

THE NAKSHATRAS OF THE MOON

Judith Dillon, 2018

Long before writing, stories were passed from mouth to mouth during the quiet hours of the night. The work of the sun done, the dark has time to listen to feats of gods and demons. Illustrated by the stars and planets, their stories evolve as the sky revolves through the calendar year.

Heroes and brave women also pace out their deeds among the stars and festivals remembering them find their order in the calendar year. This is an exploration of Hindu festivals as they follow the moon and sun along the year.

There is real time and there is myth time. In myth time, rainbows kiss the morning clouds and gods ride along with the sun and moon. In myth time, a lustrous, lusty moon once went looking for another lover.

India's wandering moon, also known as Chandra or Soma, rises newborn each month. As he matures he grows stronger but alas, gods and demons feeding on his nectar slowly exhaust him. A crescent cup holding Soma's glowing nectar the moon wanes, consumed until he disappears. As the darkened moon again emerges from his shadowy existence the sun nourishes the moonlight and Soma waxes, his cup filling once again.

Working on numerous levels, "all of which are tied together rather strangely, Soma is both plant and the intoxicating drink brewed from that plant. "As the blood of animals and the sap of plants, Soma courses through all living things. He is Inspiration to those who seek it, and so is the god of poets. He is also the god of the moon [...]. The ancient Hindus did not differentiate between these divergent aspects; all were the god Soma."¹



Mercury, Venus and the Moon, Picture taken in the morning²

The beautiful moon never wanted for lovers but his affairs once caused a war among the stars. Arrogant in his beauty, he kidnaped Tara, star born wife of Brihaspati (Jupiter). After he refused to return her the gods made war, compelling

¹ pantheon.org/articles/s/soma.html (Encyclopedia Mythica:

² Parnal Observatory, ESO/Y. Beletsky - <http://www.eso.org/public/images/potw1025a/>

Soma to release Tara. Pregnant with Soma's child, the baby was named Budha (Mercury). Some stories give the moon's romance and child to Rohini, favorite wife of the moon. Others say it was the rosy dawn or morning star he captured before fading away. Above is the moon with his lover and child.

Among the creative Daksha-Prajapati's 60 daughters, 27 married the Moon. Each wife was given her own home among the stars. Needing to keep his wives happy, India's moon spends time with each as he makes his monthly circuit around the sky. Stopping in each mansion (Nakshatra) for a day he pleases each wife in turn before visiting the next. Alas for family harmony, an exalting moon preferred sweet-faced Rohini above her sisters.

As we see in a later story (Mrigashira #5), her father also lusted after this rosy-red daughter. The jealous father like Jupiter cursed the amorous moon, causing him to fade away. Chandra/Soma begged his brother-in-law Shiva, married to Sati, youngest of Daksha's daughters, to remove the curse. Unable to totally reverse the withering, Shiva promised the moon although he would lose one shade a day for fifteen, he would then brighten the next fifteen days.

The moon invoked Lord Shiva at Somnath, where it is said the moon himself built the first temple. Somnath "has been a pilgrimage site from ancient times on account of being a *triveni sangam* the joining of three rivers — Kapila, Hiran and the mythical Sarasvati." Bathing in the Sarasvati, the moon god regained his luster.³ In addition to her lost path on earth, Sarasvati flows as the River of Stars in the night sky. Constantly writhing and changing her course in the sky, none-the-less she is forever joined to the stars near Orion (Mrigashira) and 180 degrees away near the source, the Navel of the Galaxy (#19 Mula).

The drying of the Sarasvati, home-river of the early Vedas, has another story about the moon and a stolen bride. Bhadra ('kind'), beautiful daughter of the moon married Utathya, son of Angiras (one of the seven sages circling the Pole Star). His brother is Brahaspati (Jupiter). Like Jupiter's Tara, the moon maiden was carried off and Varuna her kidnapper refused to release her from his oceans. The furious husband drank up all the seas. When Varuna still would not let her go, Utathya then drank the lake of Varuna and swept away the ocean. Finally he cursed, let "Saraswati, disappear into the deserts, and let this land, deserted by thee, become impure." After the entire land dried up, Varuna returned Bhadra to Utathya who then released the world from the drought.⁴

This particular cycle of 27 Nakshatras, each 13 degrees 20" of the moon's monthly circle around the sky, begins when the stars of Aries, horsemen of the

³ wikipedia.org/wiki/Somnathtemple The river is thought to have disappeared into the sands after her course shifted and no longer flows through India and Pakistan.

⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhadra

Ashvini, rose on the Equinoxes. The moon's first home, determined by the location of the Equinoxes, retreats westwards approximately every 1000 years. Mandating adjustments to India's star calendar, this particular cycle began during the Indian Classical Age.⁵

In the West, Aries still marks the New Year. For about 2000 years before the Common Era, their stars rose on the Vernal Equinox sun (March 21). Western astrology then froze their zodiac stars. 4000 years later, Aries still rules March in the West. Vedic astrology (sidereal astrology) continues to follow the stars as they change their seasons. Aries once rising with the March sun now rises in April/May. This change is due to the Precession of the Equinox, a slow backwards slide of ecliptic stars toward the west. Now Pisces rather than Aries physically rise on the Vernal Equinox. While I am not concentrating on calendar adjustments, today's Vedic astrologer begins the moon's 27 homes with Pisces.

Zodiac stars following the sun's path (Ecliptic) regress one degree every 72 years. This backwards drift causes the sign (30 degrees) on the Vernal Equinox to change every 2200 years. Around 4000 BCE, the Bull of Taurus rose in March. By 2000 BCE, the warrior Aries began replacing him. Finally, we entered the Age of Pisces, which now 2000 years into the present era, is nearing the Age of Aquarius. India's calendar is divided by 27 groups of stars rather than by 12 zodiac signs. Thus the change of stars associated with the seasons are apparent after only 1000 years and are reflected in stories from the ancient Vedas. The entire cycle lasts about 25,920 years, a number associated with Revati, last of the moon's wives before another long cycle begins.

MOON CYCLES & LUNI-SOLAR CALENDARS⁶

This is a paper about the stars illustrating their stories and festivals as they move through time. Hindu calendars have numerous variations and adjustments so this is only a very simplified overview. Not every festival is celebrated in every area. Long before the great sagas of India were written down, stars illustrated the oral traditions still timing the festivals of the year: the Mahabharat concerning the war between feuding clans of the Kurus and Pandavas, and the Ramayana about the adventures of Rama and his earth born wife Sita,

The new moon, first seen in the west at sunset, quickly follows the sun below the horizon. At first quarter, a half-lit moon is high in the sky at sunset, setting about six hours later. At sunrise, the full moon opposite the sun sets in the west, rising in the east at sunset. His nectar fully replenished, he travels the day sky.⁷ Taking 27.3 days (Sidereal month) to return to his first star home, the Synodic month (new moon to new moon) is 29.5 days. Waxing and then waning as he enters

⁵ David Frawley, *Gods, Sages & Kings*, Motilal Banarsidas (1991), 2003, p. 150

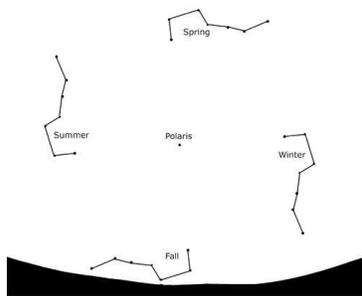
⁶ <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-names-of-months-as-per-the-Hindu-calendar>

⁷ stardate.org/nightsky/moon

each home during the month's circle, the new moon must travel further before reappearing in the evening. That is, after travelling 360 degrees it takes the new moon two more days to reappear.

Each month, he thus appears two Mansions further on. Losing 11 days a year, to arrive at his starting Nakshatra he must travel 30 more days than the lunar year of 354 days. It takes another 19 years before the unadjusted sun and moon (and Mercury) realign with their original stars.⁸ One adjustment to keep the seasons in order is to add an extra month about every three years.

Nakshatra stars are chosen as opposing pairs around the lunar circle of the sky, these stars being turned by the stars around the centering North. "Stars, whenever visible, are always seen to rise in the same place on the horizon throughout the year, stars that lie this far from the celestial pole go through a period in which they are not seen in the night sky. After this period of invisibility, their first appearance is at dawn, rising just before the sun."⁹



¹⁰ Bound by ropes of wind to the celestial pole, the circling stars mark out the hours of each night and the seasons of the year (see Swati #15). They also measure out 12 luni-solar months each containing about 3 Nakshatras. The first stars visible near the new moon at sunset name the Nakshatra. The full moon, 180 degrees and 15 days later, determines and names the twelve luni-solar months of the Vedic calendar. The full moon lies directly opposite the stars of the morning sky marking out the months of the Western calendar. Thus, unlike the Western calendar which concerns only the morning stars, when studying the Vedic tradition one must always be aware of stars opposing the sun as we move through both the months and the years.

Clouds or the light of day often hide the morning stars so the full moon is a more accurate determination of the morning stars. The full moon is directly 180 degrees away from both the sun and the new moon, That is, when the Ashwini

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_month Also, Harry Sivertsen, Ancient Indian Calendars, p. 3: Academia.edu e.g. if the new moon is in Ardra, 30 days later he appears in Pushya, 2 homes beyond.

⁹ Fabio Silva, academia.edu/16769826/_Once_Upon_a_Time

¹⁰ earthsky.org/favorite-star-patterns/big-and-little-dippers-highlight-northern-sky

stars (Aries) first appear in the east with the sun of spring, the full moon joins Chitra (Spica) in Libra. Libra lies directly opposite Aries in the Zodiac. Thus Aries heralds the Vernal Chaitra month of March/April. Conversely, autumn's full moon in Aries (Ashvini) signals the Ashvin month of the autumn sun in Libra (Chitra).

While the Nakshatras are a lunar cycle, most calendars also reflect the travels of the sun faithfully measuring out the seasons of each year. Unless occasionally adjusted to match the solar calendar, lunar calendars endlessly circle the seasons for 19 years before rejoining the sun in the original season. Measuring the four corners of the year, the sun migrates each year between two poles: the northern Tropic of Cancer reached on the Summer Solstice; and the southern most point of the Tropic of Capricorn on the Winter Solstice.



Tropic of Cancer a few miles from Rann of Kutch, Gujarat¹¹ The great Saraswati flowing from the east, changing her banks several times before disappearing (c. 1800 BCE), once emptied into the delta at Kuch¹²

The luni-solar month is determined by the full moon entering the 12 zodiac signs (Northern calendars), or by the new moon (Southern calendars) entering the sign. Rising 15 days earlier, this causes a variation in the celebration of festivals. The Full moon directly opposite the sun, the Vedic calendar is opposite the Western Tropical calendar associated with the sun's travels.

Stars in Cancer and Capricorn marked the Solstices when Aries and Libra announced the Equinoxes. When the sun travelling the Ecliptic crosses the Celestial Equator, day and night are equal (Equinoxes). At the Equator (0 degrees) the Equinox sun, rising directly due east, at its Zenith casts no shadows at either equinox.

In Vedic astrology gods and sages live in the north while the Yamas, demons and dead, inhabit the southlands of winter. After winter's Solstice, after his southernmost journey, the sun moves visibly north along the horizon toward summer. When he crosses the midway of the Spring Equinox, the path of his sinuous journey now lies north of the Equator. Every 19 years, sun moon and Mercury rejoin at these nodes among the original stars of the seasons (235 lunar months made up almost exactly 19 solar years).

¹¹ wikipedia.org/wiki/Tropic_of_Cancer

¹² Frawley, *Gods, Sages & Kings* (2003), p. 73.

NAKSHATRAS, THEIR LORDS & LUNI-SOLAR MONTHS

Each Luni-solar month contains about three Nakshatras, each ruled by a planetary Lord. The months are thus approximated among the Nakshatras. While the western Zodiac simply follows the sun's path through the morning stars, when observing the Vedic calendar you must constantly be aware of the oppositions of the sun and moon in determining the months.

SPRING MONTHS OF NORTH INDIA (April/May)

A. CHAITRA MONTH (March 21-April 20) began when morning sun entered Aries opposite the Full Moon in Chitra (Libra). THE SPRING EQUINOX

Note: due to the Precession, the Hindu month of Chaitra now begins when the sun is in Pisces, but Zero degrees Aries is in Pisces (See #27 Revati, Eta Piscium). Eta Piscium: This star is identified as the First Point of Aries, i.e. when the Sun crosses this star a new solar year begins.¹³ In the new calendar, the same effect appears. This paper follows the older calendar.

1. ASHVINI - The Horse Twins (00"00 to 13"20 Aries)
 KETU (south lunar node): rules 7 years: Ashvini, Magha and Mula
 STAR - El Sheratan & Mesarthim in Aries
 DEITY - Ashvini (Horse) Twins
2. BHARANI -The Bearing Star or Yoni (13.20-26.40 Aries)
 SHUKRA (Venus) for 20 years: Bharani, Purva Phalguni, Purva Ashadha
 STAR - 3 faint stars in womb shape
 DEITY - Yama, god of the dead

SUMMER MONTHS (May/June)

B. VAISAKHA MONTH (April 21 - May 21) begins when the morning sun enters Taurus opposite the full moon in Vishaka (Scorpio),

3. KRITTIKA (The Cutters) -(26.40 Aries-10.00 Taurus)
 SURYA (Sun) rules six years: Krittika, Uttara Phalguni, Uttara Ashadha
 STAR - Includes Pleiades & Demon Star Algol
 DEITY - Agni (Fire)
4. ROHINI - The Red One, Brahmi, or Star of Ascent (10"00 - 23"20 Taurus)
 CHANDRA (Moon) rules ten years: Rohini, Hasta, and Shravana
 STAR - Red eye of Taurus
 DEITY - Brahma or Prajapati

¹³ [www.revolv.com/main/index.php?s=Revati+\(nakshatra\)](http://www.revolv.com/main/index.php?s=Revati+(nakshatra))

C. JYAISTHA MONTH (May 22 - June 21) Morning sun enters Gemini opposite the full moon in Jyeshtha (Scorpio/Sagittarius) SUMMER SOLSTICE

5. MRIGASHIRA (AGRAHAYANI) - (23°20' Taurus-6°40' Gemini)
 MANGALA (Mars) rules 7 years: Mrigashira, Chitra, Dhanishta
 STAR - Orion (Prajapati) & Sirius (Rudra/Shiva)
 DEITY - Chandra/Soma (challenged Prajapati for Rohini)

6. ARDRA - The Moist or Green One -(6°40' - 20°00' Gemini) RAINS BEGIN
 RAHU (north lunar node) rules 18 years: Ardra, Swati, Shatabhishak
 STAR - Betelgeuse as Rudra on R. shoulder of Orion
 DEITY - Rudra/Shiva

MONSOON MONTHS (June until the Fall)

C. ASADHA MONTH (June 22 - July 22) begins when the morning sun enters Cancer opposite the full moon in Ashada (Capricorn).

7. PUNARVASU - Star of Renewal or Two Chariots (20° Gemini - 3°20' Cancer)
 GURU (Jupiter) rules 16 years: Punarvasu, Vishaka, Purva Bhadrapada
 STAR - Castor & Pollux associated with Agni (Fire) & mother Aditi
 DEITY - Aditi, mother of all

8. PUSHYA or TISHYA -To Nourish (3°20' -16°40' Cancer)
 SHANI (Saturn) rules 19 years: Pushya, Anuradha, Uttara Bhadrapada
 STAR - three faint stars in Cancer said to be cow's udder.
 DEITY - Jupiter (born under these stars)

9. ASHLESHA - The Clinging Star/The Embracer (16.40 - 30.00 Cancer)
 BUDHI (Mercury) rules 17 years: Ashlesha, Jyestha (Elder Sister) & Revati (End of an Era of Time) These three Nakshatras represent endings of various cycles.
 STAR - Naga/Hydra On the serpent's tail is Covus, the crow and raven.
 DEITY - Serpents (Nagas)

D. SHRAVANA MONTH (July 23 -AUGUST 22) begins when the sun enters Leo opposite the full moon in Shravana (Aquarius).

10. MAGHA The Great One, The Bountiful - (00.00 Leo - 13.20 Leo)
 KETU (South Lunar Node)
 STAR- Regulus (Little King) in Leo
 DEITY - The ancestors who dwell among these stars until reincarnate.
 The Universe was born under the stars of Magh.

11. PURVA PHALGUNI - Front Feet of Marriage Bed (13.20 - 26.40 Leo)
 SHUKRA (Venus)
 STAR - Zosma ('girdle') (δ Leonis on lion's back)
 Shiva started his marriage procession after being awoken by Passion (#10). His marriage follows in Uttara Phalgun #12.
 DEITY - Bhaga, god of wealth and marriage

AUTUMN MONTHS (August/October)

E, BHADRA MONTH (August 23 - September 22) begins with the morning sun in Virgo opposite the full moon in Bhadrpada (Pisces) AUTUMN SEASON

12. UTTARA PHALGUNI or UTHIRAM - Back Feet of Marriage Bed
 (26.40 Leo - 10.00 Virgo)
 SURYA (Sun) is the Lord of the second Phalgun
 STAR - Denebola ('tail of the lion') in Leo
 DEITY - Aryman, presides over marriages, family & children

13. HASTA - The Hand (10.00 Virgo - 23.20 Virgo)
 CHANDRA (the Moon)
 STAR - 5 stars to represent hand. Algorab (δ Corvi) is on R. wing of the Crow/Corvax. The Crow (or Raven) lies just south of constellation Virgo and sits on his enemy Hydra, the Water Snake (Ashlesha #9)
 DEITY - Savriti (Sun at junction of dawn). Following is the Spring Equinox.

LATE AUTUMN MONTHS (October/December)

F. ASVINI MONTH (September 23 - October 22) begins when the morning sun enters Libra opposite the full moon in Asvini (Aries). FALL EQUINOX

14. CHITRA - The Shining Jewel, The Pearl - (23' 20" Virgo - 6'40" Libra)
 MANGALA (Mars)
 STAR - Chitra is bright Spica held by Virgo
 DEITY - Tvastar or Vishvakarma, Craftsmen gods

15. SWATI (From Su-Ati 'Very Good') -(6'40 - 20'00 Libra)
 RAHU enemy of the sun is Lord, the sun is debilitated in Libra.
 STAR- Arcturus, the Guardian of the Bear, or the Keeper of the North
 DEITY - Vayu the wind whose ropes of wind turn the stars

G. KARTIKA MONTH (October 23 -November 21) begins when the morning sun enters Scorpio opposite the full moon in Krittika (Pleiades near Taurus). The sun currently transits Scorpio from approximately November 16 to December 15

(sidereal zodiac); 2000 BCE, mid October to mid November; c. 4000 BCE, mid September to mid October (Autumn Equinox). (Taurus; helical rising is opposite Scorpio)

16. VISHAKHA - Fork Shaped or RADHA (Gift) - (20.00 Libra - 3.20 Scorpio)

Scorpius corresponds to the Nakshatras late Vishakha, Anuradha, & Jyestha.

It is a compliment to Anuradha, the birth star of Surya

17. ANURADHA - Following Radha (3.20 - 16.40 Scorpio, Scorpius corresponds to the Nakshatras late Vishakha, Anuradha, & Jyestha)

SHANI (Saturn)

STAR - 3 stars in Scorpio

DEITY - Mitra ('friend', also 'binding oath' one of 12 names of the sun) He is also known as Mitra/Varuna. Mitra became associated with the light of dawn and the morning sun while Varuna becomes associated with evening, and ultimately the night.

