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## 2. ***Do's & Taboos concerning the 'Configuration' of Built Spaces***

Among the three categories of *do's & taboos*, the one to be discussed in Chapter 2 is the most fundamental, as it concerns the 'configuration' of the built space per se. These *do's & taboos* can be readily found in old texts of both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, many of which, surviving into the present, still exert considerable influence on the architectural practice in the Chinese and the Indian cultural spheres. In general, these *do's & taboos* fall into two groups: those concerning the 'shape', and those concerning the 'proportion'.

The *do's & taboos* of the first group, concerning the 'shape' of built spaces, tell people how to differentiate between the 'auspicious shapes' and the 'inauspicious shapes'. According to these *do's & taboos*, one should always make sure that the site or ground plan of the to-be-built space is in an auspicious shape, thus not in an inauspicious one. An auspicious shape is thought to bring good fortune to the occupants; whereas an inauspicious one is to be blamed for negative effects, or bad luck. It is important to note that, in both the Feng-Shui and the Vāstu-Shāstra traditions, the 'square' is taken to be the most auspicious and ideal shape, and the 'rectangle', which can be seen as an elongated square, is also quite acceptable. Later we will see that most diagrams applied in the practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, and most human spaces found in the Chinese and the Indian architectural traditions, are usually in square/rectangular shapes. On the other hand, a non-square/-rectangular shape is usually seen as inauspicious, such as the triangle, the trapezoid, the L-shape, or any other irregular and odd shape.

However, among these non-square/-rectangular shapes, the 'circle' and 'cross-shape' are the two that should be carefully considered, as they are not necessarily seen as inauspicious in the architectural practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra. Whether they are inauspicious would depend on which type of building they are applied to. On the one hand, it seems that the two shapes are auspicious for the sacred buildings. Cases as such could be found among the stupas and temples which are often built with circular or cross-shaped ground plans in the Chinese and the Indian architectural traditions. On the other hand, according to Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos*, it would be seen as very inauspicious when the ordinary houses are built with circular or cross-shaped ground plans. This is probably because the circle and the cruciform are thought to be "too perfect" and "too holy", and hence they are only suitable for

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the sacred architecture dedicated to the much-revered divine beings, thus not for the buildings occupied by the humble humans.

The *do's & taboos* of the second group, concerning the 'proportion' of built spaces, are focused on the difference between the 'very perfect square' and the 'less perfect rectangle', and on the difference between rectangles with distinct 'width-length ratios'. It is not surprising that the square as the most auspicious and ideal shape also represents the most well proportioned one. In Feng-Shui texts, we can find the *taboo* that informs people not to adopt the very perfect square as the shape for the ground plan of ordinary houses, but a less perfect rectangle is more preferable. In Vāstu-Shāstra texts, more *do's & taboos* concerning the proportion can be found. Compared to the aforementioned Feng-Shui *taboo*, these Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* are much more complicated and detailed. As they prescribe, people of different social classes should adopt different width-length ratios for the site or ground plan of a house, and only people of the highest social class deserve the perfect ratio of the square, that is 1:1. As for those of the lower social classes, a less perfect ratio of a rectangle, such as 1:1<sup>1/8</sup>, 1:1<sup>1/6</sup> or 1:1<sup>1/4</sup>, is accepted as being more suitable.

Obviously, the *do's & taboos* concerning the configuration of built spaces cannot be simply understood and explained from the perspective of the architectural modern functionalism, because the shape and proportion of a built space seem to have little to do with the proper arrangements of rooms, doors, windows, and furniture in this built space. As we know, even on the site or in the ground plan which has an inauspicious shape (e.g. L-shape, triangle, trapezoid, etc.) or a less perfect proportion (e.g. the width-length ratio of 1:2, 1:3, 1:5, etc.), a proper interior space which satisfies all functional requirements can still be created.

In this chapter, therefore, what we should discuss and analyze are the cosmic and social realities that these *do's & taboos* may represent. As we will see later, the so-called auspicious and perfect shapes such as the square and the circle are of great importance in both the Chinese and the Indian cosmology. Also according to these *do's & taboos*, a particular shape or proportion suitable for one type of buildings is not necessarily suitable for another; whether it is suitable often largely depends on 'who' will occupy this building or to 'whom' this building will be dedicated. Surely, these cosmic and social meanings can be properly analyzed in the frame of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* as a 'working space' which is based on the paradigm of 'architecture as a representation of realities'.

## 2.1 ***Do's & Taboos* concerning the 'Configuration' Support Built Spaces to Represent the Cosmic Structure**

### 2.1.1 **Analyzing the *Do's & Taboos* concerning the 'Configuration' in the Frame of the Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross Shorter-cycle Theme**

Given that these *Do's & Taboos* regarding the configuration of built spaces focus mostly on the difference between the auspicious square/rectangle and the inauspicious non-square/-rectangular built spaces, and between the different width-length ratios for quadrilateral built spaces, in this chapter, we may use the architectural shorter-cycle theme of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* as the primary frame of analysis. As we can find in many architectural traditions in different cultures, this architectural theme is worldwide and omnipresent, which finds its expression in all the ideal spatial schemes of territories, cities and dwellings, and underlies a variety of 'four-sided' and 'quincunx' built structures and icons.<sup>1</sup> It is also clear that this architectural theme is based on the 'Anthropomorphic' long-cycle tradition of architectural representations. The spatial structure manifested in this shorter-cycle theme, which refers to the vertical axis, i.e. the *Axis Mundi*, and the two horizontal axes of left-right and front-back, i.e. the *Cosmic Cross*, undoubtedly, is body-based.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mekking 2009, pp. 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

According to the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* theme, we can easily understand why the square is supposed to be the most auspicious shape for the site and ground plan in both the Feng-Shui and the Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions. In a square, the two horizontal axes can be clearly defined to meet the mental construct of the *Cosmic Cross*, and the intersection point of the two horizontal axes highlights the crucial center on which the *Axis Mundi* is conceptualized to be erected (Fig. 1). Besides, as an elongated square, the rectangle with its definable center and horizontal axes is also a shape which enables the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* to be represented in, and therefore, it is also acceptable. Moreover, we shall then understand why non-square/rectangular shapes, such as triangles, L-shapes or trapezoids, should be seen as inauspicious shapes: They often do not consist of a definable center with two definable horizontal axes. In such inauspicious shapes, it is usually difficult for the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* to be well represented.

Moreover, as for the *do's & taboos* regarding the proportion (or the width-length ratio) of built spaces, they can be seen as means to control the degree of the completeness and perfectness of such a cosmic representation. In a square with two horizontal axes of equal length, such representation is “more” complete and perfect, while in a rectangle with two horizontal axes of unequal length, it is “less” complete and perfect.

### **2.1.2 The Configuration of Built Spaces as a Representation of the Cosmic Structure**

As based on the paradigm of ‘architecture as a representation of realities’, the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* theme is said to represent the cosmos and its center.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the square/rectangle as an auspicious shape comes to represent the most ideal cosmic structure. It can thus be understood that these *do's & taboos* regarding the shape are meant to assure that the cosmic structure can be well represented in or by the configuration of built spaces. If one disobeys these *do's & taboos* by building a space of which the site or ground plan is not in an auspicious square/rectangular shape, such space is unlikely to be a proper representation of the cosmic structure.

Furthermore, the *do's & taboos* regarding the proportion also play crucial roles in controlling the degree of the representation of the cosmic structure. Dictated by such *do's & taboos*, only the building occupied by the people of the highest social status or those dedicated to the divine beings (e.g. the gods or the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

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deceased kings) deserve the perfect 1:1 width-length ratio, which enables the cosmic structure to be completely represented by the space built in such a ratio. On the other hand, ordinary houses for the humble humans should not employ this ratio, because within these spaces, the representation of the cosmic structure can only be incomplete and imperfect. It is clear that, as supported by these *do's & taboos*, the representation of social realities, as based on that of cosmic realities, is also brought to light.

Later in this chapter, we will see more examples of *do's & taboos* in Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions, and will see how these *do's & taboos* play crucial roles in supporting built spaces to represent the cosmic structure. Moreover, I will demonstrate the extent to which the degree of such a cosmic representation is conditioned by the shape and proportion of built spaces.

## **2.2 Do's & Taboos concerning the 'Shape' of Built Spaces**

Most old texts of both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra provide a variety of *do's & taboos* which explicitly or implicitly assume that a building should be constructed on a square/rectangular site or within a square/rectangular ground plan; therefore, a non-square/rectangular site or ground plan should be abandoned. In today's Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra manuals and handbooks, we can also find that modern Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners are eager to teach people how to rectify the sites or the ground plans that are not in an auspicious square/rectangular shape. To discuss these *do's & taboos*, we should begin with the many diagrams frequently used in the practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, which are mentioned in old texts as well, because these diagrams adopted, which are also usually square-shaped, are considered as the ideal plans for built spaces.

### **2.2.1 Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra Diagrams**

#### ***Feng-Shui Diagrams***

In the Feng-Shui tradition, a variety of diagrams have been utilized as ideal plans for a to-be-built space and used to determine an auspicious location, orientation and interior layout for such a to-be-built space. Some of these diagrams apply to many different types of built space, while others only apply to a specific type of built space such as houses, tombs or altars. Among the various diagrams, only a small number of them are still used in the Feng-Shui practice nowadays. In what follows, four diagrams, the 'Jiugong Bagua Diagram' (九宮八卦圖), 'Jitanlibiao Diagram' (祭壇立標圖), 'Sishijiuxue Diagram' (四十九穴圖) and 'Wuyinxiang Diagram' (五音向圖), will be discussed. The first one is still of great importance in the modern Feng-Shui practice, while the other three can only be found in old texts. It is worth noting that, with a square shape and a definable center, each of the four diagrams is intended to be a perfect representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, or the cosmos and its center.

The 'Jiugong Bagua Diagram' (or 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram') as mentioned in most Feng-Shui texts from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards is a diagram extensively used in the Feng-Shui practice in both the past and the

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present (Fig. 116).<sup>4</sup> It is characterized as a nine-square pattern, of which each peripheral square is attached to one of the Eight Trigrams of *Bagua* (八卦). The Eight Trigrams serve to denote the eight main directions, *Li* (離: ☲) the south, *Kun* (坤: ☷) the southwest, *Dui* (兌: ☱) the west, *Qian* (乾: ☰) the northwest, *Kan* (坎: ☵) the north, *Gen* (艮: ☶) the northeast, *Zhen* (震: ☳) the east, and *Xun* (巽: ☴) the southeast. In practice, this diagram is usually used as an ideal ground plan for houses. Through a series of complicated procedures based on this diagram, one can determine where to set the entrance door, the main hall, the kitchen and the bedrooms of a house.<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, 'Jiugong Bagua Diagram' can be seen as a perfect representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, since the square plot at its center highlights the place where the *Axis Mundi* should be erected, and its eight peripheral squares associated with the Eight Trigrams together let the *Cosmic Cross* come to light.

Similar to the 'Jiugong Bagua Diagram', the 'Jitanlibiao Diagram' and the 'Sishijiuxue Diagram' are also characterized as grid-patterns, on which many cosmic symbols can be found (Fig. 117, 118). However, different from the 'Jiugong Bagua Diagram' that is used for the housing design, the 'Jitanlibiao Diagram' is formulated to serve as the ideal layout for altars, while the 'Sishijiuxue Diagram' is meant for tombs. The two diagrams, no longer used by Feng-Shui practitioners nowadays, can only be found in the 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Dili Xinshu*.<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that these various cosmic symbols attached to the later two diagrams, used to represent the cosmic directions and hierarchy, were mostly informed by ancient Chinese astrology.

