

Scriptural Aspect for Selection of the land for Yagya

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Abstract. The process of selecting land for Yagya-related activities is deeply rooted in ancient Indian scriptures that view the Yagya not only as a ritual act but also as a scientific, ecological, and spiritual intervention. This paper investigates the criteria and methodologies described in traditional texts like Smartakunda Samikṣā, Śāradātilaka, and Mandapakuṇḍa Sangraha for assessing the suitability of land for the construction of a Yagya Mandap (ritual altar or pavilion). The study highlights eight primary parameters—ranging from soil texture, fragrance, and taste to slope direction and the presence of impurities—used in ancient times for land evaluation. It also explores the environmental and geographical aspects, including proximity to water bodies and temples, terrain level, and energy flow as guided by the principles of Vāstu and Vedic cosmology. Special emphasis is placed on the role of the cow (Gau) in land sanctification. Scriptures recommend the use of cow horns buried beneath the surface to neutralize śalya (subsurface impurities), while cow dung is applied for its antiseptic and spiritual purifying qualities. These practices underscore the integration of sacred ritual with environmental awareness and bioenergetics. The paper aims to bring to light the holistic approach of ancient Indian traditions in harmonizing land, ritual, and consciousness. It serves as an informative exploration and suggests the consultation of Vedic scholars for practical application in contemporary settings.

Keywords. Yagya, Bhumi, Vastushashtra, Cow, Ancient sciences

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Introduction

Temples and Yagyashala were not only places of worship in India but they also served as research labs for the Rishi (saints). They practiced the effects of Mantra, Yantra, and the utilization of various herbs inside the Yagyashala and temples. Therefore, the materials used for the construction of Yagyashala or the temple were carefully identified and used precisely, and thus so was the land on which the construction took place. Indian scriptures suggest various parameters for land and soil testing before building a Yagyashala, Mandap of Yagyashala for any rituals, temples, or any residential buildings. For the construction of Yagya Mandap or Yagyashala, various subject experts were involved in the study.

Indian scriptures state that “अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदेवतम्। अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभृतां वर” which implies that “यज्ञो वै विष्णुः” yagyo vai vishnuh. It implies that Yagya is Lord Vishnu [1]. Even Vishnu Sahasranama speaks the same, as God Himself is (यज्ञी) yagyi, (यज्ञ) Yagya, (यज्ञपति) yagyapati, (यग्यगुहा) yagyaguhya, (यज्ञकर्ता) yagyakrut, (यज्ञ वाहन) yagyavahan, (यज्वा) yajva, (यज्ञांग) yagyang, (यज्ञसाधन) Yagya sadhana, and यज्ञकृत yagyakrut, Havi (हविः) [2]. In this way, the land on which the Mandap for Yagya is going to be constructed is itself considered as supreme God, and special attention was given to its selection. For the construction of Yagya Mandap, the properties of the space and geology were also considered together, including the flora and fauna of that particular place. According to the scriptures, for the construction of Mandap or Yagyashala, the land should be owned by the Yagya Karta for excellent results; otherwise, there may be some reduction in the outcome of the Yagya. The Yagyashala should be in an area where transportation is easy, there is an ample amount of water, and proper arrangements exist for the stay of the population involved in the Yagya [3]. The site selected for the performance of the Yagya should be level and devoid of vegetation. Any existing grass or Kusha (*Cynodon dactylon*) present on the land must be removed through controlled burning, and the surface should be prepared to achieve a uniform, mirror-like smoothness [3–5]. Land selection for Yagya kund nirman or Yagyashala nirman is of utmost importance as it impacts the outcome generated through the activity of Yagya. Generally, fertile soil has been considered auspicious for Yagya. Performing Yagya in proximity to temples and water bodies is traditionally regarded as an auspicious practice. A possible rationale for this custom may be the higher population density in such areas, thereby allowing a greater number of individuals to benefit from the spiritual and environmental effects of the Yagya

[3]. Ancient Indian scriptures provide specific guidelines regarding the selection and orientation of land for the construction of a Yagya Mandap (sacrificial altar or pavilion), emphasizing its alignment with ritualistic and environmental principles. The selection of land for the construction of a Yagya Mandap is broadly categorized into two primary considerations: first, the geographical location of the site, and second, the inherent qualities and characteristics of the land itself—such as soil texture, the presence of flora and fauna, natural fragrance, and other environmental attributes.