18. JYESHTHA - Elder Sister (16.40 - 30.00 Scorpio)

BUDH (Mercury)

STAR - Antares which some texts call Rohini, others, Jyestha

DEITY - Indra, early storm god

G. AGRAHAYANA MONTH (November 22 - December 21) begins when the morning sun enters Sagittarius opposite the full moon in Mrgashira (Agrahayana/Orion near Gemini). WINTER SOLSTICE Dec. 21 is the last night of Sagittarius before the sun enters Capricorn (The Turning is now celebrated in January when the Precessed sun now enters Capricorn)

19. MULA - The Root (0.00 - 13.20 Sagittarius)

The moon is debilitated in Mula.

KETU (S. Lunar Node)

STAR - Black hole in center of Galaxy, Galactic womb near Sagittarius A

DEITY - Nirriti (Calamity), also known as Alakshmi, fierce form of Kali. god of dissolution. A guardian of the directions, she rules the south of winter.

20. PURVA ASHADHA (POORVASHADA) - Early Victory or First Invincible One (13.20 - 26.40 Sagittarius)

SHUKRA (Venus)

STAR - Kaus Borealis & Kaus Australis of archer's bow. The stars dip into the river of the Milky Way and overlook the Lagoon Nebula.

DEITY - Apah or Water as god, also Varuna.

WINTER MONTHS

H. PAUSA MONTH (December 22 - January 20) begins when the morning sun enters Capricorn opposite the full moon in Pushya (Cancer).

Last day of Sagittarius is the festival of the Makara, the turning of the Sun in Capricorn. On the WINTER SOLSTICE, the Sun turns from South and heads North along the horizon. The opposite Ashada month corresponds to the SUMMER SOLSTICE when the sun again turns, this time dying south. Due to the Precession, the Makara is now celebrated in January

21. UTTARA ASHADHA - Later Victory or Second of the Ashadha
(27.40 Sagittarius - 10.00 Capricorn)

SURYA (Sun)

STAR - Vega & lower part of Lyre, VEGA The Universal Star (has been depicted as a bird, along with the Eagle/Altair) Was the pole star for thousands of years

DEITY - Vishvadevas (Sons of Dharma - laws of time & karma).

21.5 ABHIJIT - Victorious (28th nakshatra, not in use)

Unlike the 27 wives of the moon, Abhijit is considered male. He is placed between the 21st and the 22nd wives.

STAR - Vega (06° 40' to 10° 53' 40" in sidereal Capricorn, Capricorn i.e. from the last quarter of Uttara Ashadha to first part of Shrivana)

DEITY - Brahma - He manifests as the glowing star Vega. This is the only male among the moon's wives.

22. SHRAVANA - To Hear Star of Learning 1(0.00 - 23.20 Capricorn)

CHANDRA (Moon)

STAR - Three in the head of the Eagle (Altair): Altair with its two flanking stars, Beta and Gamma (Tarazed and Alshain), are the celestial footprints of Vishnu who spanned the Universe in 3 steps

DEITY - Vishnu, Preserver of the Universe, resides among these stars.

A River of Stars separates Vega and Altair.

I. MAGHA MONTH (January 21-February) begins when the morning sun enters Aquarius opposite the full moon in Magha (Leo).

23. DHANISTHA -The Richest One (23.20 Capricorn - 6.40 Aquarius)

MANGALA (Mars)

STAR - small group in head of Dolphin (Sadalsuud - Luck of Lucks) & Beta Aquarii, Star on Left Shoulder of Water-pourer (Aquarius) pouring water

into mouth of Southern Fish. Associated with rising of sun when India's winter has passed, period of gentle rain
 DEITY - 8 Vasus (means 'light' benefic'): Earth Gods giving wealth.

24. SHATABHISHA - 100 Healers (6.40-20.00 Aquarius)

RAHU (North Lunar Node)

STAR - (Formulhaut 'Mouth of the Southern Fish (alpha piscis)

One of 4 Royal Stars guarding the cross of the ancient skies: Aldelbaran - vernal equinox (Watcher of the East), Regulus, summer solstice (North), Antares, Autumnal equinox (West), Formulhaut, Winter solstice (Watcher of the South)

DEITY - Varuna, guardian of Natural Law and god of water and the Celestial Ocean. He rides Capricorn's Makara (sea dragon).

25. PURVA BHADRAPADA - Front Legs of Deathbed or Former Happy Feet (20'00 Aquarius- 3'20 Pisces) It includes the Square as a gambling board.

The Great Square of Pegasus was a resting place for the moon on his journey through the sky.

GURU (Jupiter)

STAR - STAR - 2 main stars in Square of Pegasus (Markab/alpha Pegasi)

Pegasus may derive from a weather god of thunder & lightning.

DEITY - Ajaikapada (One footed goat, form of Rudra/Shiva)

SPRING MONTHS (which began with the Chaitra month)

J. PHALGUNA MONTH (February-March 20)

26. UTTARA BHADRAPADA -'Higher Fortune', Latter Happy Feet' (3.20 - 16.40 Pisces)

STAR - Warrior Star of Algenib on tip of wing of Pegasus (gamma pegasi, The Flank) & alpha Persei (Mirfak /elbow)

DEITY - Ahir Budhnya the Dragon of the Deep

27. REVATI -CAUSE TO THRIVE, WEALTHY (16.40 - 30.00 Pisces)

BUDH (Mercury)

STAR - η Piscium (Eta Piscium) is the brightest star of Pisces.

DEITY - Pushan the Nourisher offers guidance on one's path and brings prosperity with him. His Symbol is a drum for keeping time.

Pisces is the final and last zodiac sign. As Revati, it is the last Mansion the moon visits each month on his cycle around the sky. 4000 years ago, the sun rose in Pisces mid February to mid March when each new cycle began at the Spring Equinox. It now passes the sign mid-March to mid-April.

THE 27 NAKSHATRAS

Lord - KETU (south lunar node): rules 7 years: Ashvini, Magha and Mula

1. ASHVINI - El Sheratan & Mesarthim of the Ram (00"00 to 13"20 Aries)

STAR - The Ashvini Twins, also known as the Star of Transport lies directly opposite Chitra/Libra. The Sun is exalted (his most powerful position) at 10 degrees Aries. During the Vernal Equinox c. 2000 BCE, the dawn sun rose in Aries. Six months later, the Twins rose along with the evening's Full Moon of Autumn. This continual theme of opposites must be considered as we explore each luni--solar month of the Hindu year.

In this paper I hope to explore myths describing the moon, sun, and planetary deities who travel through or reside in each home. Although there are and have been other orders of the Moon's Mansions, I am using the Classical cycle beginning with Ashvini as best reflecting the many ancient stories written when Aries ruled the Equinoxes.

Planets cited at the beginning of each Nakshatra, the 'Lords' of the Mansion, determine astrological cycles of the person born under the Nakshatra. Each Lord ruling a given period, the total covers the 120 years allotted a human life.

A planetary ruler and a deity join the moon in each Mansion. Ketu the descending node, the south node, the lord of this home, is a tail of a dragon. The Dragon was cut in half to prevent him from drinking Soma's nectar churned at Creation. As we pass Ketu's node on the Fall Equinox, we cross the Celestial Equator to descend south. The luni-solar month of Asvin begins September 23. The dawning sun rises in Chitra (Libra) and at sunset the full moon lies among the Asvini (Aries)

As the Moon's first home, the Star of Transport once marked the intersection between summer and winter. This is the fall of the Year when Day loses his battle with the Dark. Dying toward the south, each day now grows shorter.



Hamal ('Head of the Ram) once marked the Vernal Equinox, followed by the Twins Sheratan & Mesarthim in Aries 300 years later.¹⁴

Shining in the constellation of Aries, the Ashvini Twins are the first bright evening stars after the daytime sun's exit from Virgo into Libra. Due to the implacable

¹⁴ <http://earthsky.org/brightest-stars/hamal-ancient-equinox-star>

Precession, the Ashvini began replacing the stars of the Pleiades (Krittika #3) c. 2000 BCE.¹⁵ Note: The 27 Nakshatras circle continuously through the months. The entrance of the full moon into each zodiac sign determines the luni-solar month. Stars rising with the Spring (and Fall) Equinox sun begin calendar cycles that have been periodically readjusted over the millennia.

Some traditions begin the Wheel of Time in spring; others transport us into the New Year of fall.¹⁶ When the morning sun enters Libra, 15 days later the full moon opposite the sun rises with the Twins marking the Ashvin month of fall. The Western Zodiac, 180 degrees and six months opposite the spring stars, marks fall by Libra's morning stars rather than by the full moon in Aries. On the Autumn Equinox, day and night once balanced on Libra's scales before sliding into the dark of winter. In astrology, the dying sun is weak, is debilitated in Libra. The sun having passed Ketu's descending node now travels south toward the dark of the Winter Solstice (Tropic of Capricorn).

Ashvini's Divine Twins, sometimes represented as humans with the heads of horses, were 'Born of a Female Horse'. Their mother is Saranyu (Sanjna), first wife of the sun Surya. Saranyu, a dark goddess of the Clouds was the daughter of Tvashta (discussed below, Chitra #14). The celestial architect of the universe, his home is in Libra directly opposite his grandsons.

Before her marriage, the Cloud Goddess meditated for many years before joining the fierce sun. The sun's powers are strongest (exaltation) in 10 degrees Aries. Still unable to bear his intense heat, Saranyu left her shadow (Chaya) behind and fled her marriage. The unwitting sun had children with Chaya. Among these children is Shani, the dark planet Saturn. In Western astronomy the Shadow is one of the moons circling the be-ringed Saturn.¹⁷

Two other children are Tapti, personification of river Tapti, and a son Savarni Manu. This Manu will be the next and eighth Manu (progenitor of mankind) after the ending of the current cycle. The goddess of the Tapti was ancestress of the Kuru ((c. 1200 – c. 850 BCE) the first Vedic state. Daughter of the sun, her first son was the king Kuru."The Kuru provided the legends growing into the Mahabharata epic. It decisively changed the Vedic heritage of the early Vedic period, arranging the Vedic hymns into collections."¹⁸ The Kurushetra was

¹⁵ Frawley, *Gods, Sages*, states the Krittika were still the first home 1760 BCE, p. 158.

¹⁶ Ancient Israel celebrated the New Year of Spring; The Kingdom of Judah celebrated the New Year (Rosh HaShanah) in fall. Judah surviving after the fall of Israel, her calendar tradition continued.

¹⁷ In this tradition, she is named Skade/Shadow, dark goddess of the Norse.

¹⁸ wikipedia.org/wiki/._Kingdom

established on the banks of the Sarasvati and here the battle of the Mahabharata was fought.¹⁹

When he realized the deception, the Sun went searching for his true wife. Saranyu having taken the form of a mare he joined her as a stallion, producing the Ashwini. Among their attributes, the horse twins are divine physicians adept in healing, medicine, counseling and all other allied disciplines.²⁰ They created the herbal Chyawanprash to rejuvenate an aging sage in exchange for a taste of Soma, the elixir of life.

According to the hymn (RV. 10.85) the Twins also symbolize sunrise and sunset. First appearing at sunset in the spring and rising with the full moon in the fall of the year, they travel by a golden car. They are both the first light before the sun appears, and the red glow after he sets.



Ashwini Kumaras

IMPORTANT FESTIVALS IN ASVINI -September 23 - October 22

Fall, after the summer rains end, was the season for waging war. In ancient China, the Emperor's proper actions insured the turning of the seasons. In the ninth month: "The son of Heaven...teaches how to use the five weapons of war and the rules for management of horses." This being the season to travel toward the Underworld, the emperor also "eats hemp seeds."²¹

In India, kings turned loose a white horse in September-October, following it until it brought them to another king's territory.²² The king could expand his realm by conquering anywhere the horse might wander. After a year, if no army had defeated the king's warriors, the horse was brought home and sacrificed.²³ In Vedic India of the Kurus, spring in the full moon of Vishakha (#16, 20°00' Libra-to 3°20' Scorpio, now April 21) was the season to sacrifice the white horse

¹⁹ Āryabhaṭīya (5th century CE), uses astronomical calculations to determine the date of the Battle of Kurukshetra as 18 February 3102 BCE. This date has become traditional and is still widely cited in Hindu literature.

²⁰ In Western mythology, the centaur (horse-man) is also a healer.

²¹ James Legge, trans, (Yueh Ling), *Li Chi*, NY University, 1967, pp. 292-294 Horses, like Trojan horses, were important in early wars. Mars sometimes wears a horse head.

²² Great Britain Imperial Records, *Feasts of the Hindus*, 1914, pp. 20-26.

²³ wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_sacrifice

(Ashvamedha) in a great fire ceremony.²⁴ Lying by the stallion, the queen accompanied by 3 lesser wives, was then (symbolically) impregnated.²⁵

Note: the actual timing of the Sacrifice is somewhat obscure and may reflect calendar changes. The ceremony took a year to perform. If the sacrifice was held in spring, it may, like the Durga Puja, have been later moved to fall. Romans, another Indo European people, sacrificed their October Horses in the fall.

11 NAVRATRI - Among the stories and deities celebrated during the passage of the sun and moon through the sky is that of the archer Rama and his wife Sita (The Ramayana). He is the 7th incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

The new moon after the Equinox of fall announces another martial festival: the Navratri. Held the first nine days of the bright (waxing) fortnight of the Ashvini month of September/October, it celebrates Durga, Mother of the Vedas in her nine different forms. It commemorates Lord Rama's invocation of Durga before going to war with the demon king Ravana. Durga Puja follows on the 10th day.

Ram had won Sita in an archery contest. His giant bow of stone still lies in the jungles of Nepal north of Sita's home in Janakpur.²⁶ Ravana kidnapped Sita ('furrow'), the 'earthborn' wife of Ram and hidden her in his labyrinth. After her kidnapping, in the ninth month after the Winter Solstice, Ram woke the sleeping Durga-Kali seeking her help. Durga was originally worshipped in spring. Because of her aid to Ram, her festival celebrated as a novena was moved to fall. She is worshipped in the form of a bundle of nine healing twigs.²⁷

VJIJAYA DASHAMI (Victory on the 10th) It is celebrated at the end of the nine days of Navarati in the month of Ashvin (September-October). This day is also known as the Dasara or Durga Puja. These celebrations include processions to a river or ocean front that carry clay statues of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesha and Kartikeya, accompanied by music and chants, after which the images are immersed into the water for dissolution and a goodbye. Elsewhere, on Dasara, effigies of Ravana defeated by the Pandava brothers are burnt. The festival also includes honoring the Shami or Banni mara tree (*Prosopis cineraria*).. Historically among [Rajputs](#), the high priest and the king, used to perform the worship and then liberate a jay the sacred bird of Lord Rama.

In the Mahabharata, the Pandavas are known to have spent their thirteenth year of exile in disguise in the kingdom of Virata. Before going to Virata, they hung

²⁴<https://books.google.com/books?id=AV0AAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA326&lpg=PA326&dq=visakha+and+ashvamedha&source>

²⁵ Roberto Calasso, *Ka* (1998), Vintage, 1999

²⁶ The role of the pricks of March fertilizing earth's moist furrows is widespread.

²⁷ Great Britain Imperial Records, *Feasts & Holidays of the Hindus*, 1914, pp. 20-26.

their celestial weapons in this tree for safe keeping for a year. When they returned after a year, they found their weapons safe in the branches of the Shami tree. Before taking the weapons, they worshipped the tree and thanked it for keeping their weapons safe.²⁸

2. DURGA PUJA - On the 10th day, the Dasara's defeat of Ravana, horses are worshipped with fragrant Champa (*Michelia champaka*) flowers. The Horse twins' attributes including healing, Champa trees "possess highly medicinal properties. Leafs extract and seeds extracts have fungicidal and antibacterial properties respectively. [...] detoxifies poison, worm infestation, increase digestive power, diuretic and cures fever. Flowers [cure] skin disease such as leprosy and ulcers."²⁹

Twenty days after the Dasara, the triumphant Festival of Lights is celebrated.

Each Nakshatra is not only associated with the Wheeling stars of Time, each is also represented by 27 trees. In fall, the sun unlike Rama is losing his battle for the light of day and dying south. The tree representing this Nakshatra of demons, wars and death is the highly poisonous Strychnine Plant.³⁰

²⁸ wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosopis_cineraria

²⁹ <http://drvidyahattangadi.com/the-champa-flower/#.WloQFbYrJ-U>

³⁰ giftingtrees.blogspot.com/2012/03/nakshatra-is-forever.html

Lord -SHUKRA (Venus) rules 20 years: Bharani, Purva Phalguni, Purva Ashadha

2. BHARANI (The Bearing Star) -13.20-26.40 Aries

STAR - Three representing a Yoni (woman's vagina), also Almach in Andromeda
DEITY - Yama, god of the Underworld

The summer rains now end and cold weather begins. India's Monsoon or rainy season lasts from late June to September. For those not heading off for war, it is time to plant the seed of a new generation.

The second Mansion denoted by a triad of faint stars, is known as both the Star of Restraint and the 'Bearing Star'. Bharani, ruled by Venus, represents the female sexual organ (Yoni), the doorway to another world. As a Yoni/Vagina, Bharani takes the seed of the dead into her womb until they can sprout again. In India, after the summer rains end, it is time to plant. The dark moon of this month is still traveling the Underworld. As new moon, he will be reborn into the light of the third day, the next Nakshatra. As the Lord of this home Venus "in the Puranic ideology is famed as one with the knowledge that raises the dead back to life."³¹

The tree for this Nakshatra is known variously as the Amla, the Myrobalan held by the Medicine Buddha, the Phyllanthus emblica. Created from drops of Soma spilled during the Churning of the Milk Ocean, Lord Vishnu is said to live in this tree. Offering its medicinal qualities in every part of the plant, it composes part of the Chyawanprash medicine the Asvini created to renew an aged sage.

Passing the stars of autumn, the sun continues to descend toward winter's death. Yama, god of the dead, has his home in the stars of Bharani. Yama and his twin Yamuna are children of the Cloud Goddess and the sun (see Ashwini). In this part of sky are "the waters that carry things away" - Apa-bharani. Souls transit here when they die, guided by Yama to Otherworld. As Star of Restraint, Yama is associated with Saturn whose attributes include leaden restriction.



Bharani includes the star Almach in left foot of Andromeda.³²

Almach thought to be one of the most beautiful objects in the heavens is a golden-yellow star next to an indigo-blue star. Yama, an avatar of Saturn, wears golden clothes. His vehicle (or the form he can assume) is a blue bull. Yama's

³¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shukra>

³² Roberto Mura, Creative Commons

helpers include Time (Kala) as well as Anger and Disease. Helping the dead enter the Otherworld, Yama's priest is Agni, Fire himself (R.V. 10.14).

Yama-Saturn was once king of a Golden Age. As Yama, he welcomed the dead into his Palace, a pleasure dome. The world becoming darker with age, he now rules a realm composed of 13 hells. He is debilitated, weakened in this home of Aries. Still, as judge of the Underworld, he directs the dead to the correct hell, to one of seven heavens, or even return them to earth.

Yama associated with Saturn, followed by his two dogs, was the first man to die. Giant Orion, also followed by his dogs, is another form of Saturn. "Saturnus has been another title [for Orion]."³³ A River of Stars flows past his feet on the way toward the womb of the Galaxy (Galactic Center). His wife/sister/twin is Yami, the River Yamuna who preceded him into the Underworld.

