At [the] age of 66, he will fare well and achieve some success in his mission. Before 65, he will profitably meet the Emperor of the White People. His father will have more than one wife and he will be born of the second wife. He will resort to fast[ing] for the good of the world and will live above 70.[2]

Unusual as this rather spectacular form of divination may be, it is not wholly without parallels outside of India. A typologically similar phenomenon appears to be the Chinese art of *t'ieh pan shen shu* or 'iron plate divine number' divination, in which numeric sequences generated by calculations made on the basis of a client's birth data are linked to numbered sentences, often quite specific in nature, contained in printed divination books.[3] As mentioned by Pingree, there is also a North Indian text genre similar to the *nāḍīs*, based on horoscope reading and known as *Bhṛgusaṃhitā*. The present study, however, is concerned only

[1] For a description of Hindu divinatory practices of this kind, see Kane 1977:811f.

[2] Raman 1991:274.

[3] I have not been able to find any scholarly studies explicitly discussing *t'ieh pan shen shu*. For an excellent introduction to the many interrelated varieties of Chinese divination, however, see Smith 1991.

with the phenomena explicitly known as *nāḍī* reading or *nāḍī* astrology.

The earliest English-language reports of *nāḍī* reading that have come to my notice, published in Indian theosophical journals dating from the late 19th century, suggest that there has been little material change or development in its methodology (or indeed in its reliability) since that time.[1] There may, however, be some significance in the fact that no mention is made in these reports of *nāḍī* texts written in languages other than Sanskrit, nor of the use of thumb reading as a means of locating sections within the text. As will be discussed below, the thumb print appears today to be a far more common (and, of course, more universally available) means of identifying relevant manuscript pages than the client's natal horoscope, although readings as such still maintain an astrological structure.

The term *nāḍī* (Sanskrit, occasionally spelt *nāḍi*) or *nāṭi* (Tamil, the intervocalic *ṭ* being pronounced *ḍ*) itself is of disputed derivation. In the technical sense which concerns us here, it may be derived from the Tamil verb *nāṭu* 'to enquire after; to examine; to look at', from which is also formed the noun *nāṭṭam* 'examination, investigation, astrology', etc.[2] The idea of a Tamil/Dravidian origin is supported by the fact that, to the best of my knowledge, all texts containing the term in its astrological sense, even when composed in Sanskrit, originate in the Dravidian language area.

There is, however, a proper Sanskrit noun *nāḍī*, the primary meaning of which is 'tube, hollow stalk'. From Upaniṣadic times, this has been used to designate a number of channels or 'arteries' through which the vital force or breath (*prāṇa*) is thought to pulsate through the human body; hence, a derived meaning of

[1] See Olcott 1885; Row 1885; Judge 1885; Olcott 1886; Row 1891.

[2] This explanation was spontaneously offered me by a Tamil-speaking *nāḍī* reader during a reading which I experienced in 2002: 'Since you are coming at a particular age, and you yourself are coming to know your prediction, that is why this is called *nāṭi-c÷tiṭam* [*nāḍī-jyotiṣa*]. In Tamil, *nāṭi* means "coming towards".' Also technically possible, but perhaps less likely, is a derivation from the verb *nāṭṭu*, the basic meaning of which is 'to fix, plant, establish' etc., but secondarily also 'to write, inscribe, as placing a style upon a palm leaf' (TL 2205b).

nāḍī is 'pulse'. Some writers would connect the word in this sense with the divinatory art,[1] while others again focus on *nāḍī* as a particular measure of time (synonymous with *ghaṭī*), related to the rising of minute divisions of the zodiac over the horizon. As will be discussed below, the notion of such divisions, also known as *nāḍīs*, is a key concept in certain *nāḍī* texts.[2]

1.3. Sources and method

As stated above, my objective is to examine the divinatory system of *nāḍī* astrology, with particular reference to its underlying ontological assumptions. I attempt to do this through a study of three Sanskrit *nāḍī* texts, prefaced by a survey of the classical astrological teachings forming the substructure of those texts, as well as by an account of my own experiences of present-day *nāḍī* reading.

The study is thus divisible into three major sections, the two latter of which are based on textual sources. The sources of the introductory first section, comprising Chapter 2, are not texts as such, but rather entire reading situations, including the readers themselves, their physical surroundings, etc. The method of this section may be described as one of participant observation; it aims at a description of the ritual use of *nāḍī* texts as seen through the eyes of a client, and related in narrative form. In this connection, being European (and even Tamil-illiterate) is not necessarily a disqualification: while obviously setting me apart from Indian *nāḍī* clients, this circumstance simultaneously makes me representative of what is, as pointed out above, a fairly large and fast-growing section of the *nāḍī* readers' clientele: the western 'spiritual tourist'.

[1] Astrologer R.G. Row, writing under the pseudonym Meena, states that *nāḍī* astrology 'is so called because, predictions as per this system were originally made from a study of the Nadis (*i.e.* pulse) of persons in the same manner as Ayurvedic Doctors do' (Meena 1954:II:1).

[2] Row 1891:483f. notes that on average, one zodiacal sign rises in five *nāḍīs* (two hours); each *nāḍī* in this sense (24 minutes of time) is divided into 60 *vināḍīs*, making 300 *vināḍīs* in a sign – corresponding neatly to the fact that a zodiacal sign is divided by some texts into 150 parts called *nāḍīs* or (*nāḍī-*) *aṃśas*, each of which has a former and a latter half (*pūrvārdha*, *uttarārdha*).

Although my personal experiences of *nāḍī* reading date back to 1995, all but one of the readings related in Chapter 2 took place during the month of November, 1999, during a tour of South India made for the express purpose of gathering materials for this study. Much of this journey was undertaken in the company of a recent acquaintance who, coincidentally, was at that time in search of *nāḍī* readings. This companion, some of whose readings I had the opportunity of witnessing first-hand, may be considered a fairly typical western *nāḍī* client: a German-speaking meditation teacher with a strong personal interest in astrology and *nāḍī* reading, but without any academic agenda. I believe that our contrasting personalities and experiences have contributed towards bringing out certain aspects of the *nāḍī* phenomenon more clearly in the narrative.

The textually oriented second and third sections, comprising the bulk of the study (Chapters 3–4 and 5–6, respectively), differ to some extent with regard to method. The second section, aiming at an overview of classical Hindu astrology as it had developed by the late 17th century (this being roughly the date of the anonymous *nāḍī* texts discussed in the third section), is necessarily of a synthetical nature, while the third section itself, being concerned with a closer study of a small number of texts, is primarily analytical. Chapter 3, dealing with the ideological framework of Hindu astrology, draws on non-astrological as well as astrological source texts in an attempt to capture the general tenor of Hindu thinking on issues central to divination, while Chapter 4 depends entirely on classical *jyotiṣa* manuals for its delineation of the basic procedure of casting and reading a Hindu horoscope. Where critical editions of such manuals exist, they have been used; to a large extent, however, I have had to rely on commercially available, 'vulgate' versions. Nor has it been my intention to study these works from a text-critical point of view, but rather to examine and synthesize their divinatory methodology.

The overall object of the second section is thus to describe the mainstream Hindu astrological system presupposed by the *nāḍī* authors, with a view to making their own writings intelligible as well as revealing any departures on their part from

the greater astrological tradition. The third section deals directly with the *nāḍī* texts: Chapter 5 by thematically discussing their form and contents, Chapter 6 by presenting extracts from all three texts along with annotated English translations. Again, the purpose is not to produce a text-critical edition, but to examine their contents with regard to the divinatory system as well as the larger religious worldview.

The present study does not claim to be anything but a modest beginning in the study of *nāḍī* astrology, based on very limited sources. *Nāḍī* reading, and Hindu divination in general, is a vast field meriting much research (textual as well as anthropological), but hitherto largely neglected by western scholars – a fact reflected in the relative paucity of secondary sources cited below. I can only hope that this effort will be followed by many others, each illuminating yet an aspect of a vital and fascinating subject.

1.3.1. Translations and orthography

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Sanskrit are my own, even when the Sanskrit text editions referred to do include English renderings. There are two major reasons for this policy. Firstly, the translations included in such editions may be imprecise or even inaccurate. This unfortunately applies to a number of popular editions of astrological source texts. Secondly, even when accurate, the translator's choice of technical terms may differ from mine in such a way that adopting the translation given might obscure a line of reasoning in the surrounding text.

For the sake of clarity, and to facilitate comparisons, translations of astrological terminology conform as far as possible to the existent, more or less standardized vocabulary of western astrology. Sanskrit and Tamil terms are given in standardized orthographic forms throughout, except in verbatim quotations from written material. South Indian representations of Sanskrit words in particular might otherwise cause unnecessary confusion, involving as they do both a Tamilization of the Sanskrit phonemes and, in writing, a rather unsystematic

transcription of these into the Latin alphabet. Thus, *Gowsica* has been normalized to *Kauśika*, *Sugar* to *Śuka*, etc.

2. Thumbing across South India

2.1. Chennai

November, 1999: arriving at my hotel in the pre-dawn hours, I find Matt waiting for me. Brought together by a mutual interest in the Hindu art of *nāḍī* divination, we recently decided to team up and go hunting for *nāḍī* readers in South India. My main objective is to collect material for a scholarly study, but like Matt I also take a personal interest in the phenomenon and would be thrilled to get a convincing reading.

Matt has been in India for a few days already, and as we talk, I soon learn that he has started ahead of me. Eager for adventure and determined to make the most of time, he experienced his first reading within hours of his arrival in Chennai (formerly Madras) on the previous day.

'It was amazing', he says excitedly. 'The *Śivanāḍī* told me everything about myself: my full name, my parents' names, and my horoscope. It was all in the leaf. And he didn't ask for anything but my thumb-print.'

From personal experience as well as numerous first-hand reports by friends and acquaintances, I am familiar with the standard procedure of a *nāḍī* reading. Initially, the reader or his assistant will examine the client's thumb impression – right hand for males, left for females – taking note of the particular pattern of swirls, lines and dots. From this pattern one or more bundles of palm-leaf manuscripts are identified, one of which is said to contain the client's personal reading.

Each bundle may hold fifty or more leaves, and from each leaf one or more statements are read out, to be confirmed or denied by the client: 'You are the second son of your parents.' 'You have three daughters.' 'Your name begins with an M.' This goes on until a leaf is found that matches up in every particular. That leaf points to the general reading or first *kāṇḍa* (chapter), giving a bird's-eye view of the client's life: his name and

horoscopic details;[1] parents' names and occupations; number and sex of siblings, along with other noteworthy aspects of his family background; and major past and future events, often ending with the precise year and date of death – all supposedly revealed by some ancient sage or divinity for the benefit of mankind. Further *kāṇḍas*, usually up to fifteen in number, may be consulted for more detailed information on any particular area of life.

Previous visits to the Chennai area have brought me into contact with three different readers, but all failed to produce the sense of wonder that is now plain to be seen on Matt's face. Two readings, from a *Mīnākṣīnāḍī* and a *Gaṇeśanāḍī*, respectively, were so vague and (in their few verifiable statements) incorrect that I chose to terminate the sessions and save my money.[2] The third one, an *Agastyanāḍī*, started out well enough by very nearly identifying my mother's first name in the yes-or-no session, but ultimately failed; my leaf, the reader said, could not be found among his partial collection, but should be sought in the main depot near Chidambaram – a lead which I did not pursue at the time.

Matt too was disappointed at first. Working from the list we had put together in advance, with names and addresses of *nāḍī* readers collected from various sources, his first choice had been a *Kauśika-Agastya-nāḍī* in the western part of town. It was a big place with two buildings, and presumably big business, as it housed a number of students training to become *nāḍī* readers in their own right. However, after hours of waiting and wrangling with the irascible translator, whose task it is to convey the Tamil readings in English to foreign clients, Matt's leaf was not found, in spite of his going through two full bundles of fifty or sixty leaves each.

The translator told Matt that the *nāḍī* reader's headquarters are located in Vaitheeswaran Koil; the main reader there, a man

[1] Generally in the form of the zodiacal sign placements of the nine planets and the ascendant; cf. Chapter 4.

[2] *Nāḍī* texts are typically named after the deity or *ṛṣi* (sage) credited with the predictions given in them.

called Sivasamy, is already on our list. Vaitheeswaran Koil, taking its name from the temple of Vaidyeśvara,[1] is a small town on the road between Chidambaram and Kumbakonam, reputed to house the largest collection of *nāḍī* manuscripts in India. Every few weeks, so the translator claimed, the *Kauśika-Agastya-nāḍī* reader goes to Vaitheeswaran Koil, returns a stack of used *nāḍī* bundles for which he pays Sivasamy rent, and brings a fresh stack with him back to Chennai. The translator could not say how the reader would know in advance which palm-leaf bundles are required for the weeks to come, but he did state that out of a hundred people approaching the *Kauśika-Agastya-nāḍī* in Chennai for a reading, only forty or so actually find their leaves. If a client's leaf is not found, no fee is charged.

On his second try, however, Matt struck lucky. The *Śivanāḍī* reader he tells me about is based in Salem, but has a Chennai branch which he visits regularly; Matt was fortunate to catch him here yesterday, as he is returning to Salem today. Both offices are on our list of addresses already – the Chennai one, inexplicably, as a *Bhṛgu-maharṣi-nāḍī*, the Salem one as an *Agastyanāḍī*.[2]

Although *nāḍī* readers generally permit clients to audiotape their readings once the right leaf is found, and some even provide this service for the client (in addition to small notebooks where the reading is transcribed in Tamil), Matt was not allowed to tape the preliminary yes-or-no session at the *Śivanāḍī*. From memory and his partial notes, however, he lists a number of test statements which he was able to confirm:

'You are the only son of your mother's second husband and your father's second wife.'

'Both your parents are still alive, but you are living apart from them in a foreign country.'

[1] Śiva as the Lord of physicians.

[2] Sage Agastya, often credited with the invention of the Tamil language, is very popular in the Tamil-speaking South. His name is associated with many *nāḍī* texts, including the *Śivanāḍī* consulted by Matt, although this text was presented as a dialogue between Lord Śiva and his spouse, goddess Pārvatī. Bhṛgu, another 'great sage' (*maharṣi*) popularly associated with astrology, did not seem to feature in this *nāḍī*.

'There was no religion in your birth place.'[1]

'You were born on a Thursday in Śravaṇā *nakṣatra*.'[2]

'Your father is doing some business now.'

'Your mother was working but has retired recently.'

'You have two half-brothers and two half-sisters.'

'You do not know whether one of your brothers is alive. You only know about the other three.'

'At age 23 you began to follow in the footsteps of a *maharṣi* [great sage] or philosopher and learned meditation. You gave up smoking, drinking alcohol and eating meat, dropping all those vices like a *sannyāsin* [ascetic] renouncing the world overnight.'

Sufficiently impressed with this general reading to want further *kāṇḍas*, Matt is scheduled to continue his reading in Salem, as it could not be fitted in before the *nāḍī* reader's departure from Chennai today. The *Śivanāḍī* has also instructed him to do penance (*śānti*) for the sins of his previous births by worshipping at five major Śiva shrines in Kanchipuram, Chidambaram, Tiruvanaikoil, Tiruvannamalai, and Kalahasti – representing the five elements earth, space, water, fire and air, respectively. A few extra stops therefore have to be worked into our already tight schedule.

2.2. KANCHIPURAM

Early next morning our journey together takes an inauspicious beginning as we find that a car arrangement made some weeks in advance has fallen through. A couple of hours later, however, we are on the way to Kanchipuram in an ancient black Tamil Nadu state taxi driven by a young man named Balu, looking remarkably like Eddie Murphy. The hunt is on.

Kanchipuram, located some 75 kilometres south-west of Chennai, is one of the seven great *mokṣapurīs*: sacred cities granting liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth. Famous

[1] While this may not be literally true in any society, Matt was born east of the iron curtain, where it was certainly an ideal.

[2] For the meaning of *nakṣatra* or lunar mansion, cf. Chapter 4. The chance of getting this combination right is 1 in 189: seven weekdays times twenty-seven *nakṣatras*. Naturally, not many westerners would know their *nakṣatra* of birth; Matt, taking a keen interest in Hindu astrology, is an exception.

for its ancient temples of both Viṣṇu and Śiva, it attracts pilgrims of all Hindu denominations. One of our reasons for starting here is Matt's desire to see the Śaṅkarācārya, the spiritual head of the Kanchi *maṭha* (monastery-college) belonging to the Śaṅkara lineage. As we drive into town, we note two neighbouring houses along the road, advertising in English the presence of a *Vasiṣṭhanāḍī* and an *Agastyanāḍī*, respectively. We decide to give them a try as soon as Matt has had his *darśana* (audience) with the Śaṅkarācārya.

After *darśana*, Matt visits the nearby temple of Ekāmbareśvara[1] for the propitiatory *pūjā* prescribed by the *Śivanāḍī* while I pass half an hour with our driver, observing the street life of Kanchipuram. As usual in India, the passing autorikshas carry the name and image of their owner's chosen deity beneath the rear window. Occasionally the popular gods and goddesses (Mother India among them) are replaced by a Muslim star-and-crescent or a Christian cross, with the legend *Allahu Akbar* or *Praise the Lord* underneath, and once I spot a Communist hammer-and-sickle accompanied by a barely recognizable portrait of Lenin. My favourite, however, is the singular caption: *Those who kiss Mother feet / Success kisses their feet below.* I regret not having my camera ready as the three-wheeler passes by; it would have made a great Mother's Day card.

On Matt's return, we ask Balu to take us back to the *nāḍī* establishments that we passed a few hours earlier. From the prolonged criss-crossing that follows, however, it is annoyingly clear that our guide has lost his way. Driving aimlessly through the outskirts of town, we suddenly catch sight of a signboard advertising a *Śukanāḍī*, and, a few houses further down the road, yet another *Agastyanāḍī*. Win some, lose some: we bring the car to an abrupt halt and jump out.

There is no answer as we knock at the door of the *Agastyanāḍī* reader. At the *Śukanāḍī*, however, we are met by a middle-aged man in traditional attire. His thin frame, full beard and deep-set eyes under heavy brows combine to give him a prophet-like appearance.

[1] Śiva as the Lord [of ascetics] wearing a single piece of clothing.

'I knew you were coming', he says, defusing the mystical overtones of this statement by adding practically:

'I saw you knocking at that other fellow's door. He has gone away.'

The *Śukanāḍī* reader conducts his business in a straw hut built on the flat roof of his small house, which we mount by a steep flight of stairs. After offering us chairs and refreshments, he disappears. Some minutes later, a young assistant beckons to us to enter an adjacent room. The *nāḍī* reader is seated on a grass mat in front of a small shrine, offering *pūjā* to Gaṇeśa. We bow down before the image. The reader marks our foreheads with dabs of *vibhūti* (sacred ash) and dictates a *mantra* which we repeat as best we can. He has a heavy Tamil accent, more noticeable than in his English speech, and I fail to catch the whole verse:

bodhānanda mahānanda ...
... rakṣa rakṣa namo namaḥ[1]

The brief *pūjā* over, we re-enter the office room. The reader exits, returning shortly with some bundles of palm-leaf manuscripts. The assistant takes our thumb prints, pressing our right-hand thumbs against a stamp pad and on to a sheet of paper.

Matt and I have agreed that I am to go first this time, as he has had one good reading already. The *nāḍī* reader, however, immediately zeroes in on Matt. Perhaps it is the will of the gods; perhaps it is just his open, eager face contrasting with my own naturally suspicious scowl. In any case, the search for Matt's test reading begins. Under the supervision of his teacher, the assistant picks up one leaf at a time, reading out the Tamil sentences. The *nāḍī* reader himself translates them for us.

Right at the beginning, I am impressed by the accuracy of one particular statement: 'You are the first child of your father's second wife.' In the half-hour or so that follows, however, my enthusiasm gradually wanes. As I watch Matt answering sentence upon sentence with a Yes or No, I can see how a skilful questioner could derive a considerable amount of information by

[1] 'You whose joy is [in] wisdom, whose joy is great ... Protect, protect [me]; homage, homage [to you].'

this means in a relatively short time. Statements on the same topic rarely follow upon each other, so that there is no discernable line of questioning. The haphazard order makes it difficult to remember what has been said already; issues previously touched upon and partly forgotten often resurface, approached from new angles. More than once I find myself surprised by an especially correct statement, only to realize a few minutes later that it was in fact deducible from Matt's previous answers. And in spite of our repeated requests, this reader, like the *Śivanāḍī* one, refuses to let us tape the preliminary session.

Silently observing the progress of the reading, I cannot help wondering if the supposedly stunning correctness of the *Śivanāḍī*, which I had no opportunity to witness in person, was based on cunning tactics of this sort. Matt is no fool, but unlike myself he has a naturally trusting disposition, an inclination to think well of everybody. Eventually, he and the reader seem confident that they have found the right leaf. There is no time to do the full reading today, but the reader obligingly offers to visit us in our hotel once we return to Chennai. The arrangement is agreed upon.

Next, Matt wants readings for his family members, and proceeds to pull out a sheet of paper with their thumb prints on it. There are more unconvincing test readings, and I find my attention wandering. At length they are finished. To the apparent surprise of the *nāḍī* reader, I decline a reading for myself. Not being allowed to document it, I feel that it would be a waste of time and money. Besides, it is getting on for five o'clock, and we want to reach Chidambaram some time tonight.

Leaving Matt to negotiate the price of his readings, I climb down the stairs from the roof hut and make my way towards the car. Suddenly I hear Matt's voice behind me. I turn and see him motioning urgently.

'Come, come quickly!'

A few moments later I am back on the roof.

'What's the matter?'

'He says we're going to have a car accident. He's preparing some *rakṣās* [talismans] for us.'

The reader reappears, looking grave, and hands us each a small metal cylinder filled with some sort of powder, and a packet of *vibhūti*. He explains that we are to tie the cylinders around our waists after taking bath. As we thank him, I seem to detect in his face a look of displeasure at my own perhaps too obvious scepticism. Again Matt is detained for a few moments; as he catches up with me at the car, he is holding two small lemons in his hands.

'He says to put them under the back wheels as we drive away.'

Balu is intrigued by our doings, and we explain in a few words what is going on. Visibly concerned, he runs off to a small road-side stall, returning minutes later with a jasmine garland for the tiny Murukan image mounted in a mussel-shell stand on the dashboard, and some green branches to fasten under the wind-shield wipers. Finally we drive off, duly squashing the lemons under our car wheels.

As we leave Kanchipuram, a dog suddenly darts out from behind a bush and leaps in front of the car. There is a nasty thud as we hit it at great speed. Matt and I exchange glances. Balu, apparently unmoved, drives on without losing momentum.

2.3. Chidambaram – Vaitheeswaran Koil

It was late afternoon when we left the *Śukanāḍī*. The sun sets quickly, and soon we are enveloped in the inky Tamilian night.

'Only very safe driving,' our driver explains reassuringly as we speed past countless brightly decorated transport lorries marked HIGHLY INFLAMMABLE, sometimes missing them by a matter of inches.

Reaching Chidambaram at 11 pm, we consult Matt's guide-book to find a three-star hotel. The sleepy young man at the reception informs us that there is only one room available, but with two beds. Fatigued, we accept and send Balu away for the night. Only after he is gone do we enter the room, which is filthy, infested with cockroaches, and has only one bed: a double. Vowing never again to enter a hotel with less than five stars in Matt's book, I do battle with the bugs while Matt goes to demand an extra mattress from the reception boy (who clearly

fails to see what the fuss is about). After a few hours' sleep we rise before dawn, and Matt goes off to the Naṭarāja[1] temple for more *śānti*. In due course our driver turns up, and we set out for Vaitheeswaran Koil.

Balu seems never to have heard of Vaitheeswaran Koil before; he first imagines that we are looking for another Śiva temple (Koil, properly *k÷vil*, being the Tamil word for temple). Once he has found the right directions, however, the ride is a short one – some 20 kilometres – and we arrive in plenty of time for our pre-appointed readings with Sivasamy. The main street is littered with *nāḍī* offices, and as we step out of the car at one end of it, we are immediately seized upon by the proprietor of the nearest one.

'Where are you going?' he demands. We reply that we have an appointment with Sivasamy.

'You shouldn't go there; it is very costly. The genuine *nāḍī* is here itself. Come and see.'

With some difficulty we excuse ourselves, having first given our thumb-prints and half a promise of returning later in the day if time allows. Walking down the street towards Sivasamy's place, I look in wonderment at the profusion of *nāḍī* signboards: *Śivanāḍīs*, *Kauśikanāḍīs*, *Agastya-Mahāśiva-nāḍīs* (quite a number of those), *Saptarṣināḍīs*... Clearly this place must live off its tourism; I can't imagine half the locals spending their days reading the fortunes of the other half.

Sivasamy's establishment is filled with young men dressed in shirts and *dhotīs*, their foreheads bright with vermillion marks, laughing and talking in a leisurely manner. Eventually they take notice of us; we are asked to give our thumb-prints, initials, and countries of birth, and are offered chairs. While we wait for the *nāḍī* reader to call us in, I peruse the information sheet handed out by one of the assistants.

The first thing to catch my eye is a warning in bold letters near the top of the page: DON'T BE MISGUIDED BY LOCAL GUIDES. A competitive business, apparently; but we knew that already. Above this exhortation is the Tamilized Sanskrit name of the

[1] Śiva as the King of dancers.

firm: *Sri Agasthiya Mahasiva Vakkiya Nadi Jothida Nilayam*,[1] and beneath it, a list of sixteen available *nāḍī* chapters.

The first twelve *kāṇḍas* are explicitly and unmistakably analogous to the twelve houses of a Hindu horoscope.[2] As the first house represents the native himself and is the most important one in the horoscope, so the first *kāṇḍa* gives the native's personal details and the 'gist of future predictions for all the 12 houses'. The second *kāṇḍa*, like the second astrological house, deals with finance, family, education, speech and eyesight; the third house or *kāṇḍa* concerns siblings, courage, and ears; the fourth, mother, house, land, vehicles and pleasures; the fifth, children; the sixth, diseases, debts, enemies and litigation; the seventh, marriage and spouse; the eighth, longevity, accidents and death; the ninth, father, religious instruction, pilgrimage and fortune; the tenth, profession and livelihood; the eleventh, profits; and the twelfth, expenses, overseas travel and the native's destiny after death.[3] Each of these *kāṇḍas*, according to the sheet, 'will give the future predictions up to the end of life from the date of perusal'.

The next three *kāṇḍas* are prescriptive rather than predictive: the thirteenth deals with *śānti-parihāra*, pacification of the planets by penance for sins committed in previous lifetimes; the fourteenth gives *dīkṣā* or initiation into *mantras* to be recited, as well as talismans (*rakṣā*) to be worn, while the fifteenth prescribes *auṣadha* or medicines for chronic diseases. The sixteenth and last *kāṇḍa* gives predictions particularly related to the native's current *daśā-bhukti*, or planetary main and sub-period.[4]

A note further down the page, however, reveals that there are in fact several additional *kāṇḍas* available. First there are the

[1] In pure Sanskrit, *Śrī-Agastya-Mahāśiva-vākya-nāḍī-jyotiṣa-nilaya* 'The house of *nāḍī* astrology [in the form of] the words of Śrī Agastya and the great Śiva.'

[2] For the astrological houses, cf. Chapter 4.

[3] Sivasamy's list adds 'second marriage' as a signification of the eleventh *kāṇḍa*; not all astrologers would agree in assigning this matter to the eleventh house of the horoscope, though some do.

[4] For *daśā* and *bhukti*, cf. Chapter 4.

tulliyam and *sūkṣmam*,[1] presumably covering the same areas as the first twelve chapters, but more expensive due to their 'specialist nature and elaborate details'. Next, an unnamed *kāṇḍa* for 'success in politics and political connections' is offered, along with *kāṇḍas* dealing with *jñāna* (knowledge, often in the sense of gnosis or spiritual illumination), *praśna* (questions), and *daśā-bhukti-śānti*: propitiation prescribed for the major and minor planetary periods.[2]

There is also an assertion that 'we do not have branches in any other place'. I think of the *Kauśika-Agastya-nāḍī* in Chennai, where the palm-leaf manuscripts, according to the translator, were leased from Sivasamy in Vaitheeswaran Koil. Apparently a need is felt of distancing Sivasamy's institution from those that might claim to be 'branches', and I wonder what the relations may be between the various *nāḍī* readers. This question becomes the more pertinent as I observe that, save for one or two orthographic variations (such as the violent-sounding 'thump impression' for 'thumb impression'), the body of the text before me is identical with that of two similar sheets handed out by the Kanchipuram *Śukanāḍī* reader and the Chennai *Śivanāḍī* reader, respectively. Clearly one has been copied by the others, or all three derived from a common source.

The Chennai and Kanchipuram readers also advertise the availability of other *nāḍīs*: in Chennai, *Kauśika*, *Śuka* and *Mahā-śivavākya*; in Kanchipuram, *Kākabhuśuṇḍa*, *Bhoga*, *Vasiṣṭha*, *Agastya*, *Mahāśiva*, *Sūryakāla*, *Kauśika* and *Saptarṣi*. The lists are impressive. I wonder whether the smallish *Śukanāḍī* place in Kanchipuram really houses so many texts, or whether the reader in fact leases leaves from various *nāḍī* houses – perhaps in Vaitheeswaran Koil.

At the bottom of Sivasamy's page are advertisements for accomodations in Vaitheeswaran Koil: one 'lodge' and one 'deluxe lodge'. I reflect on what 'deluxe' might imply in the

[1] Tamil *tulliyam*, derived from Sanskrit *tulya* 'equal', has acquired the additional meaning 'accuracy, exactness' (TL 1987a). Sanskrit *sūkṣma* means 'subtle, minute'.

[2] For *praśna* or interrogative astrology, cf. Chapter 4.

present context, and feel grateful for not having to find out: I could do with something less rustic tonight.

Within half an hour one of the young men ushers us into small, adjacent rooms. We are to have our readings done separately and simultaneously, by two different, youngish readers – neither of whom is Sivasamy himself – and interpreted by two different translators. Judging from the number of staff, Sivasamy's business must be thriving. I am somewhat disappointed by the separate arrangements, and wonder whether they are motivated solely by a wish for maximum efficiency. Could it be that a silent observer is undesirable from the point of view of the *nāḍī* readers?

The room I enter is simply furnished with a desk and a few chairs. The reader is not yet present, but the middle-aged translator, who has taken a seat at some distance from the desk, immediately enters into conversation. Like most people we meet, he is openly and unabashedly curious about my background, profession, and other personal details. After fencing for a few minutes, I point out that this information is supposedly contained in my palm leaf, and that I will be happy to confirm or deny it *after* the reading. Though the translator chuckles good-humouredly at my 'doubting Thomas' attitude, I sense a certain strain in the atmosphere.

The *nāḍī* reader soon appears, carrying a few bundles of palm-leaf manuscripts. As unobtrusively as possible, I reach out for my tape-recorder – without asking permission this time. The translator observes me, however, and immediately intervenes. There is no need to tape the preliminary session, he says:

'It is in your own interest. Taping the test reading is sheer waste.'

'All the same, I would like to tape it', I reply. 'After all, the waste is mine.'

Argument, however, is fruitless. Taping the test reading is not allowed, though I am promised the usual tape of my personal reading if and when it is found.

Going through the leaves is a tedious process. In the whole of the first bundle – some two or three inches thick – there is not a single statement even remotely correct. Most frustrating are the

questions about parents' names: rather than giving out the whole name, as I saw rather impressively done some years ago, this reader merely lists the initial syllables:

'Your father's name begins with *ka, kā, ki, kī, kı, kıı?* No? *Pe, p×, pai, po, p÷, paıı?*

This recurring exercise becomes the more fruitless as I have no clue about Tamil orthography as applied to Scandinavian names. At length, I persuade the reader to skip these questions entirely. We move on to the second palm-leaf bundle, with no great improvement in the results.

Finally, after perhaps an hour and a half of questioning, the reader purports to have found my leaf. To be sure, everything he reads out from it is correct; but it is also plainly deducible from my previous answers. I decide to give him a final chance.

'If I choose another *kāṇḍa* [chapter] – say, the fifth *kāṇḍa* for children – will it say how many children I have already, their ages, and so forth?'

The translator takes it on himself to answer.

'No, sir. Only the future predictions will be there – from this day till the time of your death.'

I thank him and leave the room, declining any further reading. There are many other *nāḍī* readers in Vaitheeswaran Koil, and I would rather give one of them a chance than remain at Sivasamy's. On my way out, I look in on Matt. He is in the middle of a reading.

'They found my leaf almost immediately', he says. 'It was nearly at the top of the first bundle.'

I tell him that I am off to try out the reader who first pounced on us when we arrived, and we agree to meet later on.

Greeting me with the self-righteous satisfaction of someone who told me so, the *Agastya-Mahāśiva-nāḍī* reader leads the way through his house, past children playing in an inner courtyard, to the small building where the reading is to take place. Its walls are profusely hung with colour prints of gods and sages, pride of place being given to Murukan. After a few minutes a young man joins us, carrying the now familiar-looking palm-leaf bundles. The two men, who may be father and son, converse in Tamil as they set up the usual accoutrements of tape-

recorder and notebooks. The younger man is to do the actual reading, while the older one translates.

I make the usual request to tape the test reading; as usual, it is denied. This time I do not even bother to put up a fight. The question-and-answer session begins: perhaps the most unsophisticated attempt that I have observed so far at wriggling information out of a client.

'You are not married now?'

'Yes, I am.' A few questions on other subjects follow. Then:

'You are not having affection for your wife?'

'Yes, I have.' Again a few unrelated questions. Next:

'Your wife is not pregnant now?'

'Yes, she is.'

And so on, about parents, children, siblings, education, etc., until I feel that I have told all there is to know about myself. At length the reader announces that he has found my palm leaf. Perversely, I decide to go ahead and pay for the general reading, arguing to myself that I ought to get at least one reading, however crudely faked, out of a visit to this stronghold of *nāḍī* divination.

The reading begins with verses in praise of Śiva and Pārvatī. The younger man reads out the Tamil text as he copies it into a notebook of the kind used by school-children, with a picture of Gaṇeśa on the cover. The older man translates the sentences into idiosyncratic English.

'Now, Pārvatī requests god Śiva and asks him about your future life ... You were born in a very good family ... You like others, whoever they may be.' At this point I am prepared to make an exception for *nāḍī* readers, but I say nothing. The reading goes on, stating correctly that I am the second child born to my parents, with an elder brother and a younger sister – information which I have already provided. It also covers the fact that my brother is not married, but misses the small point of his being dead. (That is the catch of yes-or-no questions: you have to know exactly what to ask.) And of course the ancient *ṛṣi* refers to my wife's being pregnant at the time of my hearing the reading. Astounding.

Then, after a sketchy summary of my biography as gleaned by the *nāḍī* reader, we get down to business.

'*Doṣa* [blemish], it means something bad, sins in your life. From your previous birth you have some sins, and therefore, in your astrology, there are some *grahas* [planets] not good for you.'

This theme is developed in some detail. On account of sins committed in previous lifetimes, as evinced by certain ill-placed planets (never specified) in my horoscope, enemies will try to harm me; there will be no improvement in my career, and I may even lose my job; my wife will fall ill and have to undergo surgery; misfortune will befall my parents; I will meet with danger while travelling. Everything looks dark. But then:

'There is a *pūjā*, a remedy for your good life. *Śivapūjā*, two times forty-eight days. The astrologer will do the *pūjā* for you every midnight. After ninety-six days we will send a copper *pūjā* plate to you. You keep it in your *rakṣā* [talisman locket] and wear it around your neck or your wrist or keep it in your house *pūjā* room or your office room; then you will have good development in your life.'

And not just my own life, either: my wife, children, and parents will enjoy all-round success. The only effort required of me is a donation of Rs. 508 to the astrologer for performing the *pūjā*. As I listen impassively to this recital, giving no sign of being about to loosen my purse-strings (as indeed I am not), the evils threatening me become more pointed with every repetition. Should I consent to the donation, however, a bright future awaits my whole family. The good fortune purchasable for the equivalent of fifteen dollars assumes amazing proportions. My father will construct a hotel (I struggle to keep a straight face as I visualize this). Gods will appear to me in dreams and bless me, and whatever I say will come true. My wife and I will enjoy successful careers; my children will lead lives of ease; my brother will get married (!). I will travel all over the world and live to the age of 70.

The whole reading, including translation and countless repetitions, takes about three quarters of an hour. At one point the

nāḍī reader asks for questions. I throw out an easy one, the first that comes to mind:

'Will my wife give birth to a son or a daughter?'

'You will have a son. In the meantime, your wife will have some treatment, some medical expenses. But the effect of bad *grahas*, the *doṣa* that you have, that will happen in your wife's life. If you take the remedy, you will have a good life.'[1]

At the close of the reading, I decline the remedial *pūjā* and further chapters, pay the stipulated reading fee, and walk back to the car. After some time Matt joins me, highly satisfied with the reading he got at Sivasamy's. He tells me again how his leaf was found near the top of the heap, and his name and personal details were stated in the test reading without his having given any hint of them. Torn between my good opinion of Matt and a growing distrust of *nāḍī* readers, I wish I had been there.

2.4. KUMBAKONAM – SRIRANGAM

From Vaitheeswaran Koil we set out for Kumbakonam, arriving in time to locate a decent hotel. We also do some shopping for *dhotīs* – the recommended gents' wear in most South Indian temples, of which Matt in particular is now seeing a great deal. Early next morning, amidst a terrific thunderstorm, we make a detour to visit another three, where Matt has now been assigned additional *śānti* by Sivasamy.

The temple of Suryanar Koil is located near Aduturai, some seven kilometres from Kumbakonam. It houses images of all the *nava-grahas* or nine planets, the central deity being Sūrya, the sun, flanked by his two consorts Chāyā (Shadow) and Uṣas (Dawn). The *grahas* apart, there are images of Śiva, Pārvatī, and Gaṇeśa; the same is true of the two other planetary shrines on our call list. Matt pays the priest to have *arcanā* (worship) performed to all the deities. In addition, Sivasamy has instructed him to recite the thousand names of Viṣṇu from the *Mahā-bhārata*, to give charity (consisting of a meal, betel nuts, bananas, flowers, turmeric, vermilion, a sari and a blouse) to

[1] Some four months after this reading, at the completion of a normal, unproblematic pregnancy, my wife gave birth to a healthy daughter.

nine poor married women, and to feed 108 crippled children in an orphanage.

From Suryanar Koil it is another fifty kilometres to Tirunallaru, a temple of Śani (Saturn) located on the east coast of Karikal – a very small state bordering on Tamil Nadu. Our vehicle being a Tamil Nadu state taxi, the driver is not allowed to cross this border, and Matt has to arrange for a separate car to take him the remaining distance to Tirunallaru. On his return we make our way back to Kumbakonam, passing through the Rāhu shrine at Tirunageswaram, where the *arcanā* procedure is repeated for the third time this day.

Our address list includes one *nāḍī* reader in Kumbakonam, and we spend most of the afternoon trying to locate him. When we do find the address, however, the reader proves to be out of town – gone to Vaitheeswaran Koil, perhaps, to replenish his stack of palm leaves? Or he may just be away visiting relatives for the Dīpāvali festival, which is coming up tomorrow. In any case, we decide to move on to the next stop on our route: Tiruchirapalli – Trichy for short – and the temple island of Srirangam.

On our way towards Trichy we pause in the village of Swamimalai, famous as a centre for the fashioning of sacred images, the ancient and hereditary craft of the *sthapati*. From this place images of gods and goddesses, sculpted according to the detailed guidelines of traditional iconography, are shipped to devout homes and temples all over South India and beyond. We draw up in a street lined with *sthapati* workshops and step into the nearest one. Half a dozen craftsmen sit on the floor, putting finishing touches on a group of metal images sized for temple use; the manager tells us they are destined for Bangalore. The shop displays shelf upon shelf lined with a variety of divinities, including gleaming brass baby Kṛṣṇas, Śiva-*liṅgas*, and all manner of Gaṇeśas. Among the less traditional exhibits I recognize images of one or two modern Hindu godmen, and even a Chairman Mao – doubtless made to order for the local Party branch. On a question from me, the *sthapati* disappears into his stock-room, emerging a few minutes later with a dusty but beautifully detailed Hayagrīva: the horse-headed form of

Viṣṇu as Lord of knowledge and learning. We agree on the price, and he wraps it up for me. I register a pious wish that with Hayagrīva on my side, I will be able to gain some insight into the strange world of *nāḍī* reading.

The next day is Dīpāvali, the festival of lights. From our somewhat pretentious hotel in Trichy (a compensation for the nastiness of a few nights before) we go some six kilometres north, across the bridge which connects Srirangam with the mainland. Set on a 250-hectare island in the Cauvery river, the entire town of Srirangam is found within the temple precincts – with its seven enclosures perhaps the largest temple complex in India. Here we meet Nandu, head priest of the Raṅganāyakī[1] shrine, whose brother (now settled in America) is a friend of a friend of ours. In consequence of this connection we are received like family members, and Nandu immediately takes it on himself to show us around.

After *darśana* at the main shrines or *sannidhis* we decide to track down a *nāḍī* reader in nearby Tiruvanaikoil, also the site of the famous Jambūkeśvara[2] temple – the third of the five 'elemental' temples at which Matt was directed by his original *Śivanāḍī* reading to do *śānti*. Nandu, eyeing our battered old taxi suspiciously, insists that we go with him and some friends in their more comfortable car. As we cross the bridge to Trichy again, he points out an impressively domed Christian church in the distance. It was recently renovated, Nandu says with a smile, and at the completion of the work, the new dome was inaugurated with a *mahā-kumbhābhiṣeka* (Hindu-style consecration ritual).

Reaching the *nāḍī* reader's address, we feel that the stars must be against us: this one, too, is out of town. One of Nandu's friends, however, knows of a reader back in Srirangam, and we decide to try him out.

Unlike most readers we have seen so far, the youngish *Saptarṣināḍī* reader in Srirangam seems unaccustomed to foreign visitors. He speaks next to no English, nor does he

[1] Lakṣmī as the Lady of [Śrī]raṅga.
[2] Śiva as the Lord [seated beneath] a rose-apple tree.

employ a translator. Another client, however, whose reading has just been brought to an apparently satisfactory conclusion, offers to translate for me.

'You tell him nothing', he says enthusiastically. 'Your name, your parents' names, everything will come in the palm leaf.'

I go through the standard procedures of giving my thumb-print, asking and being refused permission to tape the test reading. The latter, although a slightly better show than the one I had in Vaitheeswaran Koil, is still not impressive. Despite the promises of my amateur translator, no names are forthcoming. On the contrary, names are a source of confusion and vexation, as the reader keeps asking questions I cannot answer about the number of Tamil syllabic characters in my name and the names of others. It is all grist to the academic mill, however, and I decide to take the general reading.

The reading is brief and disappointingly similar to my last one. After a rehash of what has been learnt from the question-and-answer session, I am given a few very general predictions: I will know prosperity only after the birth of a female child, at which time I will get a permanent job and 'transit promotion'. But Saturn is making trouble: in family life, for children, education... There will be 'medical expenses' for my wife and parents – a favourite prediction of *nāḍī* readers? All problems can, however, be avoided by taking the *dīkṣā-kāṇḍa* (chapter on religious initiation and observances). This is repeated a number of times, to make sure I understand. I do not want the *dīkṣā-kāṇḍa*; I see enough *śānti* as it is, going around with Matt. I pay the reader, and we leave.

That evening there is a change of plan: unable to shake off the memory of a particularly persistent woman beggar outside the Naṭarāja temple in Chidambaram, Matt has decided to go the 130 kilometres back in the morning to find her and give her more money.

'The *Śivanāḍī* told me I would meet the goddess Pārvatī in person. What if this is her, and I hold back?' I do not argue, but agree to go on to Salem alone the next day.

2.5. Salem – Chennai – Bangalore

Our appointment in Salem is with the *Śivanāḍī* reader whom Matt met on his first day in Chennai. This morning I have come alone, to get a reading for myself; tomorrow we will go together for the final part of Matt's reading, including more *śānti* in the form of donations to the reader, and a *homa* (fire sacrifice).

Greeting me, the middle-aged reader directs me to a small room where the actual reading is to be done by his assistant and translated by his wife. My thumb print is taken, and there is the usual period of waiting while the assistant goes off to identify the corresponding manuscript bundles. The test reading – which, again as usual, I am not permitted to tape – goes on for two hours, covering two full bundles of palm leaves.

At one point, the *nāḍī* reader's wife translates:

'You belong to the Christian religion.'

I reply in the negative. Apparently unable to square this with the colour of my skin, the lady repeats the statement more slowly. I deny it again. She fixes me with an uncomprehending stare.

'Christian', she says, articulating carefully. 'Chris-ti-an. *Jesus!*'

As I persist in denial, she gives me a reproachful look, as though convinced that I am lying to spite her. At length the assistant reader admits defeat: my leaf, he says, is not there.

Matt returns the same evening, having carried out his purpose of finding the beggar lady. The next morning we visit the *Śivanāḍī* again. Matt has more *kāṇḍas* read out, followed by a *pūjā* performed to a large picture of sage Agastya and to the *nāḍī* leaves themselves. As part of the *pūjā* Matt donates, according to the instructions of the reader, nine kinds of fruits and flowers, cloth, various *pūjā* materials, a gold plate with his horoscope inscribed on it, and Rs. 9008. The reading is crowned with a long and very smoky *homa* rather inexpertly performed in a back room by two young priests.

