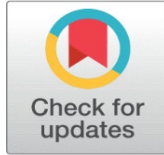
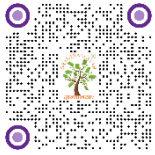


TEXT, TIME AND THRONE: DECIPHERING DIVINE KINGSHIP IN VĀLMĪKI RĀMĀYAṆA THROUGH ASTRONOMICAL REFERENCES

Dr. Virendra Singh Bithoo ¹✉

¹ Assistant Professor, College of Vocational Studies, University of Delhi, India



Received 28 October 2025
Accepted 29 November 2025
Published 31 December 2025

Corresponding Author

Dr. Virendra Singh Bithoo,
Virendrasinghcharan@gmail.com

DOI
[10.29121/Shodhgyan.v3.i2.2025.124](https://doi.org/10.29121/Shodhgyan.v3.i2.2025.124)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Copyright: © 2025 The Author(s). This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

With the license CC-BY, authors retain the copyright, allowing anyone to download, reuse, re-print, modify, distribute, and/or copy their contribution. The work must be properly attributed to its author.



ABSTRACT

This paper examines divine kingship through astronomical references, with particular emphasis on the horoscopic narratives surrounding Śrī Rāma. Astrologers occupied a prominent position in Indian society, and kings regularly appointed them for their expertise in prognostication. Evidence from epigraphy, iconography, and courtly practice demonstrates that astrologers were integral to royal patronage, legitimizing kingship while contributing knowledge in ritual, agriculture, architecture, and trade. Literary sources such as the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata recount numerous celestial phenomena and celebrate the authority of astrologers. The study argues that planetary positions were regarded not merely as temporal markers but as determinants of character and destiny, with Rāma's revered life serving to validate astrological principles. Since the fourth century BCE, predictive texts such as the Parāśara Horāśāstra, Yavanajātaka, and Bṛhajjātaka have shaped literary traditions, which incorporated astrological references extensively. By tracing these continuities, the paper highlights the enduring cultural significance of astrology in shaping religious imagination and political authority across Indian civilization.

Keywords: Sanskrit Literature, Astrologers, Predictions, Astronomical Events, Rajasthani Folklore, Renunciation

1. INTRODUCTION

There are many instances in early Sanskrit literature where the glorification of astrologers and the accuracy of their predictions is recounted. The epics Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata in particular are full of references to astronomical events and the glorification of astrologers. In Rajasthani folk lore, lord Śiva assumed the disguise of an astrologer and entered Ayodhya in the form of Jyotiṣi to attend the birth celebration of Śrī Rāma. When Śiva began to predict Rāma's future, Rāma—who was only a few months old—struck Śiva with his feet to draw his attention, secretly requesting him not to reveal about the exile of Rāma and abduction of his wife to

Rāma's parents and the eager congregation. We do find similar stories about Buddha and Mahāvīra as well, in the context of dreams as omens and predictions. After birth of Buddha, his father was informed by an astrologer that Buddha should not be allowed to see any event of grief as otherwise he would become a saint. The prophecy comes true. In Mahāvīra's case, as mentioned the auspicious dreams of Triślā, his mother were predicted by astrologers as foretelling renunciation.

The horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra has been cast by various astrologers of the 19th and 20th century on the basis of the Bālkaṇḍa of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa.¹ If we consider the view of various scholars e.g. R P Goldman,² H.D.Sankaliya³ etc., they have argued that Bālkaṇḍa, the opening book has been added to the Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa at 52a later point of time. There is no disagreement among scholars about the astronomical position of the planets at the birth time of Rāma. There are different views while predicting the horoscope of a great king and these becomes an important entry point into the discussion raised by Varāhamihira on Rājayoga. A close study of these later day horoscopes reveals that many of the jyotiṣa have given no importance to the basic rules of making a horoscope, and have given their predictions on the basis of planetary positions of Rājayoga or translating svocasaṁstheṣu pañcasu' as five exalt planets.⁴ I have cast below two horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra, first depicting Sūrya in Meṣa and in second Sūrya in Mīna and a detailed analysis is made based on the verse and mathematical positions of planets.

