

Introduction to Vastu Shastra, by Ramya Krishnamurthy, NCGR Journal Fall 2022

Jyotish or Vedic astrology translates to the science of light, while Vaastu is known as the ancient Indian science of living. The root Vas – means to reside. Vastu refers to the dwelling of humans and Gods - It is similar to Feng Shui, in the respect that it provides guidelines for the placement of architectural structures and the objects within. In both the systems the focus is on bringing harmony between the dwelling and your innate energy. Additionally, the ancient tradition of Vastu can be used with or without astrological charts.

In ancient India while constructing a house it was not only important to follow architectural rules for the building of the structure but it was also important to ensure that the living spirit of the house also known as the Vastu Purusha was nourished and would bring happiness to the inhabitants of the structure. In this ancient science, the building is considered a living organism.

This science is applied even today in many dwellings in India and hence it's a thriving area of learning in the construction business. Vastu is visible in all the ancient temple architecture of India - for example the Meenakshi Temple of Madurai, a monumental example of Vastu at its finest. It has also been applied to entire cities such as Jaipur, India. The city of Jaipur India was established in 1727 as the capital of the state of Rajasthan. The Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, was a passionate astronomer, mathematician and scientist. As the first "planned" city in India all the tiny details including the manuscript scrawled above each shop was planned beforehand. [1] The city is very popular tourist destination in India and a treasure trove for students of Vastu.

In this world, whether it be man or animal or plant or mineral, all are made from the five basic elements. These consist of the earth, the water, the fire, the wind and the sky (or spirit or ether). When the five elements are balanced and placed at proper areas of our building, we become one with nature and perhaps even one with God.

The mythology of Vastu Mandala and Vastu Purusha

The Vastu mandala depicts a grid with equally divided squares (they come in different sizes), often with a courtyard (earth) in the center and the image of a man superimposed upon it. The different directions of the structure were ruled by different deities, with different significations which governed the flow of energy.

FIGURE 1

It is said that Brahma as the father of creation, wanted to create an ideal man and that is how he created Vastu Purusha. Since the Purusha was not an ordinary man, he grew bigger with his powers and as he grew, so did his hunger. He ate everything in sight which alarmed the gods and therefore a plan had to be devised to control him. The three divine Gods (Trinity) asked the God of eight directions (Ashta Dipakalas), to help trap the man on the ground in a specific position. This is why the image of the man is superimposed on the grid with his head on the northeast and his legs towards the southwest.

Another popular story in the Matsya Purana (Vedic scripture) describes the Vaastu Purusha as having been born from the sweat of the God Shiva. [2] But the result is the same – the

extraordinarily hungry, celestial man starts to eat everything in sight and frightens the gods. Once more he is subdued and tied down to the earth. He is then granted a boon by Shiva, to be the energy that dwells in homes, temples and buildings of all sorts and has the power to possess those who construct them as well as those who live in them. If the Purusha is not appeased prior to laying the foundation stone, he may trouble those who live there. In most Indian homes, prior to construction, it is common to worship the Purusha so that there is no delay or trouble during the construction and the dwelling is assured to be peaceful and prosperous for its inhabitants.

Since the Vastu Purusha was defeated by several deities mounted in different positions each sector of the grid has a different ruling deity from which different energies emanate. This in itself can be an area of study and provide deep meaning to different corners of the structure.

Basic Vastu considerations for construction of homes

Here are some basic principles outlined for those new to this topic. The house should have plenty of cross ventilation along with natural sunlight. Bathrooms should never be constructed in the Northeast or the Southwest corners of a house or room. The rooms should be very well lit and clean. The corners of the room should also be the same. It was usual in ancient times to have an empty space or courtyard in the center of the house. Since this is not feasible today many homes try to keep the center clear of heavy furniture.

Heavy furniture is usually relegated to the southwest direction of a room. Stairs in this direction is also considered to be good. Water features like a water fountain, aquarium, potted plants etc. are usually avoided in the bedroom.

In general, the north and east directions are considered to be auspicious and hence important to keep clean and well lit. The main entrance to a home is considered the doorway for harnessing the right sort of energy force. Hence the main doorway should be bigger and more substantial than the other doors in the house. Teakwood was preferred for the main entrance. It was recommended to keep the entrance well-lit so that it would be bright and invite good energy. The door should ideally open inward, in a smooth fashion without being noisy. In the absence of a full consultation, or shortcut to locating the main door is to have it facing the north, east or in the northeast direction. The main door should be constructed such that, when you step out - you would face the north, east or northeast direction. In the next paragraph we will deal with the complexities of the main entrance.

