

# Theme 1.1 *Adhidaivata Pakṣa*

## A Traditional Approach for Unraveling Astral Observations in Vedic Texts

Yāskācārya was recording the Vedic tradition as it existed in his time (1500-800 BCE?), adding his own explanations to be passed on further. One of the definitive clarifications offered by him is about the Vedic *Soma* as a nameable entity and about *Somapāna* or drinking of *Soma* by Indra and other *devatās*. *Soma* is a creeper of the same name, from which the *soma* juice is extracted ritualistically and consumed by the officiating priests as consecrated offering in a ritual. This is the *adhiyajña* explanation and understanding. But when *Soma* is said to be the food for *devāḥ* (gods/deities) approaching him on *Pūrṇimā* (full moon), the visible moon in the sky is meant by the word *Soma*.

From the time of Yāskācārya's *Nirukta*, generations of followers of *Vedas* inherited and practiced a blend of *adhiyajña*, *adhidaivata*, *adhyātma* meanings, ideas and practices as their *dharma* or way of life. We are not going into issues of philosophy, social customs, religious practices etc. But it is important to recognize that all these are in some sense the results of the *adhidaivata* view of the cosmos that is present in the Rgveda and passed on further through other Samhita, Brāhmaṇa and Purāṇas.

When the *adhidaivata* and also the *adhiyajña* explanations are given, along with the *Viniyoga* (application in a particular rite as per the Shrauta sutras) one starts seeing a figurative similarity between the two 'meanings'.

Here the *word meaning* does not refer to lexical/ etymological meanings but something like two images/sceneries having close similarities, in colour, numbers, elements,... that is not due to chance. . This is due to the concept of *rūpasamṛddhi*, (*etadvai yajñasya samṛddhaṁ yadrūpasamṛddhaṁ yatkarma kriyamāṇaṁ ṛk abhivadati... Ait. Brā. 5.3*).

This is the principle of similarity enjoined to exist between the sound, syllabic count and meaning of the Vedic mantras with the form, content, measure and actions in the rituals. This similarity helps us to retrieve in a few cases the astronomical background that is embedded in the Vedic text. Example:

मघाभ्यः पुरोडाशं षट्कपालम् || Tai. Br. (3.1.4)

(Magha asterism is made of *six stars* as per PT & VGJ.

In the Vedas this is reflected in the offerings made on *six sherds*)

The Purāṇas and other sources also have to be consulted to follow some cryptic Vedic hymns or to trace the growth of Vedic ideas into empirical models. In all cases the original text has to be studied with commentaries to arrive at the contextual astral background that may be the picturesque sky with the *marudgaṇa* or a comet (*dhūmaketu*) or an eclipse (*svarbhānu*) or the Pole Star *Abhaya-dhruva* in the Śiśumāra constellation.

## SOMAPĀNA LEGEND: INDRA DRINKS 30 LAKES OF SOMA

एकया प्रतिधा पिबत्साकं सरांसि त्रिंशतम् ।  
इन्द्रः सोमस्य काणुका ॥

RV. 8.77.4

In a single draught Indra drank 30 lakes full of Soma. Indra is lover of Soma.

एकेन प्रतिधानेनापिवत् । साकं सहेत्यर्थः । इन्द्रः सोमस्य काणुका । कान्तकानीति वा । क्रान्तकानीति वा । कृतकानीति वा । इन्द्रः सोमस्य कान्त इति वा । कणेघात इति वा । कणेहतः । कान्तिहतः ।

तत्रैतद् याज्ञिका वेदयन्ते । त्रिंशदुक्थपात्राणि माध्यन्दिने सवन एकदेघतानि । तान्येतस्मिन् काल एकेन प्रतिधानेन पिबन्ति । तान्यत्र सरांस्युच्यन्ते । त्रिंशदपरपक्षस्याहोरात्राः । त्रिंशत्पूर्वपक्षस्येति नैरुक्ताः । तद् या एताश्चान्द्रमस्य आगामिन्य आपो भवन्ति रश्मयस्ता अपरपक्षे पिबन्ति । तथापि निगमो भवति ।

Nighaṇṭu & Nirukta by Lakshman Sarup

यमक्षितिर्मक्षितयः पिबन्ति । इति ।

तं पूर्वपक्षे आप्याययन्ति । तथापि निगमो भवति ।

यथा देवा अंशुमाप्याययन्ति । इति ।

The imperishable one whom the imperishable drink

As the gods cause the moon to grow.

Sāyaṇa Bhāṣya:

नैरुक्त्यप्रसिद्ध्या तु कालाभिमानी इन्द्रः

In the *adhidaivata* sense Indra's drinking Soma that is Moon is passage of time. The interesting point is about quantification as 30 = 15 days+15 nights

One of the most important attribute of Indra Maghavān is his power to induce rains at the right time by reducing heat, near about the summer solstice day. Extolling the extreme NE position of sun rise as Indra's highest station and Indra said to be causing sun to climb up the peak for longer visibility in the Ṛgveda, indicate events connected with the summer solstice.