Land Selection Criteria for Yagya Mandap Construction

The selection of an appropriate site for the construction of a Yagya Mandap is broadly classified into two major categories:

Geographical Location of the Land

This includes considerations such as the proximity of the site to temples, rivers, water bodies, or areas of spiritual significance. Locations with higher population density are often preferred to ensure wider participation and greater dissemination of the spiritual and environmental benefits associated with the Yagya. According to Shri M. Ojha

समुद्रगा नदीतीरे संगमे वा शिवालये | आरामे विष्णु गेहे वा देव खातादिसन्निधौ || गृह स्येशा नभागे वा मंडपं रचयेद् छदम् ||

Samudraga naditire sangame va shivalaye. Arame vishnu gehe va devkhatadi sannidhou Grahsyeshaanbhage va mandapam rachyed ghdam.

It implies that according to traditional scriptural guidelines, the Yagyashala (sacrificial pavilion) should ideally be constructed in locations imbued with natural and spiritual significance. These include the seashore, the banks of rivers, or at Sangam—the sacred confluence where two or more rivers meet. Temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, Lord Narayana, or other divine deities (Divya Sthalas) are also considered highly auspicious sites for Yagya performance. Additionally, when the Yagyashala is to be constructed within a residential setting, it is recommended that the Mandap be positioned in the Ishaan (northeast) direction, which is traditionally regarded as the most sacred and energetically favorable quadrant [6, 7].

Environmental and Physical Characteristics of the Land

This involves the assessment of various natural features of the site, including soil quality and texture, the presence and type of flora and fauna, the

natural fragrance or odor of the area, and the general ecological balance. These factors are believed to influence the efficacy and sanctity of the ritual being performed.

In the present study, various parameters outlined in ancient scriptures concerning the environmental and physical characteristics of land suitable for Yagya have been examined. The analysis primarily focuses on eight key parameters as suggested in Smartakunda Samiksha II, while additional references from other traditional texts have also been considered to provide a comprehensive understanding.

Parameters for land selection

The scripture Smartakunda Samiksha II [8] prescribes eight fundamental parameters for the selection and evaluation of land suitable for Yagya. These include: विकारतः (Vikārataḥ – deformities or irregularities), प्रवण (Pravaṇa – Sloping or inclined land), द्रव्यतः (Dravyataḥ – material composition), स्पर्शतः (Sparsātaḥ – tactile quality), रूपतः (Rūpataḥ – visual appearance), रसतः (Rasataḥ – taste), गन्धतः (Gandhataḥ – smell), and शल्यतः च (Śalyataḥ ca – presence of impurities or harmful elements).

विकारतः (Vikārataḥ – deformities or irregularities)

स्फुटिता च सशल्या च बाल्मीकि रोहिणी तथा | दूरतः परिवर्ज्या भूः कर्तुरायुर्धनापहा || स्फुटिता मरणं कुर्याद्दूषरा धननाशिनी | स शल्या क्लेशदा नित्यं विषमा शत्रुभीतिदा || Sfutita ch sashalya ch valamiki rohini tatha Durtah parivryya bhuah krturayurdhnapaha. Sfutita maranam kuryyadushra dhan-nashini. Sa shalya kleshda nityam vishma shatrubhiti-da.

These scriptural guidelines imply that land exhibiting certain negative physical traits—such as surface cracks, the presence of thorns, termite mounds, or infestations by Rohinī (रोहिणी), referring to ants and other ground-burrowing insects capable of reaching the surface—should be deemed unsuitable for the construction of a Yagyashala. Additionally, sites that are isolated from human habitation, deserted, or previously abandoned are considered inauspicious, as they are believed to lead to the deterioration of both health and prosperity. Specifically, cracked land is associated with the decline of health, barren or infertile land is believed to result in financial loss, and land infested with thorns is said to provoke conflict and increase the presence of adversaries. Therefore, such locations are traditionally avoided for the establishment of ritual spaces like the Yagya Mandap [7]. Similar recommendations regarding the selection of suitable land for ritual purposes are also found in

another authoritative text, the Śārādā Tilaka (शारदा तिलक), which further reinforces the traditional criteria outlined in earlier scriptures.[7].

