Yoga for the Home

BY JON LIPMAN

“Living in a Vedic home has brought a wonderful softening and deepening effect on my yoga practice,” says Eva Norlyk Smith, Ph.D., an Iowa-based yoga teacher and writer.

And, because our home is an extension of our body the orientation of our dwelling affects our mind and body as well. Here, too, east is best, and the ancient Vedic texts say that south is the worst building orientation as it is associated with problems and suffering. Studies validate that those who live in south-facing homes have worse mental health, are more likely to be under the care of a cardiologist, and even are less prosperous.

Our physiology is controlled by our brain, and, believe it or not, brains are affected by the direction we face. Several biomedical animal studies have found that neurons of the thalamus, deep in the brain, communicate differently based on the direction one faces. The thalamus is a critical part of the mind-body connection as it’s an intermediary between the prefrontal cortex and the body, as well as the controller of our limbic system, which regulates growth, aging, and responses to stress.

Longtime yoga practitioner David Navarrete told me, “There’s a relationship and order that permeates Vastu. I’ve noticed it over time in the silent harmony that permeates anything I do at home. In Vastu there’s a deeper resonance indoors. Whether I’m working in my office, reading intently, or listening to music, each experience carries an aura of purposefulness, as if the environment was attuned to my intention. I experience a pervasive feeling that makes me feel grounded, settled, as if I were part of a much larger, unseen environment.”

The Vedic tradition teaches us that there is a best direction to face for key activities, such as yoga, work, and sleep. Regardless of where on the planet you are the best direction is always east, and, because our home is an extension of our body the orientation of our dwelling affects our mind and body as well. Published research reveals that the direction in which people sleep correlates with incidence of depression and animal studies have found that neurons of the thalamus, deep in the brain, communicate differently based on the direction one faces.

When we live in such a home we live in harmony with the deepest structural level of nature. The ancient texts tell us this nourishes the soul.

The owner of one of these ideal homes told me, “My experience reaches at Jon@JLipman.com.

For more information, and to download citations for the research mentioned in this article, see MaharishiVastu.Org or contact info@MaharishiVastu.Org.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is best known for bringing the Transcendental Meditation technique to the West, and more recently as the inspiration behind the David Lynch Foundation. It is less well known that starting in 1961 he taught hatha yoga to many of those who learned TM, and through his programs hundreds of thousands of people in the United States have learned yoga. Subsequently, he introduced the holistic, natural healthcare system known as Ayurveda to the West and in the 1990s brought Ayurveda and Vastu architecture to the West. Roughly $500 million in Maharishi Vastu homes, schools, and restaurants have been built in the United States. For more information, and to download citations for the research mentioned in this article, see MaharishiVastu.Org or contact info@MaharishiVastu.Org.

parents and me the very day that the family opened a new east door into their home and stopped using the west door; the two girls became best friends.

Nonetheless, a few years later I stopped working with clients to modify existing dwellings because I found that people were experiencing the full effects only in Vastu houses designed from the ground up.

The owner of one of these ideal homes told me, “My experience is that my home is a totally safe, secure refuge, a sanctuary of purity and stillness and happiness. I feel that my house protects me, not only when I am in it, but even when I am far away from it.”

It’s the complete holistic approach to Vedic architecture which harmonizes all of the inner and outer energies. These homes offer their inhabitants increased peace, health, happiness, and enlightenment—deepening the effectiveness of yoga, and more.

Jon Lipman, AIA has been practicing Vastu architecture since 1997 and directs MaharishiVastu.Org. He is an award-winning architect and New York Times–recommended author who has lectured at Harvard, Stanford, and Yale. In 2013 he gave Oprah a televised tour of a Maharishi Vastu home for Oprah’s View Chapter. Jon has practiced yoga daily since 1974. He can be reached at Jon@JLipman.com.