इन्द्रो दीर्घाय चक्षस आ सूर्य रोहयद्दिवि । वि गोभिः अद्रिमैरयत् ॥ (RV 1.7.3)

गार्यन्ति त्वा गायत्रिणोऽर्चन्त्यर्कमूर्किणः । ब्रह्माणस्त्वा शतक्रतु उद्वंशमिव येमिरे ॥ 1 ॥  
यत्सानोः सानुमारुहन्द्ध्यर्ष्यष्ट कर्त्वीम् । तदिन्द्रो अर्थं चेतति युथेन वृष्णिरेजति ॥ 2 ॥

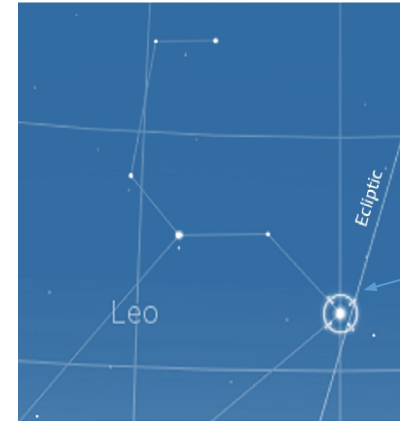
The chanters hymn thee, they who say the word of praise magnify thee. **The priests have raised thee up on high, O Satakratu, like a pole.** As up he climbed from ridge to ridge and looked upon the toilsome task, Indra observes this wish of his, and the Rain hastens with his troop. (RV 1. 10. 1-2. Transl. R.V. Griffith.)

इन्द्रो मघैः मघवान् वृत्रहा अभुवत् ॥ (RV 10.23.2)

लभेते । यद्वा । यौ हरी अस्येन्द्रस्य वने संभजनार्थं वसु<sup>1</sup> वसुनो लाभाय क्षिप्रं भवत इति शेषः ।  
तान्वा हरिभ्यां ऽमघैः धनैः ऽमघवा धनवान् ऽइन्द्रः ऽवृत्रहा वृत्राक्यस्वासुरस्य मेघस्य वा हन्ता  
ऽभुवत् भवति । अपि च ऽऋसुः दीप्तः ऽवाजः बलवान् ऽऋभुक्षाः महानिन्द्रः ऽशवः शवसो

Indra Maghavān hits Vṛtra by the *maghās*

Indra Festival observed in the rainy season.



Regulus; α-Leo

## Atharvaveda Samhitā; (19.9.8-10) Shanti Mantra:

शं नो भूमिः वेप्यमाना शं उल्कानिर्हतं च यत्। शं नो ग्रहाः  
चन्द्रमसां शं आदित्यश्च राहुणा । शम् नो मृत्युर्धूमकेतुः  
शं रुद्राः तिग्म तेजसः।

Who are Rudraah with sharp/ intense brightness?

Maruts are called Rudrah, and some times Rudra-sunavah, that is offspring of Rudra (RV 1.39.7)

In 1.64 Nodha Gautama describes them as having fearful forms, they are like drops (falling objects) bright like sun.

ते जज्ञिरे दिव ऋष्वस उक्षणो रुद्रस्य मर्या असुरा अरेपसः ।  
पावकासः शुचयः सूर्याइव सत्वानो न द्रप्सिनो घोरवर्षसः ॥ 2 ॥

The epithet asurâh does not indicate any ethnic group but just that maruts, as Deities, threw stones and other objects towards earth. The word **asura** is derived traditionally, as by Sâyan.a, from the root asu ks.e.pan.e (to throw). They threw darts/stones (towards people and animals).

चित्रो वोऽस्तु यामश्चित्र ऊती सुदानवः । मरुतो अहिभानवः ॥ 1 ॥  
आरे सा वः सुदानवो मरुत ऋञ्जती शरुः । आरे अश्मा यमस्यथ ॥ 2 ॥

*Far be from us, your impetuous shaft. Far from us be the stone you hurl  
(I.172.2; Agastya about Maruts)*

## Who are Maruts? (33 Suktas are devoted to Maruts. They appear in all the ten Mandalas. Fourth most cited Devata in RV)

Maruts are counted and are called *Gaṇa* or group. They are seen in the sky, they move together about a single central point, they have no one big or small, they glide down, they can kill people on ground.

They increased by two and three and their count varied from twenty-one (1.133.6) to forty-nine (8.28.5) to sixty three (8.96.8). They could even be seen in waves of thousands.

If these properties were to be reconciled with a physically possible natural object, *Maruts* are to be taken as a shower of meteorites (Tārā-varsha).

नि वो यामाय॑ मानु॑षो द॒ध्रु उ॒ग्राय॑ म॒न्यवै॑ । जिही॑त॒ पर्व॑तो गि॒रिः ॥ ७ ॥

*To withstand your ferocious journey man has strengthened his dwelling with columns. Even rugged hills get crushed (at your approach).*

*Maruts* have mowed down men on earth and have made mountains fall. Wherever the group of *Maruts* goes, everyone is sure to hear their roaring sound (1.37.12, 13). *Maruts* come from the sky to the earth, but not the other way round (1.38.2). That *Maruts* could not go back from earth is ingeniously expressed in the next verse, (1.38.4)

यद्यु॑यं पृ॒श्निमा॑त॒रो म॒र्तासुः॑ स्या॒तन॑ । स्तो॒ता वो॑ अ॒मृतः॑ स्यात् ॥ ४ ॥

*Hey! Children of Pr.s'ni you may become mortals, but let those who laud you remain not dead.*



**METEOR SHOTS ACROSS  
THE EAST COAST OF  
ORISSA. *THE STATESMAN,*  
*27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2003.***

- \*FOR A FEW SECONDS IT  
APPEARED TO BE DAYLIGHT!**
- \* HEARD RUMBLING SOUND.**
- \*ONE DEAD**
- \*ELEVEN INJURED**
- \*HUNDREDS FLEE**
- \*THATCHED HOUSES BURNT**
- \*STONY DEBRIS RECOVERED.**

Houses shook,  
people trembled

***Dure drsho ye divyaa iva strbhih,***

1.38.

