

Brihadjataka: 1st Chapter

~ 15th & 16th Verses

By

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The Brihadjataka of the great Varaha Mihira is a very small treatise in volume compared to various other famous works. There are about 400 verses. Though the name of the book is mentioned as *Horashastra* in the last verse, it is aptly known as Brihadjataka because of the vast ideas hidden in the apparently short work.

In the second stanza of first chapter he stated: Though, studious scientists have compiled many books for imparting the knowledge of the effect of horoscopes to the intelligent people, for helping those who did not succeed in the effort to cross the ocean of Astrology, I am commencing creation of this small boat in the form of science, which is brief, consisting of variety of meters, and having *multiple meanings*.

If we follow a literal translation, the hidden meanings (which Varaha Mihira has hinted) would not be fathomed. The Commentaries of certain Kerala Astrologers throw light on various esoteric interpretations. Most of the shlokas in the initial chapters have deep meaning to such an extent that the selection of words,



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length of phrases or number of words arranged in a verse, or the unique order in which certain results or names are mentioned or listed or the number of meanings given to a term by Varaha Mihira itself are conveying very interesting meanings on the respective subjects covered in those stanzas.

For example, the explanation of the Rashis or signs is given by Varahamihira for the first time in verse number 5 of the first chapter which starts : Matsyau ghatee nrimithunam sagadam saveenam....

The first reference is Meena or Pisces followed by Kumbha or Aquarius, Mithuna or Gemini, Dhanu or Sagittarius, Makara or Capricorn, Tula or Libra , Kanya or Virgo and other houses are not specifically stated but generally stating that they depict the features similar to their names and dwell in the areas these are generally found. The other houses not listed are Mesha or Aries, Vrishabha or Taurus, Kataka or Cancer , Simha or Leo, and Vrischika or Scorpio. *Kannassa Panicker* (a famous astrology writer of 14th/15th century in Kerala) has stated in his work *Horaphalaratnavali* that the shloka implies that sequence of the signs specified by Mihira in this shloka *hints the order of the houses one should look into when examining a horoscope*. That is the Astrologer should first check the *durita* or *likely calamities* and pending sins (as Pisces showing twelfth house is stated first), check sukrittha or virtues next (Kumbha 11th house) , help available next (Mithuna third house) , bhagya or fortune next, (Dhanu - bhagya) Karma or profession next (Makara - the tenth house), married life and partner next (Tula, seventh house) , enemies and obstacles next (kanya- sixth house).

The same verse also gives a hint on good omens according to *Dashadhyayi of Bhattathiri*. It also gives various clues for interpretation during Prashna. According to *Janardhana Kurupp*, besides the good omens, it also hints bad omens.

Coming to the current subject, the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the opening chapter explains the significations of the houses. They read as:

Horodayasthanukutumbasahothabandhu
Putraripatnimaranani shubhaspadayaa:
Riphakhyamithyupachayaanyarikarmalabha
Duschitkasamjnithagrihani na nithyameke (15)

Kalyaswavikramagrihaprathibhaakshathani
Chithotharandhragurumaana bhavavyayani
Lagnachathurthtanidhane chathurashra samjne
Dyoonamchasapthamagriham dashamarkshamaajnaa. (16)

The literal meaning is as follows:

Starting from Lagna, the houses are thanu- body, kutumba- family, sahotha- brother, bandhu- relatives, putra-son, Ari- enemy, patni- spouse, marana- death, shubha- auspiciousness, aaspada- position, aaya- gain, and ripla- last or end. Upachayas are ari- sixth, karma -tenth, labha- eleventh, and duschka- third; but there are other opinions that *they are not permanent*.

They also represent Kalya- Strength or good state of self, swa- owned (money), vikrama- valour, griha- house, pratibha- talent, kshata -wound, chitho- cupid or which is born out of mind, randhra- dangers, guru- preceptor, maana- honour, bhava- domestic concerns and vyaya- loss . The fourth and eighth are “chaturashra” houses. Seventh house is also called dyoonam; tenth house denotes command.

In the Eloquent masterpiece *Dashadhyayi*, *Thalakkulathu Govinda Bhattathiri* (13th Century) has started the commentary of these shlokas stating that interpretation of horoscope shall be done only for a person whose birth time is accurately known. (Horodaya denotes this) Then he goes on explaining calculation of Ascendant and all the twelve houses. In the sixteenth verse the main significations of first six houses are covered in the first line and next six are covered in the next line. This denotes that first six houses are invisible half and the remnants visible half of the horizon.

