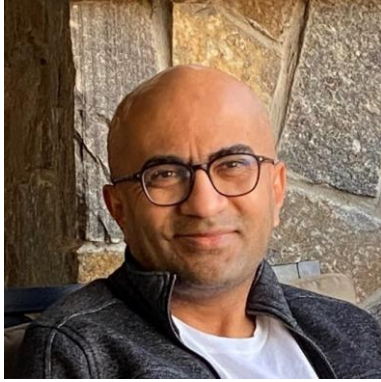


Practical Pañcāṅga – Introduction Part 2



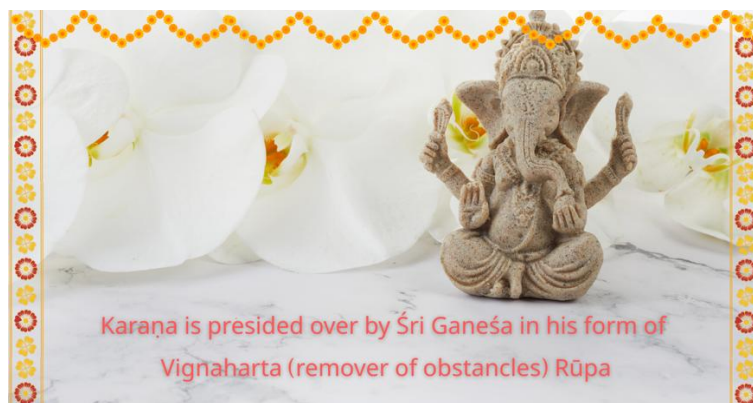
By Pratik Mehta

In last month's newsletter I introduced you to the five elements of the Pañcāṅga and gave you a taste of Vara and Tithi. There's more to be said about those two elements which I'll now cover as part of our deep dive into them.

For the remaining three elements, I'll take a slightly different approach. Reason being, Karana and Yoga are two of Pañcāṅga's more obscure components, and there just isn't a lot said about these Pañcāṅga elements in the classical Jyotiṣa texts, or at least the mainstream ones. As part of this introductory series, I'll share here everything that I currently know about them, albeit one at a time.

The last part of Pañcāṅga, ie, Nakṣatras, is a whole different ball game. There's lots of material out there on Nakṣatras and their qualities. Nonetheless, there are a few things to be said about Nakṣatras, especially around Pañcāṅga, that are not mainstream yet. I'll cover them in the final segment of this series.

But for now, let's dive into the current topic, Karana.



Karaṇa (करण)

Consensus in the world of Jyotiṣa is a rarity, although most Jyotiṣis would concur that Karana and Yoga (which we'll cover next month) are probably two of the most mysterious parts of the Pañcāṅga.

Even though veiled in mystery, they're no less significant than their better-known cousins (Vara, Tithi and Nakṣatra). It almost makes you wonder whether the Vedic seers kept these two Pañcāṅga gems hidden for a reason.

Nonetheless, here's what's known about Karana, to the best of my knowledge.

Definition and Meaning

To begin with, the meaning of the word is an enigma in itself. To me, the meanings that make most sense are "activity" or "action of dance" or "the initial enactment." Here's why.

Karana is simply half a Tithi. Quite literally, that's the definition. Tithis are the first thing that come to mind when one thinks of Pañcāṅga and Muhurta. Muhurta can be posited as the auspicious moment for initiating the "action of dance". Karaṇa, therefore, bodes well as the "initial enactment" in the "action of dance." Please take a moment and let that sink in.

Moving on from the esoteric to the practical, if you recollect, a Tithi is defined as 12 degrees of the Moon's movement relative to the Sun. A Karana therefore is defined as six degrees of the Moon's movement relative to the Sun. Subsequently, since we have 30 Tithis, there are 60 Karaṇas.

Now, there aren't 60 unique Karaṇas. There are actually 11 unique Karaṇas: seven movable ones and four fixed ones. The seven movable ones repeat eight times over a lunar month of 30 Tithis whereas the four fixed ones appear only once a month. So, $7 \times 8 = 56$ movable, plus four fixed, make up the 60 Karaṇas across 30 Tithis.

