



# Vaastu & Town Planning

## Part One

### The Vaastu way

stages of building construction.

In this "Vaastu & Town Planning" essay of three parts we examine Vaastu guide lines for town planning. The essay shall flow in three concurrent bands.

**Vaastu Guidelines** According to Vaastu the planning of any village or town must first take into account its location, climate and soil. There are guidelines on the shape of towns, on the site selection and the site planning. This will be taken up for further study in the next two parts of this essay.

**Case Studies of Towns** Parallel to the **Vaastu Guidelines**, we shall also take up case studies of towns developed on Vaastu principles or otherwise. Some of the prominent examples of town planning according to Vaastu principles include the ancient Indian cities of Pataliputra and Taxila. Other examples are the city of Jaipur (discussed in this issue) and Chandigarh (discussed in the next issue)

**Mayamatam** The third concurrent study band shall be "According to the Mayamatam..."

This essay draws generously from 'Mayamatam', Vaastu Shastra's most venerated treatise, as well as research papers (published and unpublished) on the subject.

Vaastu is a science of common understanding based on experience and experimentation wherein both the theoretical and the practical aspects of knowledge are embodied together with instinctive problem solving.

Unfortunately, the knowledge of Vaastu has generally been a jealously guarded secret with the result that today it is shrouded in a veil of mystery and its understanding is invariably fragmentary with mere emphasis on the spatial orientation and organization of the built form. The **Vaastu Way** series aims to broaden the understanding of the fundamental principles of Vaastu Shastra and to familiarize the reader with the blue print that it provides for a design system for all built space and also the elaborate detail guidelines for the various

Herein we shall be studying relevant text and diagrams directly from Mayamatam, Vaastu Shastra's most respected treatise.

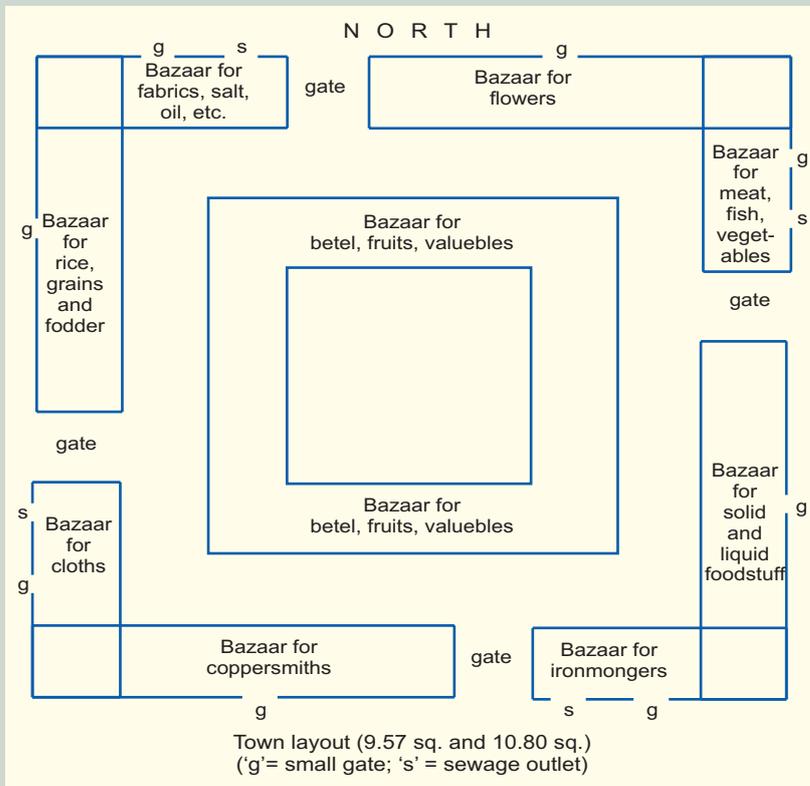
### Vaastu Guidelines - Vaastu Purusha Mandala

Bruno Dagens in his famous introduction to his English translation of the Mayamatam says:- "The different parts of an assembly going to make up a complex edifice or group of edifices or a settlement, are positioned with reference to a regular diagram drawn at the time of the laying out. Each of the squares (padas) is attributed to a protecting diety by whose name the square is designated.... There are thirty-two such diagrams, from the single square diagram to the one thousand and twenty-two squares (32 x 32).... All the diagrams may be used for rites as well as for building operations."

While planning the villages and towns the architect must decide beforehand which of the Vaastu Purusha Mandala has the closest approximation depending on the size of the village or town. The architect will also take into consideration the alignment patterns of the main streets the longest of which were to be aligned east and west.