Among the various symbols, the one assigned to the center of the diagram is of particular importance. Regarding the third diagram that I am discussing, the 'Jitanlibiao Diagram', we can see that the symbol at its center is *Ming-Tang* (明堂), a word which originally signifies the holy temple compound where emperors and kings practiced sacrifices to Heaven in ancient times.<sup>7</sup> Surely, this symbol can be seen as an indication of the *Axis Mundi* that rises from the center of the diagram, given that the *Ming-Tang* is supposed to be a holy place where Earth meets Heaven. Therefore, once the altar can be built on the basis of this diagram, it can become a place for the human beings on Earth to meet the divine beings in Heaven. So far as the 'Sishijiuxue Diagram' is concerned,

<sup>4</sup> The 'Jiugong Bagua Diagram' (or 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram') can be found in most Feng-Shui texts from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, such as the *Yangzhai Shishu* (16<sup>th</sup> century), the *Bazhai Zaofu Zhoushu* (17<sup>th</sup> century), the *Bazhai Mingjing* (18<sup>th</sup> century), the *Zhaiyu Dacheng* (18<sup>th</sup> century) and the *Yangzhai Jicheng* (18<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>5</sup> In Chapter 3, we will see how Feng-Shui practitioners use the 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram' to determine an auspicious orientation for the entrance door.

<sup>6</sup> Wang 2003, pp. 444-450.

<sup>7</sup> Yi, Yu and Hung 1999, p. 161.



in addition to *Ming-Tang*, another symbol—*Di-Xin* (地心)—can be found at its center, which literally symbolizes the ‘middle of Earth’. With the two symbols of *Ming-Tang* and *Di-Xin* together being assigned to the center, this diagram also implies that the *Axis Mundi* should be established at the center, which serves as a connection between the center of Earth and the center of Heaven. Given that this diagram is meant for tombs, once the tomb can be built accordingly, the spirits of the deceased buried in such tombs are likely to ascend to Heaven through this *Axis Mundi*.

The fourth diagram, the ‘*Wuyinxiang* Diagram’, can be found in the *Dili Xinshu* as well,<sup>8</sup> which is used to determine the location and orientation for houses of people with different surnames (Fig. 119).<sup>9</sup> Unlike the previous three diagrams, it is not formed into a strict grid-pattern. Nonetheless, it still looks like a square. Interestingly enough, this diagram is enclosed by the vivid graphics of mountains instead of the solid lines. Compared with other diagrams, the ‘*Wuyinxiang* Diagram’ seems to imply that our Earth is a giant square which is bounded by the mountains located in the four cardinal directions. Moreover, we can find that many cosmic symbols are attached to this diagram. Among them, the symbol of *Zhong* (中), which means ‘middle’, is placed at the very center of this diagram. According to this diagram, we can understand that the dwelling space of human beings is usually mentally constructed as occupying the center of the square Earth, a place where the *Axis Mundi* rises.

\Apart from these square diagrams, some round diagrams should also be taken into account. However, different from the square ones, the round diagrams in the Feng-Shui practice are not directly used as ideal ground plans for the built space; rather, they serve as tools to indicate the geographical directions with the many cosmic symbols attached to them. Let us consider the round ‘*Kaishan-Bijiu* Diagram’ (開山閉九圖), a diagram used to determine the auspicious orientation for tombs, which can be found in the *Dili Xinshu* as well (Fig. 120).<sup>10</sup> In the diagram, we can again find many symbols similar to those in the ‘*Jitanlibiao* Diagram’ and the ‘*Sishijiuxue* Diagram’ as discussed above. Employing these symbols, through a complicated procedure, one can determine the most auspicious direction in which a tomb should be built. Formed in a circular shape, the ‘*Kaishan-Bijiu* Diagram’ evidently has a clear center with which the *Axis Mundi* is brought to light. Besides, as we can understand, a circle per se cannot represent the *Cosmic Cross* due to the absence of the two horizontal perpendicular axes within it. Nonetheless, with the many symbols

<sup>8</sup> Wang 2003, pp. 227-234.

<sup>9</sup> According to the Feng-Shui theories of early times, houses for the people with different surnames should be oriented to different directions. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

<sup>10</sup> Wang 2003, pp. 356-381.

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arranged in a concentric manner, which are used to indicate the different geographical directions, the *Cosmic Cross* is present implicitly in this diagram. Similar to those square diagrams, both the *Axis Mundi* and the *Cosmic Cross* can find their expression in such a round diagram.

Another important round diagram widely and extensively utilized in the Feng-Shui practice of both the past and the present is the '*Luopan*' (羅盤), or 'Feng-Shui Compass' (Fig. 121). On a typical *Luopan*, we can find many concentric circles, each containing a lot of symbols used to indicate different geographical directions. Surely, in this round *Luopan* that has a clear center and the various symbols pointing to specific directions, the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross* can be well represented.

It is obvious that the square and the round diagrams are of the most importance in the Feng-Shui tradition, as we can hardly find the diagrams which are formed into other shapes. This is perhaps because the two shapes stand for the most ideal cosmic scheme in the ancient Chinese cosmology. Among a variety of notions in the Chinese cosmology, the most influential one is the '*Tianyuan Difang*' (天圓地方) which means 'round Heaven and square Earth'. In short words, the cosmic space is conceptualized as a perfect combination of a circle and a square. The vault of Heaven is thought to rotate like a mill from east to west carrying with it the sun, the moon and other celestial bodies, while the plane of Earth has its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions.<sup>11</sup> According to such a cosmic scheme, ancient Chinese people thought they were living in the middle of the square Earth. That is why 'China' is recognized by Chinese people as *Zhong-Guo* (中國) which denotes 'the Middle Kingdom', or 'the state occupying the center of the world'.

Moreover, in the philosophy of the *Yin-Yang* School (陰陽家), this cosmic scheme of 'round Heaven and square Earth' was further conceptualized as being associated with the *Wuxing* (五行), or the Five Elements, and the four seasons. This school, founded in the 'Era of Warring States' (c. 5<sup>th</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE) and later on incorporated with many notions from the Confucianism, has been highly influential ever since its birth. This school suggests a significant cosmology and worldview that, among Heaven, human beings and all worldly phenomena, there is a sophisticated and systematic interrelationship which can be explained and theorized by the following concepts: '*Qi*' (cosmic breath or energy flow), '*Yin & Yang*' (binary-oppositional cosmic forces, *Yin* as the negative and *Yang* as the positive), and '*Wuxing*' (Five Elements).<sup>12</sup> In the

<sup>11</sup> Needham 1975, pp. 88-89; Cheng 2005, p. 25.

<sup>12</sup> Fung 1983, *A History of Chinese Philosophy Volume I: The Period of the Philosophers*, p. 383; Fung 1983, *A History of Chinese Philosophy Volume II: The Period of Classical Learning*, pp. 11-23.

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*Chunchiu Fanlu* written in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE by Dong Zhong-Shu (董仲舒), a remarkable philosopher of the *Yin-Yang* School, the following passage can be found:

*Wood occupies the east and dominates the Qi in spring; Fire occupies the south and dominates the Qi in summer; Metal occupies the west and dominates the Qi in autumn; Water occupies the north and dominates the Qi in winter... Earth occupies the center... and shall not belong to any of the four seasons.*<sup>13</sup>

According to Dong, the association between the cosmic directions (i.e. center, east, south, west and north), the four seasons and the Five Elements, as established in the cosmic scheme characteristic of the combination of the circle and the square, again highlights the ‘quincunx structure’ and, of course, the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* theme (Fig. 19). Moreover, based on such an association, the correlation, or formal homology, between the cosmos and the body of man is further conceptualized. Dong continues in his *Chunchiu Fanlu*:

*The symbols of Heaven and Earth, and the correspondences between the Yin and Yang, are ever found established also in the human body. The body is like Heaven, and its numerical (categories) correspond with those of the latter, so that its life is linked with the latter. With the numbers (of days) that fills a year, Heaven gives form to man's body. Thus 366 lesser joints (of the body) correspond to the numbers of days (in a year), and the twelve divisions of the larger joints correspond to the number of months. Within (the body) there are the five viscera,<sup>14</sup> which correspond in number to the Wuxing (i.e. Five Elements). Externally there are four limbs, which correspond in number to the four seasons.*<sup>15</sup>

Significantly, the above quote provides us with a clear picture of how the *Anthropomorphic* long-cycle tradition underlies the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* shorter-cycle theme when ancient people tried to mentally construct the cosmic structure. However, now that both the square and the circle are thought to be essential forms of the cosmos, why is the built space usually

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<sup>13</sup> Lai 2003, p. 287. 「東方木居東方而主春氣，火居南方而主夏氣，金居西方而主秋氣，水居北方而主冬氣。……土居中央，……不可名以一時之事。」

<sup>14</sup> The five viscera are heart, liver, spleen, lungs and kidneys.

<sup>15</sup> Lai 2003, p. 327-328. 「天地之符，陰陽之副，常設於身，身猶天也，數與之相參，故命與之相連也。天以終歲之數，成人之身，故小節三百六十六，副日數也。大節十二分，副月數也。內有五臟，副五行數也。外有四肢，副四時數也。」 The English translation of this passage is quoted from Fung 1983, *A History of Chinese Philosophy Volume II: The Period of Classical Learning*, p. 31.

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recommended to be arranged on the basis of the square diagrams instead of the round ones? The question is not as difficult as it appears to be. Given that all human spaces are built on Earth but not in Heaven, the square diagrams that represent Earth are supposed to be adopted.

### **Vāstu-Shāstra Diagrams**

In the Vāstu-Shāstra architectural tradition, numerous diagrams can also be found, which are usually called 'mandalas'. While those Feng-Shui diagrams are representations of the Chinese cosmology, these mandalas also play roles in representing the Indian (or Hindu) cosmology.<sup>16</sup> Besides, like the Feng-Shui diagrams, the mandalas are usually used as ideal ground plans for built spaces, or meant for the determination of their locations, orientations and layouts. According to old Vāstu-Shāstra texts, a mandala could be square, round, triangular or in other shapes; however, the most widely and extensively applied in practice are the square mandalas. In general, these mandalas can be sorted into two primary types: one called 'Vāstu-Purusha Mandala' and the other 'Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala'.

Let us first consider the 'Vāstu-Purusha Mandala'. As described in the 6<sup>th</sup>-century *Brihat Samhitā*, such a mandala is a square grid pattern, in which there is an anthropomorphic figure called 'Vāstu-Purusha' with his body kept in the four-sided boundary (Fig. 136). It is said that, at the beginning of the world, Vāstu-Purusha was a furious and energetic cosmic being (or a demon), threatening the newly created world. Therefore, numerous Hindu deities decided to suppress him collaboratively. Eventually he was forced to lie prone in a confined space which then became known as the Vāstu-Purusha Mandala. Afterwards, in the Vāstu-Shāstra architectural tradition, this demon-like Vāstu-Purusha was sublimed to be regarded as the guardian deity of a built space, or as a representation of the built space itself.<sup>17</sup> This Vāstu-Purusha, to a large degree, can be compared with the Purusha as described in the *Purushasukta* (the *Hymn of the Cosmic Man*) of the *Rigveda*. In this hymn, the gods sacrifice a giant to create the physical universe. From his navel the air was produced,

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<sup>16</sup> Gray 2006, p. 17.

<sup>17</sup> Bhat 1986, p. 451. The following passage can be found in the *Brihat Samhitā*: "There was, it is said, some Being which obstructed the earth and the sky with its body. The Gods suddenly caught hold of it and laid it upside down, Whichever limbs were held by different Gods had those very Gods as their presiding deities, The Creator ordained that Being to be the House-God of the nature of Gods." The Vāstu-Purusha as a 'House God', or the 'Spirit of the house', is also described in the *Mānasāra*, the *Agni Purānam*, and the *Samarāṅgana-Sūtradhāra of Bhojadeva*. See: Acharya 1994, p. 405, Shastri 1967, pp. 149-150; Sharma 2007, *Samarāṅgana-Sūtradhāra of Bhojadeva I*, pp. 119-120.

from his head the sky was evolved, from his feet the earth, and from his ear the quarters. Without the sacrifice of *Purusha*, the cosmos could never come into being.<sup>18</sup>

As Michael W. Meister suggests, the use of the Vāstu-Purusha Mandala signifies the 'planning in the image of man'.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the Vāstu-Purusha as a cosmic being is a metaphor for the human body. Given that the figure of Vāstu-Purusha perfectly fits into the four-sided grid-pattern which represents the ideal cosmic scheme, the correlation and formal homology between the human body and the cosmos can be firmly established in the frame of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* shorter-cycle theme. Through the Vāstu-Purusha Mandala, we are able to perceive that it is the *Anthropomorphic* long-cycle tradition that serves as the basis for this shorter-cycle theme. No doubt, this is quite comparable with the cosmic scheme held in the Chinese *Yin-Yang* School as mentioned earlier. As long as the Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala is applied as the ideal plan for the built space, the connection between the macrocosm and the microcosm can be firmly established.