The table below lists the 11 Karaṇas and their associated deities. The first seven (shaded in green) are the movable ones whereas the last four (shaded in blue) are the fixed ones.

<i>Karaṇa</i>	Sanskrit	Deity	Graha	Animal
<i>bava</i>	बव	<i>Indra</i>	Sun	Lion
<i>bālava</i>	बालव	<i>brahmā</i>	Moon	Leopard
<i>kaulava</i>	कौलव	<i>Mitra</i>	Mars	Boar
<i>taitila</i>	तैतिल	<i>āryana</i>	Mercury	Donkey
<i>gara</i>	गर	<i>bhūdevī</i>	Jupiter	Elephant
<i>vāṇija</i>	वाणिज	<i>lakṣmi</i>	Venus	Cow
<i>viṣṭi</i>	विष्टि	<i>Yama</i>	Saturn	Hen
<i>śakuni</i>	शकुनि	<i>Kāli</i>	Rahu	Bird

<i>catuṣpada</i>	चतुष्पद	<i>Rudra</i>	Ketu	Cattle
<i>nāga</i>	नाग	<i>Nāga</i>	Rahu	Serpent
<i>kiṃstunghna</i>	किंस्तुम्भ	<i>Vāyu</i>	Ketu	Insect

Importance

As the old adage goes, “Well begun is half done”, a good Karana goes a long way in ensuring “success in endeavors” (per *Kāla Prakāśika*). Consequently, a good Karana significantly boosts the Tithi’s ability to deliver on its promise of prosperity. It does so by providing an innate stability (Karana is the earth element) to the actions being undertaken in a Muhurta. In the case of a natal chart, it’s indicative of the individual’s ability to manifest (Earth is where seeds are sown and grown) one’s desires into reality.

Further recall that the deity associated with Karana is none other than Lord Ganesha or Lord Gaṇapati, popularly known as Vignaharta (the remover of all obstacles). That’s why most Hindus begin any work, even mundane tasks, by paying obeisance to Lord Ganesha.

For a given Tithi, the Karaṇas and associated Karaṇas are listed in the table below.

Shukla Pakṣa Tithis and Karaṇas			
Tithi No.	Tithi Name	1 st Karaṇa	2 nd Karaṇa
1	<i>pratipadā</i>	<i>kiṃstunghna</i>	<i>bava</i>
2	<i>dvitīyā</i>	<i>bālava</i>	<i>kaulava</i>
3	<i>tritīyā</i>	<i>taitila</i>	<i>gara</i>
4	<i>caturthī</i>	<i>vāñija</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>
5	<i>pañcamī</i>	<i>bava</i>	<i>bālava</i>
6	<i>ṣaṣṭhī</i>	<i>kaulava</i>	<i>taitila</i>
7	<i>saptamī</i>	<i>gara</i>	<i>vāñija</i>
8	<i>aṣṭamī</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>	<i>bava</i>
9	<i>navamī</i>	<i>bālava</i>	<i>kaulava</i>
10	<i>daśamī</i>	<i>taitila</i>	<i>gara</i>
11	<i>ekādaśī</i>	<i>vāñija</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>
12	<i>dvādaśī</i>	<i>bava</i>	<i>bālava</i>
13	<i>trayodaśī</i>	<i>kaulava</i>	<i>taitila</i>
14	<i>caturdaśī</i>	<i>gara</i>	<i>vāñija</i>
15	<i>purṇimā</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>	<i>bava</i>

