

MAHARISHI VEDIC ARCHITECTURE

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Jonathan Lipman, AIA, Director
Institute for Maharishi VedicSM Architecture
Maharishi University of Management
Fairfield, Iowa USA 52557
E-mail: jon@mgc-vastu.com

Alarik Arenander, Ph.D., Director
Brain Research Institute
Maharishi University of Management
Fairfield, Iowa USA 52557
E-mail: bri@mum.edu

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The ancient textbooks of *Sthapatya Veda*, a system of architecture and urban design, propose that specific elements in the design, construction, and siting of a building will have particular effects upon the quality of life of those persons occupying a building.

The ancient texts propose in detail how influences may be designed into a building to promote such qualities as prosperity, happiness, health and enlightenment. And, the texts delineate the damaging influences of improper building design and construction which promote anger, fear and chronic disease. The objective of this system of design is to increase the influence of the beneficial factors from the built environment and eliminate the influence of the negative factors.

Manasara and *Maya Mata* are the primary ancient Sanskrit texts that describe the total knowledge (*Veda*) of establishing form (*Sthapatya*). These texts apply to all created objects but are applied primarily to the fields of architecture and urban design. Vedic architecture is considered the oldest and most systematic of the world's architectural traditions and is has been recognized as the original source of the East Asian geomancy system of *Feng Shui*¹.

Vedic architecture is also known more commonly in India by the Sanskrit word *Vastu*. The surviving strands of this ancient Vedic system have recently been unified and by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the founder of the world-wide Transcendental MeditationSM program. The system as he has restored it is referred to as Maharishi Vastu^{R 2}, Maharishi Vedic architecture, or Maharishi Sthāpatya Veda^R architecture. These names are used interchangeably in this report.

Current Progress

The predictions in the ancient Vedic texts have been verified by the overwhelmingly positive subjective experiences of thousands of people world-wide who are living, studying or working in buildings designed within the past 17 years using the principles of Maharishi Vedic architecture. In North America alone about \$400 million worth of these buildings have been built, and there have been many dramatically positive subjective reports by their users of improvements in well-being, physical health, family harmony, and financial success.

An example is the following:

Upon moving into my first Fortune-Creating home I noticed I slept more soundly without waking up during the night. My thinking was clearer, and I made better choices in business and in my personal life. When I had to temporarily move out was when I really noticed a contrast: my sleep became worse again. I had less support of nature and stayed up too late at night for no reason. The nurturing support, which Maharishi Sthapatya Veda design provides, was gone.

A year later I was able to move back into a Maharishi Vastu home, and what a relief that was. Again my sleep immediately improved, as did my daily routine. My wealth grew with less effort, and my health also improved. The choices I made were better, and the quality of my life is much better.³

To what degree have medical and scientific research verified and explained these remarkable predictions and personal experiences? Here, we summarize research conducted on Maharishi Vedic architecture. Some of the research has been published, some of it has been accepted for publication in a peer-review medical journal, and some of it is preliminary and not yet submitted for publication.

Design Principles

Maharishi Vedic architecture is defined by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as “the most ancient and complete system of architecture and planning according to the solar, lunar and planetary influences on the earth with reference to north and south poles and the equator – connecting individual life with Cosmic Life, individual intelligence with Cosmic Intelligence.”⁴

Maharishi Sthapatya Veda theory predicts that a number of influences impact the users of buildings. These influences include:

- The orientation of the building
- The placement of rooms
- The proportion and Vedic measurements of the building
- The building elements,
- The site elements
- The slope and shape of land
- The degree of exposure to the rising sun; and
- The various elements in the immediate environment including water bodies.⁵

Of this list of influences Maharishi considers *orientation* to be the most significant

Prediction 1. SLEEP: Body Orientation and Mind-Body Health

Maharishi Sthapatya Veda theory predicts that our health is affected by our orientation while sleeping. It predicts that it is healthiest for us to sleep with our heads pointed to the east and most unhealthy to sleep with our heads to the north.

Research Findings

This hypothesis has been examined by Veronica Butler, M.D., a rural Iowa physician, who discovered via a survey of her patients that those who sleep in north-facing beds suffer from significantly more depression and anxiety than do those who sleep in beds without this orientation.⁶

In her study, she found the head direction correlated with mental health. she reported that planned comparisons [based on the ANOVA, a standard statistical analysis procedure] with direction of sleep as the grouping variable revealed that those individuals sleeping with their head pointing north had significantly lower scores on the Mental Health Inventory compared to patients who slept in other directions ($F(1,150) = 9.08, p = .003$). Thus, there is initial concrete evidence in support of Maharishi Sthapatya Veda design's predicted effect of our sleeping orientation on mind-body health.

