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### Vastu - A Remedial Therapy

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The word Vastu etymologically means the place where people dwell (vasanti pranino 'tra (from the root vas' to dwell (nivase). The place may either be the ground or land on which people reside, or the house and other buildings people build for their use. The word Vastu' refers both to the site on which buildings are raised and do the buildings themselves.

The word "Vastospti" (the lord of Vastu) occurs in the Rgveda (and Sayana explains that this is the spirit that. Protects the house.

Vastu as art or science of architecture comes in for elaborate treatment in the Agamas and Silpa- Sastra texts. Among topics discussed in great detail is the Vastu- purusa as unified personification of forces and spirits that dwell in the site divided into a number of cells (padas). The conception of Vastu-Purusa is well- known. It suffices to remember that Vastu- Purusa is essentially an abstraction based entirely on the site- plan (Pada- Vinyasa) and that the Vastu- deities of plan-Cells must properly be propitiated before construction of the site commences (Vastu- S'amana).

Sivarama says - Vastu. Propitiation of Vastu-purusa is indicated not only while building a house, but also while effecting repairs, renovating an old construction, and making addition to an already built house. And, care must be taken not to violate Marma- Sthanas, Sandhis, rajjus and nadis of the site- plan for they are all vital in their influences on the inhabitants.

जीर्णोद्धारं तथोद्याने तथा गृहनिवेशने ।  
द्वाराभिवर्धने तद्वत् प्रासादेषु गृहेषु च ।  
वास्तुपशमनं कुर्यात् . . .॥ Laghu-Silpa-Jyotisaraḥ

The main consideration of significance is the determination of direction which a building should face. If a house faces the West, It is called banner (*Dhavaja*), and it secures prosperity for the inhabitant; If it faces the North-West. It is called smoke (*Dhuma*) and spells disaster for the residents; If it faces the North, it is Lion (*Sirha*) and foretells enjoyment; If it is faces the North-East, It is dog (sav) and forebodes total loss; If it faces the East, It is bull (ursa) and forecasts happiness; If it faces the South- East, It is donkey (*gardabha*) and spells ruin; If it faces the South, It is elephant (*gaja*) and the out cone is wealth; and if it faces the South-West, It is crow (*kaka*) and predicts death and disaster:

ध्वजो धूमस्तथा सिंहः श्वा वृषो गर्दभो गजः।  
काक इत्येष गदितो वास्तुस्थानस्य निर्णयः॥  
ध्वजे विभूतिर्विपदश्च धूमे सिंहे विभोगाः शुनि सर्वनाशः।  
वृषे सुखं गर्दभतो विनाशो गजे धनं काकपदे च मृत्युः॥  
& Wukti-Kalapataruḥ

A number of principles and suggestions have been laid down by ancient astrologers. The reasons for many of them have not been understood. However, the principles have been found to be based on good reasons and sound in practice. These are many common and general rules of Vastu, which I learnt from detail study of Vastu.

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The building should be constructed parallel to the magnetic forces. Northern wall shall be exactly to North and the Southern wall exactly to South. However, when the street in a layout is not held parallel to the magnetic forces, the street can be taken as the base and the building can be marked with respect to the street. The variation between the magnetic direction and the direction of the site can be up to 12 degrees.

### **Plot:**

The site should be cleared of vegetation. Trees like jackfruit, Peepal, Neem, tamarind, etc. If on the site, should be removed with roots at least six months before construction is started. If any tree is to be removed after occupation, a minimum of three months should be allowed to pass.

