

Krishnamurti Padhdhati: A New System of Vedic Astrology *T.R. Raghunath, Ph.D.*

Dr. Raghunath offers a lucid introduction to the one of the most exciting new developments in Jyotish.

K.S. Krishnamurti (1908 - 1972) is one of the original and systematic astrological thinkers of India. Today, his astrological system, known as "K.P." (Krishnamurti Padhdhati), has dedicated practitioners in different parts of India, but it is generally excluded from consideration in the mainstream astrological media there.

In the West, most Vedic astrologers are familiar with the Krishnamurti Ayanamsa which is based on the American astronomer Simon Newcomb's rate of precession, but there has been no serious discussion of his system of Vedic astrology.

Given the originality, logical structure, and the considerable explanatory and predictive power of his astrological theory, this lack of attention and discussion is unfortunate. This article is an attempt to fill this lacuna.

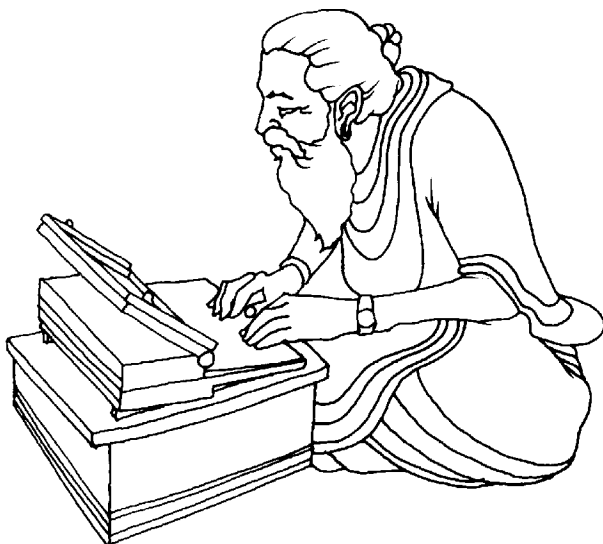
K.S. Krishnamurti

Krishnamurti made a number of astonishingly correct predictions in the course of his career. He applied his formidable predictive skills even to questions about the time of arrival of delayed planes and trains! His successful prediction about the time of arrival of the delayed Air India flight # 572 at Katunayake airport in Sri Lanka on November 28, 1970 is the most remarkable in the annals of astrology. One of his students who was present at that time wrote an article about it in *Astrology and Athrishta*, a magazine devoted to Krishnamurti's system.

According to the student's report, at 3:52 p.m. (Ceylon Standard Time) Krishnamurti was asked by one of his friends whether he could predict the time of arrival of the delayed flight. Krishnamurti answered in the affirmative and asked for a number between 1 and 249. He was given the number 4. Krishnamurti also asked one of his students to calculate the position of the *lagna* for the time of query. And then without even making any calculations on paper, in just three minutes or so, Krishnamurti predicted that the flight would definitely arrive at exactly 4:39 p.m.

Some of his friends were skeptical. Their skepticism deepened when the airport control office announced at about 4:15 p.m. that the flight would arrive at 4:45 p.m. Krishnamurti asked them to wait and observe the unfolding of events. To the amazement of all present, the Air India flight #572 arrived at the airport exactly at 4:39 p.m. This incident was reported in the local newspaper the next day.

Krishnamurti was born on November 1st, 1908 in Tanjore district, Tamilnadu, India. In 1927, he began his study of Vedic and Western astrology. In 1934, he began his research on predicting the nature and the exact timing of an event. He was disappointed with the lack of precision and uniformity in the methods employed by the Vedic astrologers and Western astrologers of his time. He earnestly began to search for an alternative to what he viewed as a mass of confusing and often contradictory rules of delineation.



*Ancient wisdom/modern methods:
a Vedic astrologer enters birth data on his laptop.*

In the course of his intensive research from 1934 to 1941 on predicting the nature and the exact time of an event through the use of the Vimshottari *dasa* system, Krishnamurti noticed that there were numerous horoscopes in which functional benefics, i.e., planets which are benefics by virtue of their ownership and/or occupation of favorable houses such as angles and trines, gave adverse results in their periods or subperiods. There were also many cases in which functional malefics, i.e., planets which are malefics by virtue of their ownership and/or occupation of unfavorable houses such as the 6th, 8th, and 12th houses, gave beneficial results in their periods or subperiods.