The whole of the Vaastu Purusha Mandala used to be fragmented into 81, 64 or 49 pads or landed parcels. The innermost square or pada was called Brahma. Different classes of human beings occupied different zones or padas. The central square, called Brahmasthana, was

## According to Chapter IX of "MAYAMATAM" Vaastu Shastras most respected treatise:-



### Streets

**Stanza 35:** The street on the internal or the external periphery of all villages is called *Mangalavithi*; a temple or an altar is installed at the center which is called the place of *Brahma*.

**Stanzas 36-39a:** The width of a street is one, two, three, four or five poles but those which traverse (the village) from east to west are six poles (wide) and are called 'main streets'. The street (which encircles) the middle of the village is called *Brahmavithi* and is the 'navel' (of the village). The roads leading to the gates are called *Rajavithi* and those which flank them are the alleys. It is said that all these streets are called 'paved (streets)' but the *Mangalavithi* is said to be the 'street for the (temple) chariot'. The streets leading to the secondary gates are called *Naracca*; those going towards the north are called *Ksudra*, *Argali* and *Vamana*.

**Stanza 39b:** the street which encircles a village is called a *Mangalavithi* and that which encircles a town, *Janavithi*; both are designated as 'chariot streets' (*Rathya*) but, according to the ancients, this expression applies to all the other streets too.

### Types Of Settlement

**Stanza 40:** A place where there are only Brahmins is called *Mangala*; that inhabited by princes and merchants is *Pura*, the place inhabited by other people in this world is called *Gram*; the place where ascetics dwell is called *Matha*.

### Names Of Villages

**Stanzas 33b-34:** It is said that there are eight types of villages: *Dandaka*, *Svastika*, *Prastara*, *Prakirnaka*, *Nandyavarta*, *Paraga*, *Padma* And *Sripratisthita*.

### Gates

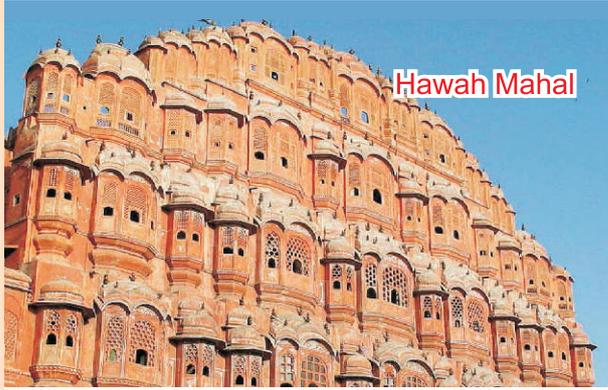
**Stanzas 57-61a:** The gateways are established on the squares of *Bhallata*, *Mahendra*, *Raksasa* and *Puspadanta*; the four sewage outlets are on the



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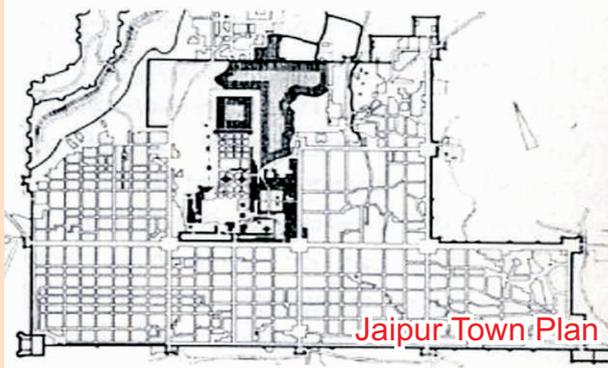
### Jaipur - The Pink City



