

वास्तु *Manage it Yourself*



A Compilation of Articles from
"Akhand Jyoti"

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Preface

Nature has potentially endowed man with the faculty of delving deep into its secrets to be able to ensure good health, happiness and soul progression. The cultivation is a never-ending process, though the momentum, depending upon several factors, keeps on changing. *Vastu* (*vāstu*) is one such field of occult knowledge that was recognized by the Indian sages (*rishis*) as the vibratory force of Nature hidden in one's residence and its surroundings. With the increasing curiosity and fascination of people, past few years have witnessed a mushrooming of popular lectures, books and web sites on this holistic discipline of architectural principles. However, because of a commercial approach to exploit mass psychology, there seems to be proliferation of misconceptions or half-knowledge about this important subject. This book presents excerpts of authentic knowledge from the Vedic scriptures on "Vastu Shastra" to acquaint the readers with the underlying principles of *Vastu* with practical guidance for its application.

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Vastu Shastra

An Introduction

Our life is sensitive to not only the environment and the ambience around, but also to the structure and designs of the residence we live in and the type and topography of the plot of earth on which it is built. The *rishis* were well aware of this fact and had therefore linked the knowledge of architecture and interior and exterior design of residence with the science of *vāstu* and had developed it as a Vedic discipline of knowledge, collectively known as the “Vastu Shastra” (*Vāstu Śāstra*). Many of the ancient temples stand as living monuments of the awe-inspiring majesty and inspiration emanating from these magnificent houses of worship built according to the Vastu Shastra.

Vastu Shastra is counted among the sixty-four principal faculties of knowledge, which emanated directly from the Vedas. Several hymns or formulae in the Rigveda and Yajurveda pertain to the origin of *Vastukala* (architectural and constructional art). Like the four Vedas there are four *Up-vedas*, namely, Gandharveda, Dhanurveda, Ayurveda and Sthaptyaveda. Of these, the last one happens to be what was developed as the Vastu Shastra in the successive ages – the periods of the vedic scriptures like the Brahmins, Aranyakas, Upanishads and Puranas. The subsequent post-vedic times of the Ramayana and Mahabharata are believed to be the periods when this knowledge (of *Vastu*) was deciphered and disseminated in its most evolved and practicable form. The planning and architecture in the grand cities of Lanka, Ayodhya, Hastinapur, Dwarika in that era are regarded as exemplary monuments of *Vastukala*.

A house provides shelter to someone or the other and hence it is given the importance of a sacred activity in the Indian Culture and is counted as a part of *dharma*. “Vrahad Vastumala” – a scripture of the Vastu Shatra, highlights the purpose of house construction as –

*Strīputrādikabho Āraṇya, Jananam Dharmārthakāma Puram |
Jantūnāmayanam Sukhāsyadamidam, Śītāmbu Dharmāham | |*

Meaning: House (Home) is that which offers the worldly joys of having a family, keeping pets, cattle, etc; which protects from cold, heat, storms and other external hazards, and which facilitates the proper performance of *dharma* (righteous duties), *artha* (attainment of wealth/material power and progress) and *kāma* (fulfillment of desires).

The savants of Vastu Shastra affirm that a house constructed according to the norms and guidelines of this vedic science, helps allay the tensions and minimize the chances of familial conflicts and stresses arising out of economic problems, social pressures, sickness, etc. “Vishwakarma Prakash” states that – “The divine power of *Vāstu* is pervading everywhere on the earth, on which Lord Vastu is (subliminally) lying with his face towards North-East direction (*Pūrvottaramukho Vāstu Purūṣaḥ Parikalpitaḥ*). A house built as per the vedic instructions of “Vastu Shastra” is blessed by the grace of Lord Vastu and thus lends enormous support in the progress and happiness of the people residing therein.

The worship of Lord Vastu, along with other manifestations of God, is an integral part of *Deva Pujāna* in the major sacraments and religious ceremonies of the Hindu Dharma. This signifies the subliminal presence of divine powers and energies inherent in the

five basic elements (the *panca tatvas**) and hence in the visible and invisible forces of Nature and stresses the maintenance of a harmonious balance between them in all activities of life.

Vastu Shastra is believed to be the oldest science of Architecture. It is literally defined as – the Shastra (a branch of Vedic Literature), which deals with the knowledge of the topography and the design of any construction to be built for residence, worship or any other purpose. The word “*vāstu*” in Sanskrit language is derived from the verb “*vasa*”, which means living, residing, lodging, etc. The word ‘*vāstu*’ is defined in “Amara Kosha” as –

Gṛaharacanāvacchinnabhūmeḥ |

Meaning: the plot of land suitable for the construction of a house for living is (the base of) *vāstu*.

According to the “Halayudha Kosha” –

Vāstu Saṁkṣepato Vakṣye Gṛahādaḥ Vighnanāśanam |
Īśāṇakoṇādārabhya Hyekāśītipade Tyajet | |

Meaning: In short, *vāstukalā* (the art of vastu) is the art of house construction, which teaches perfect (science and techniques of) designs starting from the *īśāṇa* (east-north) angle so as to protect the house from all natural calamities and other adversities.

The scriptures further describe the ‘*vāstu purūṣa*’ or ‘*vāstu devatā*’ as the presiding deity, the divine source of this hidden realm of Nature working in the properties of land and building-architecture. This *vāstu purūṣa*, is said to be ‘enshrined’ in its global form, facing the *īśāṇa* (east-north) direction. This is why the construction of houses according to the Vastu Shastra should be started from the *īśāṇa* (east-north) angle.

The ancient science of Vastu stipulates that the basic purpose of building a house is that it should be auspicious and beneficial to the people living in it; it should bring them peace, happiness, success and progress. Therefore, according to Vastu Shastra, the topography and properties of the plot should be analyzed first to examine, apart from its location, solidity, vibration, etc of the land to determine whether or not it would be beneficent to the owner and his family. Then, before laying the foundation stone, the architectural design of the house should be drawn so as to maximize the positive effects (of Nature's salutary vibrations or grace of *vāstu devatā*) from different directions. For example, what should be the direction, location, design, etc of the worship chamber, study room, living room, kitchen, bedroom, storeroom, entrance, water storage, toilet, bathrooms, etc? How many doors and windows should be there and in which directions? What should be the interior makeup and exterior surroundings of the house? The latter includes, the types and positions of trees near the house, etc.

Apart from their individual locations and designs with respect to the position and properties of the plot, all components or units inside and around the house should also be mutually compatible and with respect to the distance and directions of the nearby roads, highways etc. Similar constraints are considered for the construction of shops, offices, hospitals, etc. Wherever necessary, the different aspects of the house (or any other building) architecture are also reviewed in Vastu Shastra with respect to the zodiac sign of the owner.

It is amazing to note that the Vastu Shastra indeed gives detailed guidance in regard to architectural designs and layouts – keeping in view also the constraints of cost, area limitations,

appearance of the building, etc. Most remarkably, it also incorporates all the factors like stability and durability, safety, optimal availability of fresh air, sunlight along with the climatic nature of a particular area, which, we in the modern world, regard as the only 'scientific factors' relevant for house construction.

The properties of the plot or the piece of land (called *gṛahapiṇḍa*) –on which a particular building is to be erected – that are considered important for detailed vastu-analysis include the colour, brittleness and smell of the soil; the geometrical shape, size, slope and height of the plot from the sea-level; the types of trees, plants, mountains, spring, river, lake, pond, etc, if any, in the surrounding area and the relative position of these from the plot. For example, square shaped or rectangular plots are regarded most beneficial. Triangular, hexagonal, circular, elliptical plots or land pieces in the shape of the musical instruments like *mridang* or *dholak*, or in the zigzag shapes of cactus or like the face of a lion are considered maleficent in terms of the Vastu-effects.

