Importance of the Legend of Dhruva for Indian Chronology

[Temporal Overlap between Vedic & Harappan]

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The story of the child prince Dhruva s/o king Uttānapāda, doing penance standing on one leg, eventually obtaining the boon of immortality from Vishnu, to remain as the North Pole Star is well known. His mother Suniti also was to be with him as a star till the end of the Universe.

Dhruva means fixed, stable, certain, true, steadfast,..... Anything that is fixed/ unchanging (mountain, hill, tree, earth) can be qualified as Dhruva. But our Dhruva’s story is about the POLE STAR that remained motionless in the night sky, when other nakshatras/taaras change their position, as observed by our ancestors in India.

We can see such a star today in the sky (Polaris/Alfa-U.Minor) or show to children in the Planetarium. But this was not what the Purāna story refers to as the Pole Star.
Why the Puranic Dhruva is not now the Pole Star?

1. There was no Pole Star for people to look at and call it DHRUVA during approximately 2000 BCE-1500 CE; for 3500 years.
2. Purana describes Dhruva to be at the end of a constellation called Shishumara with 14 stars.
3. All stars named and to be marked on the body of the heavenly animal.
4. A small star is to be next to Dhruva to be called Suniti.

If there was no Visible star at NCP how did Brahmanda & Vishnu Purana scripted around 400-500 CE know about Dhruva as fixed star? Purana proposes Meru-Dhruva centric cosmology. How this idea that Earth is connected to Dhruva by an invisible Meru/Medhi (Pole) arise?

1. Purana should have recorded inherited tradition of ancient memories
2. Earth’s axis wobbles slowly such that over millennia there may be no star at the North Pole that looks fixed. At present we can see Polaris (alfa-U.Minor) as ‘fixed’ in the night sky without movement.
3. During 3200-2400 BCE ‘Abhaya” of the Taittiriya Aranyaka (Yajurveda) was the Dhruva or fixed star! This star is called ‘Thuban’ or alfa-Draconis in modern astronomy.
Scientific Evidence of Axial Precession of Earth

~27,000 years required to complete one cycle

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOPznRRiWOg
This hymn is about the constellation Shishumaara, made up of 14 stars. The text describes the head, jaws, heart, forelegs, hind legs, tail in detail as stationed in the sky with names for the fourteen stars. The commentary of Sayana attests this to be describing the celestial aquatic animal Shishumara.

1. Head: Dharma
2. Upper Jaw: Brahma
3. Lower Jaw: Yajna
4. Heart: Vishnu
5. Genital: Samvatsara
6,7. Forelegs: Ashwin (twins)
8. Navel: Atri
9,10. Hind legs: Mitra & Varuna
11. Tail-First part: Agni
12. Tail 2nd part: Indra
13. Tail 3rd part: Prajapati
14. Tail End: Abhaya-Dhruva
α-Draconis was the Pole Star during 3200-2400 BCE. In this long period, the declination of this star varied from 87° 56′ to 87° 36′, reaching 89° 53′ in 2830 BC.

In the Maitrayaniya Aranyaka, king Brihadratha among several other questions, asks “why even Dhruva moves”
Taittiriya āranyaka describes constellation Draco as Shishumara with 14 stars at the end of which Abhaya-Dhruva (α-Draconis or Thuban) was stationed. (2400-2800-3200 BCE) *Ekāgni of Krishna Yajurveda* pictures this as a Fixed Peg driven in ground around which animals go round.

\[ dhruvākṣitiḥ dhruvayoniḥ dhruvamasi, dhruvataḥ sthitam | tvam nakṣatrāṇāṁ methyasi \]
Yajurvedic Shrauta Sacrificial Rituals Related to Dhruva

Reference to stability or otherwise of ‘Dhruva’ appears in several Vedic rituals. The shrauta rites exhibit a congruence/similarity between the sacrificial pot ‘Dhruva-graha’ and the star of the same name. The Samhita part has the mantras (from Rgveda + YV) but the Brahmana part has the explanations or reasons preserved in the form of allegorical legends. [Taittiriya, MaitrayaNiya, Katha and Kapisthala-Katha have similar rituals].

In the Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, Soma (Juice) is drawn in the morning in nine cups (graha), the ninth being the dhruvagraha. Hymns and rites with Dhruva-graha are available in detail:

R.V 6.7.1

मूर्धानं दिवो आरतेपृथिव्य...| कावः सम्राजमतिथि जनानाम.....देवा:||उपयामगृहीतोसि...ध्रुवोदसि
ध्रुवक्षिप्तिः: ध्रुवाणां ध्रुवतम: अच्छुतानामच्छुतक्षितिं एष ते योनिरश्रयेऽत्वा वैश्वानराय || (TS 1.4.13)

Explanation:
आयुवधा एतद्यस्य यद्ध्रुव उत्तमो ग्रहानां गृह्यते....|| असुरा वा उत्तराः पृथिवीं पर्याचिकीर्षन् तान्देवाद्ध्रुवेण अद्भुत्तरः तद्ध्रुवस्य ध्रुवतः यद्ध्रुव: उत्तरत्तस्साद्यते .... TS-Br(6.5.2)

The asuras from above (from north) attempted to turn the earth around; the gods firmed it up with Dhruva; that is how Dhruva got its name; for Dhruva is placed in the north for fixity.

MS has similar rituals, but also refers to black magic by displacing Dhruva-cup to displace a leader/king.

yadyabhicaret| idamaham amuṣyāṁ amuṣyāyaṇasya ayuḥ pravartayāmi|| iti dhruvaṁ pravartayet, āyurevāśya pravartayati|| dhruvaṁ tvā dhruvakṣitiṁ amuṁ āsthanāt cyāvayāmi|| iti āsthanāt eva enaṁ cyāvayati, pramāyuko bhavati, dhruvaṁ vai pracyavamānaṁ viśvā bhūtānu pracyavante, pra yajamāna āsthanāt cyavate,...||
Call the story of Dhruva by any name; mythology, legend, cultural astronomy, ethno-astronomy or Vedic cosmogony.

Indic civilization, as can be gleaned from Vedic & Puranic texts, has preserved knowledge of Two Distinct Dhruva-Pole Stars Spanning ~5000 Years

First one at *tail-end* of constellation Shishumara (Thuban) → Tai.Aranyaka; (~3000 BCE)

Second in *mouth* of Dhruva-matsya (Polaris) --> Siddhanta-tatva Viveka (1658 CE)

Any ancient text by itself may be stratified zig-zag not to yield a specific date for its composition. But the inviolable effect of precession has left its verifiable foot prints through the oral textual descriptions of DHRUVA providing us the backbone to Indian chronology, linking the Vedic and the Harappan.

THANK YOU