### **Neev Sthapna:**

The building should be commenced on an auspicious day and time. The following inauspicious days should be avoided:-

- When a member of the family is in mourning due to the death of his kith or kin
- When a child is born in the family and the house is considered to be polluted
- When a female member of the house is pregnant

### **Position of House:**

- It is preferable if the building faces East or North-East.
- The building should never face South- East.
- The South- West corner should be an exact 90 degree angle.
- The house should not face a mountain nor the shape of the house resemble a mountain.
- The building should not be square, but could be rectangular.
- The corners of any house should not be in line with the door or window of any other house.
- The construction of the building should be such that the Sun's rays shall fall on the building for three hours after sun-rise and three hours before sun-set.
- The colour washing can be as shown below: For houses, facing East, white; South-East , gray; South, red; South-West , green; West, blue; North-West, white; North, green; and North – East , yellow

### **Rooms :**

- The bedroom should be on the South-West.
- The position of the bedroom where a couple is united has a bearing on the prospects of a child. If the room is in the western part of the house, the child will be intelligent, prosperous and will become famous.
- Bedrooms for couples should be only on the West or North.
- The total number of rooms in a house shall be odd in number. For purpose of computing any room provide with a door ( including toilets) should be considered a room.

### **Kitchen :**

- Kitchen should preferably be on the South-East corner of the building.
- The person who cooks should face exactly East.
- The sink in the kitchen should be in the North- East corner of the kitchen.
- Storage for storing provisions provided in the racks should be on the walls which are on Southern or Western side and not on the Northern and Eastern side
- Wash- basin in the kitchen should be in the North- East.
- For South facing houses, the kitchen can be on North-West. However, the oven may be in the South – East corner of the kitchen room.

### **Puja room:**

- Puja room should preferably be in the North- East direction.

### **Servants' Room:**

- Servants' quarters should be in the North- West.

### **Doors and Windows:**

- The total number of doors and windows, taken separately, should be even in number and should not have zeros in the ending. Doors should normally be on North direction.
- Exit of the house should be on the North or East or West in order of preference, and not on the South.
- The main entrance door should not face the intersection of roads and no trees should obstruct the entrance. However, according to some experts, if the distance between the entrance door and the above obstructions is more than the height of the building, the obstructions will not be considered inauspicious.
- The entrance steps should be an even number. The number of pillars should be an even number. Similarly, if beams are introduced in any room, or hall, this also should be an even number.

### **Well:**

- The well should be provided on the North- East direction of the plot.
- If any fountain is to be provided, it should be only on the North or East side of the house and the distance of which from the main door should be the minimum height of the door.
- Water tank should not be provided in the North- East or North-West direction

### **Compound:**

- The compound-gate should be on North- East or North- West or South- East only.
- Trees grown on West and South direction can be taller than the height of the building
- On the East and North directions, trees should not be taller than the height of the building.
- No flower pots should be kept on the compound wall or on the walls of the buildings of North and Eastern sides.
- Staircase should not be on the North- East.
- The height of the compound wall on the West should be higher than that on the East. The height of the compound wall on the South or West should be higher than that on the North.

### **Toilet:**

- The commode should face either South or North and not East nor West.
- Attached bathroom should be on the North or East of the bedroom.
- In any room, North- East corner should not be used for keeping spoiled clothes or shoes, chappals, broom sticks, chairs, etc.
- Bath water, waste water or water used for washing vessels should be disposed only on the East or the West or North or North- East only.
- Overhead tank should preferably be on the South- West and the gap should be provided between the roof and the bottom of the tank. Overhead tank should not be on the North-East direction

### **Grha pravasa:**

- House warming function shall be done only after laying the roof slab, fixing the shutters for doors and windows and satisfying the Vastu sacrifice ceremony.
- There should be at least one lamp lighted during the period covering from the sunset to sunrise on.

### **General:**

- The house should not be kept vacant for more than three months.
- If any portion of the building is to be let out, it is preferable that the South portion is occupied by the owner. The North or the North- East can be let out South portion should not be kept vacant.
- The ground floor of the house should not be kept unoccupied, while the first floor can be kept unoccupied.
- Partitioning of the house building is not advisable.

It may be noticed that above prescriptions are based on the supposed personality and functions of the guardians of eight directions, as crystallized in the Puranas. Epics and Smriti texts. They together represent the space or the universe, of which a house is but a representation. The lord of a house (grha-devata) is attended by these guardian-spirits, who must occupy their proper positions within the site-plan. Vastu, in fact, refers to a place where human beings reside with immortal spirits.