The downward slope of the land towards the East is regarded auspicious for prosperity. Lands with slopes inclined downwards in the West or South are given least preference. The land in the shape of the back of a tortoise (i.e. protruded in the center and descended on the boundaries) is also considered good. The plots in the shape of the back of an elephant, with upward portions in the Southwest and Northwest directions are regarded lucky for the owner. Deserts, barren or swampy lands are supposed to hinder the house-owner's progress; people are therefore advised not to choose such plots for construction of their houses.

Having selected the most suitable plot, the next important step in the construction of a house, according to the Vastu Shastra, is the selection of the positioning of different rooms according to the directions. Eight directions are regarded significant here – namely, the four principle directions: North (*Uttara*), South (*Dakṣina*), East (*Pūrva*) and West (*Paścima*) and the four diagonal directions in between, namely, East-North (*Īśāna*), North-West (*Vāyavya*), West-South (*Nairatyā*) and South-East (*Āgneya*).

While deciding the location and size of the rooms as per the guidelines of the Vastu Shastra, ideally, the architectural plan should also take into account the provision for leaving some place free for the concerned Lord(s) in a given direction. The Lords of eight directions are as follows: East- Indra (Vedic Sun has also been called Indra); South-east- Agni; South- Yama; South-west- Niruti; West- Varun; North- west- Vayu; North-Kuber; and North-east- Esana (God). The free space should be left as per the properties (e.g. the magnetic and other effects) of the gross manifestations of these powers. For example, as per the scriptures on Vastu, substantial open space should be left in the East direction; much lesser space in the North direction and very little in the West-South direction. Negligible or no space is to be left free or open in the other directions.

“Samarangana Sutradhar” by Bhoj, focuses on the scientific aspects of why directions are given so much importance in Vastu Shastra. It is described here that the invisible flow of infinite energy waves pervading the space together with the sublime currents of cosmic powers continuously affects every being, everything in the perceivable expression of Nature. In particular, our minds, our residence (and hence our activities in it), are influenced by these with varying momentum. The principles of

Vastu Shastra have been discovered so as to enable people gain maximum benefits from these energy currents and from sublime connection (of the inner mind) with the cosmic forces, and thus get support and help of these divine energies for living a happy, peaceful, progressive and enlightened life. If we follow the guidelines of Vastu Shastra and modify the get up or arrangement of our houses and living-style accordingly, to the best extent possible, we can experience these positive effects and lead a better and more purposeful life.

In the modern times, the architectural studies and practices across the globe have mostly been dominated by the trends of 'world class' or gorgeous looks, modern gadgets of comforts, maximum grabbing of surrounding land, etc. Not only the mega cities, the developing towns are also being flooded with concrete jungle of small and big multi-storeyed buildings. Growing populations and greed of real-estate market have further blocked the chances of consideration of any of the important factors of the ancient architectural sciences like that of Vastu. As a result, even if people are able to get plush houses in the well-developed localities, they get no peace of mind there; most families are living under acute stressful conditions.

Although some rising trends of general interest and awareness about Vastu are seen among people across the globe since the past few years, the ground reality hardly shows any improvement. On the contrary, many fake experts or those having half-cooked knowledge or stolen information of "Vastu Shastra" have made it a business to dupe the gullible masses, who want to spend their hard earned money in building a house which will bring them good fortune and ward off evil. The added negative effect is that in their blind craze for 'Vastu' benefits or pre-

vention of ill-effects of a house not fitting into the scheme of so-called 'laws' of Vastu Shastra, many people have even demolished their houses or sold them off abruptly. Deep study of the teachings of Vastu Shastra has therefore become very important and relevant today. This collection of articles will bring us useful excerpts from the original scriptures with necessary explanations on what to do if we are going to construct or purchase a house or what to do by way of modifications if we already have a house of our own?

Having acquainted ourselves with the origin, general principles and elements of this Vedic science, we shall look into the specific details about the construction and designs of different components of our houses in the successive sections.



The Importance of *Northeast Angle* in *Vastu Shastra*

It is said that even though we may not have control over the astrological effects of the stars but *Vāstu* certainly plays a role in positively modifying these effects provided we make wise use of the teachings of Vastu Shastra. Astrology emphasizes the importance of the positions and motions of planets and stars whereas Vastu Shastra is founded on the significance of directions. It is said that the state or condition (of a system) can't affect a direction but the directions (because of the geomagnetic, electromagnetic and subtler effects) do influence the state or condition. This is how *vāstu* is believed to have relation with one's horoscope and influences one's stars to some extent. Thus, apart from the scientific basis – in terms of optimizing the favorable geographical impact and energy fields of natural powers and minimizing the negative or harmful effects – the significant role of *vāstu* also emanates from the deeper mathematics of astrology.

Experts of Vastu Shastra affirm that if the house one lives in is constructed in concordance with the principles and guidelines of this vedic science of architecture, one would be able to live without falling a victim to adversities and tensions even in this age of materialistic rat-race, loan based possessions, stressful competitions and struggles. With a little care in the relative positioning and arrangement of the living room, dining room, study room, bed room, office, clinic, shop, etc, one could expect to live, by and large, a peaceful, happy and prosperous life of goodness and nobility.

Let us look at some excerpts to get an idea of what exactly the scriptures say in the above context. Vishwarkarma, the founder

of architectural knowledge, instructs that a plot selected for the construction of a house should be first divided into sixteen parts (to get the segments and angles on both sides of the eight principal directions). The map of the house should take into account the directions, which are auspicious or inauspicious for specific purposes. The different rooms, location of doors and windows in each should be planned accordingly. For example, the second chapter of “Vishwkarma Prakash” – a masterpiece of Indian architectural heritage, cites:

Īśānyām Devatāgehaṁ Pūrvasyām Snānamandiram |
Āgneyām Pākasadanam Bhāṇḍārāgaramuttare | |
Āgneyapūrvayormadhyeda Dhimanthanamandiram |
Agnipreteśāyormadhye Ājyagehaṁ Praśasyate | |
Yāmyanairāṭayormadhye Purīṣatyāga Mandiram |
Nairātyāmbupayormadhye Vidyābhyāsasyamandiram | |
Paśchimānilyormadhye Rodanārtha Gṛahamasmṛatam |
Vāyavyottararmadhye Ratigehaṁ Praśasyate | |
Uttareśānayormadhye Auśadhārthantukārayet |
Nairātyām Sutikāgehaṁ Nṛapāṇām Bhūmimichchitām | |

Meaning: The worship and meditation chamber or temple should be constructed in the *īśāna* angle (corner of the plot/house in the northeast direction); bathroom in the eastern direction, kitchen in the *āgneya* angle (corner in the southeast direction), strong room or locker (safe for money and jewellery etc) should be made in the *vāyavya* (northwest) direction and storeroom in the north. The portion between the northeast and eastern direction should be used for storage of dairy produce: milk, curd, buttermilk, butter, ghee etc. The sector of the plot/house between the south and the southwest (*nairātya*) direction should be used for toilets and septic tank. Study room should be in the west or between the southwest and the west directions. The portion between the west and the northwest (*vāyavya*) direc-

tion is best suited for constructing the solitude chamber (where one could sit in the moments of sadness and grief) and/or the family conference room (where people in the joint family could discuss family matter of mutual concern). The entertainment space should be provided nearby or in the northwest direction. Living rooms for the married couples should be made somewhere between the northwest and north direction.

