

Location: A Sacred Ground of the Temple

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Abstract

This paper documents the location of temples. Location is as important in architecture as an idol in a GarbhaGruha. Location plays an important role in the vast structure of a temple. Location selection is a fundamental matter.

The Sutradhar Sthapati is known as the main builder of architecture all over India. How do they decide the location of a temple? What are the parameters behind it? Every location has its own rules and regulations for the temple, land selection, other religious rituals and converting abandoned places into auspicious land for a temple. A temple is not just a structure. It is the house of God, where the physical body connects with the Almighty.

Along with location selection, the study of other important dimensions is also essential. It is a bridge connecting with cosmic energy.

Keywords: Location, Temple, Dimensions, Soil, Dimensions, Cosmology (Constellation-Nakshatras).

Introduction

This paper focuses on the selection of the site for the construction of the temple (Deva Prasad) and other factors used in selecting the soil. It discusses in detail what type of soil (soil) is suitable for the architecture and how the soil should be strong enough for the foundation of the architecture. The architectures all over India have been built by Sutradharas and Sthapati. The Sthapati Sutradharas followed the classical knowledge and principles formulated by their ancestors, which can be seen in the architecture. They used many classical texts to analyse the land for the temple, such as *Devatamurtirakarana*, *Diparnav*, *Jayaprucha*, *Aparajitaprachcha*, *Samaranganasutradhar*, etc.

Location literally means the place, the proper dimensions of the land at the place where the temple is to be built, along with the planets, constellations, geometry and Vastu have been analysed here. Each factor is essential. One cannot focus on any one factor and ignore the other factors. In other words, all the dimensions are interdependent.

According to the scriptures, the soil has to be selected based on its colour and smell. Soil has to be tested in seven different ways. The testing of soil (soil) has been discussed in detail in *Aparajitaprachcha*, *Samaranganasutradhar*, *Brihaddasamhita*, etc. (Jugnu & Sharma 2011: 48). According to *Devalaya Chandrika*, *Tantrasamuchaya* and Sutradhar, the best place for a temple is where there is a river or a river bank, a lake, a confluence of rivers, mountains or hills, a forest, an ashram or a *gurukul* and the beauty of the place was considered excellent for making Dev Prasad (Jugnu 2017: 2-4)

Along with various types of analysis (place and soil) in the scriptures, the importance of direction is first. By looking at the direction of the road leading into the plot, after measuring it, the size of the temple was decided, from which direction the direction could be determined and calculated from the constellation.

According to the classical method, in the version in which the temple is to be built, a pit one hand deep is dug and the same soil is removed and filled again. If the soil increases, it is considered the best soil; if it is filled properly, it is considered medium, and if it is missing, it is considered low-quality soil (land).

In further analysis, by digging a pit one hand deep and filling it with water, after counting from 1 to 100, a decision is also made by looking at the water in the pit, if the water is missing, then the lowest land, and if it is slightly less, then the medium and if the water remains the same, then it is considered the best land.

Indian classical texts such as the *Matsya Purana*, the *Vishnu Dharmottara Purana* and the *Brihaddasamhita* prescribe rules for the purity and peace of architectural elements (utapatas). The *Adrutasagara* and the *Krityankalpataru* describe long statements on the utapatas. According to Varahamihira, dig a pit, fill it with water and take 100 steps and observe the result. (personal interview, Jugnu & Sharma 2011: 48, 254-255).

Soil analysis (including bones, hair, teeth, and other impurities)

A pit about a hand deep is dug in the temple ground. And impurities like bones, coal, hair, etc., are taken out of it. A deep pit was dug till the impurities came out. The impurities were taken out till water came out of the ground. All the impurities are taken out by digging it from that depth. After the analysis, the ground and soil are purified with *Panch Dravya* (cow's milk, curd, clarified butter, honey and cow urine)(Figure 1).

Another classical method is soil analysis by colour, smell: - According to the scriptures, on an auspicious day, a pit is dug at the temple site and refilled, then the soil is tested in three ways: colour, smell and taste (Figure 2) (personal interview, Jugnu & Sharma 2011: 48, 254-255).



Fig.1: The Soil is differentiated by its colours, image source by Google



Fig.2: The Panchamrut, five elements for the Sudhi Vidhan of land-soil, image source Google

According to Shilpa Shastra, those places are auspicious for a temple where certain plants and herbs like camphor, coconut, *tilak*, *darbha*, *kadamba*, *arjuna*, *ketaki*, *kush*, *kamala*, etc. are planted.

It is best to make Dev Prasad in a place where water flows from the east direction, where the land is filled with pure water, and the land is calm.

The place and location were decided by looking at the constellation, and the auspicious wedding time was also seen.

After analyzing the soil based on the classical texts and following all kinds of rules and rituals, a huge structure is built at that place. Where the rules are not followed, the place is not suitable for Dev Prasad. After following all the rituals and mathematical calculations, the construction is ready to connect with the universe. And that is possible only through calculations. The simple structure will be transformed into the house of God, where we can exchange our energy. Through the temple, the human body, mind and soul are connected to the Almighty. (personal interview, Jugnu & Sharma 2011: 48, Shastri 1921: 23, 39-40, Ansuya 2017:1, 160-161).

No architecture is built from a single dimension, but by achieving the dimensions of place, soil, planets, stars, constellations, day and night and other elements, a completely pure offering to the deity is created.

Conclusion

The construction of Dev Prasad is possible only by following all the rules and parameters for selecting the place and soil for Dev Prasad construction.

After analyzing the land (soil), the quality of that place is determined based on the conclusion reached. Which soil, place and constellation are auspicious? Vastu, direction and astronomical calculations are also like bread and butter. In fact, architecture can be built only after gaining knowledge of Indian classical texts. Even in modern times, architects who follow sound classical principles are followed.

Directions (directions) play an important role. All the elements work together in the construction activity. In modern times, technology makes the work easier, but the classicality that was there in

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ancient times is described here. From the rules used in ancient times, it is evident that the architects who followed the rules had excellent knowledge of science, astronomy and geography, along with architecture.

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