After a day spent on the road, with a brief midday stop for more *śānti* at the temple of Aruṇācaleśvara[1] in Tiruvannamalai, we reach Chennai by nightfall. We settle our score at the airport

[1] Śiva as Lord of the red mountain.

taxi service, take leave of Balu, and return to our hotel. The Kanchipuram *Śukanāḍī* reader and his assistant are waiting for us as appointed, and Matt gets ready for an all-night session of readings for himself and his family. I decline being present and retire for the night.

I am woken in the small hours by Matt, who calls to vent his feelings about the so-called reading: a badly disguised attempt, he says, at making him spend thousands of rupees on talismans by threatening evil fates for his family members. He had a hard time getting rid of the two 'gangsters', who had their minds set on spending the night in his room, and speculates about the older one being a *preta-siddha* (having gained mastery of a ghost).[1] I am surprised, but not sorry, to hear Matt use such language of *nāḍī* readers: I recognize the pattern of metaphysical blackmail only too well from my own readings. Next morning we part company: I will go straight to Bangalore, while Matt will proceed to Kalahasti for his last propitiatory *pūjā* and then visit a popular *āśrama*, catching up with me in a couple of days for a pre-appointed *nāḍī* reading.

As we meet for lunch two days later, Matt enthusiastically relates a reading he had just before leaving Chennai. On an impulse, having a few hours to spare, he looked up the *Parāśaranāḍī* from our address list; the reader, with whom I have a scheduled appointment some days later, first mistook him for me. Unlike the previous readers we have met, he works from the actual birth horoscope, which takes some time to calculate. He therefore refused Matt's request for an unscheduled reading, but changed his mind when Matt produced a computer printout of his Hindu birth chart.

Like the two previous *nāḍī* readings I have heard Matt relate, this one is a sinner-to-saint story. I strongly suspect this to be a standard gimmick; Matt seems rather inclined to accept each

[1] Popular lore on the *preta-siddha* figure includes his attracting ghosts by smearing his left ear (the unclean side) with impure substances such as urine and faeces. The ghost whispers secrets of the past and present into this ear but is unable to see the future, which is why the predictions of a *preta-siddha* are generally unreliable. In the end, the ghost is thought often to drive its host mad, or even kill him.

repetition as confirmatory evidence. The *Parāśaranāḍī* reader told him that he will be a holy man, detached from the world; a *sannyāsin* at heart though without the saffron robes of formal renunciation. A few years from now, acting on a dream, he will go to the Himalayas and meet a centuries-old *yogin*. From this master Matt will learn to achieve an adamantine body and prolong his life indefinitely by the use of herbs. Astrological longevity calculations will not apply to him. 'Really it is not a dream', the reader insisted. The session concluded with instruction in a Dakṣiṇāmūrti[1] *mantra* which I help Matt transliterate from the *devanāgarī* script.

The next morning we decide to try out a *Bhṛgunāḍī* on our list. An autoriksha takes us to the address, where we are met by an elderly man with the appearance of not quite having finished his toilette. According to the self-promotion brochure he hands out, he is a *Hereditarily Expertised & Scientifically Qualified Astro-Palm-Numero-Gems & Vedic Vastu Consultant* offering a variety of services, including Chinese astrology and advice on how to adjust the spelling of one's name on numerological principles. I reflect that in a modern city like Bangalore, being the mouthpiece of ancient seers apparently is not enough.

In the consultation room I take my place beneath a large print of Veṅkaṭeśvara,[2] electrical lights twinkling, while Matt sits facing the reader across a small table. On it is a zodiacal diagram about the size of a standard chessboard. The reader asks for Matt's birth data and feeds them into a computer. In the squares of the zodiac board he places counters marked with planetary glyphs according to the current positions of the planets. Matt is instructed to pray to his chosen deity while the reader rotates a handful of small cowries with his palm, muttering *mantras*. Finally, the palm leaves are brought in.

'Nobody can predict one hundred percent', the reader cautions. 'We want to predict scientifically at least seventy to eighty percent.'

[1] Śiva in his 'southward form' as the silent teacher.

[2] Viṣṇu as Lord of the Veṅkaṭa mountain, perhaps the most frequented place of pilgrimage in India.

On a question from me, he informs us that the text is written in Kannada. Matt is asked to place the fee for his reading in any of the squares of the zodiac board. I recognize the procedure as a simplified version of the divinatory ritual known as *aṣṭa-maṅgala-praśna*, especially popular in Kerala.[1] The reading itself – based partly on the *praśna* chart, partly on the palm leaves, and generously mixed with impressive-sounding Sanskrit quotations from astrological texts, the *Bhagavadgītā*, and the *Ṛgveda* – is flattering but brief, and very vague. I am struck by the eagerness of Matt's response, guiding the reader around hurdles and helping him with questions and comments to flesh out his predictions. We leave the place with very different impressions.

In the afternoon Matt has an appointment with the famous *Śukanāḍī* read by Gunjur Sachidananda Murthy. Its reputation extends far beyond India, and it is booked up months in advance. I recall what a western university professor told me of it: when the previous reader was touring abroad with his *nāḍī* a few decades ago, the professor had paid for a particular *pūjā* to be performed on his behalf on the reader's return to India. Driving to his office a few weeks later, he claimed suddenly to have been lifted out of his car seat and begun to levitate – at the very hour (as he later learned) that the ritual was being

[1] After detailing the various *pūjās* which form part of this complex practice, PM 4.48–50 states:

tataḥ praṣṭā nijābhīṣṭaṃ dhyāyaṃs tiṣṭhatu sāñjaliḥ /
daivajño 'tha smaran praṣṭur abhīṣṭaṃ tā varāṭikāḥ //
saṃspṛśan saṃspṛśan mantraṃ mūrtitvepūrvakaṃ japet /
trivāraṃ tajjapasyānte dūtaṃ brūyān nyaser iti //
tadaiva vinyased dūtaḥ svarṇaṃ nijakarasthitam /
cakrasthabheṣu caikatra [...] //

'Then the querent, meditating on his own chosen [deity], should remain with palms folded; and the astrologer, calling to mind the querent's chosen [deity] and repeatedly touching the cowries, should recite the *mantra* beginning with *mūrtitve* [BJ 1.1] three times. At the end of this recitation he should tell the attendant [boy or girl assisting in the ritual] to put [the gold] down. Then the attendant should put down the gold held in his hand in one of the signs in the figure [of the zodiac] [...]' The zodiacal sign thus chosen, known as the *ārūḍha*, is used as an ascendant (*lagna*) in reading the chart cast for the time of asking a question; cf. Chapter 4.

performed on the other side of the globe. Unfortunately, this exceptional *nāḍī* reader died young – a consequence, some said, of having taken the sacred *nāḍī* manuscripts out of India where they properly belonged. The palm leaves and the task of reading them now fell to the lot of his younger brother, the present Mr. Murthy, who had not been trained for the job. On my first visit to India some seven years ago I heard reports of very unsatisfactory readings, but lately the reports have changed.

Other engagements prevent me from being present at Matt's reading, but in the evening he brings his notes and tape recording to my room. The *Śukanāḍī* claims to be based not on thumb prints, but on astrological principles, and there is no test reading. Instead, Matt shows me a form that clients are requested to fill out, giving their birth data in full as well as horoscopic details.[1] Other information requested includes parents' names and whether or not they are alive; the number of brothers and sisters, whether elder or younger; the native's educational qualification, profession, and marital status; the names of spouse and children; the number of visits to India; and any important events in life so far. Looking at this questionnaire, I wonder what there could be left for the *nāḍī* reader to discover from his leaves.

As we go through the reading, moreover, it is obvious that the reader has made an error: misreading Matt's handwriting, he has cast a horoscope for a date four months prior to Matt's birth, and come up with very different planetary positions. Matt tried to point out during the reading that something was wrong, but his objections were brushed aside with the explanation that 'this is a different system'.[2]

Despite the incorrect horoscope, however, the *nāḍī* reader made some remarkably accurate statements. Matt's form indicated that he has two brothers and two sisters, all elder; but on the tape of the reading, I hear the reader stating unambiguously:

[1] The details requested are ascendant (rising sign), birth star (*nakṣatra*), and current planetary period (*daśā*) – information with which many Indian lay clients will be familiar, much as westerners in general may know their 'zodiacal sign'.

[2] Presumably the reader believed Matt to be referring to his western, tropical horoscope, rather than the Hindu sidereal one. For the difference between the two systems, cf. Chapter 4.

'You were born as the only son of your father and mother. Your mother is the second wife of your father.' This is quite correct: Matt has four half-siblings, but is the only common child of his parents. The reading goes on to state that Matt moved to a foreign country at age twenty-three, and that prior to this he had a girlfriend some two-and-a-half years his senior. It also mentions details about his education and the awakening of spiritual interests, nearly all of which are correct. For the first time in our journey together, I feel impressed. The later part of the reading, however, is far less sensational, dealing mainly with character delineation and descriptions of previous lives. I sense a distinct catering to western and New Age tastes, and even Matt seems sceptical about his exotic-sounding incarnations as a yoga teacher in India, an Egyptian scientist, a Chinese monk, and a navigator in Atlantis (!).

My own reading with the *Śukanāḍī* is scheduled for the very next day. After filling out the questionnaire I spend a few minutes studying a large, framed portrait of Mr. Murthy's father, the legendary Narayana Sastri, while the reader himself goes to fetch my palm leaf. The photograph shows an elderly, ascetic-looking man in traditional dress, his sacred thread prominently displayed, holding a characteristic bundle of long, thin manuscript stripes in his left hand and running a finger along the text. Below it is a Sanskrit verse in *devanāgarī* script: 'The glorious brahmin Nārāyaṇa, having assumed human form, uplifts the perishing world with the strong hand of *Śukahorā*.'[1]

As I reflect on the use of the word *horā* – meaning horoscopy or judicial astrology – rather than *nāḍī*, the reader returns. He begins to read out statements about my education, the time of my marriage, etc. There is no match. I sense the reader's

[1] *śrīmannārāyaṇo vipraḥ kṛtvā martyamayīṃ tanūm /*
magnān uddharate lokān śukahorāsupāṇinā //
This verse is a pastiche of an oft-quoted Pāñcarātric stanza:
sākṣān nārāyaṇo devaḥ kṛtvā martyamayīṃ tanūm /
magnān uddharate lokān kāruṇyāc chāstrapāṇinā //
'Lord Nārāyaṇa himself, having assumed human form [as the preceptor], out of compassion uplifts the perishing world with the hand of scripture.'

mounting irritation. Eventually he says, indicating a box on his desk:

'Open this with your right hand.'

The box contains more palm leaves, stacked edgewise, and at his request I pick one at random. It is blank. The reader asks me to try again, with the same result. The procedure is repeated a third and even a fourth time, and each time I draw a blank. Yet I can see that some of the leaves, at least, are inscribed. The reader tells me that they are a *praśna-grantha* ('book of questions'), to be used when there is no natal reading available; but in my case even the *praśna-grantha* failed. With many expressions of regret, he asks me to return some other time.

2.6. Return to Chennai

Next morning I leave for Chennai and my last attempt to get a *nāḍī* reading before returning home. Matt has already left for the north. The train is three hours late, and by the time I reach the hotel, my appointment with the *Parāśaranāḍī* is long overdue. I telephone the reader to ask if I may see him later that day.

'Yes, but I cannot read after six o'clock. It is against the *śāstras* [scriptures].'

Recognizing this brahminical scruple, I promise to arrive in good time before sunset. The sun, says the law-giver Manu, separates day from night; night has been given us for sleep, and day for work. Auspicious actions such as reading sacred texts are generally forbidden during night-time, for 'night is a demoness'.[1]

The *Parāśaranāḍī* reader is an old man, perhaps in his late seventies, and rather deaf. Though his English vocabulary is excellent, his pronunciation is rendered idiosyncratic by his scarcity of teeth combined with a marked South Indian accent. We sit down facing each other across a low table. I note with interest that he has had a commercial firm provide a computer-calculated horoscope based on the birth data provided by myself in advance. The spiral-bound printout contrasts strangely with the darkened palm leaves beside them. I ask the name of the text.

[1] MSm 1.65, 3.280.

'*Pā-rā-śa-ra-ho-rā.*' He articulates the name carefully. There it is again: *horā*. 'It is the original *śāstra*. We have got in India various types of bogus... People don't know anything; therefore they are victimized, by telling your father's name, mother's name, from where you come... It is nonsense, not at all scientific. This' – indicating his text – 'this is *śāstric*.'[1]

Obviously, my host does not approve of his thumb-reading rivals (most of whom are non-brahmins). I suddenly recall a phrase from his reply to my letter of appointment some months earlier: 'the palm-leaf *śāstra* which you call *nāḍī*'. Apparently it is not a term which he cares to use, although he was recommended to me by a third party as a *nāḍī* reader. His own readings, like those of the *Śukanāḍī* reader in Bangalore, are based on the natal horoscope, and written in Sanskrit; perhaps one of these factors, or both, are what makes them 'scientific'.

The reading begins. As the old man intones each Sanskrit sentence from the palm leaf in front of him before translating it, I catch only stray words and phrases.

'*Tulālagna* – Libra. *Candramā tulāyāṃ paristhitiḥ*. Moon also in Libra. Lord of the second house Mars is in the second house, own house. This indicates that you will be prosperous till the end of your life. No poverty will visit you. Jupiter and node Ketu are in the twelfth house. This denotes wisdom. Sixth, node Rāhu: you will destroy all the inimical forces. No enemy can harm you. Sun and Mercury are in the eighth house. It denotes long life. Venus and Saturn are in the seventh house.

'In continuation of your previous birth history you will follow the path of religion and wisdom in this life also. Because you were doing the same thing in your previous life, therefore, in this life also it continues. *Bodhakācāryaḥ, ācāryanāmadheyaḥ*. You will be called a professor as well as a teacher of religion. Religious teacher. Like the Pope.'

We both laugh. The Pope, currently on a visit to India, has attracted much attention in the media over the past few days.

[1] The term *śāstra*, apart from denoting the sacred scriptures, also signifies any systematic body of teaching, i.e., a 'science' in the scholastic sense of the word.

The reader knows of my occupation as a scholar of religion already; no points to the palm leaves on that score.

'On accord of the blessings of Guru, Jupiter, you will follow *vidyā* [knowledge, wisdom]. There will be no failure or no break in your education. You will finish your education. You will become *ācārya*, certainly. *Ācārya* means professor, teacher, big teacher. You have to be very careful about a female. She will be always seeking to victimize you. Be careful.'

With such vague and mostly flattering predictions, the reading goes on. The similarities with Matt's reading are striking. By the blessing of a great soul (*mahātman*), my life will be a success materially as well as spiritually. I will live by my wisdom, establish institutes of learning (*bodhaśālā*) in several countries, and acquire various powers which I must take care not to misuse. Though a family man blessed with a good wife (albeit of a 'different religion or caste') and children, as well as 'name and fame', I will be a renunciate (*sannyāsin*) within.

Outside the window, which has iron bars but no panes, a procession approaches, heralded by loud drumming and clashing cymbals. Catching the old man's words becomes extremely difficult.

'Ayyappa', he says with a smile, nodding towards the window. Of course: the annual season of pilgrimage to the mountain shrine of this increasingly popular deity is just beginning. I strain to hear the reading.

'You will teach not only religion, but things connected with *Bhārata*, India: Sanskrit, Vedic and other things. You will propagate the religion founded by Lord Jesus, *īśaputraḥ* [!].[1] It is really wonderful: you will have interest in astrology, astronomy, calculations and everything. Many things will come to you, not only one. You will be favoured with the knowledge of Sanskrit, *gīrvāṇī*.

'Government – very big – what is it called? – titles and degrees and various honours will come to you. You are called

[1] 'The son of the Lord'.

śreṣṭhaputra: a good son. Even though you will be in the material plane, you are like a *jñānī* [sage]. You are like a lotus.'[1]

After the reading I ask to see the leaves. They are closely inscribed in *grantha* characters, which I recognize at sight but cannot read, and too faded for there to be any use in photographing them without special equipment. Thanking my last *nāḍī* reader, I leave a donation and step outside.

2.7. Epilogue

Three years after my return from India, a friend in Stockholm calls me up to say that there is a *nāḍī* reader in town, offering readings. I decide to go, if only to observe the familiar ritual in a different setting.

We meet the *nāḍī* reader by appointment in a flat provided for his wife by the medical university where she is doing her postdoctoral research. His English is somewhat limited, but another visiting Tamilian, a young science student, has been called in to translate. Some preliminary small talk reveals that the reader belongs to the large establishment in western Chennai visited by Matt the day before my arrival in India, the *Kauśika-Agastya-Mahāśivanāḍī*. He takes my thumb print and goes off to search for a corresponding bundle. There are ten such bundles for each thumb print, the reader says, but he has only brought some of the bundles with him from India. Still, 'with God's grace', he hopes to find my leaf.

As the test reading begins, the reader chants the opening Tamil stanzas out in a loud but melodious voice before explaining them to our makeshift translator. The usual round of questions begins, some of which concern the number of Tamil syllabic characters in the names of my family members. I have written the names down on a piece of paper out of the reader's sight, and am helped by the translator (who claims no familiarity at all with *nāḍī* reading) to determine when to answer Yes or No to these questions. To the best of my observation, the translator does not pass on any other information to the reader.

[1] The water-growing lotus flower, to the petals of which no water adheres, is a standard Indian image of purity and detachment.

Sitting on a comfortable sofa in the nondescript living room, with the grey Swedish October light filtering through the windows, we go through the first bundle without finding any match. After some additional searching (during which the translator stays in the room with us), a second bundle is brought in and read through, but to no avail. By this time I have revealed much of my personal history – including my profession, marital status, number and sex of siblings and children – simply by answering Yes or No, and I fully expect the reader to start making up a reading by piecing the information together.

Four or five leaves into the third bundle, precisely this seems to be happening. The first half-dozen or so sentences of the leaf repeat information already given: both my parents are alive; I have only one sister living; I have married twice; I have one son from my first marriage, a son and a daughter from my second; my birth star is Svāti. But then, a statement for which I am not prepared:

'Your mother's name is Sestin.'

'Yes.' It is really Kerstin, with an initial palatal sibilant like the Ś in Śiva; but I know Tamil speakers to dentalize such sibilants. I feel a ripple of excitement. A few more statements, correct but not as spectacular; and then:

'Your father's name is Ustin.'

'Yes.' It is Östen; but once again, some allowance must be made for the phonetic differences between Swedish and Tamil. If this is a trick, it is very cleverly done – the more so as the reader gives a perfectly artless, almost naïve impression.

'And your wife's name is' – a moment's hesitation – 'Kreta?'

'Yes.' Tamil has no voiced initial stops; hence Kreta for Greta. I knew that Swedish-sounding names were to be expected; the *nāḍī* reader claims that the bundles brought from India were chosen precisely because they contained such names, and I have already rejected a few during the test reading: Susanna, Pernilla, Birgitta... But what are the odds of three straight hits? Against my will, I am impressed. The reader goes on.

'You were born in May.'

'Yes.'

'On the twenty-ninth.'

'Yes.'

'You have Mars in Scorpio.'

'Yes.' The reader is aware of my knowing astrology; that question came up in the first bundle. He proceeds to relate the zodiacal positions of all the planets in my birth chart. They are all correct except Mercury, which he places in Aries rather than Taurus. I point this out; the answer is as I anticipated:

'There are two systems: *vākya* and *dṛggaṇita*. For *nāḍī* we follow only *vākya-pañcāṅga*.' Indeed, the controversy of *dṛg-gaṇita* ('calculation [adjusted] by observation') versus *vākya* ('[calculation by traditional] formulae') is an old one in Hindu astrology. And when cast from a *vākya* astrological calendar or *pañcāṅga*, my chart does in fact have Mercury in Aries.

The test reading over, the reader asks how many chapters I would like to hear. Each chapter (*kāṇḍa*) is SEK 1500, which I estimate to at least five times the maximum Indian price. I decide to go only for the general reading found in the first chapter. This begins with a long litany in praise of Śiva, referring to a popular legend, and includes a reference to my coming for a reading in the company of a Śiva-*bhakta* (devotee) named Śiva Śaṅkara. This is in fact the Hindu name of my friend (a Swedish convert whose chosen deity is indeed Śiva), but it doesn't really count: the reader could have picked that information up at the local temple they both frequent. Still, the name is nicely woven into the Tamil chant. The information from the test reading is repeated, and the name of my thumb-print pattern given as *śiromaṇi-śaṅkha-rekhā* ('crest-jewel and conch line') with three dots.

As usual, the predictive part of the reading is rather vague, and alternates between flattery and threats. On one hand, I will 'live a life that I never dreamt of'; on the other – surprise! – the sins committed in my previous births are following me. Planetary afflictions (*graha-doṣa*) will affect every aspect of my life: physical, mental, spiritual, academic, professional, marital – even the health and education of my children and the well-being of my wife and parents. Fortunately, Lord Śiva has provided remedies, which can be had by consulting the *śānti-* and *dīkṣā-kāṇḍas* (for another SEK 1500 apiece). The reading describes the life that will

then unfold, with all-round success and supernatural powers, up to the age of fifty; the remaining part of my life will be related once I have done the *śānti*. As politely as possible, I decline the additional *kāṇḍas* for the present.

Before leaving, I ask the reader to copy the names of my wife and parents, exactly as they appear in the palm leaf, on to a piece of paper. The writing on the palm leaf itself looks more like some sort of shorthand than regular Tamil, though I recognize a character here and there. As he obliges, the reader explains that 'this sort of script is without dots'. The function of the 'dots' (*puḷḷi*), I know, is to mark the loss of the vowel inherent in a syllabic character; omitting them will introduce a number of false vowels into words – an inversion of the problem faced in vowelless Semitic scripts.

'Then how do you know how to pronounce foreign names?'

'It is a matter of practice. In our place I specialize mostly in Japanese clients, since I have learnt by practice how to read their names from the leaves.'

A few weeks later I ask a Dravidian scholar to transliterate the names for me. They read: Cecuṭiṉā, Ucuṭiṉā, Kirāṭā.

According to B.V. Raman (1912–1998), perhaps the most well-known modern apologist and popularizer of Hindu astrology, *nāḍī* texts may be divided into two main categories:

> [W]e can make a broad division of the extant *Nadigranthas* into *Mantric* and *Tantric*, the former mainly based on the power and control of *Kshudra Mantras* but under astrological cover[1] and the latter, mostly mathematical and partly based on *Mahamantras*.

Raman thus rejects a large number of *nāḍīs* as non-astrological in nature, though presented 'under astrological cover'. On his view, any correct statement or prediction made by the readers of such *nāḍīs* is the result not of the 'scientific' application of astrology, but of mastery over inferior (*kṣudra*), dangerous deities, produced by means of incantations (*mantra*). This belief is by no means uncommon, and astrologers generally take a very poor view of such presumed practices.

[1] Letter to K.N. Rao, published in Rao 1993:158ff.

The other *nāḍī* category is referred to by Raman as 'Tantric', here to be understood as 'based on [astronomical] science' or, in Raman's own words, 'mostly mathematical'. [1] These texts, then, are genuinely, though not exclusively, astrological in nature. Raman himself claimed to have such a text in his possession, given him by 'one Narayana Sastry [...] along with a *maha mantra*' (a 'great incantation', addressed to a superior deity and having no harmful side-effects). He describes the process of *nāḍī* divination as a combination of astrological deduction and intuition based on *mantra* practice:

> Upto the division of Nadi Amsha[2] and its being tagged on to the positions of Jupiter, Saturn, the Sun and the Moon it is mathematics [i.e., astrology]. But when the amsha in a particular Lagna [ascendant] is to be interpreted, something other than mere astrological principles becomes involved. It is only after the recitation of the clue *mantra* at this stage, for the prescribed number of times that the results come more or less as a flash.[3]

Raman makes no mention of differences in language between these two types of *nāḍīs*. In retrospect, however, I find it highly suggestive that among the scores of South Indian *nāḍī* or *nāḍī*-type texts in active use which have come to my notice over the years – including the dozen or so which I have visited personally – the only two actually based on birth horoscopes also stood out by being composed in Sanskrit.[4] Both these texts were designated as *horā* (horoscopy), and the readers were unmistakably brahmins. By contrast, the majority of *nāḍī* texts seem to be composed in Tamil; they are based not on horoscopes but on thumb reading; and their readers, who appear generally to be non-brahmins, do not use the term *horā*. A further striking

[1] Cf. BS 1.9: *skandhe 'smin gaṇitena yā grahagatis tantrābhidhānas tv asau* 'In this branch [of *jyotiḥśāstra*] the planetary movements [are arrived at] by calculation; hence it is called *tantra*.'

[2] For a discussion of the concept of *nāḍī-aṃśas*, see Chapter 5.

[3] Rao 1993:158f.

[4] Sanskrit texts of a similar genre – i.e., (supposedly) ready-made life readings based on the horoscopes of persons now living – do, as previously mentioned, exist in northern India, where they are generally known as *saṃhitās*. They typically take the form of dialogues between sage Bhṛgu and his son Śukra.

difference was the complete absence in the two Sanskrit *nāḍīs* of that preoccupation with the client's accumulated sins and the atonements prescribed for them (often involving direct pecuniary gain to the *nāḍī* reader) which in my experience has been the Leitmotif of the Tamil variety.

3. DIVINATION, FREE WILL AND DESTINY

The purpose of the following two chapters is to introduce the fundamentals of classical Hindu astrology, as a necessary preamble to the study of the *nāḍī* texts in chapters 5 and 6. This 'classical system' represents my attempt at extracting and synthesizing the salient features of a number of standard Sanskrit astrological manuals, much as a well-read practitioner might do. Although such a synthesis can never entirely escape the charge of subjectivity, I have endeavoured to make it true to the tradition.

The astrological texts used in this and the following chapter are, in chronological order: *Yavanajātaka* (henceforth YJ), dated by Pingree to 269/270 CE; *Vṛddhayavana-jātaka* (VYJ), c. 300; *Bṛhajjātaka* (BJ), *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (BS), and *Yogayātrā* (YY), c. 550; *Bṛhatpārāśarahorāśāstra* (BPHS), c. 600–800; *Sārāvalī* (SA), c. 800; *Horāsāra* (HS), sometime between c. 850 and 1350; *Jātakakarmapaddhati* (JKP), c. 1050; *Vidyāmādhavīya* (VM), c. 1360; *Muhūrtadīpikā* (MD), c. 1365; *Jātakapārijāta* (JP), before 1450; *Phaladīpikā* (PhD), sometime after the JP; *Jātakābharaṇa* (JA), c. 1525; *Sarvārthacintāmaṇi* (SAC), c. 1650; *Praśnamārga* (PM), 1650; and *Horāratna* (HR), 1654.[1] Particular regard has been paid to the BPHS, in view both of its encyclopaedic nature and of the authority it commands among practitioners.

Despite having been produced over a period of some fourteen centuries, these texts are to a remarkable degree conceptually uniform, and most are in active use among practising Hindu astrologers.[2] Although the *nāḍī* texts later to be discussed do not explicitly refer to these or other mainstream manuals on astrology, the *nāḍī* authors may, from their use of astrological terminology, be reasonably assumed to have been well acquainted with the genre.

[1] Pingree 1981:81 ff.

[2] This conservative nature of astrology is by no means unique to India: when astrology began to disappear from European universities in the 17th century, Ptolemy's 2nd century work *Tetrabiblos* was still a highly-regarded standard textbook on the subject.

Chapter 3

The present chapter is concerned with the framework of ideas within which Hindu astrology is located, and in particular with this question: given that the practice of horoscopic astrology derives – wholly or to a very substantial extent – from outside the Hindu cultural sphere, how well does this practice, and the theoretical considerations it entails, agree with the tenor of classical Hindu thought?[1]

3.1. *Karman:* Freedom and Fate

Astrology is primarily a descriptive, secondarily a prescriptive art. In its descriptive aspect, it attempts to analyze and interpret the qualities inherent in a given moment of time, such as a birth or the asking of a question: indeed, *kālajña* 'knower of time' is a common Sanskrit word for 'astrologer'. This term may be seen as largely synonymous with the previously mentioned *daivajña* 'knower of fate': the Indian conception of time as a compelling force leading all things to their destined end is an ancient and near-universal one, and *kāla* 'time' is often used in the sense of 'end, death'.[2] In the astrological view of things, this destined end is inherent in the beginning, like a full-grown tree in a seed. Once the qualities of a particular point in time have been understood, therefore, the future of anything begun at that moment – e.g., the unfolding of a human life or the answer to a question – may be predicted.

In its prescriptive aspect, astrology advises on how to make the best use of time by undertaking or refraining from particular actions, but also on how to mitigate the ill-effects of evil periods by acts of *śānti*: propitiation or pacification.[3] This dual role of astrology obviously presupposes both an element of determ-

[1] Obviously, if 'classical Hindu astrology' is an abstraction, 'classical Hindu thought' is even more so; and I would in no way suggest that the phrase refers to a uniform or monolithic phenomenon. On the contrary, the comparative unanimity which does prevail on certain issues may be seen as significant precisely in view of the admittedly great diversity of the Hindu tradition.

[2] González-Reimann 2002:20, preliminary to exploring this idea as one of the main themes of the *Mahābhārata*, traces it as far back as the *Ṛgveda*.

[3] For a more detailed subdivision of astrology into various disciplines, cf. the following chapter. For *śānti*, see below.

inism or predictability and a certain measure of freedom to act on the part of the individual. If the future were absolutely undetermined, there could be no question of predicting it, and astrology, like all forms of divination, would lose its *raison d'être*. If, on the other hand, the future were absolutely predetermined, there could be no question of advising one or the other course of action, or of mitigating an evil fate. Insofar as the promotion of human happiness is considered the proper concern of any branch of knowledge, astrology would therefore be meaningless; and indeed the art has been criticized on such grounds.[1]

By and large, however, classical Hindu thinkers seem happy to accept the coexistence of fate and free will, disagree though they may on the proportions of each. As shown by Sutton, this is certainly the case with the enormously influential epic *Mahābhārata*, which, while referring in places to various causal factors (such as *haṭha* 'necessity' and *svabhāva* 'nature'), admits of 'only one principal division, and where more numerous levels of causation are referred to this constitutes a more detailed analysis of one or the other, or of both.'[2] This principal division is that between human effort (*puruṣakāra*) and fate (*daiva*):

[1] The fatalist argument is rehearsed and refuted by 17th century astrologer Balabhadra in his HR (despite its late date, says Pingree 1981:95, 'an extremely full and valuable compilation' incorporating much earlier material):

avaśyaṃbhāvibhāvānāṃ pratīkāro bhaved yadi /
tadā duḥkhena bādhyeran nalarāmayudhiṣṭhirāḥ //
[...] tathā ca jyotiṣasmṛtyāveditajātakādiphalanirūpaṇasya vaiyarthyaṃ bhāsata iti cen naivaṃ karmaṇāṃ hi vaicitryaṃ kānicid dṛḍhamūlāni kānicic chithila-mūlāni /

'[Objection:] If states that will inevitably occur could be counteracted, then would Nala, Rāma, and Yudhiṣṭhira have been afflicted with misery? [...] [Reply:] And if [you say] that this shows the futility of the delineation of results by birth horoscopy, etc., as laid down in astrological texts, [then we say:] not so, for actions are manifold, some being firm-rooted (*dṛḍha-mūla*) and others, loose-rooted (*śithila-mūla*).' (Introductory chapter, verse 35) For a development of this distinction, see below.

[2] Sutton 2000:382. Cf. MBh 3.33.14–17:

akasmād api yaḥ kaścid arthaṃ prāpnoti pūruṣaḥ /
taṃ haṭheneti manyante sa hi yatno na kasyacit //
yac cāpi kiṃcit puruṣo diṣṭaṃ nāma labhaty uta /

> Human effort is the field; fate is said to be the seed. By that union of field and seed, crops flourish.[1]

And in the final analysis even this dichotomy is resolved, as all intermediary causes are subsumed under the grand aetiological concept of action or *karman*:

> What a man thus attains by necessity, fate, nature, or [present] work, [all] that is a result of previous action. Even the Lord and Creator bestows only [the result of] one's own action, for this reason or that, dividing among men in this [world] the result [of action] previously done.[2]

This 'prevailing doctrine of destiny in the *Mahābhārata*' therefore ultimately reduces everything to *karman*: Sutton finds no justification in the epic for any clear distinction between the concepts of *karman* and *daiva*.[3] The same may be safely stated of the bulk of classical Hindu religious and scientific literature: teachings on *karman* reign supreme.

Closer investigation of this 'doctrine' reveals, predictably, that it is not one but several: various models of *karman* theory exist even within orthodox Hinduism, not to mention the 'heterodox'

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daivena vidhinā pārtha tad daivam iti niścitam //
yat svayaṃ karmaṇā kiṃcit phalam āpnoti pūruṣaḥ /
pratyakṣaṃ cakṣuṣā dṛṣṭaṃ tat pauruṣam iti smṛtam //
svabhāvataḥ pravṛtto 'nyaḥ prāpnoty arthān akāraṇāt /
tat svabhāvātmakaṃ viddhi phalaṃ puruṣasattama //

'Whenever a man attains an object unexpectedly, that [gain] is considered to be by *necessity*: it is not [due to] anyone's effort. And whatever a man obtains by way of allotment, through divine providence, O Pārtha, that is deemed *fate*. Whatever result a man attains by his own work, beholding it with his own eyes, that is known as *effort*. Another, occupied according to his nature, attains objects [seemingly] without a cause: know that result, O best of men, to be *natural*.'

[1] MBh 13.6.8:

kṣetraṃ puruṣakāras tu daivaṃ bījam udāhṛtam /
kṣetrabījasamāyogāt tataḥ sasyaḥ samṛdhyate //

[2] MBh 3.33.18–19:

evaṃ haṭhāc ca daivāc ca svabhāvāt karmaṇas tathā /
yāni prāpnoti puruṣas tat phalaṃ pūrvakarmaṇaḥ //
dhātāpi hi svakarmaiva tais tair hetubhir īśvaraḥ /
vidadhāti vibhajyeha phalaṃ pūrvakṛtaṃ nṛṇām //

[3] Sutton 2000:369f.

systems of Buddhism and Jainism.[1] Differences in detail between these models need not, however, concern us here. Common to all is the belief that actions performed (as a rule voluntarily) in previous lifetimes determine the individual's present circumstances, thereby creating the framework within which new action is performed, etc.

The limitation imposed by this framework, i.e., the scope of predestination attributed to the force of previous *karman*, is again variously defined; but this determining force is generally seen as bearing on the outcome, rather than the nature, of present undertakings. Man is forced not to act, but to experience, although a natural inclination for certain types of action is regarded as another result of previous *karman*. The precise modes of experience depend on the chosen actions of the individual, who generates new *karman* in accordance with their merit or demerit. As Potter states,

> [i]t is possible, according to the theory [of *karman*], that A should do *x* in lifetime A, that the karmic residue should breed a *vāsanā* [subconscious impression] in lifetime B which leads him to do an act *y*, which is productive of great sin but immediately accompanied by pleasant experience *z*. Indeed, not only is that possible but presumably it happens all the time. God does not ordinarily match experience to act on the ground of the merit-value of *that* act, but rather on the ground of the merit-value of *past* acts.[2]

The fruition of past acts is thus inextricably linked to the performance of present acts, and all concrete life events are formed by a combination of the two. This view is again made explicit in a *dharma* text:

> The accomplishment of an act depends on both fate and human effort. Of these, fate is the manifestation of effort [performed] with a previous body [...] For as a cart does not move on a single wheel, so without human effort, fate is not accomplished.[3]

[1] For a discussion of the major variations of *karman* theory, see Potter 2001:231ff.

[2] Potter 1983:258f.

[3] YSm 1.349, 351:
daive puruṣakāre ca karmasiddhir vyavasthitā /
tatra daivam abhivyaktaṃ pauruṣam paurvadehikam // [...]

The same conclusion is echoed time and again in the various branches of Sanskrit literature, including manuals of astrology:

> There is no fate without human effort, nor human effort without fate: one [alone] will not accomplish the purpose, even as a single piece of kindling-wood [will not produce] fire.[1]

The question of the *proportions* of fate versus human effort involved in making up an event is brought up in the classical medical treatise *Carakasaṃhitā*,[2] where a disciple inquires of the sage Ātreya: 'Verily, my lord, is all life (*āyus*) of fixed duration or not?' Keeping in mind Patañjali's well-known definition of the scope of karmic causation as 'birth, [span of] life (*āyus*), and experience'[3] one might have expected the *ṛṣi* to reply in the affirmative. But Ātreya's exhaustive answer is rather more complex. Longevity, he argues, depends on a combination of fate and effort (past and present action), each of which may vary not only in merit-value, but in force:

> One should understand fate to be action performed by oneself in a previous body, whereas that which is done in this [lifetime] is known as human effort. In these two [forms of] action there is a distinction of strength and weakness. Action, indeed, is of three kinds: inferior, middling, and superior. When both are superior, their combination determines life to be both long and happy; the reverse, if [the combination] is inferior [...] A weak fate is obstructed by human effort, while weak [present] action is obstructed by a strong fate [...] Therefore, when both are seen, acknowledging only the one is unsound.[4]

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yathā hy ekena cakreṇa rathasya na gatir bhavet /
evaṃ puruṣakāreṇa vinā daivaṃ na sidhyati //

[1] YY 1.16:
na vinā mānuṣaṃ daivaṃ daivaṃ vā mānuṣaṃ vinā /
naikaṃ nivartayaty artham ekāraṇir ivānalam //

[2] CS 3.3.28–38.

[3] YSu 2.13: *sati mūle tadvipāko jātyāyurbhogāḥ.* Variations on this definition naturally exist, but most tend to include *āyus.* O'Flaherty 1983:21 quotes the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, *Uttarakhaṇḍa* 22.70–72, as stating that an individual's wealth, learning, and [mode of] death, apart from his longevity, are predestined.

[4] CS 3.3.30–34, 36:
daivam ātmakṛtaṃ vidyāt karma yat paurvadaihikam /
smṛtaḥ puruṣakāras tu kriyate yad ihāparam //
balābalaviśeṣo 'sti tayor api ca karmaṇoḥ /

The sage proceeds to list a number of common-sense objections to the notion of an absolutely fixed life span: if such a thing existed, there would be no need to beware of fierce animals, madmen, or the wrath of kings; nor of foul winds, steep cliffs, blazing fires, etc. Nor would great sages, who know all there is to know, have laboured to produce and teach about life-elixirs, to obtain their desired longevity by penances, or to prescribe various means to long life such as incantations, oblations, vows, fasts and benedictions. Indeed, it would be impossible even for the heavenly king Indra to strike down with his thunderbolt an enemy whose life span were fixed, or for the divine Aśvin physicians to restore such a dying patient to life with their medicines.

To this explanation the disciple quite reasonably replies: 'If this is so, my lord, then how can a "timely" or an "untimely" death [be said to] befall men whose life is of no fixed duration?' Ātreya then explains that a death which occurs when the life animating a body, properly tended according to the predominant nature (*prakṛti*) of that body, 'ceases at the exhaustion of its proper duration', is called timely (*kālamṛtyu*). Untimely death (*akālamṛtyu*), on the other hand, is that which occurs in advance of this last possible date, due to overexertion, overeating or not eating enough, excessive copulation, illness wrongly treated, etc.

As will be seen in subsequent chapters, such a distinction between maximum longevity (*paramāyus*) and untimely or 'accidental' death (*apamṛtyu*) is not unfamiliar to astrological authors. Indeed, astrological longevity calculations are sometimes explicitly stated to apply only to those leading a pure and pious life:

> This [span of] life has been ascribed by [sages] of noble mind to those men who delight in righteous acts, who have conquered their senses,

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dṛṣṭaṃ hi trividhaṃ karma hīnaṃ madhyamam uttamam //
tayor udārayor yuktir dīrghasya ca sukhasya ca /
niyatasyāyuṣo hetur viparītasya cetarā // [...]
daivaṃ puruṣakāreṇa durbalaṃ hy upahanyate //
daivena cetaraṃ karma viśiṣṭenopahanyate / [...]
tasmād ubhayadṛṣṭatvād ekāntagrahaṇam asādhu /

who eat pure foods, who are devoted to gods and brahmins, and who uphold the gracious conduct of [good] families in the world.[1]

Given the scope allowed for the interplay of fate and free will, *karman* thus offers an excellent theoretical model to support the practice of astrology; and from the earliest Hindu astrological texts on, the art is indeed interwoven with the concept of *karman*. 'Even as a lamp [reveals] objects in utter darkness', writes Mīnarāja in the early 4th century, 'this science reveals the edict [i.e., fate] which, *carrying the impact of previous action*, was inscribed on [man's] forehead by the Creator.'[2]

3.2. Atonement and propitiation

Actions performed in previous lifetimes are generally designated as *saṃcita* 'accumulated', while actions of the present lifetime are known as *kriyamāṇa* 'being performed'. *Saṃcita-karman* is again divided into that portion which has begun (*prārabdha*) to take effect and that which has not yet so begun (*aprārabdha*). The former is the *karman* determining the experiences of the present lifetime; the latter is stored up for lifetimes to come. *Prārabdha-karman* is therefore more or less synonymous with *daiva* as defined above, and indeed is sometimes translated as 'fate'. Its effect cannot be absolutely reversed, just as, in Śaṅkara's words, 'an arrow, already released from the bow to hit a mark, even after hitting it ceases its flight only with the exhaustion of the force generated'.[3]

[1] JKP 5.37:
ye dharmakarmaniratā vijitendriyā ye ye pathyabhojanajuṣo dvijadevabhaktāḥ /
loke narā dadhati ye kulaśīlalīlāṃ teṣāṃ idaṃ kathitam āyur udāradhībhiḥ //

[2] VYJ 1.3:
yā pūrvakarmaprabhavasya dhātrī dhātrā lalāṭe likhitā praśastiḥ /
tāṃ śāstram etat prakaṭaṃ vidhatte dīpo yathā vastu ghane 'ndhakāre //
The image of karmically determined destiny as written by God on a person's forehead is still widespread: cf. Daniel 1983; Hiebert 1983.

[3] BhGBh ad 13.24: *yathā pūrvaṃ lakṣavedhāya mukta iṣur dhanuṣo lakṣyavedhottarakālam apy ārabdhavegakṣayāt patanenaiva nivartate*. This is in contrast to *aprārabdha-karman*, which may be neutralized by soteriological means, as when 'that same arrow unreleased, the force causing its movement not yet generated, though set to the bow is withdrawn' (ibid.: *sa eveṣuḥ pravṛttinimittānārabdhavegas tv amukto dhanuṣi prayukto 'py upasaṃhriyate*).

As we have seen, however, the results of previous action necessarily manifest through present action, and may be influenced by it to a greater or lesser extent depending on their relative strengths. For this reason, some astrological authors further divide *prārabdha-karman* into two categories: *dṛḍha* 'fixed' and *adṛḍha* 'non-fixed' (or *śithila* 'slack'). Thus Bhaṭṭotpala (10th century CE), commenting on an earlier text, writes:

> Here [the author] details the *daśā* result earned by *dṛḍha-karman* through the order of [the periods of] maturation. Finding [that] *daśā* result to be evil, one should cancel journeys, etc. Finding it to be good, [one will] gain exceedingly from journeys, etc. The result earned by *adṛḍha-karman* is detailed through *aṣṭakavarga*. Finding that to be evil, one should neutralize it by [the performance of] *śānti*, etc.[1]

Different astrological techniques are here considered as revealing different types of *karman* – stronger and weaker – the latter of which may be effectively counteracted by *śānti*. As mentioned above, *śānti* is an act of propitiation laid down in various astrological and religious works. It is in one sense the reverse of *prāyaścitta* or atonement: by undertaking atonement for a known offence (whether of omission or commission), the performer hopes to avoid or mitigate any future retribution. The practice of *prāyaścitta* therefore presupposes an awareness of sin committed, for which retribution is expected. This practice generally comprises such acts as recitations of sacred texts, physical austerities, oblations, fasting, and donations.[2] The performance of *śānti*, while taking basically the same forms, is meant to avert an existing or imminent misfortune, which in accordance with *karman* theory is believed to result from some unknown sin previously committed. Thus, while the rationale of *prāyaścitta* is the anticipation of a future effect (suffering) from a past or present cause (sin), the individual undertaking *śānti*

[1] Bhaṭṭotpala ad BJ 1.3 (quoting YJ 43.11–13), cited by Stone 1981:267: *tatra dṛḍhakarmopārjitasya daśāphalaṃ pākakrameṇa vyanakti / aśubhaṃ daśāphalaṃ jñātvā yātrādeḥ parihāraḥ kartavyaḥ / śubhaṃ jñātvā yātrāder atiśayena dānam / adṛḍhakarmopārjitasyāṣṭakavargeṇa phalavyaktiḥ / tac cāśubhaṃ jñātvā śāntyādibhir upaśamaṃ nayet.* For the meaning of the technical terms *daśā* and *aṣṭakavarga*, see the following chapter.

[2] GDhS 19.11: *tasya niṣkrayaṇāni japas tapo homa upavāso dānam.*

deduces the existence of a prior cause from the observation of a present or impending effect.