The portion (of the plot or the house) between the north and the northeast (*īśāna*) direction is best suited for the construction of clinics, hospitals or the room for patient-care. The corner in the southwest direction should be used for labor room (for the birth and nursing of infants). The dining hall should be placed in the west; bedroom in the south, the reception or drawing room should lie between the east and northeast and the grocery store and cattle shed (if any) in the northwest direction. The weapons' room (or room for security guard's duty), if any, should be in the southwest angle. The northwest direction is also suitable for garage (parking space for vehicles, if any). The garage could be made in the southeast direction as well, but the northeast direction should be avoided for this purpose. The well or water-tanks should be made in the east, west or north directions.

The above scriptural description is a broad classification that could be used as per the rooms or the utilities required in the house (or any building) being constructed. If felt necessary, one can also make minor alterations or modifications in the existing settings of the house or building already built and in use, in order to minimize the adverse effects or to gain extra benefits of *vāstu*. The scriptures unequivocally affirm the favorable and auspicious effects of architecture and interior designs as per the guidelines of Vastu Shastra. The houses constructed in contravention of these guidelines are often found attracting adversities such as theft, disputes, court-cases, severe losses, poverty, acute illness, etc.

The treatises like “Vishwakarma Prakash” attribute special importance to the *īśāna* angle (the northeast direction) in the selection and architectural map of the plot, construction of the house (building) and even the exterior and interior structure and settings of the rooms. This direction is regarded as highly surcharged with divine energies. This is why the scriptures guide – “*Īśānyam Devatāgeham*” (temples, shrines and devotional meditation centers/rooms should be constructed in the northeast corner....). As the Sun rises from the East, one naturally gets maximum (vital) energy from it in this direction. The northeast direction is enriched with the confluence of this energy pool with the magnetic and subtler energy currents of the earth and the etheric hole. The *rishis*, the Indian sages of Vedic Age had mastered this knowledge. This is why the sacred pilgrimage centers and ashrams of spiritual training in the ancient times were established in this direction near the holy rivers. We can still feel the distinctly enchanting, energizing and enlightening ambience at such sites.

Modern scientists are well aware of the vital role of the heat, light and enormous kinds of energy radiations sent by the Sun on the earth. These are the determinants of the atmospheric and other changes, energy balances and natural phenomena on the earth. Although under a different approach and in a different language, the principles and theories of Vastu Shastra thoroughly take into account these interconnected effects together with the geological and geophysical aspects. The manifestations of God or the divine powers described in the *vāstucakra* and invited and worshipped during the sacraments of Vastu Pooja are mostly the invocations of the energy currents and forces emanating/radiating from the Sun.

India is the land instinct with sanctity and religious rituals. Spiritual energy is actively pervading in its sublime environment, in

every aspect of its culture. This is why the Vedic knowledge of *vāstu* is also associated with religious rituals here. Thus adoption of the principles and disciplines of Vastu Shastra also helps in spiritual endeavors and growth. The views of Vastu-expert Shri Gauru Tirupati are worth noting here. This scholar from Andhra Pradesh has written in “Vastu Sandesh” that the secret of Vastu Shastra lies in ideal and harmonious utilization of the five basic elements (the *panca tatvas*) and the hidden powers of Nature in the house. This is why enlightened persons prefer designing and constructing their houses according to the guidelines of Vastu Shastra.

Shri Gauru also cites the examples of the great shrines of Badrinath, Kedarnath, etc in the Himalayas and those of the historic temples of Jagannath in Puri and Balaji at Tirupati etc, whose construction is in tune with the Vedic principles of Vastu Shastra. This is why these pilgrimage have been the source of attraction and uplifting experiences for millions of devotees and visitors from different parts of the globe since immemorial times. The shrines built as per the Vastu-instructions are said to work like (small or big) reservoirs of cosmic energy. This explains the emphasis laid in the Indian cultural customs upon preserving at least one room or corner of the house (in appropriate direction) for home-temple. Idols or pictures of Gods are also enshrined and worshipped in some hospitals, trade centers, etc owned by the believer in Vastu Shastra.

As the home-temples or worship-chambers happen to be given paramount importance in a building according to Vastu Shastra, the *īśāna* angle (northeast direction) being the principle axis of the location of the former also gets a prominent role in archeology. The east and the north directions are of significance in the Indian culture. The Vedic literature refers to the sun as the “soul of the world” and it is also regarded as the source of vital power

and health. The sun rises in the east, therefore meditating on the soothing radiance of the rising Sun in this direction in the early hours of the dawn is of great devotional and spiritual significance. The vedic scriptures on yoga describe the extrasensory energy centers like the *sahastrār cakra*, *brahmrandhra* and *āgyā cakra* to be subtly located in the north pole (cerebrum region) of our brain. Meditating on the rising sun activates these centers and thus awakens supernatural talents and powers.

The idols of deities are enjoined to be kept so that the devotee faces the north or the east direction during worship. The Shastras recommend specific devotional practices for specific attainments. The directions, which the devotee faces during such *sādhanā* are also of deep significance – it is said that the devotees praying for wealth should face the north, those aspiring for knowledge should face the east and those searching for peace and happiness should face the west.

Whatever directions are prescribed in Vastu Shastra for the palaces, big buildings or major constructions, are equally applicable for small flats or rooms. For example, in a two room flat, one may place the idol or picture of the *iṣṭa devatā*¹ in the northeast corner (or with the support of a stand or directly on the wall in this direction) of the house or any one of the rooms. The size of the worship spot (or home-temple) should be such that it does not occupy excessive space. For example, in small rooms, it could provide just enough space for one person to sit for devotional practice at a time. In case it is not possible to find a corner in the northeast direction, it will be most suitable to keep the idol or picture (or any symbol) of deity facing the west so that the devotee would face the east while sitting or standing in front of it. Facing the east helps in rapid progress in mental concentration and is of special significance for the devotees of Gayatri Meditation.

There should be only one place of worship and devotion in a house. This being the focus of reverence for every member of the family becomes surcharged in its holy ambience and also helps in maintaining understanding, peace, harmony and love, in the family. The number of idols and pictures of deities should be kept to the minimum (may be just one). Having many of them or of several manifestations of divinity tends to make them more as pieces of decoration rather than objects of reverence and devotion.

The northeast direction is referred as a sacred direction in Vastu Shastra. We should also maintain a state of cleanliness and purity in this direction in our house and workplace. No heavy item (e.g, almirah, table) should be kept in this direction; and should also avoid keeping a broomstick or any other sanitary item there. If not used for any devotional purposes, this corner (direction in the house) may be left clean and empty even if it happens to be located in the living room or the bedroom. Keeping dirt and debris in this corner of the house is said to attract malevolent effects such as difficulties, losses, tensions in personal (familial) relationships etc. However, the readers of Akhand Jyoti should be well aware that the Vastu principles and effects, like effects of any other forces in the gross manifestation of Nature, are only secondary to one's inner strength and dedicated endeavors towards soul growth. One need not panic if it is not possible to follow some or even none of the guidelines provided in the Vastu Shastra.

We should not forget that our *rishis* had taken full measure of the dimensions and limitations of human life and had provided humanly practical remedies against challenges of destiny or circumstances. Likewise they have also laid down guidelines to minimize or eliminate the negative effects, if any, of having a house designed against the Vastu principles. We shall endeavour to discuss these in the succeeding sections.

