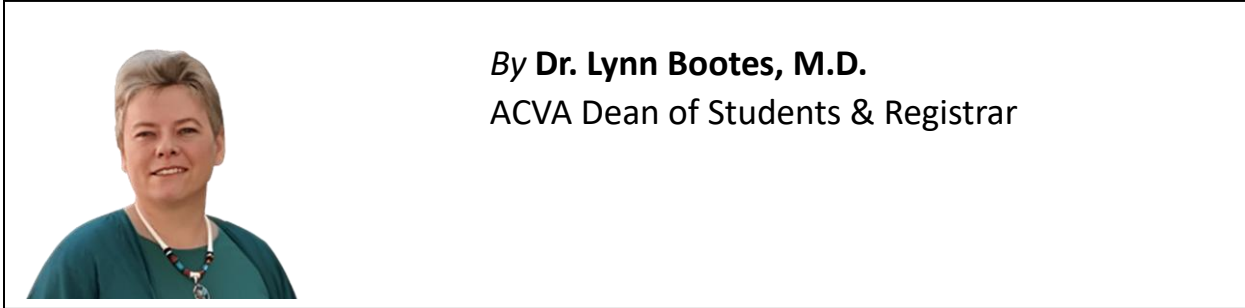


ACVA Newsletter 2025-12 – Observatory



By Dr. Lynn Bootes, M.D.

ACVA Dean of Students & Registrar

The Observatory

Late December 2025 Edition

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the post-solstice period, as we experience the maximum impact of the Winter/ Summer seasons in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres respectively. This month I've been reading Chapter 10 of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and came across a reference to the months and seasons in shloka 35, line 2, as translated by Jeffrey Armstrong and Kavindra Rishi:

Of masas 'months', I am margashirsha, 'the nakshatra bridging November and December.'

Of ritus 'seasons', I am kusuma kara, 'springtime when the flowers bloom.'

This is the chapter in which Lord Krishna gives Arjuna all sorts of examples of how a person might get a hint of his divine majesty, as the greatest or chief of any realm. We are now between the best of months and best of seasons. In *margashirsha*, the Full Moon was exalted in Taurus, and visible in the long night of late fall in the Northern Hemisphere. Looking ahead, when we reach *kusuma kara*, in mid-February through mid-April, we will be in the peak of the spring season.

We are now in the *ritu* of *shishira* in the Vedic cycle of six seasons – the freezing or cold months from mid-December to mid-February in the Northern Hemisphere. Meanwhile, in this system, the Southern Hemisphere would be in the *ritu* of *varsha*, the summer monsoon. In fact, the actual experience of seasons varies greatly around the world and through the ages. The ancient texts make it clear there have been vast cycles of time and earth changes, which we on earth must adjust to as we adjust to the changes in the sky.

We can look forward to Makara Sankranti on January 15, as the Sun enters Capricorn. The first few hours are considered especially auspicious to begin a mantra, spiritual practice, or a spiritual assembly. The great yogi Vivekananda, the first Hindu sadhu to speak in America, was born on this day. Children and young people in India often celebrate by flying kites. This is the

month when the days begin to lengthen or shorten from the Solstice, and one experiences the maximum cold or heat, depending on which hemisphere one inhabits.

The sign lord of Makara, Saturn, continues in mutual aspect to its exaltation lord Mars into the first half of January in the signs Pisces and Sagittarius. This is a potent combination for many power conflicts, but it is also a powerful time for meditation and generation of all sorts of tapas – spiritual heat – by beings of good will around the globe. Jupiter is the sign lord of both Saturn and Mars this month, mitigating their harshness a bit. Jupiter in Gemini is in opposition to Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars in Sagittarius the first half of the month, giving many opportunities for expression of dharma. We also benefit from a nice Parivartana Yoga between benefics – Mercury in Sagittarius and Jupiter in Gemini – from January 1-17.

In the second half of January, we will have a great yuti or conjoining of the Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars in the early signs of Capricorn, maximizing the traits of this amazing rashi Makara. We are taught that Makara is the crocodile, but in the Sanskrit dictionaries, it can also indicate any horned sea monster, including sharks and dolphins, or sea snakes. It is a power sign by any standard – we can expect those who wield power or aspire to power to exert themselves at this time.