Now we turn to the 'Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala' which, as described in old texts, could be of various shapes including squares, circles, triangles, hexagons, octagons, etc. (Fig. 137-140) In the Vāstu-Shāstra texts of *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra*, *Mānasāra* and *Arthashāstra*, the following passages can be found:

*In the triangular, hexagonal or octagonal and sixteen sided structures, the plan was applicable like those of the circular structures.*<sup>20</sup>  
(*Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra*)

*The square, rectangular, circular (round), octagonal, hexagonal, oval (lit. circular with two corners) and so on: these are the various shapes (recommended for the storeys) which increase or decrease (from one to twelve in order) [sic].*<sup>21</sup> (*Mānasāra*)

*On a site declared to be the best according to the science of building, the leader, the carpenter, and the astrologer should measure a circular, rectangular, or square spot for the camp, which should, in accordance with the available space, consist of four gates, six roads, and nine divisions.*<sup>22</sup> (*Arthashāstra*)

Although these Vāstu-Shāstra Mandalas may differ in shape, they are all geometric — all having a clear and definable center. Also of particular note is

<sup>18</sup> Gombrich 1975, pp. 115-116; Eliade 1981, pp. 223-224.

<sup>19</sup> Meister 2007, p. 251.

<sup>20</sup> Sharma 2007, *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra of Bhojadeva I*, p. 118.

<sup>21</sup> Acharya 1994, p. 99.

<sup>22</sup> Sharmasastry 1961, p. 391.

## 2. Do's & Taboos concerning the 'Configuration' of Built Spaces

that each mandala has its central plot labeled with the name of the deity *Brahma* (Fig. 137-140). Given that the role of *Brahma* in the Hindu *Trimurti* is seen as the Creator of the cosmos,<sup>23</sup> these Vāstu-Shāstra Mandalas convey the meanings in the Hindu cosmology and cosmogony. The assignment of Brahma to the central plot of a mandala implies that the place represents the 'original point' from which the entire cosmos is brought into being. As John Gray points out, despite their differences in representational forms, all mandalas share a basic design composition for expressing the cosmology: a central point surrounded by a concentric girdle—either square, circular or polygonal—of line(s) and space(s) that provide the 'dynamic quality of movement'.<sup>24</sup> Also according to various Hindu mythology and epics, at the time of creation, the cosmic pillar or the Mount Meru as the *Axis Mundi* was established at the center to support the cosmic structure.<sup>25</sup> Thus, no matter how a Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala is shaped, the *Axis Mundi* is always highlighted at its center, the original and the most stable point of the cosmos (Fig. 60).

As we can imagine, not in all the Vāstu-Shāstra Mandalas can the *Cosmic Cross* be well manifested, as some of them do not consist of two definable horizontal perpendicular axes. The triangular mandala is one of the examples. It is not difficult to understand that the square mandalas are more ideal than others, as in a square shape, both the *Axis Mundi* and the *Cosmic Cross* can find their expressions (Fig. 61). That is probably why the square mandalas are more frequently adopted in the practice of Vāstu-Shāstra. As mentioned in old texts, the square mandalas may differ in size, such as grid patterns of 1x1, 2x2, 3x3, 4x4, 8x8, 9x9, 32x32, or more, which are given different names according to the number of compartments. For example, according to the *Mānasāra*, the 1x1 mandala is called *Sakala*, the 2x2 one *Paisacha*, the 8x8 one *Chandita*, and the 9x9 one *Paramasayika*.<sup>26</sup> Among them, the 8x8 and the 9x9 mandalas are the most popular in practice.

<sup>23</sup> The notion of *Trimurti*, three forms, is quite old in the Hindu traditions. In the symbolism of *Trimurti*, the three gods—*Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Shiva*—coalesce into one form with three faces. This notion is taken to imply that Hindus give equal importance to all the three gods. However, in practice, most Hindus do not worship *Brahma*. While portrayed in mythology as the creator god, he is himself created by another god, serving as the agent of *Vishnu*, *Shiva* or the Goddess. See: Jacobsen 2009, p. 459.

<sup>24</sup> As noted by John Gray, movement outward from the center that forms a surrounding space is the force of creation and evolution of worldly diversity, while movement inward toward the center is the force of dissolution and devolution of worldly diversity. See: Gray 2006, p. 22.

<sup>25</sup> Jacobsen 2009, pp. 422-427; Gombrich 1975, pp. 119-127.

<sup>26</sup> According to *Mānasāra*, the 1x1 Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala is called *Sakala*, the 2x2 one *Paisacha*, the 3x3 one *Pitha*, the 4x4 one *Mahapitha*, the 8x8 one *Chandita*, the 9x9 one *Paramasayika*, and the 32x32 called *Chanra-Kanta*. See: Acharya 1994, pp. 33-36.

Let us take the ‘*Paramasayika* Mandala’ as an example for further analysis (Fig. 140). In common with the above-mentioned Vāstu-Purusha Mandala in which there is an anthropomorphic figure (Fig. 136), this *Paramasayika* Mandala is a 9x9 grid pattern. On such a mandala, we can find a lot of names of Hindu deities who have together subdued the cosmic demon, Vāstu-Purusha, at the beginning of the world. By superimposing the *Paramasayika* Mandala onto the Vāstu-Purusha Mandala, we can clearly see how different deities hold down different parts of the body of Vāstu-Purusha. Some control the head, some the chest, some the abdomen, some the anus, some the hands, and some the thighs. Obviously, the more powerful the deities are, the more squares in the Mandala they occupy. The supreme Creator, Brahmā, residing in the center (also the navel of Vāstu-Purusha), occupies nine squares, while less gods, like *Isa* or *Agni*, at corners only occupy one square each. Very importantly, in practice, the four sides of such a square mandala should be oriented to the four cardinal directions, and each of the deities on the mandala should be associated with a particular direction.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the two horizontal axes within the mandala should coincide with the geographical E-W and N-S axes.

Although it is the square mandala most frequently applied in the Vāstu-Shāstra practice, later we will see that some sacred buildings or cities found in India were built (or mentally constructed) on basis of the circular mandala. It is worth noting that, just like in the Chinese cosmology and Feng-Shui tradition, the ‘square’ and ‘circle’ are the two most important shapes in the Indian cosmology and Vāstu-Shāstra tradition. In the *Rig Veda*, we can find the cosmology suggesting that the cosmos consists of three realms—the earth, the sky and the intermediate region in-between them. The earth and the sky are described as two round bowls facing each other (Fig. 62).<sup>28</sup> Besides, according to the *Satapatha Brahmana* (compiled between 8<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE), the earth’s surface is described as containing seven concentric circular continents. Among the seven continents, the central one—*Jambudvīpa*—can be further subdivided into seven territories, of which the middle one is *Ilāvṛta*. In the center of *Ilāvṛta*, Mount Meru is located. Within the *Ilāvṛta*—and surrounding Mount Meru, there are four mountain ranges: *Mandara* is located to the east, *Gandhamādana* to the south, *Vipula* to the west, and *Suparsva* to the north (Fig. 63).<sup>29</sup> The four mountain ranges form a picture in which a square boundary around this central territory, surely, amazingly bears a resemblance to the ‘*Wuyinxiang* Diagram’ which, as mentioned earlier, can be found in the old Feng-Shui text of *Dili Xinshu* (Fig. 119). As Gudrun Bühnemann suggests, the

<sup>27</sup> Bubbar 2005, pp. 37-39.

<sup>28</sup> Jacobsen 2009, p. 422.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 425-426.

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combination of the circle and the square is a common motif in South Asian mandalas and yantras; the circle often represents 'Ether', a cosmic element only existing in the upper sky, and the square often called 'earth house', 'earth city' or 'earth citadel' usually symbolizes 'Earth'.<sup>30</sup> This is again quite similar to the cosmic reality of 'round Heaven and square Earth' in the Chinese cosmology.

Moreover, the system of *Panchamahabhuta* (i.e. the Indian Five Elements), which is quite comparable to the system of *Wuxing* (i.e. the Chinese Five Elements) developed in the *Yin-Yang* School, was developed in the *Samkhya* School of Hinduism.<sup>31</sup> It is important to note, the Five Elements of *Panchamahabhuta* have also been successfully attached to the 'quincunx scheme' represented in the square Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala. The following passage can be found in the *Mayamatam*:

*It is known of the 'Pitha Diagram',<sup>32</sup> which consists of nine squares, that the four Vedas are at the four cardinal points and that Water, Fire, Ether and Wind are (at the intermediate points, of which) the first is the north-east; in the center is Earth.<sup>33</sup>*

However, different from the Chinese Five Elements respectively associated with the 'center' and the 'four cardinal points', the Indian Five Elements are associated per se with the 'center' and the 'four corner points' of the quincunx structure: Earth with the center, Water with the northeast, Fire with the southeast, Ether (or Space) with the southwest and Wind (or Air) with the northwest (Fig. 64). It should be noted here that a small number of contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners are in favor of a different kind of association between the Five Elements and the center and four corners: Ether (or Space) is associated with the center, Water with the northeast, Fire with the southeast, Earth with the southwest, and Wind (or Air) with the northeast (Fig. 65).<sup>34</sup> The association between different essential elements and different points of compass is of great importance in both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions. In later chapters, we will see that many Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* are formulated on the basis of such an association.

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<sup>30</sup> Bühnemann 2007, pp. 47-48.

<sup>31</sup> Embree 1998, p. 305.

<sup>32</sup> This 'Pitha Diagram' is a 3x3 square Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala.

<sup>33</sup> Dagens 1994, p. 41.

<sup>34</sup> Cox 2002, p. 22.



## **2.2.2 The Square and Rectangular Built Spaces Considered to Be Auspicious**

Given that the most popular diagrams in Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions are squares, the sites or the ground plans of built spaces as based on these diagrams, theoretically, can be in a square shape as well. Besides, since the rectangle can be seen as an ‘elongated square’, in which the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be represented as well as in the square, it is also suitable for built spaces. In old Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra texts, we can easily find many *do's & taboos* that instruct people to adopt the square or the rectangle as the shape for the site or ground plan of the dwelling or other types of buildings, as the square/rectangular shape is thought to be auspicious.

### ***Feng-Shui Do's & Taboos concerning the Auspicious Square and Rectangular Built Spaces***

In the 11<sup>th</sup>-century *Dili Xinshu*, we can find a meaningful description saying that, at the initial stage of the construction work, one should erect a pole as the gnomon in the center of the site or ground plan, so as to define the four cardinal directions according to the shadows of this pole at different hours (Fig. 122). Furthermore, one should also erect another four poles at the four corners so as to highlight and fix the four-sided boundary:

*Before the construction work, one shall make sure that the site has its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions... For countries, there shall be cities; for people, there shall be dwellings; for deities and ghosts, there shall be temples and shrines. In the Zhou Dynasty,<sup>35</sup> the official of Tufang (in charge of the land survey and planning) usually applied the so-called Dugui (a sundial-like pole) to check the shadows cast by the sun so that he could define the different directions of the site... In order to define the east and the west, in the daytime, one shall examine the shadows cast by the sun at different hours, and in the nighttime, one shall examine where the Polaris is... At sun-rise, the shadow of the Dugui points to the west; at sun-set, it points to the east... After making sure that the site (or ground plan) has its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions, one shall erect another four poles at the four corners of the site (or ground plan).<sup>36</sup>*

<sup>35</sup> The Zhou (周) Dynasty was between 1046 and 256 BCE.