प्रवण (Pravaṇa – Sloping or inclined land)

ईशकोणप्लवा सा च कर्तुः श्रीदा सुनिश्चितम् | पूर्व प्लवा वृद्धिकरी बलदा तुत्तरप्लवा || विद्वेषं मरणं व्याधि कुर्या दग्निप्लवा मही | धर्म-राजप्लवा भुमिर्नित्यम् मृत्युभयप्रदा || गृह क्षय करी सा च भुमिर्या नै-ऋत प्लवा | धनहानि करी पृथ्वी कीर्त्तिदा वरुण प्लवा || वातप्लवा तथा भुमिर्नित्य मुद्गैः कारिणी || Īśakoṇaplavā sā ca kar-tuḥ śrīdā suniścitam. Pūrva plavā vṛddhikarī baladā tu uttaraplavā. Vidveṣam maraṇam vyādhim kuryād agniplavā mahī. Dharmarāja-plavā bhūmir nityam mṛtyubhaya-pradā. Gṛha-kṣaya-karī sā ca bhūmiryā nairṛta-plavā. Dhana-hāni-karī pṛthvī kīrttidā varuṇa-plavā. Vāta-plavā tathā bhūmir nityam ud-vegakāriṇī.

This verse explains the significance of the inclination of the land where the activity of Yagya is going to occur. The direction of the slope indicates the possible outcomes of the Yagya. According to texts: If plavā (slope) is observed towards the north-east (ईशान कोण / Īśāna koṇa), the land is considered highly auspicious, promising prosperity, wealth, and overall well-being to the person who utilizes it. If the slope is towards the east, the land is believed to bring growth and development, while a slope from the north is associated with strength and vitality. In contrast, plavā from the southeast (Agni koṇa) is deemed inauspicious, as it is believed to result in conflict, disease, and even mortality. If the slope is present in the southern direction, the land is considered to induce constant fear of death; the ancient Hindu text suggests that the direction of Dharmarāja is south here, where the term Dharmarāja is considered for the direction only. If the direction of the slope is the southwest (Nairṛta koṇa), it indicates domestic instability and structural decay, making the site unsuitable for residence or ritual use. If plavā is observed from the west (Varuṇa koṇa), it is said to cause financial loss, although in some interpretations, it may simultaneously enhance reputation or public recognition. Finally, plavā from the northwest (Vāyu koṇa) is associated with psychological unrest and persistent anxiety.

द्रव्यतः (Dravyataḥ – presence of flora)

ब्राह्मणी भूः कुशोपेता क्षत्रिया स्याच्छराकुला | कुशकाशाकुला वै-श्या शुद्रा सर्वं तृणाकुला || कुशैः शरैस्तथाकाशैर्दुर्वाभिर्या च सं-भृता | प्रशस्ता भुर्महाबाहो मंडपपादौ विशेषतः || Brāhmaṇī bhūḥ kuśopetā kṣatriyā syāc charākulā | kuśakāśākulā vaiśyā śūdrā sarvatṛṇākulā || kuśaiḥ śaraiś tathā

kāśair durvābhir yā ca samibhṛtā | praśastā bhūr mahābāho maṇḍapapāḍau viśeṣataḥ ||

This verse classifies land based on the dominant types of vegetation present, reflecting a symbolic correlation with the four traditional varṇas (social classes) in Vedic tradition. Land characterized by a dense and soft growth of Kuśa grass (*Eragrostis cynosuroides*) is identified as Brāhmaṇa, signifying purity and suitability for high-level ritual practices. In contrast, land dominated by hard grasses, typically used for making arrows (śara), is associated with the Kṣatriya class, indicating strength and resilience. Land covered uniformly with Kuśa-Kāśa vegetation—such as elephant grass (*Saccharum ravennae*), which is notably not consumed by cattle—is categorized as Vaiśya, symbolizing moderate productivity and commercial utility. Land overrun with a mixture of various grasses is classified as Śūdra, representing a lower ritual purity and reduced suitability for sacred activities.