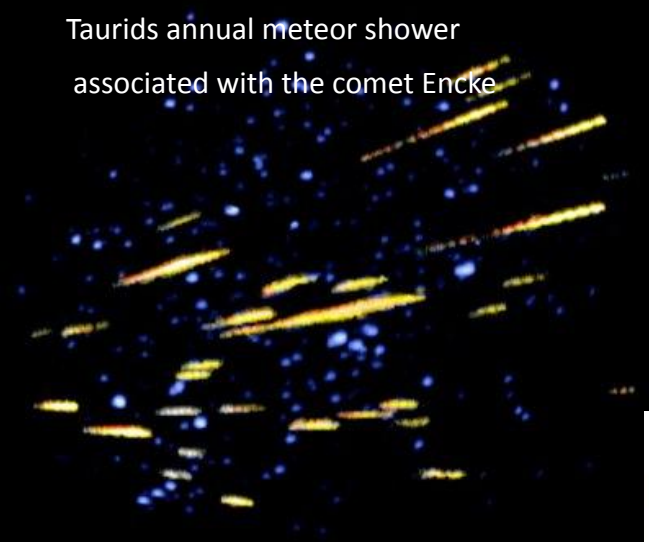
अध॑ स्व॒नान्म॒रुतां॑ वि॒श्व॒मा सद्म॑ पार्थि॒वम् । अर॑जन्तु प्र मानु॒षाः

॥ 10 ॥

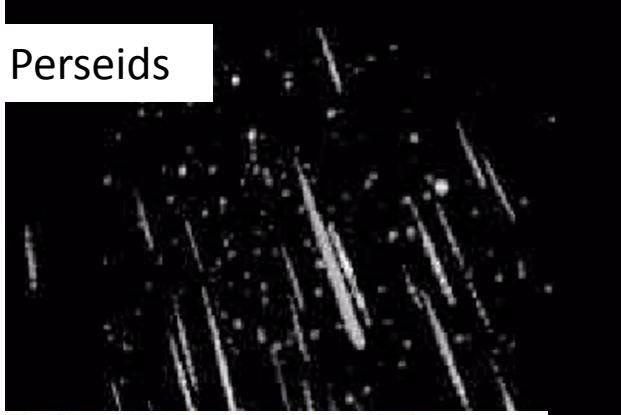
***Vāśimantah, drapshāḥ yavasādaḥ  
avayātām marutām heḷa adbhutaḥ. 1.94***

***Vāśībhih aśmamayībhih iti vā  
vāqbhiriti vā (Nirukta 4.19)***

Taurids annual meteor shower  
associated with the comet Encke



Perseids



śuklavāsā rudraganaḥ |  
grīṣmeṇā''vartate saha |  
nijahanpṛthivīm sarvām || 10 ||

In the Tai. AraNyaka (1.3.3)  
White coloured Rudragana is  
associated with Grīshma  
Rtu.

śuklavāsā rudraganaḥ |  
grīṣmeṇā''vartate saha |  
nijahanpṛthivīm sarvām || 10 ||

Another angry Marudgana  
appears in Hemanta rtu

MARUTS FORM A GANA THAT IS A GROUP.

Move like the nave of a wheel with spokes (rathaanaam na ye  
araah sanaabhayah | 10.78.4).

Saayana : even though Maruts are many, they move  
equally spaced like spokes connected to the same point  
at the center of a wheel.

svayuktaḥ divaḥ vṛthā ava āyayuh||  
ajyeṣṭhāso akaniṣṭhāsa ete;

Maruto ahi bhānavah;

Trisaptaḥ; Saptaanaamsapta;

Trihshasthih tva maruto; marutaḥ sadā  
samānarūpāh (Sayana)

Vayu and Parjanya are  
different from Maruts

Thunder Storm





Maruts had caused a disaster. They had disturbed the Creation, since they were not worshipped previously. Prajapati had to see a special offer to maruts to save his creation.

<sup>6</sup> संवत्सरो वै प्रजापतिः। संवत्सरे एवास्मै प्रजाः प्राजनयत्। ताः प्रजा जाता मरुतोऽघ्नन् । अस्मान् अपि न प्रायुक्षतेति। स एतम् प्रजापतिर्मरुतं सप्तकपालम् अपश्यत्। याः पूर्वाः प्रजाः असृक्षि। मरुतस्ता अवधिषुः॥ *Tai. Brā.* (I. 6.2.2-3-4)

<sup>7</sup> मरुतो यज्ञमजिघान्सन् प्रजापतेः॥ *Tai. Brā.* (I. 3.4.4)

Maruts are the common people in the sky. They are in the sky and are the most numerous among the deities.

<sup>9</sup> विशो वै मरुतो भूमो वै विट्॥ *ŚB.* (III. 9.1.17); मरुतो हि वै देवविशः अन्तरिक्ष भाजनाः॥ *Kaushitaki Brā.* (7.9.16):

<sup>10</sup> मरुतो हि देवानाम् भूयिष्ठाः॥ *Tai. Brā.* (2.7.10.1)

There are geographical markers also about where Maruts were more active. 1.186.9 says Maruts flew over IriNa that is Ran-of-kutch.