Hawah Mahal



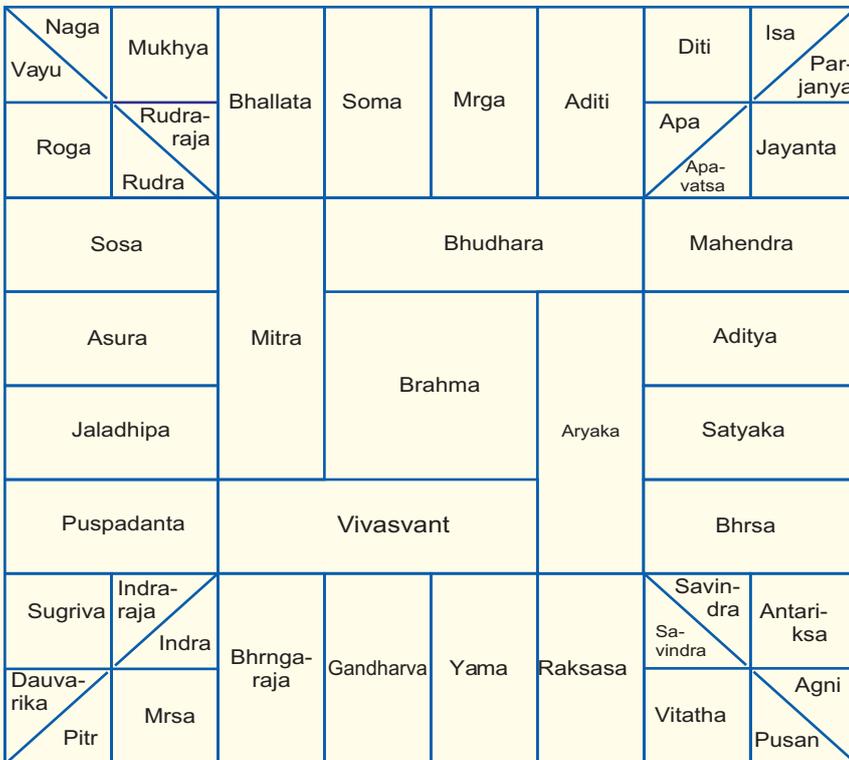
Jaipur City Palace



Jaipur Town Plan

Jaipur, the pink city was founded in 1727 by Maharaja Jai Singh II, a Kachhwaha Rajput, who ruled from 1699-1744. Initially his capital was Amber, which lies at a distance of 11kms from Jaipur. He felt the need of shifting his capital city with the increase in population and growing scarcity of water. Jaipur is the first planned city of India and the King took great interest while designing this city of victory. He consulted several books on architecture and architects before making the lay out of Jaipur. In 1853, when Prince of Wales visited Jaipur, the whole city was painted in Pink color to welcome him.

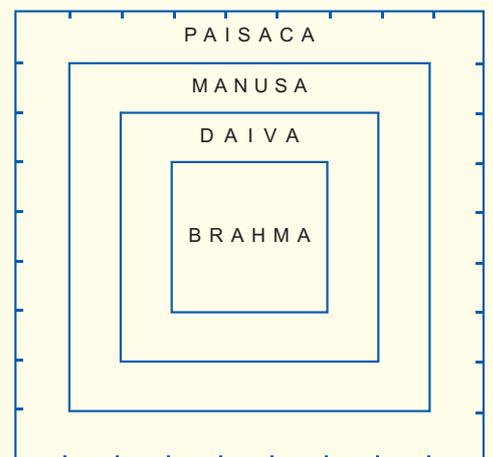
N O R T H



Manduka diagram (7.43-47b)

one and three quarters of that. Every village must be surrounded by a moat and ramparts but the best villages are those located on a river and extending along its south bank.

**Stanzas 61b-63:** In the diagram comprising eighty-one squares and in that way with sixty-four, the *Brahma* zone in the center and the *Daiva*, *Manusa* and *Paisaca* zones must be determined, one after the other. The dwellings of Brahmins should be in the *Daiva* and *Manusa* zones and those of the craftsmen in the *Paisaca* zone.



Zoning of a paramasayin diagram according to *Mayamata* (9.61) and *Manasara* (9.170-174)

squares of *Vitatha*, *Jayanta*, *Sugriva* and *Mukhya*; the eight secondary gates are on the squares of *Bhrsa*, *Pusan*, *Bhrngaraja*, *Dauvarika*, *Sosa*, *Naga*, *Diti* and *Jalada*. The breadth of the door is three, five or seven cubits and their height double, one and a half or



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always occupied by a temple or a palace.

#### **Case Studies of Towns - Jaipur**

Jaipur is considered by many urbanists to be one of the best planned cities. In an era when most of the Rajputs were busy fighting with each other, the Jaipur's kings diplomatically broadened their control sphere maintaining good relations with the Mughals.

After several battles with Marathas, Jai Singh was keen on the security aspect of the city. Due to this reason, he focused on his scientific and cultural interests to make

a brilliant city. Being, a lover of mathematics and science, Jai Singh sought advice from Vidyadhar Bhattacharya, a Brahmin scholar of Bengal, to aid him design the city architecture.

The construction of the city started in 1727. It took around 4 years to complete the major palaces, roads and square. The city was divided into nine blocks, out of which two consist the state buildings and palaces, whereas the remaining seven blocks were allotted to the public. In order to ensure the security, huge fortification walls were made along with seven strong gates.

The city was planned according to Vastu Shastra. The directions of each street and market are east to West and North to South.

The Eastern gate is called Suraj (Sun) Pol, while the Western gate is called Chand (Moon) Pol. There are only three gates facing East, west, and North including the Northern gate (known as Zorawar Singh gate) which faces toward the ancestral capital of Amber.,

Although the present city has expanded from outside of its walls, the original planning was within the walls. The gates used to be closed at sunset and opened at sunrise. Almost all Northern Indian towns of that period presented a chaotic picture of narrow twisting lanes, a confusion of run-down forts, temples, palaces, and temporary shacks that bore no resemblance at all to the principles set out in Hindu architectural manuals which call for strict geometric planning. ■

*Continued in July-09 Newsletter...*