SOME FESTIVALS UNDER THE MOON OF BHARANI

KUMBHA MELA -The Yamuna physically flows down from the Himal to join the Ganges at Allahabad as a Triveni Sangam. The third river is the (invisible) Saraswati. A Kumbha Mela is held here every 12 years, the year determined by the cycles of Jupiter, sun and moon. When Soma was churned from the Milk Ocean, four drops fell from the cup (Kumbha) into 4 rivers. Every 12 years one of the rivers turns into nectar and bathing in the waters frees one from death's torments.³⁴ At Allahabad the Mela occurs when Jupiter is in Aries (Bharani), the sun and moon in Capricorn. At the Winter Solstice, formerly in Capricorn ruled by Saturn, the sun reverses from the southern standstill of winter's death; Reborn he heads north toward summer.³⁵

Daksha's youngest daughter, Sati, married Shiva against his wishes. He then insulted Shiva by not inviting him to a great fire ceremony, the Ashvamedha, Sati placed herself in the fire, becoming the first to commit Sati. An aspect of dark Kali, she is the blue flame emerging from the first Fire Ceremony. In his grief, Shiva danced his dance of death and destruction, invoking Bhadrakali. He then carried Sati's body until Vishnu, to stop the grieving, cut her into 52 pieces with his Wheel of Time (Sundarshana Chakra). The sites these pieces fell became the Shakti Peethas, pilgrimage sites for her worship. Her Yoni (Bharani) landed in Asaam (see Ardra #6, the 'moist one').

³³ Allen, *Star Names* (1899), 1963, p. 308.

³⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Yamuna

³⁵ <http://www.kumbhamela.net/>

Lord - SURYA (Sun) rules six years: Krittika, Uttara Phalguni, Uttara Ashadha

3. KRITTIKA (The Cutters) - 26.40 Aries-10.00 Taurus

STAR - Includes the Pleiades and the Demon Star Algol

DEITY - Agni, god of fire (represented by Algol)

"On the 1st of Ayaru the Pleiades become visible." (MUL.APIN ii 38)

By Babylonian times, the moon nearing the Pleiades in the solar month of April/May (Ayaru) portended eclipses. "Ishtar plots the eclipse of the moon (Sîn), at that time, the Seven of them were evil gods who were whirling about in the base of heaven, they kept circling furiously in front of the crescent moon."³⁶

Lunar eclipses only occur during the full moon, solar eclipses during the new which is now visible on the third day of the lunar cycle. The moon can also occult the star group Pleiades during a comparatively brief period. Pleiades "can be occulted only when the ascending node of the Moon's orbit is in the Pisces-to-Sagittarius part of the ecliptic."³⁷ This situation repeats every 6798 days, the time required for the ascending node to complete one complete circuit of the ecliptic ($6798 / 365.25 = 18.6$ years (max declination of moon period). 18.6 is also the number of years for an lunar or solar eclipse to occur in the same area of the sky. We meet Rahu, the ascending node, as lord of Ardra (#6).

The Moon is born among the stars of the Pleiades. His strongest exaltation is 3 degrees Taurus. The first two days of the lunar month belong to the dark moon. Two days (and two Nakshatras later) the moon enters Krittika. Only now has the moon separated enough from the sun to be visible in the west. After the third day, the first baby crescent appears just after sunset along with the Pleiades.



Pleiades³⁸

FESTIVALS IN THE MONTH Of KARTIKA (October 23-November 21)

DIVALI -The Pleiades once marked the Equinoxes before being replaced by the stars of the Ashvini. The Seven Sisters having shifted backwards in the sky now appear in the west after sunset as the Scorpion rises in the east. This is the

³⁶ Evil Spirits, quoted L.Verderame, Pleiades in Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 4, Academai.edu

³⁷ <http://www.space.com/1830-moon-hide-beautiful-star-cluster.html>

³⁸ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleiades> NASA/ESA/AURA/Caltech, Public Domain

season of Kartika (October 23). The moon rising among the Pleiades signals Diwali when lights of fire are sent sailing down the river. After fourteen years of exile, after defeating the demon and rescuing Sita, Rama (the seventh avatar of Vishnu) and Sita return home greeted by firelights.

GOVARDHAN PUJA is celebrated on the day after Diwali. The Monsoon rains end at this time of year. It celebrates Krishna defeating the stormy Indra's rain and floods by holding a hill over the villagers in Vrindavan.



Krishna holding Govardhan hill³⁹

The hill is near Krishna's birthplace in Uttar Pradesh. Vrindavan comes from name for tulsi, holy Basil (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) groves still existing near the city. The two main plants are green-leaved Shri Lakshmi and purple-leaved Krishna tulasi (See Marriage of Lakshmi and Krishna as Tulasi below).

When the gods churned the Milk Ocean, Dhanvantari, the god of Ayurveda medicine, appeared out of the waters with the elixir Amrit for the gods. The divine healer, shed happy tears, and when the first drop fell into the Amrit, it formed the tulasi (Holy Basil).⁴⁰ His birthday is celebrated two days before Diwali.

CHHATH - is an ancient festival celebrated during Kartika six days after Diwali to honor Sita and Ram. After Sita -Ram returned to her father's home of Janakpur, they worshipped both the setting sun and his wife, the rosy dawn. A fast period, sages were said to take nourishment directly from the sun.

Besides the Sun and Rama, another fiery god is associated with the Krittikas. Six stars among the Pleiades (Krittika) were foster mothers to another warrior. Kartikeya ('One Who Cuts') is a warrior son of Shiva. Nursing from each of his six mothers, he grew six heads. Reputed to have no interest in women: "This is almost singular, as all other Hindu gods are associated with one or more women, be they goddesses or otherwise."⁴¹ Kartikeya is known as Kumar, a 'bachelor'.

Some texts give him Devasena ('army of the gods') as wife. Demanding a fierce warrior as her husband. Agni was then chosen to help father Kartikeya. He caught the burning seed ejaculated by Shiva in a moment of passion. Agni, the

³⁹ Smithsonian Institute, wikipedia.org/wiki/Govardhan_hill

⁴⁰ wikipedia.org/wiki/Ocimum_tenuiflorum

⁴¹ Sumanta Sanyal, Encyclopedia Mythica

deity residing in this home, carried the fiery seed to water where the glowing child was found and nursed by six Pleiades.

"The Vedas describe the parents of Agni as two kindling fire sticks, whose loving action creates him. Just born, he is poetically presented as a tender baby, who needs loving attention lest he vanishes. With care, he sparks and smokes, then flames and grows stronger than his parents, finally so strong that he devours what created him."⁴² The wood of the fire sticks chosen to kindle to flame comes from the Pipal, the constantly flickering *Ficus religiosa*.

Agni, Fire himself, is the high priest aiding Yama transport the dead to the Otherworld. His star is the head of the demon star Algol in the constellation Perseus near the Pleiades. Every 68.75 hours its light dims rather suddenly for several hours before returning just as quickly to its former brightness. Algol is called the Winking Demon Star because of this light variation.

Best seen (like the Pleiades) in the evening sky from autumn to spring, Algol is visible in the northeast sky in autumn, high overhead in winter, and swings to the northwest sky by spring. Modern-day astronomy discovered Algol 'the 'Head of the Ghoul' is an eclipsing binary star.⁴³ Two stars revolve around each other. When the dimmer of the two star swings in front of the brighter star, Algol dims.

Svaha, yet another daughter of Daksha, fell in love with Agni, but the Fire ignored her. Presiding over sacrifices for the Seven Sages (stars of the Big Dipper), Agni had become enamored with their beautiful wives. When the unhappy Agni withdrew to the forests, Svaha followed him, tempting him in the disguise of six wives of the Sages. Eventually becoming Agni's wife, whenever Agni appears at a sacrifice his devoted wife is also present. Whenever fire sacrifices are made, *svāhā* is chanted.⁴⁴

MARRIAGE FESTIVALS AND THE PLEIADES

Although Agni's six-headed son is celibate, marriage and marital happiness arrive with the stars of this season. At Kartika's bright moon (October/November) the golden goddess Lakshmi, manifesting as a Tulsi plant, is married to the darkly beautiful Krishna. This day also marks the end of the four-month period considered inauspicious for weddings. The annual marriage season now begins as sun enters Scorpio by day, opposite the Pleiades rising at sunset.⁴⁵

⁴² wikipedia.org/wiki/Agni

⁴³ <http://earthsky.org/brightest-stars/algol-the-demon-star>

⁴⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Svaha

⁴⁵ wikipedia.org/wiki/Ocimum_tenuiflorum

Only six Pleiades are visible to the naked eye. One of the seven sisters left to join her husband among the stars of Ursa Major. Arundhatī is the wife of Vashistha ('Most excellent'), a star in Ursa Major. She was the only wife Svaha could not imitate. She manifests both as the morning star and as Alcor, a double star with Mizar (the sage Vashistha). Mizar is the second star from the end of the Big Dipper's handle; Alcor his companion. Arundhati has the same status as the seven seers and is worshipped with them as such.



Mizar and Alcor⁴⁶

In traditional India, the pair being a faithful married couple symbolizes marriage. Even Agni was not able to separate them, nor could Svaha take this form to seduce Agni. In some Hindu communities, priests conducting a wedding point out the constellation as a symbol of the married couple. "When [the bride] has seen the Pole star, the star Arundhati and the seven sages, let her break her silence and say, 'may my husband live and may I secure offspring'."⁴⁷

The Tree chosen for the Nakshatra of the Pleiades Cluster is the Cluster Fig (*Ficus racemosa*). Fitting as a symbol of the sharp cutting Kritikas and burning Agni, the fruit is home to swarming, stinging wasps.

⁴⁶ ESO Online Digitized Sky Survey

⁴⁷ Classical Hinduism, Mariasusai Dhavamony, p. 182 Goggle books

Lord - CHANDRA (Moon) rules ten years: Rohini, Hasta, and Shravana
The moon's strongest placement (exaltation) is in Taurus.

4. ROHINI - The Red One, Brahmi, or Star of Ascent 10"00 - 23"20 Taurus



STAR - Aldebaran, the red eye of Bull represents Rohini⁴⁸

DEITY - Brahma or Prajapati



Brahmi (c. 300 BCE) symbol for syllable 'Ma'. A similar cow-head writes numeral four in the Devanagari script derived from Brahmi. Brahmi, feminine form of Brahma, is also known as the learned Saraswati.

Rohini is the favorite wife of Moon; he is exalted in her home. Representing the creative energies of the universe, this home is a fertile nakshatra. Her father Prajapati, the creator god, also resides here. Daksha-Prajapati wed 27 of his 60 daughters to the moon. Infatuated by the beauty of fragrant Rohini, Chandra spent most time with her, ignoring the other daughters. The infuriated Prajapati also lusting after his daughter cursed the moon to wither away. But on this, the fourth day of the lunar month, the growing moon continues to wax with exaltation among her stars.

In some stories the rosy dawn as Rohini rather than Tara mothered an enlightened Budha (Mercury). Mercury's symbol, like his mother, is a bovine ☿. And like his mother, Budha is associated with numeral four, naming the fourth day of each week (Budhvar, Mercredi). The association of numerical myths to personages is not by chance. As Hermes/Mercury, his planetary cycle of 88 days around the sky quarters the earth every 22 days ($88/4=22$), and four passages occur each lunar cycle ($4 \times 88=352$). Further, his synodic cycle of 119 days (sunrise to sunrise) rejoins the sun every seven years: $365.25 \times 7=2556.75$. Divided by 119= 21.58 . As tricky god of numbers and letters, he controls all circles: $22/7=\pi$ (pi).⁴⁹

Like Brahmi, Mercury (Budh) is associated with the invention of the written script. While there are multitudes of buddhas, the historical Buddha took seven steps after being on a full moon in May (luni-solar month of Jyaistha, the full moon here when the morning star rises in Rohini). The Buddha's mother was a great magic: Maha Maya. Opposite Rohini is Jyestha the "Eldest Sister". Rohini may have led

⁴⁸ <http://coraskywalker.wordpress.com/2010/04/14/my-skywalkings-aldebaran/>

⁴⁹ It may be significant that Mercury is lord of three Nakshatras of endings: Ashlesha (Intersection between Moon/Cancer & Sun/LLeo), Jyestha (Elder Sister) & Revati (End of an Era of Time).

the Nakshatras in an earlier calendar, rising on the Vernal Equinox (c. 3054 BCE. Replaced by the Pleiades c. 2240 BCE, and finally by the Ashvini heading the Moon's homes since medieval times.⁵⁰ Rohini's star Aldebaran is also known as the Star of Ascent. When the sun travelling toward summer after the Winter Solstice passes the Equinox, his path is now north of the Celestial Equator. On the horizon, he moves visibly north of the Equinox midpoint.

Lovely Rohini is a partial incarnation of Surabhi, mother of all cows. Surabhi meaning fragrant, charming, pleasing, as well as cow and earth, can specifically refer to the divine cow as the mother goddess Kamadhenu. She is also known as Sabala ("the spotted one") and Kapila ("the red one"). She incarnated as the consort of Vasudeva.

India's ancient gods shift names and reappear as reincarnations or even partial reincarnations of earlier deities. Vasudeva is a partial reincarnation of Kasyapa, (one of the seven sages circling the North Star. Associated with this motherly Nakshatra, he wrote a classic of Ayurvedic pediatrics, gynecology and obstetrics. Daksha Prajapati had yet another thirteen daughters married to Kasyapa, Kashmir in the Himalayas being named after him.

The Mahabharata of the Kurus describes Surabhi arising from the churning of the cosmic ocean when gods and demons sought to acquire Soma, the elixir of life. As such, she is regarded as the offspring of both beings. Emerging out of the Milk Ocean she was given to the seven sages of the Dipper stars, her cows providing the milk, and clarified butter necessary for ritual fire-sacrifices.

Rohini's husband Vasudeva had another wife, Devaki. After the wedding of Devaki and Vasudeva, a divine voice predicted the death of Devaki's evil brother Kansa at the hand of "the eighth son of Devaki". Kansa then resolved to kill all her children. He imprisoned the couple and killed her first six children.

Note: In Vedic Astrology, slow moving Saturn, brother (or avatar) of Yama, god of death, enters Rohini every 30 years. "This is one of the most dreaded transits of the kings and their kingdoms. The scriptures say "Kings will die and kingdoms will fall when Shani enters Rohini"⁵¹

When Devaki found herself pregnant for a seventh time, the unborn child was transferred to the womb of Rohini and born as Balarama. Rohini is also the birth Nakshatra of Krishna, eighth child of Devaki. Secretly moved to Gokula immediately after birth. Rohini moved there to watch over her beloved stepson. Gokul, childhood home of Krishna, was on the banks of the Yamuna river. In time, Krishna indeed killed his evil uncle and released his parents. Balarama eventually married Revati (last Nakshatra) after her waiting eons for his birth

⁵⁰ Frawley, *Gods, Sages*, pp. 178ff.

⁵¹ <http://saieditor.com/fourth/?p=604>

Lord - MANGALA (Mars) rules 7 years: Mrigashira, Chitra, Dhanishta

5. MRIGASHIRA (AGRAHAYANI) - (23°20 Taurus - 6°40 Gemini)

"Agrahāyaṇa means the month of *Ayana* or *Equinox* (agra=first + ayana = travel of the sun, equinox). The aligning of this name with the Mrigashira Nakshatra (*lambda orionis*) gives rise to speculation that this name was given when the sun was near Orion at the time of vernal equinox, i.e. around 7000 years ago."⁵² This is even earlier than the calendar beginning with Rohini.

STAR - Orion's head representing the ancient Creator god Prajapati

This Nakshatra is the Head (shira) of a Deer/Antelope (marga). These stars also represent Agrahayani ('leader'), the Star of Searching, perhaps a memory that Orion in an earlier age rose (c. 6000 BCE) the morning of the Spring Equinox. Around 10,000 BCE, he heralded the Winter Solstice among the stars of a lost Golden Age. Winter is when the Sun begins to turn toward summer.



⁵³ Mrigashira, the stars in the head of Orion

DEITY - Soma the Moon challenged Mrigashira-Daksha (Orion) for Rohini. Lusting after Rohini, most beautiful of his daughters, he pursued her in the form of a swift antelope. To save her from incest, Shiva-Rudra as the star Sirius shot him with an arrow. Crashing to earth, the unity of the Universe Prajapati once upheld was destroyed. Long ago Giant Orion, the River of Stars running past his feet toward the Galactic Center, touched earth on the Solstices and later the Equinoxes. Knocked from his position ruling the crossroads of time, he no longer connected the corners of Earth and Sky. His Road of Stars removed from the year's four corners, the Giant no longer descended to mingle with men.



Milky way touching earth, date unknown. The four corners of the Equinoxes and Solstice were important times for Heaven and Earth to meet.

As the first to perform the great fire sacrifice (Ashvamedha), the sacrifice itself "figures as a double of Prajapati. Actually Prajapati./yajna symbolizes the (old

⁵² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrahayana>

⁵³ [wiki/Orion_\(constellation\)#/media/File:Orion_3008_huge.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orion_(constellation)#/media/File:Orion_3008_huge.jpg)

world) which Rudra brings to an end. Thus he already has the role of Hindu Shiva as the destroyer of the world."⁵⁴



Orion's Belt

The stars forming a diagonal below the Orion's Belt is his Sword with all its overtly phallic associations. This patch of light is the Orion Nebula visible to the naked eye on clear nights.⁵⁵ Stories about Orion often include his wound to his thigh (Prajapati) or penis (Egypt's Osiris). The cloud of swirling stars in the sword of Orion may once have had a visible explosion of a supernova. However, the potent sword still actively produces new stars.

The Rudrahridaya Upanishad states that Rudra is same as Agni, and Uma is same as Svaha.⁵⁶ Shiva's consort golden Uma, emerging from the ashes of Sati, is reborn under these stars. That is, in the constant recreation and recycling of gods and their stories, Svaha, wife of Agni present at every fire sacrifice, is also Uma and equally Shiva's Sati reborn after immolating herself in the fires of Prajapati's first sacrifice.

Sirius is Mrgavyadha the 'deer hunter' avatar of Rudra/Shiva. Among the Norse who also performed horse sacrifices, Sirius was known as *Lokabrenna* (Loki's torch). When Rudra shot down Prajapati, the toppling of this giant destroyed the Universe. The actions of Loki, trickster god of the Norse, caused Ragnarok the destruction of the northern world, which toppled the World Tree. Like glowing Rudra's association with fire (Agni), Loki is literally a Wild Fire parented by dry leaves (Laufey) and hard striking lightning (Farbauti).



Sirius

Note: the sacrifice of the Ashvamedha includes three fireplaces, recalling the three stars of Orion's belt. Among the Mayans of Mesoamerica, the end of the previous world occurred when the three hearthstones of Orion changed their position. The hearth being the center of both the world and home, three stones are still arranged in a triangle to support their cooking pots.

Rudra appears as the ruddy color red. In Astrology, Sirius also has attributes of the red planet Mars, Lord of this Nakshatra. When Mars ♂, another archer

⁵⁴ www.academia.edu/25272146/Parpola_Asko_2016._Rudra, p. 327.

⁵⁵ <http://www.constellation-guide.com/orions-belt/>

⁵⁶ wikipedia.org/wiki/Agni

dealing out war and death, conjuncts Sirius, these attributes are intensified. "On the Ascendant and with Mars combined, Sirius can be quite dangerous."⁵⁷

In addition to deadly Sirius, directly across the sky lie the stings and arrows of Scorpio and Sagittarius also pointing their killing arrows toward Orion.

Orion, also known as Osiris and Saturn, once ruled a Golden Age before being overthrown. The Galactic Age of 2012, rather than marking the end of another world, realigned the Womb of the sky (Scorpio/Sagittarius, the root stars of Mula #19) on the Winter Solstice with the Milky Way joining and opposing Orion/Gemini. We are now returning toward the stars of the lost Golden Age (c. 10,000 BCE), the total cycle of the Precession taking c. 25,000 years.