However, land containing a balanced mixture of Kuśa, Durvā (*Cynodon dactylon*), and other ritualistically significant grasses is considered especially auspicious, particularly for the construction of the foundational elements of a Yagyashālā (ritual pavilion), as it is believed to enhance the efficacy and outcomes of the Yagya.

स्पर्शतः (Sparśataḥ – tactile quality)

शीतस्पर्शो ष्णकाले च बह्वीस्पर्शा हिमागमे | वर्षासु चोभय स्पर्शा सा शुभा परिकीर्त्तिता || *śītasparśo ṣṇakāle ca bahvīsparśā himāgame | varṣāsu cobhaya sparśā sā śubhā parikīrtitā ||*

A piece of land is considered auspicious (*śubhā parikīrtitā*) when it exhibits specific tactile responses to seasonal variations: it should feel cool to the touch during the hot season (*śītasparśo ṣṇakāle*), warm during the onset of winter (*bahvīsparśā himāgame*), and demonstrate both warm and cool sensations during the rainy season (*varṣāsu cobhaya sparśā*).

This verse reflects an early ecological and phenomenological approach to land assessment, where the thermal responsiveness of soil or surface texture is used as a diagnostic criterion. Such sensitivity to natural cycles is viewed in traditional texts as an indicator of balanced elemental composition, favorable energy flow, and environmental harmony, making the land especially suitable for performing sacred rituals such as Yagya.

रूपतः (Rūpataḥ – visual appearance)

श्वेता तु ब्राम्हणी पृथ्वी रक्ता वै क्षत्रिया स्मृता | वैश्या पीता तु विज्ञेया कृष्णा शुद्रा प्रकीर्त्तिता || श्वेतारुणा पीतकृष्णा विप्रदीनां प्रशस्यते | स्थिरोदका द्वा स्निग्धा भूमिः सर्वसुखावहा || *śvetā tu*

brāhmaṇī pṛthvī raktā vai kṣatriyā smṛtā | vaiśyā pītā tu vijñeyā kṛṣṇā śūdrā prakīrtitā || śvetāruṇā pītākṛṣṇā vipradīnāmi praśasyate | sthīrodakā grhā sthṛgdhā bhūmiḥ sarvasukhāvahā ||

This verse explains the category of land and its impact on the Yagya performer. Land is categorized based on its color. White-colored soil (*śvetā pṛthvī*) is considered Brāhmaṇī (suitable for Brahmins), while red soil (*raktā*) is associated with Kṣatriyas (warrior class). Yellow soil (*pītā*) is deemed appropriate for Vaiśyas (merchant or agricultural class), and black soil (*kṛṣṇā*) is designated as Śūdrā (laboring class).

Among these, land that possesses a combination of white, red, yellow, and black hues (*śvetāruṇā pītākṛṣṇā*) is regarded as highly auspicious (*praśasyate*) for Brahmins and ritualistic purposes.

Furthermore, land that contains stable water content (*sthīrodakā*), is firm in structure (*grhā* or possibly *grhītā*), and is smooth or unctuous to the touch (*snigdha* or *sthṛgdhā*) is considered to be universally beneficial, promoting overall well-being and comfort (*sarvasukhāvahā*).

रसतः (Rasataḥ – taste)

ब्राम्हणी घृत गंधा स्यात् क्षत्रिया रस गन्धिनी | वैश्या तित्का च विज्ञेया शुद्रा स्यात् कटुका च या | मधुरा च कषाया च अम्ला च कटुका च या | विप्रादिनां प्रशस्ता भुर्मण्डपादौ विशेषतः || *brāhmaṇī ghr̥ta-gandhā syāt kṣatriyā rasagandhinī | vaiśyā titikā ca vijñeyā śūdrā syāt kaṭukā ca yā || madhurā ca kaṣāyā ca amlā ca kaṭukā ca yā | vipradīnāmi praśastā bhūr maṇḍapapāḍau viśeṣataḥ ||*

It implies that the soil which emits a fragrance similar to ghee (clarified butter) is designated as Brāhmaṇī, indicating purity and suitability for Vedic rituals. Land with a tasteful or flavorful smell (*rasagandhinī*) is associated with the Kṣatriya class. Soil that is bitter in taste (*tiktā*) is categorized as Vaiśyā, while land that is pungent or acrid (*kaṭukā*) is considered Śūdrā, and thus less favorable for sacred use.

