



*H*e started learning astrology when he was 15 years old. He has learnt by self study. In addition to classic Vedic astrology he is also interested in Western astrology, Magi Astrology and a few modern variants of traditional Vedic astrology. He incorporates and blends all branches of astrology known to him when analysing charts which he does as a hobby at leisure time. He is a consultant surgeon by profession.

Email id harsha.indrasena@hotmail.com

Chara Karaka Scheme - No longer A Mystery

**By
Buddhike Sri Harsha
Indrasena, Sri Lanka**

Charakaraka system is a powerful yet simple method of predicting horoscopes. The main drawback in the application of Charakarakas is lack of clarity. There are at least four versions of the Charakaraka system in practice. The problem lies behind incomplete understanding of the topic given in ancient texts. Ancient texts themselves are ambiguous regarding the system.

Given below are the existing schemes proposed by *modern* astrologers.

1. K.N. Rao - Always seven Charakarakas without Pitru Karaka⁽¹⁾
2. Sanjay Rath - Always eight Charakarakas for living beings
3. Always seven Chara Karakas with Putra Karaka merged with Matru Karaka⁽²⁾
4. P V R Narasimha Rao - Mixed 7/8 Charakarakas combining



Matru and Putra Karakas when seven planets are considered ⁽³⁾

In practice I have found that none of the above schemes consistently gives correct results. Instead I explain a refined approach to mixed 7/8 Charakaraka scheme of Parasara (and P V R Narasimha Rao) merging Matrukaraka and Pitrukaraka (not Putrakaraka).

The English translation of **BPHS** available on Internet gives the following description for Charakarakas in **Chapter 32**.

1-2. I now detail below Atma Karak etc., obtainable from among the 7 Grahas, viz. Sūrya to Śani. Some say, that Rahu will become a Karak, when there is a state of similarity in terms of longitude between (two) Grahas. Yet some say, that the 8 Grahas, including Rahu, will have to be considered irrespective of such a state.

3-8. Atma Karak Defined. Among the Grahas from Sūrya etc. whichever has traversed maximum number of degrees in a particular Rāśi is called Atma Karak. If the degrees are identical, then the one with more minutes of arc and, if the minutes are also identical, then the one with higher seconds of arc, have to be considered.

13-17. Other Karakas. The Graha next to Atma Karak in terms of longitude is called Amatya Karak. Similarly following one another in terms of longitude are Bhratru Karak, Matru Karak, Pitru Karak, Putr Karak, Gnati Karak and Stri Karak. These are Char Karakas, or inconstant signifiers. Some consider Matru Karak and Putr Karak, as identical. If two Grahas have the same longitude, both become the same Karak, in which case there will be a deficit of one Karak. In that circumstance consider constant signifier in the context of benefic/malefic influence for the concerned relative.

18-21. Constant Karakatwas. I narrate below the constant Karakatwas, as related to the Grahas. The stronger among Sūrya and Śukr indicates the father, while the stronger among Chandra and Mangal indicates the mother. Mangal denotes sister, brother-in-law, younger brother and mother. Budh rules maternal relative, while Guru indicates paternal grand father. Husband and sons are, respectively, denoted by Śukr and Śani. From Ketu note wife, father, mother, parents-in law and maternal grand father. These are constant Karakatwas.

Author's Comments of Stanzas 1-2

Parasara: It is not clear in this translation whether Parasara recommends the use of seven Grahas or eight Grahas. Rather he gives two different theories allowing the reader to decide which theory to use. According to the translation, “some” say, that Rahu will become a Karak, when there is a state of similarity in terms of longitude between (two) Grahas. Yet “some” say, that the 8 Grahas, including Rahu, will have to be considered irrespective of such a state. In Jaimini Sutra the same thing has been mentioned; Sapthaanaamashtaanaan Wa.

Author's Proposition: First variation seems to be more logical. Seven planets are used in ordinary circumstances. When two or more true planets, excluding Rahu, share the same degree Rahu is also considered for a portfolio and eight planets will be considered. If all planets are in different degrees only seven planets must be used.

Author's Comments of Stanzas 3-8

Parasara: There is no dispute in these Stanzas.

Author's Proposition: If all three (degrees, minutes and seconds) are equal, then one with higher Shadbala strength becomes the Atmakaraka.

Author's Comments of Stanzas 13-17

Parasara: There are eight portfolios viz. Atma Karak, Amatya Karak, Bhratru Karak, Matru Karak, Pitru Karak, Putra Karak, Gnati Karak and Stri Karak. Here the translation does not tell us how to distribute eight portfolios among seven planets if only seven planets are to be considered. But there will not be a problem if eight Grahas are considered.

