

## Vāstujñāna in Early Śaiva texts

### Introduction

Here I present a critical edition, translation and discussion of chapters on building theory (*vāstujñāna*) in six texts: the *Bṛhatkālottara*; the *Devyāmata*; the *Kiraṇa*; the *Mohacūrottara*; the *Mayasaṃgraha*; and the *Piṅgalāmata*. An edition of the commentary to the *Mayasaṃgraha*, the *Bhāvacūdāmaṇi* is supplied, without translation.<sup>1</sup> These texts offer the earliest treatments of building practice in Śaiva literature. Their building instruction is in close accord with that of the sixth-century CE *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of *Varāhamihira*, which text I shall use as a reference point.

I present the material here as background information for a forthcoming publication through the École Française d'Extrême-Orient on the chapters treating the features of temples: “Temple Design in Six Early Śaiva Scriptures, Critical Edition and Translation of the *prāsādalakṣaṇa* portions of the *Bṛhatkālottara*, *Devyāmata*, *Kiraṇa*, *Mohacūrottara*, *Mayasaṃgraha* & *Piṅgalāmata*, Collection Indologie 138.

For a full introduction to the material, please that publication. Here follows additional information on *vāstu* arrays.

Different *vāstu* designs are used for different building projects: funeral grounds, temples, cities, towns, villages, palaces, forts, houses, and so forth. Figures 3a-13 show these *vāstus*, with the positions of the deities within them. In each case, I give a reference for the passage on which the drawing is based. Only where the texts offer substantially different accounts do I render more than one diagram for a *vāstu* type.

#### The 5x5 square *vāstu* (figures 3a, 3b, 3c and 3d)

At BK vy 104c-105b and 137-141 a 5x5 *vāstu* is described which houses deities and elements (see figure 3a). The same formation is seen at MY 4 y+5c-y+8b. But, at MY 4 y+10c-y+11b, a different 5x5 *vāstu* is set out, one composed of the planets (see figure 3b). PI: 8.236-247 presents a somewhat different 5x5 *vāstu* containing planets and demons (see figure 3c), and PI 8.248-255b describes a 5x5 *vāstu* of elements and demons (see figure 3d). All except PI 8.236-247 state that the 5x5 *vāstu* is a *citivāstu*, a *vāstu* for a funeral pyre. At PI 8.236-247 the *vāstu*'s purpose is not stated.

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<sup>1</sup> When making verse references, I abbreviate the titles to BK, DM, KI, MC, MY, MYcomm, and PI.

The 8x8 square *vāstu* (figures 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d)

The 8x8 square *vāstu* design is used in the construction of a temple.

Four different 8x8 *vāstu* designs are given:

BK vy 19-100b describes the 8x8 *vāstu* shown at figure 4a.

KI 54.30-37 describes the 8x8 *vāstu* shown at figure 4b. MY comm 4 f29v, line 3-30r, line 11, quotes the KI, giving the same 8x8 *vāstu* design as is seen at the KI.

PI 8.73-86 presents an 8x8 *vāstu*, shown at figure 4c, which is again different from those shown in figures 4a and 4b, with the deities in the outer circuit shifted around 1 cell anticlockwise.

At DM 76.16-24 we see one more variation on the 8x8 *vāstu* design, shown at figure 4d.

The 9x9 square *vāstu* (figures 5a, 5b and 5c)

At KI 54.11-19; BK vy 112; MY comm 4 f29r, line 6-29v, line 3; MC 4.18-28; and PI 9.1-20, all the 9x9 *vāstu* descriptions present the same design, as shown at figure 5a. The description of the 9x9 *vāstu* given at BS 52.42-50 differs from that agreed upon by the above texts. I have drawn it at figure 5b.

At 5c is shown the 9x9 *vāstu* layout given at DM 76.1-16.

The *Kiraṇa*, *Bṛhatkālottara*, *Mayasamgraha* and *Piṅgalāmata* all present the 9x9 *vāstu* as being suited to the construction of a house. Interestingly, the *Mohacūrottara* describes the 9x9 *vāstu* as a design to be employed for temple and house alike. At the *Devyāmata* I can find no discussion as to which *vāstu* is used for which type of construction.

The 10x10 square *vāstu* (figures 6a, 6b and 6c)

At BK vy 101c-104b and vy 113, the 10x10 *vāstu* is recommended for wide use: "One with 100 cells is always considered stable against adversity and productive of success. One should use [that formation] in schools, strongholds, fortresses, watch-towers, towns, villages and hamlets, in temples with reclining or seated icons and in shrines for moveable icons too, in places for *siddhi*, in palaces, in *yāga* and so forth, in ponds, wells, tanks and so on, in woods and groves. In the places listed, and also those not listed, everywhere one should use the 100 cell form, my child." As described at BK vy 113-114b, the 10x10 *vāstu* is identical to the 8x8 one, but with the demons at the outer edge of the *vāstu* drawn in as a part of it (see figure 6a).