Chart 1

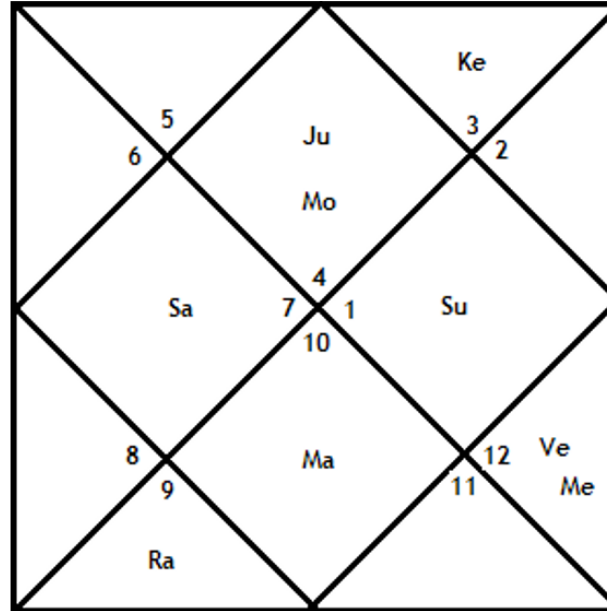


Chart 1 Horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra with Five Exalted Planets

¹ *Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa*, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, verse 9-10:

ततो यज्ञे समाप्ते तु ऋतूनां षट् समत्ययुः I
ततश्च द्वादशे मासे चैत्रे नावमिके तिथौ II
नक्षत्रे अदितिदैवत्ये स्वीच्यसंस्थेषु पञ्चसु
ग्रहेषु कर्कटे लग्ने वाक्पताविन्दुना सह ।
प्रोद्यमाने जगन्नाथं सर्वलोकनमस्कृतं
कौसल्याजनयद् रामं दिव्यलक्षणसंयुतम् II 9-10

² *The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki: An Epic of Ancient India, Volume I: Balakāṇḍa* (tr), R.P.Goldman, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1990

³ H.D.Sankaliya, *The Ramayana in Historical Perspective*, Macmillan India Limited, 1982.

⁴ *Vridha Yavana Jatakam Vol 2* (ed), Suresh Chandra Mishra, Ranjan Publications, 2015, p. 722

If we look at the position of the Sūrya in the chart 1, which is commonly found in various works. As per the description in the Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa, Rāma was born in the month of Caitra and accordingly his birth is celebrated as Rāma Navamī in the popular perception. But if we take Lord Rāmas birth in the month of Caitra, then clearly Sūrya should have been in the rāśi of Mīna (Pisces), and cannot be in that of Meṣa (Aries). If we were to correct the month in the śloka, the idea of five exalted sign is definitely incorrect; or if we take the idea of five exalted signs as correct, then the birth of Rāma could not have taken place in the month of Caitra. The śloka also mentions the tithī as navamī, lagna as Karka, and the position of Candra in punarvaśu nakṣatra with Bṛhaspati. In the Karka lagna, the degree of Punarvaśu lagna is 3°20', and by that calculation also the position of Sūrya cannot be in Meṣa. In the above chart, the position of Budha can be in any of these three signs: Pisces, Aries and Taurus but no other than these signs because of its proximity to the Sūrya. If we take this according to the Sūrya in Mīna, then the position of Budha will be either in Aquarius, Pisces or Aries. On the basis of five exalted points as described, we have placed the position of Maṅgala, Śani, Śukra and Bṛhaspati.