Once rising just before dawn in late July, Sirius follows a couple of weeks later. After setting in the west, 70 days later Orion is reborn into the night sky where he is visible most of the winter. Although Orion, located near Leo and Gemini, is south of the Ecliptic, he is still affected by the Precession and thousands of years from now will wander the summer rather than winter skies

Sirius, on the other hand, while inscribing her own stately circle about the Galaxy, has been only minimally affected. During thousands of years in ancient Egypt she appeared in mid-July to announce the Nile Floods. Even today, another 2000 years passing, she rises early August.⁵⁸ As a ruler of time, Sirius has a 365.25-day year, far more accurate than our current solar calendar.⁵⁹ This steady calendar star is a fitting symbol to represent Shiva/Rudra as Mahakala. Wearing the seasons as his garments, he is Great Time himself.



Sirius rising below Orion at dawn⁶⁰

FESTIVALS IN MRIGASHIRA (also AGRAHAYANA November 22-December)
The first month of the winter season begins with the sun's entrance into Scorpio. It occurs on either the new moon or the full moon around the same time of year. The luni-solar month now falling in November-December is determined by the full moon in the stars of Orion while the sun lies opposite in Scorpio.

⁵⁷ <http://astrologyking.com/fixe-d-star-sirius/>

⁵⁸ skyandtelescope.com/observing/a-real-scorcher-sirius-at-heliacal-rising/

⁵⁹ Christine Irigaray, academia.edu/33491549/The_Great_Clock_-3-_The_Sirian_Year

⁶⁰ <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/observing/a-real-scorcher-sirius-at-heliacal-rising/>

BHAIRAVA ASTAMI - The darkest day of winter falling at the end of this month, dark Shiva appeared in his fierce avatar as Kalabhairava during the darkening half of this month (Krishna Paksha).

The Kuru, descended from the river Tapti born from the union of the Sun and his Shadow Wife, were described above. The Tapti was ancestress of the Kuru) the first Vedic state (c. 1200 – c. 850 BCE). "The Kuru provided the legends growing into the Mahabharata epic."⁶¹ They were the clan who fought with the Pandvas whose warrior inspired the Bhagavagita. the Pandavas, relatives of the Kuru clan, included the brother Nakula, son of the Aswini Twins.

Out on raiding trips after the barley harvest, they returned home before the next rainy season to plough. War expeditions were in the season of Margashira when roads dry after the Monsoon rains.

VIVAH PANCHAMI - (one of the dates given for Sita and Rama's marriage) is a festival celebrating the wedding of Rama and Sita. He is the great warrior of the Ramayana epic. It is observed on the fifth day of the waxing phase of moon.



Illustration of Hindu epic Ramayana depicting Ashwamedha by Sahib Din (1652)⁶² Kausalya, Lord Rama's mother. is depicted slaying the horse (left) and lying beside it (right).

Kuru kings continued to perform the great Horse Sacrifices to enlarge their kingdoms. The bloody archer Rudra the son of three mothers, who occupies the following Nakshatra, may have been born from the three great queens who accompanied the chief queen when she was impregnated by the white stallion.⁶³

⁶¹ wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuru_Kingdom

⁶² wikipedia.org/wiki/Horse_sacrifice

⁶³ www.academia.edu/25272146/Parpola_Asko_2016._Rudra, p. 323

Lord - RAHU (north lunar node) rules 18 years: Ardra, Swati, Shatabhishak

6. ARDRA - The Moist or Green One - (6"40 - 20"00 Gemini)

STAR - Betelgeuse in Orion

DEITY - Rudra, an early destructive form of Shiva



Orion with Betelgeuse on right shoulder⁶⁴



In addition to fiery Sirius, Rudra manifests as Ardra the fierce red star of Betelgeuse on Orion's right shoulder. Rising with the sun of early summer (and at sunset in fall), Betelgeuse also represents the red planet Mars. Like Rudra, Mars arrives with storms, wars and violence. "Rudra primarily symbolizes the fire in its fierce, destructive aspect. This red element was an integral part of military raids."⁶⁵ Betelgeuse, a variable red star near end of life, may collapse in a few thousand years. Periods of sudden brightness reflect periods of Rudra's rages.

Lord Shiva a later form of Rudra opened His eyes after a long meditation and overcome, he shed a tear. This single tear from Shiva's eye grew into the rudraksha tree. Rudraksha (Sanskrit: *rudra* and *akṣa* "tear drop"), or "eye of Rudra", is the name both for the berry of the tree, and a name for a string of prayer beads made from those seeds. Strung together as a mala, traditionally the number of beads used should be 108 plus one. The extra bead is the "meru", *bindu* or "guru bead". If the mālā lacks a bindu, the energy is said to become cyclical and wearers who are sensitive may become dizzy.⁶⁶

Meru, also known as Sumeru, is the mountain used to churn the Milky Ocean. After the churning, sun, moon, and planets began to circle around this northern mountain. Reading stories by the lights of the sky, the churning rope of the Milky Way passes between Orion/Gemini's stars and the Root of the Galaxy among the fierce stars of Scorpio. Here each new world will be reborn from this womb.

Rahu, Lord of this Nakshatra, is kin to the King Naga (Vasuki), the serpent who acted as the turning rope churning the Milky Ocean. To accomplish this deed, the demons and gods held each end of the rope: the demons the head, the tail by the gods. Although the gods attempted to keep all the churned Soma essence, one

⁶⁴ Rogelio Bernal Andreo, Wikimedia Commons

⁶⁵ www.academia.edu/25272146/Parpola_Asko_2016._Rudra, p. 326.

⁶⁶ wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudraksha

serpent managed to drink a few drops before his head (Rahu) was severed from his tail (Ketu). The Soma elixir making him immortal, the naga Rahu-Ketu took his place among the planets. The sun and moon had warned the gods of his action, resulting in the enmity of the Dragon who periodically eclipses their lights when they stray near his path.



Vasuki Naga as rope, c. 1870⁶⁷

Along with Soma, such treasures as a great white horse, an elephant that ultimately bequeaths his head to Ganesh, and the Mother of Cows emerge. But there also appeared a dark spreading poison. Among the gods, only Shiva was strong enough to absorb it, leaving him forever with a blue neck. Shiva honored Vasuki by wearing him as a lace after Vasuki helped consume the poison.



Note: Shiva/Rudra as unchanging Sirius (#5) is Great Time (Mahakala) himself. Here he sits on the black and white tiger skin of time (Orion being a tiger in the orient). The beating drum by his left knee sounds out the rhythm of his cosmic dance. Around his neck is the poison filtering Vishuddhi The serpent in the three coils representing past, present, and future.

FESTIVALS IN ARDRA (lie in the Paus month of December, full moon in Sagittarius or when the morning sun rises in the stars of Gemini during the monsoon month of June/July).

Rahu is the ascending node along the serpentine, sinuous path the moon crosses each month. Yearly, the sun travelling the ecliptic also crosses the node on the Spring Equinox as he heads north toward the Summer Solstice. As a reflection of the solar year, the sun is now moving toward the honeymoon month of June.

⁶⁷ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O68648/painting-kurma-the-tortoise-incarnation-of/>

Sun and full moon always opposite each other, moist Ardra appears after a December sunset. Rising with the sun, she appears in June to announce the rainy Monsoons. The rains now stir Earth to begin her menstrual period (Ambobachi). When Sati, Shiva's beloved was cut into 52 (or 51) pieces after her death at the first Ashvedmedha, her vulva fell in Asaam.



Shiva carrying his dead Sati, c. 1800, India⁶⁸

The Kamarupa ("form of desire"), the *yoni* ("vulva," "womb," or "source") is said to have fallen to earth in [Asaam] and a temple was constructed on this spot. At the Kamakhya temple, the Ambobachi Mela is held each Monsoon season in mid June. She is worshipped in the form of a yoni-like stone instead over which a natural spring flows. A piece of the red cloth covers the stone yoni during the days of menstruation. The temple to the goddess Kamakya is one of the oldest of the Shakti Pithas.

⁶⁸ Public Domain, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Lord - GURU (Jupiter) rules 16 years: Punarvasu, Vishaka, Purva Bhadrapada
Jupiter, exalted in Cancer, is born under the stars of the following moon.

7. PUNARVASU - 20° Mithuna/Gemini - 3°20' Karka/Cancer

Puna+Vasu - Star of Renewal or Yamakau, Two Chariots-Restorers of Goods

STAR - Castor & Pollux

Lord Rama was born under these stars when the sun was in spring.

DEITY - Aditi Mother of gods

At first quarter, the growing Moon sails the zenith at sunset before setting about six hours later. We are now travelling through both the lunar month and through the festivals of the solar year. After the rains begin, Earth renews herself.

Aditi the mother of everything rules Punarvasu as the eternal Mother. Punarvasu signifying rejuvenation is a combination of two words Puna and Vasu. Puna means again and vasu means auspiciousness and enlightenment. After each time Rudra/Shiva dances his dance of Destruction, another Creation follows. Both Aditi, mother of eight Vasus, and Jupiter (Brahhaspati), most peaceful and beneficial of the planet-gods, are found in this Mansion.

The asta vasus or the eight factors of creation are Agni (fiery element), Apas (watery element), Dhruva (the pole-star), Soma (the nectar of rejuvenation), Dharma (the laws governing creation), Anila (air), Patyusha (dawn) and Prabhasa (day/ brilliance/ radiance). Among the vasus, the primordial elements fire and water ignite the process of creation.

While the fire-god Agni has Indo-European ancestry, he has absorbed attributes and myths likely to have Indian origin connected with local plants and animals. The kindling stick for Agni's sacred fire is taken from the Pipal-fig (*Ficus religiosa*). Agni is the "embryo of forest-trees" and invoked to place an embryo in the womb.⁶⁹ The moist womb of renewal now delivers her green new world.

The Pipal with its flame-shaped leaves is also known as the Bodhi tree under which Buddha became enlightened. Not all *Ficus religiosa* can be called a Bodhi Tree. The true tree must be able to trace its parent to another Bodhi Tree, the lineage continuing until the first Bodhi Tree under which Gautama gained enlightenment. This Buddha arrives under the stars of the following Nakshatra.

The leaves of this tree move continuously even when the air around is still and no perceptible wind is blowing. This phenomenon can be explained due to the long leaf stalk and the broad leaf structure. However, religious minded people attribute

⁶⁹ Frawley, *Gods, Sages*, p. 54

this movement of the leaves to the fact that "devas" or "gods" reside on these leaves and make it move continuously.⁷⁰



Purnavasu is the season the stormy rains of the Monsoon continue to pour from the eyes of raging Rudra. Among the Greeks, the star eyes of Castor and Pollux (Punavasu's stars) are associated with the fire appearing during thunderstorms. St. Elmo's fire can appear to sailors as a ball of light during thunderstorms. This fire is a bright blue or violet glow, appearing in some circumstances from tall sharply pointed structures. The fire can also appear on leaves and grass, and even at the tips of cattle horns. The Milky River sailing between Gemini and Sagittarius has been sailed by many (mythical) sailors including the Twins who sailed the stars with the ancient Argonauts.⁷¹



Protective eyes painted on boats

"On a voyage stars alight on the yards and other parts of the ship. If there are two of them, they denote safety and portend a successful voyage. For this reason they are called Castor and Pollux and people pray to them as gods for aid at sea." (Pliny, Natural History, first century AD)

⁷⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficus_religiosa

⁷¹ Sagittarius once ruled late November and early December skies. The River of Stars intersecting the zodiac near here, saints of early winter include sailors as well as eye-glass wearing visionaries and tax collectors. In addition to three apples, St. Nick's emblem is an anchor. He protects sailors, as do St. Jude, St Elmo and bespectacled St Matthew. Another sailor saint is Andrew (November 30. Elmo is celebrated in June ruled by Gemini (Purnavasu).

Lord - SHANI (Saturn) rules 19 years: Pushya, Anuradha, Uttara Bhadrapada

8. PUSHYA (To Nourish; or Tishya - The Celestial Archer) 3°20' -16°40' Cancer

Pushya means something that can nourish. The symbol of the nourishing Pushya is a milk-giving cow udder. Following the rejuvenation of Punarvasu, Pushya nourishes the creation of the previous Nakshatra.

DEITY - Ruler of the previous Nakshatra, Jupiter now appears as the deity of Pushya. Brihaspati (Jupiter), in his strongest exaltation at 5 degrees Cancer (Pushya), was born under these stars.⁷² But Chandra the moon entering his own Home in Cancer was still strong enough to bring Jupiter to grief.

"Brihaspati (Jupiter) preceptor of the gods had a very beautiful wife named Tara. One day when she was out walking, she came by Chandra's house."⁷³ Jupiter may be exalted here, but the Moon is lord of the House of Cancer. After meeting Tara, he stole her from Jupiter and fathered Budha (Mercury). Buddha's birth is said to have taken place at dawn during the full moon under the stars of Pushya during the Vaisakha month (April/May).

It is claimed that 27 trees represent each of 27 stars (composing the 12 houses of astrology, and 9 planets). The Bodhi Tree (Pipal) is said to represent Pushya in Cancer. Jupiter being the king of the gods, the Pipal is the 'king of the trees'.⁷⁴



Jupiter/Brihaspati

In general these stars are inauspicious to celebrate a marriage. Sita and Ram may have married under these stars, and like Jupiter's wife Tara, she too was kidnapped. (See Ashwini, #1)⁷⁵ The black Kali Yuga is said to have begun under the stars of Tishya (Pushya). Capricorn's morning stars (ruled by Saturn, Lord of this Mansion) rise opposite Pushya's full moon in Cancer. This begins Pausa, month of the Winter Solstice, December 22nd.⁷⁶ This is the darkest night of the darkest month of the year.

⁷² Frawley, *Gods, Sages*, p. 168

⁷³ <http://www.vedicastrology.com/learn/nakshatras-lunar-constellations/8-pushya/>

⁷⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ficus_religiosa

⁷⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pushya> Other dates are also given, including Uttara phalguni and Mrgashira. Their marriage festival is celebrated in December (Mrgashira).

⁷⁶ As always, the Precession affecting the stars, the sun's entrance into Capricorn is now mid January.

FESTIVALS IN PAUSA MONTH (December 22- January 21)

The month of Purnavasu is under the late fall stars of Sagittarius (opposite the full moon in Gemini of this Nakshatra). The rainy season lasting from June into late fall will soon end. Earth will soon sprout green again.

1. LOHRI -The fire festival of Lohri, observed the last day of Sagittarius before the sun moves into Capricorn, celebrates the harvest of winter crops. Lohri is the night before the Makar Sankranti, the sun's transit into Makara (Capricorn). This marks winter's end in India and the start of longer days. The light of the winter sun being reborn, the festival is dedicated to Agni. People build huge bonfires in the harvested fields and in front of their homes in the evening. People go around the bonfire and throw such food as puffed rice and popcorn. They ask Fire God Agni to banish poverty and usher in prosperity.

Fitting with the river running between Gemini and Sagittarius, the Makara is the vehicle of the River goddess Ganga. The Makara's river horse acts as the waterspouts pouring the rain from springs and temple roofs.

When she fell to earth, she landed first on Shiva's head to avoid destroying earth with her strength. There she still nestles along with the moon in his hair.



Ganga and Makara (19th C.)⁷⁷

2. MAKARA SANKRANTI - The Hindu festival honoring Surya (sun) is now observed mid-January every year. It marks the first day of sun's transit into the Makara (Capricorn) marking the Winter Solstice and the start of longer days. At the Solstice, the sun reverses his passage through the sky and begins his northern (Uttara) journey toward summer. The actual solstice and earlier date of the festival was mid-December, but due to the Precession, Capricorn now rises with the sun in January. Several thousand years earlier Capricorn's sun marked

⁷⁷ [wiki/Makara_\(Hindu_mythology\)#/media/File:Ganga_Kalighat_1875.jpg](#)

the actual Winter Solstice in December. Due to the Precession, the festival of the Makara is now celebrated around January 13 in the luni-solar month of Pausa.

Every twelve years, the Hindus observe the Makar Sankranti with one of the world's largest mass pilgrimages, with an estimated 40 to 100 million people attending for the event. At this event, they say a prayer to the sun and bathe at the confluence of the River Ganga and River Yamuna at the Kumbh Mela,

For the Hindu calendar, the Makara Sankranti marks the beginning of a new year, as the sun passes into the zodiacal territory of Capricorn. The solar year of 360 circle of days is divided into 12 lunar months of 27 days.⁷⁸ The resulting discrepancy was resolved by the intercalation of a leap month every 60 months.⁷⁹

3. PONGAL ('to boil') is one of the most popular harvest festivals of southern India. Pongal occurs in the middle of January every year and marks the auspicious beginning of Uttarayan (sun's journey northwards). Lasting for four days, it begins with a bonfire into which worn items are cast. Celebrations include drawing designs in front of homes, swinging & the cooking of delicious Pongal, a dish of sweetened rice boiled with lentils. Cows sent to earth to help farmers are stung with bells and decorated.

4. SHAKAMBARI JAYANTI- celebrates an incarnation of Durga who once incarnated as Shakambhari, Goddess of Vegetables, fruits, and green leaves ('she who bears vegetables') to end a famine.

When clarified butter is offered to the Fire, the blessings are absorbed by the Sun and transformed into rains. So when the ceremonies disappeared during a lawless period, no rain fell upon the earth. The Great Goddess appeared and began to shed waters from Her eyes. For nine nights continuously, heavy rains poured down from Her eyes. Her tears continued for nine nights, the days of her festival. Then she transformed her appearance into a wonderful form, her eight hands held foods like grains, cereals, vegetables, greens, fruits, meat and other herbs, she wore a beautiful garment, this new form of Goddess is known as Shakambhari.⁸⁰

5. PAUSH PURNIMA - The full moon in Paush (January) now begins a one month long austerity during the Magh month following. (Magh #10) Each morning of this winter holiday, worshippers bathe in the Ganga or Yamuna and charity is given to the needy. The next Nakshatra is considered extremely inauspicious.

⁷⁸ (according to the early Vedic text Taittirīya Saṃhitā 4.4.10.1–3) or 28 (according to the *Atharvaveda*, the fourth of the Vedas, 19.7.1.)

⁷⁹ <https://www.timecenter.com/articles/brief-history-of-the-hindu-calendar-by-timecenter/>

⁸⁰ wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakambhari

Lord - BUDHI (Mercury) rules 17 years: Ashlesha, Jyestha (Elder Sister) & Revati (End of an Era of Time) These three Nakshatras represent endings of various cycles. The active warrior planet Mars is debilitated among these stars at the end of Cancer.

9. ASHLESHA (The Clinging Star/The Embracer) - 16.40 to 30.00 Cancer

STAR - Naga/Hydra Perched on the serpent's tail is Covus, the crow and raven. Feeding on corpses they are death symbols.

This Nakshatra is considered very Inauspicious

DEITY - Nagas (serpents)

Stars - The Ring of stars at head of Hydra, also claw (Acubens) of Cancer. Hydra's head is located just south of the constellation of Cancer.



Hydra with ring of stars as head⁸¹

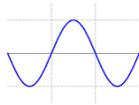
Nagas, the serpents both great and small, are the deities of this Nakshatra. Although this Moon Home is considered inauspicious, the Serpent demons found here once protected and sheltered Lord Vishnu floating in his ocean and Lord Buddha, Mercury (Budh) ruling this Nakshatra.