At PI 8.143-151 (see figure 6b) and MC 4.244-247b, the 10x10 *vāstu* is recommended for the construction of a city. PI 8.212-235 gives the 10x10

*koṭṭāṭṭālakasaṃyutavāstu* for a fort with a watchtower (see figure 6c). MY comm 4, folio 30r describes the 10x10 *vāstu* for a stronghold, fort, or watchtower.

The 11x11 square *vāstu* (figures 7a and 7b)

PI 8.197-206b describes an 11x11 *vāstu* for a hamlet (*kheṭa*) (see figure 7a). PI 8.206c-211 covers an 11x11 design for a *grāma* (village) (see figure 7b).

The 12x12 square *vāstu* (figure 8)

PI 8.185-206b describes the 12x12 *vāstu* for a town (*pattana*).

The 33x33 square *vāstu* (figures 9a, 9b and 9c)

At BK vy 114c-120b a 33x33 *vāstu* for a district (*deśa*) is described (see figure 9a). Here, a central set of blocks housing the first 45 deities, is surrounded by a space beyond which are 3-by-3 blocks in the cardinal and intermediate directions to house the outer demons.

MY 4 y+2-y+5b presents a differing account of the 33x33 *vāstu* for a *deśa* (see figure 9b). Here, the outer demons are not separated from the central 45 deities by a space.

PI 8.158-167 also lays out the 33x33 *vāstu* for a district. The first 45 deities are positioned as in the *Bṛhatkālottara* and *Mayasaṃgraha*, but there is a more intricate interface between deities 14-45 and the outer demons. For an illustration of this 33 by 33 part *vāstu*, see figure 9c.

The 100x100 square *vāstu* (figure 6b)

PI 8.168-184 gives the 100x100 *vāstu* for a *maṇḍala* (province). The arrangement described agrees with that in the diagram of the 10x10 *vāstu* at figure 6b, with each 1x1 cell in the 10x10 *vāstu* representing 10x10 cells in the 100x100 *vāstu*.

BK vy 120c-121 also presents a 100x100 *vāstu* for a *maṇḍala*, but requires that there be a 9-fold set up, as was seen in the 33x33 *deśa vāstu*. A 9x9 set-up will not work, unless one can imagine the demons arrayed around a frame that is half a cell deep. Perhaps what is meant here is a *daśavāstu*, a 10x10 *vāstu*? This set up would work, but it seems unlikely that it is what was intended, for two reasons: First, the 10x10 *vāstu* is never referred to as a *daśavāstu*. Second, this passage follows straight on from that describing the 33x33 *deśavāstu*.

8-, 16- and 32-cornered *vāstus* (figure 10)

At BK vy 130-131<sup>2</sup>, the procedure for making an 8-cornered *vāstu* is briefly given. 16-, 32-cornered, and round *vāstus* are also indicated. MY 5.90-91 gives fuller specifications for the making of 16- and 32-cornered bases. MY comm 5.91 gives a second method for attaining a 16-cornered base. For a diagram to demonstrate the account at MY 5.90-91 and MYcomm 5.90-91, see figure 10. I thank Professor Christopher Minkowski for his interpretation of the second method of obtaining a 16-cornered base.

The *Devyāmata*, at DM 88.4-7b describes a simpler procedure for the making of a base for an 8-cornered temple. Here one uses a *sūtra* the length of the half diagonal to draw a circle around the centre, and determines the position of the corners in the cardinal directions by the intersection of the north-south and east-west lines with that circle.

Having seen the simpler method described in the *Devyāmata*, Professor Christopher Minkowski points out that one must wonder why the other, substantially more labour-intensive, methods were devised. His suggestion is that the more difficult procedure is needed if one is to avoid impinging on the central *marman*.

The round *vāstu* (figures 11a and 11b)

BK, at vy 130-131, states that round *vāstus* are achieved by the repetition of the procedure described for the making of an 8-cornered temple until so many corners are created that a circular shape is marked. At MY 5.94 and DM 88.1-2<sup>3</sup>, more easily

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<sup>2</sup> *koṅārdhāṣṭāṃśatas tyāgāc caturaśraṃ prakalpayet | prākkaṅārdhāṃśaṃ cāṣṭāśraṃ dikṣu nyāsāt prajāyate || evaṃ vai ṣoḍaśāśraṃ tu dvātriṃśāśrāvadhī kramāt | kalpayet kramaśo vatsa yathā vṛttam prajāyate ||* [One commences with a square.] One subtracts a 1/8<sup>th</sup> part from one half diagonal [of that square, producing a length equal to the diagonal less 1/16<sup>th</sup> part]. [At the intersection of arcs with a radius of that length, about the four corners of the square] one establishes 4 [more] corners in the cardinal directions, at a distance [from the centre] of ½ the previous diagonal. Thus an 8-cornered [figure] comes about. Thus, too, from 16 corners to 32 corners in turn. One proceeds by degrees, my dear, until a circular form is reached'.