This anticipation of misfortune may be based on natural signs, such as physical symptoms in the case of ill-health, or on various omens: the movements of birds and beasts, celestial or meteorological phenomena, etc. In astrology, it is deduced from planetary positions in or relative to the astrological chart.[1] The particular forms of *śānti* to be chosen, including the deity or deities to whom ritual worship is directed, are likewise astrologically determined. Lists of correlations between the planets and the greater Hindu pantheon are given in various texts, so that horoscopic afflictions to any planet may be counteracted by worship of the corresponding deity. In a similar vein, donating valuables which (by symbolic correspondences of colour, etc.) fall under the jurisdiction of a given planet may alleviate the affliction. Thus, a native suffering under the malefic influence of an ill-placed Mercury may be directed to give away a horse and recite the thousand names of Viṣṇu; if Rāhu (Caput Draconis) is the culprit, reading texts sacred to Durgā and donating a goat may be the remedy prescribed; if Jupiter, worshipping Śiva and making a gift of gold; etc.[2]

Frequently, however, the recipients of propitiatory worship are the planetary deities themselves. The details of such worship are laid down in astrological as well as mainstream religious works:

> The learned should fashion the images of the nine planets from copper, crystal, red sandalwood, gold, gold, silver, iron, lead and brass respectively, or draw them on silk cloth in colours [appropriate to] the planets, at the points of the compass [previously] described for the various planets, accompanied by the chanting of *mantras* [...] The correct form of [each] planet should be fashioned by the wise one hundred and eight fingers in height including the crown, and covered with garments. One should offer garments and flowers according to the colours of the planets, as well as incense, lights, perfume and other items. One should

[1] The techniques of astrological prognostication will be discussed in some detail in the following chapter.

[2] Cf. BPHS 53–61.

> present the substances, food, drink and offerings prescribed for the various planets with devotion and in accordance with the rules.[1]

The 'correct forms' of these deities include iconographical attributes such as colour of complexion, clothes and garlands; vehicle or mount; number of arms; weapons and other objects held in the hands; finger positions (*mudrā*), etc. – all of which are also detailed in the texts.[2]

The *Matsyapurāṇa*, making the fire sacrifice (*homa*) the central act of planet worship, describes the increasingly beneficial results of offering ten thousand, a hundred thousand, or ten million (!) oblations in the fire to the planets – results ranging from wealth, children and a beautiful spouse to the regaining of lost kingdoms and even final liberation.[3] For those who find the actual performance of such rites beyond their means, however, there is (as so often in the Purāṇas) still hope:

> The man who constantly hears or relates this [description of the sacrifices] is never afflicted by the planets, nor do his relatives meet with destruction. [And] in the house where the written [description of the] three planetary sacrifices is kept, there is no affliction to the children, no illness, and no bondage.[4]

[1] BPHS 85.4–5, 14–16:
navagrahākṛtīs tāmrasphaṭikāruṇacandanaiḥ /
svarṇasvarṇarājatāyaḥśīśakāṃsyaiḥ kramād budhaḥ //
racayed grahavarṇair vā paṭṭavastre 'tha vinyaset /
tattadgrahoktāsu dikṣu mantroccāraṇapūrvakam // [...]
grahamūrtiḥ sphuṭā vijñair aṣṭottaraśatāṅgulaiḥ /
unnatā sakirīṭāpi kāryā vāsobhir āvṛtā //
varṇānusāraṃ kheṭānāṃ vāsāṃsi kusumāni ca /
dhūpadīpasugandhādidravyāṇi ca dadīta vai //
tattadgrahoditaṃ dravyam annapānādikaṃ tathā /
baliṃ ca vidhivad bhaktipūrvakaṃ vinivedayet //

[2] For a fuller treatment of the ritual, mythology, iconography and history associated with the Hindu planetary deities, see Rao 1995; Markel 1995.

[3] MP 93.

[4] MP 93.157–158:
ya idaṃ śṛṇuyān nityaṃ śrāvayed vāpi mānavaḥ /
na tasya grahapīḍā syān na ca bandhujanakṣayaḥ //
grahayajñatrayaṃ gehe likhitaṃ yasya tiṣṭhati /
na pīḍā tatra bālānāṃ na rogo na ca bandhanam //

3.3. The question of causality

A *dharma* text states the case for propitiating the planetary deities as follows:

> When any [planet] is ill-placed for anyone, he should endeavour to worship that [planet]; [for] a boon was given them by Brahmā: '[Having been] worshipped, you will worship [in return].' The rise and fall of kings and the existence and annihilation of the world depend on the planets: therefore the planets are most worthy of worship.[1]

The planets are here seen as powerful deities who can make or mar a destiny at will, and whose favour is therefore worth securing. While this view does not necessarily conflict with the belief in *karman* as just described (for the good or ill favours of a deity, like those of any other being, may be considered just another working of *karman*), it does raise the question of the status of planets as causes or mere signs.

The question of causality is peculiar to astrology.[2] Hindu divination is of many kinds, including auspices, chiromancy and physiognomy, oneiromancy, etc.; but the question of whether birds and beasts, dreams or facial features actually *cause* the events presaged does not normally arise. *Karman* is the cause; omens are mere signs: 'To travelling men, auspices (*śakuna*) proclaim the maturation of good and evil acts (*karman*) per-

[1] YSm 1.307–308:
yaś ca yasya yadā duḥsthaḥ sa taṃ yatnena pūjayet /
brahmaṇaiṣāṃ varo dattaḥ pūjitāḥ pūjayiṣyatha //
grahādhīnā narendrāṇām ucchrāyāḥ patanāni ca /
bhāvābhāvau ca jagatas tasmāt pūjyatamā grahāḥ //

[2] But not confined to the Indian context: in the European tradition, too, this debate appears to be almost as old as astrology itself. In the third century CE, Plotinus had attacked astrologers for holding the planets to be causes, arguing instead that prediction – whether from the stars or from birds, etc. – is possible because the universe is a single living organism, whose many parts move analogously and synchronically: 'All things are filled full of signs, and it is a wise man who can learn about one thing from another.' (*Enneads* 2.3) This, however, does not deter an astrological apologist like Morin, fourteen centuries later, from firmly upholding the causal power of the heavenly bodies: 'For if the horoscope is not an efficient cause how else do these things [signified by it] come about in conformity with that celestial configuration?' (*Astrologia Gallica* 21.1.7)

formed in other births.'[1] The position of the planets, however, is more ambiguous.

Mīnarāja, quoted above, compared the science of astrology to a lamp revealing the destiny dictated by *karman*, and similar images are used by other classical authors. On this view, the planets too are mere signs from which future events may be read – related synchronically rather than causally to the human experiences they signify. Some fourteen centuries later, another author elaborates on this theme:

> A further purpose [of astrology] is stated by Varāha[mihira]: 'This science reveals the maturation of good and evil action performed in another birth, even as a lamp [reveals] objects in the dark.'[2] Here, by [the word] 'reveals' it is clearly recognized that the planets, outlining by means of their good or evil positions as fixed by birth at a particular time the maturation of the effects of good or evil actions earned in another birth, only indicate, but do not cause, [these] effects. Therefore, [the view] that the planets cannot give rise to good and evil effects, since the good and evil effects befalling living creatures arise from different kinds of destiny (*adṛṣṭa*)[3] earned by this or that person, is refuted. For although such an effect may *arise* from the destiny earned by this or that person, there is no objection to the planets *indicating* the effect. Where there is thus full knowledge of astrology, he in whose birth chart misfortune is perceived at a given time should at that time take remedial measures by performing recitations, preparatory rites, etc., and thereby good [will result]. But when good effects arise, then profitable journeys, coronations, etc., should be performed – this is intended.[4]

[1] YY 23.1:
anyajanmāntarakṛtaṃ puṃsāṃ karma śubhāśubham /
yat tasya śakunaḥ pākaṃ nivedayati gacchatām //

[2] The Varāhamihira quotation is from LJ 1.3.

[3] *Adṛṣṭa* 'the unseen' is a technical term borrowed from classical Vaiśeṣika philosophy, where 'it functions as the key factor in reinterpreting the "natural" world as saṃsāra, that is, as a mechanism of reward and punishment, or karmic retribution' (Halbfass 1991:313).

[4] HR 1.28: *prayojanottaram āha varāhaḥ /*
yad upacitam anyajanmani śubhāśubhaṃ tasya karmaṇaḥ paktim /
vyañjayati śāstram etat tamasi dravyāṇi dīpa iva //
atra vyañjayatīty anena tātkālikajanmalagnaśubhāśubhasthitivaśena janmāntarārjitaśubhāśubha-karmaphalapākanirūpayatāṃ grahāṇāṃ phala-sūcakataiva na tu janakatā iti spaṣṭaṃ pratīyate / ata eva prāṇināṃ śubhāśubhaphalasya tattatpuruṣārjitanānāvidhādṛṣṭajanyatvād grahāṇāṃ na śubhāśubha-

Other texts, however, take a somewhat different stand. As seen from several quotations above, brahminical orthodoxy postulates the existence of a supreme, personal God (*īśvara* 'the Lord', *dhātṛ* 'the Creator') as the supervisor and guarantor of the workings of *karman*. The two ideas in fact serve to justify each other: while the moral law of *karman* is more easily intelligible as the just judgments of an omniscient Lord than as a purely impersonal force, it also saves this Lord from the objection of partiality or caprice in distributing punishment and reward. Quoting Śaṅkara again,

> the Lord should be regarded as the rain: for as rain is the general cause of the creation of rice, barley, etc., while the particular causes of the difference between rice, barley, etc., are the properties inherent in the various seeds, so the Lord is [but] the general cause of the creation of gods, men, etc., while the particular actions (*karman*) relating to various beings (*jīva*) are the causes of the difference between gods, men, etc. Thus dependent [on actions], the Lord is not tainted by injustice or cruelty.[1]

The seeming injustices of life, in which men appear to thrive or suffer undeservedly, are thus in fact their just deserts as seen by the Lord on a larger time scale – making *karman*, as Weber observes, 'the most consistent theodicy ever produced by history'.[2] Making use of the popular doctrine of divine descent (*avatāra*), another astrological author now identifies this Lord with the planets in an attempt to address the relation between man and the stars:

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phalajanakatvam iti nirastam / tatphalasya tattatpuruṣārjitādṛṣṭa-janyatve 'pi grahāṇāṃ phalasūcakatve bādhakābhāvāt / evaṃ samyak horājñāne sati yasya janmakuṇḍalīto 'riṣṭaṃ yasmin kāle upalabhyate tadā tasya japapuraścaraṇādinā nirākaraṇaṃ kartavyaṃ tena śubham / yadā tu śubhaphalam utpadyate tadārthayātrārājyābhiṣekādikaṃ vidheyam iti tātparyam.

[1] BSBh 2.1.34: *īśvaras tu parjanyavad draṣṭavyaḥ / yathā hi parjanyo vrīhiyavādisṛṣṭau sādhāraṇaṃ kāraṇaṃ bhavati vrīhiyavādivaiṣamye tu tattadbījagatāny evāsādhāraṇāni sāmarthyāni kāraṇāni bhavanti evam īśvaro devamanuṣyādisṛṣṭau sādhāraṇaṃ kāraṇaṃ bhavati / devamanuṣyādi-vaiṣamye tu tattajjīvagatāny evāsādhāraṇāni karmāṇi kāraṇāni bhavanti evam īśvaraḥ sāpekṣatvān na vaiṣamyanairghṛṇyābhyāṃ duṣyati.*

[2] Weber 1958:121.

> Of what kind is the connection between the planets moving in the sky and living creatures moving on earth, by which [connection] results come to pass? [...] The descents of the unborn Supreme Self are innumerable. To bestow the results of actions on living beings (*jīva*), [the Lord] Janārdana assumes the forms of the planets.[1]

Here the planets are not mere signs, but intelligent agents: manifestations of divinity actively engaged in meting out the dues of all creatures born under their influence. Presumably, however, this influence is to be considered a supernatural one, like that of other deities, and not a physical force. More importantly, the assumption of a planetary influence (or its absence) does not affect the overarching structure of *karman*.

3.4. The religious status of the astrologer

Far from being a peripheral adjunct to Hinduism, astrology is thus concerned from the outset with central religious issues such as fate and free will, reward, punishment and atonement. The orthodox doctrine of *karman* lends authority to astrological teachings, but the reverse holds true as well: for astrology claims to prove the workings of *karman* by accurately predicting the future.

Despite this religious underpinning, however, astrology has not always been considered an honourable occupation. The laws of Manu even include 'those who live by the stars' in a long list of twice-born (i.e., upper-caste) men banned from certain sacrifices, lumping them in with such undesirables as physicians, sea-farers, oilmillers, makers of bows and arrows, sellers of liquor, professional gamblers, dog-breeders, falconers, tamers of

[1] BPHS 1.5, 2.3:

nabhaḥsthāyigrahāṇāñ ca bhūmiṣṭhaprāṇināṃ mithaḥ //
kīdṛśo 'sti ca saṃbandhaḥ phalaṃ yena prajāyate / [...]
avatārāṇy anekāni hy ajasya paramātmanaḥ /
jīvānāṃ karmaphalado graharūpī janārdanaḥ //

The same text further identifies the signs of the zodiac with the body of the Lord (BPHS 5.2):

yad avyaktātmako viṣṇuḥ kālarūpo janārdanaḥ /
tasyāṅgāni nibodha tvaṃ kramān meṣādirāśayaḥ //

'As the unmanifest Viṣṇu Janārdana [has assumed] the form of time, understand his limbs to be the [zodiacal] signs (*rāśi*) in their order, beginning with Aries.'

elephants, bulls, horses and camels, house-builders, tree-planters, shepherds, buffalo-keepers, worshippers of low deities, and exorcists – all of them 'unfit for the row [of guests seated at a meal]'.[1] Other *dharma* texts take similar stands.[2]

These texts all antedate the introduction of horoscopic astrology proper (*horā*) into India in the third century CE – a more sophisticated art than the stellar divination held in contempt by the lawmakers. In contrast to their views, and perhaps in an effort to clear the name and raise the status of his science, the 6th century astrologer Varāhamihira claims a high place in society for such of his peers as meet his exacting standards:

> The twice-born one who knows this entire [science] both in word and meaning should be the first to eat at a *śrāddha* [ceremony],[3] an honoured purifier of the row [of guests]. For the Greeks are barbarians; [yet] this science is well established among them, and they are venerated like sages. How much more, [then, should one honour] a twice-born astrologer! [... But] he who assumes the role of astrologer without knowing the science should be known as a wretched defiler of the row, a [mere] gazer at the stars.[4]

[1] This list is not complete; cf. MSm 3.150–168. Professional categories apart, those excluded from the sacrifices include ascetics and others fallen from the norm of Vedic orthopraxy, brahmin-haters and members of [heterodox] groups; immoral or criminal elements such as drunkards, violators of virgins, poisoners and incendiaries; the physically or mentally deficient, including those with bad nails or brown teeth, consumptives, lepers, the one-eyed or club-footed; and those involved in or resulting from clandestine marital or sexual relations, such as younger brothers married before the elders, lovers of *śūdra* women, and sons of remarried widows. A pretty company for astrologers!

[2] E.g. BDhS 2.2.15–16, which lists 'taking counsel with the stars' (*nakṣatranirdeśa*) among minor, polluting sins, such as gambling, sorcery, etc. Occasionally, however, a grudging allowance is made for the necessity of divination, as in GDhS 11.15–16, where kings are enjoined to pay heed to the readers of signs and omens; 'for, according to some, his welfare depends also on that'. (Olivelle 1999:169, 96f.)

[3] *Śrāddha* is an annual observance in honour of the ancestors. As with all important rituals, it is incomplete without the feeding of priests and other honoured guests.

[4] BS 2.31–32, 34:

granthataś cārthataś caitat kṛtsnaṃ jānāti yo dvijaḥ /
agrabhuk sa bhavec chrāddhe pūjitaḥ paṅktipāvanaḥ //
mlecchā hi yavanās teṣu samyak śāstram idaṃ sthitam /

A real astrologer, says Varāhamihira, should not only be expert in all branches of *jyotiṣa*: he should be of noble birth, modest dress and pleasant appearance, well-built and handsome in all respects, 'for in general virtue and vice conform to the shape of the body'. His voice should be deep and sonorous; he should be skilful, confident and eloquent, unconquerable by his fellow students and fearless in assemblies; versed in religious rituals and devoted to the worship of gods, sacred vows and fasting. Like gold purified by the repeated application of fire and touchstone, his understanding of astrology should be clarified by constant application to various questions and considerations.[1] Similar requirements are put forth by other astrological authors.[2]

These high demands on the student or practitioner of astrology – obviously a matter of ideals rather than common practice – are motivated at least in part by its divine origin. Like all true arts and sciences, astrology is perceived of as given to men by the gods and passed down through the generations by semi-divine sages. Rather than developing gradually through observation and speculation, astrology is therefore perfect from the beginning and must be preserved from deterioration by carefully guarding the line of teaching. In another astrological text, we find sage Parāśara instructing his disciple:

> Maitreya! This science which has been explained to you was received by me in [this] order of succession: first Prajāpati [Brahmā] taught it to the great sage Nārada; he then [taught it] to Śaunaka and others, and I learnt it from them. It should never be given to a villain, an ill-mannered or

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ṛṣivat te 'pi pūjyante kiṃ punar daivavid dvijaḥ // [...]
avidítvaiva yaḥ śāstraṃ daivajñatvaṃ prapadyate /
sa paṅktidūṣakaḥ pāpo jñeyo nakṣatrasūcakaḥ //

[1] BS 2.2–13.

[2] E.g., BPHS 28.39–40:

gaṇiteṣu pravīṇo 'tha śabdaśāstre kṛtaśramaḥ /
nyāyavid buddhimān horāskandhaśravaṇasammataḥ //
ūhāpohapaṭur deśakālavit saṃyatendriyaḥ /
evaṃbhūtas tu daivajño 'saṃśayaṃ satyam ādiśet //

'Expert in calculations, taking pains in the science of grammar, versed in logic and intelligent, studying and reflecting on the branches of judicial astrology, skilled in argumentation and refutation, conversant with time and place, controlling his senses: such an astrologer will no doubt predict truly.'

> ungrateful man; nor to a fool, an enemy, or a blasphemer. But to a well-behaved [student] whose family and character are known, who is intelligent and serves [his teacher], this exalted and respected science should be given.[1]

Astrology is therefore divine in origin as well as in its subject matter: *daiva*, divine fate, deciphered by the astrologer with 'the faultless eye of horoscopy'.[2] As everyone is dependent on fate, everyone needs the astrologer's advice. Even the hermits of the forest, says Varāhamihira, inquire from one skilled in the movements of the stars; and a king without an astrologer is like the sky without the sun.[3]

Nor is there such a thing as a chance meeting with an astrologer: like a birth, an astrological reading is divinely ordained and takes place only when the time is right.

> Because a man comes helplessly into the presence of the astrologer, forcibly compelled by his good or evil fate, therefore [a horoscope cast for the time of] a query is equal to [one cast for] a nativity in [the correctness of its] results.[4]

From being the spokesman of fate and the divine planets, it is a short step to becoming their ally. That a figure of such learning and piety as the ideal astrologer of the texts, holding the keys to knowledge of a client's destiny, should inspire reverence in that

[1] BPHS 98.1–4:
maitreya yad idaṃ śāstram uditaṃ puratas tava /
tad idaṃ nikhilaṃ prāptaṃ pāramparyakramān mayā //
purā prajāpatiḥ prāha nāradāya maharṣaye /
sa cāpi śaunakādibhyas tebhyo 'dhigatavān aham //
durjanāyāvinītāya kṛtaghnāya jaḍāya vā /
dveṣiṇe nindakāyāpi na deyam iti karhicit //
vinītāyāpi vijñātakulaśīlāya sevine /
medhāvine deyam etad uttamaṃ śāstram ādṛtam //

[2] SA 2.1.

[3] BS 2.25–26.

[4] PM 1.46:
saṃpreryamāṇas tv avaśaḥ śarīrī prasahya daivena śubhāśubhena /
jyotirvidaḥ sannidhim eti yasmāt praśno 'py ato janmasamaḥ phaleṣu //
Though the PM is rather late, the practice (and, presumably, the underlying ideology) of casting charts for the time of a question goes back to the earliest times of horoscopic astrology.

client is natural enough. But in a work on elections (*muhūrta*) we find that the astrologer has more than knowledge: being in liaison with the planets, he shares in their actual power to affect a man's destiny for better or worse.

> And it is said: 'By worship of the astrologer, all the planets are fully worshipped; though weak [by placement in the horoscope], they work good [results] as though [they were] strong. By disrespect towards the astrologer, the planets are disrespected; they destroy that work [which the client means to undertake, as though] weak, although benefic [by placement]. Therefore, in all undertakings one should first honour the astrologers with [gifts of] clothes, cows, land, gold, etc., according to one's ability, [and] not deceive them.' [...] And also in the *Vidhiratna*: 'When presented with an inevitable undertaking [although the time may not be auspicious], one should worship all the planets and the astrologers well, according to one's ability, and then commence the undertaking.'[1]

This apotheosis of the astrologer, however, is not characteristic even of astrological texts, what to speak of mainstream religious literature (though the status of astrologers certainly improved in later eras as compared to that of Manu). Though the possibility of *śānti* is always admitted – and indeed, as seen above, justifies the art – the planets are not generally believed to be so easily swayed. The divine writing on man's forehead can never be wholly erased.

[1] MD ad VM 5.35: *uktaṃ ca –*
daivajñapūjanāt sarve grahāḥ syuḥ paripūjitāḥ /
durbalā api kurvanti prabalā iva te śubham //
daivajñasyāvamānena grahāḥ syur avamānitāḥ /
vināśayanti tat karma durbalā api śobhanāḥ //
tasmāt sarveṣu kāryeṣu daivajñān pūrvam arcayet /
vastragobhūhiraṇyādyaiḥ yathāśakti na vañcayet //
iti [...] tathā ca vidhiratne –
āvaśyake tu saṃprāpte kārye saṃpūjya śaktitaḥ /
grahān viśvāṃś ca daivajñān tataḥ karma samārabhet //
iti /

4. Casting and reading the horoscope

The conceptual framework of Hindu astrology having been to some extent outlined above, the present chapter intends to sketch the technical procedure of casting and reading a horoscope according to classical manuals, along with some necessary background information. The purpose of this exercise is partly to shed light on the astrological arguments and terminology frequently encountered in the *nāḍī* texts themselves, partly to present the fundamentals of 'mainstream astrology' so as to make possible a later demonstration of certain unique features of the *nāḍī* genre.

The discipline of *jyotiṣa* (astronomy-astrology) is traditionally divided into three branches:[1]

1. *gaṇita* or calculation, consisting of
   (a) mathematics (*gaṇita* in a restricted sense) and
   (b) astronomy (*gola*);
2. *horā*, horoscopy or judicial astrology, consisting of
   (a) genethlialogy or natal astrology (*jātaka*),
   (b) interrogations or horary astrology (*praśna*), and
   (c) catarchic or electional astrology (*muhūrta*);
3. *saṃhitā* or *śākhā* 'collections, branches', consisting of various divinatory techniques not necessarily involving the heavenly bodies.

Of these three, only *horā* corresponds to astrology in the general sense of the term, namely, the art of horoscope interpretation. The *nāḍī* texts discussed in the following chapters all deal with natal horoscopes, and the present discussion will therefore focus on the methodology of natal astrology or *jātaka*.[2] Unless otherwise specified, the word 'astrology' when used below should thus be understood as referring to this branch of the art.[3]

[1] Cf. Pingree 1981:1; Bhat 1992:4f.

[2] The GN explicitly refers to *jātaka* as its subject matter; see Chapter 6.

[3] The interpretation of *praśna*, where an astrological chart is cast for the time and place of asking a question, is closely modelled on that of *jātaka*. Cf. SAC 1.5: *yaj jātake nigaditaṃ bhuvi mānavānāṃ tat prāśnike 'pi sakalaṃ kathayanti tajjñāḥ / praśno 'pi janmasadṛśo bhavati prabhedaḥ praśnasya cātra jananasya na kaścid asti //*

Chapter 4

4.1. Starting points: observing the heavens

Astrological divination is based on observation of the heavenly bodies and other celestial phenomena. It is true that such observation must always be carried out at least partly with the mind's eye (and today, indeed, is almost always wholly so), using calculations to supplement physical vision, which is necessarily obstructed by the line of the horizon, sunlight, clouds, etc. Nevertheless, the fundamentally observational nature of the art is a point to be carefully noted, since astrology is often erroneously held to be based on a particular – geocentric, and therefore outdated – model of the universe.

Like other forms of divination, astrology in fact depends not on any particular theory explaining the natural causes of the phenomena it studies, but rather on the observation and interpretation of those phenomena as such. Astronomical models are therefore relevant to the astrologer only inasmuch as they allow for accurate calculation. Strictly speaking, the astrological perspective is neither geocentric nor heliocentric, but topocentric: its point of reference is the particular point in space at which any astrologically significant event takes place, such as a birth, the asking of a question, the commencement of an undertaking, etc.

The primary objects of astrological observation are the planets. In astrological terminology, 'planet' refers to any heavenly body – including the sun and moon – apparently traversing the sky against the background of the stars. This usage differs from that of contemporary astronomy, but agrees with the original meaning of the Greek term (οἱ πλάνητες ἀστέρες 'the wandering stars'), as well as the Sanskrit (*graha*).[1]

'Whatever [rules] have been proclaimed for the nativities of men in the world, all those do the learned prescribe for queries as well, for a query is similar to a birth: there is in this respect not the slightest difference between a birth and a query.'

[1] See, for instance, BPHS 3.4–5:

tejaḥpuñjā nu vīkṣyante gagane rajanīṣu ye /
nakṣatrasaṃjñakās te tu na kṣarantīti niścalāḥ //
vipulākāravanto 'nye gatimanto grahāḥ kila /
svagatyā bhāni gṛhṇanti yato 'tas te grahābhidhāḥ //

The *nava-grahas* or nine planets of classical Hindu astrology are divided into three groups based on their luminosity (see fig. 1). Each planet has numerous Sanskrit synonyms. The standard order of the first seven corresponds to that of the seven weekdays (cf. the section on calendar terms below). The last two *grahas* are not bodies at all, but calculated points in the sky: the lunar nodes, known in European astrology as Caput and Cauda Draconis, or the Dragon's Head and Tail, respectively.

A. Luminaries (*prakāśakagraha*)	B. 'Stellar' planets (*tārāgraha*)	C. Dark or shadowy planets (*tamograha*, *chāyāgraha*)
1. The sun (Ravi)	3. Mars (Maṅgala)	8. Caput Draconis (Rāhu)
2. The moon (Candra)	4. Mercury (Budha)	9. Cauda Draconis (Ketu)
	5. Jupiter (Guru)	
	6. Venus (Śukra)	
	7. Saturn (Śani)	

Figure 1: the nine planets[1]

A node is the point at which two concentric circles, inclined to one another at a certain angle, intersect. The apparent orbit of the sun around the earth forms one such circle, known as the *ecliptic*. The orbit of the moon, describing another circle inclined to the ecliptic, gives rise to two diametrically opposed nodes: a northern or ascending one, where the moon crosses the ecliptic in northward motion, and a southern or descending one. Due to their involvement in solar and lunar eclipses, the nodes of the

'The masses of light which are seen in the sky at night are known as stars (*nakṣatra*) because, [being] immovable, they do not perish (*na kṣaranti*). The others, possessing larger shapes and motion, are said to be planets. Since they overtake (*gṛhṇanti*) the stars by their own motion, they are therefore called planets (*graha*).'

[1] This table is based on JP 2.8. Many Sanskrit synonyms exist of the planetary names given. The *nava-grahas* apart, some classical texts mention a number of mathematically derived *upagrahas* or 'sub-planets', the ones in most frequent use being Gulika and Māndi (considered by some astrologers to be identical). Their use being peripheral to astrology generally as well as to our *nāḍī* texts, these points will not be dealt with here.

moon have been considered important enough by Hindu astrologers to be elevated to the status of planets in their own right, the north node being known as Rāhu, the south node as Ketu.

4.1.1. Primary motion: the houses

The movements of the planets across the sky are of two distinct kinds, commonly known as primary and secondary. The primary motion is what we observe most obviously in the daily movement of the sun: owing to the rotation of the earth around its axis, the sun appears each morning to rise in the east, culminate at midday, and set in the west at nightfall. During the course of 24 hours, it thus describes a full circle around the earth, from east to west – and so, though not as easily observed, do all the planets, along with their background of stars.

The primary motion is therefore relative to the place of observation, and is measured with reference to the cardinal points: the horizon or east-west line, and the meridian or north-south line. This is the basis of an all-important element of astrology: the division of the sky into twelve mundane *houses*, in Sanskrit most commonly known as *bhāva*.

Present-day Hindu astrologers are divided on the issue of houses, and two main schools of thought exist.[1] In the simpler of these, the extensions of the twelve houses coincide with those of the twelve zodiacal signs. The zodiac will be explained below; suffice it for now to say that its 'signs' constitute an unchanging division of the ecliptic into twelve equal parts of 30° each. In this whole-sign house school, whichever sign happens to be on the eastern horizon at the time of a nativity or corresponding event is called the first house; the following sign becomes the second house, and so forth. In other words, only the east-west line is employed in determining the houses, and the north-south line is ignored.

The second school makes use of both the meridian and the horizon. These two lines equally quadrisect the imaginary sphere of sky surrounding the astrologer's place of observation. How-

[1] See, for instance, Ojha 1995:91ff.; Bhat 1988:23ff.

ever, as the celestial equator is inclined to the ecliptic, the same lines when projected on to the ecliptic will divide it into four parts of unequal extension. This method of division is therefore sometimes referred to as a system of 'unequal houses'. The eastern horizon, known as the ascendant (*lagna*), here marks the centre of the 1st house; the culminating point or midheaven (*khamadhya*), that of the 10th house; the western horizon, that of the 7th; and the anti-culminating point, that of the 4th. The centres of the remaining eight houses are found by equally trisecting the four resulting ecliptical divisions.

The centre of a house is known as its *cusp* (*bhāvasphuṭa*, *bhāvamadhya*), and the point halfway between two adjacent cusps is called a house junction (*bhāvasandhi*). Each house extends from the junction preceding its cusp to the junction succeeding it: thus, the 1st house begins halfway between the 12th cusp and the ascendant, and ends halfway between the ascendant and the 2nd cusp. Depending on the latitude of the place of observation, a given zodiacal sign may contain one, two, or even more house cusps, or none at all. This unequal house system is often named after its 11th century advocate Śrīpati Bhaṭṭa, but in fact antedates him by many centuries.

Classical astrological works occasionally seem to presuppose an equal division of houses; however, this may be entirely a matter of convenience – natural enough at Indian latitudes, where even 'unequal' house cusps will be fairly evenly distributed over the ecliptic. On the other hand, even rather early texts do contain passages which can be understood only as referring to unequal houses.[1] The same apparent inconsistency is found in ancient Greek and Roman works on astrology, and presumably for similar reasons. On the whole, therefore, I feel

[1] E.g., BPHS 5.27: *lagnabhāgyāntaraṃ yojyaṃ yac ca rāśyādi jāyate* 'Add the distance between the ascendant and the [house of] fortune, as produced in signs and so forth' – implying that distances between houses are not constant, and may contain fractions of signs – or 29.19: *rāśidvayagate bhāve* 'When a house extends over two signs ...'. The 'Chapter on establishing [the places of] the planets, etc.' (*Grahādisādhanādhyāya*) present in Jha 2000 and detailing the calculation of unequal house cusps is, however, missing from some other editions, and is presumably a later addition.

that Tester's views on house systems in European astrology may be applied with equal justification to its Indian cousin:

> [T]here were ways of constructing mundane houses with unequal divisions, and there seems to be little evidence in late Greek or medieval astrology for much use of a simple 'equal house system', despite [...] the belief of many modern astrologers (among whom it is the commonest method used) that it was the most ancient method.[1]

4.1.2. Secondary motion: the zodiac

While the planets and stars continually rise and set on the horizon, the relationship between planets and stars is itself slowly changing in the opposite direction, from west to east. Should we, on a number of consecutive days, observe the stars on the horizon just prior to sunrise, we would thus notice a gradual shifting of their positions from one day to the next, so that the sun each morning appears against a slightly different background of stars. This comparatively slow process is known as secondary motion.

As the primary motion of the planets is the basis of the twelve mundane houses, so their secondary motion is the basis of the twelve zodiacal signs. The planets are all seen to move, relative to the stars, within an imaginary belt of sky extending some 9° to either side of the ecliptic. This belt is the *zodiac* (*bhacakra* 'circle of stars'). The zodiacal positions of the planets are measured with reference to the ecliptic, which is divided into twelve equal parts of 30° each, known as *signs* (*rāśi*).[2] The names of the twelve signs (see fig. 2) are derived from actual constellations observed within the belt of the zodiac. The zodiacal signs of Hindu astrology, though not fully identical with these constellations – the latter being of unequal extension – are dependent on and constant in relation to them. This division of the ecliptic is therefore known as the *sidereal* or fixed (*nir-ayaṇa*) zodiac. Hindu astrology hereby differs from its European counterpart, which since the time of Ptolemy has allowed the

[1] Tester 1987:174.

[2] The older term '(zodiacal) house' will not be used here, to avoid confusion with the mundane houses or 'places'.

zodiac to drift away from the constellations by defining it with reference to the position of the sun at the vernal equinox – the so-called *tropical* or movable (*sāyana*) zodiac.[1]

Anglo-Latin name	Sanskrit name[2]	Meaning of Sanskrit	Zodiacal extension
Aries	Meṣa	The Ram	0˚00' – 29˚59'
Taurus	Vṛṣabha	The Bull	30˚00' – 59˚59'
Gemini	Mithuna	The Twins	60˚00' – 89˚59'
Cancer	Karkaṭa	The Crab	90˚00' – 119˚59'
Leo	Siṃha	The Lion	120˚00' – 149˚59'
Virgo	Kanyā	The Virgin	150˚00' – 179˚59'
Libra	Tulā	The Scales	180˚00' – 209˚59'
Scorpio	Vṛścika	The Scorpion	210˚00' – 239˚59'
Sagittarius	Dhanus	The Bow	240˚00' – 269˚59'
Capricorn	Makara	The Sea-monster[3]	270˚00' – 299˚59'
Aquarius	Kumbha	The [Water]-pot	300˚00' – 329˚59'
Pisces	Mīna	The Fish	330˚00' – 359˚59'

Figure 2: the twelve zodiacal signs

Sometime in the early centuries CE, the two zodiacs coincided; that is to say, the vernal equinox took place at 0˚ of sidereal Aries (the first sign of the zodiac), from which it has since regressed through most of sidereal Pisces, and will in a few more centuries enter sidereal Aquarius.[4] This very slow shifting, describing a full circle in some 26,000 years, is known as the precession of the equinox, and the precessional value at any given date – the difference between the two zodiacs – is called the *ayanāṃśa* 'degree of motion'. There is considerable disagreement among Hindu astrologers on the exact *ayanāṃśa* value, or in other

[1] The equation of the vernal equinoctial point with 0˚ Aries first occurs in TB 1.10. The vernal equinox takes place around 21 March every year.

[2] Like the planets, the zodiacal signs are rich in synonyms.

[3] Skt. *makara* refers sometimes to a purely mythological creature, sometimes to a (semi)-aquatic animal such as a crocodile, shark, or dolphin.

[4] This is the basis of the modern esoteric – and rather premature – talk of the 'age of Aquarius'.

words, on the precise date of coincidence of the two zodiacs. This in turn is due mainly to a lack of consensus as to which star marks the beginning of Aries, or of any zodiacal sign. The Indian Government has adopted the popular *ayanāṃśa* value (23°09'35" for 1 January, 1950) advocated by the late N.C. Lahiri for the computation of its official almanac. Most other *ayanāṃśas* in current use differ from Lahiri by less than 4°.

Another division of the zodiac, independent of the twelve signs, is that of the twenty-seven lunar mansions or *nakṣatras* (see fig. 3). Though not without importance in natal or horary astrology, the lunar mansions figure most prominently in elections (*muhūrta*).

Velocity in secondary motion varies greatly among the nine planets, the slowest one being Saturn (completing one revolution of the zodiac in 29½ years) and the fastest one, the moon (27 days). Owing to the varying relative positions of the earth and the five *tārāgrahas* – planets in the modern astronomical sense – in their respective orbits around the sun, these planets occasionally appear to slow down, come to a halt, and move backwards: from east to west, against the order of the zodiacal signs. This phenomenon, known as retrogression (*vākrya*), lasts from a few weeks to several months, after which the planet stations once more and resumes its direct or forward motion. The luminaries are always in direct motion, the nodes always retrograde.[1]

4.1.3. The calendar

Planetary positions and related calculations apart, astrological birth charts, including those given in *nāḍīs*, generally contain certain calendaric information. The chronological terms most often employed are defined below.

[1] This is true of the mean nodes, which are traditionally used in astrology. The so-called true nodes, gaining in popularity among modern practitioners and calculated by a somewhat different method, do occasionally go direct.

Name[1]	Extension	Name	Extension
Aśvinī	0˚00' – 13˚19'	Svāti	186˚40' – 199˚59'
Bharaṇī	13˚20' – 26˚39'	Viśākhā	200˚00' – 213˚19'
Kṛttikā	26˚40' – 39˚59'	Anurādhā	213˚20' – 226˚39'
Rohiṇī	40˚00' – 53˚19'	Jyeṣṭhā	226˚40' – 239˚59'
Mṛgaśiras	53˚20' – 66˚39'	Mūlā	240˚00' – 253˚19'
Ārdrā	66˚40' – 79˚59'	Pūrvāṣāḍhā	253˚20' – 266˚39'
Punarvasu	80˚00' – 93˚19'	Uttarāṣāḍhā	266˚40' – 279˚59'
Puṣyā	93˚20' – 106˚39'	(Abhijit)[2]	–
Āśleṣā	106˚40' – 119˚59'	Śravaṇā	280˚00' – 293˚19'
Maghā	120˚00' – 133˚19'	Dhaniṣṭhā	293˚20' – 306˚39'
Pūrvaphalguṇī	133˚20' – 146˚39'	Śatabhiṣaj	306˚40' – 319˚59'
Uttaraphalguṇī	146˚40' – 159˚59'	Pūrvabhadrapadā	320˚00' – 333˚19'
Hasta	160˚00' – 173˚19'	Uttarabhadrapadā	333˚20' – 346˚39'
Citrā	173˚20' – 186˚39'	Revatī	346˚40' – 359˚59'

Figure 3: the twenty-seven lunar mansions

*Year (*abda, saṃvatsara*)*

A year is identified by reference to a given era and/or to the so-called Jovian sixty-year cycle. The two eras most often met with are Śaka and Kali, the latter antedating the former by 3179 years.[3] The computation of the Jovian or *prabhavādi* years (see fig. 4) varies, as some schools advocate a (soli)-lunar year definition (*cāndramāna*), others a solar (*sauramāna*) or a Jovian one (*bārhaspatyamāna*).[4]

[1] Some lunar mansions are known by more than one name.

[2] The *nakṣatra* Abhijit, though included in some lists as a 28th name, is generally considered part of Uttarāṣāḍhā and Śravaṇā – perhaps for the simple reason that 360˚ is not divisible by 28.

[3] The date of commencement of Kaliyuga is commonly given as 18 February 3102 BCE, while the Śaka era commenced in 78 CE. For Hindu *yuga* theories, see González-Reimann 2002.

[4] This question is discussed in HR 2.347, citing *Vedāṅgajyotiṣa* as the *prima facie* authority for *cāndramāna*, and *Sūryasiddhānta et al.* as authorities for *bārhaspatyamāna*. The latter computation is based on the mean motion of Jupiter (*madhyamaguru*) through the zodiacal signs; for the former, cf. the discussion on months below. BS 8.20–21 gives the method of converting soli-

1. Prabhava	16. Citrabhānu	31. Hemalamba	46. Paridhāvin
2. Vibhava	17. Subhānu	32. Vilamba	47. Pramādin
3. Śukla	18. Tāraṇa	33. Vikārin	48. Ānanda
4. Pramoda	19. Pārthiva	34. Śarvarin	49. Rākṣasa
5. Prajāpati	20. Vyaya	35. Plava	50. Anala
6. Aṅgiras	21. Sarvajit	36. Śubhakṛt	51. Piṅgala
7. Śrīmukha	22. Sarvadhārin	37. Śobhakṛt	52. Kālayukta
8. Bhava	23. Virodhin	38. Krodhin	53. Siddhārtha
9. Yuvan	24. Vikṛta	39. Viśvāvasu	54. Raudra
10. Dhātṛ	25. Khara	40. Parābhava	55. Durmati
11. Īśvara	26. Nandana	41. Plavaṅga	56. Dundubhi
12. Bahudhānya	27. Vijaya	42. Kīlaka	57. Rudhirodgārin
13. Pramāthin	28. Jaya	43. Saumya	58. Raktākṣa
14. Vikrama	29. Manmatha	44. Sādhāraṇa	59. Krodhana
15. Vṛṣa	30. Durmukha	45. Virodhakṛt	60. Kṣaya

Figure 4: the sixty Jovian years[1]

*Half-year (*ayana*)*

An *ayana* is the northern (*uttarāyaṇa*) or southern (*dakṣiṇāyana*) course of the sun, i.e., the period when the sun is approaching its northernmost or southernmost position relative to the equator. In classical astrology, however, the *ayanas* have

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lunar Śaka years to Jovian as ($y \times 44 + 8589$) / 3750 + y, where y is the number of *completed* years in the Śaka era. Thus, for the year 2000 CE, which corresponds to Śaka 1922/Kali 5101, the calculation would be:

a. 1921 completed years × 44 = 84,524
b. 84,524 + 8589 = 93,113
c. 93,113 / 3750 = 24 $^{3113}/_{3750}$
d. 24 $^{3113}/_{3750}$ + 1921 = 1945 $^{3113}/_{3750}$

Subtracting multiples of 60 (completed *prabhavādi* cycles), we arrive at 25 completed Jovian years (1945 - 60 × 32) in the present cycle, 2000 CE being therefore the 26th year, known as Nandana. Owing to the difference in length between the Jovian and the soli-lunar year, however, this Jovian reckoning is currently 12 years ahead of the soli-lunar (Bhat 1986:89). According to almanacs based on the soli-lunar year, prevalent especially in South India, the year 2000 CE would therefore correspond to the 14th *prabhavādi* year, known as Vikrama.

[1] This list is based on HR 2.349–408, with slight orthographic corrections.

come instead to be identified with the solar ingresses into sidereal Cancer and Capricorn, thus deviating from observable reality: for the sun can be seen turning southward while Hindu almanacs still indicate *uttarāyaṇa*, and vice versa.[1]

*Season (*ṛtu*)*

Each six-month *ayana* is divided into three *ṛtus* of two months each, the *uttarāyaṇa* being comprised of cool season (*śiśira*), spring (*vasanta*) and summer (*grīṣma*), and the *dakṣiṇāyana* of rainy season (*varṣa*), autumn (*śarad*) and winter (*hemanta*).

*Month (*māsa*)*

Two ways of reckoning months are generally recognized. A solar (*sauramāna*) month is defined by the duration of the sun's stay in one zodiacal sign, lasting just over 30 days. This system is popular in the Tamil-speaking areas. A more wide-spread system is the lunar (*cāndramāna*) or, more correctly, soli-lunar month, based on the synodic revolutions of the moon. This in its turn has two varieties: *amānta*, from one new moon to the next, and *pūrṇimānta*, from one full moon to the next. In the former, more common variety, the month takes its name from the lunar mansion (*nakṣatra*) in or near which its full moon occurs (see fig. 5). As a synodic revolution lasts for approximately 29½ days, a soli-lunar year of twelve such months (354 days) soon falls out of pace with the seasons. This year is therefore periodically adjusted to the solar year by the insertion of an intercalary month (*adhimāsa*).

[1] The points of maximum declination are known in European astrology as the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, respectively; properly speaking, the beginning of the *uttarāyaṇa* coincides with the solar ingress into *tropical* Cancer around 21 June each year (summer solstice in the northern hemisphere), whereas the beginning of the *dakṣiṇāyana* coincides with the ingress into tropical Capricorn around 21 December (winter solstice). HR 2.435 states that tropical calculation of *ayanas* should be used only for special [astronomical] purposes (*niyataviṣaya*), not for astrology in general.

*Fortnight (*pakṣa*)*

A *pakṣa* is one 'wing' or half of a synodic month: the period from new to full moon or vice versa. The period of the waxing moon is called *śukla-pakṣa* 'bright fortnight'; that of the waning moon, *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa* 'dark fortnight'.

Full Moon in/near	Name of month
Aśvinī	Āśvina
Kṛttikā	Kārttika
Mṛgaśiras	Mārgaśīrṣa
Puṣyā	Pauṣa
Maghā	Māgha
Uttaraphalguṇī	Phālguṇa
Citrā	Caitra
Viśākhā	Vaiśākha
Jyeṣṭhā	Jyaiṣṭha
Pūrvāṣāḍhā	Āṣāḍha
Śravaṇā	Śrāvaṇa
Pūrvabhadrapadā	Bhādrapada

Figure 5: the twelve soli-lunar months

*Lunar day (*tithi*)*

Each *pakṣa* is divided into 15 phases or lunar days, defined by the movement of the moon in longitudinal segments of 12° away from or towards the sun. Owing to the varying velocity of the moon, the durations of *tithis*, though never far from 24 hours, are not uniform. The new moon is called *amāvāsyā*, the full moon *pūrṇimā*; other *tithis* are known by their ordinals (*prathamā* or *pratipad* 'first', *dvitīyā* 'second', etc.). Thus, the *śukla-trayodaśī* 'bright thirteenth' would be the thirteenth *tithi* following the new moon, indicating an elongation of the moon from the sun by 144°–156°; and so forth.