Sri KK Janrdhana Kurup has given exhaustive list of significations for the 12 houses while explaining the meaning of the above 2 shlokas (Horamritham-Part 1):

House	Significations
First	Perfection of the body, its well-being; shape, form, it's nature, healthy body free of disease, happy state, victory, fame, greatness. Since it is seat of the auspicious life, the ascendant is important of all. Any relation of malefic to the body affects health, the well-being, and longevity of the body.
Second	The house and room in which one is born ; ancestral house, family life with wife and children , responsibility and duty towards family and thoughts thereof, family relatives, father, mother, brethren, grandparents, relatives through marriage, lineage . The thing one has to govern, money, wealth, many branches of knowledge (vidya) , scripts, correspondence , courtyard, toddling, relatives and assets through birth, own caste , things one has to depend upon, food and right eye.
Third	Mainly brother/s. brethren through the same mother. Neighbourhood . Ambition and perseverance. Enthusiasm.

Right ear. Crookedness, Pride, Jealousy. Ventures. Valour. Courage. Defeating others. Brave act. Strength of army. **Walking walk like running.** Wayward acts or acts causing interruptions to regular or natural course (desires causes this). Malefic in third makes the native heroic, **but would be coward inwardly.** *Would like to attack the opponent indirectly before he becomes ready.* Would not trust others as he is timid. Short journey. **Also it would change the pride into false prestige.**

Fourth House of Relations. People of own caste/clan. **Friend*#.** Mother. Happiness and love from family members. Their affection. Chastity. Home/House. **Well.** Place of birth. House where lived in childhood. Residence. Inhabitation. Asset. Own village. Native country. Earned assets. **Nephew/niece/children in laws.** Institutions one sets up. Family gymnasium, family deities, village deities, **education, higher education,** school, college, bosom friends, purity, language, mother tongue, culture, vehicles, domestic animals, equipment for sitting and sleeping (furniture), progress, perfumes, attires, ornaments, nadir, sea, water.

Fifth Son/daughter, intelligence, wisdom, thinking power, logic thinking, talent, created out of oneself, disciples, and meritorious deeds of past life. Previous birth. **Ancestors,** mind, love, lover, acquired from birth, acquired from parents and ancestors, consciousness, vision, outlook, comprehension. Knowledge, imagination, shadow, image, efficiency, **research,** fear of God, writing, writer, author, poetic writing, planning, virtue, **royal signage, tax, future.**

Sixth Enemy of body, i.e disease, enemy of self, i.e, opponents. Obstruction, litigation, quarrels, duel, persecution, attack on body, Persons who do things disliked by the native. (persons whose deeds cause aversion to native), adversary, complaint, hard work, unpleasant work, temporary job, wandering, **work without reward or remuneration,** lowly paid job, poverty, debt, mortgage, injury to body, wound, accident, broken, torn, collapsed, incomplete, defective, unexpected experiences, penury difficulty, desperation, enmity, **thief,** trouble from enemy, loss due to theft, loss of money, cheating, treachery, **lowly habits,** thrift, injury to body and pride, war, bad deed, fear, insult, independence (rather lack of dependence), **breaking**

religious practice (vrathabhanga), **atheist**, **loss of brahmacharya or chastity**. In prashna on enemy, he will return halfway. In prashna on disease, patient will die.

Seventh

Spouse. Marriage. Conjugal happiness, family of spouse. **Sexual pleasure**. Evolved from mind. Desire to have. Intense yearning. Effort to mitigate desires. Desire for worldly pleasures, intercourse, **flood**, partnership. In prashna about return of the person (missing), **adversary of the querant**, should be analysed from seventh house. *If there is a benefic in seventh and malefic in ascendant the enemy will defeat the questioner.* In a prashna about lost property seventh denotes lost thing. *It will not be got back if malefic is in ascendant and benefic is in seventh.* If the seventh lord is combust or debilitated, it will be got back and thief will be caught. In such a query whether the lost property will be got back, the fourth is the querant, seventh is the thief, ascendant is the wealth and the lord of Moon is lord of wealth. Public and route is to be reckoned from seventh.