<sup>3</sup> *ataḥ paraṃ pravakṣyāmi vṛttādīnām tu vartanam | sūtrapātaviśeṣeṇa vṛttasya vartanam śṛṇu || kṣetraṃ susammitam kṛtvā caturaśraṃ samantataḥ | kṣetrakarṇatribhāgena madhyato vṛttam ālikhet ||* 'Next I will recount the shaping of round, etc., [temples]. Hear about the shaping of a round [temple], with a special placement of the *sūtras*. Making the *kṣetra* well, 4-cornered all around, one should draw a circle around the centre with 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the *kṣetra karṇa* [*sūtra*]'.

employed geometrical descriptions for obtaining a base for the construction of a round temple are given, which I have shown at figures 11a and 11b, respectively.

The oblong and oval *vāstu*

DM 88.7c-14<sup>4</sup> describes the preparation of a *caturaśrāyata* (oblong) temple base.

DM 88.15-18b<sup>5</sup> describes that for a *ṛttāyata* (oval) temple base.

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<sup>4</sup> *caturaśrāyataṃ bhadre procyate śṛṇu sāmpratam || yāvad dhastair abhipretaḥ prāsādo vistareṇa tu | vistarasyārdhadīrghas tu caturaśrāyataḥ smṛtaḥ || jīvasūtradvayaṃ bhadre dhruvaṃ kṛtvā vicakṣaṇaḥ | caturaśrāyataṃ tiryag vartayec cātra vittamaḥ || agrataḥ pṛṣṭhataś caiva ubhayapārśvatas tathā | prāsādasyārdhasūtreṇa madhyasūtrāṇi lāñchayet || āyāmasyārdhasūtreṇa madhyasūtrāṇi lāñchayet | vistārād ardhasūtreṇa agrapṛṣṭhaṃ ca lāñchayet || pārśvacihne bahiḥ sūtraṃ sthāpya karṇaṃ prasādhayet | āyāmasyārdhasūtreṇa karṇeṣu matsyakāṃ likhet || matsyābhyāṃ sādhyed rekhāṃ caturdikṣu susammitām | bhittibhāgaṃ parityajya dvitīyām aparāṃ likhet || rekhādvitayamadhyena bhittimārgaḥ prakīrtitaḥ | caturaśrāyataṃ hy evaṃ kṛtvā ṛttāyataṃ likhet ||* ' Now hear as the *Caturaśrāyata* (oblong [temple]) is described, my dear. However many *hastas* may be desired for the temple breadth, the depth of the *Caturaśrāyata* is half the breadth. My dear, here, the wise man surely makes *Caturaśrāyata* extent with double the *jīvasūtra*. At the front and back, and at both sides, one should mark the midline *sūtras* with the half temple *sūtra*. One should mark the midline *sūtras* with the *sūtra* at half the length. One should mark, front and back, with the half *sūtra* from the width. Fixing the *sūtra* at the side mark, outside, one should arrange the corner. One should draw a fish figure at the corners, with a *sūtra* that is half the length. With the 2 fish figures, one should make a line in the 4 cardinal directions. Drawing away from the wall portion, one should draw another, second [line]. The wall course is midway between the two lines. Having thus made the *Caturaśrāyata*, one should make the *Ṛttāyata* (the oval temple)'.

<sup>5</sup> *vistarasyārdhadīrghaṃ tu kṣetraṃ kṛtvā susammitam | madhyarekhādvayaṃ likhya caturaśrāyate śaste || vistarasyārdhasūtraṃ tu saṃgrhya yatnato budhaḥ | āyate madhyasūtre tu sthāpayet sūtraṃ ādarāt || karṇabhāgādhikaṃ kṛtvā pārśve tu kṣetraṃ vartayet | bhittimārgaṃ parityajya ṛttaṃ ca vartayet punaḥ || evaṃ ṛttāyatasyoktaṃ vartanaṃ lakṣaṇānvitam |* ' Making the depth of the *kṣetra* half its breadth, drawing a pair of *rekhās* in the middle in the commended *Caturaśrāyata*, the wise man should take from it the half *sūtra* of the width and carefully establish the *sūtra* on the central *sūtra* in the [*Caturaśr*]āyata. One should make the *kṣetra* a part bigger at the *karṇa* and side, and,

### 3-cornered *vāstus* (figure 12)

BK vy 124-125 describes 3-cornered *vāstus*.

### Half-moon *vāstu* (figure 13)

BK vy 127-129 presents half-moon *vāstus*.

### Other *vāstu* shapes

MC 4.248b-249b condones *kṣetras* of 961 parts (31x31), 1600 parts (40x40) and 1280 parts (40x32?) for palaces and forts.

The PI, at 8.91-138, alludes to, but does not give much in the way of specific directions for, *vāstus* of many shapes according to the shapes of the buildings they serve.

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<i>Mohacūrottara</i>	introduction edition and translation
<i>Mayasaṃgraha</i> and <i>Bhāvacūḍāmaṇi</i>	introduction editions and translation
<i>Piṅgalāmata</i>	introduction edition and translation