However, land that simultaneously exhibits sweetness (*madhurā*), astringency (*kaṣāyā*), sourness (amla), and pungency (*kaṭuka*) is regarded as highly auspicious, especially for Brahmins and for the construction of the Yagya Mandap (ritual altar or pavilion).

This verse presents an early form of sensory-based geochemical assessment, where the organoleptic properties (taste and smell) of the soil are employed to evaluate its ritual suitability. The presence of a complex flavor profile—encompassing multiple rasa (tastes)—is interpreted as a sign of elemental balance and spiritual potency, thus making such land

ideal for hosting religious ceremonies and sacrificial rites.

कश्मीर चंद नामोदा कर्पूरा गुरु गन्धिनी | कमलोत्पल गंधा च जाती चम्पक गन्धिनी || पाटलामल्लिका गंधा नागकेसर गन्धिनी | दधिक्षीराज्य गंधा च मध्वीक्षुरस गन्धिनी || सुगन्धि व्रीहिगंधा च शुभ गंध युता च या | सर्वेषामेव वर्णानां भूमिः साधारणा मता ||
kaśmīra canda nāmodā karpūrā gurugandhinī | kamalotpala gandhā ca jātī campaka gandhinī || pāṭalāmallikāgandhā nāgakesaragandhinī | dadhikṣīrājya gandhā ca madhvīkṣurasa gandhinī || sugandhivrihigandhā ca śubhagandhayutā ca yā | sarveṣāmeva varṇānāmi bhūmiḥ sādharāṇā matā ||

It implies that the land is regarded as universally suitable (*sādharāṇā*) for individuals of all varṇas (social classes), when it possesses a pleasant and auspicious fragrance. Specifically, the soil is said to be ideal if it naturally emits aromas resembling saffron (*kaśmīra*), sandalwood (*canda*), *nāmodā* (an aromatic resin or musk), camphor (*karpūra*), or other heavy, soothing scents (*gurugandhinī*).

Additional favorable fragrances include those similar to lotus and blue lotus (*kamala*, *utpala*), *jātī* (jasmine), *campaka* (magnolia), *pāṭalā* (trumpet flower), *mallikā* (another jasmine variety), *nāgakesara* (cobra saffron), curd, milk, ghee (*dadhikṣīrājya*), sugarcane juice (*madhvīkṣurasa*), and fragrant rice (*sugandhivrihi*).

Such land, enriched with naturally occurring aromatic qualities, is considered universally auspicious and appropriate for all ritual, residential, and agricultural purposes, regardless of caste or occupation.

In *Vāstuśāstra*, Śalya Parikṣā refers to the subsurface examination of land to detect the presence of any hidden or intrusive elements—such as thorns, shards of glass, or other foreign objects—that may cause physical discomfort or negative energetic effects on individuals residing on or performing sacred rituals (Yagya) upon that land. The traditional method of conducting Śalya Parikṣā involves a direct physical assessment, where an individual stands barefoot on the selected plot and observes bodily responses, particularly sensations such as itching or irritation, which are interpreted as indicators of energetic impurity or physical unsuitability of the site.