Ongoing research includes evaluating brainwave and neuroendocrine patterns during different sleep orientation in humans. Also, research has begun to examine the brainwave patterns associated with head orientation and cardinal directions inside and outside a building with proper Vastu (see below).

Prediction 2. Building Orientation and Occupant Mind/Body Health

Sthapatya Veda also predicts that not only our own body's orientation, but also the orientation of the buildings we occupy, will affect us in detectable, well-delineated ways. Maharishi Sthapatya Veda theory predicts that the widest range of auspicious influences benefit those who live in east-facing houses, and the broadest, most life-damaging influences come to bear on those in south-facing houses. The texts state that enlightenment, affluence and fulfillment will increase to those who live in east-facing houses and that all negative influences – problems and suffering – will affect the lives of those who live in south-facing houses.⁷ Though we do not yet have a bio-mechanical model to explain this predicted effect, we can nonetheless test to see whether it does occur.

Research Findings

1. Mental Health: The first such test was carried out as a component of Dr. Butler's research cited above. As a part of her survey of patients Butler discovered that there was a strong correlation between house orientation and scores in the areas of mental health and prosperity among her patients. Significantly lower scores were found in these areas among patients whose homes faced south.

Specifically, she found that patients whose homes had south entrances had significantly poorer overall scores on the Mental Health Inventory than patients with north or east entrances ($F(1,154) = 4.51, p = .035$)....Patients whose homes had south entrances also reported more

financial problems relative to those with north or east entrances ($F(1,154) = 4.18, p = .043$). This result remained significant even when controlling for level of income ($F(1,153) = 3.98, p = .048$).

2. Cardiovascular Health: A second finding comes from pilot preliminary review of data from a practicing cardiologist in southern California. He found that 50% of his patients lived in south-facing houses – this disproportionately high percentage correlates with the Maharishi Sthapatya Veda prediction that residents in south-facing buildings come under an influence of problems and suffering.⁸

3. Hospital Recovery Rates: A third finding looked at the effect upon individuals in east vs. west facing sides of buildings, e.g., when rooms are placed so as to permit sunlight from the east to enter them versus the sunlight from the west. In a peer-reviewed published study, the recovery rates of bipolar-disorder patients housed in a wing of a hospital were compared where half of the patients were located in bedrooms on the east side of a corridor, receiving eastern sunlight into their rooms, and the other half were housed in rooms on the west side of the same corridor, receiving only western sunlight into their rooms. In all other respects the patients had the same treatments, administered by the very same doctors and nurses. It was discovered that the patients whose rooms were on the east side of the corridor were released from treatment on average 3.7 days earlier than the patients in rooms that received only western light.⁹

4. Crime Rates: A fourth finding comes from a study examining the correlation of negative behavior and house orientation. The research reported that there were 75% more burglaries in south-facing houses than in houses facing east, west or north.¹⁰

5. Subjective Sensitivity to Vastu Buildings: A fifth study has shown that individuals can detect the nature of the building they are in with no classical sensory cues (visual=blindfold, auditory=headphones with nature sounds, smell=same aroma, motor =moved in wheelchair input). Under these sensory-deprived conditions, individuals were randomly exposed to and could distinguish new Vastu buildings, from “rectified” Vastu office building, from non-Vastu buildings.¹⁸

Each of these individual cited studies is preliminary, but taken collectively they lend support for the principle of Maharishi Vedic architecture that mind-body health and wellbeing is promoted by the design of east-facing buildings, and designs that provide a maximum of eastern sunlight for their occupants.

The Cumulative Influence of Multiple Design Factors

Maharishi Vedic architecture is considered by its practitioners to be a holistic science. When multiple predictors are present the effects are anticipated to be stronger. A study is underway to examine this prediction.¹¹ In this study 100 publicly-owned businesses have been selected randomly in the Faroe Islands, a territory of Denmark. Five years of financial records for each company has been compiled from public records, as have aerial photos, topographic maps, and site plans of their headquarters. Companies have been excluded from the study if their income is not generated within their headquarters – fishing and shipping companies, for example, have therefore been excluded.