<sup>36</sup> Wang 2003, pp. 25-33. 「將欲營地事，必先正四方。……於邦國則有都鄙，於人民則有居處，於鬼神則有祠廟。……周官土方氏掌土圭之法，以致日影，以土地

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This passage implies that an ideal site should be squarely shaped, and the five poles together shed light on the quincunx scheme manifested in such a square site (Fig. 20). The *Dugui* as the first pole undoubtedly represents the *Axis Mundi*, whose position signifies the 'original point' of the cosmos. Without this point, the cosmos can never come into being, and without the center defined on the site, no human space can be built. Through this central pole, the E-W and N-S axes as a manifestation of the *Cosmic Cross* can also be projected onto the site. Moreover, by means of the four poles at corners, the four-sided boundary can be mentally constructed, and then the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross* can be fixed into the to-be-built space.

It should also be noted that, according to the quote, an ideal site is supposed to have its four sides oriented to the four cardinal points. As R. D. Dripps points out in his *The First House: Myth, Paradigm, and the Task of Architecture*, since the sun rises in the east, sets in the west, and, particularly in the Northern Hemisphere, the sun has its noontime meridian in the south, three of the four cardinal points can be defined. Based on the identification of the three points, the north comes to light as well.<sup>37</sup> In other words, it is according to the daily observation of the movement of the sun that the E-W and N-S axes can be mentally constructed as the basic structure of the cosmos. This kind of mental construct of the cosmic structure can be found in many different cultural traditions all over the world. That is why the architectural theme of the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross* is worldwide. Once the built space has its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions, the *Cosmic Cross* manifested in it can perfectly coincide with the sun-based E-W and N-S axes. Meanwhile, the *Axis Mundi* that finds expression through its center can be seen as standing at the cosmic center. Therefore, this built space can be seen as a strong representation of the sun-focused cosmic realities.

Moreover, the above four 'corner poles', in some sense, are quite comparable with the 'corner stone' in the Western or Judeo-Christian architectural traditions. As is known, placing the corner stones is usually described as the necessary first step of construction work, as this step stands for marking the boundary for a to-be-built space. In the Old and New Testaments, the corner stone has been mentioned many times,<sup>38</sup> which is taken to symbolize

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相宅。……晝參諸日中之影，夜考之極星，以正朝夕。……立表於中，日初出之時度其表影以知西，日初入之時以之東。……既正四方，據其位置，於四角各立一表。」 In the 5<sup>th</sup>-century-BCE *Kao-Gong-Ji*, a similar description of the sundial-like pole can be found. See: Wen 1993, p. 130.

<sup>37</sup> Dripps 1997, p. 61.

<sup>38</sup> "The stone which the builders rejected is become the chief corner-stone." (Psalm 118:22) "Jesus says unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing,

Jesus Christ. Without Jesus Christ, the Church would never survive and develop under the protection of the Lord; without the corner stones that mark the boundary, the space within it can hardly be established.

In many other Feng-Shui texts, we can also find the *do's & taboos* that directly ask people to have their houses built on an auspicious square/rectangular site or with a square/rectangular ground plan. The following passages are quoted from the *Bazhai Zaofu Zhoushu* (17<sup>th</sup> century), the *Zhaipu Dacheng* (18<sup>th</sup> century), the *Bazhai Mingjing* (18<sup>th</sup> century), and the *Yangzhai Jicheng* (18<sup>th</sup> century CE):

*If a house looks square, regular and agreeable, it is auspicious; if a house looks too high, too spacious, or too cramped and disagreeable, it is inauspicious.*<sup>39</sup> (*Bazhai Zaofu Zhoushu*)

*Although a house may be built in various forms and sizes... it shall always look square and regular but not crooked.*<sup>40</sup> (*Zhaipu Dacheng*)

*A square and regular house... makes the family prosperous.*<sup>41</sup> (*Zhaipu Dacheng*)

*A square (or rectangular) house makes the family prosperous and rich.*<sup>42</sup> (*Zhaipu Dacheng*)

*The auspicious site for a dwelling shall be square (or rectangular), regular and pleasing to the eye.*<sup>43</sup> (*Bazhai Mingjing*)

*On the site, people shall build their dwellings... A site may be in a variety of forms. However, the auspicious site shall be spacious, level, square and flawless.*<sup>44</sup> (*Yangzhai Jicheng*)

In addition to these passages, the *Zhaipu Dacheng* provides a meaningful diagram which implies that a typical single-courtyard house should be constructed on the basis of the aforementioned 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram' (Fig. 116, 123).<sup>45</sup> As we can easily see, in the Chinese architectural tradition, the courtyard house is usually built to have a square/rectangular ground plan, with its courtyard coinciding with the central square of the 'Nine-

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*and it is marvelous in our eyes?"* (Matthew 21:42) "*And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.*" (Ephesians 2:20)

<sup>39</sup> Huang 1998, p. 8. 「入眼可知總之方正平淨，入眼好看即是吉屋，或太高，或太闊，或太卑小，而偏促逼迫，入眼不好看者，不吉。」

<sup>40</sup> Wei 1985, p. 460. 「曰問堂雖有千百形象，……宜正不宜斜。」

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 515. 「曰方正平淨屋，……生合旺相。」

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 520. 「家造四方屋，發秀食天祿。」

<sup>43</sup> Ruo-Guan 2002, p. 94. 「凡陽宅須地基方正，入眼好看方吉。」

<sup>44</sup> Yao & Zhan 1995, p. 61. 「基形者，人家建立宅舍……其形不一，總以寬平方正圓滿為吉。」

<sup>45</sup> Wei 1985, p. 233.

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Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram', for example, the *Siheyuan* courtyard house in Beijing<sup>46</sup> and the *Sanheyuan* courtyard house in Taiwan<sup>47</sup> (Fig. 232-236). Even nowadays, people still often tend to apply the 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram' as the basis of the house plan. This can be well exemplified by the house of the Ke's family in Dacheng, Taiwan (Fig. 245, 246). According to Mr. Jun-Cheng Ke (the eldest son of his family), his family had been living in an old traditional *Sanheyuan* house until they moved to a new house built in 1994. The original plan of this new house, as being based on the 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram', was recommended by a Feng-Shui consultant (Fig. 245). However, during the construction work, this family thought that this original plan cannot offer enough rooms for their family members; consequently, the house was further extended on its back side, finally adopting a rectangular plan (Fig. 246).<sup>48</sup>

Surely, not only the courtyard house but many other types of dwellings are usually built with square/rectangular ground plans, be they row houses or modern apartments (Fig. 239-241, 253-256). In today's Taiwan, unless houses are designed to have a square/rectangular plan, they are very likely to be unmarketable. Almost nobody would like to buy houses with a non-square or a non-rectangular plan, even though these houses can satisfy all the functional requirements.<sup>49</sup>

Besides the dwelling buildings, as some ancient Chinese texts instruct, the city should also ideally have a plan in a square shape. As we can find the following passage recorded in the 5<sup>th</sup>-century-BCE *Kaogongji* (考工記):<sup>50</sup>

*The capital city should be in a square form. Each of the four sides shall measure nine miles and have three entrance gates on it. In the city, there shall be nine east-west roads and nine north-south roads, which connect these entrances gates.*<sup>51</sup>

<sup>46</sup> 'Siheyuan' (四合院) is a traditional type of residence commonly found throughout China, most famously in Beijing. Its name literally means a 'courtyard surrounded by four wings of buildings'.

<sup>47</sup> 'Sanheyuan' (三合院) is the most typical traditional courtyard house in Taiwan. Different from the *Siheyuan* in Beijing, the *Sanheyuan* only have three wings of buildings—the central wing, the left wing and the right wing, as its name literally means 'a courtyard surrounded by three wings'.

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Jun-Cheng Ke (Tainan, Taiwan, 20/02/2010).

<sup>49</sup> Interviews with Mr. Xie (Taipei, Taiwan, 27/10/2006), Ms. Fan (Taipei, Taiwan, 09/11/2006), Mr. Gao (Taipei, Taiwan, 09/11/2006), Mr. Yen (Taipei, Taiwan, 29/12/2006), and Mr. Wu (Taipei, Taiwan, 10/01/2007).

<sup>50</sup> The *Kaogongji*, or *Book of Diverse Crafts*, is a classic work on science and technology in ancient China.

<sup>51</sup> Wen 1993, p. 130. 「匠人營國，方九里，旁三門。國中九經九緯，經塗九軌。」

*Comparing the Do's & Taboos in Chinese Feng-Shui and  
Indian Vāstu-Shāstra Architectural Traditions*

The above quote delineates an ideal square-shaped city of which the four sides are oriented to the four cardinal directions. This city plan was further pictorially depicted as the 'Wangcheng Diagram' (王城圖), or the 'Diagram of the King's Capital City', in the 10<sup>th</sup>-century illustrated book, the *Sanlitu* (三禮圖) (Fig. 124). Obviously, the 7<sup>th</sup>-century capital city of the Tang Dynasty – Chang'an (長安) – is an excellent example of such an ideal city described in the *Kaogongji* and the 'Wangcheng Diagram' (Fig. 282). As we can see, this city has its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions, and except for the northern one, each of the other three sides has three main gates. Besides, this city indeed consists of nine main north-south roads. In addition to Chang'an, we can find that many other old cities were built to have square/rectangular plans and the four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions, be they capital cities or small local towns, for instance, the capital city of the Ming and Qing Dynasties – Beijing (北京) (Fig. 283), where the Forbidden City is located, and the small town – Xiayi (夏邑) – in Henan (Fig. 284).

As all types of buildings should be constructed on the basis of square Feng-Shui diagrams in theory, it is not uncommon that palaces, tombs and numerous temples in the Chinese architectural tradition, other than houses and cities, are usually built with square/rectangular ground plans. For example, the 7<sup>th</sup>-century Daming Royal Palace (大明宮) of the Tang Dynasty (Fig. 149), the 11<sup>th</sup>-century Yongzhao Royal Mausoleum (永昭陵) in Zhengzhou (Fig. 170), the 15<sup>th</sup>-century royal palace – Forbidden City in Beijing (Fig. 150, 151), the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Tayuan Buddhist Temple (塔院寺) on the Mount Wutai (Fig. 162), the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Xuguang Pavilion (旭光閣) of the Pule Buddhist Temple (普樂寺) in Chengde (Fig. 168), and the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Thian Hock Keng Temple (天福宮) in Singapore (Fig. 156, 157).

Knowing these examples of houses, cities, palaces, tombs and palaces, it is tempting to presume that the square/rectangular plans of various built spaces in the Chinese architectural tradition are all attributed to the Feng-Shui *do's & taboos*. However, this is not true. According to many ancient buildings excavated from archeological sites, we can find that such a square/rectangular plan had been followed much earlier than the development of Feng-Shui theories from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century onwards. For instance, the ancient courtyard house excavated from the Fengchu archeological site in Shaanxi, which can be dated back to the 11<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE, is characteristic of the rectangular ground plan, and has its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions (Fig. 238).<sup>52</sup> In the ground plan of this ancient courtyard house, the front-back and left-right axes perfectly coincide with the N-S and E-W axes, and hence the sun-based

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<sup>52</sup> Du 1995, pp. 214-216.

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representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be clearly perceived. As we should always bear in mind, the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* as an age-old worldwide architectural theme is much older than the Chinese Feng-Shui tradition. Hence it should be said that the Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* regarding the configuration of built spaces were developed in the older theme of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*.

As we have learned earlier, both the square and the circle are significant in the ancient Chinese cosmology, the former representing Earth while the latter Heaven. Since the circle is related to Heaven, the houses on Earth are not supposed to be built with a circular form. However, the sacred and much-revered temples, which in some sense are built to represent the connection between Earth and Heaven, are not subject to this limitation. As we can find, in the Chinese architectural tradition, not a few temples are characteristic of a ground plan in the form of the combination of the circle and the square, which are said to represent the complete cosmos – the 'round Heaven and square Earth'. Certainly, in order to seek a complete representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* in the built space, the circular form should not be used alone, but should be used along with the square form. As we know, the circle can merely shed light on the *Axis Mundi* by its center; only based on the combination of the two shapes, the *Axis Mundi* and the *Cosmic Cross* can be well represented together (Fig. 2).

