

Saturn's Transit through the 3rd Drekkana of a Sign

—a short Research

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There is a well-known shloka regarding the effects of planets in transit that reads:

"During their transit Mars and the Sun produce their results when they occupy the initial 10 degrees or figure Drekkana of a sign. Jupiter and Venus show their effects when they are in the middle portion of a sign. While the Moon and Saturn are productive in the last portion. Mercury and Rahu produce their effects all throughout their passage"

— Phaladeepika, Chapter 26- stanza 25 (1)

This principle appears in Phaladeepika, Brihat Jataka and Prashna Marga, and it has found its way into many modern books on Jyotish. This maxim is the inspiration for this short study focusing on Saturn's transit.

Here I have compiled 50 recorded life events from a total of 47 birth charts where the events are varied, but all are cases where the native's physical body experienced a major health crisis or trauma through the onset of disease, operation or an accident. These are the life experiences that readily qualify when reading the descriptions in classical texts of the assorted afflictions, suffering and helplessness that are the effects of Saturn as Dukha Karaka when its transit is adverse. In how many of these cases was Saturn passing through the third Drekkana of a sign at the time of the given event? If Saturn passes through 30 degrees of the zodiac in approximately 30 months, this means the last ten months of its transit through a sign would warrant special attention, as well as

the periods when Saturn in its retrograde re-enters the end portion of a previously transited sign.

While no one broad astrological principle or planetary influence in isolation creates an event by itself, and planetary transits are subservient to the other more fundamental strengths, weaknesses and timing of the dashas in the natal chart, still it is constructive and necessary to isolate a principle for purposes of its study.

The data was gathered primarily from charts where the native provided the date and nature of the event. In the cases of death, the date of fatality was added to an existing chart on file when family members or friends provided the information. While some events record the diagnosis of disease or illness and some events are of surgery, hopefully this is a valid compilation, where the given date was that which was most significant in the native's experience.

It could be proposed in the cases of sudden physical trauma, such as in the case of auto accident or heart attack, that studying Mars' transit would be more relevant, since Mars is the karaka of accidents, sudden injuries and seizures, while Saturn governs chronic conditions. A future study that focuses on studying Mars' transit at the time of a major accident would indeed be helpful for further testing the validity of the quoted shloka. Initially studying Saturn's transit seems fundamentally helpful because it is the primary natural karaka of ailments and obstacles, and as the slowest moving planet, it presents one of the regular challenges to an astrologer seeking to narrow down the timing of where in its long passage through a sign Saturn will finally deliver its effects.

To rule out cases that would fall under the category of Balaristha, none of the birth charts

are those of children under age 12. The time of the event in the native's life ranges from age 16 to 74 years, and the average age of the native is 41 years at the time of the event. The following is a record of the studied events (Table 1):

Event	Number of Cases
Heart attack	6
Hysterectomy	5
Cancer diagnosis (type not specified)	4
Cancer surgery (type not specified)	3
Heart surgery	3
Stroke	3
Lymphoma diagnosis	2
Ovarian cancer diagnosis	2
Ovarian surgery	2
Brain tumor diagnosis	2
Auto-accident (near fatal)	2
Prostate cancer surgery	1
Colon cancer diagnosis	1
Diabetes diagnosis	1
Gall bladder removed	1
Thymus removed	1
Hepatitis diagnosis	1
Malaria diagnosis	1
Kidney failure	1
Auto-accident/coma 3wks	1
Auto-accident/broken neck	1
Auto-accident/death	1
Helicopter-blade accident/blood transfusion	1
Head injury causing inflammation to brain	1
Accident-struck by lightning	1
Third-degree burns in kitchen fire	1
Suicide	1

Analysis

Since a Drekkana divides a sign evenly into thirds, 50 events would give an average of 16.66 of them occurring when Saturn was transiting its last 10 degrees. In actuality, Saturn was in the 3rd Drekkana in 21 cases, or 42% of the time. This confirms the basic utility of the principle. If it is valid to extend the principle to additionally take note of the several cases where Saturn had already entered the 3rd Drekkana and had just recently retrograded back into the 2nd Drekkana within less than two weeks time, here there were three more cases: in one instance Saturn had already been in the 3rd Drekkana within 7 days, and in two cases within 11 days.

Additionally, I would like to look at Saturn's

placement from the Moon and the Ascendant at the time of the given event (Table 2), since the precedence that should be given to each is an area of debate when assessing the transit of planets:

Table 2
Saturn's Transit from Moon and Lagna

House	Moon	Lagna
1st	Number of cases*: 4	Number of cases: 3
2nd	4	4
3rd	6	1
4th	4	2
5th	4	5
6th	4	4
7th	3	6
8th	5	8
9th	1	5
10th	6	3
11th	2	2
12th	4	4

*Total: 47 events- In 3 cases Saturn was 1st from both Moon and Lagna, and these are not included here.

From the above chart, it can be seen where Saturn was transiting from the natal Moon and the Lagna at the time of the event. The number of cases from the 1st, 2nd and 12th houses from both Moon and Lagna are nearly equal. Of the 3rd, 6th and 11th Upachaya houses from where Saturn's transit from the natal Moon is classically regarded as benefic, it is striking to note that there are 6 cases where Saturn was 3rd from natal Moon as compared to once from the Lagna. From the 6th and 11th houses from both Moon and Ascendant, the number is the same. Regarding the very malefic 8th house, there is the highest number of cases of Saturn transiting the 8th house from the Lagna. Next after this there is a higher number of cases where Saturn was transiting towards the end of the 7th house (from where it aspects the first house, is approaching the 8th house, and is transiting a maraka-sthana). The data mildly supports the precedence of counting transits from the ascendant, which is as expected here since in regard to matters connected to the physical body, the ascendant as that which represents one's physical self and vitality would naturally be most relevant. The near-equality in places between the two is of course a confirmation of the essential significance of considering both.