Now immortal, Rahu was once one of earth's serpents. Vishnu cut him in half for trying to steal the Soma created by the churning of the Milk Ocean. Because he had managed to drink a few drops, he is immortal and takes his place among the planetary powers. The sun and moon alerting Vishnu to the theft earned his eternal enmity. Each month and year the moon and sun travel past the severed pieces of his sinuous enemy. North node is the head of Rahu; the south node his tail (Ketu). Each passage allows the possibility of an eclipse.

Rahu, also called Svarbhaanu (Splendor of Radiance), lies in wait along the path of the ecliptic. Also known as the Dragon's Head, the ascending node is the point of intersection between the ecliptic (path followed by the sun, moon, and planets) and the plane of Earth's equator. Each Spring Equinox, the Sun crosses over from the Southlands of the dead (Yamas) heading North toward the high point of

⁸¹ Public domaine, Til Credner, own work, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HydraCC.jpg

summer. In the fall, the sun crosses the descending node (Ketu) on his way toward the Tropic of Capricorn and winter's dark.



Sine wave crossing equatorial line at Equinoxes

The serpent Hydra straddled the celestial equator in antiquity.⁸²

The moon's sinuous path moves through the seasons of the year. An eclipse can occur only when the sun and (full or new moon) cross the nodes at the same time. The Saros Cycle (18 years, 11 days, 8 hours) can predict eclipses of the Sun and Moon. One saros period after an eclipse, the Sun, Earth, and Moon return to approximately the same relative geometry, a near straight line, and a nearly identical eclipse.



Rahu, British Museum⁸³

Rahu appears as a serpent with no body riding a chariot drawn by eight black horses. His consort is Karali. Two of the "ever-flickering tongues of the black-pathed Agni were called Kali, the black, and Karali, the terrific, and these became names of Durga, the wife of Shiva, who was developed out of Agni."⁸⁴

Rahu is friendly with Venus (Shukra), joining her once a year. Their meeting can bestow an unhealthy increase in desire. After the great Churning, the demons stole the Soma and refused to share the elixir. Vishnu then took his only female form as the enchanting Mohini. Seducing the demons into giving her the cup of Soma, she bestowed it to the gods. Svarbhanu disguising himself, managed to drink a few drops before the sun and moon spotted the deception. Vishnu then took his spinning Wheel of Time, the lethal Sudarshana Chakra, and cut the serpent in two. A ring of stars in the head of Ashlesha suggests this disc.



Sudarshana Chakra c. 180 BCE⁸⁵

⁸² [wikipedia.org/wiki/Corvus_\(constellation\)](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Corvus_(constellation))

⁸³ [Redtigerxyz](#), Creative Commons

⁸⁴ from Google Books: George Wm Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, p. 421

⁸⁵ wikipedia.org/wiki/Krishna_Vasudeva Vasudev-Krishna is another avatar of Vishnu

Among the stories of the serpentine Svarbhānu, he once ushered Kalanemi through the galaxy. Like Svarbhanu, dismembered into Rahu (head) and Ketu (tail), the demon Kalanemi was also cut into pieces by Vishnu. The name, literally 'kala' ("time"), and 'nemi' ("the felly of a wheel or a portion), represents the segment of the wheel of time that denotes "the afternoon leading to sunset. 'Kala' also means "black" and is perceived to be Kalanemi who represents the period of darkness that "increases as day moves toward night and [the] Yuga moves towards the Kali yuga."⁸⁶ Appearing in the Vedic stories, Kalanemi reincarnated as Krishna's evil uncle Kamsa who would kill Krishna's first six brothers before being killed by Krishna. His demon father helped kidnap Sita, the earthborn wife of Rama, stealing her away to a labyrinth in the fall.



Felly: rim of the Wheel. Vishnu's Chakra is another Wheel of Time.

The tree for Ashlesha is the Beauty Leaf tree, Alexandrian Laurel (*Calophyllum Inophyllum*). Fitting with this unlucky Nakshatra, both the fruit and sap are poisonous but oil from round ball of fruit treats skin diseases. The stars named Cancer recall the sores and cancers that appear when Cancer rises with the summer sun. "Tamanu (Beauty Leaf) oil possesses a unique capacity to promote the growth of healthy skin." As a folk medicine, it heals cuts scrapes, burns, insect bites, anal fissures, diabetic sores, sunburn, dry or scaly skin, eczema, among other uses.⁸⁷



The end of Ashlesha being the end of Cancer's stars, Lunar and Solar zodiacs now conjunct. Cancer's stars belong to the Moon; the sun owns the following zodiac sign Leo. Whenever the sun and moon meet along the serpent's nodes, an eclipse is possible. An eclipse at the sun's prime on the Summer Solstice, when the midsummer sun rose in Cancer (late Purynvasu, Pushya, and Ashlesha), was especially feared. Even after the sun emerges from the shadow, he weakens and begins his fall south toward winter. As a luni-solar month, Ashlesha appears in December's Paush, the location of the sun on the darkest night of the year (Winter Solstice).

⁸⁶ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalanemi> (Hari-vamsa, ?1st Century CE)

⁸⁷ medicinehunter.com/tamanu

Lord - KETU (South Lunar Node) During periods of Ketu, material goods fall away; It is a time for spiritual deeds and purifications preceding the coming pleasures and excesses of Venus (#11).

10. MAGHA The Great One, The Bountiful - 00.00 Leo to 13.20 Leo
Magha from Maghaban, the cause of light and brightness

Rahu was among the Nagas of the 9th Nakshatra. Here the serpent's head (Rahu) and tail (Ketu) join the Moon (Cancer) and Sun (Leo) to keep the Circle of Time rolling. Like the monthly moon, each year the darkened sun of winter begins to brighten once more.⁸⁸

DEITY-Pitris (The Fathers) - These are family ancestors acting as guardian angels. They represent the ancestors, the father and the paternal lineage.

STAR- Regulus (Little King) in Leo
The ancestors dwell among Leo's stars until they reincarnate to rejoin the family



Regulus (α Leo) Heart of the Lion

Magha, the Little Sun King, is denoted by such words as 'benevolent', 'bountiful', or 'magnificent'. Its symbol is a Throne, the throne of Leo indicating royalty, power, status and prestige. Some families daily worship the sun during the month of Magh.



Lion throne with birth goddess, Catyl Huyuk, c. 6000 BCE⁸⁹ The Fathers waiting to incarnate must first enter the womb of the Queen. The Universe was born under the stars of Magh, the lion.

Leo was one of the earliest recognized constellations, with archaeological evidence that the Mesopotamians had a similar constellation as early as 4000

⁸⁸ Makar Sankranti (now January 13) celebrates the sun's transit into Makara (Capricorn) preceding the stars of Aquarius directly opposite the full moon of Leo (Magh)

⁸⁹ Wikimedia Commons. Leo led the Spring Equinox c. 10,000-8,000 BCE

BCE. The Persians called Leo *Ser* or *Shir*; the Turks, *Artan*; the Syrians, *Aryo*; the Jews, *Arye*; the Indians, *Simha*, all meaning "lion"⁹⁰

As luni-solar month, Magh begins with the sun's entry into Aquarius directly opposite the full moon in Leo. Magh may begin on either a new moon or the full moon around this time of year.

FESTIVALS IN MAGH MONTH (January 21-February 19)

1. PAUSH PURNIMA (full moon in Paush) began the one-month austerity period observed until the end of Magha. In the North Indian lunar calendar, the month of Magh starts the day following full moon in Paush. The purification rituals of this month prepare for the coming holidays of early spring.

2. VASANT PANCHAMI - In north India, spring is beginning. Fields bloom bright with yellow mustard flowers of spring (Vasant). The Vasant Panchami, also referred to as Sarawati puja, Shree Panchami, or the Festival of Kites celebrates spring and initiates preparations for the Holi Festival held 40 days later.

3. SARASWATI PUJA - The moon of Magh rises among the stars of the literary Lion. In Europe great lions still guard the entrances of important buildings and libraries. The sun opposite the full moon lies among the brilliant stars of Aquarius. This is the month of the festival for studious Saraswati, goddess of learning, art, and music. It is usually celebrated on the 5th day of this month (the Panchami). On this day, the Vasant Panchami celebrated as her birthday and schools seek the blessing of Goddess of learning.



Leo's stars, Leo being 5th House of the Zodiac

Like Valentine Day when birds and lovers choose their mates, February's Vasant Panchami is also associated with pursuing lovers as well as pursuing knowledge (To Know, in the biblical sense). After the death of his Sati, Shiva withdrew from life. Leaving on the dark night of the Shiva Maharati (celebrated the 13th night of the month of Phalgun (#11), he no longer danced his dance of renewal. Demons abounded and the world was in danger of ending for all time. The worried gods begged Brahma to intervene.

The result was the creation most beautiful being in the world, Kama god of love and desire. Sometimes he is a son of Yama, golden God residing where new souls are both carried away and re-enter the world of Time (Bharani, #2, the 'Bearing Star'). Other stories make him the wish born son of Brahma. However

⁹⁰ [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_\(constellation\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leo_(constellation))

he entered the world, he comes springing green with a bow made of honey-sweet sugar cane strung with humming-bees to shoot his flower tipped arrows.



Kama, equated with the creative power of Agni, god of fire, takes aim at Shiva.⁹¹

Near the meditating Shiva waited the hopeful daughter of the Mountain. Although Parvati was his beloved Sati reborn, deep in his withdrawal Shiva was oblivious. Kama approached, bringing spring (Vasant) with him. The dying forest became scented with flowers and full of bird song. Drawing his bow, he pierced Shiva. Awakened, opened his third eye. First focusing on Kama, he incinerated him with his fiery gaze. Then noticing Parvati, he finally recognized his love. He relented but Kama, no longer having a body, arrives unseen to shoot his love arrows.

1. MARRIAGE OF Shiva-Parvati on the 6th day of bright fortnight of this month.



The tree for Magh is the Banyan Tree (*Ficus Benghalensis*). The extensive hanging roots shelters both travelling merchants (banyans), and meditating gods.⁹² Shiva's is often depicted meditating by the Banyan.

4. RATHA SAPTAMI - The previous month of Paush began with the celebration Makara (Capricorn) Sankranti when the sun began his journey north after his stay among the stars of the Winter Solstice. Capricorn originally falling in December now rises in January. On the 7th night (Saptami) of this Magh month, the Sun celebrates his birthday. On this day in brightening February, the Sun began to enlighten the world. The season is changing from winter into spring, which intensifies with the coming Moon of Chaitra (March 21). The Sun has turned his Chariot (Ratha). Having left the southland of the dead, he now visibly travels north toward the high point of summer (Tropic of Cancer, Summer Solstice).

⁹¹ pantheon.org/articles/k/kama.html

⁹² giftingtrees.blogspot.in/2011/04/great-indian-shelter.html

3. BHISHMA MAGHA SHUKLA ASHTAMI is the death anniversary of Bhishma. The brother of the god Rama was allowed to choose the date of his death. He chose the auspicious time when the sun moves north after the Winter Solstice, breathing his last breath the fourth day after the Ratha Saptahmi.

4. MAAGH MELA, celebrated in most of North India, is held every year where the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati rivers meet near Allahabad (Uttar Pradesh), Both Rama and Krishna once ruled this land. This is a smaller version of the Kumbha Mela held every 12 years. The month long austerity of Maagh began when the sun passed into Capricorn in January.

Note: the next Nakshatra, number eleven, begins the pleasures of spring. By tradition, the period of morning death and losses ends on the eleventh day.

I describe both the Phalgunas together as they both celebrate the Sacred Marriages held during the Phalgun month of the Spring Equinox.

Lord - SHUKRA (Venus)

11. PURVA PHALGUNI (Pubbha) First Reddish One -13.20 to 26.40 Leo

STAR - Zosma ('girdle') (δ Leonis on lion's back)



Leo



Zosma⁹³

DEITY -Bhaga, god of marital bliss/marriage bed and prosperity, the stars represent the Front 2 Feet of the Marriage Bed.

Shiva started his marriage procession after being awoken by Passion/Kama (#10). His marriage occurs in the following Nakshastra, (Uttara Phalgun #12)

Lord - SURYA (Sun) is the Lord of the second Phalgun, the back legs of the Marriage Bed.

12. UTTARA PHALGUNI (UTHIRAM) 2nd Reddish One, 26.40 Leo - 10.00 Virgo

(Aquarius/Pisces rises with the sun opposite these evening stars)

STAR - Denebola ('tail of the lion') in Leo



Denebola (β Leo)

DEITY: Aryman ("close friend", "play-fellow" or "companion") is one of the early Vedic deities. Third son of Aditi, mother of the Adityas, he is depicted as the mid-morning sun disk.

In the Rig Veda Aryaman is a protector of mares; the Milky Way (aryamṇāḥ pánthāḥ) was his path through the sky. In German mythology, Irmin was the god

⁹³ www.nikomi.net

of war and storms, the Milky Way being 'Irmin's Way'. Often identified with Norse **Odin** and often identified with him, Irmin (Hermann) is related to the Vedic god Aryaman. Like Rudra/Shiva's linga a pillar of stone (Irminsul) represented Hermann. Charlemagne destroyed Germany's Irminsul in 772 CE and then seized control of the pole stars. Once known as Irmin's Wagons, they were renamed Charley's Wains.

FESTIVALS IN PHALGUNA (February 20-March 20) This month includes both Phalguns. The stars of Leo form most of the month and transits into the moon of Chaitra, the intersection between the two months being the Vernal Equinox (March 21).

1. **MAHA SHIVA RATI PHALGUN** , the Great Night of Shiva is celebrated this month. Shivaratri festivals occur every 13/14th during the dark of the month (starting with the full moon), but the Great Night, held just before spring, occurs the last night of Magh (South Indian calendar) and in Phalgun (North Indian calendar).⁹⁴

The Shivratri arrives on the 'amavas' - the no moon night, the dark night before a new moon appears. This night represents the black Kali Yuga, last of four great cycles of Time. This is the Dark Age before the world returns to enlightenment. The Kali Yuga is said to have begun at midnight on 18 February, 3102 BCE.⁹⁵ It began when blue skinned Krishna (8th avatar of Vishnu) left earth and will end when the last and final avatar of returns.

Lord Shiva appeared just before the Kali Yuga to help rid the world of evil and ignorance. In Phalguna he first manifested himself as a great pillar of light. After appearing, he danced his first dance of creation and destruction on this day. His lingam now appears in stone in the temples.



2. **PHULERA DOOJ** (New Moon day), falling between Vasant Panchami and Holi, people prepare to celebrate Holi with flowers and bright colors.

3. **HOLI** is celebrated the end of the winter season on the last full moon day of Phalguna usually falling in the late February or March. There are a couple stories explaining the powdered dyes thrown during the festival.

⁹⁴ South India calendars begin with the new moon, North, with the Full.

⁹⁵ wikipedia.org/wiki/Kali_Yuga

As a baby, dark Krishna developed his blue skin because the demon Putana tried to poison him with her breast milk. Instead, sucking her dry, the baby killed the demon. When grown, dark blue Krishna despaired whether the beautiful fair-skinned Radha (lightening) would avoid him because of his dark color. His mother suggested he approach Radha and color her face. Radha and Krishna then became a couple and ever since, the play with colors has been part of Holi⁹⁶



Holi is named for Holika, evil sister of the demon Hiranyakashipu. Given the boon neither god, human, nor animal could defeat him, he was shaking the abode of the gods. Vishnu incarnated as a lion-man (Narashimha). Being none of the above, Narashimha was able to destroy the demon at twilight. The demon's sister Holika also dies under the Lion stars of Leo. Holika also had a protective boon: a cloak that protected her from burning. She was tricked into sitting in Agni's flames while holding her blameless nephew. The boon only protected her while she sat alone so she was incinerated while the nephew emerged unharmed. On the eve of Holi near sunset, bonfires are lit and people dance around Holika's fire. Good has again destroyed evil.

Above I discussed Kama awakening Shiva to notice his past and future wife, Parvati/Uma, waiting patiently for his notice. There was yet another demon threatening the stability of the world. Tarakasura had gained the protection that only a son of Shiva could kill him. Deep in meditation, Shiva was celibate. The worried gods sent spring bestowing Kama to awaken him. Awakened in passion, he ejaculated a burning seed caught by Agni who placed it in a lake. The resulting child became fierce Kartikaya whom the Pleiades found and nursed (Kartika, #3). In time, this son of Shiva and Agni killed the demon.

MARRIAGE FESTIVALS IN PHALGUN

Several Sacred Marriages occur this month near the Vernal Equinox. Bhaga, generous deity of Purva Phalgun (Front Feet of the Marriage Bed) is invoked for favors and marriage contracts. Connected to wealth and luck, he presides over love, relationship, affection and sexual passion. Bhaga (gifting) has the function of distributing riches or spoils among. The name of the city Baghdad (god given) derives from this name.

⁹⁶ wikipedia.org/wiki/Holi

The deity of Uttara Phalgun (Back Feet of the Marriage Bed) is Aryaman who presides over marriage, family and children, and considered chief of the ancestors. Hindu marriage oaths are administered with an invocation to Aryaman being the witness to the event.

Valmiki who lived thousands of years ago according to Hindu tradition, Kalidasa who lived before first century BCE, and Kampan who lived in 12th century CE -- all mention the star Uttar Phalguni as the most auspicious day for the wedding.⁹⁷

“Let the four princesses give their hands to four valiant princes on the same day, O Great Ascetic. O Brahmin, the wise declare the nuptials should take place on the last day under the Phalguni star when Bhaga is in the ascendant” — Bala Kanda, Chapter 72 (Vamiki Ramayana)⁹⁸

Shiva and Parvati/Uma married this month on the night of Maha Shivarati their wedding celebrated in temples during the month of Phalgun.. According to some traditions Sita and Ram and Kartikeya and his wife also married this month. Rama who broke Shiva's bow courting his wife married on the same day as Shiva.⁹⁹ However other traditions celebrate Rama and Sita's marriage in Mrigashira (November/December). During that month, the flight of another arrow changed history (Mrigashira #5)

“During the Muhurtha [a period of time of 48 minutes] sacred to the sun, and when the moon was in conjunction with UTTARA PHALGUNI, such of her kinswomen as had their husbands and male children living, put decorations on her [Uma's] body” – Kalidasa in Kumarasambhava, Chapter 7, Sloka 6

⁹⁷ <http://swamiindology.blogspot.com/2015/04/why-did-rama-marry-sita-on-pha>

⁹⁸ tamilandvedas.com/tag/sita-kalyan/

⁹⁹ Another tradition states: Ram-Janki' marriage falls on the fifth day of the bright half of Mrigashira month occurring every year around November-December. The broken stone bow lies in the jungle near Sita's home in Janakpur (now in Nepal).

Lord - CHANDRA (The Moon)

13.HASTA - The Hand 10.00 Virgo - 23.20 Virgo

After the pleasures of the preceding marriage bed Venus now rests, being debilitated (weak) in Virgo

STAR - 5 stars to represent hand. Algorab (δ Corvi) is on R. wing of the Crow/Corvax. The Crow (or Raven) lies just south of constellation Virgo and sits on his enemy Hydra, the Water Snake (Ashlesha #9).

DEITY - Savriti (a form of the Sun at the junction prior to dawn) He symbolizes awakening. Following this moon are the stars of the Spring Equinox month when the Wheel of Time commences.

"The god who adorns vedas is also worshipped as time. He is said to have made the whole universe as his chariot and rides on the wheel of the year with the seven types of vedic metres as horses.¹⁰⁰ The seven horses can also represent seven colors and seven planets, or seven notes.

Suyra - the sun. When considered distinct from the Sun proper, he is conceived of as the divine influence or vivifying power of the Sun. The Sun before sunrise is called Savitr. After sunrise until sunset the sun is called Sūrya.