प्रासादरम्भकाले च गृहादौ च विशेषतः। शल्योद्धारः प्रकर्तव्यो यदिच्छेच्छु ममात्मनः ॥ १ ॥ प्रासादरम्भकाले च यदंग पुरुषः स्पर्शत । वास्तुदेहे दृढं तत्र शल्यं विद्याद्विचक्षणः ॥ २ ॥ कएडूयति शिरः पुंसी शिरः शल्यं समुधरेत् । शल्यं तत्रास्थि विज्ञेयं खन्यमाने करत्रये ॥ ३ ॥ बाहुकएडूनाज्ञेया द्विहस्ते लोह श्रंखला । ऊरुकएडूना द्रुस्त मात्रे कास्यं विनिदर्शत् ॥ ४ ॥

This procedure is traditionally conducted prior to any construction or ritual installation, serving as a diagnostic tool to identify and remove any hidden obstructions or harmful materials—referred to

as śalya—from the subsurface layers of the land. According to *Vāstuśāstra*, the examination involves an individual standing barefoot on the selected plot and sequentially touching various parts of their body, as prescribed, while attentively observing for sensations such as itching or discomfort in specific regions. These physiological responses are interpreted as indicative of disturbances or obstructions beneath the surface, which may affect the efficacy of rituals such as Yagya or the well-being of future occupants.

For instance, itching on the head suggests the presence of a śalya within the upper soil strata (up to 3 feet deep), typically organic or thorn-like material, which must be excavated and cleared before proceeding with construction. Itching on the arms is interpreted as a sign of metallic intrusion, such as buried Iron (Fe) rods or chains, located approximately 2 hastas (roughly 3 feet) below the surface. Likewise, itching around the knees indicates the probable presence of glass or sharp fragments embedded in the soil, which should be removed to prevent negative physical or energetic consequences.

हस्त.....विदेशगमनं तथा ||

If itching is experienced in the hands or palms, it is interpreted as an indication of the presence of bones or skeletal remains (*asthi*) beneath the surface, which must be excavated and removed to ensure ritual purity. Itching in the back of the observer signifies the presence of multiple undesirable or contaminated materials within the land, suggesting that such a plot should be altogether avoided for construction or ritual use.

If the legs exhibit itching, it implies the existence of a śalya approximately 2 hastas (around 3 feet) below the ground. Itching in the underarm region suggests the presence of a large buried stone, located at an approximate depth of 3 hastas. Similarly, itching in the thighs is considered symptomatic of burnt materials, such as ash, charcoal, human or animal hair, or cremated bone fragments, all of which must be carefully removed, as they are considered highly inauspicious.

Moreover, the presence of iron (Fe) within the soil is traditionally associated with inauspicious outcomes, including premature death or extended separation or travel from one's home or family. Thus, such findings during Śalya Parikṣā are taken seriously in determining the ritual and residential suitability of the land.

कांस्यशल्येशल्य मरुत्यातयेत्रः ||

The presence of glass fragments is traditionally associated with a decline in fame or public reputation. Similarly, the discovery of a skeleton or skeletal remains beneath the surface is believed to signal im-

pending illness or death.

If the land contains multiple shalyas (foreign or impure intrusions), it is interpreted as a highly inauspicious sign, sometimes foretelling the possibility of the woman of the household meeting a fate similar to 'sati'—a symbolic reference to extreme personal tragedy or loss. The presence of a śalya within one hasta (approximately 1.5 feet) from the surface is associated with punitive consequences, such as punishment by authorities or loss of livestock and other animal wealth.

A stone buried in the land is considered particularly dangerous, as it is believed to increase the risk of snakebite (sarpadaṁśa). Furthermore, the presence of ash—especially remnants of burned organic matter—is seen as a sign of potential domestic conflict (kleśa), grief, or violence, and is therefore to be treated as a strong disqualifying factor when selecting land for residence or ritual activities.

शल्योद्धारम् ततः रत्न जातयः

Any form of śalya (subsurface impurity or obstruction) must be removed prior to the construction of a Yagyashālā (ritual altar or sacrificial pavilion), to ensure the sanctity and efficacy of the ritual. It is stated that if the land is excavated to a depth of five hastas (approximately 7.5 feet), all latent imperfections or harmful influences associated with śalya are effectively neutralized.

Additionally, ancient texts prescribe the use of certain ritually purifying objects for further spiritual and energetic cleansing of the land. These include the horn of a cow, peacock feathers, a śarīkha (conch shell), and specific precious or semi-precious stones. The placement or ritual installation of these objects on the site is believed to facilitate the purification of the land, making it suitable for sacred activities such as the performance of a Yagya.