Kṛiṣṇa Pakṣa Tithis and Karaṇas			
Tithi No.	Tithi Name	1 st Karaṇa	2 nd Karaṇa
1	<i>pratipadā</i>	<i>bālava</i>	<i>kaulava</i>
2	<i>dvitīyā</i>	<i>taitila</i>	<i>gara</i>
3	<i>tritīyā</i>	<i>vāñija</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>
4	<i>caturthī</i>	<i>bava</i>	<i>bālava</i>
5	<i>pañcamī</i>	<i>kaulava</i>	<i>taitila</i>
6	<i>ṣaṣṭhī</i>	<i>gara</i>	<i>vāñija</i>
7	<i>saptamī</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>	<i>bava</i>
8	<i>aṣṭamī</i>	<i>bālava</i>	<i>kaulava</i>
9	<i>navamī</i>	<i>taitila</i>	<i>gara</i>
10	<i>daśamī</i>	<i>vāñija</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>
11	<i>ekādaśī</i>	<i>bava</i>	<i>bālava</i>
12	<i>dvādaśī</i>	<i>kaulava</i>	<i>taitila</i>
13	<i>trayodaśī</i>	<i>gara</i>	<i>vāñija</i>
14	<i>caturdaśī</i>	<i>viṣṭi</i>	<i>śakuni</i>
15	<i>amāvasyā</i>	<i>catuṣpada</i>	<i>nāga</i>

Interpretation

For all practical purposes, the interpretation and usage of Karaṇas can be considered uncharted territory. The classics do mention that the movable Karaṇas (excluding Viṣṭi) are to be considered favorable for material prosperity, whereas the fixed ones are less optimal.

I do feel that, had the Vedic sages been around, they would have encouraged us to contemplate the deities and animal associations they left us and derive our own interpretations.

Below are some pointers for using the Karaṇas in natal chart interpretation.

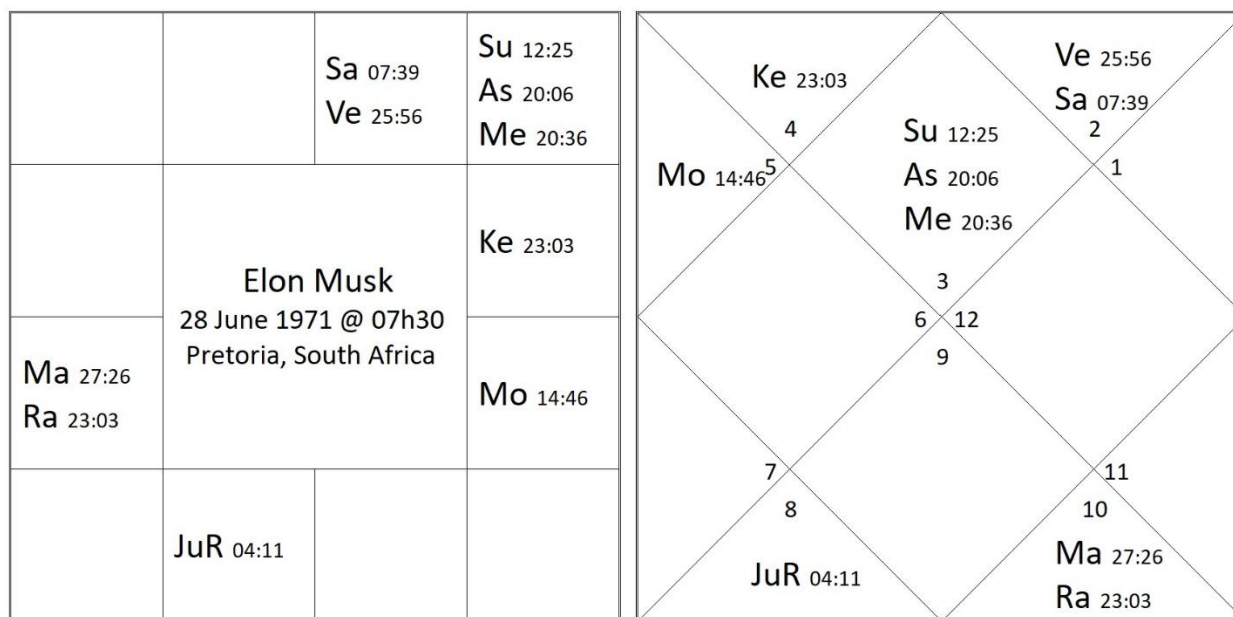
1. As with most other things in Jyotiṣa, a well-placed (Kendra or Trikoṇa), strong (own sign, exalted, retrograde, digbala) and stable (aspected by benefics and not by malefics) Karana lord can go a long way in amplifying a native's prospects for material well-being.
2. Additionally, if the Karana lord participates in Graha Yogas, like Raja Yogas or Dhana Yogas, it further enhances its ability to deliver riches and abundance.
3. A Saṁbandha between Karaṇa lord and Tithi lord is considered very favorable.