*Weekday (*vāra*)*

The seven days of the week are assigned to the seven planets (excluding the nodes) in the order familiar to us from their Latin and related Romanic names (see fig. 6). This order is based on a scheme of planetary rulers of the twenty-four hours (*[kāla]horā*) in a day, which in its turn depends on the respective velocities of the planets, listed in ascending order from Saturn onwards.[1] If a day and night are divided into twenty-four parts, ruled consecutively by the seven planets in this natural order, the same pattern will repeat every seven days (see fig. 7). Each day begins at sunrise, and the ruler of the first hour is considered the ruler of the day in its entirety. Thus, for instance, birth in the pre-dawn hours of a western calendar Thursday would for astrological purposes be considered a Wednesday birth.

Weekday	Latin name	Sanskrit name	Ruling planet
Sunday	Dies Solis	Ravivāra	Sun
Monday	Dies Lunae	Somavāra	Moon
Tuesday	Dies Martis	Maṅgalavāra	Mars
Wednesday	Dies Mercurii	Budhavāra	Mercury
Thursday	Dies Jovis	Guruvāra	Jupiter
Friday	Dies Veneris	Śukravāra	Venus
Saturday	Dies Saturni	Śanivāra	Saturn

Figure 6: the seven weekdays with their planetary rulers

[1] Cf. Tester 1987:4.

	Day 1	*Day 2*	*Day 3*	*Day 4*	*Day 5*	*Day 6*	*Day 7*
1st hour	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
2nd hour	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
3rd hour	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
4th hour	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
5th hour	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
6th hour	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
7th hour	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
8th hour	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
9th hour	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
10th hour	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
11th hour	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
12th hour	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
13th hour	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
14th hour	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
15th hour	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
16th hour	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
17th hour	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
18th hour	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
19th hour	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
20th hour	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
21st hour	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
22nd hour	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
23rd hour	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
24th hour	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon

Figure 7: the rulers of the 24 hours giving rise to the order of the seven weekdays

*Watch (*yāma*) etc.*

A *yāma* is defined as one-eighth of a day and night, or approximately three hours, reckoned in segments from sunrise. Other similar measures are the *muhūrta* (one-thirtieth, or 48 clock minutes), the *ghaṭī* or *nāḍī* (one-sixtieth, or 24 minutes), and the *vighaṭī* or *vināḍī* (one-sixtieth of a *ghaṭī*, or 24 seconds).

4.2. Diagnosis

Once ascertained, the zodiacal placements of the planets and ascendant are represented in a simple diagram known as the *rāśicakra* 'sign wheel' (see fig. 8).[1] The exact longitudes (*spaṣṭa*, *sphuṭa*) of the planets and houses are listed separately. Occasionally a second diagram – the *bhāvacakra* 'house wheel' – is added to represent the (unequal) house positions of the planets in the same nativity.[2] From these basic data the astrologer forms his diagnosis, that is to say, his delineation of the latent tendencies of the nativity. This is done by a consideration of the *natural* and *accidental* significations of the planets.

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces
Rāhu</td><td>Aries
Venus
Saturn</td><td>Taurus
Mercury
Sun</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><td>Cancer</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn</td><td>Leo</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius</td><td>Scorpio
Mars</td><td>Libra
Ascendant
Moon</td><td>Virgo
Jupiter
Ketu</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 8: the rāśicakra

4.2.1. Natural and accidental significations

As a *natural* significator (*kāraka*), every planet represents or governs a fixed set of phenomena. Exhaustive lists of such significations are not feasible, since ultimately every aspect of human experience must be assigned to one of the nine planets,

[1] The appearance of these 'wheels' (usually square or rectangular in shape) is subject to regional variations. The style shown here, with the zodiacal signs in fixed positions, is prevalent in South India. In contrast to this, the diamond-shaped diagram ⊠ common in the North always shows the rising sign at the top.

[2] In the southern-style diagram, the square corresponding to the rising sign is then used to represent the first house.

or at least to a combination of planets; but some common and typical significations may be listed here, along with the fundamentally benefic (*saumya*) or malefic (*krūra*) character of each planet (see fig. 9).

Sun	Malefic. The self; kings; the father; gold; glory; fire.
Moon	Benefic if waxing, malefic if waning. The mind; queens; the mother; silver; water.
Mars	Malefic. Strength; soldiers; brothers; earth; fighting; weapons; wounds; enemies.
Mercury	Benefic with benefics, malefic with malefics. Speech; scholars; learning; intelligence; arts and crafts.
Jupiter	Benefic. Wisdom; offspring; priests; ministers; teachers; dignity; piety; wealth.
Venus	Benefic. Lust; semen; love-making; beauty; marriage; wives; enjoyments; carriages.
Saturn	Malefic. Suffering; death; servants; poverty; misfortune; low company; imprisonment.
Rāhu	Malefic.
Ketu	Malefic.

Figure 9: natures and significations of the planets[1]

The *accidental* significations of a planet vary from one horoscope to another, resting as they do on the relationships formed by the planets to the mundane houses, each of which governs certain areas of life. Some major significations of the houses are shown in a separate table (see fig. 10).

Central to the concept of accidental significations is the notion of zodiacal rulership (*ādhipatya*). Each of the twelve zodiacal signs is considered to be the proper home of – i.e., owned or ruled by – one of the seven planets (again excluding the nodes). The luminaries are assigned Leo and Cancer,

[1] The significations listed in this table are not based on a single text, but rather represent the elements most commonly assigned to the planets in Sanskrit astrological works. As references for many of them, however, cf. BPHS 3, 33; JP 2; PhD 2; etc. The lunar nodes are often left out of such lists; even when they are included, there is little consensus regarding their significations.

respectively, while the remaining signs are allotted in pairs to the five 'stellar' planets, in their order of velocity (see fig. 11).

First	Birth; body; character; general quality of life.
Second	Wealth; food; learning; speech; household.
Third	(Younger) siblings; courage; strength.
Fourth	Mother; home; land; house; carriages; happiness.
Fifth	Children; intelligence; worship (*upāsanā*); incantations (*mantra*).
Sixth	Illness; debts; enemies; wounds.
Seventh	Marriage; spouse; sexual intercourse; trade.
Eighth	Longevity; death; suffering; misfortune.
Ninth	Father; teachers; religious duty (*dharma*); pilgrimage.
Tenth	Actions; livelihood; rank; honour; fame.
Eleventh	Elder siblings; gains; prosperity.
Twelfth	Losses; imprisonment; exile.

Figure 10: significations of the houses[1]

Pisces Jupiter	Aries Mars	Taurus Venus	Gemini Mercury
Aquarius Saturn			Cancer Moon
Capricorn Saturn			Leo Sun
Sagittarius Jupiter	Scorpio Mars	Libra Venus	Virgo Mercury

Figure 11: zodiacal rulerships of the seven planets

The ruler of the sign in which any house cusp falls is considered the ruler of that house. Should the ascendant (rising point) fall in

[1] As with the planets (fig. 9), the significations of the houses are derived from a number of texts. For references, cf. BPHS 12; JP 11–15; PhD 1; etc.

Libra, Venus therefore becomes the ruler of the ascendant, and thereby of the 1st house. Assuming a fairly even distribution of house cusps – typical for areas near the equator – Venus would also rule the 8th house (falling in its other sign, Taurus); similarly, Mars would rule the 2nd and 7th houses, Jupiter the 3rd and 6th, etc.

Occasionally houses are reckoned from other points than the actual ascendant, e.g. from the zodiacal position of a particular planet. This practice may be considered a hybrid of natural and accidental significators. For instance, the sun is considered the natural significator of the native's father, and the 9th house is the house of father. Making the sun the starting-point of the chart, the 9th house reckoned from it therefore particularly signifies the father. Similarly, as Saturn and the 8th house both signify death, so does the 8th house reckoned from Saturn; etc.[1] A somewhat similar concept is the *ārūḍha-pada* 'mounted position', which is found by counting the distance in signs from any house to the planet ruling it, and adding the same distance to that planet. The *ārūḍha* is used as a supplementary tool in judging the results of the house.[2]

4.2.2. Sorting the information

In the interpretation of an actual horoscope, natural and accidental significations are both taken into account and balanced against each other. To illustrate, we may imagine a nativity where Mars occupies the 5th house as ruler of the 9th (see fig. 12). In such a case, the astrologer might deduce:

- that the native's brothers (a natural signification of Mars) would prosper, on account of Mars occupying the 5th house, which is generally considered fortunate or auspicious (cf. the discussion on dignities below);
- that his children (a signification of the 5th house) would suffer, on account of the 5th house being occupied by a malefic planet;

[1] Cf. BPHS 7.38–43.
[2] Cf. BPHS 30.1–3.

- but that they would also enjoy good fortune (a signification of the 9th house), on account of the 9th house ruler occupying the 5th;
- that his father would prosper for the same reason, the 9th house signifying the father and the 5th being an auspicious house; etc.

Pisces	Aries/9th	Taurus	Gemini
Aquarius			Cancer
Capricorn			Leo Ascendant
Sagittarius/5th Mars	Scorpio	Libra	Virgo

Figure 12: Mars occupies the 5th house as ruler of the 9th house.

From the placement of a single planet, multiple conclusions can thus be drawn, some of which may mutually conflict. This situation obviously calls for hierarchizing approaches to interpretation. One such approach employed by classical authors is to establish an order of priority between natural and accidental significations, the latter taking precedence on account of their individualized nature:

> Sages agree that the result of *daśās* is called twofold: general and specific, depending on the nature of the planets and on [their relation to] the houses, [respectively].[1]

Deductions based on house rulership would thus outweigh those based on universals. Another order of priority concerns the

[1] BPHS 48.2:
sādhāraṇaviśeṣābhyāṃ dvidhā proktaṃ daśāphalam /
svabhāvasthānavaśataḥ khagānāṃ munisammatam //
For the meaning of *daśā*, cf. the section on prognosis below.

three fundamental relationships by which a planet may influence a house – namely, occupation (*yoga*), aspect (*dṛṣṭi*), and rulership (*ādhipatya*):

> The result of a house holding planets is said to conform to the planets joining [it]; but that of [a house] with no planets conforms to the aspects of planets, O sage [...] The results of any house which is bereft of [both] occupation and aspect, O brahmin, should be pronounced by the learned in accordance with its ruler.[1]

Occupation and rulership were discussed above. An aspect is the 'glance' which a planet is thought to cast on certain zodiacal signs reckoned from and inclusive of the one it occupies (see fig. 13). Three kinds of partial aspects are theoretically recognized, though only full aspects are normally employed in practice. The luminaries and inferior planets (Mercury and Venus) have full aspects only on the opposite (7th) sign, whereas the superior planets (Mars, Jupiter and Saturn) have two additional full aspects each (see figure 14). The nodes are not normally included in the aspect scheme.

Planet	*Sun*	*Moon*	*Mars*	*Mercury*	*Jupiter*	*Venus*	*Saturn*
Full	7	7	4, 7, 8	7	5, 7, 9	7	3, 7, 10
Three-qrt.	4, 8	4, 8	–	4, 8	4, 8	4, 8	4, 8
Half	5, 9	5, 9	5, 9	5, 9	–	5, 9	5, 9
One-qrt.	3, 10	3, 10	3, 10	3, 10	3, 10	3, 10	–

Figure 13: planetary aspects to signs reckoned from their own places

[1] BPHS 74.10, 13:
sakheṭabhāvasya phalaṃ yuktakheṭasamaṃ smṛtam /
kheṭadṛṣṭisamaṃ proktaṃ nirgrahasya tu tan mune // [...]
yogadṛṣṭivihīno yo bhāvaḥ kaścid bhaved dvija /
tasyādhipavaśād eva phalaṃ vācyaṃ vipaścitā //

Pisces	Aries	Taurus	Gemini
Aquarius Sun			Cancer Mars
Capricorn			Leo
Sagittarius	Scorpio	Libra	Virgo

Figure 14: Mars aspects the sun fully by its 8th sign aspect, but the sun does not aspect Mars.

An aspect is exact, or at its most powerful, if the angle between the aspecting planet and the aspected point (a planet or house cusp) is a multiple of 30° (one sign):

> All [planets] aspect the seventh [sign], and Saturn, Jupiter and Mars also particularly [aspect] the third-and-tenth, trinal, and fourth-and-eighth [signs, respectively]: this the learned call the general aspect according to distance in signs (*sthānāntara*); but the [aspect] according to longitudinal distance (*spaṣṭāntara*) between two planets is considered [more] accurate.[1]

Yet another hierarchizing approach concerns the proximity of a planet or its aspect to the cusp of a house. The PhD states:

> In the houses, [a planet] whose degree equals that of the house cusp gives the results of that house in full; at the junction, there is no result; in the intermediate space, one should consider the planets proportionately.[2]

[1] BPHS 26.4–5:
paśyanti saptamaṃ sarve śanijīvakujāḥ punaḥ /
viśeṣataś ca tridaśatrikoṇacaturaṣṭamān //
eṣā sthānāntaravaśād dṛṣṭiḥ sāmānyato budhaiḥ /
uditā khagayoḥ spaṣṭāntarāt sā tu sphuṭā matā //

[2] PhD 15.14:

The nearer a planet is to the cusp, therefore, the greater its influence on the house. The VM adds a further dimension to this rule by distinguishing between a planet applying to (i.e., approaching) the cusp and a planet separating from it:

> The result which has been declared for a planet in the ascendant is given to a small extent when that planet is fully risen [i.e., separating]; to a medium extent when about to rise [i.e., applying]; and to the full when rising [i.e., conjunct the cusp].[1]

It is thus possible to distinguish at least three sets of criteria by which the influence of planets on a given house would be hierarchically arranged:

1. Signification of the planet:
   (a) accidental/individual
   (b) natural/universal
2. Relation of the planet to the house:
   (a) by occupation
   (b) by aspect
   (c) by rulership
3. Proximity of the planet to the house cusp:
   (a) identical
   (b) applying
   (c) separating

Applying this model to our hypothetical chart above, with a few additions (see fig. 15), the interpretation might be carried out

---

bhāveṣu bhāvasphuṭatulyabhāgas tadbhāvajaṃ pūrṇaphalaṃ vidhatte /
sandhau phalaṃ nāsti tadantarāle cintyo 'nupātaḥ khalu khecarāṇām //

[1] VM 5.39:

yasmin grahe lagnagate yad uktaṃ phalaṃ grahas so 'bhyuditas tad alpam /
karoti tan madhyamam abhyudeṣyan nikāmasaṃpūrṇam udīyamānaḥ //

Although the word *lagna* primarily signifies the ascendant, it is occasionally used of other house cusps (as in *madhya-lagna* 'midheaven'); and the commentator Viṣṇu explains that the same principle applies to all houses:

lagnagrahaṇam upalakṣaṇaṃ dvitīyādisthānānām / uktaṃ ca –
aśubhaṃ ca śubhaṃ codyann udeṣyann udito grahaḥ /
tridvyekaguṇam ādhatte lagnādisthānam āśritaḥ //

'The term *lagna* is used elliptically of the second, etc., houses; [for] it is also said: "A planet occupying the ascendant *or other houses* gives [its] good and evil [results] threefold, twofold or in single measure when rising, about to rise or risen, [respectively]."' (MD ad VM 5.39)

along the following lines: Mars alone occupies the 5th house, applying to the cusp. As there are no aspects on the house, the influence of Mars is unmixed and will dominate the development of 5th house affairs, such as children. This influence will be mainly a salutary one, owing to the benefic rulership of Mars, though some ill-effects owing to its malefic and violent nature cannot be ruled out. The 9th house, on the other hand, is unoccupied but closely aspected by Saturn, a malefic both by nature and by its rulership of the 6th house. This influence outweighs that of the well-placed ruler, and hardships must therefore be expected in connection with 9th house matters, such as the father.

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces</td><td>Aries
9th cusp 8°</td><td>Taurus
Jupiter 27°</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><td>Cancer
Saturn 7°</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn</td><td>Leo
Ascendant</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius
Mars 15°
5th cusp 8°</td><td>Scorpio</td><td>Libra</td><td>Virgo</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 15: a more detailed version of the example chart of fig. 12.

4.2.3. Dignities and debilities

Once the tendency of a given combination for good or evil has been ascertained in accordance with the natural and accidental properties of the planets, their power to manifest this tendency must be judged. The propensity of a planet to do good increases with its strength or dignities, whereas its propensity to do evil increases with its weakness or debilities:

> In exaltation, the good results are pronounced full; one quarter less in its rejoicing; half in domicile; and a mere quarter in a friendly sign. They are proclaimed to be half a quarter when peregrine, and nil in fall, combus-

> tion, or an inimical sign. So too the wise should declare the evil [results] in reverse order.[1]

The consideration of strength thus becomes yet a tool with which to differentiate and choose between possible interpretations of planetary positions in the horoscope. As a general rule, a house is said to prosper when occupied or aspected by its own ruler and/or benefic planets, provided that these planets are dignified; conversely, a house influenced by malefic planets and lacking the protective presence of its own ruler, or whose ruler is in debility, suffers.[2]

The dignities and debilities just mentioned relate mainly to a planet's sign placement; but there are other kinds. Broadly speaking, sources of planetary strength and weakness may be divided into four categories: zodiacal position; house postition; motion and light; and planetary interrelations.

Zodiacal position

As was shown above, each of the seven planets rules one or two zodiacal signs. A planet occupying its own sign or domicile (*svabha*) is in a position of strength or dignity. Other zodiacal dignities are those of exaltation (*ucca*), rejoicing (*mūlatrikoṇa*)[3] and friendly sign (*mitrabha*), whereas inimical sign (*śatrubha*) and fall (*nīca*) are debilities. Signs not belonging to any of these categories are termed neutral or peregrine (*samabha*).

The fundamental zodiacal dignities and debilities of each planet are shown, in descending order of strength, in fig. 16. In addition to these, there is the general consideration that a planet

[1] BPHS 3.63–64:
svocce śubhaṃ phalaṃ pūrṇaṃ trikoṇe pādavarjitam /
svarkṣe dalaṃ mitragehe pādamātraṃ prakīrtitam //
pādārdhaṃ samabhe proktaṃ viyan nīcāstaśatrubhe /
tadvad evāśubhaṃ brūyād vyatyayena vicakṣaṇaḥ //
For the meaning of the technical terms employed, see below.

[2] Cf. BPHS 12.14–16.

[3] The literal meaning of *mūlatrikoṇa* is 'root-triangle', but as noted by Pingree 1978:II:222, the concept is similar to 'rejoicings' as defined in the western astrology text *Carmen astrologicum*: an area of particular dignity within a planet's masculine (i.e., odd-numbered) domicile – or, in the case of Mercury and the moon, within its exaltation (cf. CA, p. 162).

occupying the middle portion of a sign is stronger than one near its beginning or end. This is illustrated by the concept of *bālyādi-avasthās* 'conditions beginning with infancy':

> By [dividing a sign into parts of] six degrees, in [forward] order in an odd [sign] and in reverse order in an even [sign], O sage, a planet is an infant, a boy, a youth, aged, or dead. The [good] result [of a planet] when an infant is one quarter; half the result when a boy; full, when a youth; a trifle, when old; and nil, when the planet is dead.[1]

The junction of two signs (and the last degree of a sign in particular) is considered very harmful, outweighing every kind of dignity according to some authors:

> Though a planet be exalted or occupy a friendly sign, endowed with [all kinds of] strength beginning with the sixfold strength – if occupying a junction [of signs], it will not give any [good] results. Considering thus, one should pronounce [the results] in its period.[2]

> In the period of [a planet] occupying a sign junction, there is grief, illness, and other suffering. The period of [a planet] occupying the thirtieth degree brings about death.[3]

[1] BPHS 46.3–4:
ṣaḍbhir aṃśaiḥ kramād oje same syād vyutkramān mune /
graho bālaḥ kumāraś ca yuvā vṛddho mṛtas tathā //
bāle phalaṃ caturthāṃśam ardhaṃ kaumārake smṛtam /
pūrṇaṃ tu taruṇe kiñcid vṛddhe śūnyaṃ mṛte grahe //

[2] PhD 15.13:
svocce suhṛtkṣetragato grahendraḥ ṣaḍbhir balair mukhyabalānvito 'pi /
sandhau sthitaḥ sann aphalapradaḥ syād evaṃ vicintyātra vaded vipāke //

[3] JP 18.27:
rāśisandhigadāye tu śokarogādipīḍanam /
triṃśadbhāgam anukrāntadaśā mṛtyuphalapradā //

Planet	*Sun*	*Moon*	*Mars*	*Mercury*	*Jupiter*	*Venus*	*Saturn*
Exaltation	Ari 10	Tau 3	Cap 28	Vir 15	Can 5	Pis 27	Lib 20
Rejoicing	Leo	Tau	Ari	Vir	Sag	Lib	Aqu
	1–20	4–30	1–12	16–20	1–5	1–20	1–20
Domicile	Leo	Can	Ari	Gem	Sag	Tau	Cap
			Sco	Vir	Pis	Lib	Aqu
Friendly	Can	Gem	Leo	Tau	Ari	Gem	Tau
	Sco	Leo	Sag	Leo	Leo	Cap	Gem
	Sag	Vir	Pis	Lib	Sco	Aqu	Vir
	Pis						
Peregrine	Gem	Ari	Tau	Ari	Aqu	Ari	Sag
	Vir	Lib	Lib	Sco		Sco	Pis
		Sag	Aqu	Sag		Sag	
		Cap		Cap			
		Aqu		Aqu			
		Pis					
Inimical	Tau	–	Gem	Can	Tau	Can	Can
	Cap		Vir		Gem	Leo	Leo
	Aqu				Vir		Sco
					Lib		
Fall	Lib 10	Sco 3	Can 28	Pis 15	Cap 5	Vir 27	Ari 20

Figure 16: zodiacal dignities and debilities[1]

Complex as these divisions and classifications of the zodiac may already seem, they are far from exhaustive. Much importance is attached to the division of a sign into smaller segments (*varga*), of which six, seven, ten or sixteen varieties are commonly listed (see fig. 17). Each segment is assigned a planetary ruler, and most correspond symbolically to one of the zodiacal signs.[2] A planet may thus be simultaneously dignified in some divisions

[1] This table is based on BPHS 3.50–55. The numbers shown against *Exaltation* and *Fall* refer to the degrees of supreme exaltation (*paramocca*) and deep fall (*atinīca*) within those signs; thus, Ari 10 refers to the 10th degree of Aries, or 9°00'00"–9°59'59"; etc.

[2] The two exceptions are the *horā* and *triṃśāṃśa* divisions, the former being divided between the two luminaries, the latter among the five 'stellar' planets.

and debilitated in others. For instance, Jupiter placed in 11° of Leo would occupy a friendly sign or *rāśi*; the *navāṃśa* of its exaltation (Cancer); the *drekkāṇa* and *dvādaśāṃśa* of its domicile (Sagittarius); an inimical *saptāṃśa* (Libra), etc.

Division of 30°	Extension	*Ṣaḍvarga*	*Saptavarga*	*Daśavarga*	*Ṣoḍaśavarga*
1/1	30°00'00"	*rāśi*	*rāśi*	*rāśi*	*rāśi*
1/2	15°00'00"	*horā*	*horā*	*horā*	*horā*
1/3	10°00'00"	*drekkāṇa*	*drekkāṇa*	*drekkāṇa*	*drekkāṇa*
1/4	7°30'00"	–	–	–	*turyāṃśa*
1/7	4°17'09"	–	*saptāṃśa*	*saptāṃśa*	*saptāṃśa*
1/9	3°20'00"	*navāṃśa*	*navāṃśa*	*navāṃśa*	*navāṃśa*
1/10	3°00'00"	–	–	*daśāṃśa*	*daśāṃśa*
1/12	2°30'00"	*dvādaśāṃśa*	*dvādaśāṃśa*	*dvādaśāṃśa*	*dvādaśāṃśa*
1/16	1°52'30"	–	–	*ṣoḍaśāṃśa*	*ṣoḍaśāṃśa*
1/20	1°30'00"	–	–	–	*viṃśāṃśa*
1/24	1°15'00"	–	–	–	*siddhāṃśa*
1/27	1°06'40"	–	–	–	*bhāṃśa*
1/30[1]	5° – 8°	*triṃśāṃśa*	*triṃśāṃśa*	*triṃśāṃśa*	*triṃśāṃśa*
1/40	0°45'00"	–	–	–	*khavedāṃśa*
1/45	0°40'00"	–	–	–	*akṣavedāṃśa*
1/60	0°30'00"	–	–	*ṣaṣṭyaṃśa*	*ṣaṣṭyaṃśa*

Figure 17: the varga *sub-divisions of a sign included in some standard schemes*[2]

A few texts ascribe particular portfolios to the different divisions, but these may vary considerably.[3] More often, the sum total of a

[1] This is the literal meaning of *triṃśāṃśa*. In reality, however, the *triṃśāṃśa* given by classical texts is a version of the unequal division of a sign into five parts (distributed among the 'stellar planets') known in ancient and classical European astrology as *terms* (Lat. *termini*), for a discussion of which cf. Tester 1987:73ff., Pingree 1978:II:211ff.

[2] This table is based on BPHS 6, 7.17–20. Several *vargas* have one or more synonyms.

[3] BPHS 7.1–6 assigns the following areas to the *ṣoḍaśavargas* in order: body; wealth; happiness from brothers; fortune; sons and grandsons; wives; greatness; parents; joy and sorrow, vehicles; worship; learning; strength and weakness; misfortune; good and evil; good and evil; all things. But Sastri s.a.:18 quotes a

planet's *varga* placements is used to judge its overall performance. Even a malefic planet is said to give benefic results if occupying predominantly benefic divisions, and vice versa. Benefic divisions are generally defined as those of exaltation, domicile and friendly signs, and those ruled by benefic planets, while those of debilitation or inimical signs, and those ruled by malefic planets, are considered malefic. The BPHS further includes 'angles from [the sign] occupied by [the planet] itself (*svārūḍhāt*)' among benefic placements.[1]

Benefic divisions	Ṣaḍvarga	Saptavarga	Daśavarga	Ṣoḍaśavarga
2	*kiṃśuka*	*kiṃśuka*	*pārijāta*	*bhedaka*
3	*vyañjana*	*vyañjana*	*uttama*	*kusuma*
4	*cāmara*	*cāmara*	*gopura*	*nāgapuṣpa*
5	*chatra*	*chatra*	*siṃhāsana*	*kundaka*
6	*kuṇḍalayoga*	*kuṇḍalayoga*	*pārāvata*	*kerala*
7	–	*mukuṭa*	*devaloka*	*kalpavṛkṣa*
8	–	–	*brahmaloka*	*candanavana*
9	–	–	*śakravāhana*	*pūrṇacandra*
10	–	–	*śrīdhāmayoga*	*uccaiḥśravas*
11	–	–	–	*dhanvantari*
12	–	–	–	*sūryakānta*
13	–	–	–	*vidruma*
14	–	–	–	*śakrasiṃhāsana*
15	–	–	–	*goloka*
16	–	–	–	*śrīvallabha*

Figure 18: nomenclature of varga *dignities*[2]

A specific nomenclature is employed to signify the attainment by a planet of two or more benefic divisions according to these criteria (see fig. 18). In practice, however, even the *ṣaḍvargas*

Horāpradīpa (not listed by Pingree 1981) as ascribing this symbolism to the *saptavargas*: body; wealth; work; brothers; children; wives; death.

[1] BPHS 6.52; cf. also 74.14–16. A *varga* (most often *navāṃśa*) placement identical with a planet's sign placement in the main or radix chart (*rāśicakra*) is known as *vargottama* 'best of *vargas*'.

[2] This table is based on BPHS 6.42–51.

attained by a planet are rarely referred to in the predictive maxims laid down by classical texts, and only the *navāṃśa* is consistently made use of for all purposes of chart delineation and prediction.

House position

The twelve mundane houses are variously classified, as shown in fig. 19. Angular houses are positions of strength; succedent houses are weaker than the angular, and cadent houses weaker still. The 5th and 9th houses, however, are held to be fortunate (*śubha*); and planets in the 3rd and 11th, the 'increasing' houses, are thought to improve over time. The most unfortunate places are houses 6, 8 and 12, the 6th being somewhat better than the other two on account of its increasing nature. Angles and trines (*kendra-[tri]koṇa*) are routinely referred to as the 'auspicious' places in a horoscope; occasionally such an epithet is applied to the 11th house (the house of gain) as well.

First	Angular (*kendra*)	Trinal (*trikoṇa*)	
Second	Succedent (*paṇaphara*)		
Third	Cadent (*āpoklima*)		Increasing (*upacaya*)
Fourth	Angular (*kendra*)		
Fifth	Succedent (*paṇaphara*)	Trinal (*trikoṇa*)	
Sixth	Cadent (*āpoklima*)	Evil (*duḥsthāna, trika*)	Increasing (*upacaya*)
Seventh	Angular (kendra)		
Eighth	Succedent (*paṇaphara*)	Evil (*duḥsthāna, trika*)	
Ninth	Cadent (*āpoklima*)	Trinal (*trikoṇa*)	
Tenth	Angular (*kendra*)		Increasing (*upacaya*)
Eleventh	Succedent (*paṇaphara*)		Increasing (*upacaya*)
Twelfth	Cadent (*āpoklima*)	Evil (*duḥsthāna, trika*)	

Figure 19: classifications of the twelve mundane houses[1]

[1] This table is based on BPHS 7.33–36.

Among the angular houses, the 1st is held to be the strongest, followed in turn by the 10th, the 7th, and the 4th; but it is also the case that each of the seven planets enjoys maximum strength at one particular point of the compass: Mercury and Jupiter in the east (rising point or first house); the sun and Mars in the south (culminating point or tenth house); Saturn in the west (setting point or seventh house); and the moon and Venus in the north (anticulminating point or fourth house).

Motion and light

The luminosity and velocity of the five 'stellar' planets depend on their apparent position relative to the sun. In Hindu astrology, brightness and slowness/retrogression are generally considered dignities, whereas combustion (conjunction with the sun) and swiftness are debilities.[1] For the so-called superior planets (Mars, Jupiter and Saturn), the orbits of which lie outside that of the earth, the two sets of phenomena are necessarily related: their stations and retrogression – i.e., their periods of minimum velocity – coincide with their greatest elongation from the sun, which is to say with their maximum brightness. The case of the inferior planets (Mercury and Venus), the orbits of which lie between the sun and the earth, is more complex: they may be

[1] This is partly in contrast to European astrology, where swiftness is considered a dignity and slowness/retrogression a debility. Sastri s.a.:88, in his commentary on JP 2.84, quotes the following variant on the *bālyādi-avasthās* 'conditions beginning with infancy' (see above) from an unnamed astrological text:

sūryād uditamātro 'sāv atibālaḥ prakīrtitaḥ /
bālaḥ saptāṃśakād ūrdhvaṃ kumāras tu tataḥ param //
vakrārambhe yuvā prokto vakrakāle narādhipaḥ /
āsannāstamaye vṛddho mṛto 'staṅgata īritaḥ //

'That [planet] is declared a newborn when rising just after the sun; an infant [when rising] with the next seven degrees; after that, a boy; at the beginning of retrogression it is called a youth; during retrogression, a prince; an old man, when approaching combustion; and declared dead when combust.'

The JA (*Viśeṣadaśāphalādhyāya* 4–6), however, states that the period of a retrograde planet makes the native's position, wealth and happiness very unstable, and mentions retrogression along with debilities such as fall or inimical sign (*vilomagāmigrahapākakāle sthānārthasaukhyāny aticañcalāni / [...] nīcāribhasthasya ca vakriṇo vā [...]*).

combust, and therefore invisible, in either direct or retrograde motion.

Planetary interrelations

Two forms of relations (*sambandha*) between planets have been touched upon above, namely, conjunction (*saṃyoga*) and aspect (*dṛṣṭi*). Depending on the natural and accidental significations of the planets involved, an aspect or conjunction may be considered a dignity or a debility for the planet conjuncted or aspected. Among the conjunctions, a particular subset is that of planetary combat (*graha-yuddha*), in which one planet is considered defeated by the other. Different definitions of this condition are found in classical texts, some requiring the combating planets to be conjunct by latitude as well as longitude.[1] Being the victor in planetary combat is a dignity, whereas being defeated is a debility.

A third variety of planetary relations is the *parivartanayoga* or mutual reception, in which two planets occupy each other's signs (see fig. 20). As with conjunctions and aspects, mutual reception may be a dignity or debility depending on the planets involved, their rulerships, etc.

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces
Saturn</td><td>Aries</td><td>Taurus</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius
Jupiter</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2"></td><td>Cancer</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn</td><td>Leo</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius</td><td>Scorpio</td><td>Libra</td><td>Virgo</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 20: Mutual reception: Jupiter occupies one of Saturn's signs, while Saturn occupies one of Jupiter's signs.

[1] E.g., JKP 3.17.

The friendly, neutral, and inimical signs enumerated for each planet under the heading *zodiacal position* are further modified by the juxtapositions of the planets in the horoscope: planets which are mutually placed in the second and twelfth, third and eleventh, or fourth and tenth signs from one another (always inclusive of the sign occupied) become temporary friends, while others become temporary enemies. Natural (*naisargika*) and temporary (*tātkālika*) relations are then combined to make up the *pañcadhā-sambandha* 'fivefold relations' (see fig. 21).

Temp./ Nat.	Friends	Neutrals	Enemies
Friends	*Great friends*	*Friends*	*Neutrals*
Enemies	*Neutrals*	*Enemies*	*Great enemies*

Figure 21: the fivefold planetary relations[1]

A more involved, numerical system of gauging strength from planetary juxtapositions is the *aṣṭa[ka]varga*, which will be discussed in the section on transits below.

Several other numerical methods of computing the strength of a planet or house are presented in classical texts, the most complex being the *ṣaḍbala* or sixfold strength. As these methods have no prominent place in the *nāḍī* texts, they will not be detailed here. In the main, however, they draw on the elements enumerated above.[2]

Among non-numerical methods, one finds several lists of planetary states or conditions (*avasthā*). A common variety (*bāl-yādi*) was described in the section on zodiacal position above. Another list of conditions often met with are the *dīptādi-avasthās*:[3]

Dīpta 'blazing': in exaltation or rejoicing

Svastha 'confident': in domicile

[1] This table is based on BPHS 3.61–62.

[2] The *ṣaḍbala* also includes certain elements of a calendaric nature, such as year, half-year, month, fortnight, day, portion of day or night, and hour; cf. the section on calendar above.

[3] This list is based on JP 2.16–18. Other texts contain slight variations in nomenclature, order and/or definitions of the *avasthās*.

Mudita 'happy': in a friendly sign
Śānta 'calm': in benefic divisions
Śakta 'able': bright
Pīḍita 'suffering': defeated in combat
Dīna 'wretched': in an inimical sign
Khala 'wicked': in malefic divisions
Bhīta 'frightened': in fall
Vikala 'crippled': combust

The most complex form of planetary conditions are the *śayanādi-avasthās*, which take into account not only lunar mansions and *navāṃśas*, but even extra-horoscopic factors in the form of the first letter of the native's name. Being of little relevance to the *nāḍī* texts, these calculations will not be detailed here.

4.3. Prognosis

The latent tendencies of the horoscope having been delineated, the astrologer's next task is to predict their times of manifestation. For this purpose, Hindu astrology employs two main techniques: time-cycles and transits.

4.3.1. Time-cycles

A time-cycle consists of blocks of time (*daśā*, lit. 'condition', also known as *pāka* 'maturation', *dāya* 'allotment', etc.) symbolically assigned to the various planets or zodiacal signs. Every block or period comprises a sub-cycle of shorter periods similarly allotted, each of which may be further subdivided. In the simplest *daśā* systems, the order and duration of the various periods are fixed, and identical for all horoscopes; in the more complex systems, these factors vary.

The most wide-spread *daśā* system of Hindu astrology, and the one employed throughout the *nāḍī* texts, is the *viṃśottarī daśā*. The *nāḍīs* further give some importance to a second system known as *kālacakra-daśā*. These two techniques will be discussed below. Both systems are *nakṣatra-daśās*, that is, based on the natal position of the moon in one of the twenty-seven lunar mansions or their quarter-parts (*pāda*, *caraṇa*), re-

spectively.[1] This position determines the native's starting-point in the time-cycle. The BPHS describes two methods of calculating this starting-point, namely, by time or by longitudinal arc.[2]

> The *daśā* years of that [planet] are multiplied by the expired *ghaṭīs* and *palas*[3] in the quarter [of a lunar mansion] in which birth takes place, and divided by fifteen. The result are the expired years, etc., [of the birth *daśā*], and the remainder should be established from that [...] [Or else], the minutes [of arc] expired in the moon's *navāṃśa*, multiplied by the own [*daśā*] years [of the planet] and divided by two hundred, are the expired [years, etc.], and the remainder should be known from that.[4]

Thus, in the first method, the *time spent* by the moon in the lunar mansion or quarter at birth is divided by the total duration of that stay, and then multiplied by the years of the corresponding

[1] Some astrologers, however, believe that *daśās* should be reckoned from the ascendant or the moon, whichever is stronger; cf. HS 31.2:

svajanmanakṣatravilagnato vā brūyāt krameṇaiva daśāphalāni /

'One should state the *daśā* results in their order from one's [lunar] birth *nakṣatra* or from the ascendant.'

[2] This in connection with the calculation of *kālacakra-daśā*. The passage dealing with the calculation of *viṃśottarī* is so vague as to allow for either interpretation:

bhayātagaṃitaṃ kheṭadaśāmānaṃ bhabhogahṛt /
bhuktavarṣādikaṃ tasya bhogyaṃ māne viśodhanāt //

'The *daśā* duration of the planet, multiplied by the [extent] covered in the *nakṣatra* and divided by the [full] extent of the *nakṣatra*, are the years, etc., expired [in the *daśā*]; the remainder is found by subtraction from the [full] duration.' (BPHS 47.14)

[3] A *pala* is another name for a *vighaṭī*, discussed in connection with calendar terms above.

[4] BPHS 47.87–89:

yatra pāde bhavej janma tadvyatītaghaṭīpalaiḥ /
taddaśābdā vinihatāḥ pañcabhūmivibhājitāḥ //
labdhaṃ tu bhuktavarṣādi bhogyaṃ tasmāt prasādayet / [...]
indor navāṃśabhuktā yā liptāḥ svābdahatoddhṛtāḥ /
śatadvayena bhuktaṃ tad bhogyaṃ jñeyam ataḥ param //

A *navāṃśa* or one-ninth of a zodiacal sign is the same as a *pāda* or quarter of a lunar mansion, i.e., 3°20' (= 200') of ecliptical arc. When the *daśā* is based on the moon's position in an entire lunar mansion (as in the *viṃśottarī*), rather than a quarter thereof (as in the *kālacakra*), the denominator should be 60 *ghaṭīs* rather than 15, or 800' rather than 200'. Note that the text expects the moon to cover 200' in exactly 15 *ghaṭīs* (6 hours), which in real life will only rarely be the case.

planetary period. In the second method, it is the *minutes of arc* traversed by the moon in the lunar mansion or quarter that are divided by the total number of minutes therein and then multiplied by the *daśā* years. Either of these formulas will give the expired part of the ruling *daśā* at birth. Subtracting this from the total duration yields the balance. As the velocity of the moon is far from constant, the results produced by the two methods may vary considerably, but the text does not state any preference; indeed, there is no evidence that the author was aware of the fact.[1]

The *viṃśottarī* is a cycle of 120 years, corresponding to the theoretical maximum longevity of man in our current 'age of strife' (*kaliyuga*),[2] and divided unevenly among the planets. The zodiac is divided into three groups (*trimaṇḍala*) of *nakṣatras*, beginning from 0° of sidereal Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius, respectively, and each extending 120°. In each group, rulerships of the nine lunar mansions are allotted to the nine planets (see fig. 22).

Lunar mansion (nakṣatra)			*Ruler*	*Period*
Aśvinī	Maghā	Mūlā	Ketu	7 yrs.
Bharaṇī	Pūrvaphalguṇī	Pūrvāṣāḍhā	Venus	20 yrs.
Kṛttikā	Uttaraphalguṇī	Uttarāṣāḍhā	Sun	6 yrs.
Rohiṇī	Hasta	Śravaṇā	Moon	10 yrs.
Mṛgaśiras	Citrā	Dhaniṣṭhā	Mars	7 yrs.
Ārdrā	Svāti	Śatabhiṣaj	Rāhu	18 yrs.
Punarvasu	Viśākhā	Pūrvabhadrapadā	Jupiter	16 yrs.
Puṣyā	Anurādhā	Uttarabhadrapadā	Saturn	19 yrs.
Āśleṣā	Jyeṣṭhā	Revatī	Mercury	17 yrs.

Figure 22: The viṃśottarī daśā *scheme*[3]

[1] Another relevant factor, to my knowledge not touched upon by classical texts, is the difference between geocentric and topocentric calculation of the moon's longitude. The zodiacal longitude of the moon when calculated from the imaginary centre of the earth may at times vary by as much as 1° from that calculated from the actual place of birth. This discrepancy is known as lunar parallax.

[2] BJ 7.5 gives the maximum longevity for men and elephants as 120 years and 5 nights: *samāṣaṣṭir dvighnā manujakariṇāṃ pañca ca niśā[ḥ]*.

[3] This table is based on BPHS 47.11–13.

No explanation is given for the order of the planets in this scheme, nor for the periods assigned to them. The *daśā* or *mahādaśā* of a planet is divided into nine sub-periods (*antardaśā*, also known as *bhukti*, *vipāka*, *apahāra*, etc.) allotted to the nine planets beginning with the *daśā* ruler, and following in the same sequence as the major periods. Each planet is assigned a time-span proportionate to its number of *daśā* years in the greater cycle; that is, a planet's *antardaśā* lasts for as many $1/120^{th}$ parts of the *mahādaśā* as there are years in its own *mahādaśā*. On the same principle, *antardaśās* are further divided into sub-sub-periods (*pratyantardaśā*), and so forth.

The second *daśā* system found in the *nāḍī* texts is somewhat more complex. Though based, like *viṃśottarī*, on the position of the moon (or ascendant) in the *nakṣatras*, the *kāla-cakra* 'wheel of time' is a cycle of zodiacal signs rather than planets, the complete cycle corresponding to 118 years unequally divided among the signs. Owing perhaps to a certain ambiguity in the textual sources, several conflicting schools of calculation have developed, some of which place extreme demands on the accuracy of birth time notation, astronomical computation, and precessional value: an error of a single minute of arc in the moon's longitude (corresponding approximately to two minutes of clock-time) may throw these periods off by up to six months.[1] Having found no evidence to suggest which method of calculation was favoured by the *nāḍī* authors, I will limit my description to the school which in my view displays the greatest internal consistency, and therefore strikes me as most likely to represent the original system. This is the less time-sensitive *rāśikrama* system now prevalent mainly in South India.[2]

The *kālacakra* is based on the division of the zodiac into 108 quarter-*nakṣatras* or *navāṃśas* of 3˚20' each. These form nine cycles of twelve *navāṃśas*, each cycle corresponding sym-

[1] If the *daśās* are calculated from the ascendant, the same discrepancy will arise from an error of some four seconds (!) of birth-time notation.

[2] For a discussion of the main issues in the calculation of *kālacakra-daśā* (*vākyakrama* versus *rāśikrama*), see Sastri s.a.:1000ff., on whose comments my presentation of the *rāśikrama* method is largely based.

bolically to the twelve zodiacal signs. There is, however, an important peculiarity in the system: the even-numbered cycles all run *backwards* through the order of the signs, beginning with Scorpio and ending with Sagittarius – see fig. 23, where the leftmost column indicates the twelve zodiacal signs, while the topmost row gives the arc of commencement of each *navāṃśa*. The white cells mark the forward (*savya*) cycles; the darker cells, the backward (*apasavya*) ones. The placement of the natal moon in any *navāṃśa* indicates that the corresponding *daśā* ruled at birth.

Sign	Years	0°00'	3°20'	6°40'	10°00'	13°20'	16°40'	20°00'	23°20'	26°40'
Ari	7	Ari	Tau	Gem	Can	Leo	Vir	Lib	Sco	Sag
Tau	16	Cap	Aqu	Pis	Sco	Lib	Vir	Leo	Can	Gem
Gem	9	Tau	Ari	Pis	Aqu	Cap	Sag	Ari	Tau	Gem
Can	21	Can	Leo	Vir	Lib	Sco	Sag	Cap	Aqu	Pis
Leo	5	Sco	Lib	Vir	Leo	Can	Gem	Tau	Ari	Pis
Vir	9	Aqu	Cap	Sag	Ari	Tau	Gem	Can	Leo	Vir
Lib	16	Lib	Sco	Sag	Cap	Aqu	Pis	Sco	Lib	Vir
Sco	7	Leo	Can	Gem	Tau	Ari	Pis	Aqu	Cap	Sag
Sag	10	Ari	Tau	Gem	Can	Leo	Vir	Lib	Sco	Sag
Cap	4	Cap	Aqu	Pis	Sco	Lib	Vir	Leo	Can	Gem
Aqu	4	Tau	Ari	Pis	Aqu	Cap	Sag	Ari	Tau	Gem
Pis	10	Can	Leo	Vir	Lib	Sco	Sag	Cap	Aqu	Pis

Figure 23: the kālacakra *scheme, with the number of daśā years allotted to each sign*

In any major period there are nine sub-periods, which can be found by locating the *daśā* sign in the leftmost column of the table and reading the nine *navāṃśa* signs in its row. If the *daśā* belongs to a forward cycle, the *antardaśās* are read from left to right; if to a backward cycle, from right to left. The duration of any *antardaśā* is calculated by multiplying the years assigned to the rulers of the major and sub-period and dividing them by the total number of years represented by all nine *antardaśās* in the *daśā* sign. This total will be 100 for the *daśās* of Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius; 85 for Taurus, Virgo, and Capricorn; 83 for Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius; and 86 for Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces.