The Ideal Locations of Different Rooms in Your House

As per the tradition of Vedic worship, the rituals of *Vastupujan*, *Bhumipujan*, *Bhumishodhan*, and *Shilanyasa* are performed at an auspicious time before commencing the construction of a building. Apart from invoking divine grace, these rituals are aimed at creating a harmonious balance and linkage with Nature so as to attract its agreeable support and favorable effects of the Sun and other planets and stars. Accompanied with every new construction, there is a natural desire and hope that the building would be a source of prosperity, joy and peace for the people residing in it and that the life of its residents would be protected from adversities and hazards; they should live in a cordial, mutually benevolent and progressing ambience, avoiding bickering and clashes. All projects initiated in the buildings having maximum *vāstu* benefits are expected to lead to shining success. Everyone wants his house to be the harbinger of health, happiness, prosperity and social prestige for him and his family.

If *Vastu Shastra* was so pervasive and integral part of the Indian culture and religion, why is it no longer having the same place in our lives today? In order to seek an answer, we will have to have a quick look at its brief history.

After the devastating war of Mahabharata, the world entered the Dark Age (*Kaliyuga*) when no development of any kind could take place. With gradual revival of civilization, the ancient architectural knowledge again came into use in several parts of India between 800 - 600 B.C.; the royal palaces, buildings of rich traders and several Buddhist monasteries and other reli-

gious centres and temples were the major outcomes of this resurrection of the Indian archaeology. But the cultural and socio-economic development faced a setback with the invasion of Alexander around 400 B.C. However, this was only a temporary phase. Soon, with the endeavors of farsighted geniuses like Chanakya, the Indian economy as well the Vastu-based grand constructions of individual houses, community centres, palaces, forts, warehouses, temples, monasteries, universities etc, and all round progress gained glorious momentum and blossomed in the golden era of the regime of Chandrgupta Maurya and his successors.

The heritage of ancient knowledge lost its originality and grip on people's life in the mist of the opportunistic trends and consequent anarchy on the sociopolitical and even religious fronts. Foreign invasions from the Northwest and the West resulting in the political and cultural subjugation of India in the medieval era devalued the role of *Vastu* in the Indian system of life. The luxurious and lavish lifestyles of the foreign rulers adversely influenced the architectural designs as well. In lieu of the disciplines of *Vastu Shastra*, the focus then shifted to gorgeous appearance, huge structures, artificial decoration, creature comforts and excessive possession of land. Gradually increasing influence of western culture, the greed of builders and contractors, space constraints coupled with growing populations (especially, in the metro cities) have practically ruined the meaning and vital relevance of *Vastu Shastra* in the modern times.

Given that the invaluable repository of Vedic knowledge cannot be found in its original form today and in view of the unavoidable constraints (of space, environment and costs) of the present circumstances, it is certainly not feasible to follow the principles and teachings of *Vastu Shastra in toto*. However, as the ancient and modern scholars and savants have opined, many

of its guidelines and architectural formulae or tips of internal and external designs are simple and adaptable even today. With a little care, wisdom and will on our part, we can be blessed by the power of *vāstu* in our existing or future houses (and other buildings, if any, owned or constantly used by us). The present booklet on *Vastu* aims at elucidating the relevant and practical tips in this regard.

It may be recalled that it is not the size or cost of the house but the impact and intensity of specific kinds of energy fields and natural forces from specific (geo) directions that are of significance in *Vastu*. The subtle as well as the gross roles of the cosmic energy of the Sun and the five basic elements (*pancha tatvas*) are of paramount relevance here. The Northeast and the East directions assume a leading role with respect to spiritual effects and religious and devotional accomplishments. The home-temple, meditation chamber or place for devotional rituals is therefore advised in *Vastu Shastra* to be located in these directions.

In the earlier chapters, we have discussed about the Northeast and East directions and place of devotion/worship/meditation and related matters with practical guidance. As per the excerpts from the principal scriptures on knowledge of *Vastu*, broad guidelines on the most suitable directions for positioning of important rooms (including kitchen, bedrooms, living room, drawing room, etc) were also presented there. It may be added that having a basement and open ground (*brahmsthāna*), plants and trees (garden) within the building premises is also recommended in the *Shastras*. Further interpretations of some scriptural excerpts indicate that the electrical appliances (e.g, heater, refrigerator, cooler, telephone, television set, music system, etc) should be placed in the southeast angle or in the southward portion (of the house/room). Specific guidelines for interior settings and decoration are also given in the teachings of *Vastu Shastra*. We shall discuss these aspects with respect to the loca-

tion of important rooms in the successive chapters. In the present article we consider the location and design of the bathroom(s).

Bathing has a vital place in daily life. It has been given crucial importance in healthcare under Ayurveda and Naturopathy. Almost all creatures bathe in their own style. Right from the tiny butterflies and small birds to giant elephants and bears, every one enjoys dipping into a pool of water – be that a collection of dew-drops, tiny pots or rivers, ponds or an ocean, as per one's requirement and convenience. The delight of diving and bathing in the fresh streams of water in a river or a pond certainly can't be found in the tubs, roof-showers or buckets of the bathrooms in our houses. Still, we all need to clean and freshen up our body by a good bath every day. It energizes the body and gives a calming feel to the mind as well. However, the exploding population, increasing pollution and the drying of natural resources of water have made it impossible for most of us to have the 'luxury' of bathing in a natural spring or a river every day. We are to manage with the bathroom(s) inside the house or premises of our buildings.

As per the guidelines of *Vastu Shastra*, bathrooms should be constructed in the East with as much open space around them as possible. The windows/ventilators of the bathroom should open in the East. The obvious reason is the direct reach of sunlight from this direction. While taking bath it would give the natural advantage of absorbing the vital elements and energy from the sunrays in the morning. Today, for most of the 'urbanized' ones among us, bathrooms have also become showpieces rather than natural necessities of health and hygiene. We decorate them with modern accessories, cosmetics, steam-tubs, moving showers, glass taps, plastic gadgets, electrical appliances and what not... Not only that, more than the space constraints, our 'comfort driven' life-style has given rise to new trends of having bathrooms attached to (every) bedroom.

With the influence of western culture and use of western techniques of construction, our overall living styles and housing patterns have restrained the architectures of our houses. This has virtually imposed the negligence of the 'need' of *Vastu Shastra*. For example, the position of the kitchen and the dining hall is constrained by that of the drawing room which, in turn, restrains the designing of the bedroom, study room, etc. The bathrooms and toilets then are naturally confined to be located wherever possible as per the restrained structure of the house. The limitations are unavoidable in case of multistoried buildings as per the pre-laid water supply and drainage pipelines. However, if one cares and aspires to benefit the most from Nature, one can incorporate the guidelines of the Vastu-Scriptures prior to the construction of the house. The builders and architects could adopt the same practice at the stage of initial planning of the multistoried complexes.

As per the Vastu guidelines, bathrooms should not lie in the Northeast or Southwest corners of the house. The bathrooms and toilets should never be constructed beneath the staircase or somewhere in (a patch available in) the central portion of the house. This obviously will let the filth, the bacteria, the stinky odor and infections to be retained in the house; people residing in such houses would suffer health problems. As fire and water have opposite natural properties, so have the kitchen and the bathrooms in the terminology of Vastu-Scriptures. Therefore, the kitchen and dining room should not face the bathroom. Also the bathrooms and toilets should be located at a safe distance from the kitchen and the dining room. In any case, one may alter the internal design of the bathroom so that one faces the East while bathing.