प्र नु यदेषां महिना चिकित्त्रे प्र युञ्जते प्रयुजस्ते सुवृक्ति  
अधु यदेषां सुदिने न शरुर्विश्वमेरिणं प्रुषायन्तु सेनाः

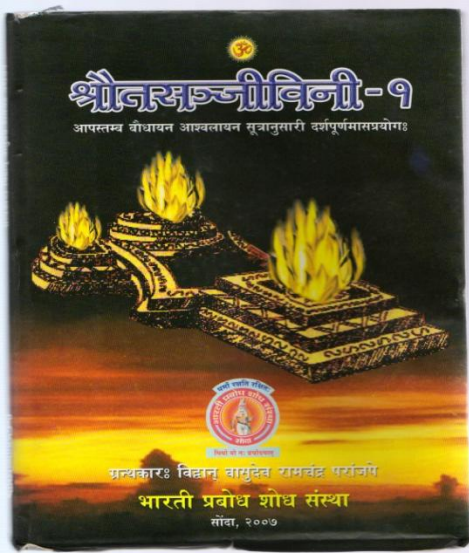
| Sarasvati is followed by Maruts 3.54.13; 2.30.8  
॥ 9 ॥

सुषोमै शर्याणावत्यार्जीके पस्त्यावति

| ययुर्निचक्रया नरः

॥ 29 ॥

Maruts went downwards to Sus.oma, R.ijika, Śaryan.āvati full of dwellings.



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## DP Yaga in Progress



Darshiki Vedi, No fire on this altar. Not built in five layers like the other altars. Construction of this special vedi is given in the shulba sutras. It is cut out from a trapezium of height  $h=96$ , with parallel sides 48 and 64 angulas. The area of the curved geometrical figure  $(\pi/6 - \sqrt{3}/4) h^2$  desired by the Vedas can be shown to be between 3333 & 3345 angula with  $\pi$  taken to be 3 to 3.0885;  $\sqrt{3} = 26/15$  in the Sutras. The area of DP Vedi is nearly 3339 angulas

## Viśvedevā Group Deities Counted as 3339

The most important Śrauta rite connected with moon is the **darśa-pūrṇamāsa**. The importance of this yAga for preserving and promoting astronomy, geometry, mathematics, intellectual tradition in general has not been fully appreciated. What has been widely discussed is the equivalence principle of the areas of the Ahavaniya, Gārhapatya and the Dakṣiṇāgni altars. A is a square 24 x 24; but G is a circle and D is a semicircle. For getting equal area, one faces the “circling the square” This leads to irrational numbers and much more.... But what about the Antarvedi, which looks like a doll, symmetrically placed East-West, of the height of the Yajamāna = 96 angulas. The shulba sutras describe the construction this altar, on which no fire is kept. This is equally important for the DP-rite. The Tai.Sam and TB explain the importance of the Vedi. If we find the area of the Vedi, it is very nearly 3339 sq. angulas. This number is the special count of the Viśvedevas, who are invoked in the DP-rite. This number appears in RV 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> mandala.

No where in the Vedas the precise physical meaning behind this special number is mentioned. Indirectly we know that the Saucika hymns (RV 10<sup>th</sup> Mandala) have some connection with the DP rites.

The number is found in several other Vedic texts but what is their purpose?

It is in the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa (Ch.23) we get a clear picture of this number.

भक्षार्थममृतं सोमः पौर्णमास्यामुपासते  
एकां रात्रिं सुरैः सर्वैः पितृभिः सर्षिभिः सह ६६  
सोमस्य कृष्णपक्षादौ भास्कराभिमुखस्य तु  
प्रक्षीयंते पितृदेवैः पीयमानाः कलाः क्रमात् ६७  
त्रयश्च त्रिंशत्तश्चैव त्रयस्त्रिंशत्तथैव च  
त्रयश्च त्रिसहस्राश्च देवाः सोमं पिबन्ति वै ६८  
इत्येतैः पीयमानस्य कृष्णा वर्द्धन्ति वै कलाः  
क्षीयन्ति तस्माच्छुक्लाश्च कृष्णा आप्याययन्ति च ६९  
एवं दिनक्रमात्पीते विबुधैस्तु निशाकरे  
पीत्वार्द्धमासं गच्छन्ति चामावास्यां सरोत्तमाः ७०

The deities coming in the *kr̥ṣṇapakṣa*, to moon for Somapana are counted as 3339 (303+33+3003)

The Vishnu, Linga and Vayu Purāṇa also have this number and the same verses but in variant manner. When numbers have to be retrieved for understanding the science behind them, the printed versions of the Purāṇa should be used with care.

Anandashrama Edition Vayu Purana has the first half correctly as **trayasca trishatascaiva...**

Tai.Br. Describes the background of the Vedi and why it should not be deeper than four angulas.

(If the *vedi* should be) excessively (i.e. too deeply) excavated, it would belong to the Fathers (i.e. the deceased ancestors) (and it would not be fit for the sacrifice to the gods). He (the *Adhvaryu*) excavates it to such an extent that it is equal to Prajāpati, the mouth of the sacrifice. (Formerly) the *vedī* hid itself from the gods. They found it four *aṅgulas* deep (in the earth). That is the reason why it should be excavated four *aṅgulas* deep.<sup>53</sup>

Tai.Br. III.2.9 Transl. By Du Mont

पुरा क्रूरस्य विसृपो विरश्निनुदादाय पृथिवीं जीरदानुर्या ऐरयन् चन्द्रमसि स्वधाभिः तां धीरासो अनुदृश्य यजन्ते॥

TS (I.1.9)

...you are the self-law....you the glorious one, take the earth.... by means of its self-law and place it on the moon.

*Sāyana's* interpretation also the altar was used by the ancestors of the current practitioners to establish earth on the moon as per natural self-law (*svadhā*).