If two portfolios are combined, it is easy to distribute seven portfolios among seven planets. The translation goes on to say that “some” consider Matru and Putra Karakas as identical. This implies that he is undecided on this merging suggested by “some”. He does not tell us what “others” think or whether it is possible to combine any other two. Even in Jaimini Sutra a verse with the same meaning is seen; Maatraa saha putrameke samaamananthi. *Use of the word “some” implies that although “some” scholars treat Matru and Putra Karakas as identical it was never the practice of Parasara or Jaimini.* Parasara and Jaimini mentioned about Matru-Putrakaraka combination in their writings probably only for the sake of completeness.

Author's Proposition: If there are no two or more true planets sharing the same degree Rahu is not considered for a portfolio and we are left with only seven planets (see author's proposition of Stanzas 1-2 above). Now it is required to combine two portfolios (out of all eight portfolios) so that there are only seven portfolios available to be distributed among seven planets. I suggest combining Matru Karaka and Pitru Karaka together when Rahu does not qualify for a portfolio. Putra Karaka must NOT be combined with Matru Karaka in such a situation. I will explain the reason later.

If Rahu comes into play (because two or more true planets share the same degree) there are eight planets (see author's proposition of Stanzas 1-2 above). There is no need to combine any two portfolios in this occasion because there are eight planets and eight portfolios. Matru Karaka and Pitru Karaka (and Putra Karaka) portfolios are considered separately in this instance when Rahu qualifies for a portfolio. It is quite possible to distribute all eight portfolios among eight planets (including Rahu) in the order given by Parasara and Jaimini subjected to other rules.

Putra Karaka portfolio should remain as a separate portfolio always. It is not rational to combine Putra Karaka with Matru Karaka for any reason.

Reason for merging Matrukaraka and Pitrukaraka

Imagine, for clarity, we consider only seven portfolios excluding Pitru Karaka for a moment. We get following Karakas in the descending order of degrees.

1. Atmakaraka
2. Amatyakaraka
3. Bhatrukaraka
4. Matrukaraka
5. Putrakaraka
6. Gnatikaraka
7. Darakaraka

It is obvious that Parasara has allocated Karakatwas from Atmakaraka to Darakaraka in the order given above so that each Karaka represents the individual represented by each house in the horoscope respectively from 1 to 7.

1. First Bhava represents the nativity himself and it goes to first Karaka, Atmakaraka (self)
2. Second Bhava, represents professional education, status and wealth and it goes well with second Karakatwa, Amatyakaraka (minister)
3. Third house in the horoscope represents siblings and it goes well with third Karaka, Bhatrukaraka (brothers and sisters)

4. Fourth house in the horoscope represents mother and it goes well with fourth Karaka, Matrskaraka (mother)
5. Fifth house in the horoscope represents children and it goes well with fifth Karaka, Putrskaraka (children)
6. Sixth house in the horoscope represents enemies and maternal uncles and it goes well with sixth Karaka, Gnatiskaraka (rivals)
7. Seventh house in the horoscope represents spouse and it goes well with seventh Karaka, Darakaraka (spouse)

If we combine Matrskaraka and Putrskaraka, a gap will be created in the above sequence between 4th and 6th portfolios, i.e. 5th portfolio goes vacant. If we use Pitrskaraka portfolio to fill up this gap, the sequence becomes disordered because 5th house in the horoscope does not represent Father (in Vedic astrology Father is represented either by 10th house or 9th house). To sort out this issue I propose to combine Pitrskaraka with Matrskaraka, when necessary, and leave Putrskaraka alone.

Matru-Pitru Karaka

There is no doubt that there is another Karakatwa called Pitrskaraka. Existence of Pitrskaraka has been mentioned clearly by both Parasara and Jaimini (Thasya Pita). If so where to fit Pitrskaraka in the above list? According to Tropical (western) astrology father is represented by 4th house and mother is represented by 10th house. In Sidereal astrology mother is represented by 4th house and father by 10th (or 9th) house. Therefore the best place to fit Pitrskaraka in the above list without disturbing the order of sequence of house ownership is at the level of Matrskaraka, i.e. Matrskaraka and Pitrskaraka portfolios go together to one planet when circumstances arise.

It is needless to say both parents influence the destiny of a nativity more or less equally. Both parents are of equal significance. In English there is a collective term to describe mother and father as “parents”; in Sinhalese it is “Demawpiyo”.

