

Indian Chronology: Kalpa = 560 Years in Time Units of Prāṇa and Historical Kalpādi in 482 BC



K. Chandra Hari

I. Introduction

Indian Chronology as seen in the ancient texts Purāṇas, Epics, Manusmṛti etc had been a hard nut to crack for the Indologists and other researchers who have tried to raise some sense out of the mind boggling counts given of years. The purāṇic time count gains sense only when the numbers are considered in units of Prāṇa instead of years. Manvantara in fact means Manoh antara – the interval of manah = prāṇah – in tāntrik tradition manah is synonymous with prāṇah.

Table-1

Time Interval	Years		Numbers of Purāṇas	Days of 21600 Prāṇa	Major Units
Yuga	432000	K	432000	20	1 day = 21600 Prāṇa 1 Manu = 40 Years 1 Kalpa = 560 Years
Kṛta	4K	4x432000	1728000	80	
Treta	3K	3x432000	1296000	60	
Dvapara	2K	2x432000	864000	40	
Kali	K	432000	432000	20	
Mahayuga	10K	10x432000	4320000	200	
Manvantara	720K		311040000	14400	
Kalpa	14Manu	14x720K	4354560000	201600	

When the Purāṇic chronology is converted to days and years, the true interval of Manu turns out to be 40 years and one Kalpa becomes 560 years. If considered as Savana, the difference that happens is 8 years in a Kalpa which is negligible when we look at the antiquity of India.

Time count as above is reckoned from the so called Kali-Yugādi 00:00 18 Feb 3102 BC on the assumption that it was the only super-conjunction of human memory or the one that the ancient Chaldeans could compute as the ideal record of a zero of the synodic planetary movements. Following table illustrates a comparison of two super-conjunctions:

Kalpādi of 482 BC

(From 482 BC to 78 AD = 560 Years =14 Manus)

00:00, 18Feb 3102 BC			17 Feb -3101, 01:13 ZT		Kalpādi	
JD =588465.5	Position		JD (ZT) = 588464.551		01 Feb 482 BC, 15:20	
Planetary positions: Degree-Minutes					JD (ZT): 1545404.139	
Sun	304	40	303	45	307	9
Moon	316	41	303	45	307	9
Mars	301	8	300	26	313	26
Mercury	289	54	288	11	310	34
Jupiter	317	36	317	23	305	9
Venus	317	25	316	15	292	11
Saturn	276	40	276	33	291	51
Mean	303	26	300	54	303	56
Std. Devn	14	32	13	31	7	56
Ayanamsa			45	55	09	53

It is apparent from the table that the super-conjunction had a lesser standard deviation in 482 BC than the one at 3102 BC. The fact that sun had been more or less at the same position suggests that the 3102 BC super-conjunction may have been the result of back computation from 482 BC using the synodic periods of planets.

Kumbha-Meḷa of Planets

Sapta-graha yoga in Kumbha thus reminds one of the Kumbha-Meḷa coinciding with Jupiter's transit of Kumbha. One striking coincidence here is the precise 36 degrees of precision that separated the Kaliyugādi epoch from the 482 BC which reminds one of the 36 years predicted for the doom of Dvārakā in the Mahābhārata. Further, the 482 BC epoch corresponds to the fall of nodes across 60-240° line of Mūlādhāra, Pināki with the garland of Kālasarpa. And the epoch followed Mahāśivarātri of the year and no planet other than moon could be seen. Heliacally set planets separated in due course in the order of their speeds and Moon took the farthest sign Cancer, then Mercury took Gemini, Venus-Taurus, Mars-Aries, Jupiter-Pisces and Saturn-Aquarius. Nodes were across the junction of Scorpio-Sagittarius. This Kumbha-mela of 482 BC definitely had something to do with the Indian astronomy and Tāntrik tradition. 482 BC also corresponded to the 10⁰ norm of equinoxes and solstices that is popular in Babylonian cuneiform tablets.

Considering the Kalpa of 560 years (14x40 = 560) from 482 BC, we reach 78 AD, the beginning of Śaka Era. Surprisingly, the Śaka 427 spoken of by Varāhamihira when considered from 482 BC fall at 55 BC, 2 years distant from the beginning of Vikrama samvat and the astronomer's instruction is to "subtract two from the years of the elapsed Saka Era".

II. Sheet Anchor of Purāṇic History

During the last 200 years of historical research, Purāṇic history had been getting condemned as making no sense and no anchoring date could be deciphered out of the same. But it can be very easily realized that the sheet anchor of Purāṇic chronology is the beginning of Śaka_samvatsara in 78 CE or Kali 3179. Śaka 1 or 78 CE marked the beginning of a Kalpa and the same got concluded after 560 years in 638 CE i.e. endpoint coincides with Harsha-Vardhana (590-647CE). 78 AD Era had been a re-fixing of the Kalpādi 560 years after 482 BC where-in the observed super-conjunction of planets took place – heliacally set planets separating out may have been observed. AD 78 had no other observational significance to be treated as the beginning of an astronomical calendar and Varahamihira had used 11 January 1980, JD (ZT) = 1750287.695769 as the beginning of the Dhanishādi Pitāmaha epoch.