The most important example is probably the aforementioned '*Mingtang*', the holy place where ancient emperors and kings made sacrifices to Heaven. As many archeologists and architectural historians suggest, the *Mingtang* was constructed with a ground plan characteristic of repeated square and circular forms, symbolizing the idea of the 'round Heaven and square Earth' (Fig. 171, 172).<sup>53</sup> As we can see, its central building with a square plan is built on a circular platform, the circular platform is located in a square compound, and the square compound is confined within a circular area surrounded by the woods. In such a layout, the *Axis Mundi* and the *Cosmic Cross* are fully represented by the repeated combinations of the two shapes.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a majestic temple compound, the 'Tiantan' (天壇), or Temple or Heaven, was built to the southeast of the Forbidden City in Beijing to represent the ancient *Mingtang* (Fig. 173, 174). Similar to the *Mingtang*, the Tiantan served as a sacred place which the emperors of the Ming and the Qin Dynasties visit to pray and make offerings to Heaven for good harvest.<sup>54</sup> As a place built to represent the connection between the Earth and the Heaven

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<sup>53</sup> Yi, Yu and Hung 1999, pp. 161-162.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

and the cosmic reality of 'round Heaven and square Earth', the Tiantan is also characteristic of the combination of the circle and the square: Its central building built with a round ground plan is constructed on a three-step round platform, and this platform is confined in a square compound. As well as the *Mingtang* and the Tiantan, some other famous Chinese temples are built with ground plans in the form of the combination of the two shapes, for instance, the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Tayuan Buddhist Temple (塔院寺) on Mount Wutai (Fig. 162), and the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Xuguang Pavilion (旭光閣) of the Pule Buddhist Temple (普樂寺) in Chengde (Fig. 168).

Although the ordinary house is not supposed to have a round ground plan, this is not explicitly forbidden by old Feng-Shui texts. Actually, we can still find that some types of vernacular houses in China are built with round ground plans. Take for instance the 'Tulou' (土樓), a type of vernacular house widespread in the Fujian Province. The name literally means 'earth building', as the fortified outer structures are usually established by compacting earth mixed with other materials such as stone, bamboo and wood. Though the *Tulou* houses may come in many shapes and sizes, the most impressive ones are those with big round plans (Fig. 249, 250). In such a giant round *Tulou*, there could be more than one hundred compartments for different families (belonging to the same clan) to reside in. Of particular note is that, in the middle of the round *Tulou*, there is usually a building with a square/rectangular plan, which serves as the 'ancestral shrine' for all the families living in the *Tulou*. Such an ancestral shrine is always built to face the front entrance of the *Tulou* building. Significantly, it is according to the orientation of this ancestral shrine that the front-back and the left-right axes of the entire *Tulou* compound can be defined. With this square/rectangular shrine located in the center, the round *Tulou* becomes a space which can completely represent the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*. Moreover, the dwellers of *Tulou* houses usually believe that the combination of the circle and the square/rectangle is meant to symbolize the 'round Heaven and square Earth'.<sup>55</sup>

Other than the circle or its combination with the square, in the Chinese architectural tradition, the 'cross-shape' is also sometimes applied as the ground plan for temples to enhance the representation of the cosmic structure. Although the cross-shape is not a square, it can be seen as a square with its four sides extending outward (Fig. 21), and hence the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be well represented by it. Furthermore, because the four sides are extended outward, the two orthogonal horizontal axes of the cross-shape are particularly highlighted. Therefore, the representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* in

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<sup>55</sup> Lin 2006, p. 95.

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such a cross shape is likely to be stronger than in a square (Fig. 22). The 10<sup>th</sup>-century Manichean Hall (摩尼殿) of the Longxing Buddhist Temple (隆興寺) in Shijiazhuang is a good example (Fig. 169). This temple was built with a cross-shaped ground plan and with four entrances on the four sides, and the innermost room in which the Buddhist statue is set is located in the center of the ground plan. It should also be noted that the four sides of the temple are respectively oriented to the four cardinal points, and hence the *Cosmic Cross* manifested in the cross-shaped plan can perfectly coincide with the N-S and E-W axes. Accordingly, the Buddhist statue can be seen as occupying the crucial place – the center of the cosmos – where the *Axis Mundi* is erected.

Apart from this Manichean Hall, the central building of the aforesaid *Mingtang* also roughly has a cross-shaped ground plan, and likewise, its four sides are respectively oriented to the four cardinal directions (Fig. 172). Undoubtedly, the *Mingtang* can be seen as a built space characterized by a great degree of the representation of the cosmic structure because in its compound, the square, the circle and the cruciform are present together, all playing significant roles in enhancing the manifestation of the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross*.

While the cross-shape, obviously as a very auspicious shape, can be applied to temples, it is not allowed to be applied to houses according to Feng-Shui texts. As we will see later, some Feng-Shui *do's* & *taboos* stipulate that the cross-shape should be treated as an inauspicious shape for ordinary houses.

### **Vāstu-Shāstra Do's & Taboos concerning the Auspicious Square and Rectangular Built Spaces**

In the Vāstu-Shāstra architectural tradition, the square/rectangular site or ground plan is also considered auspicious. According to old texts, at the initial stage of the construction, the center and the four corners of the site should be clearly defined and fixed. The following passage can be found in the *Mānasāra*:

*In the center of the selected site, the expert geometrician should describe a circle by moving around (a cord of) twice the length of the gnomon (as the radius); and on the center (of the circle) a gnomon should be fixed. In the forenoon (at a certain time) the chief architect should mark a point (where) the shadow from the gnomon (meets) the circumference in the west. In the afternoon (also) a point should be marked as before (i.e. as in the morning) where the shadow from the gnomon (meets) the circumference in the east. Thereafter the gnomon should be left (to remain) therein... The (due) east should then be*



*determined... Four pegs at the four corners (ears) should be fixed and the corners should be attached (i.e., joined). This is of great benefit, it should be done... The architect and the master standing with face towards the east or north, (each) catching hold of a peg by the left hand and holding a hammer should strike it (the peg) with the right hand, and there should be eight strokes on each (of the pegs).<sup>56</sup>*

The central gnomon and the four pegs at the corners as described in the *Mānasāra* (Fig. 66) are quite comparable with the central *Dugui* and the four poles at the corners described in the Feng-Shui text of *Dili Xinshu* as mentioned earlier (Fig. 20). Like the *Dugui*, this gnomon with a vertical character, which should be first set in the center, is a representation of the *Axis Mundi* and the original point of the cosmos. By examining its shadows cast by the sun at different times of a day, one can determine the four cardinal directions. Therefore, the E-W and N-S axes that represent the *Cosmic Cross* can be projected onto the site. The four pegs on the corners, as well as the four poles described in the *Dili Xinshu*, serve to mark the four-sided square boundary of the to-be-built space, in which the representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be realized.

Moreover, according to most Vāstu-Shāstra texts, all types of built spaces in theory should have ground plans as based on either or both the Vāstu-Purusha Mandala or the Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala. Given that the square mandalas are most frequently applied, these built spaces are supposed to have square or rectangular ground plans. The following passages with regard to such a square/rectangular plan for cities, villages, temples and houses can be found in the *Agni Purānam*, the *Mānasāra* and the *Mayamatam*:

*As regards the general characteristics of a divine edifice (i.e. temple), a square plot of ground should be divided into four equal rectangular divisions... In the case of a simple house, the diagram should be divided into eighty one subdivisions, whereas the same would be divided into a hundred chambers.<sup>57</sup> (Agni Purānam)*

*A village should be measured first, secondly, the ground-plan should be marked, thirdly, the sacrificial offerings should be made, fourthly, the village-planning should be carried out, fifthly, the house-plans should be designed and their foundations should be laid, and in the sixth place, the first entry into the house should be considered... The description of the arrangement of the Dandaka village is now*

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<sup>56</sup> Acharya 1994, pp. 24, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Shastri 1967, pp. 419, 425.

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*elaborated. It should be made quadrangular, not of equal sides, but rectangular. The surrounding wall should be quadrangular and (thus) it is also rectangular in shape.<sup>58</sup> (Mānasāra)*

*It is said that rectangular sites too are suitable for gods and for Brahmins. The shape of the site must be perfect and it must rise towards the west or south.<sup>59</sup> (Mayamatam)*

*In the middle of the pavilion a sacrificial area is laid out with unhusked rice; it is one pole wide. A diagram is drawn there with sixty-four squares, where the guardians of the site are arranged, starting with Brahma; they are represented by husked white rice and propitiated with flowers, perfumes, incense and lamps; the offerings are made to them according to the ritual.<sup>60</sup> (Mayamatam)*

As we can easily observe, most houses, palaces, cities and temples in India or in the Indian architectural tradition are usually built with a square/rectangular ground plan. Let us first consider the houses. Just like in China, traditionally, the courtyard house is also the most popular type of house in India. According to Vāstu-Shāstra texts, the ground plan of a courtyard house should always be based on a square mandala (Fig. 141). Such courtyard houses with a four-sided plan can be found throughout India (Fig. 268-272). Besides, as noted by Paul Oliver, even in Bali, an island far from the Indian sub-continent, the Hindus also usually build their houses with ground plans based on the square Vāstu-Purusha Mandala or Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala (Fig. 277).<sup>61</sup> Today, most Vāstu-Shāstra consultants still insist that the site or ground plan for a house should be in a square or rectangular shape, although modern dwellings are not necessarily courtyard houses, but often apartments within multi-storey buildings (Fig. 273-276).<sup>62</sup>

According to old texts, the ground plan of the palace as the residence for royal members should also be ideally based on the square mandala (Fig. 142). One of the most prominent examples is the palace built by Sawai Jai Singh in Jaipur, Rajasthan, in 18<sup>th</sup> century, which nowadays is called City Palace (Fig. 153). According to historical documents, this Hindu king was a devotee to Krishna, and at the time of the decline of the Islamic Mughal Empire, he sought to assert himself and his kingdom as an alternative power bases. Within this context, Sawai Jai Singh tended to use the ancient Hindu knowledge, Vāstu-

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<sup>58</sup> Acharya 1994, pp. 63, 67, 68.

<sup>59</sup> Dagens 1994, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>61</sup> Oliver 2003, pp. 184-185.

<sup>62</sup> Sastry 2005, p. 67.

Shāstra, to be the base of his new city and palace.<sup>63</sup> As we can see, this palace complex consists of several compounds, each obviously based on the square mandala.

Surely, the Jaipur city, built by Sawai Jai Singh in 18<sup>th</sup> century as well, exemplifies the city which was ideally established on the basis of the square mandala. It is very clear that the plan of this city is roughly based on a 3x3 Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala, with its central quarter as the palace complex and its four sides oriented to the four cardinal directions (Fig. 287).<sup>64</sup> In addition to this, the Dabhoi City in Gujarat with its foundation and fortification ascribed to the King of Siddhraj Jaisinh (1093-1143 CE) is also a good example (Fig. 286).