Therefore the order of Karakatwas when only seven planets are considered should be as follows:

1. Atmakaraka
2. Amatyskaraka
3. Bhatrskaraka
4. **Matru-Pitrskaraka**
5. Putrskaraka

6. Gnatikaraka
7. Darakaraka

What happens when eight planets come into play, including Rahu, if two or more true planets share the same degree? In this instance it is possible to separate the combined Matru-Pitrukaraka portfolio since there are enough planets (eight planets) available (we combined Matru and Pitru karakas when there were only seven planets available). Therefore all eight Karakatwas are considered in this instance as follows:

1. Atmakaraka
2. Amatyakaraka
3. Bhatrukaraka
4. (Matru-Pitru Karaka)
 - a. Matrukaraka
 - b. Pitrukaraka
5. Putrakaraka
6. Gnatikaraka
7. Darakaraka

The above order does not contradict with the order given by Jaimini. The order of Karakatwas given in Jaimini Sutra is as follows:

1. Aatmadhikah Kaladibhi Nabhogah: Atmakaraka (self)
2. Thasyanu Saranaath Amaathyah: Amatyakaraka (minister)
3. Thasya Bhratha: Bhatrukaraka (siblings)
4. (Matrukaraka-Pitrukaraka)
 - a. Thasya Matha: **Matrukaraka** (mother)
 - b. Thasya Pita: **Pitrukaraka** (father)
5. Thasya Puthrah: Putrakaraka (children)
6. Thasya Gnathih: Gnatikaraka (relatives)
7. Thasya Darashwe: Darakaraka (spouse)

The fourth portfolio (Matru-Pitrukaraka) in the previous list (of seven planets) has been rightly split into sub portfolios and will be distributed between two planets.

Author's Comments of Stanzas 18-21

Parasara: Constant Karakas have been explained in these stanzas. In stanzas 17 and 18 he says Constant Karaka should be used *when two planets compete for one Karakatwa* owing to placement in the same degree.

Author's Proposition: Given below are the Constant Karakas (or Sthira Karakas) for respective portfolios. There is no need to consider Constant Karaka for Atmakarak (AK) and Darakaraka (DK) portfolios.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Amatyakaraka (AmK) | - Mercury |
| Bhatrukaraka (BK) | - Mars |
| Matrukaraka (MK) | - Stronger planet in Shadbala strength between Moon and Mars |
| Pitrukaraka (PiK) | - Stronger planet in Shadbala strength between Sun and Venus |
| Putrakaraka (PK) | - Saturn |
| Gnatikaraka (GK) | - Mercury |

Examples

Example 1: All Eight planets in different degrees

| | | | | | |
|------------|---|--------|----|----|------------|
| Sun | - | MK/PiK | 18 | Vi | 53' 00.08" |
| Moon | - | BK | 23 | Cp | 40' 16.09" |
| Mars | - | PK | 16 | Cn | 11' 35.20" |
| Mercury | - | AK | 25 | Vi | 02' 44.22" |
| Jupiter(R) | - | GK | 13 | Ar | 29' 33.53" |
| Venus | - | DK | 2 | Li | 44' 28.62" |
| Saturn | - | AmK | 24 | Vi | 45' 45.22" |
| Rahu | | | 22 | Sc | 55' 38.03" |

Only seven planets are considered for Karakatwas. MK and PiK are merged and goes to one planet. PK remains as a separate portfolio.

Example 2: Two planets competing for Atmakaraka

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|-----|----|----|-----|--------|
| Sun | - | BK | 18 | Vi | 25' | 53.37" |
| Moon | - | MK | 17 | Cp | 58' | 53.40" |
| Mars | - | PiK | 15 | Cn | 55' | 31.48" |
| Mercury- | | AmK | 24 | Vi | 16' | 40.64" |
| Jupiter (R)- | | PK | 13 | Ar | 32' | 37.83" |
| Venus | - | DK | 2 | Li | 10' | 16.87" |
| Saturn | - | AK | 24 | Vi | 42' | 24.45" |

Rahu - GK 22 Sc 57' 05.47"

All eight planets are considered. All eight portfolios are considered separately.

Example 3: Three planets in the highest degree

| | | | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------|-----------|----|------------|
| Sun | - | MK | 22 | Le | 39' 35.08" |
| Moon | | | 29 | Cp | 10' 08.04" |
| Mars | - | AK | 29 | Ge | 58' 47.90" |
| Mercury- | | AmK/GK | 7 | Le | 05' 01.89" |
| Jupiter(R)- | | PK | 15 | Ar | 33' 20.04" |
| Venus | - | BK | 29 | Le | 26' 35.95" |
| Saturn | - | PiK | 21 | Vi | 36' 11.76" |
| Rahu | - | DK | 24 | Sc | 20' 49.11" |

Mars and Venus compete for AK and Mars wins. Venus should have got AmK but Moon also competes for AmK. Therefore AmK portfolio goes to Constant Karaka i.e. Mercury. Venus gets next portfolio of BK instead. Moon does not get BK because its longitudes are less than Venus.