It goes without saying that the rate of delivery for said fortunes would be greater during the Daśās and Bhuktis of the Karana lord. Nonetheless, the thing to remember is that, unlike their Bhava lordship, Grahas that rule Pañcāṅga elements in a chart have an innate ability to deliver on their promises

throughout the native's lifetime, irrespective of the Daśās. Remember, Pañcāṅga represents the Divine blessings of the five most venerated Gods in the Hindu pantheon. (For details see Part 1).

Example

Let's see how Karana can be applied to natal chart evaluation using Elon Musk's chart. I reviewed a dozen other horoscopes but chose his because it was a good fit for this article. I also picked it because he's been hogging the newsfeeds and been a lot on our minds of late.



Musk was born in *kaulava* Karana making Mars his Karana ruler. Mars doesn't participate in any of the usual wealth-giving Yogas and is relatively not well placed, but it is exalted, thereby giving it some juice. It's also the 6th lord in the 8th house without the influence any other visible Graha, thereby giving rise to a Viparīta Raja Yoga. The 8th is also the Bhava for other people's money and virgin expeditions (no pun intended) into areas where Star Trek dictum "to boldly go where no man has ever gone before" is applicable. Tesla, Crypto, SpaceX, anyone? It gets even more interesting when we look at the Mahadaśās he's run so far.

1. Venus Mahadaśā (birth to April 1989):

- Venus is in a Mars Nakshatra thereby giving Mars's results in addition to its own (according to the fundamental KP principle that states that, in a Graha's Mahadaśā, it gives the results of its Nakṣatra dispositor in addition to its own).
- During his formative years, Musk is said to have been an avid reader with a particular fondness for science fantasy (8th house again).
- He is also said to have developed a keen interest in computers and technology (Mars) at a very young age and is believed to have taught himself programming. Even for the best of programmers, creating video games was extremely challenging, especially back in the technologically rudimentary 1980s. Musk

made one of his own and sold it for \$500 (Mars in 8th, tech and other people's money).

2. Mars Mahadaśā (May 2005 to April 2012):

- Musk became Tesla CEO in 2008.
- In the same year, SpaceX also achieved its first major milestone with the successful launch of Falcon 1.
- The Tesla IPO came out in 2010, raising \$226 million, and the share price jumped 41%.

3. Rahu Mahadaśā (May 2012 – now)

- In Musk's chart, Rahu predominantly gives the results of Mars since there are no other Grahas associated with Rahu.
- Musk co-funded Open AI (creators of ChatGPT) into existence in 2015.
- He became the world's richest individual, valued at \$185 billion, in January 2021. His net worth more than doubled in four years to \$486 billion. Despite recently losing more than \$100 billion he's still by far the world's richest individual at \$351 billion.
- In July of 2024, Musk officially started supporting the Trump campaign.
- Last but not least, as of this writing, Musk is now a senior advisor to President Trump and the de facto head of the DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) which now seems to wield more power than anyone had anticipated.

Although there are many other factors in his horoscope that contributed to all of the above, Mars has played a very significant role. Given its Karana status, it would be hard to otherwise explain his amazing journey thus far.

Before closing, some food for thought: the animal associated with the Kaulava Karana is a boar. On that note, let's leave the interpretation of that to you.

In the next instalment of the series, we'll consider some interesting nuggets about Yogas, but of the Pañcāṅga variety, not to be confused with Graha Yogas.

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