The following Nakshatra (Chaitra #14) welcomes the sun's arrival into the Vernal Equinox.



Serpent with Crow on Tail

The tree representing this Nakshatra is the sweet Jasmine associated with love and romance of this spring season. (*Jasminum Grandiflora*)

¹⁰⁰ bhakti-psalm.blogspot.com/2014_03_28_archive.html

Lord - MANGALA (Mars)

14. CHITRA- The Shining Jewel, The Pearl -(23' 20" Virgo to 6'40" Libra)

DEITY - Tvastar or Vishvakarma

At full moon (13-16th days after the new moon), the moon is behind earth in space and opposite the sun. As the sun sets among the early stars of spring the moon, fully illuminated by sunlight, rises in the east among the stars of Libra.

STAR - Chitra is Spica, the bright star of wheat held by Virgo and one of the most auspicious stars in the sky. Chitra denotes success, riches, and a love of sciences and arts. The Deity of this home is the Craftsman Tvashtar.

The sun passes the nodes, the intersection of the ecliptic and the Celestial Equator, on the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes. Day and night once balanced here on Libra's scales. The Spring Equinox sun, once in Aries, rose directly opposite the full moon of Spica in AD 285. Due to the Precession, the Equinoxes are now receding toward Pisces and Virgo.



Spica¹⁰¹ Spica – α Virginis (Alpha Virginis)

To find Spica among the night stars: "Follow the arc (of Big Dipper) to Arcturus and speed on to Spica." Bright Arcturus appears in Swati's Mansion (#15)

Tvashtar the celestial architect created the Universe by blowing the creatures into existence and fanning them with his wings. His breath animated their souls. Master of illusion and magic he possesses regenerative power. Echoing an earlier feminine or transsexual form, he is known as the Garbha-pati, the Lord of the Womb. The term "Tvaṣṭṛ" is mentioned in the Mitanni treaty, which establishes him as a proto-Indo-Iranian divinity."¹⁰²

Vedic stories twining and intertwining, Tvashtar himself emerged from the navel of Vishvakarma ("all-accomplishing, maker of all, all-doer"), the alternate deity for this Nakshatra. Vishvakarma's daughter Sanjana married the Sun. Due to the Sun's blazing light and heat, she could not go near her spouse (see #1 Ashvini).

¹⁰¹ Photo, Albert Manzanrares, Creative Commons

http://www.astronomike.net/en_annuaire_auteur_14397_1.html

¹⁰² Mittani (c. 1500-1300 BCE) kingdom in Anatolia Although their origins are not known, many deities and names of aristocracy were Indo-Aryan (including Mitra, Indra, Varuna, Nasatya, the Ashwini)

After complaining to her father, Vishvakarma dimmed the light so his daughter could hug the Sun. The left over Sun "dust" was collected by Vishvakarma and made into three divine objects¹⁰³ Sometimes Tvashter is cited as Sanjana's father, the two gods being closely linked.

Among the Craftsman's creations is the Sudarshana Chakra used to sunder the serpentine lunar nodes of Rahu and Ketu at the great Churning. Another is the thunderbolt, the diamond Vajra given Indra to bring rain. Created from the bones of a pious sage, it destroyed the Dragon of drought (Vritra) who was drying the rivers to dust. The final battle lasted 360 days.¹⁰⁴

Indra rides a great white elephant, Airavata who sprays water into the clouds to produce the rain. One of eight cosmic elephants, each guards a compass point. Note: In many traditions, the eight compass points determined by the sun's path of 360 degrees around the year (two Solstices, two Equinoxes, and their midpoints) time the seasonal festivals.

FESTIVALS IN CHAITRA (March 22 / 21-APRIL 21)

We have arrived at the Spring Equinox. On this day, and only on each Equinox, the sun rises due east as he travels the Serpent's Path. The Moon is near Chitra on the full moon day of this month. We began the stories among the stars of Ashvini during the Fall Equinox. In lunar religious calendars, Chaitra appears with the full moon in March/April as the first month of the year. The nodes are a dangerous time for the sun and moon. The sun passes them twice a year on the spring and fall Equinox, while the moon passes monthly. Demons lurk here to swallow their lights

1. The FIRST OF CHAITRA is celebrated as New Year's Day, known as Gudi Padwa in Maharashtra, Chaitrai Vishu and Ugadi in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. The Ugadi New Year begins a new Samvat, the Samvatsara being a 60 year cycle linked to position of Jupiter and the sun. Homes are decorated with a Gudi flags and designs are drawn by homes.¹⁰⁵



2. HOLI, the spring festival of color, begins the eve of Chaitra on the last day of the Phalgun month. Exactly 6 days after Holi the festival of Chaiti Chhath is

¹⁰³ wikipedia.org/wiki/Sudarshana_Chakra

¹⁰⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Vritra

¹⁰⁵ <http://www.drikpanchang.com/rangoli/ugadi/rangoli-designs.html>

observed. Also celebrated in the fall in the month of Kartika, it is dedicated to the returning sun and the dawn of day.

3. BASODA PUJA, usually celebrated 8 days after Holi, is dedicated to Sheetala (one who cools), goddess of small pox. An aspect of the goddess Durga, she carries in her four hands held a short broom, winnowing fan, jar of cooling water and a drinking cup. With her power, she cures fevers and diseases. As a spring goddess, she is also identified with the healing Vasant (Spring).¹⁰⁶



Kalighat painting of Sheetala

4. RAMA NAVAMI - Rama's birthday is celebrated on the ninth day of the bright half of this month, approximately in April. When the month begins on the full moon, the first 15 days are the darkening (Krishna) half of the month. Lord Vishnu incarnated as Rama on this bright day. The reign of King Rama (Ramraja) was a period of peace and prosperity.

Rama, the descendent of the sun (Raghu vamsa) appeared at mid-day when the sun was high in the sky. The chariot that is part of the celebration has now crossed toward the northern path of the yearly journey. "In some Hindu sects, prayers on Ramanavami day start not with an invocation to Rama but to Surya (sun). Again, the syllable Ra is used in the word to describe the sun and brilliance in many languages." (Ravi is another name for the sun).¹⁰⁷

5. HANUMAN JAYANTI is the birthday of Rama's loyal monkey general. Born at sunrise during the full moon of the Chaitra month, the monkey warrior appeared on Tuesday (Mangalvar) during the Chitra Nakshatra. Mangalvar is the day of the warrior Mars (Mangal), Lord of this Nakshatra.

Hanuman is one of the most powerful Hindu gods. Born as the son of Shiva to help Rama kill the powerful ten-headed demon Ravana, he is also the son of 'Pawan', the God of Winds. His mother Anjani was cursed to wear the shape of a monkey until she had a son of Shiva. Vishnu who had incarnated as Rama also took the shape of the enchantress Mohini. The mere glimpse of Mohini caused Shiva to eject his seed (Shiva Purana). As Shiva pursued her, his semen fell on

¹⁰⁶ wikipedia.org/wiki/Shitala

¹⁰⁷ indianmandirs.blogspot.com/2014/03/sri-rama-navami-sree-sitarama-kalyana.html

the ground to become lingas and ores of gold and silver. Agni caught the burning semen and poured it into Anjani to generate the monkey-god. Another story has the Wind God carrying the seed to Anjani (see #15 Swati).¹⁰⁸

6. The BHARANI FESTIVAL is held in Kerala when the spring sun appears in Chaitra's month of March/April while the moon is in Bharani. It is dedicated to Bhadrakali, fierce form of the Great Kali/Durga as protector. She incarnated in this form to destroy one of the many demons plaguing ancient India. There are several traditions regarding her appearance. There was a great battle between Durga and Raktabija (seeds of blood). Each drop of the demon's blood became a new demon. Kali-Durga then appeared as an even more fierce Bhadrakali and licked up each red drop, destroying the demon.

¹⁰⁸ wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohini

Lord - RAHU (north node of moon)

15. SWATI (From Su-Ati 'Very Good') - 6'40" to 20'00 Libra

The sun is debilitated in Libra. Rahu, the ravenous enemy of the sun and moon is Lord of this Nakshatra. Mid-Libra the sun on his travels toward summer once crossed the north node, facing the possibility of being swallowed by Rahu.

STAR- the star in the left knee of Bootes is named Arcturus: Guardian of the Bear, The Watcher, or the Keeper of the North.

DEITY - Vayu, the god as wind

Bootes guards the stars circling the North Pole. Arcturus, known by ancients as the Guardian of the Bear, herds the stars of Ursa Major around the pole. In one story, the constellation represents a ploughman driving his oxen followed by two dogs, Asterion and Chara (represented by the constellation Canes Venatici, the Hunting Dogs). The ploughman's oxen are tied to the polar axis and their movement keeps the skies spinning in their seasons.

This is similar to India's story about Arcturus. In India, the wind god as Vayu composes the Ropes of Wind tethering the stars to their fixed post as they turn. They faithfully point out the hours of the night and the seasons of the year.



Arcturus¹⁰⁹

The Hindu deity Vayu is the god of Wind and Storm who helped father the monkey general Hanuman. Also known as Vāta, Pavana ("the Purifier"), and sometimes Prāṇa ("the breath"), Pavana played a role in [Anjana's](#) begetting Hanuman so Hanuman is also called Pavanaputra "son (putra) of Pavana" and Vāyuputra. As the Breath, he is one of the strongest of the gods.

Once the gods who control bodily functions engaged in a contest to determine who among them is the greatest. When a deity such as that of vision would leave a man's body, that man would continue to live, albeit as a blind man and having regained the lost faculty once the errant deity returned to his post. One by one the deities all took their turns leaving the body, but the man continued to live on, though successively impaired in various ways. Finally, when [Vayu] started to

¹⁰⁹ <http://coraskywalker.wordpress.com/2010/04/29/my-skywalkings-arcturus/> In Mesopotamia, Arturus was associated with Enlil, god of Wind and Storm.

leave the body, all the other deities were [...] pulled off their posts by force, "just as a powerful horse yanks off pegs in the ground to which he is bound."¹¹⁰



A homonym of vata 'north' is vatam, 'banyan fig', the might tree with rope-like air-roots from which it has got its name (cf. vatam 'rope'). This Dravidian homonymy explains two conceptions of Puranic cosmology, the banyan as the tree of the northern direction and the idea that stars and planets are tied to the pole star with invisible 'ropes of wind.'¹¹¹

That is, the guardian star of the Pole keeps time and life continuing in their cycle.

Vayu's consorts are Swasti (Luck) and Bharati (another name for the goddess Saraswati).



"Painting of the astadikpala Vayu. He is depicted crowned and four-armed and riding on his antelope vahana. He is accompanied by two attendants - with a club (front) and a parasol held high above him (behind)."¹¹² In Greek mythology, two dogs accompany Vayu's Star Arcturus.

The tree chosen for Swati Nakshatra is the Terminalia Arjuna, The Arjuna tree. Thread spinning silk worms feed on its leaves. Named after the hero Arjuna ('Bright'), he was born under the star Uttara Phalguni. Arjuna was the greatest warrior of the Pandava clan. This greatest of archers was instrumental in defeating the clan of the Kurus during the Mahabharat War.

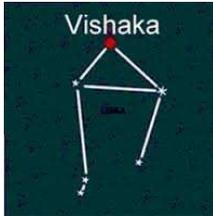
¹¹⁰ wikipedia.org/wiki/Vayu story from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, c. 700 BCE

¹¹¹ academia.edu/5564641/Parpola_Asko_2013._Beginnings_of_Indian_astronomy p. 22

¹¹² Public domain, British Museum

Lord - GURU (Jupiter)

16. VISHAKHA (Fork Shaped) or RADHA (Gift) - (20.00 Libra - 3.20 Scorpio)
It is a compliment to Anuradha (#17), the birth star of Surya the sun.



Saturn is exalted at 20° Libra, and the Moon is debilitated at 3° Scorpio.

STAR - 4 stars on scales of Libra (including Zuben el Genubi Alpha Leo) - Southern claw in Libra, once part of Scorpio) also southern pan of Libra

DEITY- Satragni – also called Indragni (Agni and Indra in one form) Like the reflective moon and sun defining the seasons, this is another twinned pair.

FESTIVALS IN THE VAISAKHA MONTH (April 12-May 22)

On the full-moon day this month, the moon appears near the star Alpha libra.

The Sun once transited this area on the Equinox. Due to the Precession the morning sun currently transits the constellation of Libra from approximately October 16 to November 17. The luni-solar month marked by stars near the full moon rising in the night sky (as opposed to rising with the sun), appears as May days began to grow toward the longest day on the summer Solstice.

1. VAISAKHI - the harvest festival celebrated this month.
2. VAISAKHA PURNIMA is the birthday of Gautama Buddha amongst southern Buddhists or the Theravada school. The birthday is observed on the full moon of May. His enlightenment and death also occurred on this day.
3. PARASHURAMA JAYANTI, - birthday of sixth incarnation of lord Vishnu He Incarnated to exterminate kings neglecting duties and oppressing subjects. Unlike other avatars, this one still exists of earth. He will be guru of Kalki, 10th and final Avatar of Vishnu. Parashurama came to the betrothal of Sita and Rama (7th avatar).
4. AKSHAYA TRITIYA (Never diminishing) - On the third day of bright half of this month, the Satya Yuga ended and Treta Yuga began. Lord Vishnu, preserver of creation and his golden wife Lakshmi are worshipped. After the Treta Yuga, the Dvapara Yuga began. The Kali and most dismal of the four ages began when

Vishnu in the avatar of Krishna left earth at the end of the Kurushetra War (Mahabharata).

5. GANGA JAYANTI, The River Ganga was born on the seventh day. She first descended onto head of Lord Shiva to avoid destroying the earth. Eventually she was released in seven streams from his hair to save Bhagiratha's ancestors. This great king was responsible for bringing the Ganga down from the heavens. His ancestors could only be saved if the Ganga descended. On way to his kingdom, the waters destroyed the ashram of Jahhnu, Angered the sage drank up all her water. After many prayers by the gods, Jahnu released her so she could continue her journey. Her head stream is now called Bhagirathi.

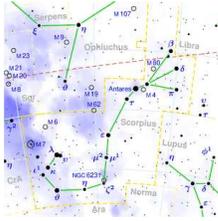
After finally being released, the river descended in Jyeshtha (May/June) to purge the cursed souls of Bhagiratha's ancestors.

6. SITA NAVAMI (Janaki Navami). - Birthday of Sita. She was born on the ninth day of this month on Tuesday under the Pushya Nakshastra. Her birthday falls one month after Rama's birthday. She is the adopted daughter of King Janaka. Out plowing his field, the king found baby in gold casket. After her plowed land is called Sita (furrow).

7. NARASIMHA JAYANTI - The 4th incarnation of Lord Vishnu appeared in a Lion form to kill demon Hiranyakashipu ('clothed in gold'- hiranya). Best celebrated bright half of month under Swati Nakshatra on Saturday. The demon's sister is Holika whose destruction is celebrated with joy and bonfires at Holi.

Lord - SHANI (Saturn)

17. ANURADHA - Following Radha #16 Nakshatra (3.20 - 16.40 Scorpio)



Anuradha Constellation¹¹³

STARS - [β](#), [δ](#) and [π](#) Scorpionis

The sun currently transits Scorpio from approximately November 16 to December 15 (sidereal zodiac); 2000 BCE, mid October to mid November; c. 4000 BCE, mid September to mid October (Autumn Equinox). (Taurus; helical rising is opposite Scorpio). As a luni-solar month we are still in Vaisakha (May/June).

DEITY - Mitra ('friend', also 'binding oath' 'tra/causes to happen'), one of 12 names of the sun) He is also known as Mitra/Varuna. Anuradha is the birthplace of Surya, another name for the sun. Mitra, another form of the Sun, is also connected to Lord Varuna. Mitra became increasingly associated with the light of dawn and the morning sun while Varuna became associated with the evening, and ultimately the night.

Varuna is lord of the cosmic rhythms of the sun and other celestial spheres, while Mitra brings forth the light at dawn covered each night by Varuna. Agni's fire is kindled before dawn to produce Mitra, and when kindled is Mitra. In the Atharvaveda, Mitra arrives with the sunrise contrasting with Varuna's association with evening. Varuna ('he who covers'), god of rain and oceans in this aspect, is guardian of the western horizon.

Mitrosavam in December is a Hindu festival worshipping the Sun whose orderly traversal of the sky is ensured by Mitra-Varuna, the guardians of cosmic order.

¹¹³ [wikipedia.org/wiki/Anuradha_\(nakshatra\)](https://wikipedia.org/wiki/Anuradha_(nakshatra)), [Torsten Bronger](#). - Own work:

Lord - BUDH (Mercury)

18. JYESHTHA - Elder Sister (16.40 - 30.00 Scorpio - Scorpius corresponds to these Nakshatras: 3 degrees of Vishakha, Anuradha, & Jyestha).

STAR - Opposite red Aldebaran (Rohini) in Taurus is the red star Antares, the heart of Scorpio. The Taittiriya texts call her Rohini, and others Jyeshtha.



Antares¹¹⁴

In ancient Egypt, Antares represented the scorpion goddess Serket and also the goddess Isis in the pyramidal ceremonials. Isis and Serket, like black Kali of India associated with this area of the sky, are mother goddesses. After the destruction of Time, her black womb gives birth to a new world. The Black Hole, the Navel of our Galaxy spawning out stars, is located between the end of Scorpio (Jyeshtha #18) and the beginning of Sagittarius (#19).¹¹⁵



Milky Way with Galactic Center between her legs



Ur, c. 2400 BCE -Scorpion Goddess opening her womb

The recognition of the Galactic Womb being in Scorpio is very old. Note the nine legs on this goddess. I believe this reflected Scorpio's movement into the ninth month after the Winter Solstice due to the Precession. The sun currently enters Scorpio about the middle of November (eleventh month after the Solstice). All animals have an even number of legs; scorpions have eight.

The red star Jyestha may once have represented the mouth of the heavenly crocodile; "*mukha* 'mouth' also denotes 'beginning' and is used of the first asterism. Thus the heavenly crocodile would be eating the baby sun, newly born at the vernal equinox."¹¹⁶ The full moon in Jyestha rising opposite the morning

¹¹⁴ <http://coraskywalker.wordpress.com/2010/04/14/my-skywalkings-antares/>

¹¹⁵ It may be co-incidental but 18 is the end of a moon cycle (Saros cycle) and 19 the end of a sun cycle through the sky (Metonic cycle).

¹¹⁶ Asko Parpola, , Indian calendars 110 *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 134.1 (2014)

sun in Taurus (Rohini), this would have occurred about 4000-2000 BCE. Jyestha, oldest wife of the moon, lost favor to her beautiful sister Rohini.

Like the festival of the dead associated with Scorpio's Halloween, Jyestha "the eldest" is now the goddess of inauspicious things and misfortune. She is regarded as the elder sister and antithesis of Lakshmi, goddess of good fortune and beauty. Also identified with Alakshmi, another goddess of misfortune, she carries a broom and has a crow attending her. Sometimes carrying a rake, a few people escape her sweeping destruction. Alakshmi being born out of the poison emerging with the churning of the stars in the Milk Ocean, beautiful Lakshmi appeared when the healing elixir of Soma emerged.

DEITY - Indra is the deity of this Nakshatra. Ruling thunder, lightning, rains and rivers, he killed the ('enveloper') Vrtra Dragon drying rivers and stopping the falling rain. The combat beginning soon after Indra's birth, he first drank Soma before defeating Vitra with a great thunderbolt. The craftsman god Tvashta fashioned the thunderbolt and Vishnu made space for the battle by taking the three great strides between the worlds (see Shravana #22).¹¹⁷ Drought defeated, India's Monsoons begin late May and early June.

