

# Introducing you to Vastu Shilpa Shastra

by Colombo School of Architecture

**V**astu shastra is an ancient Indian science dealing with construction technology and techniques for building environment friendly dwellings which are in harmony with nature, cosmic forces and the universe. Cosmic forces cover forces like gravitation, electro magnetism, the electro weak force and the strong force which are well defined in modern physics.

Knowledge provides direction for man to reach his goals. The Vedas, the eternal source of knowledge, provide scientific guidance on how man can conduct himself scientifically in various aspects of life. Vastu Shilpa Shastra refers to the field of Vedic architecture. By following principles of Vastu Shastra an architect can design a structure that will not only cater to the gross needs of the resident but also to his subtle needs of mental peace and happiness.

There are five fundamental principles of Vedic Science:

1. Dikrimaya - the doctrine of orientation.
2. Vastu-Pada Vinyasa - site planning, Vastu Purusha Mandala.
3. Mana Hastalakshana - proportional measurement of building.
4. Aayaadi Savarga - six canons of vedic architecture.
5. Pataakaadi Sadschadas - character of the building.

Vastu Shastra recommends that the maximum spaces should be left open towards the North and East directions and that the vastu (dwelling) should be aligned in the South and West zones. Provision of more space in the North ensures that the entire household is exposed to health preserving energy of the clear morning sun for the maximum possible duration. Maximum opening to the East and North maintain and shower this bliss on the whole house. Alignment of the house to the South and West zones of the plot helps in achieving dynamic stability by equalising gravitational forces, magnetic flux effect and to attain environmental purity and a success of cosmic reality. Thick walls without openings on the South side provide a shield to the household against the negative energies.

The living place of Devas and human beings is known as Vastu which consists of:

1. Bhumi (earth)
  2. Prasada
  3. Yaana
  4. Shayana
- The extent of land where buildings are built.
- The compound walls, buildings and other structures built within the Bhumi.
- Vehicles like ratha (chariots) gaadi (cart), vimana (plane) and nauka (ship) etc parked within the Bhumi.

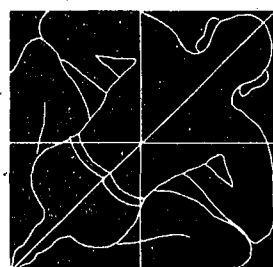
Other articles like furniture. Vastu Shilpa is further divided into two parts:

1. Deva Shilpa / abstract world which deals with:
  - religion, religious practices and traditions.
  - participation and apparent effects of the five elements - Prithvi, Akash, Tej, Vayu, and jal-in human dimension.

- The eight directions
- Geomagnetic and other fields
- Frequency spectrum of sound waves and light waves, and their inter relationship.
- Human mind as influenced by traditional values and beliefs.
- Ancient charts, diagrams and their interpretation.
- Science of astrology any influence of planets.

2. Maanava Shilpa / physical world which deals with
  - building materials
  - construction equipment
  - time duration for completion of the work
  - rules to be followed for proper construction
  - the architect
  - the contractor
  - budgetary estimates
  - skilled and unskilled labour

## Vastu Purusha Mandala



This studies the movement of the sun and therefore explains orientation of buildings accordingly.

The lord of the central square is always the lord of cosmos, Brahma and the presiding deity of the whole site is called Vastu Purusha.

The North is attributed to the lord of wealth (Kubera). South to the lord of death (Yama). East is the lord of light (Sun). West is the lord of winds (Varun) suggesting that there be a courtyard in the center of the building. When these are followed proper ventilation, good disposition to Sun and privacy is ensured. The house when compared to the human body results in the courtyard signifying the abdominal region (central part of the body) which has the least amount of activity.

## Selection of site

There are three factors that should be considered when purchasing a land:

1. The colour of the soil
 

The soil should be white, yellow or at least red in colour. White and yellow soils have natural pest controlling qualities due to the presence of minerals like calcium, potassium, manganese, magnesium, etc. Water logging possibility in these soils are characteristically low offering natural plinth protection, avoiding differential settlements and seasonal fluctuations. Due to white, yellow colours the soil has good thermal properties, reducing direct penetration of solar energy, resulting in benign environment around the house. These also tend to have better bearing capacities. Black soils consist of a mineral called montmorillonite. The montmorillonite crystals have very high swelling characteristic which results in differential settlement in foundations and expanding cracks in plinths.

The soil has poor thermal insulation since it is black in colour and

holds and stores during daytime, the direct penetrated solar energy which emanates out in the shadow period of night, resulting in very unhealthy environment throughout the day. Also due to high absorption of solar energy, magnetic flux lines in the zone are disrupted leading to complete cosmic disorder all around. Soils should not have blue black colour.

## 2. Taste of soil

The soil should taste sweet or slightly - but never acidic.

## 3. Smell

The soil should have a pleasant smell and should be cultivable. It should allow for the growth of all kinds of crops.