The generic rules stated above are applicable for anyone and any space, be it office, home, etc. However, as we get more in depth into the subject, as with anything else its best to consult a reputable Vastu practitioner so as to get the full benefits of this science. Vastu should not be treated as a quick fix for issues or as a self-prescribed medication as it can also have negative effects if done improperly. We will explore some of the complexities of applying astrology along with Vastu below.

Basic Astrology Considerations for applying Vastu

While purchasing a house, one of the biggest considerations is the direction of the main entrance to the home. Based on the buyer's moon sign, different directions are considered to be auspicious. Indians will not purchase a house which has an entrance incompatible with their moon sign. The (moon) signs and the corresponding compatible directions are given below:

Aries - South and East

Taurus - South and West

Gemini - South and West

Cancer - South and West

Leo – North and West

Virgo – North and West

Libra – North and West

Scorpio – North and East

Sagittarius – North and East

Capricorn – North and East

Aquarius – South and East

Pisces – South and East

Planets also have directions that they rule along with a Vastu Lordship. Please refer to table 1:

Directions	Planetary Lord	Vastu Lord
North	Mercury	Kubera – God of Wealth
North East	Jupiter	Esha – Supreme God
East	Sun	Indra – King of Heaven
South East	Venus	Agni – God of Fire
South	Mars	Yama – God of Death
Southwest	Rahu	Nirit – Goddess of Demons
West	Saturn	Varuna – God of Oceans
North West	Moon	Vayu – God of Wind

Table 1

Let's take an example of a person with a Leo moon sign. The directions that are compatible for Leo are North and West. We can also incorporate the sign ruler indicated for Leo – which in this case, is the Sun, the ruler of Leo. The direction compatible for the sun is East. Applying both the principles, the North, West and East directions are all compatible for this person. So automatically homes with the main entrance facing the North, West or East would be chosen for a residence, while homes with entrances facing the South would be rejected.

However just like the several complexities of reading a natal chart we can layer on more considerations. For example, in addition, if the person has planets that are benefic located in the moon sign, those can also factor into calculating the compatible Astro direction. As you can see this can get quite complicated which is why you would need an expert in astrology as well as Vastu.

Now in a typical situation, if we assume there are two people purchasing a home, we need to consider both of their charts and the Astro direction chosen should be compatible for both parties. Let's take a simple example of two people, one with a Pisces moon sign and another with a Gemini moon sign. In this case, if we refer back to the compatible directions, the southern direction is common for both signs. As explained earlier in a detailed reading, we would consider other factors such as the planets located in these houses as well as rulership of the moon sign to determine an entrance that is compatible for both parties. This is probably one of the most common and important consultations that is done prior to house hunting. Just based on the direction of the entrance, many homes are automatically rejected, no matter how desirable it may be. Many home buyers will take this basic rule into consideration and chose to layer on more Vastu rules within the home if they are able to. In the case of a brand-new construction where the builder is building to your criteria, a Vastu consultant would be brought in, along with an architect to plan every single room and placement to the best advantage of the owner(s) of the property. These days it is common in India for architects to also study Vastu because their clients demand it. So either the architect will undergo basic Vastu training, or hire a Vastu specialist for their projects. Its common to find Sales brochures for new homes touting the best Vastu consultants, and application of Vastu in the home construction.

Ideal locations for various rooms

Listed below are some ideal locations prescribed by the texts. These are particularly applicable, if a house were to be constructed from ground up, utilizing the principles of Vastu. For homes that are pre-existing, the buyers will have to pick what is most important for them (usually the entrance), and relegate the rest to 'nice to have' – and perform a spiritual practice (puja) to appease the deity for the "incompatibilities" in the home.

1. Meditation or spiritual room- most Indian homes designate a section of room or an entire room for this purpose. Spiritual pursuits are considered to be very important and the Northeast part of a home is considered to be perfect for meditation, yoga and other spiritual activities. Facing the east or the northeast while meditating is considered to be very good. In many homes if the northeast part cannot be designated for this purpose, a painting of a God, or something spiritual in nature is placed here in what is known as the Eshan corner. Suitable colors are white and yellow.
2. Living room- this room should face east, north or northeast. Northwest is also an option. Heavy furniture is to be kept in the West or Southwest direction, to block negative energies. The Southwest direction, ruled by Rahu, has an energy that is obsessive in nature. This is why, we tried to block the energy flowing from that direction. For example, a television located on the southwest corner of the living room will have the tendency to remain on all the time, due to the obsessive nature of Rahu and its energies

there. The North and East areas of the room should be lighter and open to allow for circulation of positive energy.