Toilets should not be constructed near the bathroom in the East direction. If it is a must to have the toilet attached inside the bathroom because of space constraints, it should be in the South-

west or Northwest corner. However, if it be not possible in the existing structure of the house or building, one could simply change the positions of the ventilators or taps etc. Only one door is sufficient in the bathroom, with windows or ventilators in the East. If exhaust fan is a must, it should be fixed in the eastern or northern direction. Geyser and other electrical appliances, if any, should be fixed in the *āgneya* angle (Southeast corner), because of the favorable effect of *agni* (fire, heat) in this direction. The tap to be used for bathing should be in the east so that, while bathing, one would face this direction. It is said that facing the East while bathing generates soothing effects on the mind-body system.

As we have discussed earlier, the principles of *Vastu Shastra* are derived from deeper understanding of the gross and subtle energies of the five basic elements (*pancha tatvas*) so as to maximize the favorable impacts of the desired elements in the specific portion (room, as per its use) of the house and minimize the untoward influences. We shall continue with broad guidelines on the positioning and design of other rooms in the successive installments.



Best Position of Kitchen in Your House

This small book on the teachings of Vastu Shastra aims at introducing the readers to the original texts and principles of the Vedic Science of Architecture. Although *Vastu* (original Vedic term *vāstu*) has become quite a popular term among the masses these days, it is more the apprehensions and illusions rather than the facts of this occult science that seem to have been spread. Afraid of the 'hidden' untoward effects of not having the house built as per the principles of *vāstu*, people anxiously search for the expert-help; some even go in for hurried sell-off or breaking of the house. The confusion between blind faith and total disbelief has been a breeding ground for opportunists. For some it has become a tool for pretending against failures; rather than lack of assiduity and best efforts on their part, they blame *vāstu* imperfections as the cause of their failures. Many so-called experts have mushroomed with the rising 'business' of '*vāstu*-guidance'; most of whom have incomplete or only a superficial knowledge of this ancient science.

Hope this book will acquaint the readers with the fundamentals – that, *vāstu* mainly pertains to enabling supportive effects of geomagnetism and certain streams of energies of Nature. Most importantly, let them know that they don't have to panic if their existing houses do not conform to the major guidelines of Vastu Shastra. Little alterations or modifications will also suffice, as guided in this book, for instance, for the arrangements of the specific rooms/corners of the house.

We had talked about the relative positions and directions of the bedroom and bathroom in the previous chapter. Here we discuss about the most important entity in the house, as identified in the Vastu Shastra, namely, the kitchen. Be that a palatial mansion, a mud hutment, or any type of house, kitchen happens to be its pivotal place. It is referred to as the treasure of the house in some Chinese scriptures. This is the only prominent place in every home, where the *agni tatva* (one of the five basic elements – the *panca tatvas*) plays a key role. As we all know, the discovery of its gross physical manifestation—the fire—is considered as the foundation of modern civilization. In the remote pre-historic times people used to survive on raw (uncooked) meat, fruits and vegetables; it is the boon of fire that enabled cooking of our food and showered on us with varieties of other comforts.... *Agni tatva* as a source of energy, including vital energy – the *prāṇāgni*, and mental strength and radiance – the *tejas*, is also of great significance in yogic practices and spiritual *sādhanā*.

The Vastu Shastra describes the principle direction of natural energy field of *agni* as – southeast (*āgnyeya*). The Fire-God “Agnideva” is honored there as the divine power that governs this direction and associated Natural energy fields and sublime forces. (The name “*āgnyeya*” of this direction is indeed derived from “*agni*”). Therefore, Vastu Shastra prescribes that the position and design of the kitchen should be such that the tools of producing heat and fire such as, gas-stove, burner, electric heater, oven etc, be placed in the southeast corner of the house. Appropriate use of this direction is said to build up a vibrant environment in the house and enhances the vigor of its inhabitants.

As the sun is the natural source of heat and energy in this world, it is referred in the Vedic Scriptures as the shrine of Agnideva. Performing *yajña* (*homaṁ, havan, agnihotra*) in the southeast direction while facing the east is therefore considered as most

beneficial. It is supposed to bestow health, happiness, prosperity and fame upon the devotees. The “Agni Puran” describes these aspects in detail. It advises to perform *bali-vaishva agnihotra*² every day in the southeast direction. It states that – “The devotees, who worship the Agnideva by *bali-vishva agnihotra* or other kinds of *homam* every day, are blessed with *ojas* (vigor), *tejas* (brilliance) and *varchas* (inner power and auspicious welfare).

If it is not feasible to perform *homam* or *agnihotra* every day, lighting a lamp in the southeast corner every day will also be beneficial as per the Shastric literature. Some of the scriptures on *Vastu* further recommend that for special auspicious effects, the fire in the southeast corner of the kitchen should not be extinguished completely. Such a thing might have been possible in the ancient times when people used firewood and dry cow dung in kitchen stoves. It is certainly not feasible in today’s circumstances. Instead, continuous lighting of a tiny lamp of *ghee* or oil should be tried. It is also said that the food cooked in the southeast direction induces liveliness, strength and charm in one’s personality.

Food prepared in the kitchen is the principal source of nourishment of our body, which is made up of the gross manifestation of the five basic elements (*panca tatvas*). The health of our subtle-body depends upon the subliminal properties of these *tatvas* present in our food. As the energy fields and subtle environment of the kitchen affect the quality of food, they are given due importance in the Vedic scriptures.

The scriptures on *Vastu* further stress that the *āgyena* (southeast) angle effectuates optimal impact of natural energy fields required for the food cooked inside the kitchen. For instance, the 118th shloka of the 53rd Chapter (entitled “*Vastu Vidya*”) of

Varahmihir's "Vrahat Samhita" states – "The best location for the place of worship/ devotion in the house is the northeast, that for the kitchen is the southeast, for general storeroom is the southwest and for grocery storage is the northwest corner (direction)."

Similarly, the shlokas no. 18-19 of the 106th Section (on "Nagaradik Vastu Kathanam") of the "Agni Puran" state – the strong room (safe for money and valuables) of the house should be placed in the eastward direction, cooking-room (kitchen) in the southeast, bedroom in the south and major tools storage in the southwest. The dining room should lie towards the west, grocery stockroom in the northwest, material resources storing in the northward direction and worship and devotion room in the northeast. A house constructed according to these Vastu Shastric designs is supposed to bring good luck for the residents.

A visible advantage of having the kitchen in the southeast direction is that it is open to the positive effects of morning sunrays and also gets fresh air most of the time. Added benefits are available if the cook faces the east while preparing the food. Not only he or she would enjoy good health and happy mood in general, but the food cooked thereby would also be tasty and filled with subtle vigorous effects. It is said that the ancient experts of Vastu Shastra were able to identify the direction in which the food was prepared by simply tasting it! If the taste and quality of cooking could so much depend upon the position of the kitchen, the latter could naturally have significant impact on the health, mental development and hence the overall progress and life-status of the people who would eat the food everyday.

According to Chinese belief, the overall wellbeing of the residents of a house largely depends upon – In which direction in

the house the kitchen is placed, in which direction is the food cooked, etc. The ancient science of Chinese architect (*Feng Shui*) also lays maximum importance on proper positioning and designing of the kitchen in the plan of the house, as it directly affects the health and moods of the people. As per *Feng Shui* – the food cooked in the kitchen is the key source of energy (to work) for the inhabitants; it is therefore responsible (to a great extent) for their efficiency and hence for their prosperity and success.

The blueprint of the house, according to Vastu Shastra, should be planned with respect to the shape, size and location of the plot. For example, the size of the corners in a specific direction would obviously depend upon whether the plot is rectangular, circular, triangular or hexagonal etc? Which way and how far is the nearest road or ground from it? What is already there in the surroundings, etc?