Since the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* is a worldwide and very old architectural theme, it should not be uncommon that we can find many ancient cities or human spaces in India, which were built much earlier than the development of Vāstu-Shāstra theories, are characteristic of square/rectangular plans. For example, Dholavira, a famous archeological site of an ancient city located on the Island Khadir-bet in Gujarat, dated back to c. 2650 BCE and belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization, has exactly a square plan with its four sides roughly oriented to the four cardinal directions (Fig. 285).<sup>65</sup> Though its grid-pattern reminds us of the Vāstu-Purusha Mandala and the Vāstu-Shāstra Mandalas, we should understand that the ancient city Dholavira was much older than all diagrams as well as *do's & taboos* of Vāstu-Shāstra. Suffice it to say that the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, which such a square grid-pattern was built to represent, is a pre-Vāstu-Shāstra worldwide architectural theme. Today, some Indian urban planners still hold that the modern city should be in a square or rectangular shape, and that in such a city there should be two main roads, one connecting the east with the west, and the other connecting the north with the south, which represent the *Cosmic Cross*.<sup>66</sup>

Other than cities, palaces and houses, numerous temples in India are also usually built with square/rectangular ground plans, as their ground plans should be based on the square mandalas as well (Fig. 143). Besides, not only the ground plan but certain rooms of the temple such as the '*Garbha-griha*' (i.e. the innermost sanctuary) should also be constructed in accordance with the square mandala (Fig. 67).<sup>67</sup> As we see, the temples in the Indian cultural sphere usually have square or rectangular ground plans, be they Hindu temples, Jain temples or others (Fig. 195-202). It is noteworthy that, in some of these temples, the

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<sup>63</sup> Sachdev & Tillotson 2002, pp. 36-38.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., pp. 39-49.

<sup>65</sup> Bisht 2000, pp. 11-16

<sup>66</sup> Rao, K. V. Raja 2005, pp. 86-87.

<sup>67</sup> Acharya 1994, pp. 198-201; Stierlin 1998, pp. 64-65.

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quincunx structure is particularly identifiable, which is highlighted by a variety of building components. As we can see in the plan of the Adinatha Jain temple, apart from the *Garbha-griha* which occupies the central position for the *Axis Mundi*, there are another four smaller rooms located on the four cardinal points which together stress the four-sided space once more and strengthen the representation of the *Cosmic Cross* (Fig. 196). Likewise, in the compound of the Brahmeshvara Hindu Temple, while the central tower, in which it is the *Garbha-griha*, represents the *Axis Mundi*, the four smaller towers on the four corners, in which there are four smaller shrines, are built to highlight the four-sided boundary and reinforce the scheme of the *Cosmic Cross* (Fig. 199).

Apart from the square/rectangular shape, the round shape with its meaning in the Indian cosmology should be also of great importance in the Indian architectural tradition. Indeed, just like in the Chinese architectural tradition, the round shape in the Indian architectural tradition is also usually used as the ground plan for the sacred and much-revered built space, with its center highlighting the *Axis Mundi* and the connection between the Earth and the Heaven. It is worth noting again that, in the ground plan of a built space, the round shape should not exist alone but should be used along with the square shape; otherwise the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross* cannot be fully manifested.

Such a combination can be first exemplified by the stupa, a mound-like structure containing Buddhist relics, which was developed in India as early as in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and then spread with Buddhism to other Asian countries. With a circular ground plan and a spire that tops its structure, the stupa clearly manifests the *Axis Mundi* that rises vertically from its center.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, as we can often observe, the round stupa is usually built with four *Toronas* (gates) or four niches on the four cardinal sides, or built on a square elevated platform, for example, the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century-BCE stupa in Sanchi, and the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century-BCE Ruwanwelisaya stupa in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka (Fig. 208-211). By the four *Toronas*, four niches or the square platform, along with the top spire, the presence of the directional axes—two horizontal axes (E-W and N-S) and one vertical axis (top-down)—are brought to light.<sup>69</sup> As we can see, the mound-like structure of the stupa does not exist alone, but is always accompanied by a square, either a 'visible square' defined by the platform or a 'conceptual square' defined by the four *Toronas* or niches on the four cardinal sides. In such a combination of the two shapes, the *Axis Mundi* and the *Cosmic Cross* both

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<sup>68</sup> As indicated by Anagarika Govinda, in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese term for the stem of the spire, '*devata, kotuva*', which means the 'enclosure of gods', is closely connected with the mythical Mount Meru in the shape of the cosmic tree, which represents the cosmic center. See: Govinda 1976, pp. 31-32.

<sup>69</sup> Snodgrass 1985, pp. 12-13.

find their expressions (Fig. 68). According to its form and cosmic meanings, the Indian stupa is quite comparable with the Chinese *Mingtang* as mentioned earlier (Fig. 171, 172).

Another significant example of the circle adopted as the shape for the plan of the built space is the sacred city Varanasi (or Kashi). As noted by Jonathan P. Parry, this sacred city in the Hindu traditions is seen as old as time itself because it is revered as the place where the universe is created and destroyed at the beginning and end of each cosmic cycle, that is, the 'original point' of the cosmos; only the city can survive the cosmic destruction.<sup>70</sup> The circumference of this city is marked by the famous *Panch-Kosi* pilgrimage route which, at peak times, is followed by tens of thousands of pilgrims from other places. As most Hindu devotees believe, this pilgrimage route can relieve them from their past sins and liberate them from the *Samsara*, the endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The *Panch-Kosi* route is a clockwise circumambulation of the city, and consequentially, the pilgrims can always keep the sacred area—the city—on the right side. The pilgrims worship in temples located to the right of the road (and which therefore fall just within the sacred perimeter). The most elaborate *Panch-Kosi* route consists of a sequence of seven concentric circles, each described by a set of eight shrines dedicated to Lord Ganesha, which are said to guard the eight points of the compass. At the focal point of the whole series is the most sacred temple of the city, the Vishvanath Temple dedicated to *Shiva*, the Lord of the Universe. The pilgrims thus pass through seven rings in order to penetrate the sacred core of the city.<sup>71</sup>

According to the above description, one might take it that both the Varanasi's plan and the *Panch-Kosi* route are circular. In fact, neither the Varanasi's plan nor the *Panch-Kosi* route is characteristic of a circular shape (Fig. 288, 289). Besides, as we can see, the Vishvanath Temple is not located in the center of the city either. Nevertheless, this city along with the pilgrimage route is ideally and mentally constructed as a perfect circle, of which the Vishvanath Temple as a representation of the *Axis Mundi* is thought to be situated at the center. Such a mental construct can be well manifested by some 19<sup>th</sup>-century maps of Varanasi made for the pilgrims who followed the *Panch-Kosi* route, for example, the '*Kashidarpana*' (i.e. city map of Varanasi) made by Kailasanatha Sukula in 1876 (Fig. 290). Obviously, this map does not represent the real shape of Varanasi but the shape that is mentally constructed by pious pilgrims, depicting this holy city as an ideal circular mandala.<sup>72</sup> Although in this map there is not a square accompanying the circle, this map has its four sides

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<sup>70</sup> Parry 2004, pp. 80-82.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., pp. 82-83.

<sup>72</sup> Michaels 2006, p. 132.

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oriented to the four cardinal directions.<sup>73</sup> This implies that the *Cosmic Cross* in keeping with the E-W and N-S axes is also represented in the map. Without a doubt, the eight Ganesha's temples located on each of the seven concentric circles of the pilgrimage route also play significant roles in reinforcing the *Cosmic Cross* in such a mental construct, as they serve to indicate the four cardinal directions (N, E, S and E) and the four intermediate directions (ES, SE, SW and NW).

So far we have seen, in both Chinese and Indian architectural traditions, the 'square' and the 'circle' are the two most important shapes, and an auspicious site or ground plan of the human space should always be based on either of them. In a square, or in its elongated form – rectangle, the center and the two horizontal axes can be well defined so that the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be well represented. In a circle, however, only the center, not the two horizontal axes, can be defined. That is why in architectural practice the circle is often combined with the square – either a visible square or a conceptual one. Based on the combination of the two shapes, both the *Axis Mundi* and the *Cosmic Cross* can find their expressions. Besides, as the two shapes are related with Heaven and Earth in both Chinese and Indian cosmology, only those highly sacred and much-revered spaces, which are built to emphasize the connection between the Heaven and the Earth, are usually built with the ground plan in the form of the combination of the two meaningful shapes.

### 2.2.3 The Non-square and Non-rectangular Built Space Considered to Be Inauspicious

Having discussed the *do's & taboos* concerning the auspicious square/rectangular built space, now we turn to the *do's & taboos* regarding the inauspicious non-square/rectangular built space, which can also be found in many old Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra texts. Undeniably, the reason why a non-square/rectangular built space should be seen as inauspicious is because the quincunx scheme, or the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, cannot find expression in it (Fig. 3). Given that people nowadays often inevitably have to build houses on a non-square/rectangular site or to buy the houses that have a non-square/rectangular plan, today's Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra consultants provide some methods for rectifying such an inauspicious site or plan.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

### **Feng-Shui Do's & Taboos concerning the Inauspicious Non-square and Non-rectangular Built Spaces**

Some inauspicious shapes which, absolutely, cannot be accepted as the site or the ground plan for houses are described in the following old Feng-Shui texts:

*The house shall never be built on a triangular site.*<sup>74</sup> (Dili Xinshu)  
*The triangular site will let people have the problems with mouths, tongues and eyes.*<sup>75</sup> (Zhaipu Dacheng)  
*A house with one side longer or shorter than its opposite side (i.e. having a trapezoid ground plan) may cause the death of the householder's wife and livestock.*<sup>76</sup> (Zhaipu Dacheng)  
*If the ground plan of the house is like the shape of the word 「丁」 (pronounced 'Ding'), the family will be homeless, and no son will be born into this family.*<sup>77</sup> (Yangzhai Shishu)  
*If the ground plan of the house is in the shape of 「丁」, no son will be born into this family.*<sup>78</sup> (Bazhai Zaofu Zhoushu)

According to these quotes, the houses built on a triangular/trapezoid/T-shaped site or having a triangular/trapezoid/T-shaped ground plan are very inauspicious, and the people living in them may suffer misfortune. Apart from these passages, according to the illustrations provided by some old Feng-Shui texts, many other inauspicious shapes for houses can also be found, for example, the H-shape, the L-shape, the cross-shape, the irregular and weird shapes, and the shapes without clear corners (Fig. 125-127). As we can see, they are all non-square/rectangular shapes, and most of them do not consist of a clear center and two horizontal orthogonal axes which together manifest *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*. Once the house is built on the basis of such shapes, its space is unlikely to represent the cosmic structure.

However, among these inauspicious shapes for houses, the 'cross-shape' should be of particular significance. As mentioned earlier, such a cross-shape is sometimes applied as the ground plan to Chinese temples, since the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be strongly represented by virtue of its highlighted center

<sup>74</sup> Wang 2003, p. 89. 「凡地勢三角者，亦不可用也。」

<sup>75</sup> Wei 1985, p. 521. 「火星三角形，口舌眼生丁。」

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 526. 「一邊屋短一邊長，損畜剋妻房。」

<sup>77</sup> Wang 1996, p. 121. 「凡宅起丁字屋，主無家，主絕人丁。」 This taboo asks people not to let houses have a T-shaped ground plan. Because the word 「丁」 in Chinese literally means 'male', people think that the 'T-shaped plan' of a house may cause the death of the sons of the family.

<sup>78</sup> Huang 1998, p. 27. 「屋如丁字樣者，名絕丁殺。」

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and two horizontal axes. As a shape definitely auspicious for temples, why is it on the contrary said to be inauspicious for houses? This probably lies in that the very strong representation of the cosmic structure is considered unsuitable for the houses of ordinary people, but only suitable for the sacred temples dedicated to much-revered divine beings.