3. Bedroom- ideally the bedroom should be located in the southwest direction and the bed placed in the southwest corner. Avoid water features in the bedroom to minimize emotional disruption. Attached bathrooms should never be constructed in the North east or South West corner of the bedroom (or any room).
4. Kitchen - this room should be located in the southeast corner of the house, as it is ruled by the fire God, Agni. In case there is no kitchen in the southeast corner of the house, this area can be illuminated by candles or lamps which bring in the positive fire element into the home.
5. Courtyard - in the ancient days, a courtyard would be located in the center of the house. The center of the house is considered to be the cosmic center of the home and the most powerful zone of the house. This area is said to radiate the maximum energy and was kept open and clear for the energy to circulate. In ancient times (but still a common feature in new homes), the holy basil would be grown in the center of the courtyard as a method to purify the energy emanating from the center. These days, since houses are not constructed with courtyards, it's very important to keep the center of the house clutter free, and open to circulation.
6. Home office- this can be located in the northern direction of the house which is traditionally reserved for the treasury. Desks should not be placed against the wall but rather 3 to 6 inches away from the wall. For those in the pursuit of knowledge (students) – its preferable to sit facing East (or North) - the flow of knowledge will be greatly facilitated.

Applying Basic Vastu Remedies

As seen above, a full Vastu consultation along with the astrology of the natal chart can be quite complicated. However, there are some easy ways to apply Vastu in your life by combining your natal chart and the directions provided in Table 1. This method can be applied to either Western or Vedic charts.

Let's consider an example of a person undergoing a harsh Mars aspect. What could we do by using Vastu, to improve or ameliorate the condition of this Mars? By looking at the table we can see that Mars rules the southern direction. We can look towards the southern room in the house and check the condition of that room, to ensure that it is well lit, clean and well ventilated. We can incorporate interior design in the room utilizing things that signify Mars. An example might be the use of the color red, decorations that include sharp objects , lighting a candle etc. These things can be done to appease the planet Mars, and hence reduce the negative effect associated with this planet. The similar vein of thought can be applied to a single room. For example, if the person who is struggling with Mars issues, works from home and has problems with their boss- this person could take a hard look at their home office. Within the home office, they could locate the southern corner of the room, and apply the basic principles here. Meaning, ensure that the southern corner is clean, well lit, with a good flow of air and energy.

Here's another example, to illustrate how these principles can be applied with a basic understanding of astrology, and Vastu. A person having relationship issues, due to an afflicted Venus - they should look to the southeast corner of the house, clean out any dead plants, garbage, move out any trash receptacles etc.

Keep in mind that we can combine, the natural significations of the planets, their directions per Vastu, and get creative in coming up with remedies that might help the querent. This can be applied with Western astrology or Vedic astrology. In Vedic astrology the meanings or significations, of the various planets are slightly different than in Western astrology.

Provided below are some of the natural significations of the planets in Vedic astrology.

Sun - authority, power, ego, soul, father, source of life, government, heart, right eye, politics, gold, forests, fortresses.

Moon- mother, women, emotions, family, breasts, lymph nodes, water bodies, nurses, cooks.

Mars- courage, enemies, siblings/brothers, weapons, surgeons, butchers, barbers, dentists, sports competitors, factory workers.

Mercury - duality, LGBT, skin, speech, intelligence, memory, youth, communication.

Jupiter - teacher, spirituality, prosperity, fortune, luck, children, ministers, religion, liver, fat, sweet treats, philosophy, temples, places of worship, legislative places.

Venus - luxury, materialistic gains, love, marriage, beauty, semen, hormones, musicians, transportation, cars and vehicles, artists, fine textiles, dancing, luxury goods.

Saturn- longevity, hard work, senior citizens, disappointments, disharmony, dejection, bones, teeth, melancholy.

Rahu or North node - materialistic gains, dissatisfaction, foreign, traveling, nonconforming, serpents, research, interreligious, Eccentric, Obsessive, diseases not visible to the naked eye.

Ketu or South node - wisdom, detachment, psychic abilities, micro sciences, self-realization, loss.

Conclusion: To summarize, Vastu, like any other discipline, requires deep study and contemplation. To apply it in concert with the natal chart and associated transits requires a certain amount of skill and experience. However, there are many resources on the basics of Vastu, which we can apply in a generic prescriptive manner and tinker with it until we find a positive flow of energy that suits our needs. What is important to realize, is that a building structure can be considered a living organism that nourishes and provides us with life-giving energy. For us to function at our highest calling, it is important to harmonize ourselves with this energy.