It may be noted that although the order of the *navāṃśa* signs differs in the *savya* and *apasavya* cycles, the order of their rulers remains intact, with one exception: the sun and the moon exchange places (see fig. 24). For this reason, the calculation of *antardaśās* is modified by the special rule that in forward *daśās*, the *antardaśā* of Cancer must always precede that of Leo, while in backward *daśās*, Leo must precede Cancer. This rule, along with the alteration of forward and backward cycles, gives rise to particular deviations in the zodiacal order, known as 'jumps' or 'gaits' (*gati*). Reversing the order of succession, backward or forward as the case may be, is called *markaṭagati* 'monkey's gait'; skipping an intermediate sign is called *maṇḍūkagati* 'frog's gait'; and jumping to a trinal sign (120° distant) is called *siṃhāvalokana* 'lion's gaze'. Some texts assign special meanings to these jumps.

Sign	Ari	Tau	Gem	Can	Leo	Vir	Lib	Sco	Sag	Cap	Aqu	Pis
Ruler	Mar	Ven	Mer	**Moo**	**Sun**	Mer	Ven	Mar	Jup	Sat	Sat	Jup
Sign	Sco	Lib	Vir	Leo	Can	Gem	Tau	Ari	Pis	Aqu	Cap	Sag
Ruler	Mar	Ven	Mer	**Sun**	**Moo**	Mer	Ven	Mar	Jup	Sat	Sat	Jup

Figure 24: order of kālacakra-daśā *rulers*

In the interpretation of time-cycles, the basic premise of any *daśā* system is that a planet or sign should manifest during its period whatever it indicates in the natal horoscope:

> The results which were stated [for any planet] in [the chapter on] definitions; which were described in the verses relating to significators (*kāraka*); which were delineated with regard to livelihood and in the consideration of illnesses; the results arising from the aspect or conjunction of any [planet] or produced by the conjunction of house rulers; as well as the results of the house positions of house rulers – [all this] should now be predicted in the *daśā* [of that planet].[1]

[1] PhD 20.21:
saṃjñāyāṃ yad agāc ca kārakavidhiślokeṣu yaj jalpitaṃ
karmājīvanirūpitaṃ phalam idaṃ yad rogacintāvidhau /
yad yasyekṣaṇayogasambhavaphalaṃ bhāveśayogodbhavaṃ
bhāveśair api bhāvagair api phalaṃ vācyaṃ daśāyām iha //

According to a view met with in several texts, these various factors take effect at different times:

> The results arising from exaltation, etc., [manifest] at the commencement of a malefic's period; those arising from houses, etc., in the middle of a malefic's period; and those arising from aspects, towards the end of the periods of all malefic planets: so say the noble ones.

> In the beginning of the period of benefics, [results] arising from houses [manifest]; those arising from the occupation of various signs, in the middle; and at the end of the period, those arising from aspects: thus do all [teachers] declare the differentiation of stellar periods.[1]

Other methods of narrowing down the time of fruition of *daśā* results relate to the sign, portion of a sign, or group of *nakṣatras* occupied by the period ruler:

> A planet occupying [a sign] that rises with its head (*śīrṣodaya*) gives its result in the beginning of the period, one in [a sign] rising with its back (*pṛṣṭhodaya*) at the end of the period; and one in [a sign] rising with both parts (*ubhayodaya*), at all times.[2]

> When a planet occupies the first *drekkāṇa* [one-third of a sign] one should predict results in the beginning of the *daśā*; results should be predicted in the middle of the *daśā* when the planet is in the middle *drekkāṇa*; and at the end when it is in the third [*drekkāṇa*]: the reverse when the planet is retrograde.[3]

[1] JP 18.57–58:
svoccādijanyam aśubhasya daśāpraveśe bhāvādijaṃ phalam aśobhanapākamadhye /
dṛṣṭyudbhavaṃ sakalapāpaviyaccarāṇāṃ pākāvasānasamaye phalam āhur āryāḥ //
pākasyādau bhāvajanyaṃ śubhānāṃ tattadrāśisthānajaṃ pākamadhye /
dāyasyānte dṛṣṭisaṅjātam evaṃ sarve tārāpākabhedaṃ vadanti //

[2] JP 18.24:
śīrṣodayagataḥ kheṭaḥ pākādau phalado bhavet /
pṛṣṭhodayasthaḥ pākānte cobhayodayagaḥ sadā //
Signs rising with their heads are Gemini, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio and Aquarius; those rising with their backs are Aries, Taurus, Cancer, Sagittarius and Capricorn; only Pisces rises with its head and back simultaneously (cf. BJ 1.10).

[3] BPHS 48.3–4:
ādidreṣkāṇage kheṭe daśārambhe phalaṃ vadet //
daśāmadhye phalaṃ vācyaṃ madhyadreṣkāṇage sati /
ante phalaṃ tṛtīyasthe vyastaṃ kheṭe ca vakriṇi //

> The *daśā* of a planet occupying one of the nine *nakṣatras* beginning with the *janmarkṣa* gives immediate results; in the period of a strong [planet] occupying one of the nine *nakṣatras* beginning with the *karmarkṣa*, the result will come later on; and in that of [a planet] occupying [one of the nine *nakṣatras*] beginning with the *ādhāna[rkṣa]*, one should pronounce all to be fruitless, or to mature [only] after [a long] time.[1]

Trinal *nakṣatras* may further be grouped into nine categories known simply as *tārās* 'stars', the names of which reflect the results of their periods:

1. *Janman* 'birth'
2. *Sampad* 'fortune'
3. *Vipad* 'misfortune'
4. *Kṣema* 'prosperity'
5. *Pratyari* 'adversity'
6. *Sādhaka* 'accomplishing'
7. *Vadha* 'death'
8. *Maitra* 'friendly'
9. *Atimaitra* 'very friendly'[2]

A tendency to consider *viṃśottarī daśās* primarily as the periods of nine *nakṣatras* (or nine sets of three *nakṣatras* each) rather than of their respective rulers, is found in a few texts:

> In the *daśā* of a *nakṣatra* holding a malefic planet, one meets with suffering. As far as [it] has gone in the *nakṣatra* of the *daśā* ruler, at that [corresponding time] one should predict its result. If in one of the three groups [of *nakṣatras*] (*trimaṇḍala*) a malefic stands bereft of strength,

[1] JP 18.23:

[...] janmarkṣādinavarkṣagagrahadaśā kurvīta bhūtaṃ phalam /
karmarkṣādinavarkṣagasya balinaḥ pāke bhaviṣyat phalaṃ
cādhānādigatasya sarvam aphalaṃ pāke phalaṃ vā vadet //

The terms *janmarkṣa*, *karmarkṣa* and *ādhānarkṣa* designate the *nakṣatra* occupied by the moon at birth, the 10th and 19th *nakṣatras* reckoned from and including it, respectively.

[2] This list is based on BPHS 47.207–208, which, however, treats the *tārādaśās* as a separate *daśā* system – identical with the *viṃśottarī* except insofar as the nine *daśās* are named not after the nine planets, but after the *tārās*, and reckoned 'from a strong planet occupying a quadrant' rather than from the moon.

> and is not conjunct a benefic, one will meet with death at the end of the *daśā*.[1]

Thus, a debilitated and malefic planet occupying the middle portion of the second *nakṣatra* from the natal position of the moon would threaten death in the middle of the second *daśā* from birth; etc.

Finally, much importance is attached by classical authors to planetary positions at the commencement (*ārambha*, *praveśa*) of a *daśā* period – in particular, the positions of the period ruler and the moon:

> If, at the commencement of a *daśā*, the *daśā* ruler should occupy the ascendant, be conjunct or aspected by benefics, in domicile, exalted, or in a friendly sign, the results of its *daśā* will be good. But if it should occupy the three [evil houses], be combust, fallen, or in an inimical sign, the *daśā* results will be evil. [2]

> If occupying the sign of a friend of the *daśā* ruler, or the exaltation of that [planet], in the seventh, a trine, or an *upacaya* house from the *daśā* ruler, the moon yields good results. That house of the moon occupying the said signs will be the first, second, etc., house arising from the time of birth. [Here] it is said to cause the prosperity of the corresponding [house] for men; but if occupying a contrary sign, it harms that house. At the commencement of a *daśā*, the results of the moon occupying its domicile, etc., which have been declared by the noble ones should be pronounced; for the moon, having the form of the mind, yields the results known as good or evil.[3]

[1] HS 31.4–5:
pāpagrahānvitarkṣasya daśāyāṃ kleśam āpnuyāt /
yāvad gate daśeśarkṣe tatphalaṃ tatra nirdiśet //
trimaṇḍaleṣv athaikasmin pāpas tiṣṭhati durbalaḥ /
saumyagrahayuto na syād daśānte mṛtyum āpnuyāt //

[2] BPHS 48.5–6:
daśeśe tu daśārambhe tanau saumyayutekṣite /
svarkṣatuṅgasuhṛdbhe vā śobhanaṃ taddaśāphalam //
tatra trikasthite saty astamite nīcaśatrubhe /
daśāphalam asat proktam [...] //

[3] JP 18.7–9:
daśādhināthasya suhṛdgṛhasthas taduccago vātha daśādhināthāt /
smaratrikoṇopacayopagaś ca dadāti candraḥ khalu satphalāni //
uktaṣu rāśiṣu gatasya vidhoḥ sa bhāvaḥ syāj janmakālabhavamūrtidhanādibhāvaḥ /
tattatprayṛddhikṛd asau kathito narāṇāṃ tadbhāvahānikṛd athetararāśisaṃsthaḥ //

This method of relating current planetary positions to those of the natal horoscope brings us to the second prognostic tool of Hindu astrology: transits.

4.3.2. Transits

As seen from the above, *daśās* comprise fairly long periods of time. Of considerably shorter duration are the transits (*gocara*, *grahacāra*), i.e., the continuous movements of the heavenly bodies as superimposed on the natal horoscope. Transits are sometimes used as a supplementary technique to qualify *daśā* results:

> Whatever house from the ascendant the *daśā* ruler should occupy in transit, in its domicile, exaltation or friendly sign, it will make that house prosper, if [also] endowed with strength at the birth of that [person]. If bereft of strength at birth, whatever house the *daśā* ruler enters by transit while in combustion, fall, or an inimical sign, it will then destroy that house.[1]

---

daśāpraveśe svagṛhādisaṃsthe himadyutau yatphalam uktam āryaiḥ /
tad vācyam indur hi śubhāśubhākhyaṃ phalaṃ manorūpatayā dadāti //

The JP apparently favours the reading of *daśārambha* positions with reference to the natal chart, and though most texts are silent on this point, such a praxis would seem the most natural and feasible. The JA (*Viśeṣadaśāphalādhyāya* 11), however, gives a different opinion:

daśāpraveśe 'pi khagāḥ salagnāḥ kāryāḥ sphuṭās tatra daśāpatiś cet /
lagnatrikhāyārigato 'tha lagne tanmitravargaḥ śubhadā daśā sā //

'At the ingress of a *daśā*, the longitudes of the planets *and ascendant* [*or*: house cusps (*lagna*, cf. p. 90n)] should be calculated. If the *daśā* ruler in that [chart] occupies the third, tenth, eleventh or sixth house [i.e., the increasing houses], or the ascendant, in the divisions of its friends, that *daśā* will be productive of good.'

Since fixing the time of commencement of a *viṃśottarī daśā* period within four minutes of clock-time (as necessary for establishing the ascending degree) requires that the margin of error in the longitude of the natal moon (or ascendant!) be no more than 0°00'00.02" – 0°00'00.06" of arc, depending on the ruling *daśā* at birth, the method of the JA must be regarded as wholly theoretical.

[1] PhD 20.34–35:

yadbhāvago gocarato vilagnād daśeśvaraḥ svoccasuhṛdgṛhasthaḥ /
tadbhāvapuṣṭiṃ kurute tadānīṃ balānvitaś cej janane 'pi tasya //
balonito janmani pākanātho mauḍhyaṃ svanīcaṃ ripumandiraṃ vā /
prāptaś ca yadbhāvam upaiti cārāt tadbhāvanāśaṃ kurute tadānīm //

More often, however, transits are reckoned from the sign natally occupied by the moon, without reference to the *daśās* or the rising sign:

> Among all the ascendants, the moon-ascendant is the foremost in [the consideration of] transits. Therefore, one should pronounce the results according to the current movements of the planets [reckoned] from its sign.[1]

For each of the nine planets, separate good or evil results are predicted as they pass through each of the twelve signs, beginning with the natal moon sign. For each planet transiting each sign, there is also a *vedha* or 'obstructing' place which, if simultaneously occupied by any planet, will cancel the effect of the first transit.[2] Complex as this system may seem, however, it is rejected by some classical authors as too simplistic:

> Even as they call that the 'birth sign' in which the moon is placed [at the birth] of men, are there not seven [more] such in which the [other] planets and the ascendant are placed? Therefore, every man here is said to have eight [birth] signs, and from these [arise] good and evil results when they are joined or disjoined [by the planets]. [Only this] result arising from the group of eight [points] (*aṣṭavarga*) is accurate.[3]

Omitting the nodes, the *aṣṭa[ka]varga* system thus has seven planets continuously transiting one or another of the twelve signs reckoned from eight different points, giving rise to 672 possible results. At an early stage of its development, however, the method was considerably rationalized by the conversion of particular good or evil predictions into a binary point system. A

[1] PhD 26.1:

sarveṣu lagneṣv api satsu candralagnaṃ pradhānaṃ khalu gocareṣu /
tasmāt tadṛkṣād api vartamānagrahendracāraiḥ kathayet phalāni //

The word *lagna* 'ascendant' is used here in the wider sense of any possible starting-point for judging the horoscope.

[2] For the effects of transits and their *vedhas*, cf. PhD 26.3–25.

[3] Horāmakaranda, dated by Pingree 1981 to c. 1100–1450, quoted in Patel & Aiyar 1957:v:

yatra sthitaḥ śītakaro narāṇāṃ syāj janmarāśiṃ tam udāharanti /
yathā tathā yeṣu khagāḥ salagnāḥ sthitā na te saptakato bhavanti //
ato 'ṣṭarāśir manujo 'tra sarvaḥ prokto 'tra tebhyaś ca śubhāśubhāni /
phalāni teṣāṃ ca viyogayogā yadāṣṭavargotthaphalaṃ sphuṭaṃ syāt //

planet transiting a benefic place from its own natal position scores one point (*bindu*), while a planet transiting a malefic place receives a dash (*rekhā*); likewise from the positions of the six other planets and the ascendant (see fig. 25).[1]

From/Sign	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Sun	•	•	–	•	–	–	•	•	•	•	•	–
Moon	–	–	•	–	–	•	–	–	–	•	•	–
Mars	•	•	–	•	–	–	•	•	•	•	•	–
Mercury	–	–	•	–	•	•	–	–	•	•	•	•
Jupiter	–	–	–	–	•	•	–	–	•	–	•	–
Venus	–	–	–	–	–	•	•	–	–	–	–	•
Saturn	•	•	–	•	–	–	•	•	•	•	•	–
Ascendant	–	–	•	•	–	•	–	–	–	•	•	•

Figure 25: aṣṭakavarga *points for the transit of the sun*

A table indicating the number of points allotted to each sign for the transit of any planet is known as the *bhinna* 'separate' *aṣṭakavarga* of that planet. In such a table, a sign may hold from 0 to 8 *bindus*, thus averaging at 4. The more *bindus* allotted to a sign in the *bhinnāṣṭakavarga* of the transiting planet, the more benefic the transit will be. The number of *rekhās* is inversely proportionate to the *bindus*, so that their sum in any sign is always 8.

The tables of all the seven planets added together give the *samudāya* 'aggregate' *aṣṭakavarga*. The total number of *bindus* being 337, the average number in a sign will be 28, signs with more *bindus* giving benefic effects, and those with less, malefic effects. Conversely, a sign in a *bhinnāṣṭakavarga* table may be divided into eight zones (*kakṣyā*) of 3°45' each, assigned to the seven planets and the ascendant.[2] A planet is considered to give its good results when transiting a *kakṣyā* ruled by a *bindu*-donor; thus, if the sun were to transit the 12th sign from Mercury, where

[1] Some texts reverse the *bindu/rekhā* terminology.

[2] Two schools of thought exist regarding the order of *kakṣyā* rulerships, JP *et al.* giving the order Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, sun, Venus, Mercury, moon, ascendant; BPHS *et al.*, Sun, Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Mercury, moon, ascendant.

it receives a *bindu*, the good effect of this transit would be felt while the sun transits through the *kakṣyā* assigned to Mercury. This scheme is called *prastāra* 'detailed' *aṣṭakavarga*.

Though originating as a prognostic tool, *aṣṭakavarga* soon found additional use as a method of diagnosis, by interpreting the natal position of each planet along the lines of a transit. Thus, a planet natally occupying a sign with more than 4 bindus in its own *bhinnāṣṭakavarga*, and more than 28 bindus in the *samudāyāṣṭakavarga*, is considered dignified, while a planet with less bindus is considered debilitated; etc. Various methods were devised for manipulating *aṣṭakavarga* figures, deriving separate *daśā* systems from them, etc.; but a detailed discussion of such techniques has no place in this brief survey.

5. The Devakerala Nāḍīs

The final two chapters of this study comprise an investigation of three Sanskrit *nāḍī* texts: the *Aṃśanāḍī* (AN), *Guruṇāḍī* (GN), and *Dhruvanāḍī* (DhN). It should be emphasized again that my purpose has not been to critically edit any or all of these texts, but rather to examine them as found, from the point of view of the genre they represent. The present chapter discusses the distinguishing characteristics and overall contents of the three texts; the next presents a number of representative excerpts in Roman transliteration along with an annotated translation.

While no attempt has been made to adjust the grammatical peculiarities of the texts (discussed below) in conformity with the standard rules of classical Sanskrit, obvious scribal errors have been noted and corrected. Unless otherwise noted, the text given in the GN excerpts follows the first of the two manuscripts in my possession (GN_1), which is generally less corrupt than the second (GN_2). Breaks in the original manuscripts (*granthapāta*) are indicated by [---], while [...] represents passages deliberately omitted. Bracketed text indicates explanatory additions. The translation of technical terms may vary according to context: thus, *putra[sthāna]* may be translated as '[the house of] children' or as 'the fifth house' (for which it is a shorthand term), depending on which variant best elucidates the reasoning of the relevant passage; etc.

Nāḍī manuscripts in current use are objects of veneration and even of ritual worship.[1] The texts are carefully guarded by their readers, and well-nigh impossible for a layman to procure. Clients may not even be allowed to touch their own readings, and only rarely does a *nāḍī* reader consent to part with a manuscript leaf containing the client's particulars, despite the claim that any given leaf refers to one individual only, and thus ought to be of no further use to the reader once the reading is

[1] One instance of such worship (*pūjā*) offered to physical *nāḍī* texts, here as part of the client's act of propitiation (*śānti*), was given in Chapter 2. For an example of *nāḍī* worship in a different context see York 1995, plate 10, where *pūjā* is offered to the *nāḍī* leaves as part of an annual observance.

completed.[1] A study such as the present is therefore necessarily based on disused *nāḍī* texts, which may be found in manuscript libraries (and occasionally even in printed editions). The texts presented below belong to this category.

5.1. Form

5.1.1. Sources

The physical *nāḍī* texts in my possession are photocopies acquired in 1996 from Bombay astrologer C.S. Patel, who in the early 1960's had had *devanāgarī* transcripts made from *grantha* originals found in various South Indian manuscript libraries. While the occurrence of copying errors in this process cannot be ruled out, they are not likely to affect the overall intelligibility of the texts.

The AN copy does not state the province of its original; but the title *Keraḷīye Aṃśanāḍīphalam* given in the colophon agrees well with an entry in the NCC: *Aṃśanāḍīphala (Keralīya) jy. Mysore I. p. 342. III. p. 9.* The colophon further states that the text was written down by one Beḷakavāḍi Varadārya on 15 March, 1893, copied by Śrīnivāsan Rāghavācārya, and compared with the original by the same and Su. Nārāyaṇasvāmiśāstrī (no date). The manuscript covers 184 pages, each page holding 18–20 lines of text typically corresponding to *śloka* half-verses.[2] The verses are not numbered.

The originals of the GN, two copies bound in one volume, are stated to belong to the Oriental Research Institute in Mysore, which again agrees with the NCC entry: *Gurunāḍī jy. [...] Mysore I. p. 333 (2 mss.).* The first manuscript was copied by P. Maribasavaradhya and compared by K.S. Mahantha Devaru on 11 May, 1961; the second, copied by K.S. Mahantha Devaru and compared by P. Maribasavaradhya presumably a month later, on 13 June, 19[61]. The former has 241 pages of 24–30 lines of text;

[1] For one such instance, see Ritter 1998:146ff.

[2] *Śloka* consists of four times eight syllables, lines *cd* being identical with *ab*: ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏓⏓⏑ | ⏑⏑⏑⏑⏑⏓⏑⏓

the latter, 311 pages of 18–23 lines. Again, a line typically corresponds to half a *śloka* (unnumbered).

The DhN is stated to have been copied by P.G. Sitharaman from a paper manuscript numbered R. 14721 in the collections of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library at Madras and compared by the same and E.S. Srinivasaraghavan on 17 November, 1960. The manuscript covers 432 pages, generally of 22 lines each, and each line being approximately the length of half a *śloka*. Only the first page and a half have numbered verses.

The authorship and transmission of all three texts are unknown. There is no division into chapters in the conventional sense, but rather (as will be discussed below) into a number of individual, independent horoscope readings. In the absence of numbered sections and verses, passages in the texts will be referred to below by page and line.

5.1.2. Locating and dating the texts

The three texts display many similarities with regard to form as well as contents. Identical or near-identical verses occur not infrequently, as do references to other texts – sometimes in very general terms, sometimes by name:

> In another book [it is stated that] in *vāruṇāṃśa*, when Jupiter is aspected by Mars, one becomes famous for one's learning and is well-respected in the royal palace.[1]

> [He will be] bereft of younger brothers [but] derive happiness from his three sisters. If [there are] others, they will meet with death. One should refer to the *Kujanāḍī* for details.[2]

> There will be loss of fortune and prosperity [but he will be] very happy in Ketu's period. [This] is explained in detail in the chapter on results from the *Gurunāḍī*.[1]

[1] GN 35.21–22:
granthāntare vāruṇāṃśe jīve kujanirīkṣite /
vidyāvikhyātim āpnoti rājadvāre sukīrtimān //

[2] AN 40.9–10
paścādbhrātṛvihīnaś ca sodarītrayasaukhyavān //
adhikeṣu layaṃ yāṃti kujanāḍīṣu vistaret /

These references often conform symbolically to the planets giving names to the texts: information on brothers is sought from the *Kujanāḍī*, brothers being a signification of Mars (Kuja); information on wives, represented by Venus (Śukra), from the *Śukranāḍī*; etc. Many verses found in the AN, GN and DhN further occur in the *Candrakalānāḍī* (CKN), a text also known by the names *Candranāḍī*, *Keralanāḍī*, and *Devakerala*. While the precise relations between these works remain to be established, the term *[deva]kerala* seems more properly applicable to a certain body of astrological teachings, and/or to a group of texts based thereon, than to a single work.[2] The AN refers to itself (in the superscription and colophon, respectively) as *Keraḷīyam* and *Keraḷīye Aṃśanāḍīphalam* '[the section on] the result of the *Aṃśanāḍī* in the *Keraḷīya*', and like the GN makes use of the term in a frequently repeated formula:

> This indeed is the result proclaimed, the *devakerala* evident to perception.[3]

> [This] result of the *Gurunāḍī* is true, the *devakerala* evident to perception.[4]

The term *devakerala* '*kerala* of the gods' finds its explanation in the legend of origination shared by the GN and the CKN, which

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[1] AN 47.9–10:
bhāgyalakṣmīvināsaś ca ketudāye mahāsukhī //
gurunāḍīphalādhyāye vistareṇa pracakṣate //

[2] CKN I:352 (no verse number) gives the proper name of the text as *Candrakalā[nāḍī]*:
deśe 'nekasurālayaiḥ parivṛte vidvadbhir āsevite
jātaḥ keralake ca tatra tapasā saṃpūjya śaktiṃ parām /
cakre candrakaleti viśrutam idaṃ tv aṃśair namāyair yutaṃ
śrīmān acyutasaṃjñito dvijavaro jyotirvidāṃ prītaye //
'Born in the land of Kerala, which is covered with countless temples and inhabited by learned men, and having fully worshipped Parā Śakti there with penances, the glorious brahmin named Acyuta composed this [work], celebrated as *Candrakalā*, with its 150 parts (*aṃśa*), for the pleasure of astrologers.'

[3] AN 177.19:
idam eva phalaṃ proktaṃ pratyakṣaṃ devakeralam //

[4] GN 63.17:
gurunāḍīphalaṃ satyaṃ pratyakṣaṃ devakeralam //

states that the science was revealed to 'a certain brahmin named Acyuta in the district of Kerala'.[1] This part of the legend may well be founded in historical fact: Kerala has long been noted for its unique contributions to astrology – so much so that *kerala* (*keralī*, *keralīya*) is occasionally regarded as a separate branch of the art, alongside the traditional division into *gaṇita*, *horā*, and *saṃhitā*. Aside from this legend, the AN, GN and DhN contain frequent references to South Indian locations and languages:

> [He will be] a pleasing speaker, learned in the arts of drama and rhetoric, having some knowledge of Sanskrit and eloquent in his knowledge of the Āndhra [language].[2]

> And [he will take] a second wife secretly; the result will be the gain of a wife in the Cola country.[3]

> He will be educated, intelligent and discriminating, skilled in two kinds of writing; in some cases he will have [knowledge of] three kinds of writing, [conducting] examinations in the knowledge of Dravidian [languages] [...][4]

> [He will have] the administration of a village at the proper time prior to that, and [be] the lord of that [village], in his own country and in the province of the king of Karṇāṭaka.[5]

There is thus little doubt that the texts all originate in South India, and most probably in Kerala itself.

[1] This legend is missing from the Santhanam 1992 edition of the CKN. The Acyuta mentioned in the legend is considered by Pingree 1970:35 as the historical author of the CKN, and dated to before c. 1650.

[2] AN 40.17:
nāṭyālaṅkāraśāstreṣu priyavaktā vicakṣaṇaḥ /
saṃskṛtajñānavān kiñcit āndhravidyāsuvācakaḥ //

[3] DhN 98.13–14:
dvitīyakalatraṁ ca rahasyena coladeśe kalatralābhaś ca phalaṃ bhavet /

[4] DhN 124.16–17:
vidyābuddhiviveki syāt lipidvayasamarthaś ca kecit pakṣe lipitrayayuto bhavet / draviḍavidyāparīkṣā ca [...]

[5] DhN 142.6–8:
grāmavyavahāraś ca / yuktakāle ca tatpūrvaṃ caitatprabhuś ca svadeśe karṇāṭakarājasya bhāge ca /

As noted by Pingree, the majority of extant *jyotiṣa* manuscripts were copied in the 17th to 19th centuries; being typically made from highly perishable materials like palm leaves, Indian manuscripts rarely survive for very long and are frequently recopied.[1] An attempt to date the *nāḍī* texts by the age of the manuscripts preserved in research libraries would therefore be futile, except to establish a fairly recent *terminus ante quem*. Dating the texts with any certainty by their linguistic characteristics, as discussed below, is hardly more feasible. The most serviceable means at our disposal for arriving at an approximate date is thus the *contents* of the texts – in particular, the astronomically datable horoscopes contained therein.

This method of dating obviously presupposes the historicity of the nativities discussed in the texts, rather than considering them as ideal or 'potential' horoscopes. There are good reasons for such an assumption: firstly, *nāḍī* texts are used today in actual consultations (with clients often in possession of their own horoscopes), and there is nothing to suggest that the texts ever served any other purpose. Secondly, the horoscopes found in each of the texts all date from a period of less than a century. As the number of possible planetary configurations is very great, an author seeking merely to illustrate a theory with hypothetical examples would almost certainly produce charts corresponding to far more divergent dates.[2] My contention, therefore, is that the texts were written for the purpose of being used in divinatory practice, new generations of charts being added – presumably by more than one author – as need arose.

[1] Pingree 1981:118.

[2] The total number of possible placements of the 'nine planets' in the twelve zodiacal signs is 44,789,760. Each configuration being unique in the recorded history of mankind, there is little difficulty in tracing the correct date of the horoscopes discussed, despite any imprecision or occasional miscalculation on the part of the *nāḍī* authors. For a discussion on similar dating of 'literary horoscopes' by astronomical data, cf. Neugebauer & Van Hoesen 1959:1f.

Pisces Moon Ketu	Aries	Taurus	Gemini
Aquarius Saturn Mars Venus	9 January, 1699 Morning		Cancer
Capricorn Ascendant Sun Mercury			Leo
Sagittarius Jupiter	Scorpio	Libra	Virgo Rāhu

Figure 25: a chart discussed in GN 63.18ff.

Pisces Ascendant Saturn Moon	Aries	Taurus Rāhu	Gemini
Aquarius Jupiter	16 December, 1760 Midday		Cancer
Capricorn Mars Venus			Leo
Sagittarius	Scorpio Mercury Ketu	Libra	Virgo

Figure 26: a chart discussed in GN 221.19ff. (the sun not included)

The horoscopes discussed in the GN are the most difficult ones to date, as planetary positions are not stated at the beginning of readings, but must be deduced from the technical argumentation within the reading itself. The resulting charts are often incomplete; on the other hand, the positions of the slower-moving planets (Jupiter, Saturn, and the lunar nodes) along with one or two of the faster-moving ones is sufficient for general dating

purposes. The datable charts thus arrived at belong to the late 17th and 18th centuries.

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces
Moon</td><td>Aries</td><td>Taurus
Rāhu
Saturn</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius
Venus</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">1 February, 1854
Late evening</td><td>Cancer</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn
Mercury
Sun</td><td>Leo
Mars</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius
Jupiter</td><td>Scorpio
Ketu</td><td>Libra</td><td>Virgo
Ascendant</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 27: a chart discussed in AN 12.8ff.[1]

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces
Ascendant</td><td>Aries
Jupiter</td><td>Taurus</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius
Moon</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">25 December, 1786
Midday</td><td>Cancer</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn
Venus
Saturn</td><td>Leo</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius
Sun
Rāhu</td><td>Scorpio
Mars
Mercury</td><td>Libra</td><td>Virgo</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 28: a chart discussed in AN 173.1ff.[2]

The horoscopes of the AN, on the other hand, are very easily dated: zodiacal positions are not only given in full (with few

[1] Calendar information given as *prabhavādi* 47, *śuklapakṣa*, *pañcamī*, Uttarabhadrapadā 3rd *pāda*, Wednesday, nighttime.

[2] Calendar information given as *prabhavādi* 40/41, *śuklapakṣa*, *pañcamī*, Dhaniṣṭhā 3rd *pāda*, Monday, daytime, 3rd *yāma*.

exceptions), but also accompanied by calendaric information typically comprising *prabhavādi* year, fortnight (*pakṣa*), lunar day (*tithi*), day of the week, lunar mansion and quarter (*nakṣatra*, *pāda*), and watch (*yāma*) of day or night. The charts belong to the late 18th and 19th centuries.

The DhN, finally, is the only one of the texts to give actual diagrams (in the copyist's hand) for many if not all of the horoscopes discussed. As in the AN, calendaric information is presented along with the zodiacal positions of the planets, and the time frame of the nativities is late 18th to 19th century.

Assuming, as seems reasonable, that the texts were composed in the lifetimes of the subjects whose horoscopes they discuss, the GN can thus be roughly dated to the 18th century; the AN and DhN, to the 19th. These late dates further match the softer evidence of the society reflected in the *nāḍīs*, particularly the oft-mentioned presence of 'foreign masters' (*mleccha-prabhu*). The AN is even more specific:

> The father's livelihood will be in business [with] a master from another continent (*dvīpāntara*).[1]

The text also shows an acquaintance with modern technology:

> On account of machines printing letters, he will have an independent employment.[2]

[1] AN 102.8:

dvīpāntaraprabhuś ceti vyāpāre jīvanaṃ pituḥ //

Although *dvīpa* also means 'island' generally, the phrase *dvīpāntara* 'another *dvīpa* [than the native one]' clearly suggests that the term is used here in its cosmographic sense, the world being traditionally thought to consist of a number of concentric 'continents' or *dvīpas*.

[2] AN 164.10:

mudrākṣaraṃ yaṃtramūlāt svatantrodyogavān bhavet //

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces</td><td>Aries</td><td>Taurus
Saturn</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">28 August, 1794
Forenoon</td><td>Cancer
Rāhu</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn
Ketu</td><td>Leo
Sun
Mercury</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius
Jupiter</td><td>Scorpio
Mars</td><td>Libra
Ascendant
Venus</td><td>Virgo
Moon</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 27: a chart discussed in DhN 240.16ff.[1]

<table>
<tr><td>Pisces</td><td>Aries</td><td>Taurus
Moon</td><td>Gemini</td></tr>
<tr><td>Aquarius
Saturn
Ketu</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">16 October, 1848
Pre-dawn</td><td>Cancer
Jupiter</td></tr>
<tr><td>Capricorn</td><td>Leo
Ascendant
Rāhu</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sagittarius</td><td>Scorpio</td><td>Libra
Sun Venus
Mercury</td><td>Virgo
Mars</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 27: a chart discussed in DhN 424.11ff.[2]

5.1.3. Language and style

All three texts are written in a simple, largely ungrammatical Sanskrit characterized by astrologer B.V. Raman as *paiśācika*.[3]

[1] Calendar information given as *prabhavādi* Ānanda [48], Hasta 2nd *pāda*.

[2] Calendar information given as *prabhavādi* Kīlaka [42], *kṛṣṇapakṣa*, *caturthī*, Rohiṇī 2nd *pāda*, Sunday, nighttime, end of 3rd *yāma*, 22 *ghaṭīs*, 7 *vighaṭīs*.

[3] Quoted in Rao 1993:158ff.: 'The language [of the *Dhruvanāḍī*] is easy to read and understand, grammatically not correct and is styled *paisachika*.' The word,

The general style is highly formulaic and repetitive, with few attempts at literary embellishments, although more elegant passages do occur. The bulk of the AN and GN is composed in *śloka* metre, with the occasional verse in *ıpajāti*; longer and more complex metres are used only rarely.[1] The DhN is mainly a mixture of *śloka* and prose, the latter often giving the impression of having degenerated from verse form by lengthy interpolations corrupting the metre.

Phonologically, the language of the texts is characterized by frequent loss of *sandhi* or standardized phonetic changes. Loss of vowel-*sandhi* leading to hiatus occurs not infrequently, *metri causa*, even within a *pāda* or quarter-verse: thus, *mātṛvaṃśe ariṣṭakṛt* for the expected *mātṛvaṃśe 'riṣṭakṛt*. Furthermore, as in various forms of Prakrit, the ending *-o* often takes the place of an expected *-aḥ/as*, etc. There are also frequent Dravidisms in the form of confusion of aspirated stops with unaspirated, voiced with unvoiced: thus, *ādāna* for *ādhāna*; *artha* for *ardha*.

Among the major morphological peculiarities are irregular case endings such as *karme* for *karmaṇi*, *śane* for *śanaıu*, etc., and irregular compound forms such as *pitā-vipad* for *pitṛ-vipad*. Syntactically, the most striking features are the excessive and superfluous use of the possessive suffix *-vat* (and more rarely *-mat*) in constructs such as *bhrātṛ-vihīna-vān* 'having lacking brothers'; the frequent lack of agreement between noun and attribute either in gender, as in *bhaginī sıukhī* for *bhaginī sıukhinī* 'the sister is happy', or in case, as in *kıumbhendravandye saphaṇī* for *kıumbhendravandye saphaṇini* 'when Jupiter in Aquarius is with Rāhu'; and contaminations such as *jananī dīrgham āyıuṣam* 'the mother long life' for *jananyā dīrgham*

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derived from *piśāca* 'demon, devil', should be understood here in the general sense of 'corrupt dialect', not as the Paiśācī dialect of Prakrit.

[1] *Upajāti* consists of four times eleven syllables:

⏑ – ⏑ – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – –

Other metres used include *vasantatilaka*, *mālinī*, and *śārdūlavikrīḍita*, each of four identical lines:

– – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – –

⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – – | – ⏑ – – ⏑ – –

– – – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – | – – ⏑ – – ⏑ –

āyuṣam 'the mother has long life' or *jananī dīrghāyuṣī* 'the mother is long-lived'. Finally, a few irregular lexemes occur fairly often: *bhrātrī* (sometimes, *metri causa*, *bhātrī*) 'brotheress, sister', derived by addition of the feminine ending *-ī* to the standard lexeme *bhrātṛ* 'brother' and used in all three texts; and *āsti* 'property, wealth', a Dravidian loan occurring primarily in the DhN.

5.2. Contents

Mainstream Sanskrit astrological works are, as a rule, concerned almost exclusively with universal principles. Only very rarely do they touch on particular horoscopes, or attempt to demonstrate a rule using practical examples; and even then, the exemples given are typically partial and mythological in character.[1] This situation is reversed in the *nāḍī* texts: the delineation of individual horoscopes makes up the bulk of all three texts, with the occasional digression on general principles. Following brief benedictory invocations, the AN and DhN launch directly into this discussion.[2] The GN, on the other hand, opens with a legend on the revelation of *nāḍī* astrology, followed by a description of the various technical aspects of the art, a (very corrupt) passage on the calculation of mean planetary longitudes, and a list of the 150 parts of a zodiacal sign (for which see below), before turning to the delineation of actual horoscopes. In the main, however, information on the religious universe of

[1] Cf. BPHS 42.31–32:

asmin yoge hariścandro mānavaś cottamas tathā /
balir vaiśvānaro 'py evam anye bhūmaṇḍalādhipāḥ //
varttamānayuge rājā kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ /
bhavitā śālivāhādir vijayaśrīyuto mune //

'In this [planetary] configuration Hariścandra, Uttama Mānava, Bali, Vaiśvānara, and other rulers of the earthly realm [were born]; in the present age, king Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Kuntī; and so will Śālivāha[na] and others be, covered in victory and glory, O sage!' In the texts of the late-mediaeval *tājika* (Indianized Perso-Arabic) school, practical illustrations are somewhat more common, though still not generally amounting to full example horoscopes.

[2] The *Aṃśanāḍī* begins: *śrīḥ / śrīmate hayagrīvāya namaḥ / śubham astu* 'Prosperity! Homage to the glorious Hayagrīva [*or:* Hayagrīva with Śrī]! May there be good fortune!'; the *Dhruvanāḍī* merely: *śrīr astu* 'May there be prosperity'.

the *nāḍīs* must be gathered from the individual horoscope readings.

5.2.1. General world-view

The religious outlook of the *nāḍīs* appears in general to be a mainstream *smārta* one, with few distinguishing characteristics: the 'great tradition' of classical and pre-modern Hinduism. There are no indications of sectarian bias, although the AN and GN both open with salutations to Viṣṇu. Different Hindu denominations, typically of the Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava categories, are referred to without partiality or animosity:[1]

> [The native will be] devoted to Śiva and to his teacher, especially devoted to Śiva, a Vīraśaiva, intent on the worship of Śiva, wholly given to devotion to Śiva.[2]

> In the former part, [he will be] a devotee of Viṣṇu, devoted to Vaiṣṇava precepts.[3]

> In the former part, he will be a Vaiṣṇava; in the latter, devoted to Śiva.[4]

[1] The GN does contain a few passages which could be construed as anti-Vaiṣṇava, but which in view of the overall tone of the text are more likely to refer to the deepening rift between the two subsects of the Śrī Vaiṣṇava community, reaching a head with legal disputes over temples in the 18th and 19th centuries:

śrīvaiṣṇavajanadveṣaṃ bandhuvarge viśeṣataḥ /
rājadvārāvamānena kleśaṃ prāpnoti bhūrisaḥ //

'[There will be] enmity among (*or:* from, *or:* towards) the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, particularly among [his] relatives; he will suffer much due to disrespect in the royal palace.' (35.9–10)

vanāntarapure vāsaṃ kutsitaḥ prabhusevakaḥ /
vaiṣṇavadveṣamūlena atīva kleśavān pitā //

'[He will] reside in a town near a forest, despised, serving a master. On account of enmity among (*or:* from, *or:* towards) the Vaiṣṇavas, [his] father will suffer greatly.' (74.5–6)

[2] DhN 44.10–13: *[...] śivabhaktigurubhaktiś ca śivabhaktiviśeṣaś ca vīraśaivaś ca śivapūjāparaś caiva śivabhaktiparāyaṇaḥ //*

[3] GN 222.9:

pūrvabhāge viṣṇubhaktaḥ vaiṣṇavācāratatparaḥ //

[4] AN 92.18:

pūrvabhāge vaiṣṇavas syāt uttare śivabhaktimān //

By tracing its history to a mythical source, the GN conforms to a classical Hindu pattern as discussed above, emphasizing the divine origin, and hence the divinely authoritative nature, of *nāḍī* astrology. The primeval teacher of the art is said to be Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu, extolled in the opening verses as the 'supreme *brahman*' or transcendent Deity, from whom it was passed in succession to Brahmā, the *catuḥsana* (Brahmā's four mind-born sons Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra), Bṛhaspati the preceptor of the gods, Śukra the preceptor of the demons, Śiva, and the latter's consort Umā. Each teacher 'extracted the essence' of this compendium of astrology (*jyotiṣa-saṃhitā*) until the original 400,000 verses had been reduced to two thousand. These are taught by Bṛhaspati to the brahmin Acyuta who, as a boon for his penances, has asked to learn the 'science of astrology' (*jyotiṣaṃ śāstraṃ*) revealing the past and future. On the completion of his instruction by Bṛhaspati, Acyuta in turn learns from Śukra, Śiva, and the *catuḥsana*, and finally returns home to teach his own pupils.

On the religious issues most relevant to the theory and practice of divination, the *nāḍīs* largely agree with standard astrological texts. The descriptive and prescriptive aspects of astrology are both present, in the form of predictions and of recommendations for *śānti*, respectively, based on the same implicit view of the power and varying qualities of time.[1] The

[1] These views are made explicit in the CKN 5773–5774:

kālajñānaṃ vinā loke yo naraḥ phalabodhakaḥ /
tatphalaṃ vyartham āpnoti tailahīnapradīpavat //
kāśabdena tu kāraṇaṃ trijagatāṃ paścāl layaṃ cety ataḥ
mātrābhir gaditaṃ hitatrayamayaṃ brahmaiva kālātmakam /
tajjñānaṃ kamalodbhavādyam uditaṃ puṇyaikalabdhaṃ satāṃ
yas tad vetti sa tattvavit sa ca munir brahmāhvayaḥ kālavit //

'The man who would teach the world the results [of action] without the knowledge of time – his results are useless, like a lamp without oil. The syllable *kā* is the cause (*kāraṇa*) of the three worlds, and later [their] dissolution (*laya*) [is represented by the syllable *la*]; by [these three] morae *brahman* is indicated, comprising the three goods and being essentially time. The knowledge of that is said to originate with the lotus-born [Brahmā] and attained only by the merit of the holy: whoever knows it is a knower of truth; he is a sage, called a brahmin and a knower of time (*kālavid*).'

term *kālavid* 'knower of time' is frequently used of the astrologer. The twin doctrines of *karman* and rebirth, presenting a middle way between fatalism and indeterminism, are upheld explicitly as well as implicitly:

> In *agadāṃśa*, in the former part, [the native's] half-brother has no son; [if one] is born, he meets with death, by reason of previous sin.[1]

> By the maturation of previous sin, she will suffer on account of children.[2]

A sense of continuity between lifetimes is sometimes very concretely expressed:

> And the result of illness for his father: when the ruler of [the house of] illness from the house of father is in the twelfth, in a *vargottamāṃśa*, in a sign of Mars, a malefic sign – for that reason, due to joining a *ṣaṣṭyaṃśa* of Mars, his father [...] will suffer illness, and that illness is an illness begun in another birth [...][3]

Although the religious issues with which the *nāḍīs* are concerned generally relate to life in the world, soteriological matters are occasionally touched upon in connection with discussions of rebirth:

> When the ruler of the ninth house is in the eleventh house in *gadāṃśa*, in *viprakāla*, [the native] was formerly born as a brahmin and will next take birth as a Vedic [brahmin]. In the final days of [this] birth as a brahmin one should predict renunciation [of the world as a result of] misfortunes (*āpatsannyāsa*); by the power of that merit [he will] take birth as a Vedic [brahmin knowing the] Veda. After his next birth [he will be] liberated (*mukta*), as the ruler of the twelfth house is aspected by Jupiter [and] the ruler of the sign occupied by the ruler of the ascendant is in a benefic division in the sign of the ninth house.[4]

[1] GN 27.15–16:
agadhāṃśe pūrvabhāge bhedabhrātā aputrakaḥ /
jayate mṛtim āpnoti purāpātakahetunā //

[2] AN 90.16:
purāpāpasya pākena putraklesavatī bhavet //

[3] DhN 17.8–11: *svapitārogabhāvaphalaṅ ca pitṛsthānāt rogeśe vyaye vargottamāṃśasthe kujakṣetre pāpakṣetre kujaṣaṣṭyaṃśayogāt tanmūlāt sva-pituḥ [...] rogapīḍā ca tadrogaś ca janmāntaraprārabdharogaś ca [...]*

[4] GN 63.5–10:

More common is the assertion that the native will 'attain a good world' (*sulokavān*) after death. The opposite is stated only rarely, as in this reading for a *śūdra* native:

> When the ruler of the twelfth house is in *kaluṣāṃśa*, and the twelfth house is joined [and] aspected by malefics, at the end of the body he goes to hell. One should refer to the *Gurunāḍī* for details.[1]

Again as in standard texts, the destiny caused by previous actions and deducible from the horoscope is thought to include a maximum longevity (*paramāyus*) which may, however, be cut short by 'untimely death' (*apamṛtyu*) at certain critical times:[2]

> When the ruler of the ascendant is in a movable sign, the ruler of the eighth house in a fixed sign, and the ruler of the twelfth house in a fixed sign, he has a combination for medium longevity. And he attains a maximum life span of sixty-three years. [...] At sixty-three he leaves his body: [when the sun is] in the northern course, in the month of Pisces, in the bright fortnight, on *ekādaśī*, death occurs.[3]

> When the moon is in *uragāṃśa* [and] one is born in the former part, with the sun in fall and in its division of fall, he attains long life. Seventy-one years is the longevity calculation according to *yoga*, sixty-one the longevity by *aṃśa*, and death is in the southern course [of the sun]. In

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bhāgyādhipe lābhagate gadāṃśe viprakālage /
purā brāhmaṇajanmānaṃ paścād vaidikajanmavān //
brahmajanmāntyakāleṣu āpatsannyāsam ādiśet /
tasya puṇyaprabhāvena vedavaidikajanmavān //
paścāj janmāntare muktaḥ vyayeśe guruvīkṣite /
lagneśākrāntarāśīśaḥ śubhāṃśe bhāgyarāśige //

[1] AN 92.11–12, reading *yāti* 'he goes' for *yānti* 'they go':
vyayeśe kaluṣāṃśasthe vyaye pāpayutekṣite /
dehānte narakaṃ yāti gurunāḍīṣu vistaret //

[2] Frequently occurring, and no doubt based on popular etymology, is the erroneous *alpamṛtyu* 'small death' for *apamṛtyu*.