## Test of soil

Dig a knee-deep pit in the middle of the plot of the land. Refill with the same excavated earth. If the earth spills over the pit it is a good sign (high bearing capacity). If nothing is left and pit is fully filled then soil is okay - average plot. However if the pit is still vacant after having filled it then it will bring back luck. This is because the bearing capacity of the soil is very bad.

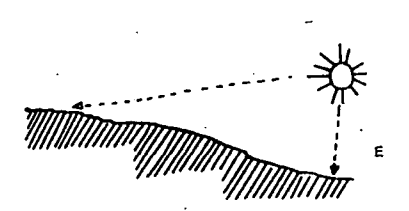
## Vibrations

One must observe the vibrations of the place. Stand in the site with eyes closed and see how you feel. If you feel happiness and upliftment and good vibrations then by the land this is because according to each individual's profession the energy vibrations in their body differs. Their vibrations have to balance with the surrounding the environment/site.

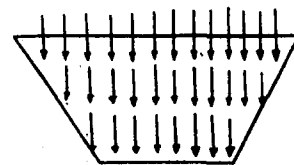
Always select a square or rectangular plot. Vastu Shastra qualified shapes suitably conforming to the cosmic balance of the earth. Square and rectangles exhibit the typical perfect balance as the magnetic flux is uniaxial. All other shapes are dynamically unbalanced and therefore useless. It is alright if your plot is tilted by 20° or 15°.

After buying the plot it is said that some kind of seed be sown there along with cow dung or a cow and its calf should be tied there for some time. This may be explained by the fact that the cow dung is a disinfectant and also will cleanse the site of antibodies and germs.

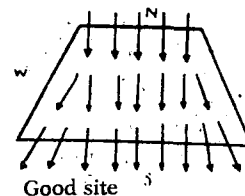
Vastu Shastra also recommends that your land should always slope downwards towards the East, this should be done in order to benefit from the sun's vital energy in the morning. The vibrant, life sustaining electromagnetic vibrations from the sun is available only in the first two and a half hours. If the slope is descending towards the West, the vastu comes under a shadow instead of sunshine, a factor considered unhealthy and unhygienic in Vastu Shastra. If the land tilts towards West and South it is best to fill in more earth in the same and make it slanting towards the East.



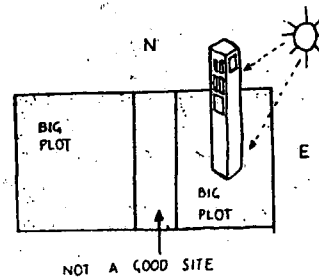
If the plot is wider at the front gate (East or North) and narrower in the end (West or South) it is called a lion faced plot (Vyaghra-muha). This plot allows for stress concentration towards the end which is disturbing.



If the entrance is narrow and rear portion is bigger it is called a cow shaped plot (Goumukh). This is good the plot allows for stress relief.

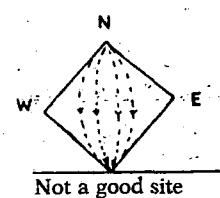


Any plot of land which is squeezed between two bigger plots is not good. Bigger buildings are likely to be constructed in the bigger plots which will cast shadows and also disturb the flow of magnetic flux lines from the North.



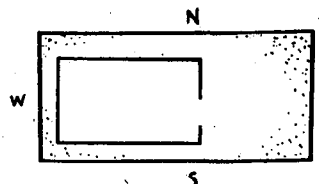
Plot of land which is free from pebble, pot heads, worms, ants, bores, charcoal, pointed objects, sludge, dust, cavities, husks, is a suitable site for all castes and sects of people because it will bring them success.

Any plot where the middle of the land is raised like the back of a tortoise should be rejected. A site which consists of pebbles, pot heads, worms etc generally has loose earth which will later cause even settlement in the structure. This will cause the floors and walls to crack. The corner of any plot, if they fall on the four directions, should not be bought because due to the sharp corners the stress concentration (or negative energy) is at its highest.



When one plans a building it is advisable to leave more space in the East and North of the building and less space in the South and West.

In other words, the building should be located in the South-west corner of your plot. This helps in achieving the dynamic stability by equalising gravitational forces, magnetic flux effect and attain environmental purity and a sense of cosmic reality.

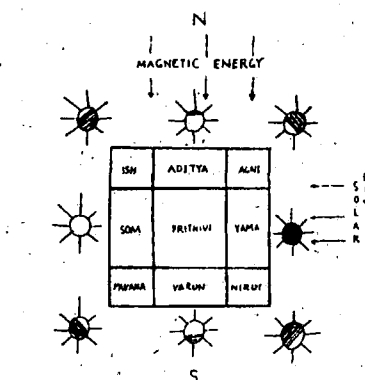
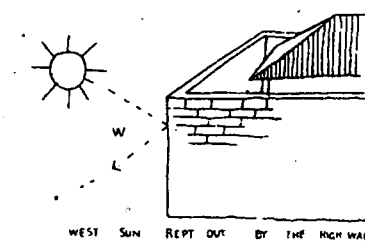


If more space is left on the west side of the house it is said to affect the health of the occupants.