Suggestions provided in other scriptures

In addition to the eight primary parameters described for land assessment in Smartakunda Samīkṣā II, various other classical scriptures also provide supplementary methods for identifying and evaluating land for the performance of Yagya or the construction of a Yagyashālā (ritual altar or pavilion).

Slope (plavā) of the land

Similar to the Smartakunda Samīkṣā II, other scriptures also confirm the same outcomes as mentioned in the Smartakunda Samīkṣā II. They agree that one of the most significant criteria is the slope

(plavā) of the land, which is believed to directly influence the outcome and efficacy of the ritual. According to Śāradātilaka [7] and Maṇḍapakunḍasaṅgraha; Maṇḍapakunḍasiddhi, śloka "kha" and "ga" [9], if the slope of the land is oriented toward the northeast (Īśāna koṇa), it is considered highly auspicious and is believed to bring prosperity. A slope toward the east is associated with longevity, and a northern slope is said to yield successful ritual outcomes. Conversely, slopes in other directions—southeast, south, southwest, west, and northwest—are generally regarded as inauspicious, potentially leading to unfavorable results, a notion supported by multiple textual sources.

Percolation Testing

Another critical test recommended in classical texts is the percolation test, which assesses the water absorption capacity of the soil. As prescribed in Kuṇḍakumudī (śloka 4 and 5) [10] and Maṇḍapakunḍasiddhi [11], this method involves excavating a square pit (khaṭṭa) with each side measuring 1 hasta (equivalent to 24 aṅgulas, approximately 45.6 cm). The pit is filled with water in the evening, and the remaining water level is measured the following morning, allowing one to observe the degree of absorption into the subsoil.

In addition, the presence of termites, buried bones, or insects is also considered inauspicious [10]. The underlying rationale appears to be ethical and environmental: since Yagya is based on the principle of ahimsā (non-violence), selecting land inhabited by such organisms may result in inadvertent violence during the construction or performance of the ritual, thereby compromising its spiritual integrity.

Conclusion

The traditional assessment of land, as prescribed in Vedic texts and manuals such as Smartakunda Samīkṣā, Śāradātilaka, and Mandapakunḍa Saṅgraha, offers a comprehensive framework for evaluating the suitability of a site for the construction of a Yagya Mandap. These criteria—spanning environmental, geophysical, energetic, and ritual dimensions—are intended not only to enhance the efficacy of the Yagya but also to ensure maximum benefit for the surrounding community, particularly by selecting land closer to residential areas or water bodies, thereby enabling broader participation and collective upliftment.

The orientation, slope, soil fertility, absence of pollutants, and quietude of the location are emphasized as critical features. East and northeast directions are traditionally regarded as auspicious for the

placement of the Yagya Mandap, in alignment with Vedic cosmology and energy principles. The terrain should be level, free of depressions or obstructions, and capable of supporting the energetic processes associated with Yagya, including the absorption of Parjanya (atmospheric or divine moisture) generated during the ritual, which in turn supports local biodiversity and plant growth.

A unique dimension of these prescriptions is the integration of consciousness science and energy flow theory, where spatial arrangements are not merely physical but are aligned with metaphysical principles of prāṇa (life force) circulation. This reinforces the role of Yagya not only as a ritual act but as a bio-energetic intervention with ecological, psychological, and spiritual impacts.

Importantly, the role of the cow (Gau) in land sanctification and ritual purification is deeply embedded in the Vedic system. Scriptures recommend the burial of a cow's horn beneath the land surface to neutralize negative influences (śalya), symbolizing grounding, auspiciousness, and purification. Similarly, the application of cow dung, considered sacred and antiseptic, is prescribed for coating the ground, thereby preparing the space for spiritual activities by purifying and sanctifying the environment.

While this paper serves an informative and exploratory purpose, it is crucial to acknowledge the depth and nuance of these practices. For actual implementation, especially in the context of sacred rituals like Yagya, it is advisable to consult experienced Vedic scholars, priests, or Yagya practitioners who can interpret these guidelines in alignment with scriptural authority and contemporary context.

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