FESTIVALS IN JYESHTHA MONTH - May 22 - June 22

MAHESH NAVAMI (9th day) of the bright half of Jyeshtha month celebrates Mahadev (Shiva) and Parvati . The Maheshwari believe their community was formed when Shiva first appeared before them on this day

2. VAT PURNIMA (full moon) in (Jyeshtha) The Vat Purnima is celebrated on the full moon day of Jyeshtha in June. It honors Savitri, the legendary wife of Satyavan who was under a curse of death. Savitri argued with Death (Yama) who first refused to release her husband. After he was tricked into promising her children, she regained her husband to begin their family. Death defeated, Earth herself now sprouts her green children.

Vat is Sanskrit for 'tree'. Women praying for their men tie threads around a banyan (Vat) tree.¹¹⁸ 'Vat' also being the word for 'north', newly-weds are directed to gaze at the faithful North Stars (see #10 Magh & #15 Swati). Threads of wind from the celestial Banyan Tree keep the stars spinning in their seasons around the fixed North.

4. SHANI JAYANTI, - Coinciding with the Vat Purnima in some calendars, it celebrates the birth of Shani (Saturn) son of the sun. His mother was the shadow wife left behind when the first wife fled the sun's heat (#1 Asvini). Shani/Saturn is

¹¹⁷ wikipedia.org/wiki/Vritra

¹¹⁸ wikipedia.org/wiki/Banyan

often identified with Yama, god of death. While Earth is now greening, after passing the midpoint of summer in Jyeshtha, the sun begins slowing dying south toward the Winter Lands of the Yamas.

3. JAGANNATH: SNANA YATRA is also celebrated on the full moon in the month of Jyeshtha. It is the ceremonial bath of Lord Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra, and sister Devi Subhadra in preparation for their great Wagon ceremony following 18 days later in the month of Ashada.

These very ancient deities, roughly carved from logs of wood, are brought out from the Jagannath Temple in Puri and taken in a procession to the Snana Bedi ('bathing altar'). A Sudarshana Chakra carved with 108 points is also bathed. After being bathed with 108 pitchers of water, they are dressed and decorated.



5. NARADA JAYANTI - The birth of Narada Muni is celebrated the dark half of this month. He is the divine messenger carrying information between all the worlds including Heaven, Earth and the Underworld. Narayana, an avatar of Vishnu is worshipped as the embodiment of truth. It was Narada who helped Parvati finally marry Shiva.

6. GANGA DUSSEHRA PUJA - dark half of the month "descent of the Ganga" (Ganga Jayanti) when the River Goddess was reborn. She had been held captive by the sage Jahnu Rishi after her descending waters destroyed his home (see #16 Vishakha). Her waters are now released to flow unfettered to the sea. Like Yama and his sister Yamuna, she carries the dead toward the South.

Lord - KETU (South Lunar Node)

19. MULA- The Root, roots tied together (0.00 - 13.20 Sagittarius)

STAR - Near the stinging tail of Scorpion near Ophiuchus is Lesath (Upsilon Scorpii = 'bite of poisonous animal' or? foggy patch) The Galactic Womb, the root origin of our Universe, is located here between Scorpio and Sagittarius. Stories of Scorpio and Sagittarius often intertwine as they were once, along with Libra, joined into a larger constellation.



Black hole in center of the Galaxy by Sagittarius¹¹⁹

Babylonians identified Sagittarius as Nergal, a centaur-like creature firing an arrow from a bow. He is generally depicted with wings and a scorpion's stinger rising above his horsetail. God of death, like deadly Scorpio, he heralds plagues and pestilence. Like India's Yama, he rules the Underworld with his dark wife. Nergal may represent the noontime sun and the summer solstice that brings destruction: high summer being the dead season in Mesopotamia. In India, the Summer Solstice arrives at the end of the preceding Jyeshtha month.

Pabilsag, the Sumerian name for Sagittarius, is composed of two elements – Pabil, meaning 'elder paternal kinsman' and Sag, meaning 'chief, head'. The name may thus be translated as the 'Forefather' or 'Chief Ancestor'. The Chief Ancestors emerged out of the stars of our galaxy from the Galactic Center.

DEITY - Nirriti (Calamity) is also known as Alakshmi, fierce form of Kali (Kaali) the goddess of dissolution. At the end of Time, Kali takes the seed of her spouse Shiva (Mahakala, 'Great Time') into her womb until Time returns again. "If there is a seed, then there will be a tree. If there is a tree, there also is a seed."¹²⁰



Kali with crows dancing on Shiva's body (c. 1880, Kolkata)¹²¹

¹¹⁹ nasa.gov/topics/earth/features/2012-alignment.html

¹²⁰ writespirit.net/spirituality/the-cosmic-gods/the-relationship-between-mother-kali-and-lord-shiva

¹²¹ <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O128623/kali-dancing-on-shiva-painting-unknown/>

Nirriti commonly takes the form of the goddess Kali. In some stories **Alakshmi**, the goddess of misfortune, is the older sister of beautiful Lakshmi. In another tale, she is the second wife of Kali, the male demon (Kali, not Kaali the goddess). She is the guardian of the South, land of the dead.



Painting of the demon Kali, 1894, Raja Ravi Varma

The demon Kali became jealous at the Princess Damayanti's marriage to the hunter Nala. Kali spoke to his companion Dvapara, asking her to influence the dice he was using. Dvapara is the personification of Dvapara Yuga, the last eon before the black Kali Yuga which began with the Kurushetra War. (Mahabharata)

Possessing Nala after defeating him in the loaded dice game, the demon was eventually exorcized and imprisoned in a Bibhitaki tree. The nuts of the tree are rounded with five flatter sides and were used as dice in the Mahabharata. Note: Among the definitions of Kali is: "The game of dice personified."¹²² As a 'throw of a dice' Kali (the goddess) is sometimes illustrated riding a horse, the dice attached to her saddle. 64 fairies (dakinis) attend her.

"The number 64 is always related in some way or another to play and fate."¹²³

TERMINALIA BELLIRICA, the Bibhitaki tree

In traditional Indian medicine, the fruit of the Bibhitaki is used in the popular Indian herbal medicine Triphala. Triphala (three fruits), i.e., emblic, beleric and chebulic myrobalans, is employed in a great number of diseases

Remembering the demon imprisoned in the Bebhitki, the kernels are narcotic and mind altering. "This Vibhitaka (fearless) is avoided by the Hindus of Northern India, who will not sit in its shade, as it is supposed to be inhabited by demons."¹²⁴

Note: Nakshatras ruled by Ketu, the tail of the Dragon, all represent endings: Ashvini (#1) when the Durga Puja is celebrated by a mass slaughter of bulls. The sun now passes the Autumn Equinox and loses his battle with Winter; Magh (#10) where our ancestors dwell until they reincarnate to rejoin the family; and

¹²² Benfey, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1866), Asian Educational Services, 1991, p. 168,

¹²³ Anne Marie Schimmel, *Mystery of Numbers*, Oxford, 1993, p. 259.

¹²⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminalia_bellirica

Mula (#19) the Navel of the Universe ruled by the goddesses of Destruction. Nakshatras ruled by the Mother Goddess Venus follow each ending. Lord - SHUKRA (Venus)

20. PURVA ASHADHA - First Invincible One (13.20 - 26.40 Sagittarius)

DEITY - Apah (Water as goddess) As Water, the Lady rules the Moon. Apas is also Soma, the nectar of the Moon as nourishment principle.

Another DEITY is Varuna, guardian of the West. Varuna the water God rules the heavenly ocean, which relates to the west setting Sun. After summer's high point, we head into the dark half of the year.



Waves breaking in the stellar Lagoon, NASA photo¹²⁵

STAR- Kaus Borealis (λ Sagittarii & Kaus Australis ϵ Sagittarii) of archer's bow. The Invincible Star (Kaus = 'bow') marks the handle of the Teapot asterism pointing to a great interstellar cloud: the Lagoon Nebula, an area of fierce star formation. Currently, just above the lagoon lies the Winter Solstice, the southernmost point of the sun's path through the year.¹²⁶



Lambda Sagittarii

The Invincible Purva Ashada contains stars representing the bow with which Sagittarius aims his arrow into the Galactic Center. An elephant tusk belonging to the elephant Ganesha, 'Remover of Obstacles' is the symbol for this Nakshatra. It is said that under these stars one can never accept defeat. His birthday is celebrated the September month of Bhadrapada.



Ganesh and broken tusk

FESTIVALS IN THE ASHADA MONTH - June 22 -July 22

¹²⁵ wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagoon_Nebula

¹²⁶ <http://stars.astro.illinois.edu/sow/kausbor.html>

The month begins with sun entering Gemini opposite the full moon in Sagittarius. This day marks the first peak of the lunar cycle after the peak of the solar cycle (Summer Solstice). We have now passed the Summer Solstice to begin our Falling toward the dark of the year. In India, Monsoon rains bring their floods.

KOKILA (Cuckoo) VRAT - The cuckoo is a Rain Bird, a Storm Bird. Migrating to India the month preceding the Monsoon it calls loudly to announce the coming rains.¹²⁷ The cuckoo's festival is dedicated to the Goddess Sati and her Shiva. After Sati immolated her self in the first Great Fire Festival, grief stricken Shiva cursed her to be a cuckoo (Kokila) for a thousand years. She stayed in the Nandan forest as a bird. (The Nandan is still an important bird sanctuary). Later, reborn as Parvati, she fasted for the entire month of victory-giving Ashadha to regain Lord Shiva as her husband. Women perform this fast both to gain husbands and to keep them in health and fortune.

GURU PURNIMA is dedicated to spiritual and academic teachers. Paying respects to teachers, the festival is celebrated during the full moon in the month of Ashada. This is the day Gautama Buddha gave the first sermon at Sarnath and the birthday of Vyasa, author of the Mahabharata. Some say Ganesh inscribed it, using his broken tusk to write down the story.

The festival also celebrates the day Shiva become the first teacher (guru). 15,000 years ago, a yogi appeared in the upper Himalayas. People gathered to view him. As he exhibited no signs of life, but for occasional tears of ecstasy rolling down his face, people began to drift away, but seven stayed. When Shiva opened his eyes, they pleaded with him for teachings but he ignored them. Finally, he gave them a simple teaching and closed his eyes again.

Days became weeks; weeks, months; months became years, but Shiva continued to meditate. After 84 years on the summer solstice when the sun begins his voyage toward the south (Dakshinayana), the yogi looked at them again.¹²⁸ On the very next full moon day (Ashada month), he turned south and began to teach the seven men. Shiva, the Adi yogi (the first yogi) thus became the Adi Guru, teaching the Sages. His seven disciples became the Seven Sages (Saptarishis) circling the unmoving Pole Star.

JAGANNATH - The Ratha Yatra at the Jagannatha temple in Puri After their ritual bath 18 days earlier in Jyeshtha, the Jagannath festival begins in earnest. Jagannath, an avatar of Vishnu, is a part of a very old triad along with his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra. The siblings along with a red-painted Sudarshan Chakra, made of Neem wood, are re-painted every year

¹²⁷ <http://naturalistfoundation.org/the-pied-cuckoo/>

¹²⁸ Although not part of the ancient Zodiac planets, Uranus takes 84 years to circle earth.

before the Ratha Yatra. They are replaced with new carvings every 12 years when Asadha occurs twice in the same year of the Hindu calendar.¹²⁹



Jagannath (Lord of the Universe)¹³⁰

The festival includes an annual visit by great car (the Juggernaut) to the Gundicha Mata temple built in his honor. After a few days here, on the 4th day, Jagannath-Vishnu's wife Lakshmi visits the temple searching for husband.¹³¹ On 8th day, the Return (Bahuda Yatra) is observed. The deities visit the Mausī Maa (the maternal aunt's) temple of the Goddess Ardashini on their way home. When the city of Puri was about to flood from the rains falling this month, Ardashini drank the rising waters to save the city.

CHATURMAS - Four holy months begin now. After returning home, Jagannath as Vishnu sleeps his sleep on the Cosmic Ocean for 4 months. These four months begin the dark half of the year as the Sun heads toward winter. The Monsoon rains flood the land beginning the Ashada month (late June and July). He awakes in October at rain's end.



Vishnu sleeping on the back of Shesha

Also known as Vasuki, King of all Serpents, planets of the universe reside among his hoods. "When he uncoils, times moves forward and creation takes place."

"Shesha" in Sanskrit texts, especially those relating to mathematical calculation, implies the "remainder" — that which remains when all else ceases to exist."¹³²

¹²⁹ wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagannath

¹³⁰ commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statues_of_Lord_Jagannath_at_Bhubaneswar.jpg

¹³¹ His name does not appear in the traditional ten avatars of Vishnu though in certain Odia literature, Jagannath has been treated as the Ninth avatar.

wikipedia.org/wiki/Jagannath

¹³² wikipedia.org/wiki/Shesha

Lord - SURYA (Sun)

21. UTTARA ASHADHA - Later Victory or Second of the Ashadha
(27.40 Sagittarius - 10.00 Capricorn)

STAR - VEGA (in the Lyre) The Universal Star Vega *(Also known as The Falling Eagle or Vulture) "This is a reference to the time when people regarded the constellation Lyra as a swooping vulture rather than a lyre."¹³³

The "constellation was represented as a vulture in ancient Egypt and as an eagle or vulture in ancient India."¹³⁴



Sirius¹³⁵



Gobekli Tepe (c. 11,000 BCE)

Carving of a Vulture possibly carrying the sun (Vega was the Pole Star at this time). As Sirius rises in the eastern dawn, Vega sets in the west

Vega was the northern pole star c. 12,000 BCE and will be so again around 13,727 CE. The celestial pole had drifted away from Cygnus (location of Deneb) and into the neighboring constellation of Lyra. Vega synchronized with and then acted as Pole Star through until around c. 11,000 BC.

DEITY - Vishvadevas - the universal gods, the "all-gods", essentially the Universal Principles or Laws of Nature, personified.

The male Nakshatra Abhijit is included among the stars of the Northern Victory as Uttara Ashada. Victorious Vega represents Abhijit.

¹³³ Michael Anissimov , wise GEEK

¹³⁴ wikipedia.org/wiki/Vega

¹³⁵ Courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech/University of Arizona, public domain

21.5 ABHIJIT - Victorious (28th Nakshatra) - (06° 40' to 10° 53' 40 Capricorn)
Among the 27 wives of the moon, the male Abhijit is placed between the 21st and the 22nd wives. He stands outside the 27 Homes belonging to the moon-wives.

STAR - The glowing Vega, Pole Star through eons of time before his rule passed with the Precession, represents Abhijit. Vega, the brightest star in the northern constellation of Lyra. resides at 06° 40' to 10° 53' 40 in sidereal Capricorn: i.e. from the last quarter of Uttara Ashadha to first part of Shravana belonging to Vishnu who once preserved the Universe.

Druva, another name for the unmoving Pole Star was once a wise king on earth. After ruling for 36000 years his devotion to Narayan, Lord Vishnu, moved him into the Heavens where he now rules surrounded by the Seven Sages circling his throne.

Although not having a Nakshatra of his own, Abhijit Nakshatra represents an auspicious time in the Hindu calendar. It has served as an intercalary asterism most of the times. It is not mentioned as frequently as other asterisms in mythology.

Lord Krishna was born under this Nakshatra, Krishna being another avatar of Vishnu. Krishna as the victorious one said that "He was Shiva among Rudras; He was Arjuna among Pandava and Abhijit among Nakshatras." (Bhagavad Gita)

Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharat, mentions in the chapter "Contesting against Abhijit (Vega), the constellation Krittika (Pleiades) went to "Vana" the summer solstice to heat the summer. Then the star Abhijit slipped down in the sky."¹³⁶P. V. Vartak suggests in his book, [Seminar on the Mahabharata) the "slipping of Abhijit" and ascension of Krittika (Pleiades) might refer to the gradual drop of Vega" as a pole star after 12,000 BC.¹³⁷

DEITY - Brahma, the ruling deity is a god of creation. Abhijit has a creative influence that can bring auspiciousness for both social and universal good. In predictive astrology, those born at the moment when moon was in Abhijit nakshatra will be highly learned and famous. They are respected by the society and live like Kings.

Vega is one of the three great bird-stars that form the Summer Triangle: Vega in a Falling Vulture (or Eagle), Deneb in a Swan, and Altair in an Eagle.

¹³⁶ Vana Parva, Chap. 230, Verses 8–11

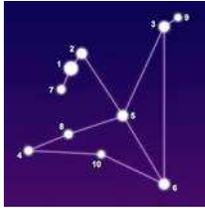
¹³⁷ wikipedia.org/wiki/Vega (Vartak, 1992, pp. 75-83)

Lord - CHANDRA (Moon)

22. SHRAVANA - To Hear, Star of Learning (10.00 - 23.20 Capricorn)

STAR - 3 stars in the head of the Flying Eagle (Aquila)

Altair with its two flanking stars, Beta and Gamma (Tarazed and Alshain), are sometimes thought to be the celestial footprints of Lord Vishnu. He spanned the three worlds in three steps. Vishnu rides the great Eagle Garuda.



Altair, The Eagle Star¹³⁸

DEITY - Vishnu, preserver of Universe. Lord Vishnu is the resident in the "Makara Rashi" (the "Shravana Nakshatra"), which is about coincident with the Capricorn constellation. Once the morning stars of the Winter Solstice, the Makara now rises with the sun in January (see Pausa #20. Purva Ashadha), Marking the luni-solar month, he appears by the full moon in late summer.

Vishnu floats in the Cosmic Waters of Hindu Creation. Ancient Sumerians, sharing myths with ancient India,¹³⁹ associated these stars with the god Ea. Also called Enki or Oannes, he brought culture and science from the sea to mankind. Ea appears both as a goatfish (zodiac image of Capricorn), and in human form with water gushing from his shoulders or vase (zodiac image of Aquarius).¹⁴⁰



Enki/Ea pouring out water: Note Eagle or Raven¹⁴¹

In China, Altair is a herdsman separated from Vega, the weaver girl by the dark rift in the Milky Way (Vega in Lyra - the Falling Vulture or Eagle). They can only meet once a year in late August when a River of Birds forms a bridge they may cross. Deneb pointing down the rift marks the location of the magpie bridge across the Milky Way. The two lovers represented by Altair and Vega—the other

¹³⁸ Altair, photo: NASA

¹³⁹ Indo-Iranian Mitanni of Mesopotamia (1500-1300 BCE) had Indian names and gods.

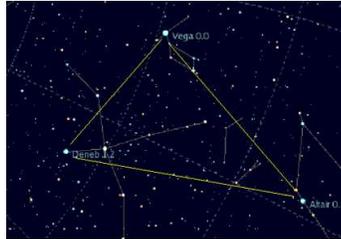
¹⁴⁰ <http://www.mazzaroth.com/InsertTwo/CapricornusStarChart.htm#Denderah>

¹⁴¹ wikipedia.org/wiki/Enki The Raven brought news that the Flood had receded.

two vertices of the Summer Triangle—now can be reunited on one special night of the year in late summer. China's festival is held mid summer during the growing moon.