[3] DhN 123.3–5, 9–10:
lagneśe cararāśisthe randhreśe sthirarāśige /
vyayeśe sthirarāśisthe madhyāyuryogavān bhavet //
triṣaṣṭiś ca vayaś ceti paramāyuś ca vindati / [...]
triṣaṣṭau dehaniryāṇaṃ uttarāyaṇage mīnamāse śuklapakṣe ekādaśyāṃ mṛtir bhavet //

Ekādaśī is the eleventh *tithi* or lunar day following the full or new moon; cf. Chapter 3.

> the month of Cancer, Scorpio, or else of Virgo, on a Friday, one should predict death for *uragāṃśa* in the former part.[1]

> When the ruler of the eighth house is in the twelfth sign and the ruler of the ascendant is in the fifth, by [this] combination of mutual enmity he has a combination for medium longevity. In the fifth [major planetary] period [from birth], in the middle of the period [or] at the end of the period, death is possible. In the period of Venus there are two dangers: in the middle of the period and at the end of the period. [There will be] bodily illness, untimely death [or] a loss similar to this. In the period of Ketu there is great fear and danger of untimely death. The subperiods of Jupiter and Saturn are known as an evil (*krūra*) time; he should know that by propitiation [there will be] happiness, and give away boiled rice (*krūra*), etc.[2]

The question of causal versus non-causal views on the relation between astrological indications and human events is not explicitly treated in the texts. As seen above, the practice of planetary propitiation (*śānti*) for the alleviation of undesired results is, however, upheld. The proper object of such propitiation is not always stated, but may often be reasonably presumed to be the afflicting planet itself:

[1] GN 53.9–12, reading *niśānāthe* 'the moon' for *daśānāthe* 'the ruler of the period':

uragāṃśe niśānāthe pūrvabhāge prajāyate /
nīce nīcāṃśage sūrye dīrgham āyuś ca vindati //
ekasaptativarṣāṇi yogāyurdāyanirṇayam /
aṃśāyuś caikaṣaṣṭiś ca dakṣiṇāyanage mṛtiḥ //
kulīre vṛścike māse kanyamāse [']thavā yadi /
uragāṃśe pūrvabhāge śukravāre mṛtiṃ vadet //

Aṃśāyurdāya and *yogāyurdāya* are two standard astrological methods of longevity calculation.

[2] AN 13.13–20:

randhreśe vyayarāśisthe lagneśe pañcamasthite /
anyonyaśatruyogena madhyāyuryogavān bhavet //
pratyagdāye daśāmadhye daśāntye mṛtyusambhavaḥ /
śukradāye dviguṇḍaṃ syāt daśāmadhye daśāntyage //
dehajāḍyaṃ cāpamṛtyuḥ tatsamānaviyogakṛt /
ketudāye mahad bhītiḥ apamṛtyubhayaṃ bhavet //
jīvabhuktau mandabhuktau krūrakālam iti smṛtam /
śāntyā saukhyaṃ vijānīyāt krūradānādi kārayet //

> In an evil year and an evil month in the period of the ruler of the eighth house, in the subperiod of Mars, there is danger from fever; by propitiation (*śānti*) [the native] will attain alleviation (*śānti*).[1]

> In the period of the ruler of the ascendant, good and evil results are equal. In the subperiod of Mercury there may be misfortune; by propitiation (*śānti*) [it] will give alleviation (*śānti*).[2]

In cases where the object and procedure of *śānti* are stated, worship of the greater Hindu pantheon (including the manes and the 'gods on earth', i.e., brahmins) is often enjoined alongside that of the planetary deities – in particular, the dreaded Saturn. The methods of *śānti* comprise various practices such as ritual worship (*pūjā*, *arcanā*), recitation of *mantras* or sacred texts (*japa*), fasting, pilgrimage and sacred baths, and, above all, donations. While some of these practices have the appearance of universal remedies, symbolic correspondences between the afflicting planet and the form of *śānti* recommended (or the deity to be appeased) are very common:

> To alleviate that sin [one should perform] bathing at Setu[bandha and] worship of Śiva. One should predict the attainment of progeny by a vow of fasting on *ṣaṣṭhī*.[3]

> By propitiation he should strive towards happiness; he will have bodily health. He should do what is pleasing to the planets: perform recitation of [*mantras* directed to] the nine planets, recitation of the *mṛtyuñjaya* and other [*mantras*], and give away an ox. [...]

> And by pleasing Saturn [the native] will be happy. He should give away a dark-blue garment, [perform] the donation of sesame oil on a Saturday

[1] GN 33.7–8:
krūrābde krūramāse ca randhrādhipatidāyake /
kujāntare jvarabhayaṃ śāntyā śāntiṃ prayāsyati //

[2] GN 40.15–16:
lagnādipadaśākāle śubhāśubhaphalaṃ samam /
budhāntare ariṣṭaṃ syāc chāntyā śāntiṃ prayacchati //

[3] GN 27.17–18:
tasya pāpopaśāntyarthaṃ setusnānaṃ śivārcanam /
ṣaṣṭhivratopavāsena santānaprāptim ādiśet //

Ṣaṣṭhī is the sixth *tithi* or lunar day following the full or new moon; cf. Chapter 3.

[and] give away an iron bowl, an anointment with oil and a meal of sesame. Worship of brahmins along with gifts (*dakṣiṇā*) [should be performed; then] there is no danger of untimely death, [but] bodily health, without doubt.[1]

To remedy that fault [one should perform] bathing at Setu[bandha and] worship of Śiva. He should propitiate the snake [deities and] perform a vow to Subrahmaṇya. By the donation of a golden [image of the] sun one should predict the gain of offspring, due to the obstruction having been removed at the completion of that propitiation.[2]

Donations to the astrologer occasionally form part of the prescribed *śānti*, alone or in conjunction with worship of the planetary deities:

To remedy that fault, the discerning one should perform propitiation. He should give a diagram of eighty-one squares to the astrologer.[3]

Having worshipped a silver [image of the] moon, he should present it to the astrologer.[4]

By a donation to the astrologer, [the native] will have [long] life, health and children.[5]

[1] AN 37.10–12, 18–21:
śāntyā saukhyaṃ prayuñjīyāt dehārogyaṃ bhaviṣyati /
grahaprītikaraṃ kuryāt navagrahajapaṃ caret //
mṛtyuñjayajapādīni anaḍvāhaṃ pradāpayet / [...]
śaniprītyā sukhī ceti nīlavastraṃ pradāpayet //
mandavāre tailadānaṃ lohapātraṃ pradāpayet /
tailābhyaṅgaṃ tilānnaṃ ca viprapūjā sadakṣiṇā //
apamṛtyubhayaṃ nāsti dehārogyaṃ na saṃśayaḥ /

[2] AN 67.3–6:
taddoṣaparihārārthaṃ setusnānaṃ śivārcanam /
nāgaśāntiṃ prakurvīta subrahmaṇyavrataṃ caret //
svarṇasūryapradānena santānaprāptim ādiśet /
tacchāntikarmaṇi kṛte pratibandhanivartanāt //
Subrahmaṇya is another name of Skanda or Kārttikeya.

[3] GN 45.21–22:
taddoṣaparihārārthaṃ śānti kuryād vicakṣaṇaḥ /
ekāśītipadaṃ cakraṃ daivajñasya pradāpayet //

[4] AN 73.14:
rājataṃ candram abhyarcya daivajñāya pradāpayet /

[5] GN 27.22:

The astrologer of the *nāḍī* texts thus functions as a two-way representative of the planets: firstly, in acting as their mouthpiece by delineating the results of *karman* made manifest through planetary positions; and secondly, in accepting, on behalf of the planets, worship meant to remedy undesirable results.

5.2.2. The aṃśas: *patterns of destiny*

The most unique distinguishing feature of the *nāḍī* form of horoscopy as evinced in the *devakerala* texts is the importance ascribed to minute segments of a zodiacal sign known simply as *nāḍīs*, or as *aṃśas* 'parts', numbering 150 in each sign, or 1800 in the zodiac as a whole. The method of division is not discussed in the texts, and the most natural conclusion would perhaps be that the *aṃśas*, like most subdivisions of the zodiac, consist of equal divisions of a sign (30˚/150 or 0˚12' each). Some modern astrological writers, however, have argued that the *aṃśas* represent a 'consolidation' of the sixteen *varga* divisions discussed in Chapter 4.[1]

Each *aṃśa* has a proper name (though a few names appear twice in the lists), and horoscopes discussed in the *nāḍī* texts are sorted under rising sign (ascendant or *lagna*) and the name of the *aṃśa*; e.g., *meṣalagna – sumatyaṃśa*, or *siṃhalagna –*

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daivajñasya pradānena āyurārogyaputravān //

[1] Notably, Bhagat 1990:1ff., whose position may be summarized as follows: beginning with the most minute *vargas*, the *ṣaṣṭyaṃśa* ($^1/_{60}$) divides each sign of 30˚ into 60 parts (commencing at 0˚00', 0˚30', 1˚00', etc.); to these, the *akṣavedāṃśa* ($^1/_{45}$) division adds 30 demarcations not coinciding with those of the *ṣaṣṭyaṃśa* (0˚40', 1˚20', 2˚40', etc.); the *khavedāṃśa* ($^1/_{40}$) adds 20 demarcations not coinciding with those of the preceding two *vargas* (0˚45', 2˚15', 3˚45', etc.); the *bhāṃśa* ($^1/_{27}$) adds 18 demarcations not coinciding with those of the preceding *vargas* (1˚06'40", 2˚13'20", 3˚20'00", etc.); the *siddhāṃśa* ($^1/_{24}$) adds 8 demarcations not coinciding with those of the preceding *vargas* (1˚15', 6˚15', 8˚45', etc.); the *ṣoḍaśāṃśa* ($^1/_{16}$) adds 8 demarcations not coinciding with those of the preceding *vargas* (1˚52'30", 5˚37'30", 9˚22'30", etc.); and the *saptāṃśa* ($^1/_7$) adds 6 demarcations not coinciding with those of the preceding *vargas* (4˚17'09", 8˚34'17", 12˚51'26", etc.). All other *varga* demarcations coincide with the above, making the total number of *varga* demarcations in any sign 150. On Bhagat's view, these 150 unequal divisions, varying in arc from 0˚01'40" to 0˚30'00", constitute the *nāḍīs* or *nāḍī-aṃśas*.

kumbhinyaṃśa.[1] From this arrangement it might be assumed that 'birth' in such-and-such *aṃśa* (a common phrase in the texts) refers to the position of the ascendant point in the relevant division; but the texts in fact often refer explicitly to the position of the moon (*niśānātha*), rather than the ascendant, in the *aṃśa* under discussion. The positions of various other planets in different *aṃśas* are also frequently mentioned.

Birth in a given *aṃśa* is explicitly linked to certain basic destiny patterns, particularly, but not exclusively, relating to the circumstances of birth and early life:

> In *kusumāṃśa*, in a movable ascendant, when the sun is in *vargottamāṃśa*, the native is born in a non-brahmin family, a family of Śiva devotees. He himself will be the third child, having no elder brothers; two elder sisters die prematurely in [their] childhood. One younger brother is fortunate, long-lived and happy. Later, an[other] younger brother also dies prematurely in [his] childhood. [The native] has no younger sisters, but elder half-sisters. Two or three issues die prematurely in [their] childhood, [but] two elder half-sisters and a brother are fortunate.
>
> When the ruler of the ascendant is in the twelfth sign, and the ruler of the fourth is in the eleventh sign, [the native] is born in a holy place in the vicinity of a great river. In that place, a large village or a town, a temple of Śiva is located, but no temple of Viṣṇu. The native is born in an east-west street, in a house facing south; birth is in the father's [ancestral] home.[2]

[1] The names of the 150 *aṃśas* are listed in the first excerpt from the GN in Chapter 6.

[2] DhN 1.1–15:

kusumāṃśe care lagne sūrye vargottamāṃśage /
vipretarakule jāto śivabhaktakulodbhavaḥ //
svayaṃ tṛtīyagarbhas syāt jyeṣṭhabhrātṛvihīnavān /
jyeṣṭhasodarīdvayañ caiva bālye alpe mṛtir bhavet //
kaniṣṭhabhrātṛ eko sukhañ caiva dīrghāyuś ca sukhaṃ bhavet /
paścāt kaniṣṭhabhrātraikaś ca bālye cālpamṛtir bhavet //
kaniṣṭhasodarīvihīnaś ca bhedajyeṣṭhasodarīyuto bhavet /
dvitrisaṃkhyāprasūtiś ca bālye 'lpamṛtir bhavet //
bhedajyeṣṭhasodaradvayaṃ caiva sodaraś ca sukhaṃ bhavet /
lagneśe vyayarāśisthe sukheśe lābharāśige //
mahānadīpradeśe ca puṇyakṣetre prasūtimān /
tatra kṣetre śivasyaiva ālayasya sthitir bhavet //

Such basic destiny patterns are modified according to whether birth is in the 'former half' or 'latter half' (*pūrvārdha, uttarārdha*) – presumably of a *nāḍī-aṃśa*, though this is not explicitly stated – and to certain divisions known as *kāla* 'time'. The latter are generally related to the native's *varṇa* or 'social class', of which there are four, and some modern astrological writers on the subject therefore regard the *kāla* as one-fourth of an *aṃśa*.[1] In the texts, however, the *kāla* concept is less symmetrical, and may refer to divisions outside of, or parallel to, the four-*varṇa* system:

> One born in *viprakāla* [will be] fortunate from birth (*garbhaśrīmat*), rich and happy; in *vaiśyakāla* [he will] have the occupation of a *vaiśya*, and likewise in *kṣatriya[kāla]*. One should know the same [to be true] in *śūdrakāla*, and likewise in [the *kāla*] of intermixture (*saṃkara*).[2]

> In *dhanadāṃśa*, in Taurus ascendant, when Venus is in *vargottamāṃśa* and the moon in *śaivakāla*, [the native] is born in a family of Śiva devotees.[3]

Occasionally the *kālas* of planets other than the moon are referred to:

> In *dhanañjaya* [*aṃśa*], in Pisces ascendant, when the ruler of the ascendant [Jupiter] is in *vaiśyakāla*, [the native is] born a *vaiśya*, endowed with good fortune, the fourth child born [to his parents].[4]

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viṣṇvālayavihīnaś ca ghanagrāme ca paṭṭane /
prākpaścimavīthau ca dakṣiṇaśreṇige gṛhe //
jātakasya janiś caiva jananaṃ pitṛmandire /

[1] E.g., Santhanam 1992:vi: 'Simply these are quarters 1 to 4 (each of 3' longitude) of a given Nadiamsa and are superior or inferior in that order for certain purposes.'

[2] GN 26.1–3:
viprakāle prajātasya garbhaśrīmān dhanī sukhī /
vaiśyakāle vaiśyavṛttiḥ kṣatriyasya tathā bhavet //
śūdrakāle tathā vindhyāt saṃkarasya tathaiva ca /

[3] DhN 25.22–26.1:
dhanadāṃśe vṛṣabhalagne śukre vargottamāṃśage //
śaivakāle niśānāthe śivabhaktakulodbhavaḥ /

[4] AN 35.7–8:
dhanañjaye mīnalagne lagneśe vaiśyakālage /
vaiśyajanmā subhāgāḍhyo turīyo garbhajātakaḥ //

An explicit definition of the *kāla* division is, however, lacking from the texts; and the same is true of the *pūrvārdha* and *uttarārdha*. The 'variations on a theme' ascribed to these complementary divisions often take the form of binary oppositions, even to the point of determining whether, out of two contradictory astrological indications, one or the other will prevail:

> In the former part (*pūrvabhāga*), [the native will have] the occupation of a *vaiśya*, possessing wealth rightfully earned; wealth wrongfully earned is said to be the result in the latter part (*uttarāṃśa*), [the native being] ever devoted to the service of foreigners (*mleccha*) and earning his livelihood in many ways. [...] In the latter part, the blemish of Rāhu is said to be severe; to the native of the former part, [there is the benefic] result of Jupiter's aspect. For one born in the latter part, the mother has long life; in the former part, the father has long life, without a doubt. In the latter part, the paternal grandmother dies in his sixteenth year; to one born in the former part, [this year] is fatal to the paternal grandfather. When the moon is in *uraga*, in the former part, aspected by Mars in *mitrāṃśa*, the maternal family of the native is extinct; in the latter part, there is increase of offspring and great happiness in the maternal family.[1]

As seen from these quotations, the assignment of more or less fixed destiny patterns to the *aṃśas* does not imply a rejection of the common considerations of astrology; rather, one layer of interpretation is superimposed on the other. Although clear enough in practice, this principle is not explicitly discussed in the three manuscripts studied here. It is, however, expressed in the CKN:

[1] GN 50.2–17:
pūrvabhāge vaiśyavṛttir nyāyārjitadhanāḍhyavān //
anyāyārjitavittasya uttarāṃśe phalaṃ smṛtam /
mlecchasevāparo nityaṃ bahuvyāpārajīvanam // [...]
uttarāṃśe rāhudoṣaṃ bahutvam iti kathyate /
gurudṛṣṭiphalaṃ ceti pūrvabhāgasya jātake //
uttarāṃśe prajātasya jananī dīrgham āyuṣam /
pūrvabhāge pitā ceti dīrgham āyur na saṃśayaḥ //
uttarāṃśe ṣoḍaśābde pitāmahivināśanam /
pūrvabhāge prajātasya pitāmaha ariṣṭakṛt //
uragāṃśe niśānāthe pūrvabhāge kujekṣite /
mitrāṃśage prajātasya mātṛvaṃśa kṣayaṃ gataḥ //
uttarāṃśe mātṛvaṃśaṃ prajāvṛddhir mahat sukham /

> Having ascertained the *yoga* and the *nāḍī*; having made its *aṃśa* follow the path of the house rulers; having determined the aggregate and separate strength and examined the inherent quality of [each] house; having ascertained the *[kāla]cakra* and *[viṃśottarī] daśā* and examined [it] as it bears on each topic and [as it is] by nature – [having done all this] one should pronounce the performance (*ceṣṭā*) and state (*avasthā*) [of each planet]. [The client's] own accumulated results should be considered by [his] words.[1]

The term *yoga* as used here refers in the *nāḍī* texts to the sum total of planetary positions – what, in the modern sense, we would in fact call 'the horoscope'.[2] In some cases a circumscribed version is used, the position of only a few planets being given:

> When birth is in *durdarāṃśa*, with Saturn in Virgo and Jupiter in Pisces, he obtains little progeny, suffering the frequent death of children.[3]

[1] CKN 5772:

jñātvā yogaṃ ca nāḍīṃ gṛhapatipadavīṃ prāpayitvā tadaṃśaṃ
nītvā samyag viśeṣaṃ balam api ca guṇaṃ vīkṣya bhāvāntaraṅgam /
cakraṃ jñātvā daśāṃ ca pratiphalaviṣayāṃ prākṛtāṃ cāpi vīkṣya
brūyāc ceṣṭām avasthāṃ nijanicayaphalaṃ cintanīyaṃ vacobhiḥ //

Ceṣṭā and *avasthā* are technical, interrelated terms used in gauging planetary effects. The purport of the final sentence is not quite clear, but the idea may be similar to that expressed in PM 2.47: *ātmāvasthāsadṛśam akhilaṃ pṛcchakasyāpi vācyam* 'Everything should be foretold according to [the astrologer's] own state [of mind] and that of the client.' The phrase 'having made its *aṃśa* follow the path of the house rulers' presumably refers to the variations of *aṃśa* results caused by planetary positions.

[2] Thus, to quote but one instance, AN 2.2ff.:

ravikujabudhaśukrā siṃhakanyādijuṣṭā
ravisutaśaśiketau karkinakrādijūkau /
phaṇipatisurapūjyau meṣayugmādirohau
naravarakulajanmā yogavān rājapūjyaḥ //
asmiṃś ca yoge manujo 'lpaputraḥ puṇyā matiḥ puṇyasutābhikāṅkṣī / [...]

'The sun, Mars, Mercury and Venus occupying Leo and Virgo; Saturn, the moon and Ketu tenanting Cancer, Capricorn and Libra; Rāhu and Jupiter having entered Aries and Gemini: [this man] was born in an eminent family, fortunate, worthy of royal honours. In this *yoga*, a man has few children, is of virtuous mind and desirous of virtuous children [...]'

[3] GN 54.15–16:

kanyāmanda jhaṣe jīve durdarāṃśasya jātake /
alpasantānam āpnoti mṛtaprajabahutvavān //

In terms of practical application, the concept of fixed life patterns inherent in minute divisions of the zodiac itself would seem to be unique to Hindu *nāḍī* astrology. A similar idea (the *myriogenesis* doctrine) is outlined by the 4th century Roman astrologer Firmicus Maternus in his *Mathesis*; but to my knowledge no horoscope interpretations actually based on this doctrine have been recorded.[1]

Apart from its uniqueness as a divinatory approach, the *nāḍī-aṃśa* doctrine has implications of definite interest for the study of Hindu views on human freedom and the operations of *karman*. As every human being is necessarily born into some particular *aṃśa*, the number of which is limited, and as each *aṃśa* corresponds to a basic destiny or event pattern, it follows that the number of possible human *curricula vitae* is likewise limited. There are only so many basic plots, as it were; and although the plot inherent in each *aṃśa* may vary in detail according to the *pūrva-* or *uttarārdha*, *kāla*, and planetary positions, the number of possible variations is still finite. We thus see in this doctrine the perhaps greatest deviation of *nāḍī* authors from mainstream Hindu orthodoxy: a view of *karman* and rebirth not as an infinitely variable flux, but rather in the nature of a flow chart in which movement, though voluntary, takes place from one pre-defined square to the next.

5.2.3. Other characteristic traits

In addition to the 150 *aṃśas* and their permutations, the *nāḍī* texts employ a number of diagnostic and prognostic astrological techniques, some frequently discussed in standard manuals of horoscopy, others more obscure. According to the GN, the science of *nāḍī* astrology, which 'should be learnt from the

[1] *Mathesis* 5.1.36: 'For the individual signs make all these predictions with their own power. If you read the *Myriogenesis* of Aesculapius which he claimed Mercury had revealed to him, you will find that from individual minutes, without any help of the planets, the order of the whole chart can be explained. For the ascendant, located in individual minutes, explains the whole order of life most clearly and obviously: its appearance and experiences, kinds of danger, and the first day of life. Since the individual sign consists of 30 degrees and 1800 minutes, the location of the ascendant in one minute describes the entire fate of men.'

teacher's mouth', comprises a vast range of more or less technical subjects arranged in three different schools (*mata*), namely, those of Guru (Bṛhaspati), Bhārgava (Śukra), and Sāmbaśiva ('Śiva and the Mother').

The school of Guru includes, *inter alia*, the procedure of establishing the longitudes of the planets 'along with the houses (*bhāva*) and *upagrahas*' – features which are, however, conspicuous by their absence from the actual horoscope delineations. Particular considerations of this school also include illegitimate and unnatural births; means of livelihood; travels; alleviation of harmful time-cycles (*daśāriṣṭa*); circumstances of death and attainment of the next world (*lokāntara*). The consideration of (maximum) longevity versus premature death belongs to the school of Bhārgava, along with loss of position and renunciation of the world, the worship (*upāsana*) of deities, the father's profession, and the death of the native's parents.

While these considerations all relate to the lives of individuals, the school of Sāmbaśiva appears to deal mainly with what is known as mundane astrology: the characteristics of the king of the land; the well-being of the kingdom (*rāṣṭra*) and invasions by foreign armies (*paracakrāgama*); famine and abundance; epidemic diseases (*mahāroga*); and hurricanes (*mahāvāta*). The frequent occurrence of such information within the readings of individual horoscopes is characteristic particularly of the GN:

> [When Saturn and Jupiter] are in the division of Virgo, one should predict suffering to the king, grief to the ministers, etc., extending to the subjects of [his] native land. When Jupiter is in accelerated motion and Saturn has turned retrograde, the whole world [will be filled with] cries of 'Alas! Alas!' – the southern parts in particular.[1]

> At the time when Saturn occupies Scorpio, the death of a great king [will occur]; [when it is] in a trine to that [sign], one should predict a disturbance to the people of the Coḷa country: the death of the lord of the realm is declared from one country to another. In the chapter on

[1] GN 56.9–12:
kanyāṃśagau janmadeśe bhūpatiklešam ādiśet /
amātyajanaśokādi janmadeśe prajāvadhi //
aticāragate jīve śanau vakratvam āgate /
hāhākāraṃ jagat sarvaṃ viśeṣād dakṣiṇe diśi //

> results of the *Śanināḍī*, the results of kings and kingdoms are treated in detail: manifold and wondrous results.[1]

As discussed earlier, horoscopes of individuals are cast for the time and place of birth. This time would normally be defined as the moment at which the infant, leaving the body of the (typically squatting) mother, 'falls on to the ground' (*bhū-patana*). Only in a fairly late text do we find alternative definitions:

> Some astrologers advocate the ascendant of impregnation; others [that of] the appearance of the head; some [again] the ascendant of falling on to the ground, at the time of separation of the sentient body (*cetana-kāya*) from the womb.[2]

Characteristic of the AN and DhN is the importance attributed, at least in theory, to all these three points in time; or rather, to the signs then rising. The ascendants of impregnation (*ādhāna*), appearance of the head (*śirodaya*) and birth (*janman* or *bhūpata[na]*, typically misspelt *bhūpada*) are routinely given at the beginning of horoscope delineations, stressing the importance of including them all. In practice, the astrological argumentation explicit in the texts is nearly always based on the natal ascendant, though exceptions do exist:

> The ascendant [of birth] is a sign trinal to Virgo: in Taurus, in the [*navāṃśa*] division of Capricorn. The head ascendant is Aries, and the [ascendant of] impregnation is the same: therefore most results [will be seen] in this [ascendant], and a few from the [ascendant of] birth.[3]

[1] GN 62.23–63.4:
kīṭe śanisthite kāle mahānṛpatināśanam //
tattrikoṇe coḷadeśe prajākṣobhaṃ vinirdiśet /
maṇḍalādhipater mṛtyur deśe deśāntaraṃ smṛtam //
śanināḍīphalādhyāye rājārāṣṭraphalāni ca /
vistāramatim āpnoti vicitraphalam adbhutam //

[2] PhD 13.2:
kecid yathādhānavilagnam anye śīrṣodayaṃ bhūpatanaṃ hi kecit /
horāvidaś cetanakāyayonyor viyogakālaṃ kathayanti lagnam //

[3] AN 93.3–5:
kanyātrikoṇabhaṃ lagnaṃ vṛṣabhe makarāṃśage /
śirolagnaś ca meṣa syāt ādhāno 'pi sa eva ca //
tasmād atra phalādhikyaṃ janmataś ca kvacid bhavet /

The texts differ on the function of the three ascendants, the AN somewhat arbitrarily ascribing various aspects of horoscope interpretation to each, while the DhN more elegantly connects them with the three divisions of time (past, present and future), assigning each division to a particular *ṛṣi* or sage:

> From the head ascendant, [fortunate] combinations and so on [are seen]; from [the ascendant of] birth, qualities and so on; from the [ascendant of] impregnation, [it is judged whether the native is] endowed with combinations for children. [These] are the constant results.[1]

> Impregnation is the first [moment for which to cast the] ascendant; the second is the appearance of the head; the third one should know to be falling on to the ground. Seeing [them], results become [apparent]. [The ascendant of] impregnation is future actions; the appearance of the head, the past; and falling on to the ground, the present. [These] are the results for the native.[2]

> The future results belong to Vasiṣṭha, past results to Gārgya, and present results to Jayamuni. Seeing [all] three, results become [apparent].[3]

A consistent practice of the *nāḍī* texts, rarely seen in mainstream astrological works, is the projection of *navāṃśa* placements on the main or *rāśi* chart. The practice is most developed in the DhN, which routinely employs a specialized nomenclature for such placements. A planet in any zodiacal sign, occupying a 3˚20' zone corresponding to the sign on the ascendant, is said to be in *lagnāṃśa* 'the division of the ascendant'; if the *navāṃśa* corresponds instead to the next sign/house, it is called *dhanāṃśa* 'the division of the second house'; etc. The DhN frequently appears

[1] AN 60.1–2:
śirolagnāc ca yogādi janmataś ca guṇādhikam /
ādhānāt putrayogāḍhyo phalaṃ bhavati nityaśaḥ //

[2] DhN 26.18–21:
ādhānaṃ prathamaṃ lagnaṃ dvitīyaṅ ca śirodayam /
bhūpadaṅ caiva trayaṃ vidyāt vīkṣya phalaṅ ca bhavet //
ādhānaṃ bhaviṣyatkāryāṇi śirodayaṃ bhūtam eva ca /
bhūpadaṃ vartamānaṅ caiva jātakasya phalaṃ bhavet //

[3] DhN 128.19–20:
vasiṣṭhasya bhaviṣyatphalaṅ caiva gārgyasya bhūtaphalaṃ bhavet /
jayamunivartamānaphalaṅ caiva trayaṃ vīkṣya phalaṃ bhavet //

to give greater emphasis to *navāṃśa* than to actual sign placements:

> When Venus is in the second house in the [*navāṃśa*] division of an angle, there will be a royal combination.[1]

> When the ruler of the seventh joins the division of the twelfth house, the result is two wives. [...] When Jupiter is in the division of Libra, joining the division of the fourth house and *suprabhāṃśa*, the result is the increase of daughters and sons by the second wife. When Venus is in the division of Sagittarius, the division of the sixth [house], the result is two wives.[2]

Other subdivisions of a sign (*varga*) than the *navāṃśa* are seldom referred to in any of the texts, except at the very beginning of readings, where the AN and DhN frequently give the *horā*, *drekkāṇa*, *navāṃśa* and *triṃśāṃśa* of the ascendant. Only rarely are these put to predictive use:

> Born in the *horā* of the moon, [he will be] handsome; by [birth in] the *drekkāṇa* of Venus, virtuous; by the *navāṃśa* of Saturn, cruel; by the *triṃśāṃśa* of Venus, wealthy. [This] result of the six divisions (*ṣaḍvarga*) is declared in accordance with the time of birth.[3]

Occasionally the astrological argumentation includes references to the *ṣaṣṭyaṃśa* placement of a planet; more often, to the technical terms designating the number of 'good divisions' attained in the *daśavarga* scheme: *pārijātāṃśa*, *uttamāṃśa*, etc.[4]

> The sun in Sagittarius joining the [*navāṃśa*] division of Cancer and *pārāvatāṃśa*, and the moon in Leo joined by Ketu, in the division of Taurus [---] due to the configuration of joining its division of exaltation

[1] DhN 3/10:
kendrāṃśage dhane śukre rājayogo bhaviṣyati /

[2] DhN 77/2ff.: *saptameśe vyayāṃśayuktaḥ kalatradvayaṃ phalaṃ bhavet / [...] tulāṃśajīve sukhāṃśasuprabhāṃśayuktaḥ dvitīyakalatrasya putrīputra-vṛddhiś ca phalaṃ bhavet / cāpāṃśaśukre ṣaṣṭhāṃśakalatradvayaphalaṃ bhavet /*

[3] AN 93.6–8:
candrahorābhavaḥ kāntaḥ śukradrekkāṇato guṇi //
śaner navāṃśato krūraḥ śukratriṃśāṃśato dhanī /
ṣaḍvargaphalam ādiṣṭaṃ janmakālānuguṇyataḥ /

[4] For this nomenclature, cf. Chapter 4.

> [and] *pārāvatāṃśa*, in its period [he will be] powerful in undertakings, will get carriages etc., will get daughters and sons and be happy. Ketu in the division of Virgo joins the division of the second house. Venus joining Jupiter in Libra joins the division of Pisces, its division of exaltation, [and] *siṃhāsanāṃśa*. Jupiter in the division of Aquarius joins *pārijātāṃśa*: the result is daughters and sons.[1]

As in mainstream astrology, prognostic techniques comprise time-cycles (*daśā*) and transits (*gocara*). The *viṃśottarī daśā* system is used throughout all three texts, with occasional references to *kālacakra-daśā*:

> In the twentieth, twenty-first, [or] nineteenth year, [at] a junction of *kālacakra-daśās*, there is misfortune [to one born] in *vāruṇāṃśa*.[2]

> When there is a frog's jump (*maṇḍūka-gati*), etc., in the *[kāla]cakra*, [and] Saturn is transiting an evil house, there is danger of ill-health to his own body, extending to [relatives] equal to himself.[3]

The *viṃśottarī* major periods are typically referred to in the *tārādaśā* terminology: *janman*, *sampad*, etc.[4] The DhN also occasionally makes use of a little-known method of judging *daśā* results known as *graha-samaya* 'planetary time', in which a planet's performance is named after the various stages in the daily routine of an idealized brahmin householder: from his morning ablutions and worship through his day of study and

[1] DhN 115.7–13: *cāpe dineśe kaṭakāṃśapārāvatāṃśayuktaḥ / sihme ca candre śikhisaṃyutaś ca vṛṣabhāṃśa [---] svoccāṃśapārāvatāṃśayuktayogāt taddaśāyāṃ udyogaprabalaś ca vāhanādi udyogaś ca putrīputra udyogaś ca sukhaṃ bhavet / lalanāṃśaketū dhanāṃśayuktaḥ / tauliguruṛbhṛgusaṃyutaś ca mīnāṃśasvoccāṃśasihmāsanāṃśayuktaḥ / kumbhāṃśajīve pārijātāṃśayuktaḥ / putrīputraś ca phalaṃ bhavet /*

[2] GN 45.19–20:
viṃśābde ekaviṃśābde ekonadviṃśavatsare /
kālacakradaśāsandhi vāruṇāṃśe upadravam //

[3] AN 94.16–17:
maṃḍūkādigate cakre dusthāne gocare śanau //
svadehāyāsabhīti syāt svasamānajanāvadhi /

[4] The *tārādaśā* names were listed in Chapter 4.

scholarly debate, relaxing and chewing betel in the afternoon, to his evening lovemaking and rest.[1]

A prominence equal to if not greater than that of *daśās* is given by all three texts to the transits of Saturn and Jupiter for evil and good events, respectively. Peculiar to the *nāḍīs* is the importance attached to transits to the 'division' (*aṃśa*) of house rulers, *aṃśa* here presumably meaning (as it normally does) *navāṃśa* – a phrase frequently combined with the word *sphuṭa-yoga* 'exact conjunction':[2]

> When Saturn exactly joins the division of the ruler of the eighth house [or] its trine, [or] the trine of the division of the ruler of the second house, one should predict misfortune to [the native's] kinsmen.[3]

> When Jupiter is in the second house [of the natal horoscope], it will give a good wife. When Jupiter in transit comes to the division of the ruler of the seventh house, he will obtain a wife.[4]

[1] I have been able to find mention of the *grahasamayas* in only one mainstream astrological manual, the JAN (1.88–99) – a text of late appearance, not mentioned in Pingree 1981.

[2] The mention of 'exact' (*sphuṭa*) conjunctions to the *navāṃśa* of a planet could indicate a practice on the part of *nāḍī* authors to calculate *navāṃśa* longitudes in degrees and minutes (such positions being commonly known as *sphuṭa*), whereas common practice would be to note only the *navāṃśa* sign. Only a few mainstream texts mention the calculation of *navāṃśa* degrees; so HS 32.12:

iṣṭaṃ sphuṭaṃ divicaraṃ navabhir guṇayed viśeṣayet kramaśaḥ /
maṇḍalahṛtāvaśiṣṭaṃ tasyaivāṃśasphuṭaṃ samānaṃ tat //

'One should multiply the longitude (*sphuṭa*) [of] the planet sought by nine and define it in order [as signs, degrees, minutes, etc.]. Dividing [this] by the [entire] circle [of 360°], the remainder equals its divisional longitude (*aṃśa-sphuṭa*).'

The technique here used for prognostic purposes is also employed for finding the ascendant or moon sign of the native's relatives, as in GN 36.5–6:

dāreśāṃśe tattrikoṇe dārajanmarkṣabhaṃ viduḥ /
dāreśadṛṣṭarāśau vā yojayet kālavittamaḥ //

'The division of the ruler of the [house of] wife [or] its trine is known to be the wife's birth sign; or [else] the sign aspected by the ruler of the [house of] wife. [Thus] should the expert astrologer judge.'

[3] GN 76.9–10:

randhreśāṃśas tattrikoṇe dhaneśāṃśatrikoṇage /
sphuṭayogaṃ gate mande svajanāriṣṭam ādiśet //

[4] AN 44.2–3:

Of the comparatively few *nāḍī* passages touching on general principles of interpretation, many in fact deal with this and related techniques of evaluating planetary transits, involving houses and their rulers as well as natural significators and sometimes lunar mansions:

> When Saturn exactly joins the division of the ruler of the eighth [house reckoned] from any house, or its sign of aspect, one should predict the demise of [the person signified by] that [house]. One should judge [thus] for exact conjunctions from the first to the twelfth house. [This] result of the planets' transits is true, the *devakerala* evident to perception.[1]

> When Saturn exactly joins the division of the ruler of the twelfth house in the sixth house, or occupies the sixth house, [the native] is in danger of bodily suffering. From whichever house Saturn [transits] the eighth [house], he causes suffering to [the things signified by] that house; or [if he transits] the division of the [natural] significator [of that house or its] trine, [there is] suffering to the house and mental anguish: when Saturn trines the sun, there are evils and suffering to the father, and misfortune to the father's family; when Saturn trines the moon, there are evils and suffering to the mother, and misfortune to the mother's family; when Saturn trines Mars, there are evils and suffering to the brother, and misfortune to the brother's family. Thus should an expert astrologer judge the twelve houses. [When Saturn transits] the divisions of the rulers of the sixth, eighth and twelfth houses, on the weekdays [of these rulers], there will be evil results; [but] in the months of the rulers of the trinal [houses, and] on [their] weekday[s], happiness and attainment of wealth. There will be prosperity month by month in accordance with the strength of the lunar mansions. When Jupiter trines Venus, [the native] will gain daughters and sons. Considering the time thus, an expert astrologer should judge [the results].[2]

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kuṭumbasthānage jīve satkaḷatraprado bhavet /
dāreśāṃśagate jīve gocare dāralābhavān //

[1] GN 61.13–16, reading *yojayet* for *yejayet*:
tattadbhāvāṣṭameśāṃśe sphuṭayogaṃ gate śanau /
dṛṣṭirāśau [']thavā ceti tattanniryāṇam ādiśet //
mūrtyādivyayabhāvāntaṃ yojayet sphuṭayogake /
grahacāraphalaṃ satyaṃ pratyakṣaṃ devakeralam //

[2] DhN 89.22–90.14:
ṣaṣṭhakṣetre vyayeśāṃśe sphuṭayogaṃ gate śanau /
sthite ṣaṣṭharāśau vā dehopadravabhītimān /
tattadbhāvāṣṭame mande tattadbhāvaprapīḍakṛt //
kārakasyāṃśakoṇe vā bhāvapīḍā manovyathā /

Similar verses are repeated on numerous occasions throughout the texts. The dignity or debility of the transiting planets are sometimes included in the evaluation:

> In the subperiod of Mercury [there will be] bodily ill-health now and then in an evil month; in the sub-sub-period (*antara*) of Saturn, in an evil month, at the time when Saturn is combust.[1]

Although a variety of astrological techniques of diagnosis as well as prognosis thus find mention in the *nāḍī* texts – including, in addition to those already discussed, such concepts as *ārūḍha*, *aṣṭakavarga*, and *avasthās* – the overall impression created is that of a rather circumscribed set of techniques forming the core of their interpretative approach.[2]

5.2.4. Structure of readings

As mentioned above, the bulk of all three texts is made up of individual horoscope readings, the style of which is highly formulaic and repetitive. Readings occurring within each text vary with regard to length and amount of detail; but most conform to the standardized pattern or structure outlined here.

The reading typically begins by stating the name of the *aṃśa* in which the native was born, along with the movable, fixed or common nature of the rising sign, and often the placement of

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ravitrikoṇage mande pitṛpīḍā bhavet kaṣṭam / pitṛvarge ariṣṭadam //
candratrikoṇage mande mātṛpīḍā bhavet kaṣṭam mātṛvarge ariṣṭadam /
kujatrikoṇage mande bhrātṛpīḍā bhavet kaṣṭam bhrātṛvarge ariṣṭadam //
evaṃ dvādaśabhāvānāṃ yojayet kālavittamaḥ /
ṣaṣṭhāṣṭamavyayeśāṃśe vāreṣu duṣphalaṃ bhavet //
trikoṇādhipamāseṣu vāre saukhyaṃ dhanāgamam /
tārābalānusāreṇa pratimāsaṃ śubhaṃ bhavet //
śukratrikoṇage jīve putrīputrasya lābhavit /
evaṃ kālaṃ samālokya yojayet kālavittamaḥ //

The 'strength of the lunar mansions' (*tārābala*) refers to the designations *janman*, *sampad*, etc., used for the delineation of *daśā* results.

[1] GN 60.23–24:

krūramāse dehajāḍyaṃ budhabhuktau kvacit kvacit /
śanyantare krūramāse śanyastamayakālage //

[2] For the meaning of these technical concepts, cf. Chapter 4.

one or two key planets.[1] The *kāla* (e.g., *viprakāla*, *śūdrakāla*) and/or *varṇa* of birth is then stated, sometimes along with the sectarian affiliation of the family; likewise, the native's position (first, second, etc.) among the children born to his parents – the native of the texts is almost invariably male – and whether birth occurs in the *pūrvārdha* or *uttarārdha*. The recurring theme of differences between the 'former and latter half' is frequently introduced at this point, often in set phrases:

> Slight differences in what does or does not occur (*phalāphala*) are declared only with regard to birth.[2]

> [There will be] slight differences in what does or does not occur (*phalāphala*) for a native of the former part.[3]

Variations in the circumstances of birth relate mainly to the place: whether in a small village (*mitagrāma*) or a large village or town (*ghanagrāma*, *paṭṭana*); near a river, the sea, or a forest; in the vicinity of a temple of Śiva or Viṣṇu; in the ancestral home of the mother or father; etc. The direction of the street (east-west or north-south) and that faced by the house are often stated, as is the intensity of labour pains, and possible danger to mother or child.

Another topic almost invariably brought up at the beginning of a reading is the number of brothers and, secondarily, sisters: whether elder or younger, long-lived or not. The financial and professional status of brothers, and marital status of sisters, are typically discussed. The trouble of childlessness is not infrequently mentioned, as is the death of sisters (often given the paradoxical epithet *sumaṅgalī* 'very auspicious', applied to married, unwidowed women) in childbirth.

The AN and DhN next detail the horoscopic positions and time of birth, beginning with the *rāśi* and *navāṃśa* placements

[1] Beginning with Aries, the twelve signs of the zodiac are classified in order as movable (*cara*), fixed (*sthira*) and common (*ubhaya*). As will be seen in Chapter 6, the order of *aṃśas* within the signs varies according to this classification.

[2] AN 106.3:
kiṃcit phalāphalaṃ bhedaṃ janimātraṃ pracakṣate /

[3] DhN 76.6:
kiñcit phalāphalaṃ bhedaṃ pūrvabhāgasya jātake //

of Jupiter and Saturn. These are followed by calendaric information in the form of *prabhavādi* year; half-year (*ayana*); season (*ṛtu*); solar month; fortnight (*pakṣa*); *tithi*; day of the week; lunar *nakṣatra* and *pāda*; watch (*yāma*) of day or night; *ghaṭis* and *vighaṭis*. The ascendant of birth and of the appearance of the head are given, being either identical or adjacent signs. The ascendant of impregnation is generally said to be a trinal sign to the ascendant at birth, and the solar month of impregnation is sometimes stated. Following some standard verses on the importance of the three ascendants as discussed above, the subdivisions (*varga*) of the natal ascendant are then stated, along with the *rāśi* and *navāṃśa* positions (and occasionally additional *vargas* or even *nāḍī-aṃśas*) of all the planets. The GN omits these details, proceeding directly to the delineation of the native's life.