The Southwest corner should be at a right angle. Southwest corner of your house should be heaviest and walls taller and thicker and floor a little higher. A typical imbalance in energy fields is evident in the South and Southwest zones (the

danger zones in Vastu Shastra). High temperatures create distortion in the force lines of magnetic flux, creating chaos in the energy fields.

Traverse of the sun along the East - South - West path creates temperature variations, disturbing the symmetry of the magnetic force lines in the south-west region.



In a south facing house the door should not be exactly in the middle of the plot. No veranda or balcony should be on this side. Even here more space should be left on the Eastern and Northern sides.

The entry into the house would be opposing the magnetic flux lines which in turn results in creating chaotic.

Oscillations or wave patterns in the mind that results in disturbance of mind.

Rivers, canals or tube wells, should be placed in the northeastern side of your land. The well should be exposed to, sun rays for a period of six hours a day. The well stores water and therefore is likely to consist of germs. The rays of the sun destroys these unhygienic / harmful elements thus making the water clean.

If the well is located in the South it is supposedly harmful for women.

This is because women spend most of their time during the day near the well utilising the well water for their daily chores like washing pots and pans. Hence they are subjected to opposing the flow of magnetic flux lines which results in causing disturbances in their mind.

If the well is located in the West it is inauspicious because it will have adverse effects on the male member of the house.

It is likely that men use the well for bathing purposes in the evening once they return after a hard days work. Thus they might get affected by the radiation emitted by the setting sun. Women do not use the well in the evenings as they are in the house. During the day however the sun is not strong on the West and thereby does not affect the women.

Mounds, hillocks or higher ground or buildings towards the South and West of the plot will give health and wealth. Any plot which has lower land in the North and East side and big or small hills on the Western or Southern side is a very good plot. Reject any site if there is a hill on the East would cast a shadow on the building thus preventing the sun's rays from entering.

The gate should not face any religious place specially since these are tall structures that can cast shadows over the whole house. Neither the ground nor the building should be higher in the North-east. The ground should have a slope in the North-east and the walls of the buildings should be lower in the Northeastern than the Southwest. If possible the walls on the North-east should be thinner than the walls of the Southwest.

Except in the Northeast, the land should not be elongated towards any other side it is not good.

If the Southeast corner is projecting towards East or South there may be disputes or losses. The site does not fit into mandala.

## Streets and roads

If a road ends in your house from the Northeastern corner it is considered very good.

Southern side road is not considered to be very good.

Northern side road is good.

A road on the Western side is reasonable.

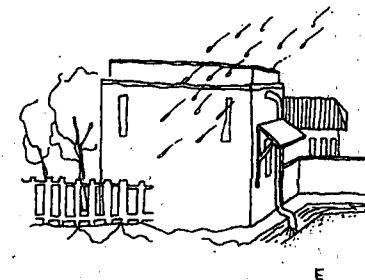
This too is based on the geomagnetic flux, which causes the stress concentration in the South.

If your house is north facing, place the door in North or North east verandahs and balconies can be erected in these sides. Three doors exactly facing each other should not be placed in a North facing house.

Further two or three doors in a straight line and aligning with each other should be avoided in all the house.

Northeast corner of the house, should be a vacant place. Northeast corner of the bedroom or any other room in the house should always be left vacant.

The roof should have a slope towards the Northeast or North or East. Rain water should flow towards Northeast. All water bodies should flow in this direction because if there's a stagnation of water there will be reduced accumulation of germs.



## Proportionate measurement of building

Ganyamaana is the measurement referred to in architecture.

When the height is equal to the breadth it is regarded as a graceful proportion and is meant to reflect peacefulness.

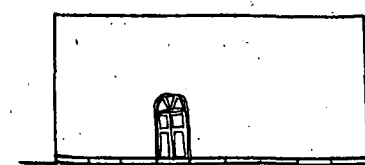
When the height is 1.25 times the breadth the buildings is meant to look stable reflecting strength, eminence, richness, completeness or perfectness.

If the height is 1.5 times the breadth it is supposed to give a pleasant appearance to the building, meaning joy giving.

If the height is 1.75 times the breadth it is supposed to make the building strong and beautiful, meaning wealth giving.

If the height is twice the breadth, this would give the building a wonderful look.

The front of the house should be divided into nine equal parts in order to put a door in an east facing house. Leave the five portions from the right side while facing the house and make the door in the 6th division.



Make more of the doors and windows open towards the eastern and northern sides.

Size of the main door should be bigger than all other doors i.e. in proportion to the building.

Gate of the plot should be on the North, North-east or East.

A door below the floor level of the house should not be fixed at all.

The number of doors and windows should be less on the first floor than on the ground floor, essentially for aesthetic purposes.