The 7th Manvantara of Vaivasvata famous in the Purāṇic texts as marking the age of humanity had its original interval during Gupta times as indicated below:

Manvantara 6: 278 – 318 CE: Reign of Ghatokacha Gupta

Manvantara 7: 318 – 358 CE: Reign of Chandra Gupta-I and Samudra Gupta. Middle of the Kalpa almost coincides with the mid-point of Samudra Gupta's reign 335-380 CE.

If we consider the evidence in Durga-saptaśati dated to times such as 9-10 centuries which speaks of the 8th Manu, Sāvarṇi, we can work out the interval of another Kalpa as 638 – 1198 CE. Durga-saptaśati can be considered as marking the date of either 318 CE or 918 CE.

Evidence of the Buddha

Above reconstruction of Indian chronology with Kalpa of 560 years and Manu of 40 years meet with a surprising coincidence that the Kalpa prior to 78 AD had its beginning in 482 BC, just one year ahead of nirvāṇa of Gautama Buddha in 483 BC. Can this be a coincidence? Buddha lived for 2 Manu and therefore 563 BC can be considered as the year of birth of Buddha. It can be inferred here that after 560 years of the birth of Gupta, i.e at the end of a Kalpa, birth of another savior holding the lamb was expected and then came Jesus Christ who followed in the footsteps of Buddha with the message of compassion and missionary work.

Kalpa that preceded Buddha had its beginning in 1042 BC, the Vedic times and before at 1602 BC, 2162BC and 2722 BC.

Astronomical Rationale of the 40 Year Manu



8 solar years equals 5 synodic cycles of Venus and this planetary cycle may have been the observational crux of ancient Indian Calendar. India has its most famous clan named after Venus, the Bhārgavas:

$$8 \times 365 = 5 \times 584$$

The 5 cycles of Venus in 8 years perhaps gave the five faces to Mahākāla who is known to be the Preceptor of the Great Nāga-Bhargava who entered India through Persia, thus receiving the name Paras_Rama which became Parasu Rama in Brāhmnical literature. $8 \times 5 = 40$ and $40 \times 14 = 560$ years where 14 represent the number of worlds as known in ancient mythology and in ancient wisdom the derivation would have been from 365, the magic number that represented time as $3+6+5 = 14$. Further, the sidereal luni-solar period of 160 years means 100 synodic cycles of Venus $160 \times 365 = 584 \times 100$. A Kalpa had $25 \times 14 = 350$ synodic cycles of Venus. Buddha is believed to have lived for 80 years, 8 years having 99 full moons and the legend of 80 years may have originated from the count of 1000 full moons that accompanies 80 cycles of earth and 50 cycles of Venus.

560 Years Tail of the Śaka Era of AD 78

It is the 560 years tail of the Śaka Era that led to many controversies in Indian history. Varahamihira's epoch is Śaka 427 and here the question arises as to which Śaka? If we consider the Kalpa of 482 BC mentioned earlier, the Mihira epoch falls precisely at 55 BC, 2 years after the beginning of the era credited to Vikramāditya. Why such a coincidence?

560 years being Kalpa, ancient Indian eras may have residues of 560 years that leads to a zero point. Given the little chronological records of Indian history, it is likely that the earliest era is of 482 BC that marked the Indian zero of time for an era coinciding with the Nirvāṇa of Buddha. It is likely that the Christian era has its roots in Pagan Buddhist tradition in which the year was counted from the birth of Buddha. This Buddha Era of 563 BC may have got rechristened as Christian era by omitting the 560.

Babylonian Connections

India had strong connections to Babylon and this is illustrated by the common astronomical heritage and the use of decimal and sexagesimal number systems. Being connected to the large sexagesimal numbers $4320000 = 200$ days and $4320000 \times 72 = 40$ years and 14 Manus = $14 \times 40 = 560$ years, it is likely that the 560 year time count had been common to the ancient world including Babylonians, Egyptians etc. Manvantarā we may correlate with the 'Generations' of the Bible.

It is likely that the legend of Dvāraka's fall may correspond to some happenings around the Kumbha_mela of 482 BC or may be 560 years back in time around 1042 BC. 560 years between the 2162 BC and 1602 BC may mark the six centuries of dark period between Dravidian decline and Aryan invasion.

K. Chandra Hari

chandra_hari18@yahoo.com
9428007935.