Eighth

Longevity. Death. Place of death. Time of death, **disease causing death**. Loss of money. Loss of health. Loss of position. Stay in distant locations. Unpleasant results. Disease and penury, poison. *Randhra* is the word used by the Acharya for eighth house. Hole, cave, a divide (crack), split, gap, weak point, deficiency, incompleteness, harassment, destruction, persecution, More or less these can be attributed to Scorpio also. Eighth lord can break anything strongly attached. Lie, cheating, to scare, **black magic**, to confine, to kill.

Ninth

House of Fortune. All auspicious results. Pleasant. Prosperity. Righteousness. Virtuous, illuminated, beautiful. Most extolled house. **Rebirth**. It is to be understood that the first to eight houses are for all living beings and **the remaining houses are only for great men**. This is the inference from the usage "*shubhaspadaayaa*" (*three houses stated in one single word.*). Aspada and Aya are only for those who have shubha. Acharya used the word Guru. Guru also denotes Dharma, punya, kindness penance, vratas, great deeds, main things, respected, revered, most liked. Matters having weight, length, and difficulty also implied. Father, teacher respected person, spiritual teacher, Master, person who creates new philosophy. Grandchildren, chanting of hymns, **donation** (daana), worship of god,

goodness, good conduct. **Favourite deity of next birth**, purity of clan, medicine. Religious practices. Piety.

Tenth Aaspada means do things for making a living. Location. Dias. Position. Honour. State. Get-up. Power. Job. Occupation. Support. Self-respect. Rise. Transpire. Do honourable acts. Self-confidence. Pride. Approval. **Temple**. City. **Servants**. Commanding power. Fame. Sky. Rain. Lifestyle. **Ego**. **Stubbornness**. Anger due to jealousy.

Eleventh Monetary gain. Accomplishment. Achieving desired results. To grab. Income. Revenue. Profit. Gain of pleasure. Happening of planned/desired things. Accretion. To remain. **Love**. Prosperity. Happiness. Well-being. Success. Worldly pleasures. Welfare. **Family**. Elder brethren. **Children born**. Left ear. Contentment. Hearing. Material gain.

Twelfth Acharya Varaha Mihira has explained 11 houses in two lines, and twelfth house is relegated to the third line to show that it is different from other houses. Sin, Fall, hell-state. Left eye. **Deficiency to organs**. Leg. Depletion. Poverty. Ruin. Loss. distant place. Loss of position. Salvation. Loss or deficiency of physical body. Physical weakness. Recline. Hospitalisation. Penury. Difficulties. **Heaven and hell**. Expenditure. Giving. Going. Moving. Changing. Risk. Threat on happiness or enjoyment. Disappearance. Sacrifice. Loss of happiness. Obstruction. Extravagance. Loss of health/ happiness. Spending. Abandon native place. Go to distant lands.

*The Genesis of this write up is question by a friend, enquiring where it is mentioned by Varahamihira that fourth house signifies friend? I browsed the translations of Brihadjataka available with me, but to no avail. Then I stumbled upon Kurupp's eloquent exposition. Subsequently I checked Uttarakalamritha known for the exhaustive list of significations for houses as well as planets. The verse in fifth chapter giving the significations for fourth house read as follows: (*Vidya rajya griha*

.....janani bandhu suhrudau...

janani is mother
bandhu is relative

suhrud means bosom friend suhrudau is plural of the same.

Swami Vijnanada has given the **meaning friend** for *bandhu* in the fifteenth verse. In his translation of Brihadjataka, *Suryanarain Rao* has given the meaning relatives.

The significations are given separately in the fifteenth and sixteenth verses. *Kurupp* states a reason for this. Let us tabulate the significations as per him:

House	Significations as per	
	<i>Fifteenth Verse</i>	<i>Sixteenth Verse</i>
First	Body	Well-being of body
Second	Family	Wealth
Third	Brother	Valour
Fourth	<i>Relatives</i>	House
Fifth	Son (Children)	Talent
Sixth	Enemy	Wound
Seventh	Spouse	Yearning (urge, craving)
Eighth	Death	Chink (split)
Ninth	Auspiciousness	Preceptor
Tenth	Livelihood	Honour
Eleventh	Gain	Emerge. Transpire. Befall
Twelfth	Loss of position	Expenditure.

The Significations of the first set (as per the fifteenth verse) are external matters (concerned with others or external factors also) and those of the second group are internal matters (concerning only self). ***Each house will give rise to the signification (i) from the first set if the house lord has NO connection with the ascendant lord and (i) the one from the second set if there is such connection.*** For example if there is certain weakness for the second house, then the damage would be to the money or wealth if there is relation between the second lord and first lord; and the damage would be to the family otherwise (if first and second lords are not connected).