The structure of this delineation is partly thematic, partly chronological, often commencing with a description of the father, the happiness the native will derive from him, and his time of death. A similar but briefer and (even) more stereotyped description of the mother then follows, typically emphasizing her devotion to her husband, her dutiful efforts to secure the increase of the family, and her liberal dispensing of food. Longer readings may include similar sketches of the native's brothers and sisters before moving on to his own life.

The outline of the native's life proper is, for obvious reasons, mainly chronologically disposed. In contrast to modern 'astro-psychological' consultations, the *nāḍīs* tend rather to slur over the childhood part, merely stating – in standard phrasing and without fear of contradiction – that in spite of various childhood illnesses, the native happily reached adulthood. The narrations of adult life are more detailed and individualized, though similar in focus: marriage and childbirth, income and livelihood, status and profession are topics of universal interest. The astrological argumentation presented is generally quite superficial, and there is no sharp dividing line between results related to *aṃśa* and to planetary positions. The two are in fact often explicitly combined, by stating that for the native of such-and-such *aṃśa*, in the former (latter) half, the result of a given horoscopic

indication is so-and-so. The results of *daśā* periods, too, are related to the *aṃśa* of birth, and the sequence of these periods, along with the transits of Saturn and Jupiter, provide the chronological framework of the narrative. This ends with the prognostication of the native's death, typically to the very day – the only event other than birth to be stated with such precision.

6. TEXT EXCERPTS

6.1. THE ORIGINS OF *NĀḌĪ* ASTROLOGY (GN 1.1–5.9)

śrīrāmacandra prasanno bhūyāt śubham astu
gurunāḍī nāma granthaḥ[1]
vāsudevaṃ paraṃ brahma nārāyaṇam anāmayam /
lakṣmīsakhaṃ namaskṛtvā vakṣye 'haṃ devakeralam[2] //
kerale viṣaye kaścid acyuto nāma bhūsuraḥ /
bṛhaspatiṃ samuddiśya sa cakre tapa uttamam //
prasādasumukhas tasmai prāha devapurohitaḥ /
tapasā tava tuṣṭo ['']smi vatsa kiṃ te karomy aham //
acyutaḥ –
namas te munināthāya vacasāṃ pataye namaḥ /
yadi mahyaṃ prasanno ['']si yady anugrahabhāg aham //
atītānāgatajñānaṃ yena me syāt sureśvara /
saṃkṣipya jyotiṣaṃ śāstraṃ matkṛte vaktum arhasi //
guruḥ –
sādhu sādhu mahāprājña yan me manasi vartate /
vaktavyam iti vatsādya tad eva prārthitaṃ tvayā //
purā nārāyaṇo devaḥ kamalāsanayācitaḥ[3] /
caturlakṣamitagranthaiś[4] cakre jyotiṣasaṃhitām //
brahmā pravartayām āsa sanakādiṣu tat svayam /
tatra sāraṃ samuddhṛtya cakrus te saṃhitāṃ pṛthak //
akārṣam[5] iha mantreṇa prārthitaḥ pūrvam ādarāt /
granthair dvyayutasaṃkhyākair[6] nāmnā gurumataṃ dvija //

[1] GN_1 omits the superscription.

[2] GN_1 has *devakeralīm*.

[3] My conjecture. Both MSS have *kamalāsanayārcitaḥ* 'worshipped by the lotus-seated one' (fem.).

[4] My conjecture. GN_1 has *jātur-* 'creature,' which hardly fits the context; GN_2 has *cātu bhakṣavi* ..., which is obviously corrupt. An alternative reading would be *jātu*, '*once* composed ... in *one* hundred thousand verses.'

[5] My conjecture; cf. the corresponding verse in CKN I:2, which reads *akārṣam aham indreṇa prārthitaḥ* 'applied to by Indra, I made...'. Both MSS have *ākarṣam*, which may be taken as the imperfect of the verb *ā-kṛṣ* 'draw towards oneself'; but this reading seems less plausible.

[6] My conjecture, following the corresponding verse in CKN I:2. Both MSS have *granthe dviyuta-*.

May Śrī Rāmacandra be pleased! May prosperity reign!

[Here begins] the book named *Gurunāḍī*.

Saluting Vāsudeva, the supreme *brahman,* the faultless Nārāyaṇa, consort of Lakṣmī, I will expound the *devakerala*.[1]

In the district of Kerala, [there lived] a certain brahmin by the name of Acyuta. He performed outstanding penances aimed at [pleasing] Bṛhaspati.[2] Graciously smiling, the priest of the gods spoke to him: 'I am pleased with your penance, child; what can I do for you?'

Acyuta [said]: 'Homage to you, lord of sages; homage to the master of speech! If you are pleased with me, if I enjoy [your] favour, [then] kindly recount to me in brief the science of astrology by which, O lord of gods, I may have knowledge of what is past and what is yet to come.'

Guru[3] [said]: 'Excellent, excellent, O wise one! What I was thinking should be told, that same thing, my child, you have this day asked for. In olden times, the divine Nārāyaṇa, beseeched by the lotus-seated [Brahmā], composed a compendium of astrology in four hundred thousand verses. Brahmā himself passed on that [work] to [the four sages] headed by Sanaka, and extracting the essence thereof, they [each] composed a separate compendium.[4] Having here been reverently applied to with a *mantra*, I made [these] into twenty thousand verses, entitled the "School of Guru", O twice-born one.

[1] Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmīsakha are all names of Viṣṇu.

[2] The priest-preceptor of the gods and deity of the planet Jupiter.

[3] Bṛhaspati.

[4] The four child sages Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra are sons of Brahmā.

ayutair bhārgavaś cakre kṛpayā vṛṣaparvaṇi /
umāyai bhagavān śambhuḥ provācāyutasaṃkhyayā //
yan mayā sukṛtaṃ pūrvaṃ jātakaskandham uttamam /
dvisahasreṇa saṃkṣipya tvatkṛte procyate 'dhunā //
evam uktvā gurus tasmai upadiśya svakaṃ matam /
manuṃ[1] ca bhārgavaṃ prītas[2] tatraivāntaradhīyata //
acyuto 'pi punaḥ prīto tapasārādhya bhārgavam /
tasmāt sahasrasaṃkhyākaṃ prāptavān bhārgavaṃ matam //
śukraprasādalabdhena mantreṇārādhya śaṃkaram /
sahasragranthasaṃkṣiptaṃ[3] lebhe sāmbaśivaṃ matam //
sanakādibhir ādiṣṭāḥ saṃkṣiptāḥ saṃhitāḥ pṛthak /
samprāptavān krameṇaiva teṣāṃ teṣāṃ prasādataḥ //
kṛtakṛtyas tato vipraḥ gṛhaṃ prāpyācyuto mudā /
śiṣyān adhyāpayām āsa śāstraṃ tad devakeralam //
te [']pi nānāvidhāṃ cakrus sārāṃśaiḥ kṛtisaṃskṛtim /
atītānāgatajñāne yasyāsti[4] prītir uttamā //
adhyetavyam idaṃ śāstraṃ tena samyag guror mukhāt /
bhāvopagrahasaṃyuktakhecarasphuṭasādhanam //
grahasvarūpakathanaṃ rāśīnām upalakṣaṇam /
bhāvānāṃ ca parijñānaṃ phalaṃ tatvaparīkṣaṇam //
aṣṭavargaprakāraṃ ca prakīrṇakam ataḥ param /
rājyayogo bhogyayogo parajātakalakṣaṇam //
aṅgabhaṅgādiyogaṃ ca viparītajanis tathā /
daridrajātakaṃ caiva karmajīvam ataḥ param //
lokayātrāparijñānaṃ daśānāṃ[5] nirṇayaṃ tathā /
antardaśāvicāraṃ ca daśāriṣṭaphalaṃ tathā //
daśāriṣṭapraśamanaṃ mṛter lakṣaṇam eva ca /
tathā lokāntaraprāptir ucyate sadguror mate //

[1] My conjecture. Both MSS have *manuś* (nom.).

[2] My conjecture; cf. the corresponding verse in CKN I:2, which reads *gurus ca brāhmaṇaḥ prītas*. Both MSS have *pitrā* 'by the father', which does not fit the context.

[3] GN_1 inserts *yuktaṃ* 'correct,' in violation of the metre.

[4] GN_1 has *yāsyāsti*.

[5] My conjecture. Both MSS have *diśānāṃ* 'of directions'.

Bhārgava made it into ten thousand out of kindness towards Vṛṣaparvan, and Lord Śambhu told it to Umā in ten thousand [verses].[1] I will now teach you the excellent division on genethlialogy previously well composed by myself, abbreviated into two thousand [verses].'

Having said this, Guru taught him his own school and the *mantra* of Bhārgava, and, pleased, vanished at that very place. Pleased, Acyuta proceeded to worship Bhārgava by penances, and received from him the 'School of Bhārgava' in one thousand [verses]. With the *mantra* received by Śukra's grace, he worshipped Śaṅkara and obtained the 'School of Sāmbaśiva' abbreviated into one thousand verses.[2] One by one he obtained the separate, abbreviated compendia taught by [the four sages] headed by Sanaka, by their respective grace. His object fulfilled, the brahmin Acyuta then joyfully returned home and taught his pupils that science, the *devakerala*.

They variously adorned [that] composition with important parts. He whose greatest joy is in the knowledge of what is past and what is yet to come should learn this science fully from the teacher's mouth: the means of establishing the longitudes of the planets, along with houses and sub-planets; the delineation of the nature of the planets; the characteristics of the zodiacal signs; the full knowledge of houses; the results [of] the examination of the elements;[3] the method of *aṣṭa[ka]varga*,[4] and then miscellaneous subjects: combinations for royal power and combinations for enjoyment; the signs of illegitimate birth; combinations for physical harm, as also unnatural birth; birth in poverty, and then the means of livelihood; the full knowledge of travel throughout the world, and the determination of periods; the consideration of sub-periods, and the unfortunate effects of periods; the remedies for [such] periods of misfortune, and the signs of death; likewise, the attainment of the next world is explained in the school of the true teacher;

[1] Bhārgava 'son of Bhṛgu' is a name of Śukra, priest-preceptor of the demons and deity of the planet Venus. Vṛṣaparvan and Śambhu are both names of Śiva.

[2] Śaṅkara is a name of Śiva. Sāmbaśiva means 'Śiva and the Mother,' i.e., Umā.

[3] The technical meaning of *tattva* 'element' in this context is not clear.

[4] For *aṣṭakavarga*, cf. Chapter 4.

āyurdāyaparijñānaṃ apamṛtyoś ca lakṣaṇam /
parivrājakayogaś ca padabhraṃśakaras tathā //
devatopāsanatvaṃ ca upāsyāṃ devatāṃ tathā /
pitror maraṇakālaḥ ca parivyaktajaniḥ tathā //
pitṛkarmakaratvaṃ ca procyate bhārgave mate /
svadeśakālabhedena svadeśanṛpalakṣaṇam //
svadeśarāṣṭrasaukhyaṃ ca paracakrāgamaṃ tathā /
durbhikṣaṃ ca subhikṣaṃ ca mahārogādisambhavam //
mahāvātābhighātaṃ ca proktaṃ sāmbaśive mate /
[1]śakābdāpi gate jyotir virāme vopadeśataḥ //
[2]padmādricandrāgniyutāḥ śakābdāḥ kalivatsarāḥ /
kalyābdārkagato māsayutās trikhādriśeṣataḥ //
labdhayutāsturayutāṃ samāsair api saṃyutaḥ /
khaṃ vaśvāghno dinayutaḥ dviśaśevāgnibhās tribhiḥ //
lalabdhekṣa [---] nair hīnaṃ śukravārādikaṃ dinam /
dyugaṇaṃ gaṇanair hitvā bhājayed api bhājakaiḥ //
labdhaṃ rāśi hataṃ śeṣaṃ khāgnibhir bhājanair vṛtā /
bhāgaśeṣaṃ khatarkaghnaṃ hṛtahāraikadā punaḥ //
vikalāś ca bhavanty evam ayaṃ syān madhyakhecaraḥ /
guṇakāro raver bhāṇa śīrendur hārakasmṛtaḥ //
śarendu tarkaṣaḍbhāgo khakhārbhāgnir vidhoguṇaḥ /
śaradarkanidhiścandra vasavohārakasmṛtaḥ //

[1] The following thirteen lines, too corrupt to admit of coherent translation, deal with the calculation of mean planetary longitudes for the casting of horoscopes; the corresponding section of the CKN I:3–5 covers 52 lines. The standard procedure is to multiply the years expired from the beginning of the Kali era by 12, adding the expired solar months in the current year, and converting the result into synodic (soli-lunar) months by adding 7 intercalary months for every 228 solar months. The expired synodic months thus obtained are multiplied by 30 and the result added to the number of *tithis* expired in the current month. This total of expired *tithis* is multiplied by 11/703, and the product subtracted from the total to get the number of civil days (*ahargaṇa*) expired from the beginning of Kali. This number is divided by 7, and the remainder gives the day of the week, beginning with Friday. Multiplying the *ahargaṇa* by the number of revolutions of a given planet in a *yuga* and dividing the result by the number of civil days in the *yuga* gives the mean zodiacal position of that planet, which, when multiplied by 30, 60 and 60, respectively, yields the number of degrees, minutes and seconds of arc.

[2] GN_1 adds *svadeśakālabhedena* 'according to the difference of one's own place and time'.

the full knowledge of longevity, and the signs of untimely death; combinations for a mendicant's life, and those causing a fall from position; the worship of deities, and the deity to be worshipped; the time of death of one's parents, and distinguished birth;[1] the occupation of one's father is also explained in the school of Bhārgava; [and] in accordance with one's time and place, the characteristics of the ruler of one's land; the happiness of one's own country, and invasion by foreign armies; famine and abundance of food, and the rise of epidemic diseases; and the attack of hurricanes is explained in the school of Sāmbaśiva.

[...] The years of the Śaka era added to 3179 gives the years of the Kali era. Multiplied by the Kali years, along with the months, from 703 [...] along with the months [...] with the days [...] by three [...] less by [...], beginning with Friday, is the day. The number of days multiplied by the revolutions should be divided by the divisors. The result is the zodiacal sign. The remainder, multiplied by 30 [and] divided by the divisors, is the degree; the remainder [of that], multiplied by 60 [and] divided [by] the divisors, [and] once more [so multiplied and divided] are the [minutes and] seconds [of arc]. This is the mean [longitude of the] planet. The multiplier of the sun [...] is called the divisor. A division of 6615 [...] multiplied [...] 3 [...] 00 [...] 8 is called the divisor.

[1] The precise meaning of *parivyaktajani* is not clear.

brahmābdīndumitā[1] nāḍyaḥ carabhe vyatyayā sthire /
ṣaṭsaptatiṃ samārabhya dvisvabhāveṣu rāśiṣu //
vasudhā vaiṣṇavī brāhmī kālakūṭā ca śāṃkarī /
sudhākarī samā sāmyā surā māyā manoharā //
mādhvī mañjusvanā horā kumbhinī kambalā prabhā /
dhīrā payasvinī mūlā jagatī jarjharā dhruvā //
musalā mudgarā pāśā campakā yāminī mahī /
kaluṣā kamalā kāntā kālā parikarā kṣamā //
durdharā durbhagā viśvā viśīnā vikaṭāṅgirā /
vibhramā sukhadā snigdhā sodarā surasundarī //
amṛtaplāvinī kālā kāmadhuk karavīriṇī /
gaṃharā kuṭinī tādrā viṣākhyā viṣanāśinī //
śarmadā śītalā nimnā tritā priyavivardhinī /
mānaghnī durbhagā cittā citriṇī cirajīvinī //
bhūpā gadaharā nālā nalinī nirmalā nadī /
sudhāmṛtāṃśukalikā hālāhalaviṣāṃkurā //
trailokyamohanakarī mahāśūrī sudhīlatā /
sukhadā suprabhā śobhā śobhanā śītadā śilā //
salā jvālā sarā nādhā sūtanā sumatī sitā /
somavatī somalatā maṅgalā mudrikā sudhā //
melavagā vihvalayā navanītā niśācarī /
nivṛtti nīradā sārā sāmagā somagā samā //
viśvambharā kumārī ca kokilā kuñcarākṛti /
aindrī svāhā svadhā vasvī pretā rakṣā jalaplavā //

[1] The numeric value of this compound, if taken out of context, would be unclear. If the middle member is meant to be *abdhi* 'ocean', it would normally signify 4 rather than 5, while *abdi* 'cloud' (variant of *abda)* has no fixed standard value. However, cf. the corresponding verse in CKN I:6, which reads *kha-pañcendu* '150'.

[There are] one hundred and fifty *nāḍīs* in a movable sign; [their order is] reversed in a fixed [sign], [and] begins from the seventy-sixth in signs of dual nature: 1) Vasudhā, 2) Vaiṣṇavī, 3) Brāhmī, 4) Kālakūṭā, 5) Śāṃkarī, 6) Sudhākarī, 7) Samā, 8) Sāmyā, 9) Surā, 10) Māyā, 11) Manoharā, 12) Mādhvī, 13) Mañjusvanā, 14) Horā, 15) Kumbhinī, 16) Kambalā, 17) Prabhā, 18) Dhīrā, 19) Payasvinī, 20) Mūlā, 21) Jagatī, 22) Jarjharā, 23) Dhruvā, 24) Musalā, 25) Mudgarā, 26) Pāśā, 27) Campakā, 28) Yāminī, 29) Mahī, 30) Kaluṣā, 31) Kamalā, 32) Kāntā, 33) Kālā, 34) Parikarā, 35) Kṣamā, 36) Durdharā, 37) Durbhagā, 38) Viśvā, 39) Viśīnā, 40) Vikaṭāṅgirā, 41) Vibhramā, 42) Sukhadā, 43) Snigdhā, 44) Sodarā, 45) Surasundarī, 46) Amṛtaplāvinī, 47) Kālā, 48) Kāmadhuk, 49) Karavīriṇī, 50) Gaṃharā, 51) Kuṭinī , 52) Tādrā, 53) Viṣā, 54) Viṣanāśinī, 55) Śarmadā, 56) Śītalā, 57) Nimnā, 58) Tritā, 59) Priyavivardhinī, 60) Mānaghnī, 61) Durbhagā, 62) Cittā, 63) Citriṇī, 64) Cirajīvinī, 65) Bhūpā, 66) Gadaharā, 67) Nālā, 68) Nalinī, 69) Nirmalā, 70) Nadī, 71) Sudhāmṛtāṃśukalikā, 72) Hālāhalaviṣāṃkurā, 73) Trailokyamohanakarī, 74) Mahāśūrī, 75) Sudhīlatā, 76) Sukhadā, 77) Suprabhā, 78) Śobhā, 79) Śobhanā, 80) Śītadā, 81) Śilā, 82) Salā, 83) Jvālā, 84) Sarā, 85) Nādhā, 86) Sūtanā, 87) Sumatī, 88) Sitā, 89) Somavatī, 90) Somalatā, 91) Maṅgalā, 92) Mudrikā, 93) Sudhā, 94) Melavagā, 95) Vihvalayā, 96) Navanītā, 97) Niśācarī, 98) Nivṛtti, 99) Nīradā, 100) Sārā, 101) Sāmagā, 102) Somagā, 103) Samā, 104) Viśvambharā, 105) Kumārī, 106) Kokilā, 107) Kuñcarākṛti, 108) Aindrī, 109) Svāhā, 110) Svadhā, 111) Vasvī, 112) Pretā, 113) Rakṣā, 114) Jalaplavā,

dāruśvā madirā maitrī hariṇī hāriṇī marut /
dhanā yajñā dhanakarī dhanadā kacchapāmbujā //
īśā ca śūlinī tādrī śivā śivakarālatā /
kundā caiva mukundā ca bhasitā kadarī smarā //
kadalī kokilālāpā kāminī kalaśodbhavā /
virā prastā saṃgarā ca śatayajñā śatāvarī //
sragvī pātalinī nagnā paṅkajā parameśvarī //
etāvantyās samākhyātāḥ proktā yā brahmaṇā purā/
nāḍīphalam asaṃjñāya[1] na śakyo lagnanirṇayaḥ //
avijñāte punar lagne mṛṣāvādeva[2] vinyaset /
tasmān nāḍīṃ parīkṣyaiva kuryāj jātakanirṇayam //

[1] My conjecture, based on the meaning and context. Both MSS have *samājñāya* 'thoroughly understanding.' For this and the following verse, cf. CKN 5730–5731:

etā nāḍyaḥ samākhyātāḥ proktā yā brahmaṇe purā /
nāḍīphalam avijñāya na śakyo lagnanirṇayaḥ //
ajñāte ca punar lagne mṛṣā vāṅ na phalapradā /
tasmān nāḍyā parīkṣeta kuryāj jātakanirṇayam //

'[Thus I have] related these *nāḍīs* which were previously told to Brahmā. Without understanding the results of the *nāḍīs* it is not possible to ascertain the ascendant. And when the ascendant is unknown, [the astrologer's] words will be false and will not bear fruit. Therefore one should investigate the horoscope [after] examining it through the *nāḍī*.'

[2] Both MSS have *mṛṣāvādeva*, which gives no grammatical meaning; my translation follows the probable intention. *Mṛṣāvādeva vinyaset* is possibly a corrupt version of *mṛṣāvāgdevavad bhavet* (itself a problematic phrase) found in CKN II:7 (no verse number):

sujñāte na punar lagne mṛṣāvāgdevavad bhavet /
tasmān nāḍīḥ parīkṣyaiva kuryāj jātakalakṣaṇam //

'And when the ascendant is not well known, one will be like someone having a deity of false speech [?]. Therefore one should delineate the horoscope after examining the *nāḍīs*.'

115) Dāruśvā, 116) Madirā, 117) Maitrī, 118) Hariṇī, 119) Hāriṇī, 120) Marut, 121) Dhanā, 122) Yajñā, 123) Dhanakarī, 124) Dhanadā, 125) Kacchapā, 126) Ambujā, 127) Īśā, 128) Śūlinī, 129) Tādrī, 130) Śivā, 131) Śivakarālatā, 132) Kundā, 133) Mukundā, 134) Bhasitā, 135) Kadarī, 136) Smarā, 137) Kadalī, 138) Kokilālāpā, 139) Kāminī, 140) Kalaśodbhavā, 141) Virā, 142) Prastā, 143) Saṃgarā, 144) Śatayajñā, 145) Śatāvarī, 146) Sragvī, 147) Pātalinī, 148) Nagnā, 149) Paṅkajā, 150) Parameśvarī.[1]

[Thus I have] related all these [*nāḍīs*] which were previously described by Brahmā. Without fully understanding the results of the *nāḍī* it is not possible to ascertain the ascendant. And when the ascendant is unknown, [the astrologer] will predict falsely. Therefore one should investigate the horoscope after examining the *nāḍī*.

[1] A few names in this list differ from those given in GN_2. It should further be noted that my division of the stanzas into 150 names differs slightly from that indicated in the MSS, both of which break up no. 40 into two names (Vikaṭā and Aṅgirā), while reading no:s 116–117 and 122–123 as compounds (Madirāmaitrī and Yajñādhanakarī), thus ending up with only 149 names. For the names as such, many of which are apparently corrupt, cf. Santhanam 1992:ix ff., which gives two similar but not identical lists; so also CKN I:6f., II:341f.

6.2. A READING FROM THE *GURUNĀḌĪ* (GN 218.4–221.18)

trailokyāṃśe pūrvabhāge makare lagnajātake //
budhatriṃśāṃśage jātaḥ dvitīye garbhajātakam /
mahānadīprāntyadeśe dakṣiṇottarvīthiṣu //
prāgbhāge jananaṃ ceti uttaradvāragehage /
geheśe yannavāṃśasthe tadrāśyaṃśatrikoṇage //
tannavāṃśagrahadvāre prasūtir nātra saṃśayaḥ /
lagneśe daśarāśisthe lābheśe sukharāśige //
triṃśadvarṣāt paraṃ bhāgyaṃ ārogyadṛḍhagātravān /
yugmāṃśakasya yogena mīnārūḍhe prajāyate //
bālye dāridryam āpannaḥ yauvane rājayogavān /
pañcaviṃśāt paraṃ bhāgyaṃ gehe lakṣmīkaṭākṣavān //
trailokyāṃśe care lagne budhatriṃśāṃśajātake /
raktavarṇo madhyagātraḥ samadehasvarūpavān //
trailokyāṃśe pūrvabhāge makare lagnajātake /
rūpavān matimān vāgmī prasannamukhanetravān //
adṛṣṭaśālī dharmātmā rājayogayuto bhavet /
trailokyāṃśe pūrvabhāge makare lagnajātake //
yatīśvarapriyo vāgmī devabrāhmaṇapoṣakaḥ /
mitāśī mitabhāṣī ca mitanidrātijāgrataḥ //
pareṃgitajñaś caturo bhūṣito bhūṣaṇapriyaḥ /
duṣṭeṣv[1] aduṣṭabuddhiś ca krūreṣu krūrakṛtyavān //
pitṛbhāgyavihīnaś ca svabhujārjitavittavān /
dharmaśāstrārthatattvajñaḥ jñānāṃśe sukhanāyake //
sarveṣām[2] upakārī ca śauryasāhasakṛtyavān /
satkathāśravaṇaṃ nityaṃ śrīmān dīnajanapriyaḥ //

[1] The MS has *duṣteśv.*
[2] The MS has *sarveṣāṃm.*

A native born in *trailokyāṃśa*, in the former part, in Capricorn ascendant [and] the *triṃśāṃśa* of Mercury, is the second child born. Birth is in the vicinity of a great river, in a north-south street, in a house on the eastern side, its door facing north. Whichever *navāṃśa* is occupied by the ruler of the [house of] home, in the trine of that sign and division, birth [takes place] in a house [with a] door [indicated by] that *navāṃśa*. There is no doubt about this.

When the ruler of the ascendant is in the sign of the seventh house, and the ruler of the eleventh house is in the sign of the fourth, [the native enjoys] fortune after his thirtieth year [and] has health and a robust physique. By joining the division of Gemini, in the *ārūḍha* of Pisces, he suffers poverty in childhood [but] enjoys royal combinations in youth. There is fortune after his twenty-fifth [year, and he] has the blessing of Lakṣmī on his home.[1]

The native of *trailokyāṃśa*, in a movable ascendant [and] Mercury's *triṃśāṃśa*, is of a ruddy complexion, middle stature, and has a symmetrical body. The native of *trailokyāṃśa*, in the former part, in Capricorn ascendant, is handsome, intelligent and eloquent, with smiling mouth and eyes, well-versed in things unseen, of pious mind, and endowed with royal combinations.
The native of *trailokyāṃśa*, in the former part, in Capricorn ascendant, is fond of great ascetics, eloquent, a patron of gods and brahmins; eating and speaking little, sleeping little, very wakeful; clever, understanding the intentions of others; [well] adorned, fond of ornaments; of uncorrupted mind among the corrupt, dealing fiercely with the fierce; lacking paternal property, possessing wealth earned with his own hands. When the ruler of the fourth house is in *jñānāṃśa*, he knows the true meanings of the sacred texts (*dharmaśāstra*). [He is] helpful towards everyone, given to rash and heroic acts; ever [devoted to] hearing good discourses, prosperous, beloved of the poor;

[1] Literally, 'the side-glance (*kaṭākṣa*) of Lakṣmī'. A deity blessing his or her devotee is thought to do so by a sidelong glance rather than a direct, and perhaps too forceful, one.

śivavratopavāsī ca hariśaṃkarabhaktimān /
sanmārgavṛttiniratah utkṛṣṭadharmabuddhimān //
kṛṣipaśvādilābhaś ca grāmyabhūmyādhikāravān /
bhrātṛsthānādhipe jīve asitena yutekṣite //
trailokyāṃśe prajātas tu bālye mātṛvināśavān /
vāheśe ravisaṃyukte randhreśe svoccarāśige //
trailokyāṃśe prajātasya gajāntaiśvaryam ādiśet /
lagnasya vāhasyanoccanāthair bhāgyasya nātho yadi karmapo vā /
samarthavān vāhanalābhagaś ca kavis tathā cec caturantayānam //
puṣkarāṃśagate jīve randhreśe svoccarāśige /
trailokyāṃśe prajātas tu yāvadāyuṣyabhāgyavān //
sampattārādaśākāle karmeśāṃśatrikoṇage /
sphuṭayogaṃ gate jīve vivāhotsavam ādiśet //
janmabhūrdakṣiṇe deśe āgneye va vivāhavān /
bhāvādhyāye dāraphalaṃ śukranāḍīṣu yojayet //
jāmātrādhipatau candre sthirāṃśe sthirarāśige /
kārake sthirarāśisthe vaded ekakalatratām //
nidhanāṃśe sthito vāpi parastrīsaṃgapāpavān /
kāmeśe somavalyaṃśe makare lagnajātake //
trailokyāṃśe pūrvabhāge guptakāmāturo bhavet /
niṣiddhadivase kāle svastrīsaṃgayuto bhavet //
ratikāle vinodī syāt kālāṃśakagate bhṛgau /
karmeśe sutarāśisthe makare lagnajātake //
trailokyāṃśe prajātas tu satkarmācārabuddhimān /

[worshipping] Śiva by a vow of fasting, having devotion for [both] Hari and Śaṅkara;[1] intent on following the right path, having outstanding knowledge of sacred law (*dharma*). He has gains from agriculture, cattle, etc., [and] authority over a village district (*grāmyabhūmi*).

When Jupiter, ruler of the third house, is joined or aspected by Venus, a native of *trailokyāṃśa* loses his mother in childhood. When the ruler of the fourth house is conjunct the sun, and the ruler of the eighth house is in its exaltation, one should predict lordship [extending even] unto [the possession of] elephants for a native of *trailokyāṃśa*. When the ruler of the ninth or the tenth house [---] by the exaltation rulers of the ascendant [or] the fourth house, [the native is] able and obtains carriages: a wise man travelling to the four corners [of the world]. When Jupiter is in *puṣkarāṃśa* and the ruler of the eighth house is in its exaltation, the native of *trailokyāṃśa* is fortunate for as long as he lives.

At the time of the *sampattārā* period, when Jupiter exactly joins the division of the ruler of the tenth house, one should predict the celebration of marriage. He will marry [a girl born] in a land south or south-east of his birth place. One should seek the results pertaining to wives in the section on [the results of] houses in the *Śukranāḍī*. When the moon, ruler of the seventh house, is in a fixed [*navāṃśa*] division in a fixed sign, and the [natural] significator [of marriage] is in a fixed sign, one should predict a single wife. But when [it also] occupies the division of the eighth house, he will commit the sin of intercourse with others' wives. When the ruler of [the seventh house of] desire is in *somavallyaṃśa*, a native of Capricorn ascendant, in *trailokyāṃśa* in the former part, will be afflicted by secret desires. He will have intercourse with his own wife on forbidden days [and at forbidden] times. When Venus is in *kālāṃśa*, he will be cheerful at the time of lovemaking.

When the ruler of [the house of] action is in the sign of the fifth house, a native of *trailokyāṃśa*, born in Capricorn ascendant, will be inclined to the performance of virtuous acts.

[1] Viṣṇu and Śiva.

vipattārādaśākāle sukheśāṃśatrikoṇage //
sphuṭayogaṃ gate jīve putralābhaṃ vinirdiśet /
vipattārādaśākāle uttarārdhe mahat sukham //
rājñā tatra phalaprāptiḥ gehe lakṣmīkaṭākṣavān /
dvāviṃśābdāt paraṃ bhāgyaṃ vipramūlāc chriyāvaham //
vipaddaśāṃtye yadi ketudāye svadeśabhūpālakanāśam āhuḥ /
vikṣemadāye phalam ākaroti rājāntare saukhyam ihāhur āryāḥ //
vṛścike [']rkasute kāle deśe rājñāṃ kalāpakṛt /
pāke śukre jīvabhuktau kalahaṃ deśapāṇḍyage //
tadrajyajanasantāpaṃ yānaprāṇaharāṇi ca /
mlecchaprabhuvināśaḥ syāt karmeśasya daśāntare //
gocare aṣṭame jīve trailokyāṃśasya jātake /
makare lagnajātasya strīprajālābham īrayet //
pañcatriṃśāt paraṃ bhāgyaṃ rājalakṣmīkaṭākṣavān /
ekonacatvāriṃśābde aṣṭatriṃśativatsare //
dārapīḍām avāpnoti kṣipreṇārogyabhāgyavān /
rājyādhikārajanatoṣitasaukhyavṛddhiḥ
sarvagraheṣu dhanadhānyasamṛddhayaś ca //
syāt sarvadā bhṛgudaśāgamane bhavanti / [---]
karmādhipadaśākāle aparārdhe mahat sukham /
senāmātyajanadveṣaṃ samānajananāśanam //
daśānte vyākulaṃ kiñcit kṣematārādaśāntage /
pratyaktārādaśākāle trailokyāṃśasya jātake //
satkathāśravaṇaṃ nityaṃ rājaprītir dhanāgamam /

At the time of the *vipattārā* period, when Jupiter exactly joins the division of the ruler of the fourth house, one should predict the gain of a son. At the time of the *vipattārā* period, there is great happiness in the latter half: there he will enjoy success by means of the king, and the blessings of Lakṣmī on his home. There is fortune after his twenty-second year, and prosperity on account of brahmins.

At the end of the *vipad* period, if [it is] the period of Ketu, the king of [the native's] own land is said to die. In the *kṣema* period it fulfils [this] result: the noble declare happiness under a new king. At the time when Saturn is in Scorpio, there will be a battle of kings in the land.[1] In the period of Venus and the subperiod of Jupiter there is strife in the Pāṇḍya country, suffering to its rulers, and destruction of carriages and life. In the subperiod of the ruler of the tenth house, a foreign lord (*mlecchaprabhu*) may die.

When Jupiter transits the eighth [house], one should predict the gain of a female child to a native of *trailokyāṃśa* born in Capricorn ascendant. There is fortune after thirty-five, and he enjoys the blessing of Rājalakṣmī.[2] In his thirty-ninth [or] thirty-eighth year there will be suffering to his wife; [but she] will soon enjoy [renewed] health and fortune. Increase of happiness from pleasing royal officers and abundance of wealth and grains in every house is always [the result] at the commencement of the period of Venus; there are [---]. At the time of the tenth house ruler's period, in the latter half, there is great happiness; [but also] enmity with the commander of the army (*senāmātya*) [and] the death of an equal: some agitation at the end of the period, towards the end of the period of the *kṣematārā*.

At the time of the *pratyaktārā* period, for a native of *trailokyāṃśa*, there is constant hearing of good discourses, royal favour and gain of wealth.

[1] *Kalāpa* in this sense appears to be a Dravidian loan. TL 781a translates 'rising, disturbance, uproar, raid, invasion'; NSW 139b gives the gloss *sainyasamudāya* 'clash of armies'.

[2] 'The royal Lakṣmī', one of the many forms of the goddess.

pāke sūrye candrabhuktau deśe rājñāṃ kalāpakṛt //
dakṣiṇāyanage sūrye paścime kalahaṃ mahat /
colakaṅkaṇakāśmīra mlecchapīḍā bhaven nṛṇām //
mahad atyugrakalahaṃ[1] mahatī sainyanāśanam /
paścāt svasthaṃ prakurvīta dhanasandhiḥ nṛpālayoḥ //
sūrye ketvantare kāle rājakāryam iti smṛtam /
jātakasya viśeṣeṇa saukhyaṃ bhavati nityaśaḥ //
marudvṛthāprāntyadeśe rājāmātyajanāvadhi /
colabhūpatisantāpaṃ hatāśvo sainikeśvaraḥ //
jātakasya śubhādhikyaṃ yātāyātaṃ dhanāgamam /
svaprabhoś ca phalādhikyaṃ ādāyādādhikavrayam //
pratyaktārādhipe sūrye lagnāt kendracatuṣṭaye /
taddaśāyāṃ mahad bhāgyaṃ pūrvārdhe saukhyam aśnute //
rājamudrādhikārādi agrahārapratiṣṭhavān /
utkṛṣṭadharmasiddhis syād gocare aṣṭame gurau //
pratyaktārādaśākāle lalane pāpasaṃsthite /
pāṇḍyabhūpatināśas syāc coladeśe nṛpāvadhi //
mahānadīprāntyadeśe kalahaṃ samupeṣyati /
aṣṭamādhipatau svocce sukheśena samanvite //
pūrṇāyurdāyavāṃś ceti sādhaneśadaśāvadhi /
dharmakriyādikāraketarasuhṛtsvoccasthite[2] dusthalaṃ
tyaktvā cāntyagate ['']pi vā śubhayute dṛṣṭe ['']thavā svāminā /
grāmānekataṭākagopurapurodyānakratūnāṃ śriyā
kurvan sajjanasaṃgato ['']pi vijayate tādṛk pumān bhūtale //

[1] The MS has *atyagra-*.
[2] The MS has *-svecca-*.

In the period of the sun and the subperiod of the moon, there will be a battle of kings in the land. When the sun is in its southern course, there is great strife in the west; in Cola, Kaṅkaṇa (Konkan) and Kāśmīra men will suffer [at the hands of] foreigners (*mleccha*): a great and terrible strife and great destruction of armies. Later [all] will be well, [by] a monetary alliance (*dhanasandhi*) between two kings. At the time of Ketu's subperiod in [the period of] the sun, there are said to be royal engagements for the native in particular, and constant happiness. In the vicinity of [the river] Marudvṛdhā there is suffering to the Cola king, extending to the royal ministers, [and] the general's (*sainikeśvara*) horse is killed.

The native will have abundant fortune, travels back and forth, and income of wealth. His master, too, will have abundant [good] results, great sovereignty extending to his heirs. When the sun, ruler of the *pratyaktārā*, is in [one of] the four angles from the ascendant, there is great fortune in its period; he enjoys happiness in its former half: [investment of] authority with the royal seal, etc., and bestowment of a land grant (*agrahāra*). When Jupiter transits the eighth house, he will accomplish outstanding [acts of] piety (*dharma*). At the time of the *pratyaktārā* period, when malefic [planets are] in Virgo, the Pāṇḍya king will die, affecting the king of the Cola country. In the vicinity of a great river, strife will break out.

When the ruler of the eighth house is in its exaltation, joined by the ruler of the fourth house, [the native] has full longevity, extending to the period of the ruler of the *sādhana[tārā]*. When the significator of [the house of] piety (*dharma*) [or of the house of] action (*kriyā*) occupies [a sign of] the other's friend [or] its exaltation, rejecting the evil houses, or else occupies the following [sign],[1] conjunct or aspected by a benefic or by its ruler, such a man shines gloriously in the company of good men on the face of the earth, by the splendour of his works [such as the making of] manifold village ponds, gateways, and parks.

[1] *Antya* would normally denote the twelfth house of the horoscope, but the explicit rejection of the 'evil houses' (*duḥsthala*) makes that meaning less plausible.

pratyaktārādaśākāle karmādhipatibhuktiṣu /
trailokyāṃśe prajātasya kālamṛtyubhayaṃ smṛtam //
yadi jīvati puṇyena aṣṭaṣaṣṭisame mṛtiḥ /
vṛṣabhāditrimāseṣu athavā makare tathā //
śukravāre bhaven mṛtyu uṣaḥkāle na saṃśayaḥ /
randhrādhipadaśākāle[1] gadāṃśe viprakālage //
purā brāhmaṇajanmā syat paścād vaidikajanmavān /
paścāj janmāntare muktiḥ vyaye gurunirīkṣite //
viprakāle bhavet satyaṃ pratyakṣaṃ devakeralam /

[1] My conjecture. The MS has *tantrādipa-*.

At the time of the *pratyaktārā* period, in the subperiod of the tenth house ruler, there is said to be danger of appointed death (*kālamṛtyu*) for a native of *trailokyāṃśa*. If by his [religious] merit he survives, death [occurs] in his sixty-eighth year, in the three [solar] months beginning with Taurus, or else in Capricorn. Death occurs on a Friday at dawn, without a doubt, at the time of the period of the ruler of the eighth house in *gadāṃśa*, in *viprakāla*. Previously he was born as a brahmin; next he will take birth as a Vedic [brahmin]. After his next birth [he will attain] liberation, when the twelfth house is aspected by Jupiter. In *viprakāla* [this result] is true, the *devakerala* evident to perception.

6.3. A READING FROM THE *AṂŚANĀḌĪ* (AN 152.3–155.11)

vṛścikalagnaṃ / dhanadāṃśam //
dhanadāṃśe pūrvabhāge vṛścike lagnajātake /
vaiśyakālaniśānāthe vaiśyajanmā sukhī bhavet //
jyeṣṭhabhrātrībhrātṛyogaṃ[1] kaniṣṭhā sodarī bhavet /
pūrvāparayutaś ceti prāṇagarbhe prajāyate //
dhanadāṃśe dattayoge pitā'nujasudattavān /
atibālye nirṇayaṃ syāt ekākī ca phalaṃ bhavet //
tulārāśigate maṃde kuṃbharāśigate gurau /
siṃharāśigate rāhuḥ prabhavābde janir bhavet //
siṃhamāse śuklapakṣe ṣaṣṭhi iṃdujavāsare /
śaradīndrāgninakṣatre[2] viśākhātripade janiḥ //
divā dvitīyayāmāṃte kīṭalagne janir bhavet //
rāśicakram//
prabhākare siṃhagate sasaumye śukreṇa yukte phaṇinā samete /
tulāntakāṃśe[3] ravijena yukte kuṃbhendravandye[4] lalane dharāje[5] //
asmiṃś ca yoge manujaḥ prasiddhaḥ
kṣetrārthabhogī dhanadhānyayuktaḥ /
pitrārjitārtho svabhujād dhanāḍhyaṃ
bālye 'lpasaukhyaṃ kramaśaś ca yogī //
janmalagnādhipe bhaume candralagnādhipe bhṛgau /
pañcāśadvatsaraś ceti pratyaktāradaśāmṛtiḥ //
graṃthāṃtare viśeṣeṇa mṛtikālādinirṇayaḥ /
dvātriṃśapañcaviṃśābde mṛtyubhītim avāpnuyāt //
mārakādhipadāye tu mārakādibhayaṃ bhavet /
maṃdādhipe saumyadāye trigaṃḍajalapīḍitaḥ /
ṣaṣṭir varṣaṃ sujīvī syāt dvipañcāśe mahad bhayam //

[1] My conjecture. The MS has *-bhrātṛbhrātṛ-*.
[2] My conjecture. The MS has *śūdram indrāgninakṣatre*, which gives no meaning.
[3] My conjecture. The MS has *tulāṃśakāṃśe*.
[4] My conjecture. The MS has *kuṃbhendravarye*.
[5] My conjecture. The MS has *'dhirāje*.

Scorpio ascendant, *dhanadāṃśa*:

In *dhanadāṃśa*, in the former part, for a nativity of Scorpio ascendant, when the moon is in *vaiśyakāla*, [the native] is born a *vaiśya*, and happy. There is a combination for elder brothers and sisters, and a younger sister. He has [siblings born] before and after him, born alive (*prāṇagarbha*). In *dhanadāṃśa*, in a combination for adoption (*dattayoga*), he is well adopted by his father's younger brother. The transfer takes place in infancy, and the result is [that he is brought up] alone.

Birth takes place when Saturn is in the sign of Libra, Jupiter in the sign of Aquarius, and Rāhu in the sign of Leo, in the year Prabhava. In the month of Leo, in the bright fortnight, on *ṣaṣṭhī*, on a Wednesday, birth is in the autumn, in the lunar mansion of Indra and Agni, in the third quarter of Viśākhā. Birth takes place by day, at the end of the second watch, in Scorpio ascendant.[1]

The *rāśi* chart:

When the sun is in Leo with Mercury, joined by Venus, accompanied by Rāhu; when Saturn joins the last [*navāṃśa*] division of Libra, with Jupiter in Aquarius and Mars in Virgo: [born] in this combination, a man is renowned, enjoying land and riches, endowed with wealth and grains; adding wealth [earned] with his own hands to the riches earned by his father; [having] little happiness in childhood, but gradually [becoming more] fortunate.

When Mars is the ruler of the birth ascendant, [and] Venus the ruler of the moon ascendant,[2] death [takes place in] the period of the *pratyaktārā*, in the fiftieth year. In another book, the time of death is specifically determined: in his thirty-second and twenty-fifth years he will be in danger of death. In the period of a killing [planet] there is danger from killers, etc.; when Saturn rules [the subperiod] in the period of Mercury, he suffers from *triṇaṇḍajala*.[3] He will live well for sixty years, [but] at fifty-two there is great danger.

[1] This corresponds to 4 September, 1867, around midday.

[2] I.e., the moon used as a starting-point for judging the chart.