पूर्वे यजमाना वेदिरूपं यां पृथिवीं कृत्स्नभूमेरासुर्याः सकाशादूर्ध्वमादाय चन्द्रमस्यमृतकिरणैः सार्धं स्थापितवन्तः इदानीन्तनास्तु धीमन्तः तामिमां वेदिं मनसानुचिन्त्य तस्यां यजन्ते॥

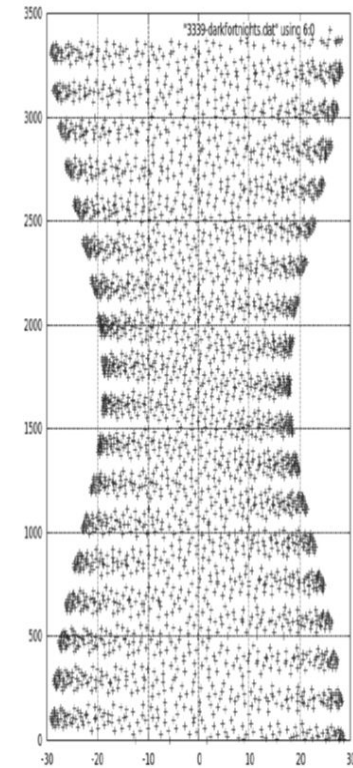
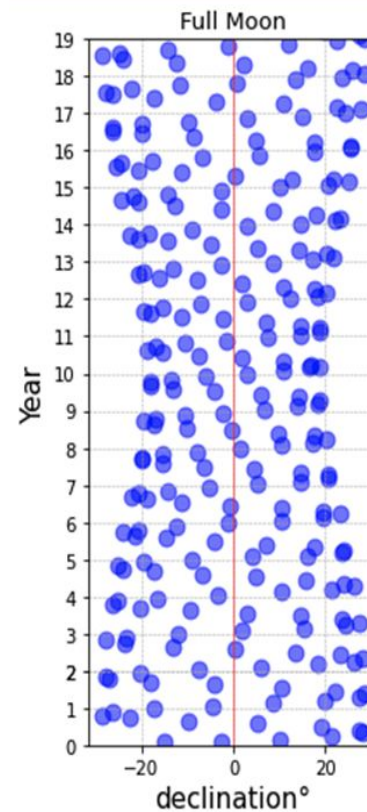
*Sāyana Bhāṣya* (TS I. 1.9)

Including the Shuklapaksha

$3339 \times 2 = 6678 = 371 \times 18$ ; If we take 371(tithi/year) this is the 18 year Rahu Yuga; that is the eclipse period.

223 FM Rises

3339 Kr. P moon rises



3339 consecutive nights only in the dark fortnights starting from 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 2006 a lunar eclipse, Bhadrapada month, Moon near Nakshatra: Purva-Bhadra. 18<sup>th</sup> Sept.2024 is LE night, moon near the same nakshatra P.B.

मित्रावरुणौ त्वोत्तरतः परिधत्तां ध्रुवेण धर्मणा॥ TS (I. 1.11.12)

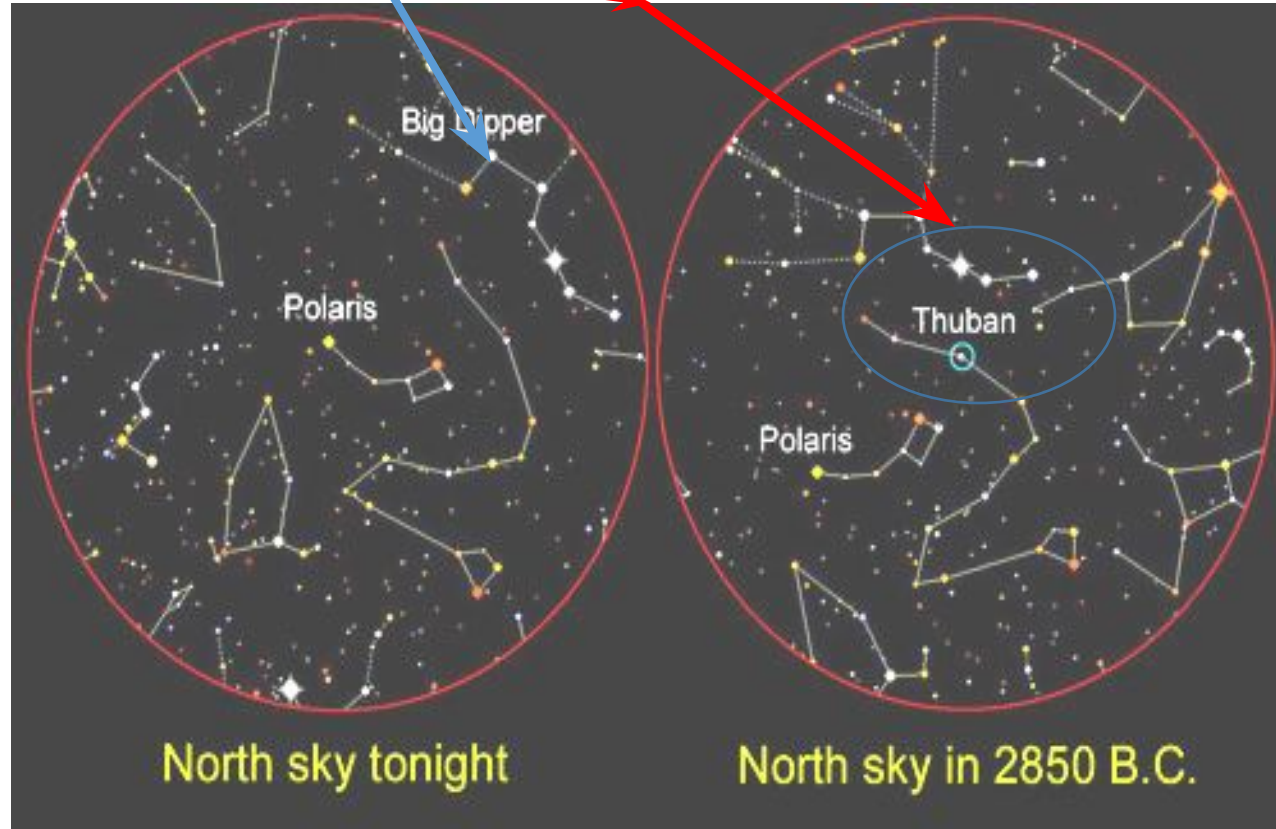
THE SACRIFICER PRAYS TO THE DP-VEDI SO THAT HE COULD ATTAIN A PLACE NEAR THE SAPTARSHI-MANDALA (U.MAJOR) IMPLIED TO BE ABOVE THE NORTHERN LIMB OF THE DP-VEDI.