Given that the Feng-Shui practice nowadays is mostly concerned with houses, which are not as holy as temples, Feng-Shui consultants usually do not recommend people to adopt the cross-shape or the circle as the shape for the site or ground plan of houses. A square/rectangular site or ground plan, in which the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be properly represented, is quite good enough for the ordinary houses. Surely, most contemporary Feng-Shui books or manuals still strongly instruct people to avoid choosing the sites or ground plans which are triangular, L-shaped, T-shaped or in any other disagreeable and defective shape.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, it seems that, in the Feng-Shui practice in the past as well as the present, people mostly dislike the triangular site or ground plan. It is not only because the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* cannot be represented in the triangle, but also because, according to the cosmology of the *Yin-Yang* School, this shape is usually associated with the element of 'Fire', which may lead to terrible fire disasters at any time.<sup>80</sup>

In the modern built environment, especially in a crowded and high-density city, it is often hard for people to find a square/rectangular site to build the house or to buy a house already built with a square/rectangular plan. People often unavoidably have to live in a house of which the site or ground plan is in an inauspicious non-square/rectangular shape. Knowing this, some contemporary Feng-Shui consultants recommend people to rectify such an inauspicious site or ground plan by adding trees, fences, curtains or folding partitions which can serve to form a 'new boundary line' between the 'square/rectangular part' and the 'surplus part' (Fig. 128).<sup>81</sup> The former thus can become a space in which the representation of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can take place, whereas the latter has no contribution to this cosmic representation. Accordingly, the 'square/rectangular part' can be properly used as an important

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<sup>79</sup> Mai 2004, p. 83 and 211; Ou-Yang 2004, *Illustrated Architectural Taboos and Solutions in Modern Dwellings*, pp. 2, 35 and 78; Ou-Yang 2004, *Ensuring the Prosperity of Human Beings and Homes: A Practical Manual of House Feng-Shui*, pp. 42-43; Roszbach 1984, pp. 71-73; Too 2004, p. 22.

<sup>80</sup> In the Feng-Shui tradition, different shapes can be associated with different Elements, the Metal with the circle, the Wood with the rectangle, the Water with the curve, the Fire with the triangle, and the Earth with the square. And in the Feng-Shui practice, such kind association can be applied to the shape of the site, the ground plan, the façade, the landscape, etc. See: Xu 2007, pp. 11-1 to 11-6.

<sup>81</sup> Roszbach 1984, pp. 76-80.



space for the living room, the kitchen, the dining room and the bedrooms, but the 'surplus part' should be merely used as a less important space, such as the outside garden, the storeroom, the toilet, etc., or simply left empty.<sup>82</sup>

### **Vāstu-Shāstra Do's & Taboos concerning the Inauspicious Non-square and Non-rectangular Built Spaces**

Similar to Feng-Shui texts, Vāstu-Shāstra texts provide many *do's & taboos* regarding a variety of inauspicious shapes for the site or ground plan of a built space. The following passages can be found in the *Mayamatam* and the *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra*:

*They reject, as well, a site which is too near a hall, a sacred place, a palace or a temple. They reject one planted with thorn trees, one which is round, triangular, irregular or shaped like a Vajra (narrow in the center) and one (raised in the center) like a tortoise shell... They reject a site depressed in the middle like a panava drum and one in the form of bird, tambourine or fish [sic].<sup>83</sup> (Mayamatam)*

*They reject a site (for dwellings) which is a cremation ground or a place of retreat as well as one in the shape of a porcupine, a monkey or a forest snake and, as well, one which is shaped like a hatchet, a winnowing basket, a conch or a stake. So too, they reject one resembling a cat or a lizard, one which is desert or frequented by worms, one in the shape of a house lizard or in any other such shape.<sup>84</sup> (Mayamatam)*

*In a town having the shape of a fan, the men become gout tormented or rheumatic pains victims or squall or storm and avalanche tormented short life-spanned, speakers of untruth and frivolous minded [sic].<sup>85</sup> (Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra)*

*A land cornerless creates auricular pain and one cleaved as such is a source of devastation [sic].<sup>86</sup> (Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra)*

These paragraphs, just like those found in Feng-Shui texts, indicate that the inauspicious shapes for the site or ground plan are usually non-square/rectangular. For example, the triangle, the fan-shape, the irregular and odd shapes, the animal-like shapes and the shapes without clear corners. These

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Dagens 1994, p. 13.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 13, 15.

<sup>85</sup> Sharma 2007, *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra of Bhojadeva I*, p. 94.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 515.

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shapes cannot well represent the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross*.

Of particular note is the first passage as quoted from the *Mayamatam*, which prescribes that the site for dwellings should never be in a round shape. However, as we have learned earlier, the circle is of importance in the Indian cosmology, which, in combination with the square, has been often applied as the plan to some sacred built spaces such as the stupas and Varanasi City (Fig. 208, 290). Besides, as described in old Vāstu-Shāstra texts, theoretically, a built space can be built on the basis of a round mandala (Fig. 138). Why, then, is the round shape said to be not suitable for the site of dwellings? According to this passage, we can understand that the dwellings in question are absolutely not those built for kings or divine beings but those for common people. The same passage goes on to indicate that the site for these dwellings should never be too close to sacred places, palaces and temples. As we can clearly see, what should not be built on a round site are the ordinary houses, thus not the palaces for kings or the temples for deities. Since the circle can be related to the divine Heaven in terms of the Indian cosmology, it could be “too perfect” for the humble human beings. The humble human beings do not “deserve” a perfect representation of the cosmic structure manifested by the circle or its combination with the square, but a square/rectangular site or ground plan is quite good enough for them. Surely, this Vāstu-Shāstra *taboo* that ‘*the circle should never be applied to the ordinary house*’ is quite comparable with the afore-mentioned Feng-Shui *taboo* that ‘*the cross-shape should never be applied to the ordinary house*’, as they both serve to prevent the ordinary house from being a space in which the cosmic structure can be represented “too” perfectly.

Interestingly enough, many contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra theoreticians and practitioners tend to explain such a *taboo* according to the theory of ‘cosmic energy’. For example, Sashikala Ananth, a famous and influential Vāstu-Purusha practitioner/theoretician, asserts in her book:

*The energy contained within the square and rectangle is the most stable, restful and equilibrium. This is considered suitable for residences and places of learning... The energy contained in a polygon is in movement and greater than that within a square. It is suitable for centers of energetic activities such as offices... The energy contained in the circle is very high and considered aggressive. This is suitable for stadia, entertainment centers, amphitheater, council chambers, and sometimes for religious centers such as prayer halls and temples*<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ananth 1998, pp. 84-85.

Surely, such a kind of explanation based on the cosmic energy still has something to do with the mental construct of the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross*. According to Sashikala Ananth, the intensity of the cosmic energy in a 'more concentric shape' could be greater than that in a 'less concentric shape' (Fig. 69). As we know, the center is the crucial place from which rises the *Axis Mundi*; hence in a 'more concentric shape', the manifestation of the *Axis Mundi* would be stronger than that in a 'less concentric shape'. Given that the cosmic energy is thought to come from the Heaven to the Earth through the *Axis Mundi*, a shape which has a stronger manifestation of the *Axis Mundi* in it may thus contain a greater intensity of the cosmic energy. In the current Vāstu-Shāstra practice, the *do's & taboos* regarding the inauspicious or improper shapes for the site or ground plan of houses are still by and large followed. As many modern Vāstu-Shāstra manuals and handbooks recommend, one should avoid applying the triangle, the circle, the polygon, the trapezoid or any other irregular, weird and animal-like shape to the site or ground plan for houses (Fig. 145).<sup>88</sup>

Quite coincidentally, the triangular site or ground plan in the Vāstu-Shāstra practice, just like in the Feng-Shui practice, is considered to be the most inauspicious. However, the Feng-Shui and the Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners offer different explanations for this. As mentioned earlier, in the Feng-Shui practice, the triangle is often associated with the dangerous element of Fire; in the Vāstu-Shāstra practice, the reason why the triangle is seen as particularly inauspicious is because it may contain negative cosmic energy.<sup>89</sup> Of course, from the perspective of the representation of the *Axis Mundi* & *Cosmic Cross*, we can realize why the triangle in both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions is thought to be particularly dangerous. On the one hand, as we already know, unlike the square/rectangle, the triangle is devoid of the two horizontal orthogonal axes that can manifest the *Cosmic Cross*. On the other hand, unlike the most other inauspicious shapes which are usually irregular and weird, the triangle is a simple and pure geometric shape that can be without difficulty drawn and applied in daily life. Consequently, in order to prevent people from easily or rashly using this shape as the ground plan for the built space, the *taboo* that '*the site or ground plan should never be in a triangular shape*' is formulated in both the Chinese and the Indian architectural traditions, and in order to increase the power of this *taboo*, more and diverse explanations were

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<sup>88</sup> Ananth 1998, p. 132; Arya 2000, pp.43-49; Babu 2003, p. 51; Babu 2007, p.23; Bhambi 2007, p.22; Chawla 2004, p. 21; Dwivedi 2003, pp. 22-37; Saluja 2007, p. 31.

<sup>89</sup> For instance, Rakesh Chawla (a contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra practitioner) asserts in his book that "*A triangular shaped plot is generally associated with negative energies which tend to bring in various problems and so it is best avoided.*" See: Chawla 2004, p. 21.

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developed in the Feng-Shui and the Vāstu-Shāstra traditions.

Moreover, as mentioned before, many Feng-Shui practitioners nowadays in their books teach people how to rectify the sites or the ground plans which are not in an auspicious square/rectangular shape. So do the Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners nowadays. The methods for rectifying the site or ground plan in the Vāstu-Shāstra practice are also highly similar to those in the Feng-Shui practice. As many Vāstu-Shāstra manuals and handbooks emphasize, when people cannot but have to live in a house of which the site or ground plan is in a non-square/rectangular shape, they can still redefine an auspicious square/rectangular area within the house by setting fences, cornerstones or other natural or man-made materials (Fig. 146). Inside this redefined area, there can be the living room, the kitchen, the dining room, the *Puja* room and the bedrooms, whereas the part outside this area should be left empty or just be used as an unimportant space such as the garden, the storeroom, the garage, etc.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ananth 1998, pp. 108-109; Dwivedi 2004, p. 44; Mastro 2006, p. 49; Sihapati 2005, p. 236.

## 2.3 Do's & Taboos concerning the 'Proportion' of Built Spaces

So far we have seen that, in the Feng-Shui as well as the Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions, either the 'square' or the 'rectangle' is taken to be a proper and favorable shape which can be applied as the ideal plan for almost all types of built spaces. On the one hand, there seems to be no big difference between the two kinds of four-sided shapes, since the rectangle can be seen as an elongated square, both consisting of a definable center and two horizontal orthogonal axes through which the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* can be manifested. However, on the other hand, it should be noted that the square and the rectangle are different in proportion: the former has four sides of equal length, but the rectangle does not. As a result, in the square, the two horizontal axes can be of equal length, so that the representation of the *Cosmic Cross* can be "very perfect". But in the rectangle, as the two horizontal axes are not of equal length, the representation of the *Cosmic Cross* is "less perfect". That is to say, the representation of the cosmic structure in a square built space is likely to be seen as more perfect than that in a rectangular one (Fig. 4). In what follows, we are going to discuss the *do's & taboos* regarding the proportion (or the width-length ratio) which play crucial roles in controlling the degree of the representation of the cosmic structure in the four-sided built space.

### 2.3.1 Feng-Shui Do's & Taboos concerning the Proportion of Built Spaces

Although the *do's & taboos* found in old Feng-Shui texts are generally not concerned with the difference between the square and the rectangle, some of them explicitly emphasize that the square ground plan is not suitable for the ordinary houses. For example, the following passage can be found in the *Zhaiyu Dacheng*:

*As for the house, if the four sides of the ground plan are equal in length, its dwellers are destined to suffer from a total lack of clothes and food, and as a result, the house will become where the coffins of the deceased are laid.*<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, in the same text, we can find an illustration regarding how the four sides of the single-courtyard house should be properly measured and

<sup>91</sup> Wei 1985, p. 524. 「四正一般長，停柩絕衣糧。」

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proportioned, which supports the *taboo* that 'the ordinary house should not have a square plan' (Fig. 123). This illustration clearly shows that the plan of a single-courtyard house should be based on the 'Nine-Square & Eight Trigram Diagram' (Fig. 116). As mentioned before, such a diagram is a square, but however, in this illustration, it is elongated into a rectangle when applied as the plan for houses. Based on the rectangular diagram, the single-courtyard house should be 36 feet in length ( $12 + 8 + 4 + 12 = 36$ ) and 23 feet in width ( $6.1 + 10.8 + 6.1 = 23$ ).<sup>92</sup> This *taboo* found in the *Zhaipu Dacheng* seems to function to prevent the ordinary house from representing the *Cosmic Cross* perfectly manifested, and this implies that the humble human beings who occupy this house do not deserve a space which completely represents the cosmic structure. In some sense, it can be compared with the earlier-mentioned *taboo* that 'the ordinary house should not have a cross-shaped plan'. As we can understand, both the equal-sided square and the cross-shape are likely to contribute to a perfect and strong representation of the *Cosmic Cross* which is not suitable for the houses of the common people.