While constructing a house, often cost-effectiveness and maximum utilization of the space seem to be the major criteria these days. As a result, at times the construction is unscientific and against Vastu Shastra. For example, in some houses, the kitchen faces the main entrance. The outer door naturally needs to be kept open for cross ventilation in such cases; the argument given in favor of this arrangement, despite the intrusion in privacy, is that – the house is better guarded because anyone in the kitchen can keep guard on the main entrance as well and the smell of food would not spread inside the house, ..., etc. But the fact is that apart from being inconvenient such a construction is quite against the Vastu principles and might give rise to mutual conflicts, tensions and despair among the family members. Such houses are also said to be prone to cause economic problems and diseases. Therefore, as far as possible, the design of the house should avoid positioning the kitchen in front of the main en-

trance even while constructing it in the southeast. If such an optimal structure is not feasible because of the location of the plot etc, then, according to the Vastu Shastra, the kitchen should be made in the western direction. Here again, the gas-stove, heater etc, should be kept in the southeast corner of the kitchen.

In the villages, people use firewood and dry cow-dung as fuel in their kitchens. Because of the availability of open space, they don't face any problem in shifting the *chulhas* (usually made up of clay and cow-dung) in the desired directions. The situation is quite different in the towns and cities where the kitchens in the flats are generally small. Kerosene and gas-stoves are commonly used in most houses and usually one L-shaped or two parallel stone-platforms are constructed in the kitchen. If one of the platforms is attached to the wall in the west and the other in the east, obviously, the best choice would be to keep the stove(s) in the south east corner of the latter. (The other platform could be used for keeping utensils, drinking water container etc). Similar arrangements could be made with the construction of L-shaped platforms.

If the above arrangements are not possible, some alternatives could be chosen. We shall discuss this, along with some Vastu guidelines on internal utilities of the kitchen, in the next section.



Some *Guidelines* on Arrangements inside the *Kitchen*

As mentioned in the previous chapter, kitchen is given para amount importance in the ancient Indian and Chinese science of architecture. There is a popular folk-saying in India that –household discords begin and end in the kitchen.

While constructing a new house, the gas-platform should be constructed along the eastern wall with substantial portion touching the south wall as well; so that the stove could be kept in the southeast corner and the person using it would face the east. The width of the slab should ideally be about 1.5 to 2 ft. The slab would, obviously, touch the south but should be kept at least 3 inches away from the north. In case the house is already constructed or is rented, where the platforms cannot meet these requirements, then the platform could be in the westward direction and gas-stoves could be placed in the north-west or west direction. If that, too, is not practical in the existing house, then electrical utilities of cooking may be kept in the southeast corner of the kitchen or a small lamp of *ghee* or oil could be kept lit for as much time as possible.

As we had discussed earlier, the best place for the kitchen is in the *āgneya* (southeast) direction. In view of the Shastric interpretations, heat and reddish (yellow) color are supposed to be most auspicious for this direction. This is another reason why keeping the source of fire (gas-stove, etc) in this corner of the kitchen or lighting a lamp here is advised. There has been the vedic tradition of constantly keeping the *ghee* or oil lamp lit in this direction (corner). This is supposed to significantly reduce the negative effects of the faults (in terms of the *vastu*-principle), if any, in the design of the house.

The southeast direction is also referred as having the place of the Goddess of food (grains). Some experts of Vastu Shastra specify – “*Pākaśālā Agnikoṇe Syātsuswādubhojanāptaye*”; meaning – the food cooked in the southeast direction is especially tasty. The scriptures also mention of having the dining room, dining hall or place of eating in the west (*Bhojan Paścimāyām Ca Vāyavyām Dhan Sancayam*). It is supposed to add some benefits of soothing mental health; all members of the family would then enjoy an extra support of having their minds balanced and calm. If dining facility is to be arranged inside the kitchen, this could be in its west or northwest part. Washbasin should best be placed on the north or east of the dining room; west could also be a choice. Bathroom should not be made adjacent to the dining room.

Sitting in the west and facing the east while eating is ideal. Although, sitting on a piece of cloth or jute on the floor and keeping the food-plate above a wooden plank is ideal, the use of dining tables is becoming more and more common these days. The shape of the dining table should be square or rectangular. Round, triangular or elliptical shaped dining tables are considered inauspicious, in general. Eating in a relaxed and peaceful mood induces enormous healthy effects. Apart from the habit of cleaning the hands, that of chanting specific mantras and prayers with deep feelings of regarding food as a divine gift would bring magical changes for the better in health and harmony.

According to the Chinese principles of *Feng Shui*, the south direction represents the principal direction of fire element, and the east represents that of wood-elements. As the latter is used in the fire for cooking, the southeast direction being combination of the two is best for placing the kitchen. Both *Feng Shui* and Vastu Shastra specify east as a natural alternative in case it is not possible to construct the kitchen in the southeast. It is often difficult to construct the kitchen in the southeast corner

of the houses that open in the east or the south. In such cases, the second alternative as recommended by Vastu Shastra, is the northwest (*vāyavya*) direction. As stated earlier, the kitchen slab should preferably lie along the southeast or eastward wall of the kitchen.

Kitchen should not be constructed in front of a bathroom/toilet, bedroom, makeup room (if any) or the worship room. Because of space constraints, the idols of deities are placed and arrangements for worshiping made in the kitchen in many homes. In such cases, care should be taken not to have the worship corner towards the southeast, or near, above or below the sink or the gas-stove/cylinder.

Having the kitchen in the northeast or the west directions, although termed as generally inauspicious, one should not worry if there are compulsions to make the kitchen in either of the direction only. In these circumstances, the positioning of the slab or especially the gas-stove should be chosen in the corner of the kitchen, which is towards the southeast or east. The northeast corner should be used for keeping water storage vessels to compensate for the negative effects. The northeast corner of the kitchen is best suited for the latter; in fact, it is said that keeping the gas-stove or fire-source there leads to counteract the harmful effects in terms of the natural energy currents, because fire and water have mutually opposing properties. The arrangement of cooking should be such that the gas stove (or heater etc) should not be below a window or in front of a door or outlet – this, apart from the Vastu guidelines, is essential in order to prevent the mixing of dust or pollutants in food. The person who is cooking should not face the door(s); further, as per the Chinese beliefs, he or she should also not have the back towards the door. Care should be taken that no one is able to see the kitchen, especially the cooking-process, from outside.

The gas-stove or burner should not be placed next to the sink or refrigerator; it should not lie right in front of the water storage vessels in the kitchen. These should be placed at a distance of about 3 to 4 inches from the wall but should not be kept in the middle of the kitchen. In case of a gas-stove, care should be taken to keep the gas-cylinders well protected from heat and fire. The knob should be properly closed while not in use. If the gas stove is placed in the southeast corner, its burner should be kept on the eastern side of this corner and the cylinder (in use) in the western side. If there are more than one gas-stoves or burners, the extra ones may be kept in the south of this main corner. Extra cylinders, if any, may be kept in the southwest direction.

In case the kitchen is placed in the northwest direction, the gas cylinder in use should be kept in the middle of the western corner. As said earlier, the cooked food gains maximum benefits of natural energy fields if the cook faces the east while cooking. The second choice prescribed in Vastu Shastra is that of facing the south for good effects. Chinese scriptures on *Feng Shui* give significant importance to the cooking appliances – such as the burners, heater, gas-stove, cooker, etc. Food grains are supposed to be the sign of good omen there. The disorder (of *Feng Shui*) in the kitchen is believed to be harmful for the health and prosperity of the head of the family.