Krishnamurti also found that there were plenty of cases in which a planet in its *dasa* or *bhukti* moved matters or affairs unrelated to those signified by the house occupied and the house(s) owned or aspected by that planet. There were also other anomalies such as the fact that planets in their own signs or signs of exaltation gave unfavorable results and planets in their signs of debilitation gave favorable results.

The Nakshatra Dispositor

These anomalies led Krishnamurti in 1941 to a cornerstone of his astrological system, a theory of the *Nakshatra dispositor*. According to this theory, the Nakshatra dispositor, i.e., *the ruler of the constellation in which a planet is located*, predominantly determines the status and signification of a planet. Thus a planet's strength or weakness, its beneficence or maleficence, and its power to move specific matters or affairs are all *primarily* determined by its Nakshatra dispositor.

Krishnamurti was able to satisfactorily explain his anomalous cases in terms of his theory of the Nakshatra dispositor. He found that planets which were in trines or angular houses gave adverse results because their Nakshatra dispositors were occupying adverse houses. Planets which were in the 6th, 8th, or 12th houses gave favorable results because their Nakshatra dispositors were occupying beneficial houses.

Further, he discovered that planets primarily move matters or affairs signified by the *bhava(s)* occupied and owned by the Nakshatra dispositor. The matters or affairs signified by the Nakshatra dispositor have priority and can overrule the indications of a given planet.

This explained cases in which a planet, during its *dasa* or *bhukti*, moved matters or affairs unrelated to the house(s) it owned or occupied. For instance, a person with his *lagna* in Libra, Moon in the 3rd house in Sagittarius in the Nakshatra Purvashadha of Venus, and Venus in the 7th house, gets married in Moon *dasa*. Why did the Moon move matters unrelated to the house owned by it, viz., the 10th, and the house occupied by it, viz., the 3rd? In terms of the Nakshatra dispositor theory, the Moon is in the constellation of Venus who is not only the natural significator of marriage, but also a significator of marriage by virtue of occupying the 7th house. Hence, there was marriage in Moon's *dasa*.

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The Nakshatra dispositor also determines the strength of a planet. A planet may be exalted, but if its Nakshatra dispositor is debilitated or in an inimical sign, then the strength of that planet is vastly reduced. Conversely, a planet may be debilitated, but if its Nakshatra dispositor is exalted, or in its own sign, or in a friendly sign, then the strength of that planet is considerably increased.

However, Krishnamurti maintains that exaltation, debilitation etc., do not affect a planet's disposition to move certain matters or affairs, but only the extent to which it brings about positive or negative outcomes pertaining to those matters.

Hart DeFouw and Robert Svoboda in their book *Light on Life* have advanced the thesis that, "A *graha's* [planet's] strength or weakness is a measure of its ability to exert energy, not its intentions." Krishnamurti offers a strong argument in favor of this thesis in his writings published in the late 1960's. In his book *Horary Astrology*, Krishnamurti writes:

Hindus are of the opinion that strong planets will offer invariably advantageous results, whereas those who have little strength will do harm.... Are there not people born in Cancer ascendant having Jupiter exalted in the ascendant who suffered during Jupiter *dasa*? Therefore, *the nature of the result need not be desirable simply because a planet is strong.... There is nothing as exaltation becoming auspicious and debilitation inauspicious.*

Astrological Relativism

Krishnamurti also holds original views on categorizing planets as benefic or malefic and on classifying houses as good or bad. He adheres to a *relativist* interpretation of the beneficence or maleficence of planets and the auspiciousness or inauspiciousness of houses.

According to Krishnamurti, no planet is absolutely benefic or malefic. A planet may be a benefic in relation to some affairs in a person's life, but a malefic in relation to other affairs. For example, a person has a strong Mars in the 2nd house. It follows that

Mars is favorable for the person's finances. But Mars is in the 8th from the 7th, the house representing the spouse of the native. Therefore, Mars is unfavorable for the wellbeing of the native's spouse. Is Mars a benefic or malefic planet for the native? The answer, obviously, is that Mars is a benefic in relation to the native's financial interests, but a malefic in relation to the interests of the spouse.

The auspicious or inauspicious nature of *bhavas* or houses is similarly relative to the matters or affairs in question. If the health of the native is considered, then the 6th house is a bad or inauspicious house because it signifies disease. However, if we consider the native's prospects for success in a competition, then the 6th house is a good or auspicious house because it is the 12th to the 7th house (opponents) and indicates defeat or loss to the native's opponents.