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Summer Triangle¹⁴³

Overhead at summer midnight, the Triangle, composed of Altair (Aquila, lower point), Vega (Lyra, upper right) and Deneb (the swan of Cygnus, upper left) is bright. Deneb, also known as the Northern Cross, **marks out the seasons**. On Northern summer nights, the Northern Cross shines in the east at nightfall, sweeps high overhead after midnight, and swings to the west by daybreak. By the time northern autumn arrives, the Northern Cross is still out from nightfall till midnight, but it appears high overhead at evening and sets in the northwest after midnight. When winter comes, the Northern Cross stands upright over the northwest horizon.¹⁴⁴

FESTIVALS IN THE SHRAVANA MONTH - July 23-August 23

Begins when the sun rises in Cancer, the moon in Capricorn. Waters of the Monsoons continue to fall. The Shravana month (as are other Monsoon months) is dedicated to the lovers Shiva and mountain born Parvati; Mondays for Shiva; Tuesdays for Parvati

The solar year is divided into Uttarâyana (the north turning) and Dakshinâyana (south turning) phases. From Capricorn to Cancer it is called Uttarâyana and from Cancer to Capricorn it is called Dakshinâyana. The sun now enters Cancer on July 20 each year. When the Turnings were named, Cancer rose the morning of the Summer Solstice (June 21). This is the furthest north the sun wheel rolls along the horizon. After a three day 'standstill' (solstice) he visibly turns and begins moving back toward the south.

HARIYALI (GREEN) TEEJ is celebrated by women honoring Parvati during the monsoon months. Three (Tej) festivals celebrating rain, clouds and birds are performed during the rains of July, August, and September.

¹⁴² earthsky.org/favorite-star-patterns/the-northern-cross-backbone-of-the-milky-way

¹⁴³ Tomruen, Public Domain, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Summer_triangle_map.png

¹⁴⁴ <http://earthsky.org/favorite-star-patterns/the-northern-cross-backbone-of-the-milky-way#backbone>

Shravana begins late July and ends in the third week of August. Also known as Āvani it is the fifth month of the solar year and ends with the Sun's entry into Leo (Bhadra month. Both Vishnu and Oannes warned men about the coming Floods.

NARALI ('COCONUT) POORNIMA - In the coastal regions of Maharashtra, a coconut is offered to the sea for calming it down after the monsoon season. Fishermen start fishing in the sea after this ceremony.

END OF THE KOKILA FAST begun the previous month
Sati was worshiped in form of the storm bird Cuckoo, a form she took for 1000 years before reuniting with Shiva.

RAKSHA BANDHAN, the festival of brothers and sisters, is celebrated on the Full Moon of the month. During a battle between gods and demons, the demons (Rakshas) conquered Indra and all three lands. Indra then asked Brihaspati (Guru/Jupiter) for help. He suggested a mantra and a Raksha puja, After, Indra's wife tied the Raksha band on his right hand, the demons were defeated. Sisters now tie sacred threads on brothers for their wellbeing. On this day Yama, the god of Death, also blessed his sister, promising sisters tying Takhi on the full moon of Shravana would have his blessings.

NAG PANCHAMI is also celebrated in many parts of India on the fifth day of the waning half (some places on the waxing) of Shravana. Snakes are worshiped and praying for the health of their brothers and family, women offer milk at the snake holes. Serpent deities made of silver, stone or wood or the painting of snakes on the wall are given a bath with milk and then revered. Remembering this is the rainy season, India's snakes like Chinese dragons are associated with water, emerging from their holes when the floods drive them forth.

Tying together story and practice, once Shiva was travelling and found himself in a forest of Lotuses. In that forest he was overtaken by a sudden lust and his semen found their way onto the ground. A Serpent Queen was in the spot and she fell pregnant with a child. The Queen was the mother of the Serpent King Vasuki. When a child was born, Vasuki adopted her as his own sister. Named Manasha, the snake goddess came to share dominion over the snake races with her brother. (Padma Purana)

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI, marking the birth of Krishna, eighth avatar of Vishnu, falls on the 8th day after the full moon of this month.

Lord - Mangala (Mars)

23. DHANISTHA (SHRAVISTHA)- Richest One (23.20 Capricorn - 6.40 Aquarius)

STAR - In the head of Dolphin (Sadalsuud - 'Luck of Lucks') is Beta Aquarii, the brightest star. Associated with rising sun, it signals a period of gentle rain. Sadalsuud is found in Hindu texts as Kalpeny (? meaning).

DEITY - 8 Vasus (means 'light' 'benefic') (Earth Gods giving wealth)



Star on Left Shoulder of Water-pourer (Aquarius) pouring water into mouth (Fomalhaut) of the Southern Fish¹⁴⁵

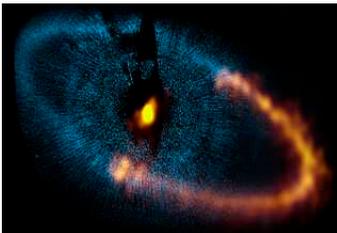
When the sun enters Leo, summer's month of Bhadra begins (see #24)

Lord - RAHU (North Lunar Node)

24. SHATABHISHA -One Hundred Healers (6.40-20.00 Aquarius)

SYMBOL: An empty circle is the symbol of this Nakshatra

STAR - Formulhaut 'the Mouth of the Southern Fish (alpha piscis)
Because it's the only bright star in its region of sky, Fomalhaut is sometimes called the Loneliest Star. Fomalhaut belongs to a large group of faint stars poured out by the Water Bearer to heal earth.



Fomalhaut with debris ring¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Aquarius_et_Capricornus_-_Mercator.jpeg, Public domain
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vega>

¹⁴⁶ Photo, European Southern Observatory, common domain, wikipedia.org/wiki/File:AL

As a morning star, it once marked the Winter Solstice c. 2500 BCE, the location in the sky where the sun crossed the meridian at noon on the first day of winter.

One of 4 Royal Stars measuring out the seasons: Aldelbaran (Taurus) The Watcher of the East - Vernal Equinox; Regulus (Leo), Watcher of the North - Summer Solstice; Antares (Scorpio) Watcher of the West, - Autumn Equinox; and Formulhaut, Watcher of the South - Winter Solstice. The directions are the location of the sun along the horizons at the corners of the year.

DEITY - Varuna, the guardian of Natural Law rules Shatabhisha. God of water and the Celestial Ocean, Capricorn's Makara is his mount. Varuna was eventually replaced by Indra and later faded with the ascendancy of Shiva and Vishnu. His consort is the Hindu goddess Varuni. [Varuna adopted her](#) when she came out of the ocean, during the churning for amrita (the healing Soma used by the 100 Healers of this Nakshatra). She represents the purifying nectar of immortality.



Varuna on Capricorn's Makara

The Makara Sankranti of winter is the only Hindu festival based on the solar calendar rather than the lunar calendar. As a Nakshatra marking the luni-solar months we now enter late summer.

TREE - *Anthocephalus cadamba* (*Neolamarckia cadamba*,) Kadamba Tree
According to tradition, 27 trees represent 27 Nakshatras, one for each star.
The Kadamba tree is said to represent the 100 healers of Shatabhisha.

It is believed that God lives inside a kadamba tree and that Goddess Durga likes to live in the forest of kadamba trees. An extract of the root bark of the kadamba is used as an antidote against snakebite. It also has anti fungal, antihelminthic, antifilarial and antimalarial activities, and used for diabetes, cancers, and mood swings¹⁴⁷



Circular blossom of the Kadamba

In addition to its medical qualities, Cadamba flowers are an important raw material in the production of 'attar' it is associated with Krishna while in the south it is known as "Parvati's tree". Radha and Krishna conducted their love play under the sweet-scented shade of the tree. The Goddess Radha was born on the eighth day of this Bhadra month. Her lover, dark Krishna, was born on the eighth day of the dark half of the month.

In another story, Krishna once stole the garments of milk maidens (gopis) while they were bathing in a pond near Vrindavan.¹⁴⁸ Varuna, sea-god and deity of this Nakshatra, had forbidden nude bathing in rivers, ponds and other public places, but gopis often ignored his wishes. One day Krishna took away their garments and spread them on the branches of nearby kadamba tree. Climbing the tree he hid behind a branch. After the gopis had bathed, they looked for their garments. Suddenly their attention was drawn to the nearby kadamba tree by the stirring of its branches. When they looked up, they saw Krishna hiding there and their garments scattered all over the branches of the tree. Krishna insisted that they come out naked to receive their garments. This episode is portrayed in song, story, painting and artifacts, in the backdrop of the kadamba.¹⁴⁹

KARAM-KADAMBA is a popular harvest festival, celebrated on the eleventh lunar day of the month of Bhadra. A twig of the tree is brought and worshipped in the courtyard of the house. Later in the day, young ears of grain are distributed among friends and relatives.

For further festivals in the month of Bhadra (began when the moon in the Leo sun of August/September entered the stars of Aquarius) see following Nakshatra.

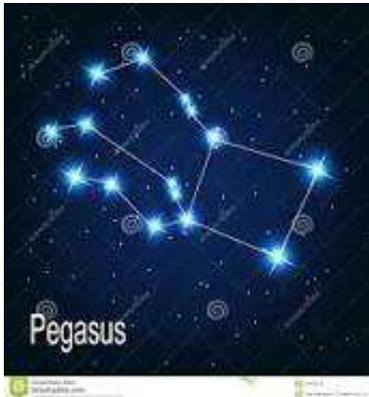
¹⁴⁸ Krishna spent his childhood here in Bihar, North India.

¹⁴⁹ wikipedia.org/wiki/Neolamarckia_cadamba

Lord - GURU (Jupiter)

25. PURVA BHADRAPADA- Early Happy Feet (20'00" Aquarius - 3'20" Pisces).

STAR - 2 main stars in the shoulder of Greek horse Pegasus (Alpha & Beta Pegasi) The couple of stars of Purva Bhadrapada make an almost perpendicular straight line to the belt of ellipsis at the intersection of Aquarius and Pisces.



The Great Square of Pegasus contains the 25th and 26th lunar mansions, representing a bedstead that was a resting place for the Moon

DEITY - Akaijapada (the one footed goat or fire dragon) are forms of Rudra (the Roarer). Rudra is also known as the Archer and associated with the arrow star of Sirius (see #5. Mrigashira). He knocked the World God off his perch at the corners of Time. Pegasus, who carries the thunderbolts to Zeus, may have once represented an older weather god of thunder & lightning.

Rudra, god of the roaring storm, is usually portrayed as a fierce, destructive deity. Thus, Shiva and Rudra according to Hindu **mythology** are essentially one and the same, Rudra being an older darker manifestation.

FESTIVALS IN BHADRA MONTH - mid-August/mid-September

Bhadra begins with the sun's entrance into Leo (opposite the moon in Aquarius). 2000 BCE, Leo's sun rose in July/August. The monsoon Floods continuing while Aquarius pours his waters over the earth will soon end.

Aquarius is identified as GU.LA "The Great One" in the Babylonian star catalogues and represents the god Ea (Enki). Rising with the morning sun, it once marked the winter solstice in the Early Bronze Age. Ea ruled the southernmost quarter of the Sun's path, the "Way of Ea", corresponding to the period of 45 days on either side of winter solstice. Ancient Egypt also associated

Aquarius with the annual Nile Flood, the banks flooding when Aquarius' overflowing jar filled the river.

HARTILIKA TEEJ Teej means 'three (celebrated 3rd day). The previous month of Shravan (July/August) holds the Green Teej welcoming the healing rains.

Hartalika is a combination of "harit" and "aalika" which means "abduction" and "female friend" respectively. Hartalika Teej is one of three monsoon celebrations welcoming the monsoon season celebrated primarily by girls and women. The festivals of Teej are primarily dedicated to Goddess Parvati and her union with Lord Shiva. "Hartalika Teej is seen as a major festival and is celebrated on the third day of the bright half of the North Indian Lunar month of Bhadrapud."¹⁵⁰

The Goddess Parvati (incarnated as Shaliputri)¹⁵¹ was the daughter of Himalaya who had promised her hand in marriage to Vishnu. Upon hearing this, Parvati told her friend of her father's decision whereupon the friend took Parvati to the thick forest so that her father would not marry her against her wish.

On the third day of the bright half of Bhadra, Parvati made a Shiva lingam out of her hair and prayed. Lord Shiva was so impressed that he gave his word to marry her. Eventually, Goddess Parvati was united with Lord Shiva and married with her father's blessing. Since then, the day is referred to as haritalika teej as Goddess Parvati's female (aalika) friend had to abduct (harit) her in order for the Goddess to achieve her goal of marrying Lord Shiva.

SHUKRA GANESH JAYANTI - The birthday of Ganesh begins a ten-day festival starting on the fourth day of the bright half of the Bhadra month. New clay idols of the Elephant god are made. At the end of the ten days, they are carried to water and allowed to dissolve back into earth.



Ganesh

Parvati created her son Ganesha from clay. Not recognizing his son, Shiva beheaded him but then replaced Ganesha's original head with that of an elephant. Lord Ganesha is also known as "Vighna Vinasaka", which means, one who destroys and remove obstacles.

¹⁵⁰ wikipedia.org/wiki/Teej

¹⁵¹ Shaliputri, like Parvati, means 'daughter of the mountain'.

Also known as Ekadanta (one tusked), there are multiple stories relating the loss of his tusk. In one version, he broke his tusk to use as a pen while transcribing the great epic of the Mahabharatha. In another version, he used his tusk as a weapon to slay a mouse demon.

The greedy elephant was observed dropping his candy and the moon, unable to stop, laughed. "Angrily, Ganesha pulled his tusk and threw it at the Moon God, breaking the moon into many pieces. Chandra Deva was shocked but Ganesha was not yet done. "You will always be dark!" Young Ganesha cursed the Moon God. Finally with the intervention of Lord Shiva, Ganesha agreed to modify the curse and so came the fifteen days of growing moon and the fifteen days of the waning moon.¹⁵²

KRISHNA JANMASTAMI - Sri Krishna was born at midnight of this day, the 8th day (Ashtami) of the Krishna Paksha (dark fortnight) of the month of Bhadrapad.

PITRU PAKSHA - The dark fortnight of Bhadrapada is reserved for the veneration of the dead. This period is known as Pitru Paksha. (See #10 Magh/Leo) The sun is travelling through Leo, opposite Bhadra's moon in Aquarius. Souls of the ancestors wait among the stars of Leo until they are reborn on earth. Purva Bhadrapada is sometimes translated as the 'front feet of a funeral bed'. The Chinese saw the Water Jar asterism (Aquarius) as a tomb.

RAHU, demon head of the serpent swallowing the sun and moonlight, is born on the Chaturdasi (14th day) of the Krishna Paksha (Dark fortnight) in the month of Bhadrapada. Because there seems a reason for the timing of ritual events, on the 15th day of the waning half of the month, the moon disappears until a new moon returns, signaling the Bright fortnight.

¹⁵² http://hindumythologyforgennext.blogspot.com/2015/12/the-stories-of-single-tusked-ganesha_31.html

Lord - SHANI - (Saturn)

26. UTTARA BHADRAPADA- Pisces 'Latter Happy Feet' or 'Back Feet of the Funeral Bed' (Pisces 3.20 - 16.40)

STAR - The Warrior Star Algenib on tip of wing of Pegasus (gamma pegasi, The Flank) & alpha Persei (Mirfak /elbow)

This area of the Square of Pegasus represents either the back legs of a funeral bed or a snake in the water.

SYMBOL: Back legs of a funeral cot. Saturn, Lord of this Nakshatra is sometimes identified with Yama, god of the dead.

DEITY- Ahirbudhyana. The Dragon of the Deep stands for the serpent of the atmosphere's underbelly. It is hence signified as a Warrior Constellation and grants prosperity to the cosmos. This Naga, a serpent god, is connected to the deep nether regions and to Ketu (south lunar node) as well as unseen, hidden territory. The environment of * higher fortune * utara-bhadra * is located in the lower recesses of Earth, where the crystalline grid is located.

Ahira-Budhnaya is the one who is aware (budha) of the treasures stored in the inner recesses below the surface of Earth. Often depicted as a serpent steadily defending a hoard of precious treasure at the bottom of the ocean, Ahira (diamond) is a collector and preserver of treasuries. However the location of His activities is rarely recognized.¹⁵³

TREE: Azadirachta indica (Neem) is a very bitter medicinal fruit. Neem leaves are dried in India and placed in cupboards and containers of rice to prevent insects. Neem leaves are dried and burnt in the tropical regions to keep away mosquitoes.

Fitting with the symbols of the Nakshatra ruled by serpents: "If a patient presumed to be bitten by snake is given a few leaves of neem to chew and he does not find them bitter, consider that the venom has gone into his body. Administer him with neem leaf water or any other antidote. He can be considered to be cured only when he finds the neem leaves bitter again."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ http://www.barbarapijan.com/bpa/Nakshatra_radical/26uttarabhadra.htm

¹⁵⁴ remedyguru.com/content.php/1926-Neem-Therapy-Neem-in-Snake-Bite-Treatment

Lord - BUDH (Mercury)

27. REVATI (Transcendent, Wealthy)-16.40 - 30.00 Pisces

STAR - Kullat Nunu – η Piscium (Eta Piscium)

Eta Piscium is the brightest star in the constellation. The star has an unofficial proper name, Kullat Nunu. Nunu is the Babylonian word for “fish,” and “kullat” refers either to a bucket or the cord used to tie the fish together.

This star is identified as the First Point of Aries, i.e. when the Sun crosses this star a new solar year begins.¹⁵⁵ Pisces is the final and last zodiac sign. It is also the last Mansion the moon visits each month on his cycle around the sky. 4000 years ago, the sun rose in Pisces mid February to mid March, announcing the end of the year before the New Year of the Vernal Equinox returns. It now rises mid March to mid-April.



Pisces and Game Board - Zodiac of Dendera, Egypt
Gambling was a common way of allotting fortune and inheritance.

DEITY - Pushan offers guidance and protection on one's path, bringing nourishment and prosperity with him. Like Mercury (Budh), lord of this nakshatra, he is a psychopomp conducting souls between the worlds. This last and final nakshatra includes the journey, from this world into the next circle of Time. His symbol is a drum for keeping time.

In plain translation, Revathi refers to one who is wealthy and this is conveyed by the essence of this asterism at multiple levels. Alternatively, Revathi can be translated into 'the ability to transcend'.¹⁵⁶

As a woman, Revati became the wife of Balarama, elder brother of Krishna. In an earlier form she wanted to marry the most powerful god. After considering the Wind, the Mountain, and the Earth, Earth said that Shesha, the serpent who carries the earth and the worlds on his hoods, is the most powerful; Balarama would be Shesha's most powerful form and that she would marry Balarama, but warned that he would not be born until 27 yugas (eons) later.

"Revati 'returns' to a place after 27 units of time, 27 Mahayugas or Chaturyugas. It demonstrates knowledge of the precession of equinoxes."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ [www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Revati+\(nakshatra\)](http://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Revati+(nakshatra))

¹⁵⁶ india-astrologer.com/vedic_astrology/nakshatra/revathi.html

¹⁵⁷ <http://ancientindians.wordpress.com/indiancalendars/manvantaras-revati-and-yugas/>

Her future spouse, "Shesha", especially in Sanskrit texts relating to mathematical calculation, implies the "remainder" — that which remains when all else ceases to exist. In Sanskrit it also means 6 shesham as the sheshanaga has been depicted to have many heads to supports the unstable earth on his hoods.

TREE - Mahua longifolia (Indian Butter Tree). As a zodiac sign, Pisces is associated with alcohol and drunkenness. Fitting as a symbol for this Nakshatra, the seed oil, good for the skin, also makes an alcoholic drink. The sweet flowers are lovely but "Tamil tradition cautions that excessive use of this flower will result in imbalance of thinking and may even lead to lunacy."¹⁵⁸

As always, the end is embedded in the beginning. We return again to the stars of the Ashvini who once stood at the entrance to the turning of the year on the Equinoxes.

¹⁵⁸ wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhuca_longifolia