The consent of Brahmā is conveyed in the following words. “प्रणय , यज्ञं देवता वर्धय त्वं नाकस्य पृष्ठे यजमानोऽस्तु । सप्त ऋषीणां सुकृतां यत्र लोकः - तत्रेमं यजमानं च धेहि ” ३. ‘ॐ प्रणय’ - इति ॥

Cosmography: Where is naaka? Where is the loka of Saptarshi?

अम्भस्यपारे भुवनस्य मध्ये नाकस्य पृष्ठे महतो महीयान् ।  
शुक्रेण ज्योतींषि समनुप्रविष्टः प्रजापतिश्चरति गर्भे अन्तः ॥

Heaven was perceived to be near Saptarshi constellation U.Major near to the Centre of Universe, i.e North Celestial Pole- Dhruva which was not the present day Polaris in U.Minor. This was due to precession. Vedic texts are aware of this phenomenon.



Taittiriya AraNyaka is the first known text that cites Saptarshi and Agastya to be staying with the Nakshatras of the same name.

ऋषयः सप्तात्रिंशच्च यत् । सर्वेऽत्रयो अगस्त्यश्च । नक्षत्रैः शंकृतोऽवसन् (तै० आ० १-११)

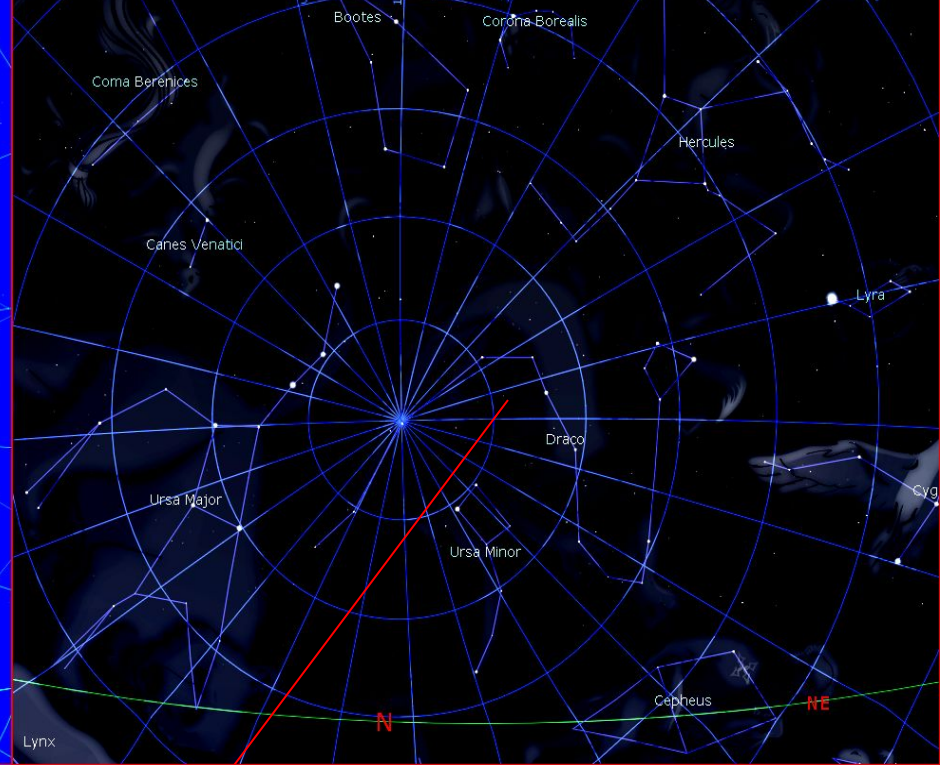
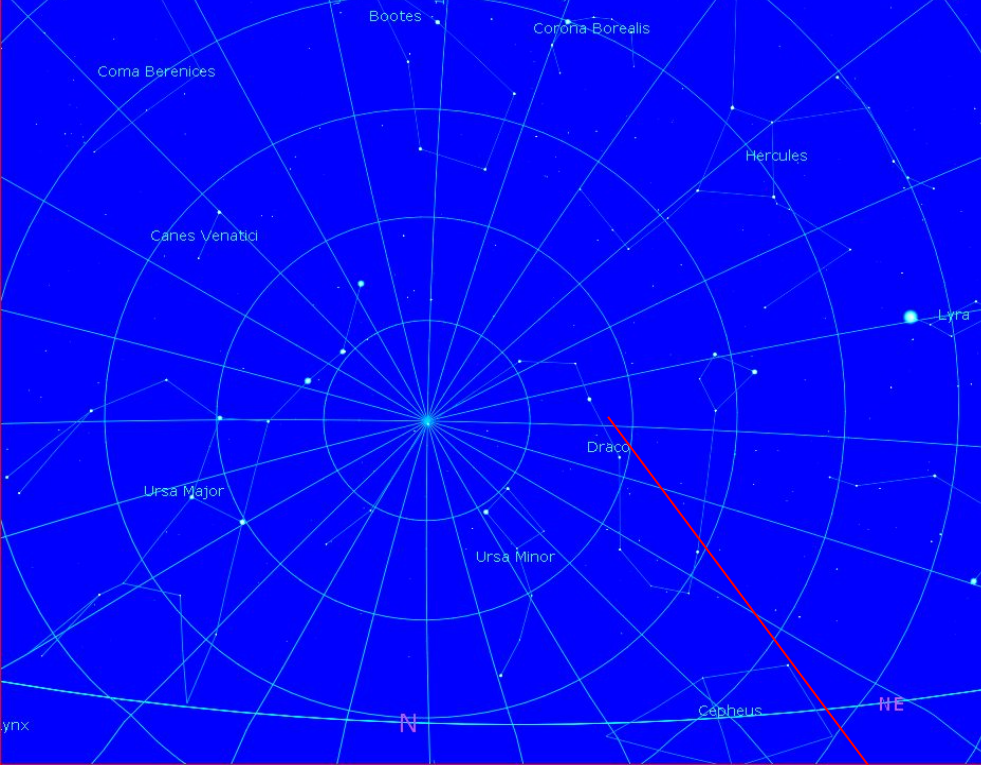
It also refers to Meru, and says 'Kashyapa' does not leave the Meru. This indirectly says that the star named Kashyapa was circumpolar. Most importantly the constellation Draco is described.