Please pay particular attention to the days when these planets are moving through the nakshatra Abijit, at 06deg00 to 10deg53 Capricorn, at the end of Uttara Ashadha nakshatra and the beginning of Shravana. This “extra” nakshatra plays an important role in muhurtas. With Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars passing through within a few days, there are many opportunities for muhurtas which recognize the deep practical and spiritual purpose of this star which lies far north of the ecliptic. Westerners know Abijit as Vega, a very bright star which has, in certain parts of the 26,000-year precession cycle, served as the North Star. While classical Jyotisha ignores the non-visible planets and dwarf planets, I will give a nod here to the passage of Pluto through Abijit at the same time as these visible grahas. Abijit and Pluto remind us of the vast background of the cosmos which envelops us, even when unseen.

Jupiter continues its retrograde motion from 27 to 23 degrees Sagittarius/Punarvasu. Saturn continues direct from 2 to 4 degrees Pisces and transitions from Purva Bhadrapada to Uttara Bhadrapada on January 20. Rahu/Ketu continue in Aquarius and Leo respectively moving from 16 to 14 degrees in Shatabhishak and Purva Phalguni nakshatras.

The Almanac

Dates and times refer to Eastern Standard Time (USA), (-5:00h). Please adjust for your own location.

December 15, Sun enters Sagittarius/Mula

December 16, Saturn makes 1:10 aspect to Sun by degree at 01deg15 Pisces/Sagittarius

December 19, 20:43 EST, New Moon at 03deg50 Sagittarius/Mula

December 19, Mercury enters Jyeshtha

December 21, 10:03 am EST, Solstice (winter in Northern Hemisphere, summer in Southern Hemisphere), Sun at 05deg56 Sagittarius

December 21, Venus enters Sagittarius/Mula

December 25, Mars enters Purva Ashadha
December 28, Sun enters Purva Ashadha
December 30, Mercury enters Sagittarius/Mula
December 30, Venus enters Purva Ashadha
January 3, 5:27 pm EST, Full Moon at 18deg47 Gemini/Mrgashira
January 6, Mercury enters Purva Ashadha
January 6, Venus superior conjunction of Sun at 22deg09 Sagittarius
January 7, Venus conjunct Mars at 24deg00 Sagittarius
January 9, Sun conjunct Mars at 25deg33 Sagittarius
January 11, Venus opposite Jupiter at 26deg02 Sagittarius/Gemini
January 10, Sun opposite Jupiter and Mars opposite Jupiter at 25deg54 Sagittarius/Gemini
January 11, Sun and Venus enter Uttara Ashadha nakshatra
January 12, Venus enters Capricorn
January 12, Mars enters Uttara Ashadha nakshatra
January 14, Mercury opposite Jupiter at 25deg22 Sagittarius/Gemini
January 15, Sun and Mars enter Capricorn
January 15, Mercury enters Uttara Ashadha nakshatra
January 17, Mercury enters Capricorn
January 17, Venus enters Abijit
January 18, Mercury conjunct Mars at 01deg44 Capricorn
January 18, 2:57 pm EST, New Moon at 04deg04 Capricorn/Uttara Ashadha
January 18, 06:00 to January 20, 15:00 (as calculated for New York City), Moon in Capricorn
conjoined with Mars, Mercury, Sun and Venus.
January 20, Saturn enters Uttara Bhadrapada nakshatra
January 20, Sun enters Abijit
January 21, Venus enters Shrivana nakshatra
January 22, Venus leaves Abijit
January 23, Mercury enters Shrivana nakshatra and leaves Abijit
January 23, Mars enters Abijit
January 24, Sun enters Shrivana and leaves Abijit
January 28, Mars enters Shrivana 18deg50 Cancer/Ashlesha
January 29, Mars leaves Abijit
January 29, Mercury conjunct Venus

January 31, February 2, Moon in Cancer opposite Sun, Mercury, Venus and Mars

February 1, 5:09 pm EST, Full Moon at 18deg50 Cancer/Ashlesha

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