Objections to Krishnamurti

Some astrologers, notably R. Santhanam, have attacked the very idea of the Nakshatra dispositor. One of Santhanam's arguments is that since standard Vedic astrological texts do not contain references to Nakshatra dispositors, the theory has no textual support. The implication is that there is no place for the theory of the Nakshatra dispositor in the conceptual framework of the Vedic astrological tradition.

In response to this argument, I wish to point out that the famous *Dhruva Nadi* of Satyacharya who was held in great esteem by Varahamihira, the illustrious author of *Brihat Jataka*, does contain a reference to the Nakshatra dispositor or ruler. According to Satyacharya, the status of the lord of the Nakshatra occupied by the ascendant or the Moon, whichever is stronger, must also be examined in assessing a horoscope.

However, Satyacharya does not seem to have developed this idea and extended it to the other planets. Nor did he formulate principles of interpretation concerning the role of the Nakshatra dispositor. Further, Satyacharya makes more use of the classification of Nakshatras into nine categories such as *janma*, *sampat*, *vipat*, etc., counting from the birth Nakshatra, i.e., the Nakshatra occupied by the ascendant or the Moon, whichever is stronger. Krishnamurti never uses this classification.

A famous work on Vedic horary astrology, *Prasna Marga*,

also makes reference to the *Nakshatra ruled by a planet* in the context of determining the time of fructification of the significations of a *bhava*. In Chapter XIV, Stanza 88, it states that an event may occur when the Moon is transiting the *Nakshatra ruled by the favorable significator* of the house governing the event.

A theory of the role of the Nakshatra dispositor was also offered by Meena (alias Gopalakrishna Rao) in his book *Nadi Jyotisha* published in the late 1930's or early 40's. Some astrologers, notably B.V. Raman, mistakenly assert that Krishnamurti simply borrowed his ideas from Meena. It is necessary to set the record straight.

It is true that both Meena and Krishnamurti made the idea of the Nakshatra dispositor a cornerstone of their respective astrological systems. But Krishnamurti's theory of the Nakshatra dispositor is different from Meena's theory in some important respects. For instance, he does not use Meena's concepts of the *jiva* (soul) and *sarira* (body) of a *bhava* or house.

There are also other significant differences between Krishnamurti's and Meena's criteria for assessing *bhavas*. For example, Krishnamurti's emphasis is on *the ruler of the Nakshatra subdivision in which the cusp of a bhava falls*, whereas Meena follows the traditional approach of considering the lord of the Rasi in which a *bhava* falls.

Krishnamurti was led to an independent discovery of the Nakshatra Amshas or subdivisions as a result of years of painstaking and original research. He has described in detail aspects of his research which led him to the Nakshatra Amshas. There is absolutely nothing in Meena's work that anticipates Krishnamurti's novel interpretation and application of the Nakshatra Amshas or subdivisions.

Nakshatra Amshas

I have mentioned the Nakshatra Amshas or subdivisions. This concept is another cornerstone of Krishnamurti's system. It was his research on twin births that led Krishnamurti to the Nakshatra subdivisions. The problem of explaining differences between the personalities and lives of twins whose birth is separated by only a few minutes has hounded astrology throughout its history. St. Augustine's very influential critique of astrology, to name one, rests heavily on the argument of differences between the lives of twins.

I believe that Krishnamurti has provided a striking solution to the problem of twins. He states that the only astrological factor that can change in an interval of a few minutes is the cusp of a *bhava* or house, especially the cusp of the *lagna* or ascendant. Therefore, Krishnamurti argues, the key to an astrological explanation of the differences between twins must be found in the realm of the swiftly changing cusps of houses.

However, even in the case of twins whose births take place in an interval of a few minutes, the cusps of houses seldom change from one sign to another, or even from one Nakshatra to another. What is it about the cusps of houses, then, that can change in a few minutes?

Since the Nakshatra is the most important astrological division, Krishnamurti decided to subdivide the Nakshatra into nine unequal parts after the manner of the subdivision of a *dasa* or planetary period into nine unequal *bhuktis* or subperiods. The extent of the Nakshatra subdivision ruled by a planet is determined by the proportion of years allotted to that planet in the Vimshottari *dasa* scheme. This proportion is then taken from the extent of a Nakshatra in the zodiac, namely, 13°20' or 800' of arc. The resulting figure represents the extent of the subdivision of that planet in any Nakshatra.