If we were to look at the śloka in terms of the statement 'svocasaṁstheṣu pañcasu', this can be translated as five planets either in their own and exalted house. In this case, the horoscope given below would be made:

Chart 2

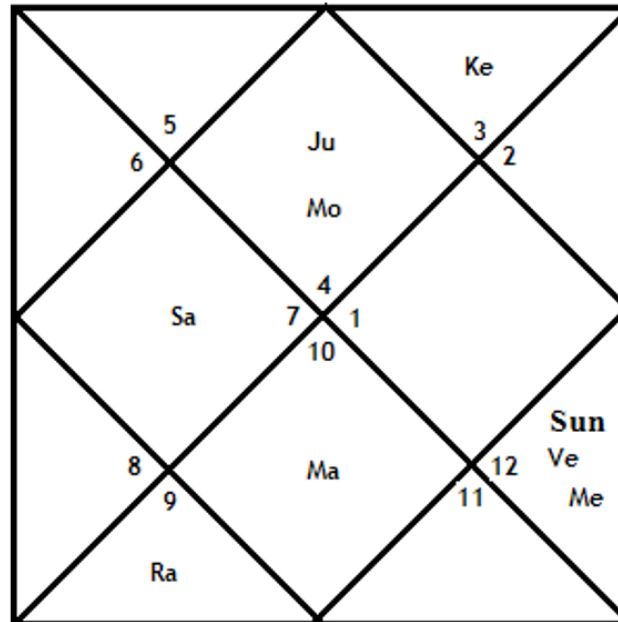


Chart 2 Horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra with four Exalted Planets

If we go by this horoscope, then the four planets Bṛhaspati, Śani, Maṅgala, Śukra are exalted, and Candra is in his own house. It proves the right interpretation of svocasaṁstheṣu pañcasu' as per the mathematical calculation and also the view of Varāhamihira is vindicated that such a person would definitely become king. In his lagna and Candra chart, Maṅgala is placed in the seventh house which makes kuja doṣa, indicating quarrel with,⁵ or separation from, the wife; but as Maṅgala is seen by Bṛhaspati, he and his wife remain chaste for each other. When Rāma abandons Sītā, at that time Vālmīki says that character of Sītā is chaste. Maṅgala in seventh

⁵ *Bṛihat Samhita (tr)* Bhat, p. 910.

house gives a disease of eyes too, or in other words at the time of taking a decision regarding his wife, his true vision or decision is clouded.

2. RĀJAYOGA IN HORĀŚĀSTRA

Astrologers earned their highest position in the royal court due to perceived accuracy of their prognostications. They played an important role in the royal court, offering astute counsel that held significant strategic value in ensuring the king's welfare and stability of the kingdom. Rājayoga is one of the important sections in Horāśāstra which describes the probability of becoming a great king. We do find that Varāhamihira in Rājayogādhyāya has pointed out two ways of becoming king.⁶ One is when the person is born in the family of the king, and the other is on the basis of strong planetary positions or support of all mechanisms of kingship.⁷ Varāhamihira while discussing Rājayoga points out "When three or more planets are powerful and occupy either their exaltation signs or their mūlatrikoṇa signs, a person born becomes a king if he belongs to a king's family."⁸ In case of Śrī Rāmacandra's horoscope four planets are exalted and one is in its own sign and as per Bṛhat Parāśar Horāśāstra, four exalted planets makes sure that the native becomes a king.⁹

As per the other rule described by Varāhamihira, of the four planets - Maṅgala, Śani, the Sūrya, and Bṛhaspati, for all the four or any three of them occupying exaltation signs, while each of the planets occupies the lagna becomes a renowned king.¹⁰ In other words, he will become an emperor or king of kings by virtue of his attainments in divine knowledge. If we follow this rule, there are twelve possibilities for becoming a great king and four possibilities with Jupiter in the lagna. Based on the aforementioned rule and considering the horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra, where Jupiter is posited in the lagna, I have cast four charts below. As per this rule, the horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra follows chart 4 and reveals great kingship. But as per Mīnarāja for becoming a great king the position of the planets should be as per the chart 3 only.¹¹ Having witnessed the greatness of Śrī Rāmacandra and following the opinion of Mīnarāja many astrologers are misled and place the Sun in Aries instead of Pisces. In the Ādhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, five planets are considered to be exalted.¹²

⁶ The Bṛihajjātakam of Varāhamihira (tr) Swami Vijnanananda, 1979 pp 190-204.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Bṛhat Parāśar Horāśāstra Vol 1 (tr) G C Sharma, Sagar Publication, 1999, p 555.