Surely, this *taboo* which applies to the ordinary house does not apply to the sacred and much-revered buildings. In the Chinese architectural tradition, many temples, pagodas and royal mausoleums are built with equal-sided square ground plans, for instance, the ancient *Mingtang* (Fig. 171, 172), the 9<sup>th</sup>-century Qianxun Pagoda (千尋塔) of the Chongsheng Temple (崇聖寺) (Fig. 166), the 7<sup>th</sup>-century Simen Pagoda (四門塔) of the Shentong Temple (神通寺) (Fig. 167), the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Xuguang Pavilion (旭光閣) of the Pule Temple (普樂寺) (Fig. 168), and the 11-century Yongzhao Royal Mausoleum (永昭陵) (Fig. 170). It is not uncommon that some of these majestic buildings also have the square plan in combination with a cross-shape or a circle because such a combination can further strengthen the representation of the cosmic structure.

Another interesting example is the Zhong-Zheng Memorial Hall, a gigantic construction with a perfect square plan built in Taipei, Taiwan, which was built to commemorate Chiang Kai-Shek,<sup>93</sup> the dictator or President of the Republic of China, who died in 1975 (Fig. 175, 176). Surely, Chiang Kai-Shek is neither a god nor an emperor, but he is/was venerated by a host of loyal followers of the Kuomintang (i.e. Chinese Nationalist Party) as a god-like or emperor-like figure. That is why he was/is thought to deserve a temple-like or mausoleum-like space in which the complete representation of the cosmic structure can take place. Nowadays, this memorial hall is often dubbed "Zhong-Zheng Temple" (中

<sup>92</sup> In the traditional Chinese measurement system, 1 *zhang* (丈) = 10 feet (尺) = 100 inches (寸).

<sup>93</sup> 'Zhong-Zheng' (中正) is the Chinese style name of Chiang Kai-Shek, which is also commonly recognized by Taiwanese people.

正廟) by many Taiwanese people. Indeed, the seated statue of Chiang Kai-Shek inside this hall is quite like a statue of a deity in terms of its position inside the construction, and the twelve-ray emblem of the Kuomintang above his head also highlights the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* theme in this “holy space” (Fig. 177).

### **2.3.2 Vāstu-Shāstra Do's & Taboos concerning the Proportion of Built Spaces**

The *do's & taboos* regarding the proportion found in the Vāstu-Shāstra texts, compared with those found in the Feng-Shui texts, are much more elaborate and complicated because they are not only concerned with the difference between the square and the rectangle, but are also concerned with the difference between the rectangles with distinct width-length ratios. As indicated by D. N. Shukla, the principle concerning the proportionate measurements is of great importance in the Vāstu-Shāstra architectural tradition, and only the building which is proportionately measured out could be said to give an auspicious result for its residents.<sup>94</sup> It is important to note that, according to old Vāstu-Shāstra texts, the determination of the width-length ratio for the ground plan of a built space should depend on ‘who’ will reside in it.

As we know, the traditional Indian society is considered being established on complicated caste systems, among which the system of *Varna*, mentioned in many ancient Hindu texts, is the most familiar one to us. In principle, people from a society should be divided into four groups of *Varnas*: the ‘Brahmin’ (including priests, teachers and scholars) as the highest caste (or *Varna*), the ‘Kshatriya’ including kings, nobles and warriors) as the second one, the ‘Vaishya’ (including merchants and craftsmen) as the third one, and the ‘Sudra’ (including service providers and peasants) as the lowest one; the top three castes are called ‘twice-born’.<sup>95</sup> According to old Vāstu-Shāstra texts, the house of each caste should have the site or ground plan with a particular width-length ratio. For the people from a higher caste, the ratio can be as nearly perfect as that of an equal-sided square, while for those from a lower caste, the ratio should be further remote from such perfection.<sup>96</sup> The following passages can be found in the *Brihat Samhitā*, the *Mānasāra* and the *Mayamatam*:

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<sup>94</sup> ‘Zhong-Zheng’ (中正) is the Chinese style name of Chiang Kai-Shek, which is also commonly recognized by Taiwanese people.

<sup>95</sup> Shukla 1960, p. 205.

<sup>96</sup> Flood 2004, p. 48-49, 58-61; Rodrigues 2006, pp. 57-60; Sinha 1983, p. 11.

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*The length of the houses for the four classes should respectively exceed the breadth by a tenth (Brahmins), an eighth (Kshatriyas), a sixth (Vaishyas) and a fourth (Sudras) respectively.<sup>97</sup> (Brihat Samhitā) That site is auspicious for the Brahmins, which is square (in shape), whitish in colour, possessing the fig tree, sloping towards the north, and sweet and fragrant in taste. With (the length) exceeding the breadth by one-eighth, reddish in colour, with declivity towards the east, bitter in taste, possessing the peepal tree (ficus religiosa), and wide in size: such a site is suitable and prosperous to the Kshatriyas (lit. the kings). With the length exceeding the breadth by not more than one-sixth, yellowish in colour, possessing the fig tree (ficus infectoria), with declivity towards the east, and sour in taste: such a site is auspicious and the source of all success to the Vaishyas (lit. the merchant class). With the length exceeding the breadth of four parts by one part (i.e. one-fourth), possessing the banyan tree black in colour, pungent in taste, and with declivity towards the east: such a site bears prosperity to the Sudras. Of the sites described above the (first) two are stated to be the best and the (last) two fair [sic].<sup>98</sup> (Mānasāra)*

*The site suitable for Brahmins is square, white, without defects, planted with udumbara trees, sloping towards the north, perfect and has an astringent and sweet savour. Such a site is a guarantee of good fortune. The length of the site suitable for kings is one eighth more than its width; it is red in colour and bitter in flavour; it slopes towards the east, is vast and planted with asvattha. Such a site invariably guarantees success. The length of the site suitable for Vaishya is one sixth more than its width; it is yellow, of sour taste and planted with plaksa; it slopes towards the east. Such a site is beneficent. The length of the site suitable to Sudra is one fourth more than its width; it slopes towards the east, is black, has a pungent flavour and is planted with nyagrodha. Such a site is a source of abundant riches and grain.<sup>99</sup> (Mayamatam)*

*For Brahmins and, (amongst the others), only for kings (the enclosure) is square; for Kshatriyas, (Vaishyas and Sudras) its length is greater than its width by an eighth, a sixth or a quarter, respectively.<sup>100</sup> (Mayamatam)*

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<sup>97</sup> Shukla 1960, p. 322.

<sup>98</sup> Bhat 1986, p. 454.

<sup>99</sup> Acharya 1994, p. 12.

<sup>100</sup> Dagens 1994, p. 9.



*Comparing the Do's & Taboos in Chinese Feng-Shui and  
Indian Vāstu-Shāstra Architectural Traditions*

As shown in these passages, for the Brahmins as the highest caste, the ratio can be as perfect as 1:1 or 1:1½, for the Kshatriyas as the second caste, it is 1:1⅛, for the Vaishyas as the third caste, it is 1:1⅙, and for the lowest caste, the Sudras, it should be 1:1¼, a ratio far from that of a square (Fig. 70). It is evident that in a house for higher castes, the representation of the *Cosmic Cross* can be “more” perfect; whereas in those for lower castes, such a representation should be far from perfect. This implies that the people of a higher social class deserve to live in a space which can represent the cosmic structure “more” completely; whereas those of a lower social class are only allowed to live in a space representing the cosmic structure “less” completely.

Besides, it is also noteworthy that there is a slight difference between the two above passages as found respectively in the *Mānasāra* and the *Mayamatam*. As prescribed in the *Mānasāra*, the house of kings should be built with a width-length ratio as that of Kshatriyas (i.e. the second caste), since the kings belong to this caste theoretically. However, in the *Mayamatam*, it is said that the width-length ratio of the house of Brahmins should be identical with that of the house of Brahmins (i.e. the highest caste), and this seems to imply that the king should have his social status equal to that of the Brahmins, and thus higher than that of the Kshatriyas. Such a difference is probably a result of the ambiguous and debatable socio-political role of the king in the Hindu traditions. On the one hand, some suggest that the king is by nature a Kshatriya, and his status should not be as high as that of the Brahmin.<sup>101</sup> As shown in the ancient epic *Ramayana*, the protagonist King *Rama* as a prince and heroic warrior was a Kshatriya.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, some hold that the king should be regarded as a divine being rather than a human being, and even the highest caste, the Brahmins, should be largely dependent upon his power for patronage.<sup>103</sup> Also according to *Ramayana*, the King *Rama*, though born into a Kshatriya, was an avatar of Lord *Vishnu*.<sup>104</sup> Obviously, the difference of the two passages respectively found in the *Mānasāra* and the *Mayamatam* is a significant reflection of the difference between the two opinions on the kinship in the Hindu traditions.

In the contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra practice, people are still very concerned with how to determine a proper width-length ratio for a house plan. However, as we know, the Indian caste system has been officially abolished, and the social hierarchy based on the caste discrimination was no longer allowed in modern Indian society. Consequentially, the Vāstu-Shāstra consultants nowadays

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 573.

<sup>102</sup> Flood 2004, pp. 67-74.

<sup>103</sup> Jacobsen 2009, p. 683.

<sup>104</sup> Flood 2004, pp. 67-74.

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rarely tend to ask people to determine this ratio according to the caste, but just emphasize that the ratio of 1:1 is not suitable for the ordinary house. As mentioned earlier, these contemporary consultants think that the cosmic energy in an equal-sided square plan is likely to be too strong for people. According to them, the width-length ratios between the 1:1 and 1:2 are all suitable for dwellings, and an 'integer ratio', such as 1:1¼, 1:1½, 1:1¾ or 1:2, is better than a 'non-integer ratio' (Fig. 71).<sup>105</sup> Given that the configuration of built spaces is a representation of the orderly cosmic structure, the four sides of this built space are supposed to be proportioned orderly rather than chaotically. Definitely, an integer ratio is usually considered more orderly than a non-integer one.

The *do's & taboos* regarding the 'configuration' of built spaces in the Feng-Shui tradition and those in the Vāstu-Shāstra tradition, though somewhat different in detail, are quite comparable. This plays crucial roles in supporting the architectural representations of the cosmic and social realities. First, the *do's & taboos* concerning the 'shape' in both traditions all recommend that an auspicious built space should consist of a definable center and two horizontal perpendicular axes, so that the cosmic structure can be well represented in it. Some *taboos* also suggest that the cross-shape and the circle are not suitable for the ordinary houses, which seem to prevent the humble human beings from owning a space that can represent Heaven or the cosmic structure "too" perfectly and completely. Surely, as we have seen in the Chinese and the Indian architectural traditions, the sacred built spaces dedicated to the much-revered divine beings, such as the *Mingtang*, the Varanasi City, temples and stupas, are not subject to these *taboos*. Second, the *do's & taboos* concerning the 'proportion' in the Feng-Shui as well as the Vāstu-Shāstra traditions further highlight the hierarchical distinction between the human beings and the divine beings and that between the higher-class and the lower-class people. As we have already noted, the space built for the divine beings (or the higher-class people) can have a ground plan with a width-length ratio as perfect as that of an equal-sided square, whereas the humble humans (or the lower-class people) should not. According to these *do's & taboos* regarding the configuration of built spaces, it can be understood that the representations of the social realities are based on the representations of the cosmic realities. In the next chapter, we will see that the *do's & taboos* concerning the 'orientation' of built spaces, just like those regarding the 'configuration', also play important roles in supporting the architectural representations of cosmic and social realities.

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<sup>105</sup> Jacobsen 2009, pp. 685-689.