Example 4: Two planets in the same degree competing for the same portfolio

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|-----------|-----------|----|------------|
| Sun | - | PiK | 14 | Vi | 29' 32.42" |
| Moon | - | AmK | 25 | Sc | 45' 14.12" |
| Mars | | | 13 | Cn | 34' 25.45" |
| Mercury- | | MK | 17 | Vi | 27' 16.03" |
| Jupiter(R)- | | GK | 13 | Ar | 58' 16.34" |
| Venus | - | AK | 27 | Vi | 11' 50.03" |
| Saturn | - | BK/PK | 24 | Vi | 13' 16.96" |
| Rahu | - | DK | 23 | Sc | 09' 48.55" |

Both Mars and Jupiter compete for PK portfolio. Therefore PK portfolio goes to the Constant Karaka of sons i.e. Saturn. The winner, Jupiter, obtains next portfolio in the list i.e. GK. Since Mars is less in minutes he fails to secure GK portfolio.

Example 5: Three planets in the same degree

| | | | | | |
|-------------|---|---------------|-----------|----|-----------|
| Sun | - | PiK/GK | 13 | Vi | 37'54.05" |
| Moon | | | 13 | Sc | 30'41.10" |
| Mars | | | 13 | Cn | 03'20.40" |
| Mercury- | | BK | 15 | Vi | 55'53.36" |
| Jupiter(R)- | | MK | 14 | Ar | 03'35.16" |
| Venus | - | AK | 26 | Vi | 06'32.79" |
| Saturn | - | AmK/PK | 24 | Vi | 06'56.05" |
| Rahu | - | DK | 23 | Sc | 12'35.48" |

Three planets, Sun, Moon and Mars compete for two portfolios PK and PiK. Therefore PK and PiK portfolios go to Constant Karakas. Sun has the highest longitude so he wins the next portfolio i.e. GK. Both Moon and Mars fail to get any portfolio.

Example 6: Three planets in the same degree

| | | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------|-----------|----|-----|--------|
| Sun | | | 15 | Le | 23' | 12.88" |
| Moon | | | 20 | Li | 12' | 46.32" |
| Mars | - | AmK/BK/MK | 25 | Ge | 15' | 35.09" |
| Mercury- | | AK | 27 | Cn | 17' | 15.96" |
| Jupiter (R)- | | GK | 15 | Ar | 44' | 08.41" |
| Venus | | | 20 | Le | 08' | 10.39" |
| Saturn | - | PiK/PK | 20 | Vi | 46' | 52.07" |
| Rahu | - | DK | 24 | Sc | 44' | 39.89" |

Venus and Moon compete for BK. Both lose BK and it goes to Constant Karaka, Mars. Venus loses and Moon is the winner of this pair. Moon is bound to get next Karakatwa i.e. MK. But Saturn also is in the same degree and competes for MK. So MK portfolio too goes to Constant Karaka i.e. stronger planet between Mars and Moon. Saturn is the winner (higher longitudes) so he gets next portfolio of PiK.

If there were another planet with the same degree (say Jupiter 20Ar50'), Saturn would not get PiK portfolio, which goes to stronger planet between Sun and Venus, the Constant Karaka of father. The other planet (Jupiter) with the higher longitudes would secure next Karakatwa of GK.

Example 7: Rahu becoming Atmakaraka

This is possible if two or more true planets share the same degree and Rahu has got the maximum longitudes.

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|------------|-----------|----------|----|-----|--------|
| Sun | - | GK | 6 | Cn | 38' | 04.08" |
| Moon | - | DK | 3 | Sg | 23' | 16.85" |
| Mars | - | PiK | 21 | Cn | 39' | 04.79" |
| Mercury | - | AmK | 28 | Cn | 12' | 39.61" |
| Jupiter | (R) | | 6 | Sg | 03' | 30.58" |
| Venus | - | BK | 27 | Ta | 40' | 25.09" |
| Saturn | - | MK/PK | 22 | Ta | 22' | 53.34" |
| Rahu | - | AK | 1 | Cp | 45' | 13.02" |

Example 8: Rahu becoming Amatyakaraka

This is possible if two or more true planets share the same degree and Rahu's longitude is the second highest of all planets.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------|----------|----|-----|--------|
| Sun | - | AK | 28 | Aq | 56' | 14.45" |
| Moon | - | PiK | 15 | Sg | 18' | 43.06" |
| Mars | - | DK | 0 | Aq | 56' | 36.89" |
| Mercury | - | BK/GK | 26 | Aq | 36' | 28.40" |
| Jupiter | - | PK | 2 | Ta | 08' | 21.95" |
| Venus | | | 0 | Ar | 20' | 07.39" |
| Saturn(R) | - | MK | 16 | Cn | 33' | 24.76" |
| Rahu | - | AmK | 1 | Li | 58' | 32.75" |

References

1. http://www.journalofastrology.com/article.php?article_id=312&language_code=ar
2. Jagannatha Hora 7.51 software
3. Parasara's Teachings on Chara Karakas. An Independent Interpretation
http://www.vedicastrologer.org/articles/c_karaka.pdf