The internal arrangements inside the kitchen also play important role in terms of *vāstu* or *Feng Shui* effects. Positions of the basin for washing hands, sink for cleaning the utensils, tap, drinking and cooking water containers, electrical appliances, milk, curd etc should also be optimized according the science of *vāstu*, taking into account the practical constraints. As a broad guideline, it should be remembered that the elements of mutually opposite or conflicting nature (e.g. fire and water, or those

naturally having or expanding heat and those being cold, etc) should not be kept together or facing each other. For example, water container should not be kept in front of, below, adjacent or above the source of fire (gas-stove, heater etc). The fixings of racks, exhaust fans etc, should also be adjusted accordingly. In fact, all these should be taken into account while designing the house so that the positioning of ventilators, windows, doors, kitchen platforms, sink, taps etc does not pose any problem in making the internal arrangements as laid down by the *Vāstu-Shastra* experts.

The washbasin, sink, bathroom or laundry-section should not be in the southeast direction; neither should be adjacent to that corner of the kitchen. This direction, as stated earlier, happens to be the principal axis of the natural subtle field of fire. In such cases, the mutually incompatible characteristics of fire and water disturb the peace in the house and enhance the chances of imbalance, clashes and quarrels in the house. If the kitchen is in the southeast direction, the water-related utilities could be placed appropriately (e.g. sink inside and washbasin etc outside at a distance) in the northeastward region, but not exactly in the northeast corner. These should preferably be more towards the east; these may be positioned in the northward direction as well. If the kitchen lies in the northwest or west direction then the sink and water-tap etc should be placed in the western corner of the kitchen.

The pipelines or other arrangements for outlet of water from the sink in the kitchen should be so constructed that the water flows out towards the south, west or southwest direction. The water storage tanks (on the terrace of the building or the small ones inside the kitchen), if any, could be made in the northeast. The water-container in the kitchen should also be placed in this corner of the kitchen ideally; the second best choice for it as per

Vastu principles would be the side or corner of the kitchen towards the north.

The rack or cupboard for keeping utensils inside the kitchen should ideally be placed along the walls in the south or the west. These could be anywhere except the walls in the east or north, as doing so is supposed to attract untoward effects in terms of *vāstu*. Care should be taken not to fix or place them above the gas-stove or other fire-sources, as this would be inconvenient and risky in practice. Milk, curd etc should preferably be kept in the north-east corner of the kitchen. The facilities like refrigerator should be kept in the south, north, southeast, west, or northwest corners. Northeast and southwest corners should be avoided, because, if kept in these corners the electrical and thermal machines would require frequent repairs. If it is a must to keep them in either of these two directions, they should be kept at least 2-3 ft away from the walls. Microwave oven, mixer etc could be best kept somewhere between the south and southeast directions.

Grinding stone, broomstick etc should be kept in the southwest corner; the northeast corner is prohibited for such things. The containers of grocery should be kept in the northwest direction; nothing empty should ever be kept in this direction. Second choice could be the southwest direction. The region between the northeast and the southeast is also described to be good for grocery storage. As per the Vastu guidelines for arrangement of other utilities inside the kitchen, the heavier ones should be arranged towards the west or south and the lighter ones be placed somewhere in the east or north side.

The Vastu teachings cited in earlier chapters specified that having the kitchen-windows in the east and the north directions amounts to healthy effects of sunlight and fresh breeze; this design would also satisfy Vastu principles. As per the latter,

having the entrance door of the kitchen in the south direction is inauspicious – people in the house would face tussles and tensions. There should not even be a window in this direction; may be a small ventilator could be made if it is a must; the best place for ventilators is towards the northeast. Having proper exhaust facility is necessary for the kitchens where firewood or kerosene is used as fuel or where there is no cross-ventilation; the best directions for fixing the exhaust fan are east and north.

Having the floor-level of kitchen above the other rooms is beneficial with respect to *vāstu* effects. According to Vastu Shastra, the flooring of the rooms placed in the southeast, south, west, northwest or southwest should never be below that of the other rooms. It is practically the best to have all rooms at the same level. As for any other room, the downward slope (if required for water-exit) of the floor in the kitchen should be towards the east or north but never towards the west or south. The color of the walls and floor also matters. Light blue, gray or brown is supposed to be good for the kitchen while red and yellow are not.

The description of the internal design of the kitchen presented above should also give broad idea about the best directions for placing the furniture / furnishings commonly used in other rooms. Most important thing to be noted here is that the rooms should not be cluttered with unnecessary furniture, decorative pieces etc. There should be proper ventilation and availability of fresh air and sunlight. The internal settings of each room should be such that the mind gets naturally attuned according to the purpose of the particular room. For example, the living room should induce feelings of cooperation and sociability; entry in the study room should make the mind alert and energetic; the atmosphere in the kitchen and dining room should induce appetite; bedroom should give a feeling of relaxation and tranquility, etc. In the next chapter we shall look at Vastu principles for the bedroom(s) in detail.

Vastu Guidelines on Bedrooms

Scholarly king Bhojdev remarks the importance of the Vastu principles in the first chapter of his historic treatise “Samarangana Sutradhar” as –

*Sukhaṁdhanāni ṛiddhiścha Santatiḥ Sarvadā Nṛaṇām |
Priyāṣyeṣām Tu Sansiddhayai Sarvaṁ Syāchchhubhalakṣaṇam | |
Yachcha Nindita Lakṣmātra Tadeteṣām Vighatakrat |
Ataḥ Sarvamupadeyaṁ Yad Bhavechchhubhalakṣaṇam | |*

Meaning: The house complying with the Vastu specifications would bring happiness, prosperity and health to the owner and his family residing in it; the family will be blessed with noble-souled children who will brighten the name of their parents. The house designed against Vastu principles might, however, prove to be the reverse – that is, may bring misery, poverty, ill health, inharmony and other negative effects.

Some other scriptures also cite:

Śāstramānen Yo Ramyo Sa Ramyo Nānya Eva Hi |

Meaning: Any creation or construction, howsoever outwardly beautiful it may be, is complete and fulfilling only when it is in accordance with the laws and guidelines of the concerned Shastras (Vedic scriptures).

As such all the rooms in the house are important for the occupants, however, like the kitchen, the bedroom attains special significance for them. Whether it is a palatial mansion or a big

or small flat, the bedroom happens to be the only place where one relaxes and sleeps for a few hours after the hectic, stressful or busy schedule of the day. In most cases, one spends about one-third of the whole day in taking rest or sleeping here. If we consider the active age of a person to be around 70 years on an average, and let his average hours of sleep/rest per day to be about 7 to 8 hours, we find that we would have spent about 23 to 24 years of our active life span in the bedroom!

Sound sleep and proper rest is important for sound health. It is therefore of obvious priority that our bedrooms bear a soothing ambience where we could relax and sleep without disturbance and irritation. Location of the bedroom relative to the other room(s) and with respect to the geo-magnetic effects and natural energy fields is therefore very important. Vastu plays a key role in optimizing its position and design in our homes.

As per the Vastu Shastra, South and West are supposed to be the suitable directions for construction of the bedroom. Of these, South is said to be the best. Maharshi Vashishtha's guidelines in this regard, as quoted in the "Vastu Ratnawali", are –

Aindrāyām Snānagraham Kāryamāgneyām Pachanālayaḥ |
Yāmyāyām Śāyanam Veśma Nairatyām Śāstramandiram | |

Maharshi Kashyap also states the same in an independent context,

Prāchyaṁ Diśi Snānagrahamāgneyām Pachanālayaḥ |
Śāyanam Yāmyadigbhāge Nairatyām Śāstramandiram | |

Both the *shlokas* mean – Bathroom should be placed in the East, Kitchen in the Southeast. Bedroom should be located in the Yamyā (South) direction and weaponry (security-related storage and safe) in the Southwest.