In looking at Saturn's strength in its own

Bhinnashtakvarga at the time of the recorded event (table) as well as the Sarvashtakavarga of the house transited (Table 3), the data is as follows:

Table 3
Number of Bindus in Saturn's Bhinnashtakvarga:

Saturn's Bindus:	Number of cases
0	1
1	3
2	13
3	14
4	8
5	10
6	1
7	0
8	0

Here it is interesting to note that there are 19 cases (38%) where Saturn was transiting a sign where it had 4 bindus or more in its own Bhinnashtakvarga at the time of the event. Since in Ashtakavarga Saturn only distributes a total of 39 bindus throughout the birth chart, instead of the 4 bindus giving the average strength to a house in the case of the natural benefics, 3 can be considered the workable medium number to give neutral strength, and 4 bindus the number of Saturn's theoretical stability. However as one might expect, in the majority of cases Saturn was transiting a house where it had 3 Bindus or less.

Table 4
Sarvashtakavarga of the House Transited by Saturn

Number of Bindus	Number of Cases
35 and above	7
28 to 34	30
21 to 27	13
Below 21	0

In assessing the Sarvashtakavarga (Table 4), where in this system 28 bindus is the total average number for a house to be considered stable in transit, it can be seen that in 37 cases (or 74% of the time) Saturn was transiting a house where the house had 28 bindus or more. Here there are no extreme cases where the house had less than 21 bindus, where the annihilation of the house might be expected.

In looking specifically at the charts where Saturn was transiting the 8th house from the

Lagna in which there is the highest concentration of cases, the bindus ranged from 21 (two cases) to 32 (one case), and where aside from these cases, the rest had very average bindus, close to 28.

It is an area of some debate in Sarvashtakavarga over whether the dusthana houses benefit or suffer from a number higher or lower than the average 28 bindus. As per Phaladeepika, lower bindus are considered uniformly desirable for houses 6, 8 and 12 (2), while in Prasha Marga, a specific ideal distribution of bindus for each house is presented where the dusthanas are thought to benefit from the following numbers of bindus (3):

3rd house	29
6th house	34
8th house	24
12th house	16

In both of these classical texts it is considered best for the very malefic 8th house to have lower than average bindus. In looking specifically at the charts where Saturn was transiting over the 8th house (or the dusthana where Saturn was transiting most of the time): with the exception of two cases where there are 21 bindus each, the rest of the time the 8th house contained more than the 24 bindus recommended in Prashna Marga, however none had above 32 points. So in looking at the Sarvashtakavarga of the 8th house in each of the cases, the number of bindus were in an average range for the most part.

In looking at Saturn's transit by sign placement at the time of the event (Table 5): by chance the data was collected mainly between 1996 and 2003, while Saturn was in its transit through the rasis of Pisces, Aries and Taurus. Often the motivating intention of the native coming for astrological consultation during this window of time was to gain perspective on the life event that had recently happened (and is being studied at this time), so there is the inherent uneven distribution of sign placement through the zodiac. Here there is a concentration of 36 events occurring through these three signs, where through Pisces there are 14; Aries: 12; and Taurus: 10, so by chance here there is a fairly even distribution of transit through a sign governed by a planet neutral in dignity to Saturn, through its sign of debilitation, and through the sign of its friend.

Table 5

Dignity of Saturn by Sign Placement	
Aries (Debilitation)	Number of Events 12
Taurus (Friend)	10
Gemini	3
Cancer	0
Leo	0
Virgo	0
Libra (Exaltation)	1
Scorpio	2
Sagittarius	3
Capricorn	1
Aquarius	4
Pisces (Neutral)	14

Summary

In studying the collected events, the classical principle of Saturn giving its effects in the third Drekkana can be regarded as a valid general rule for practical use, as this planet was in the third Drekkana slightly less than half of the time. This principle is perhaps especially helpful when narrowing down the timing of periods that are potentially vulnerable to the health or the protection of the physical body. The principle is additionally supported in Bhinnashtakvarga, by the predominance of low Bindus for Saturn at the time of the event, however the principle is not clearly supported by the Sarvasthakavarga. Also, there is a more clear influence of Saturn's negative effect from the Lagna as compared to the natal Moon.

All the above observations being said, I would also like to again acknowledge the inherent limitations of attempting to study one general astrological rule, since the practical application of astrology is the honoring and weighing of numerous cumulative and contradictory factors. Additionally, while Saturn is the primary karaka of physical suffering, the living reality of astrology is that every planet has the potential to give difficult and desirable experiences simultaneously in various areas of life. Each birth chart is a convergence of influences Divinely unique to each person, where Saturn in its transit also certainly has the potential to bestow its share of auspicious blessings.

This article is humbly dedicated to Sri Mata Amritanandamayi, my Beloved Sat Guru, with the prayer that this research honors the compassionate and noble intentions of Astrology.

References

1. Mantreshwara. *Phaladeepika*, Trans. S.S. Sareen. New Delhi: Sagar Publications, 1992. p. 303.
2. *Ibid.* p.283
3. Namboodiri. *Prashna Marga. Part 2.*, Trans. B.V. Raman. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1991.