¹⁰ The Bṛihajjātakam of Varāhamihira, pp. 190-204

¹¹ Vṛddha Yavana Jātakama (tr) Suresh Chandra Mishra, Ranjan Publication, 2015, p 722.

¹² Ādhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 2001, p 17

Chart 3

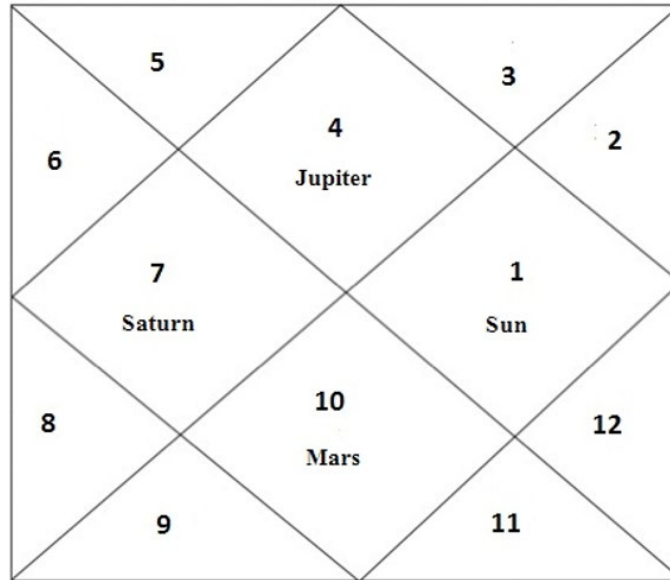


Chart 3 Jupiter is in Karka lagna with other Exalted Planets

Chart 4

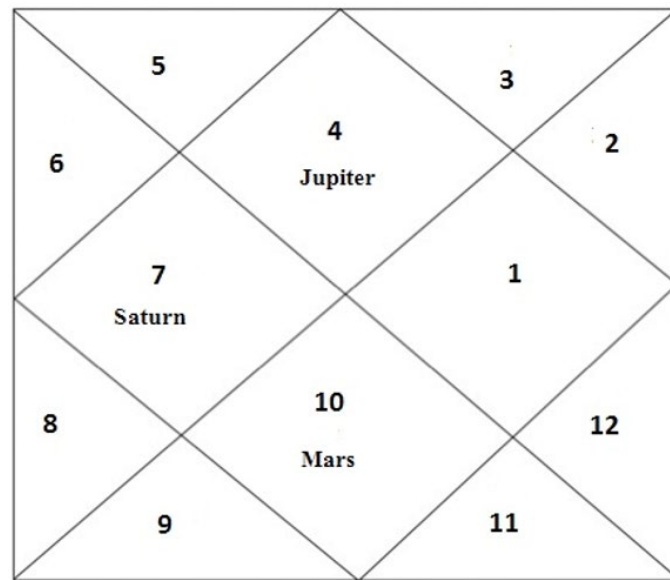


Chart 4 Jupiter is in Karka lagna with other Exalted planets

Chart 5

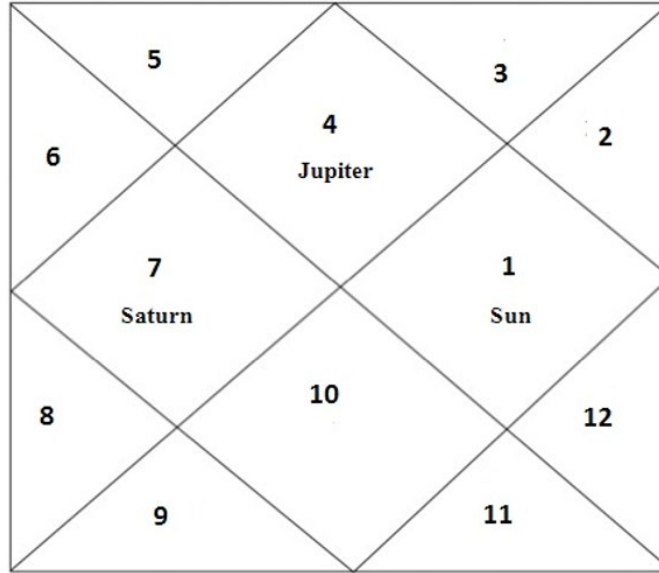


Chart 5 Jupiter is in Karka Lagna with other Exalted Planets

Chart 6

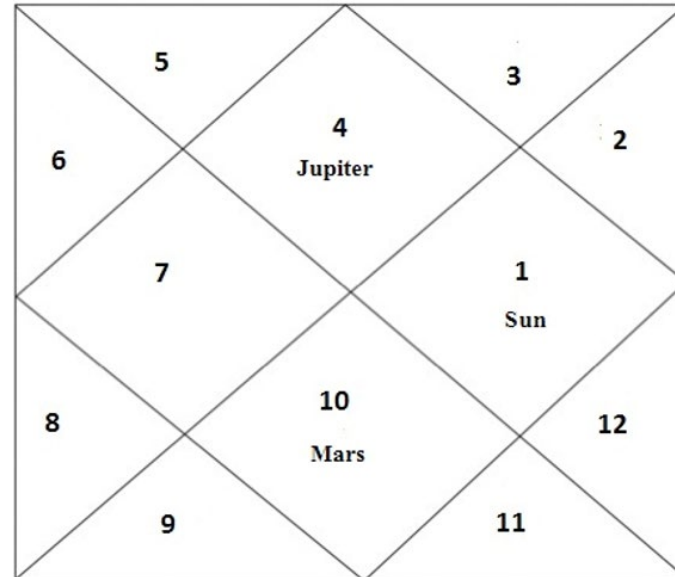


Chart 6 Jupiter is in Karka lagna with Other Exalted Planets

In the horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra various auspicious yoga are formed, as per the Horāśāstra following yoga are found Rucaka Yoga (Mars in quadrant and in Capricorn), Śaśa (Saturn in quadrant and in Libra), HaṁśYoga (Jupiter in quadrant and in Cancer), Gaja Kesari Yoga (Conjunction of Jupiter and Moon in Lagna)¹³. Horoscope of Śrī Rāmacandra becomes an ideal example for the astrologers due to these Mahāyoga.

We come to know through various sources about the presence of astrologers in royal courts. In the Mahābhārata, Vyāsa requested Dhṛtrāṣṭra to observe celestial

¹³ Phaladīpikā (tr) G K Ojha, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2011, pp 109-111

phenomena which proves his astronomical and astrological knowledge; Garga was also associated with the King Veṅa of Mahābhārata.