२३ भूः प्रपद्ये भुवः प्रपद्ये स्वः प्रपद्ये भूर्भुवस्स्वः प्रपद्ये ब्रह्म प्रपद्ये ब्रह्मकोशं प्रपद्येऽमृतं  
प्रपद्येऽमृतकोशं प्रपद्ये चतुर्जालं ब्रह्मकोशं यं मृत्युर्नावपश्यति तं प्रपद्ये देवान्प्रपद्ये देवपुरं  
प्रपद्ये परीवृतो वरीवृतो ब्रह्मणा वर्मणाऽहं तेजसा कश्यपस्य यस्मै नमस्तच्छिरो धर्मो  
मूर्धानं ब्रह्मोत्तरा हनुर्यज्ञोऽधरा विष्णुरहृदयं संवत्सरः प्रजननमश्विनौ पूर्वपादावत्रिर्मध्यं  
मित्रावरुणावपरपादावग्निः पुच्छस्य प्रथमं काण्डं तत इन्द्रस्ततः प्रजापतिरभयं चतुर्थं

स वा एष दिव्यः शांकरः शिशुमारस्तं ह य एवं वेदाप पुनर्मृत्युं जयति जयति  
स्वर्गं लोकं नाध्वनि प्रमीयते नाग्नौ प्रमीयते नाप्सु प्रमीयते नानपत्यः प्रमीयते लघ्वान्नो  
भवति ध्रुवस्त्वमसि ध्रुवस्य क्षितमसि त्वं भूतानामधिपतिरसि त्वं भूतानाग् श्रेष्ठोऽसि  
त्वां भूतान्युपपर्यावर्तन्ते नमस्ते नमस्सर्वं ते नमो नमः शिशुकुमाराय नमः ॥ ०। २।

११। २३॥ ॥ ११॥

Fourteen stars with their names and location on the body of the celestial animal Shishumara are mentioned. This constellation is said to be Dhruva-> Fixed around which all beings circumambulate. The last star, the fourth on the tail, is **Abhaya**, the **POLE STAR Dhruva** in later texts .

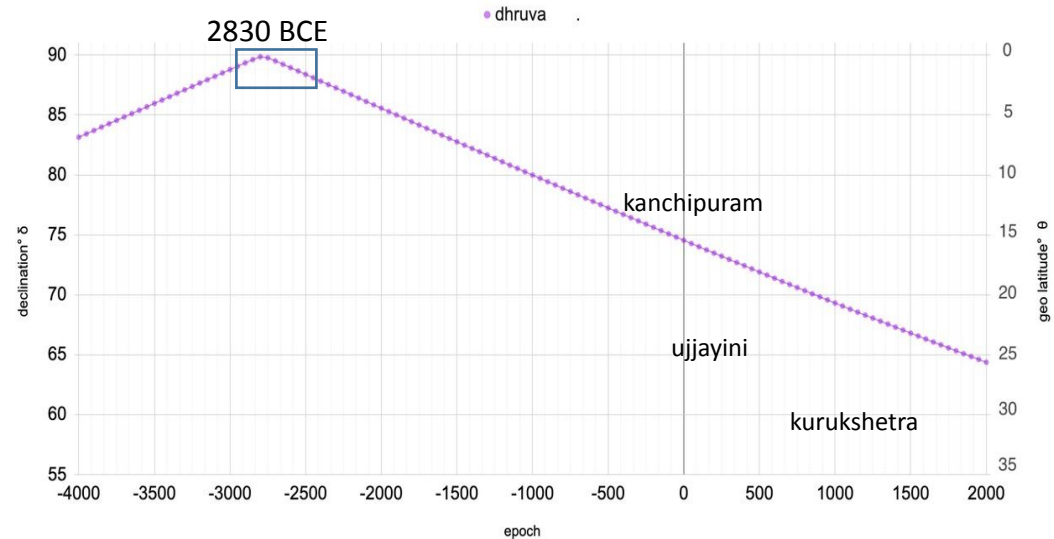


## Shishumara of T.Aranyaka c3000 BCE

$\alpha$ -Draconis was the Pole Star during 3200-2400 BCE. In this long period, the declination of this star varied from  $87^{\circ} 56'$  to  $87^{\circ} 36'$ , reaching  $89^{\circ} 53'$  in 2830 BC