Upachayas

The meaning of Upachaya is “causing increase or prosperity”

Na nithyameke is a highly suggestive usage made by the Acharya. The meaning is that some say these are not permanent and *Bhattathiri* says it is not the opinion of Mihira himself. There is an implication that the prosperity promised

by Upachaya houses fructify only if their lords or enemies or malefics do not aspect or associate with the respective houses.

Kaikkulangara Ramavarier (in his commentary *Hridayapatha* written in 19/20th century) also confirms that Acharya thought they are permanent as many stalwarts like *Satyacharya*, and *Yavanacharya* have indicated accordingly.

Suryanarain Rao (translation and commentary on Brihadjataka) gives the examples of eleventh house position of Mars for both Pisces (exalted Mars in Capricorn) and Virgo (debilitated Mars in Kataka) and states that the results would vary in these cases. Again it will vary if the Mars in Capricorn is aspected by Jupiter situated in Kataka.

Mr Kurupp states:

While explaining Upachayas, ari-karma-labha are stated in one phrase, and duschikya next indicating the first three (6th /10th /11th) are one type and the last one (3rd) distinct from the other set.

The third house gives ambition and perseverance. It contributes or results to the Karma (tenth) in a way decided by sixth (quality of work and capacity to work, hard work etc) in turn Karma makes enemies. Karma also results in gains- eleventh. All these change according to the thinking and ambition. Therefore the results of third, tenth, sixth and eleventh (which are interconnected as stated above) houses keeps changing. One's thinking, and the intensity of his ambition keeps changing. Accordingly his karma and extent of perseverance and also the gains from karma keeps varying. This is why *na nithyameke* is used while describing upachayas.

Mr Kurupp continues: The Kendra, Trikona or second house position gives auspiciousness to the benefics and Upachaya position reduces the maleficence of the malefics. Thus 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10,11, are covered. The houses left out are 8th and 12th. They are not good for both benefics and malefics.

In the stanza *Lagnachathurthtanidhane chathurashra samjne Dyoanamchasapthamagriham dashamarkshamaajnaa* the importance of houses 1, 4, 8, 7 and 10 are hinted and this is the order of mention in the stanza. Any beneficence of the shubha planets would stand to testimony only if the better effects of 8th house outsmarts the ill effects. The good state of body should be thought first from Lagna, followed by happiness from fourth, then the longevity from the eighth. If longevity is confirmed then, judge worldly life and gain from seventh house, and fame and Karma from tenth. This *indeed is different* from what *Kannassa Panicker* has stated. The name chaturashra given for fourth and eighth denotes that the effects of these bhavas- happiness (4th) and death/accidents/disease and ruin come suddenly or fast (chatura means fast).

Interestingly in a prashna concerning food the various houses denote the following:

House	Signification
First	Bodily state of the person
Second	The plate from which food was consumed
Third	The salad and side dishes
Fourth	Drinks had with the food
Fifth	Character of the person served
Sixth	Chips/pickle etc served along.
Seventh	Curry
Eighth	Rice or the main course
Ninth	The person who took food along with one side by side.
Tenth	Satisfaction from food
Eleventh	Topics discussed at that time.
Twelfth	The reclining, rest /bed etc after food

Before conclusion of his commentary of these two shlokas, *Kurupp* adds:

The cause for rise of any bhava's is its respective succeeding house. The reason for the native's being is his family. The family is because one's brethren (more clarity required here-Gopal). Brethren due to mother. Mother from punya. Punya because of family of last birth. Enemy due to passion. Passion due to Longevity (more clarity required here too-Gopal). Death due to punya of previous birth. Fortune due to good deeds of last birth, karma due to thought about profit and enjoyment. Enjoyment due to expenses, and Moksha due to birth. The state of body is due to wealth, wealth due to valour, valour due to happiness, happiness due to intelligence, intelligence due to efforts. Enemies due to desires, and wife due to accomplishment (more clarity required here too-Gopal), and accomplishment is due to luck. Luck due to Karma and Karma is due to thought of gain. Welfare is due to spending and that is due to the native himself.

In Prashna, the planets in 1st to 4th denotes results expected during the present. Those in 5th to 8th denotes future results. And the planets in 9th to 12th signify the results of the past.