¹⁴ We also come to know about Parāśara explaining astrological knowledge to Bṛhadratha. A court astrologer was expected to possess knowledge of not only making horoscope but also of ritual, architecture, agriculture, omens and of auspicious and inauspicious nature of many things. In addition, they were required to have a sound understanding of agriculture, market, instruments of warfare. Kings patronized astrologers not merely to learn about their own destiny but also to gain broader insight into architecture, agriculture and trade. In return, astrologers provided legitimacy to the king's rule. The image depicts Vaśiṣṭha casting the horoscope of Rāma and presenting it to Daśaratha. It illustrates the practice of royal patronage while affirming the historic presence of astrologers in the royal court. Paintings depicting the casting of horoscopes of Mughal emperor were also produced during the Mughal era. This clearly shows that, irrespective of religious belief astrologers held a distinct place in the royal court, and their role continues to be an important part of Indian civilization.

Planetary positions in the astronomy are not simply a reflection of time but act as significant indicator in shaping the qualities and nature of an individual. This belief system developed across the world, though with certain variations. Horoscopic rules concerning kingship are largely similar, whether articulated by Yavana authorities or Indian scholars. In India, the character of Rāma became so deeply revered that his life was seen as legitimizing to astrological principles, rather than those principles merely legitimizing his characteristics.

Figure 1



Figure 1 Ayodhya Celebrates the Birth of Rama and his Brothers, Painting, Malwa School, 1650-60 CE.

Source: http://museumsofindia.gov.in/repository/record/nat_del-51-65-1-363.

¹⁴ Audrius Beinorius, *On the social and religious status of an Indian astrologer at the royal court*, Acta Orientalia Vilnensia, 9.2, 2008., pp 39-55.