[3] While I have been unable to determine the exact nature of this illness, the name suggests something in the nature of boils (*gaṇḍa*) exuding fluid (*jala*) in three (*tri*) places.

pitṛsthānādhipe caṃdre mātṛsthānādhipe tathā /
lagnād vyayagato vāpi pitṛmātṛsukhāpaham[1] //
paṃcamābde cāṣṭamābde dvādaśābde pitāvipat /
maṃdadāye pitākarmamātṛkarmādisaṃbhavaḥ //
pitṛdvayavināśaṃ syāt dvādaśābdāt susaṃdhiṣu /
dattamātṛvaśāc ceti bahukālaṃ sujīvanam //
mātṛbhaktiyutaś ceti mātṛpoṣaṇatatparaḥ /
aṃtaḥkaraṇacittātmā antaḥkapaṭavān sadā //
adṛṣṭaśālī medhāvī vidyāvighnaparo bhavet /
śyāmavarṇo madhyagātraḥ kamalāyatalocanaḥ //
svataṃtrodyogam ity āhuḥ viṃśadvarṣāt paraṃ sukham /
vyāpārakṣetramūlāc ca dhanadhānyādilābhavān //
ayutādhikanaṣṭāpti dhanārjanasamarthakaḥ /
vācālakaḥ satyavādī lubdho mānī vivekavān //
yuktāyuktavivekī ca guptadharmaparo bhavet /
maṃdadāye dāralābhaṃ saumyadāye vivekavān //
ekā rogavatī ceti dārāṃtarasusaukhyavān /
alpabhāgyādisaṃyuktaḥ putraputryādiyogavān //
vārdhike putrabhāgyāpti vāhanāṃbarasaukhyavān /
grāmyabhūmyādhikārī ca vyāpāre kṣetrayogavān //
nānāmūlāt dravyayogaṃ anyastrīsaṃgacittavān /
atilubdhasya kṛpaṇo raktaśyāmaḥ śubhākṛtiḥ //

[1] My conjecture. The MS has *-sukhāvaham* 'bringing happiness to', which does not agree with the context.

When the moon, ruler of the house of father, and also the ruler of the house of mother, are placed in the twelfth house from the ascendant, [this] takes away happiness from his mother and father. In his fifth year, eighth year [or] twelfth year, [there is] misfortune to his father. In the period of Saturn [the last] rites for his father and mother, etc., take place. His two fathers die in the great junctions (*saṡandhi*) following his twelfth year. He lives well for a long time on account of his adoptive mother, devoted to his mother, intent on caring for his mother.

By nature given to dwelling on thoughts within, he is always dishonest within, well-versed in things unseen, intelligent, surmounting obstacles to learning; of dark complexion and middle stature, eyes broad as lotus [petals]. He is said to have an independent employment, happy after his twentieth year; earning wealth and grains by business and [cultivation of his] land, capable of earning wealth [to the extent of] regaining more than ten thousand lost [before]; talkative, truthful, avaricious and proud [but] discriminating, distinguishing between right and wrong, secretly given to virtue (*dharma*).

In the period of Saturn, there is gain of a wife; in the period of Mercury, separation. One [wife] is sickly, [but] from the other he has much happiness. Endowed with little fortune, he has combinations for sons and daughters, etc. In his later days his sons bring him fortune, [and he has] the happiness of carriages and [fine] clothes; he has authority over a village district (*grāmyabhūmi*), and obtains land by business. He obtains goods from various sources, and thinks of intercourse with other women, very avaricious and miserly, reddish-dark [in complexion] and of handsome appearance.

sārdhasaptaśaner dāye gocare janmage śanau /
mātṛgaṃḍaṃ mātṛkarma dāragāṃḍādisaṃbhavaḥ //
dārādhipe sukhaṃ ceti yāvad āyur na saṃśayaḥ /
dvitridāraphalaṃ proktaṃ dāratulyakaḷatravān //
setuyātrādisiddhiḥ syāt gaṃgāsnāyī supuṇyavān //
vaṭavṛkṣagayāśrāddhaṃ viṣṇupādādipūjanam /
saṃkalpavidhivat bhaktyā pūjādānaṃ ca kārayet //
strīhatyābrahmahatyādiśiśuhatyāvimocanam /
catuṣpājjīvahatyādi tatkṣaṇena vinaśyati //
vaṃśavṛddhikaraṃ ceti putrapautraprado bhavet //
saptajanmārjitaṃ pāpaṃ yoniśūlanivāraṇam /
dehārogyakaraṃ brūyāt svamātā ca na saṃśayaḥ //
dāreśe daśamasthāne guruṇā yadi vīkṣite /
bālye vivāhayogāptiḥ mātṛvarge na saṃśayaḥ //
bhāgyavaṃśe dārayogaṃ śvaśrūśvaśurayogavān /
dārasaukhyaṃ kvacic ceti dāreśe vraṇasaṃyute //
rogī durbaladehaḥ syāt ml[āna]cittasya śālinī //

In the period of Saturn's seven-and-a-half [years' transit],[1] when Saturn in transit comes to the natal [moon sign], there is danger to his mother, [the performance of last] rites for his mother, danger to his wife, etc., when [the moon is] ruler of the house of wife; [but] he is happy as long as he lives, without a doubt. The [astrological] result is said to be [having] two or three wives, [or] an [additional] consort equal to a wife. He will complete a pilgrimage to Setu[bandha and] attain the great merit of bathing in the Ganges; [he will perform] *śrāddha* at a banyan tree in Gayā, worship at the feet of Viṣṇu, etc.; with devotion and according to the injunctions (*vidhi*) and his solemn vow (*saṃkalpa*) he will perform donations [to complete his] worship. [By this merit he attains] release from the killing of a woman, the killing of a brahmin, [or] the killing of a child; [the guilt of] killing quadrupeds, etc., vanishes at that moment. [It will] increase his family, giving children and grandchildren, giving relief from *yoniśūla*[2] [and] sins accumulated for seven births; and one should declare it to give bodily health [to] his mother, without a doubt.

When the ruler of the [house of] wife is in the tenth house, if aspected by Jupiter, his marriage is celebrated in childhood, [to a girl from] among his mother's relatives, without a doubt. He obtains a wife from a fortunate family, having his mother-in-law and father-in-law [both alive]. He has [only] some happiness from his wife: when the ruler of the [house of] wife is joined to [the division of] the eighth house, [she will be] sickly, of feeble body and dejected mind.

[1] This refers to the supposedly calamitous period (known in North Indian vernaculars as *sāṛhesātī* 'seven-and-a-half') when Saturn passes through the zodiacal sign natally occupied by the moon and its two adjacent signs. The concept is not, to my knowledge, mentioned in classical *jyotiṣa* texts, but belongs to a store of popular astrological lore. Around the times of Saturn's ingress into a new zodiacal sign, shrines dedicated to the grim deity are much frequented by believers just beginning their *sāṛhesātī*.

[2] While I have been unable to determine the exact nature of this illness, the name ('spike of the womb') suggests a female complaint.

dvitīyodvāhayogena satkaḷatrasamanvitā /
tanmūlāt saukhyam ity āhuḥ bahukālaṃ sukhī bhavet /
putreśe kendrarāśisthe rāhuketuyutekṣitau //
vargottamāṃśage ceti putraputryādiyogavān /
putradvayaṃ cirāyuṣyaṃ putrikādvayasaukhyakṛt /
śeṣaṃ naṣṭam iti proktaṃ putramūlāt sukarmavān //
dhanadāṃśe kīṭalagne paṃcaviṃśāt paraṃ sukham /
svaprābalyaṃ viśeṣeṇa vāhanadvayayogavān //
triṃśopari subhāgyāptiḥ paṃcaviṃśe sukīrtimān /
taṭākodyānadharmātmā gṛhakṣetrādivṛddhikṛt //
vicitragṛhanirmāṇaṃ saumyaketudaśā yadi /
putrotsavādisaṃtoṣaṃ gṛhe lakṣmīnivāsakṛt //
dvitrigehavivāhaṃ syāt vyāpāre vṛddhim ādiśet /
svadeśe janasaukhyaṃ syāt anyadeśādikaṃ caran //
dakṣiṇottarayogena prāgbhāge saukhyavān bhavet /
nānādeśe sukīrtiś ca tatra bhūṣaṇasaṃgrahaḥ //
svataṃtrodyogayogena yāvad āyus sukhāvaham /
svarṇavyāpāraratnādi madhye madhye phalaṃ bhavet //
ataḥ kuṭilacittātmā rājadvāre supūjitaḥ /
kalahapriyavāṃś ceti baṃdhuvairaṃ ca niṣṭhuram //
nirdākṣiṇyo hiṃsāparaḥ kīṭalagne prajāyate /
dvipaṃcāśe śukradāye dakṣiṇāyanage ravau //
āṣāḍhe kṛṣṇapakṣe tu caturthyāṃ[1] maṃdavāsare /
rohiṇīrātrikāle tu anāyāse mṛtipradaḥ //
putrasāmīpyamaraṇaṃ viṣṇusmaraṇapūrvakam /
asitāṃśe pūrvabhāge pratyakṣaṃ devakeraḷam //

[1] The MS has *catarthyāṃ*.

Making a second marriage [he will be] endowed with a good wife: on her account there is said to be happiness; he will be happy for a long time.

When the ruler of [the house of] children occupies a sign on an angle, joined or aspected by Rāhu or Ketu, and in *vargottamāṃśa*, he has sons and daughters, etc. Two sons have long life, and two daughters give him happiness: the rest are said to die. On account of his sons he does good deeds. In *dhanadāṃśa*, in Scorpio ascendant, [there is] happiness after twenty-five: [by] his own particular effort he has two carriages. After thirty he attains good fortune; at twenty-five, he is well-reputed. [He is] of virtuous inclination, [constructing public] ponds and parks, increasing his houses and land. In the periods of Mercury and Ketu, the construction of various houses [takes place; there is] the satisfaction of celebrating [the birth of] sons, and Lakṣmī resides in his home.

There will be two or three houses [and] marriages [for him, and] one should predict prosperity in business. People in his own place will be happy; [he will] travel to other places, with undertakings (*yoga*) in the south and north, [and] be happy in the eastern part. He will be renowned in various places and collect jewelry there. By [this] independent employment, he will have happiness for as long as he lives. Now and again the [astrological] result will be trade in gold and jewels. For this [he will be] much honoured at the royal palace, [although] of a dishonest disposition. Fond of quarrel, fiercely inimical to his kinsmen, uncorteous [and] given to violence: [such] is [one] born in Scorpio ascendant. At fifty-two, in the period of Venus, when the sun is in its southern course, in [the month of] Āṣāḍha, in the dark fortnight, on *caturthī*, on a Saturday, in Rohiṇī [and in] the nighttime, he meets an easy death. Death [occurs in] the company of his sons, accompanied by the remembrance of Viṣṇu. [These are the results] in *asitāṃśa*, in the former part: the *devakerala* evident to perception.

6.4. A READING FROM THE *DHRUVANĀḌĪ* (DHN 20.1–25.20)

bhrāmyaṃśe vṛṣabhe lagne bhṛguvargottamāṃśage /
viprakāle niśānāthe viprajanmā sukhī bhavet //
jyeṣṭhabhrātṛvihīnaś ca bhedabhrātṛyuto bhavet /
candrāt sukhagate śukre candrāt kendragate gurau //
mahānadīprāntyadeśe ghanagrāme ca paṭṭane /
prakhyātapurage janma puṇyakṣetre janir bhavet //
prāgpaścimavīthau ca uttaraśreṇijanmabhāk /
uttarāṃśe ghanagrāme mahānadīsamīpasthe
puṇyakṣetre śivālayayute bhavaḥ //
cāpe cāpāṃśage mande kaṭake tulāṃśage gurau /
prabhavādiśrīmukhābde ca jananaṃ uttarāyaṇage ravau //
caitramāse vasantartau kṛṣṇapakṣe
saptamyāṃ tithisambhavaḥ /
uttarāṣāde ca janmā ca caturthacaraṇe bhavaḥ /
bhṛguvāre bhavaḥ śrīmān divā prathamayāmāntye
vṛṣabhe jananaṃ bhavet /
śirolagnaṃ kriyaś caiva ādhānaṃ tattrikoṇabham /
janmatrikoṇam ādhānaṃ saptamaṃ bhaved dhruvam //
ravihorāsamutpanno drekkāṇaṃ kanyakā bhavet /
navāṃśastha vṛṣākhyasya gurutriṃśāṃśabhāgajaḥ /
meṣe dineśe bhṛgusaṃyutaś ca kaṭake
ca rāhau gurusaṃyutaś ca /
mīne ca saumye kumbhāṃśayuktaḥ /
[cāpe] dharāje[1] śanisaṃyutaś ca /
nakre śaśiśikhisaṃyutaś ca //
asmiṃś ca yoge prabhavo manuṣyaḥ
vidyāvivekī śivabhaktiyuktaḥ /
lagneśe vyayarāśisthe randhreśena samanvite /
prasūtisamaye mātā bahuvedanaśālinī /

[1] My conjecture. The MS has *adhanāje*.

In *brāhmyaṃśa*, in Taurus ascendant, when Venus is in *vargottamāṃśa* and the moon in *viprakāla*, one is born a brahmin, and happy. Lacking [full] elder brothers, he has an [elder] half-brother. When Venus is in the fourth house from the moon, and Jupiter is in an angle from the moon, birth is in the vicinity of a great river, in a large village or town, in a renowned place. Birth is in a holy place, in an east-west street; he is born on the northern side. In the latter part, birth is in a large village in the vicinity of a great river, in a holy place with a temple of Śiva.

When Saturn is in Sagittarius in the [*navāṃśa*] division of Sagittarius, and Jupiter is in Cancer in the division of Libra, in the *prabhavādi* year Śrīmukha, birth [takes place] when the sun is in its northern course. In the month of Caitra, in the spring season, in the dark fortnight, birth [takes place] on *saptamī tithi*. Birth is in Uttarāṣāḍha, in the fourth quarter. Born on a Friday, he is prosperous. Birth takes place by day, at the end of the first watch, in Taurus [ascendant].

The ascendant of [the appearance of] the head is Aries; [the ascendant of] impregnation is its trinal sign. The [ascendant of] impregnation is certainly a trine to [that of] birth, [or] the seventh [from it]. [The native is] born in the *horā* of the sun; the *drekkāṇa* is Virgo; the *navāṃśa* is Taurus; [and he is] born in the *triṃśāṃśa* division of Jupiter. When the sun is in Aries conjunct Venus, Rāhu in Cancer conjunct Jupiter, Mercury in Pisces joined to the division of Aquarius, Mars in Sagittarius conjunct Saturn, and the moon in Capricorn conjunct Ketu: born in this combination a man has learning and discretion, and is endowed with devotion to Śiva.[1]

When the ruler of the ascendant is in the sign of the twelfth house, joined by the ruler of the eighth house,[2] the [native's] mother was in great pain at the time of birth;

[1] This corresponds to the morning of 23 April, 1813. *Saptamī* is the seventh *tithi* or lunar day following the full or new moon; cf. Chapter 3.

[2] There is a mistake here: in the horoscope under discussion, Venus is not conjunct Jupiter (ruler of the eighth house), but only the sun (ruler of the fourth house).

sūtidoṣabhayañ caiva saptarātraṃ tu vā bhavet /
aṣṭame śanidoṣeṇa svamātā mṛtaprāyeṇa jīvati //
candrāt kendragate jīve sarpadoṣanivāraṇam[1] /
pūrvapuṇyena saukhyañ ca daivayogasukhī bhavet //
bāladoṣabhayañ caiva pade pade upadravavān /
māndajvarabhayañ ceti māndījvarabhayaṃ
atha vātarogādipīḍā ca vraṇopadravabhītimān //
purāpuṇyaprabhāvena dehārogyo bhaven naraḥ /
lagneśe cararāśisthe randhreśe cararāśige //
vyayeśe[2] ubhayarāśisthe dīrghāyuḥ prakīrtitāḥ /
dīrghārambho vayaś ceti ekasaptativayodbhavaḥ //
ṣaṣṭyabde dehabhītiś ca pañcaṣaṣṭau tathā bhavet /
pañcāśe dehabhītiś ca catvāriṃśe kvacid bhavet //
pañcaviṃśe dehapīḍā syāt vātarogaprapīḍavān /
vātapittādirogaś ca udararogena pīḍitaḥ //
tanmūlāc ca manaḥkleśaḥ dehe durbala ādiśet //
anyavyayakarañ caiva manaścāñcalyabuddhimān / [---]
trayastriṃśāt paraṇ caiva gulmaroganivāraṇam /
pūrvapāpasya pākena gulmarogena pīḍavān //
tadroganivāraṇārthaṃ śivasahasrakajapaṃ kuryāt /
śaniprītiñ ca kārayet śanipratimādānena //
svarṇakenaiva kārayet śivasannidhau
mahānadītīre ca yad yat pūjāṃ kṛtvā
yathoktadakṣiṇāṃ dadyāt /
daivajñasya kuṭumbasya dāpayec chivasannidhau //
brāhmaṇān bhojayet tasya śatabrāhmaṇabhojanam /
tataḥ paścāt sukhañ caiva gulmaroganivāraṇam //

[1] Another plausible reading would be *sarva-* 'wards off *all* afflictions'.
[2] The MS has *vyayaśe*.

or else, for seven nights there may be danger from birth complications, [but although] nearly dead from the affliction of Saturn on the eighth [night], his mother survives. When Jupiter is in an angle from the moon, it wards off afflictions from snake [deities]; by the merit of previous [lives] there is happiness, and he is favoured by fate. There is danger of childhood fatality and misfortunes at every step: danger of *māndajvara*[1] and suffering from illnesses of wind (*vāta*) etc., and danger of wounds; [but] by the force of previous merit, the man will [regain] bodily health.

When the ruler of the ascendant is in a movable sign, the ruler of the eighth house in a movable sign, and the ruler of the twelfth house in a common sign, long life is declared. His age [at death] is [in] the beginning of [the division of longevity called] long: he attains the age of seventy-one. In his sixtieth year there is danger to his body, and also in his sixty-fifth. At fifty, there is danger to his body, and sometimes at forty. At twenty-five there is bodily suffering; he is afflicted by illnesses of wind, has illnesses of wind and bile and is afflicted by an illness of the stomach. On that account his mind is troubled, and one should predict weakness in the body. [It] also causes expense to others, [and his] mind is disposed to waver. [---] After thirty-three, there is relief from *gulmaroga*.[2] By the maturation of previous sin, he is afflicted with *gulmaroga*. To be relieved of that illness, he should perform the recitation of the thousand [names of] Śiva, and please Saturn by donating an image of Saturn. He should have it made of gold, and having performed whatever worship [is prescribed] in a shrine of Śiva on the banks of a great river, he should give the [priests'] fee (*dakṣiṇā*) as prescribed; [then] he should donate [the image] to the astrologer's family in the shrine of Śiva. He should feed the brahmins; the feeding of a hundred brahmins [is prescribed] for him. Thereafter there is happiness, and relief from *gulmaroga*.

[1] 'The name seems to mean 'saturnine fever'. The exact nature of this illness is unknown to me.

[2] *Gulma[roga]* (*roga* meaning 'disease') is a term used for tumours or glandular enlargements in the abdominal area.

daśāṃ prati śanibhuktau gurubhuktau tu vā bhavet /
kujabhuktau tathā ceti dehopadravabhītimān //
ṣaṣṭhāṣṭamavyayeśāṃśe sphuṭayogaṃ gate śanau /
krūragrahadaśābhuktau dehopadravabhītimān //
[tat]tadbhāvagate mande [tat]tadbhāvaprapīḍavān /
kārakasya trikoṇe 'pi bhāvapīḍā bhaved dhruvam //
candratrikoṇage mande mātṛvarge ariṣṭadam /
evaṃ dvādaśabhāvānāṃ yojayet kālavittamaḥ //
śanicārād bhayaṃ proktaṃ śaniprītyā sukhī bhavet /
śaniprītiṃ japaṃ kuryāt kujaprītiṃ ca kārayet //
tattatkālaṃ samālokya śāntyā saukhyaṃ śubhaṃ bhavet /
bhrāmyaṃśe sthire lagne sūrye svocce śubhasamanvite //
bhāgyeśe aṣṭamasthāne vyayeśena samanvite /
svapitā mitabhāgyaś ca vidyābuddhi kvacid bhavet //
vaidikācāravāṃś ceti daivabrāhmaṇaviśvāsī
alpavidyā arthavān bhavet //
arthārjanasamarthaś ca nānāmūlād dhanārjanam /
svapitā pitrārjitakṣetrajīvī syāt svabhujārjitavān bhavet /
svapitā kalatradvayayogaś ca putrasantānayogavān //
prathamāyāṃ kalatrasya putram ekasukhaṃ bhavet /
putrikā ca tathā ceti putrasantānayoginī //
prathamadāraputrasya kalatradvayayogavān /
putrasantānahīnā ca putrikā ca dvayaṃ bhavet //
ekañ ca bhedabhrātṛkaś ca yogavāṃś
ceti madhyāyuś ca mṛtir bhavet /
svapitā[1] sātvikā śuddhā vyāpāreṇa dhanārjanaṃ kvacit /
arthārjanasamarthaś ca yāvad āyuḥ sukhaṃ bhavet //
evaṃbhūtā pitā ceti vipaddāye mariṣyati //
vipaddāye candrabhuktau yugmānte[2] kaṭake śanau /
svapitāmṛtim ādiśet //

[1] The MS has *svajitā*.
[2] My conjecture. The MS has *yugmābde*.

According to the [planetary] periods (*daśā*), it will be in the subperiod of Saturn or Jupiter; in the subperiod of Mars there is also danger of bodily misfortune.

When Saturn exactly transits the divisions of the rulers of the sixth, eighth and twelfth houses, in the period and subperiod of evil planets, one is in danger of bodily misfortune. When Saturn occupies any house, one has afflictions to [the area represented by] that house; or [when it is] in trine to the [natural] significator, there is certainly affliction to that house. When Saturn is in a trine from the moon, [it] causes misfortune to the mother's side [of the family]: thus should the expert astrologer judge for [all] the twelve houses. Danger is declared from the transit of Saturn; by pleasing Saturn he will be happy. He should please Saturn [by] recitation, and he should please Mars. Having examined the respective periods, there will be happiness and prosperity by [the performance of] propitiation.

In *brāhmyaṃśa*, in a fixed ascendant, when the sun is in its exaltation joined by a benefic, [and] the ruler of the ninth house is in the eighth house joined by the ruler of the twelfth house, his father will have limited fortune [and only] sometimes be inclined to learning. He practises the Vedic [rites], has faith in gods and brahmins, has little learning [but] is wealthy, capable of earning wealth, earning money from various sources. [The native's] father lives on the land earned by his [own] father, [and also] possesses [wealth] earned with his own hands. [The native's] father has [planetary] combinations for two wives and combinations for male offspring. With his first wife he has the happiness of one son and also a daughter [who] has combinations for male offspring. The son of his first wife has combinations for two wives, is without male offspring [but] has two daughters. One of [his] half-brothers is fortunate [but then] dies, having medium longevity. [The native's] father is good (*sāttvika*) and pure, earns some money by his business, is capable of earning wealth, and is happy for as long as he lives. This father will die in the *vipad* period. In the *vipad* period, in the subperiod of the moon, when Saturn is in late Gemini or in Cancer, one should predict the death of his father.

mātṛsthānādhipe sūrye vyaye kavisamanvite[1] /
kārake bhāgyarāśisthe rāhuketuyutekṣite //
gurudṛṣṭivaśāt[2] saukhyaṃ svamātā dīrgham āyuṣī /
svamātā sātvikī pūtā patibhaktiguṇānvitā //
daivabrāhmaṇaviśvāsī gṛhakṛtye samarthakī /
sodarabhrātṛsaṃyuktā ekasodaravān bhavet //
vātarogaprapīḍādidurmaraṇe mṛtir bhavet /
svamātā guṇasaṃyuktā dhanasaṃyutam ādiśet /
evaṃbhūtā ca jananī kṣemadāye mariṣyati //
kṣemadāye śukrabhuktau candrabhuktau tathā bhavet /
meṣamāse vṛṣabhe mande mātṛmaraṇam ādiśet //
jyeṣṭhabhrātṛsthānādhipe jīve svocce rāhusamanvite /
bhedajyeṣṭhabhrātṛ ekavān ca kalatradvayavān bhavet //
putrasantānahīnavān putrikā ekavān bhavet /
kaniṣṭhabhrātṛvihīnaś ca bhrātṛbhāvaṃ tathaiva ca //
bhrātṛbhāvaphalañ cedaṃ kujanāḍīṣu vistaret /
bhrāmyaṃśe sthire lagne gurutriṃśāṃśajātake //
bhadrayoge prajātaś ca gauravarṇasamāṅgavān /
vidyābuddhivivekī syāt vedādhyayanaparo bhavet //
pañcame 'kṣarārambhaḥ ṣaṣṭhe vā tathā bhavet /
garbhakṣetre prajātaś ca pañcadaśe
vivāhaś ca ṣoḍaśābde vā vivāhavān //

[1] My conjecture. The MS has *ravi-*.
[2] The MS has *-dṛṣṭi-*.

When the sun, ruler of the house of mother, is in the twelfth house joined by Venus, [and the natural] significator [of mother] occupies the sign of the ninth house, joined or aspected by Rāhu and Ketu, there is happiness on account of Jupiter's aspect, and his mother has long life. His mother is good (*sāttvika*) and pure, endowed with virtue and devotion for her husband, has faith in gods and brahmins [and is] capable in household affairs. She has a full brother, one brother, [who] will die an evil death [by] afflictions from illnesses of wind, etc. [The native's] mother is endowed with virtue, [and] one should predict [her to be] endowed with wealth. This mother will die in the *kṣema* period. In the *kṣema* period, in the subperiod of Venus, [or] else in the subperiod of the moon, in the month of Aries, when Saturn is in Taurus, one should predict the mother's death.

When Jupiter, ruler of the house of elder brothers, is in its exaltation joined by Rāhu, [the native] has one elder half-brother [who] has two wives. He is without male offspring [but] has one daughter. [The native] is without younger brothers; such [is the result of] the house of brothers. One should seek [details of] these results of the house of brothers in the *Kujanāḍī*.

In *brāhmyaṃśa*, in a fixed ascendant, in a nativity of Jupiter's *triṃśāṃśa*, one born in *bhadrayoga* will have a fair complexion and a symmetrical body. He will be educated, intelligent and discriminating, devoted to the study of the Veda. In his fifth or sixth [year] he will begin [to learn] the letters [of the alphabet]. [Having been] born in the *garbhakṣetra*, he will marry in his fifteenth or sixteenth year.[1]

[1] The phrase 'born in the *garbhakṣetra*' most likely refers to the ceremony of *upanayana*, where a brahmin (or other high-caste) boy is invested with the sacred thread and taught the *gāyatrī-mantra*. This ritual is commonly referred to as a second birth, rendering the initiate a *dvija* 'twice-born one'. *Garbhakṣetra* 'womb-field' is presumably a variant of *garbhagṛha* 'womb-house, inner chamber', here denoting the enclosed space or makeshift cover within which the instruction in the *mantra* takes place. Cf. AV 11.5.3 (Bloomfield's translation): 'When the teacher receives the Brahma*k*ârin [*brahmacārin*] as a disciple, he places him as a foetus [*garbha*] inside (of his body). He carries him for three nights in his belly: when he is born the gods gather about to see him.'

janmabhūpūrvadigbhāge āgneyyāṃ vā vivāhavān /
śvaśrūśvaśurasaṃyuktaḥ vivāhaṃ labhate naraḥ //
vivāhānantaraṃ saukhyaṃ svaprābalyaṃ sukhaṃ bhavet /
viṃśopari prasiddhiś ca dvāviṃśe dārasaukhyavān //
ṣaḍviṃśe jātakaś ca dehe rogaviśiṣṭavān //
vātarogaprapīḍādi gulmamūlena vā bhavet /
trayastriṃśāt paraṅ caiva gulmaroganivāraṇam //
tataḥ paścāt sukhaṅ caiva putre patni samādiśet /
putrasthānādhipe nīce putrasthāne śanivīkṣite //
vilambena sutotpattiḥ nāgaśāntiṃ ca kārayet /
setusnānādipuṇyena pitṛprītiṅ ca kārayet //
tataḥ paścāt sutotpattiḥ putrasaukhyaṅ ca jāyate /
pañcatriṃśe putrajanma putraputrīyuto bhavet //
putra ekaṃ sukhaṅ caiva putrikā ca tathā bhavet /
catvāriṃśe suyogaś ca vipraprabhuvaśāt sukham //
anukūlaṅ ca sukhaṅ caiva dhanalābhaṃ bhaven naraḥ /
jātasya sukhaṅ caiva yāvad āyuḥ sukhī bhavet //
janmatārādidaśākāle mātṛpīḍā bhaviṣyati /
sampattāradaśāsaukhyaṃ pitṛmātṛsukhāvaham //
vidyābuddhivivekī syāt sukhajanmā bhaved dhruvam /
vipattāradaśākāle vivāhaś ca labhiṣyati[1] //
taddaśāyāṃ pīḍā bhavet //
kṣematāradaśākāle candrabhuktau mātṛpīḍā bhaviṣyati /
rogopadravabhītibhāk /
pratyaktāradaśāsaukhyaṃ[2] sadyo roganivāraṇaṃ /
putrasantānayogaś ca [---] dhanalābhabhāk /
sādhaneśadaśāsaukhyaṃ putrapautrādisaukhyavān //
daśādau ca sukhaṅ caiva daśāntye
gurubhuktau mṛtir bhaviṣyati /

[1] The MS has *ladhiṣyati*.
[2] The MS has *pratyagdāra-*.

He will marry [a girl born in] the eastern or south-eastern direction from his native place; [this] man will celebrate his wedding together with his mother-in-law and father-in-law. Following the wedding there is happiness; he is happy [by] his own effort. After [the age of] twenty there is success; at twenty-two, he is happy with his wife.

At twenty-six, the native suffers particular illness in his body: afflictions by illness of wind, etc., or on account of *gulma*. After [the age of] thirty-three there is relief from *gulmaroga*; thereafter one should predict happiness [from his] wife and son. When the ruler of the house of children is in its fall, and the house of children is aspected by Saturn, the birth of a son is delayed, and he should propitiate the snake [deities]. By bathing at Setu-[bandha] and other meritorious [acts] he should please the manes; thereafter a son will be born, and he will have happiness from [that] son. At thirty-five a son is born, [and] he will have a son and a daughter: one son and happiness [from him], and likewise [one] daughter. At forty he is fortunate, happy on account of a brahmin master: comfort and happiness and gain of wealth [come to this] man, and the native [knows] happiness, is happy for as long as he lives.

From the time of the *janmatārā* period, there will be suffering to [his] mother; [in] the period of the *sampattārā*, happiness, bringing joy to [his] father and mother. He is educated, intelligent and discriminating, certainly born to happiness, and at the time of the *vipattārā* period he will celebrate his marriage. In that period there will be suffering. At the time of the *kṣematārā* period, in the subperiod of the moon, there will be suffering to his mother, [and he will be] in danger of suffering from illness. [In] the *pratyaktārā* period [there is] happiness, [and] immediate relief from illness, a combination for male offspring [---] enjoy gain of wealth. [In] the period of the ruler of the *sādhana[tārā]* [there is] happiness; [he is] happy with his children and grandchildren. In the beginning of the period there is happiness, and at the end of the period, in the subperiod of Jupiter, death will occur.

7. Conclusion

As in other religious traditions, divination has played an important, if somewhat ambiguous, role in the history of Hinduism, and continues to do so today. Its concerns are concerns central to religious thought generally, relating as they do to man's place in the universe, moral responsibility, and the revelation of a coherent divine order underlying human experience. Among the numerous forms of Hindu divination, the complex and systematic 'science' of astrology (*jyotiṣa*), which has recently gained great popularity in the western world, is often regarded as the divinatory art *par excellence*. Perceived of as perfect and divine in origin, *jyotiṣa* is a highly conservative discipline. Textbooks authored over the better part of two millennia – many of them ascribed to semi-divine sages – show only minor variations, and the theory and practice of the art, even in the west, is closely interwoven with belief in Hindu precepts and Hindu ritual observances.

Like medicine, astrology is concerned with diagnosis, prognosis, and prescription. The object diagnosed is the particular point in space-time at which anything begins, e.g., the birth of a human being. From the qualities inherent in this point the latent promise of events to come may be read; the projection of such events in time constitutes the prognosis. Finally, prescription relates to the counteraction of undesirable future events by ritual means (*śānti*), or to the commencement of undertakings at auspicious times. This division of the art, allowing for a high degree of predictability as well as for a certain measure of individual freedom, makes it excellently suited for accomodation in a worldview dominated by the concept of *karman*. While diagnosis and prognosis, or the descriptive aspect of astrology, refer to the effects of accumulated actions from past lives and their current maturation (*prārabdha-[saṃcita]-karman*), commonly equated with *daiva* 'fate, destiny', its prescriptive aspect relates to actions of the present life (*kriyamāṇa-karman*), known by contrast as *puruṣakāra* 'human effort'. The varying success of current efforts in counteracting the effects of previous misdeeds is accounted for by a division of *prārabdha-karman*

into a *dṛḍha* 'fixed' and an *adṛḍha* 'non-fixed' variety, corresponding to the gravity of the seminal action.

Teachings on *karman* thus serve as a means of legitimizing astrology. Once this connection is made, the practice of astrological divination will serve in its turn to uphold the authority of the *karman* theory. In its mainstream Hindu varieties, this theory further involves a personal God (*īśvara*) who is simultaneously the guarantor of karmic theodicy and justified by it in 'writing on men's foreheads' their widely divergent destinies, decipherable by astrology. While some texts identify the planets as manifestations of this supreme deity for the sake of distributing the results of *karman*, others reject such causal language in favour of a view of the planets as mere signs. This question of causality, absent from the less complex divinatory systems, arises from the representations of the planets as powerful deities to be propitiated when ill-placed. Such propitiation or *śānti* may be seen as a reversed form of standard atonements for known sins (*prāyaścitta*), seeking by similar ritual means to neutralize unknown misdeeds of previous births in order to escape present misfortune. In addition to the planetary divinities as such, the objects of *śānti* include the deities of the greater Hindu pantheon signified by the planets concerned, or (more rarely) even the astrologer himself as a representative of the planets.

Astrological divination is based on observation of the movements of the planets – including the sun, moon, and lunar nodes – through the twelve signs of the zodiac by their proper motion, and (along with the zodiac) through the twelve mundane houses by diurnal motion. From the superimposition of these two coordinate systems, astrological delineation is carried out by a consideration of the natural or universal significations of planets on one hand, and their accidental or particular significations on the other. This process frequently yielding mutually contradictory indications, hierarchies of interpretative principles are employed, including highly complex methods of gauging a planet's power for good or evil. Such latent tendencies are then translated into prognostications by the use, jointly as well as independently, of symbolic time-cycles (*daśā*) and actual planetary movements or transits (*gocara*). The events fore-

shadowed by these two techniques are considered by some astrological authors as indicating 'fixed' and 'non-fixed' varieties of *karman*, respectively.

While advocates of *nāḍī* divination see in this art the consummation of astrological doctrine, proponents of mainstream astrology are often more critical of the phenomenon, rejecting much if not all *nāḍī* reading either as fraud or as a base form of spirit possession in the guise of astrology. There does in fact appear to be at least two methodologically distinct varieties of *nāḍī* reading in practice today, only one of which retains its astrological character in full by taking as its foundation the natal horoscope of the client. The other, more common variety, though moving within an astrological paradigm – in the sense of dividing readings into sections thematically corresponding to the twelve astrological houses, discussing 'planetary afflictions' (*graha-doṣa*) and the means for their alleviation (*śānti*), etc. – is founded rather on a method of thumb reading, in conjunction with an interview technique perhaps more sophisticated than it seeks to appear. My admittedly limited personal experience suggests that texts of the latter kind are typically composed in Tamil and read by non-brahmins, while the genuinely astrological *nāḍīs* tend to be Sanskrit texts in the custody of brahmins. Despite these differences, however, the common trait of predictions being read out to clients from a pre-existent text, allegedly of great antiquity and divine or semi-divine origin, justifies the use of a common designation for both varieties of the art.

The *nāḍī* texts examined in the present study – the *Guru-nāḍī*, *Aṃśanāḍī*, and *Dhruvanāḍī* – are of the astrological variety, dealing entirely with the interpretation of natal horoscopes. Datable by the astronomical information contained in these nativities to the 18th and 19th centuries, the texts originate in the Dravidian language area (as, most likely, does the term *nāḍī* itself), probably in Kerala. The language of the texts is a simple, formulaic and repetitive Sanskrit, deviating from the classical language both phonologically, morphologically and syntactically. Their authorship and transmission are unknown, although the *Gurunāḍī* ascribes the discovery of the art to a

certain brahmin Acyuta of Kerala. The three texts – along with the published edition of a fourth, the *Candrakalānāḍī* – display a high degree of intertextuality, and may be seen as representing a common school or style of astrology, known as *devakerala*.

The world-view of the texts, as seen from the horoscope readings they contain, is generally representative of mainstream *smārta* Hinduism. The focus of attention is on the present world, soteriological matters being mentioned only rarely and in general terms. The doctrines of *karman* and rebirth, upheld throughout, form the framework of readings both predictive and prescriptive, with injunctions of *śānti* most often designed to avert the threat of 'untimely death' (*apamṛtyu*) cutting short the astrologically determined 'maximum longevity' (*paramāyus*) at critical times. The objects of such propitiation include the planetary deities as well as the greater Hindu pantheon, the manes (*pitṛ*), snake deities (*nāga*), brahmins, and even the astrologer himself; the methods include ritual worship, *mantra* recitation, fasting, pilgrimage, and donations. Symbolic correspondences between afflicting planet and method of propitiation are common, though not universal. By serving as an object of propitiation, the astrologer of the texts becomes a full-fledged mediator between the divine planets and man: not only disclosing to the client his fate as dictated by the celestial deities, but accepting on their behalf the worship intended to remedy its harsher aspects.

Each text is divided into a number of readings of varying length, nearly all of which include complete natal horoscopes, and invariably based on a particular, minute division of the zodiac known as a *nāḍī* or *aṃśa*. The texts thereby reverse the trend of Sanskrit astrological works to concern themselves only with universals and not with particular nativities. More importantly, the *aṃśas* discussed in the *nāḍī* texts are a unique feature not found anywhere in mainstream *jyotiṣa* literature. Numbering 150 in each zodiacal sign, these *aṃśas* are thought to embody certain fixed, basic destiny patterns. Each *aṃśa* has a proper name, their order varying according to the movable, fixed or common nature of the zodiacal sign. Permutations of the fundamental destiny embodied in each *aṃśa* are introduced by the concept of the 'former and latter halves' (*pūrvārdha*, *uttarārdha*)

as well as a division known as *kāla* 'time'. Neither the computation of these variables, nor that of the *aṃśas* as such, is explained in the texts. The variations in life patterns ascribed to the *pūrva-* and *uttarārdha* generally take the form of binary oppositions (e.g., birth in the paternal or maternal ancestral home, respectively), while the *kālas* relate to the native's *varṇa* and/or sectarian affiliation. Finally, the natal horoscope with its planetary configurations is superimposed on the destiny pattern inherent in the *aṃśa* and interpreted (using an often limited, even simplistic, and sometimes obscure set of astrological techniques) to provide further permutations.

This concept of a limited number of predefinable, basic plots or patterns of destiny (albeit subject to some variation), to one of which every human being is necessarily born, marks the most drastic deviation of the *nāḍīs* not only from mainstream Hindu astrology, but also from orthodox teachings on *karman*. It is a view more mechanistic, more confining and perhaps more frightening to contemplate; but also one of singular fascination to the mind attracted to the divinatory ideal of objectivity, of 'decoding impersonal patterns of reality' by means of 'predictable, ordable processes'. It is the triumph of cosmos over chaos, even at the sacrifice of the illusion of individual uniqueness.

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Glossary

Arcanā	Ritual worship, particularly the offering of flowers accompanied by a litany comprising the names of the deity worshipped.
Ascendant	The point at which the eastern horizon intersects the ecliptic.
Aspect	Lit. 'glance': influence exerted by a planet on certain zodiacal signs reckoned from its own position.
Bhāva	See: house.
Brahman	The absolute, divine reality underlying the world.
Catarchic astrology	See: *muhūrta*.
Daiva	Fate or destiny, commonly understood as a manifestation of actions (*karman*) performed in previous lives.
Darśana	Lit. 'seeing': being in the presence of (i.e., seeing and being seen by) a deity, holy or respected person; a central act of Hindu devotion .
Daśā	Period of life ruled and formed by a given planet or zodiacal sign.
Devanāgarī	Syllabic script used for Sanskrit, particularly in North India.
Dharma	Sacred law; religious duty; righteousness; piety; virtue.
Dhotī	Piece of cloth worn wrapped round the waist and falling to the ankles, often with one end passing between the legs and tucked in at the back.
Dīkṣā	Consecration or initiation into a particular religious observance, such as the recitation of a particular *mantra*.
Doṣa	Affliction caused or indicated by ill-placed planets in the horoscope.

Drekkāṇa	(Gk. δέκανος)The division of a zodiacal sign into three parts; cf. *varga*.
Ecliptic	The apparent orbit of the sun around the earth.
Electional astrology	See: *muhūrta*.
Gaṇita	Calculation (mathematics and astronomy).
Genethlialogy	See: *jātaka*.
Ghaṭī	One-thirtieth of a day or night, or one-sixtieth of a day and night.
Graha	'Seizer', see: planet.
Grantha	Syllabic script based on Tamil characters and used for Sanskrit, particularly in South India.
Horā	(Gk. ὥρα) 1. Judicial astrology; the art of reading a horoscope, comprising *jātaka*, *praśna*, and *muhūrta*. 2. The division of a zodiacal sign into two parts, so called because each part will take an average of one hour to rise; cf. *varga*.
Horoscope	Originally synonymous with ascendant; in later usage a chart cast for a given time and place, representing the positions of the planets relative to the earth and to the zodiac.
Horoscopic astrology	See: *horā*.
House	A twelfth-part of the imaginary sphere of sky surrounding the place for which a horoscope is cast, representing some particular area of human experience.
Jātaka	The branch of astrology dealing with horoscopes cast for a person's time and place of birth.
Jyotiḥśāstra, jyotiṣa	The discipline of astronomy-astrology, comprising *gaṇita*, *horā* and *saṃhitā*.

Kāṇḍa	Chapter or division of a *nāḍī* reading, typically corresponding to a house of the horoscope.
Karman	Action, particularly perceived as a force generating the agent's future destiny according to its merit-value; secondarily, the manifestation of such destiny.
Kṣatriya	See: *varṇa*.
Lagna	See: ascendant.
Liṅga	Phallic emblem of Śiva in the form of a column (usually made of stone) with a rounded top.
Lunar mansion	See: *nakṣatra*.
Mantra	Sacred word, phrase, passage or syllable used in repetitive recitation, meditation, etc.
Muhūrta	The branch of astrology dealing with the selection of favourable times for various undertakings.
Nakṣatra	Division of the zodiac into 27 (more rarely 28) divisions, roughly corresponding to the daily distance travelled by the moon and commonly divided into four quarters (*pāda*).
Natal astrology	See: *jātaka*.
Nava-graha	The 'nine planets', comprising the luminaries (sun and moon), stellar planets (the five planets visible from earth), and dark planets (the lunar nodes).
Navāṃśa	The division of a zodiacal sign into nine parts; cf. *varga*.
Nodes, lunar	The diametrically opposed points at which the apparent orbits of the sun and moon around the earth intersect.
Pāda	See: *nakṣatra*.

Pañcāṅga	Astronomical calendar, consisting of five parts (including lunar *nakṣatra* and *tithi*) used for astrological and religious purposes.
Planet	Heavenly body moving through the constellations of the zodiac.
Praśna	The branch of astrology dealing with horoscopes cast for the time and place of a question.
Prāyaścitta	Atonement; act of penance meant to avert the ill-effects of one's misdeeds.
Pūjā	Ritual worship, typically directed to a sacred image and comprising various elements such as the offering of flowers, incense, food, etc.
Query	See: *praśna*.
Rāśi	See: sign.
Ṛṣi	Sage, particularly a seer of the Veda, regarded as a particular class of semi-divine beings.
Śaiva	Worshipper of Śiva, particularly one acknowledging Śiva as the one supreme deity.
Saṃhitā	Miscellaneous divinatory techniques formally included under the heading of astrology.
Sannyāsin	Renunciant, ascetic.
Śānti	Rites of propitiation directed towards planetary or other deities, meant to avert present misfortunes caused by unknown sins of previous lives.
Śāstra	Sacred or authoritative text; any systematic body of teaching.
Sign, zodiacal	A twelfth-part of the zodiac, ruled by one of the seven planets.
Śloka	Verse; the most common Sanskrit metre, consisting of four times eight syllables.

Smārta	Lit. 'based on tradition'; Hindu tradition acknowledging all deities as equal manifestations of divinity.
Sthapati	Sculptor of sacred images used for ritual worship (*pūjā*).
Śūdra	See: *varṇa*.
Tithi	Lunar day, defined by the movement of the moon in 12° segments from or towards the sun.
Transit	Movements of the heavenly bodies as superimposed on the natal horoscope.
Triṃśāṃśa	Division of a zodiacal sign into five unequal parts; cf. *varga*.
Upagraha	Imaginary, mathematically derived 'sub-planet'.
Vaiṣṇava	Worshipper of Viṣṇu, particularly one acknowledging Viṣṇu as the one supreme deity.
Vaiśya	See: *varṇa*.
Varga	The subdivision of a zodiacal sign into zones of varying size, each zone typically corresponding to a zodiacal sign.
Vargottama, -āṃśa	The occupation of a *varga*, particularly *navāṃśa*, identical to the zodiacal sign within which it falls.
Varṇa	The four ideal, religiously legitimized social classes of Hinduism: *brāhmaṇa* (brahmin, religious authority), *kṣatriya* (worldly authority), *vaiśya* (mercantile/agricultural class) and *śūdra* (servant class).
Vibhūti	Sacred ash used for marking the forehead and other parts of the upper body.
Vighaṭī	One-sixtieth of a *ghaṭī*.
Zodiac	Imaginary belt of sky extending north and south of the ecliptic, within which the planets are seen to move.

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