For instance, the extent of the Sun's subdivision in any Nakshatra is determined by the proportion of its years in the Vimshottari *dasa* scheme, viz., 6/120 or 1/20. This gives us the extent of the Sun's subdivision in a Nakshatra, viz., 800/20 or 0°40' of arc. The following table gives the longitudinal extent of the subdivisions of other planets in a Nakshatra.

<u>Planet</u>	<u>Nakshatra Amsha</u>
Sun	0.40.00
Moon	1.06.40
Mars	0.46.40
Rahu	2.00.00
Jupiter	1.46.40
Saturn	2.06.40
Mercury	1.53.20
Ketu	0.46.40
Venus	2.13.20

Note that the Nakshatra subdivisions of Mars and Ketu have the same extent because they have the same number of years allotted to them in the Vimshottari *dasa* scheme. The subdivision of Venus exceeds others in its extent because the number of years allotted to Venus is the highest, viz., 20 years.

The sequence of the Nakshatra subdivisions follows the Vimshottari *dasa* and *bhukti* scheme. The first *bhukti* in Sun's *dasa* is governed by the Sun itself. The next is governed by the Moon and so on. In just the same way, the first subdivision in Sun's Nakshatras, viz., Kritika, Uttaraphalguni, and Uttarashada, is governed by the Sun itself. The next subdivision is governed by the

Moon. And the next by Mars and so on. Thus the Nakshatra Amshas or subdivisions stand in the same relation to the Nakshatra as the *bhuktis* stand in relation to the *dasa*. Krishnamurti has transformed the Vimshottari logic of temporal divisions and subdivisions into a logic of spatial divisions and subdivisions of the zodiac.

The duration of a sign is about 2 hours, but the duration of a Nakshatra is about 53 minutes. The duration of the Nakshatra subdivisions, on the other hand, lasts anywhere from 2 minutes to 9 minutes or so depending on the subdivision. Thus it is the Nakshatra subdivisions that can change in the span of a few minutes.

Here, then, lies the answer to the question concerning the cusps of houses: what is it about the cusps of houses that can change in an interval of a few minutes? The answer, according to Krishnamurti, is that *the cusps of houses can change their locations in the Nakshatra subdivisions*. Although in the case of twins separated by a few minutes the position of planets in signs, bhavas, and nakshatras, will be identical and the position of the cusps in signs and Nakshatras will also be identical, there will be a difference in the Nakshatra subdivisions in which the cusps fall. This implies that the *rulers of the Nakshatra subdivisions of the cusps of bhavas* in the charts of the twins will be different. Therefore, there will be differences between the twins in respect of the matters or affairs signified by those *bhavas*. Hence, the twins will have different personalities and lives.

Here, at last, is an elegant solution to the vexing problem of twins offered by a 20th century Vedic astrologer. One of the merits of Krishnamurti's solution is that it does not appeal to ad hoc factors, factors invoked in the context of the charts of twins and ignored or jettisoned in the context of normal charts.

Geoffrey Cornelius observes in his thought provoking book *The Moment of Astrology* that, "Astrologers will turn out a brilliant display of technical discrimination which they never demonstrate in any other natal map, using midpoints and ultra-fine aspects to differentiate a degree on the Ascendant in an otherwise identical map for dissimilar twins." Krishnamurti's solution is immune to this damaging criticism because the consideration of the Nakshatra subdivisions in which the cusps of *bhavas* fall is an integral part of his method of interpreting every chart, be it natal, horary, or electoral.

I want to conclude this introduction with a few important points. First, if you want to apply Krishnamurti Padhdhati to a chart, it is imperative to use Krishnamurti's Ayanamsa figures. Second, you must use the *Placidus* or *Topocentric* system of house division. Krishnamurti uses the Placidus system of house division. I recommend Topocentric because it is a refinement of the Placidus time system. Finally, it is necessary to follow the Vimshottari *dasa* system because the scheme of Nakshatra rulerships used by Krishnamurti is based on the Vimshottari system. Other *dasa* systems have different planetary rulerships for the Nakshatras.

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T. R. Raghunath received his doctorate in philosophy from McMaster University, Ontario, Canada. He was initiated in Vedic astrology at the age of 13. He is a full time Vedic astrologer and Tantrik. He is currently writing books on Krishnamurti's system, the ethic of compassion, and Aurobindo's theory of spiritual development. Dr. Raghunath can be reached at (818) 365-3732 for information regarding courses, lectures, and consultations.

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