A Maharishi Sthapatya Veda consultant has begun to evaluate the collected drawings and photos and has concluded that there are five Maharishi Vedic architecture factors that can be observed in the documentation on each company:

- Building orientation
- Building shape
- Direction of nearest mountain
- Direction of nearest water body
- Orientation of fenced enclosure around the building, where present

The consultant has begun to grade each company according to the predicted influence of each of the five factors and is compiling a single numerical predictor for their overall influence, and is then ranking the companies on the basis of this predictor. Independently, the study's lead researcher, a professor of business and statistics, is ranking the financial success of the companies on the basis of the amount of profit generated per employee over the five year period and other standard financial statistics.

In a preliminary review of the data, results for thirty of the companies have been compared, and in the cases of 27 out of the 30 companies the researchers report that the Vedic architecture indices correlated with the amount of profit generated per employee by the companies. 27 out of 30 is a remarkably high correlation. The researchers plan to submit the study for publication in a peer-reviewed journal when they have completed their analysis of all of the 100 companies.

Conclusion

Preliminary research on homes and office buildings shows significant correlations with the behavior of their occupants, supporting the contention of the texts of Maharishi Vedic architecture that the application of its principles can “influence health, happiness and success.”

We encourage future research to clarify the effects of these ancient principles by studying either individual principles or combinations of principles. Also, research can be conducted to examine the effects of the many hundreds of buildings built world-wide over the past decade entirely according to the recommended principles of Maharishi Vedic architecture. It is proposed that even more measurable effects upon occupants' well being and success will be found in them, in accordance with anecdotal evidence and the preliminary research findings.

We encourage the national research institutes, such as the NIH, to examine these principles of Vastu and the great potential they offer to the health and welfare of the world.

References and Footnotes

¹ This statement is based upon conversations with masters of Feng Shui and Sthapatya Veda by Lipman. We recommend further research by an historian of Asian architectural.

- ² Maharishi Vedic, Maharishi Sthāpatya Veda and Maharishi Vastu are registered or common law trademarks licensed to Maharishi Vedic Education Development Corporation and used under sublicense or with permission.
- ³ Financial calculation and anecdotal experiences of building users collected by Eloise Raymond and Susan Lauer for Fortune-Creating Buildings/1680 Highway One, Suite 2600/Fairfield, Iowa, 52556/USA (info@fortunecreatingbuildings.com). A large selection of first-person experiences, including the one quoted above, may be reviewed at <http://www.fortunecreatingbuildings.com/testimonials>.
- ⁴ *Building for the Health and Happiness of Everyone, Creating Ideal Housing in Harmony with Natural Law – Exhibition*, Maharishi Vedic University, The Netherlands, 1998. Page 3. Available from Fortune-Creating Buildings/1680 Highway One, Suite 2600/Fairfield, Iowa, 52556/USA (info@fortunecreatingbuildings.com).
- ⁵ *Ibid.* page 15
- ⁶ Travis, F., Butler, V., Rainforth, M., Alexander, C.N., Khare, R., Lipman, J. “Can a Building’s Orientation Affect the Quality of Life of the People Within? Testing Principles of Maharishi Sthāpatya Veda,” *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*. October, 2004. Butler’s study’s subjects did not live in Maharishi Sthapatya Veda-designed houses and were generally unacquainted with Maharishi Sthapatya Veda design. Approximately 100 subjects were included in the study.
- ⁷ *Building for....*, page 13.
- ⁸ John Zamarra, M.D., verbal description of preliminary review conducted by on 100 of his recent patients. Orientation of house was based on street address. Addresses were categorized into one of four cardinal directions. Zamarra hopes to follow this up with a comprehensive study of 3000 patients and submit his findings for publication.
- ⁹ Benedetti, F., “Morning Sunlight Reduces Length of Hospitalization in Bipolar Depression” *Journal of Affective Disorders* 62 (2001) pp. 221-223
- ¹⁰ *Prev. cit.*: Travis, F., Butler, V., Rainforth, M., Alexander, C.N., Khare, R., Lipman, J., Study conducted on 110 burglaries reported in Fairfield, Iowa. A preliminary, unpublished study in 2000 by student Jar-El Cohen at the Maharishi School of the Age of Enlightenment, Fairfield, Iowa conducted on burglaries reported in Ottumwa, Iowa yielded similar results.
- ¹¹ Lead researcher is Olavur Christiansen, Ph. D., University of the Faroe Islands, Denmark. This report is based upon an oral presentation made by Christiansen in August of 2001 to the faculty of the business school at Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, Iowa.
- ¹⁸ DeFrietas, Graham, Preliminary Report on a Study on Vastu-sensitive subjects, Unpublished research, Maharishi University of Management, 2005

¹⁹ Arenander, A, Travis, T. and Wallace K. working at MERU in Netherlands, 2005.