सर्वश्रेष्ठेक्षयिष्णुं पश्यामो यथेभे दृशमशकादयः॥ तूणवनस्पतय उद्धृतप्रध्वसिनोऽथं किमेतैर्वाऽपरेऽन्ये महाधनुर्द्धराश्चक्रवर्तिनः ॥ केचित्सुद्युम्नभूरिद्युम्नेन्द्रद्युम्नकुवंलयाश्वयौ वनाश्ववधयश्चाश्वपतिः शशबिन्दुर्हरिश्चन्द्रोऽम्बरीषो ननक्तुः शर्यातिर्ययातिरनरण्योऽक्षसेना-द्वयोऽथ मरुत्तभरतप्रभृतयो राजानो मिषतो बन्धुवर्गस्य महतीं श्रियं त्यक्त्वाऽस्माल्लोकाद्-मुल्लोकं प्रयाता इति, अर्थ किमेतैर्वाऽपरेऽन्ये गन्धर्वाऽसुरयक्षराक्षसप्रतगणपिशाचौरगग्रहार्दीनां निरोधनं पश्यामः, अर्थ किमेतैर्वाऽपर्यानां शोषणं महार्णवानां शिखरिणां प्रपतनं ध्रुवस्य प्रचलनं चश्चनं वातरज्जनां निमज्जनं पृथिव्याः स्थानादपसरणं सुगणामित्येतदिभेः-स्मिन्सुसारे किङ्कामोपभोगैर्यैरेवाशितस्यासकृदिहावर्तनं इत्यतः इत्युद्धर्तुमर्हसीत्यन्धो-द्वानस्थो भेक इवाहमास्मिन्सुसारे भगवस्त्वं नो गतिस्त्वं नो गतिः ॥४॥

॥ इति मैत्रायणीयारण्यकेऽथवा मैत्रायणीयशास्त्रोपनिषदि प्रथमः प्रपाठकः ॥१॥





Was the star **Dhruva** observed always to be fixed without change? Some Vedic texts laud the fixity, but some seem to have felt the star to be *somehow not as stationary* as it was originally! In pondering over this question a curious Vedic rite in the Yajurveda attracts attention; that is the **Agnishtoma and the Dhruva-graha**

The **adhiyajña** explanation of **dhruvagraha** has an **adhidaivata** counterpart that is celestial and connected with or inspired by the *fixity of the Pole Star*

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:

[partly from RV 6.7.1 ]

मूर्धानं दिवो अरतिं पृथिव्या .... | कविं सम्राजमतिथिं जनानाम् ..... देवाः || उपयामगृहीतोसि ... ध्रुवोऽसि ध्रुवक्षितिः ध्रुवाणां ध्रुवतमः अच्युतानामच्युतक्षित्तम एष ते योनिरग्नये त्वा वैश्वानराय || (TS 1.4.13)

Explanation:

आयुर्वा एतद्यज्ञस्य यद्ध्रुव उत्तमो ग्रहाणाङ्गृह्यते .... || असुरा वा उत्तरतः पृथिवीं पर्याचिकीर्षन् तान्देवाद्ध्रुवेण अदहन्त तद्ध्रुवस्य ध्रुवत्वं यद्ध्रुवः उत्तरतस्साद्यते .... 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 the name; for Dhruva is placed in the north for fixity.*

What is meant by GRAHA in Vedic parlance? It is a cup that is a holder of *soma juice*. *Āditya-graha* is the name of the cup which holds the *soma juice* meant for *ādityadevatā*. The above text on the '*dhruvagraha*' exhibits the *rūpasamṛddhi* principle quite well. The RV hymn refers to a bright, stable *Samrāṭ* in the sky and the corresponding *soma holder* called *dhruvagraha* is lauded as fixed, stable and *uttama* (highest) and kept in the *north* as against the other eight cups kept relatively south.

The TS hymn is close to a mantra of the *Ekāgnikāṇḍa* prescribed in the marriages for *dhruvadaraśana*. The *adhidaivata* link of the above *soma cup* called *dhruvagraha* is explained in the Brāhmaṇa part. This is an upākhyaṇa which clearly connects the *shrauta prayoga* with the Pole Star, perhaps when the star *was suspected to be moving* in the same place.

Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā mentions similar rituals, but also refers to ***Abhicāra*** by disturbing Dhruva-cup to displace a leader/king. This may indicate a time when in the cosmic scheme the divine king was getting displaced.

This gets confirmed in the Maitrāyaṇī Āraṇyaka when king Bṛhadratha questions 'why even Dhruva is moving'

This combined with the Sisumara constellation (modern Draco) described in the Taittiriya Aran.yaka with Abhaya-dhruva as the fourteenth star provides a verifiable date of circa 3000 BCE for Vedic observation of Dhruva the Pole Star which in modern astronomy is known as a-Draconis or Thuban.

[We come back to this in Theme 4.2 about continuity of sky observations.](#)

1. The Adhidaivata approach of the Nirukta is the traditional method for deciphering the astral/astronomical background.
2. The earliest observations available in RV were perhaps about unexpected disturbances in the sky (?). Why Maruts are cited some 500 times and the havoc caused by them is detailed? This situation seems to have altered slowly, so much so the word was taken to mean 'type of wind'
3. Dhumaketu is called Vis'pati or lord of the Vis' that is the Maruts. This is interesting; meteor showers are due to disintegration of cometary bodies.
4. Dhruva as the fixed point in the sky is the inspiration for the Meru-centric astronomy; Mahasalilam, Bhuvanakosha, Bhuvanapushkara, and the Puranas.
5. Shifting of Dhruva, must have been very ominous, leading to closer sky watching and growth of Vedanta
6. Maitrayaniya Aranyaka questions why Dhruva is moving and also mentions that the summer solstice started when sun was at the beginning of asterism Magha. (Theme 3.2)