“Muhurtamartand” and “Muhurta Chintamani” also specify South as the best direction for construction of the bedrooms. The 150th Shloka of the “Vrahadvastumala” also says –

*Pūrvasyām Śrigrāham Proktamāgneyyām Syānmahānasam |
Śayanam Dakṣiṇasyām Ca Nairātyāmāyudhāśrayam | |*

Meaning: Wealth should be safeguarded in the eastern corner of the house. Southeast direction is best for the construction of the kitchen, south for the bedrooms and southwest for the weaponry.

The 154th Shloka of the same scripture indicates another possible direction for the master bedroom of the house as somewhere in the Northwestern side of the house – “Kāmopabhogaśamanam Vāyavyottarayorgrāham” | (The room for amour of the husband and wife owning the house, should be somewhere between the Northwest and the North directions).

Because of being the most private part in the house, bedroom is also referred as “*antahpur*” in the scriptures. It should obviously be away from the main entrance of the house to prevent disturbances by the visitors.

Depending upon the size of the family, more than one bedroom might also be required in some houses. In such cases, the scriptural guidelines on Vastu suggest – bedrooms could be (in the order of suitability) in the South and Southwest directions. Apart from these, if necessary, the portions between the West and Southwest or, with lesser positive effects, in-between West and Northwest, or Northwest and North could also be selected for this purpose. If only two bedrooms are required, the best combination would be one in the South and the other in the Northwest. The directions East, North, Southeast and Northeast are said to be unsuitable for the construction of a bedroom.

If needed, the house could have the following arrangements: the master bedroom in the South or Southwest corner of the house; the bedroom for the youngsters or the children should in the east or north of this room; the bedroom for grownup girls in the family in the Northwest. For the newly married younger couples, it could be in-between the North and the Northwest; and towards the North (or Northwest, if there is free space available) for the guests.

If it is feasible, the bedrooms could be designed (successively) in the L-shaped portion around the southwest (from Southwest up to Northwest and from Southwest up to just before Southeast).

Some experts of Vastu have analyzed the effects of sleeping in different directions upon people of different age groups and mentality vis-à-vis the precepts of the Vedic Scriptures.

The summary of their recommendations on the positive or negative effects found in general is as follows:

1. Bedroom in the Northeast (*Ishana*) Direction: This is supposed to be against the principles of Vastu. Having bedroom in this direction is not suitable because, as the name suggests (*Isha* = God; *Ishana* = place of God), this direction is most suited for the worship-, prayer- and meditation room. If the master bedroom happens to be in this corner and is being used by the head of the family, he/she might suffer physical and mental problems and often face economic constraints. If it is a must (due to a readymade or rented house, for instance) to have a bedroom in this direction, it should be used for the younger members (especially the school or college going children) of the family. The bed should be placed in the South of this room and care should be taken that the head lies in the South or the East.

2. Bedroom in the East: If used for a continuous stretch of time, especially by the elders in the family, it would cause or augment ill health and fluctuating moods. If it is a must to have a bedroom here, it may be arranged for the guests or converted into a study-cum-bedroom for the children who should do their studies in the Northeast corner.

3. Bedroom in the Southeast (*Agneya*) Direction: This being the Natural direction of the (thermal) energy field of *Agni* (fire), sleeping here would disturb the mental cool of the head of the family. He/she would feel excessive irritation and might become short-tempered in general. This in turn would upset peace in the family ambience and add to the mental tension and might lead to insomnia. As discussed earlier, this corner is most suitable for having a kitchen or a fireplace. However, if it is unavoidable, one might have a bedroom here with a partition so that one portion could be used as a storeroom or kitchen. If even that be not feasible, then this bedroom should be used by the young girls in the family provided they are not short-tempered; the energy of *Agni* will help them remain energetic and active in general.

4. Bedroom in the South: This is supposed to be the best choice. The geomagnetic effects are most soothing here for mental and bodily relaxation. One gets good sleep here and regains energy and freshness for the next day. This way, his/her productivity and mental peace and creativity also increase. Thus, having the master bedroom in this direction generally results in happiness and prosperity for the family.

5. Bedroom in the Southwest (*Nairatyā*) Direction: This is also found to bring auspicious effects like the South direction, if the master bedroom is located here. For best results, the bed should be placed towards the South.

6. Bedroom in the West: This could also be a good choice after South or Southwest while taking care that the slope (if any) of its roof is inclined towards Southeast or some other direction but not towards the West. Having youngsters' or children's bedroom in this direction bestows more beneficial effects upon them.

7. Bedroom in the Northwest (*Vayavya*) Direction: This is supposed to be the best if guest's bedroom is placed here. It also is generally good for the girls in the family. However, for others, especially the elders, sleeping here would generally cause mental agitation and irritation and hence would result in bad health and/or quarrels. The negative effects would be most prominent upon the head of the family, if it happens to be the master bedroom used by them; in that case, one of them might also have to travel unnecessarily.

8. Bedroom in the North: This is prohibited according to the strict rules of Vastu. This direction is supposed to be that of Kuber (the treasurer of heavens or the Lord of wealth). This direction is therefore best suited for storing the wealth or valuables. Using this as the master bedroom harms the prosperous growth of the family and causes economic decline, which naturally results in mental tension and associated health problems.... If necessary, arrangements could be made to have the bedroom somewhere between the North and the Northwest corner instead of North. Having the bedroom between the North and Northwest for the younger couples (especially the newly married ones) in the family is supposed to be auspicious for them.



Concluding Reminder

This small book of practical teachings on Vastu has dealt with the major *vāstu* aspects of house architecture and that of different rooms – especially with respect to the directions and type of construction, their relative position in the house and the shape and location of the plot – giving practical guidance, wherever possible. The worship room, kitchen and the bedroom(s) are covered in greater details, as the *vāstu* effects in these three have direct impact on the subtle body as well as the physical well being; these three are also given prime importance in Vastu Shastra.

We conclude with a reminder that – we can enjoy maximum support and benefit of the natural forces and energy fields by following the guidelines and disciplines of Vastu Shastra. However, even if the architect and the internal design of the house are against the Vastu principles and there is no scope for modification, one need not panic. Creating auspicious environment through noble conduct and spiritual *sādhanās* – especially *Gāyatrī Anuṣṭhans* - annul all kinds of negative impacts.

Notes on Sanskrit Terms:

- **Deva Pujāna:** The ritual of worshiping God.
- **Iṣṭa devatā:** Divine manifestation that is the focus of one's devotion.
- **Pancha Tatvas:** The five basic elements of the gross manifestation of Nature. Namely, *prithvī* – source of all material existence is solid or semi-liquid and gel forms; *jala* – source of material existence in liquid and fluidic forms; *vāyū* – source of air and gaseous states of matter; *agni* – source of fire and all forms of energies and light; and *ākāśa* – the subliminal etheric expansion and source and foundational basis of existence and manifestation of mental and emotional expressions.
- **Bali-vaiśva agnihotra** is a type of *agnihotra* (fire ritual) in which five offerings of *ghee* (clarified butter, preferably prepared from cow's milk) and cooked food are sacrificed in the fire (lit on dry cow-dung cake) along with chanting of special mantras, before the people in the house eat.
- **Gāyatrī Anuṣṭhāna:** Devout endeavors of Gayatri Mantra *japa* and meditation along with ascetic disciplines of fasting, chastity, etc, aimed at noble spiritual purposes. Twenty-four thousands/One Hundred Twenty-five Thousands *japa* are completed in specified period of time, viz., usually, nine days/forty days.

