



11. From Tradition to Transformation: The Relevance of Ayurveda, Yoga, and Vastu Shastra in the Contemporary World

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Abstract

Health, well-being, and living spaces have been profoundly impacted by traditional Indian science and technology, exemplified by Ayurveda, Yoga, and Vastu Shastra. The ancient medical system known as Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on natural remedies, preventative care, and holistic health care that balances the body's doshas. Yoga integrates breathing exercises, meditation, and physical postures to support mental clarity, spiritual development, and physical well-being. The ancient architectural science known as Vastu Shastra offers principles for creating environments that are in balance with the elements to improve well-being. These systems, which have their roots in ancient wisdom, still provide insightful knowledge and useful applications in contemporary architecture, healthcare, and wellness. Traditional Indian systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Vastu Shastra have made significant contributions to architecture, health, and well-being. Yoga is a popular tool in contemporary stress reduction and therapy. Yoga for health, mind-body medicine, consciousness research, managing and preventing lifestyle disorders, and the spiritual pursuit of self-realization are all gaining global attention. The question of "Is yoga a therapy or a lifestyle?" is crucial. However, the world of yoga is made up of numerous sets and subsets that have been developed over millennia by renowned yogis and Acharyas. The goal of building a brand rather than a yoga revival, renewal, or renaissance is often the driving force behind the proliferation of yoga names among various teachers and schools. The enduring relevance of ancient knowledge systems is demonstrated by the way these traditional sciences continue to inform and enrich modern approaches to mental health, architecture, and medicine.

Keywords: *Yoga, Vastu Shastra, Traditional Indian Science, Holistic Health, Stress Management, Architectural Science, Harmony with Nature.*



Introduction

Ayurveda, one of the world's oldest holistic healing systems, has made significant contributions to traditional science and technology. The term Ayurveda is comprised of two words *ayu* (life) and *veda* (knowledge), and deals with health and wellbeing. It is defined as the discipline that deals with the salutary and unsalutary aspects of life, the happy, and unhappy life, and what is beneficial and not beneficial for nurturing life and a full life span. Dhanvantari, the gods' physician, is credited with developing Ayurveda after receiving it from Brahma. Its foundational ideas are found in the Atharvaveda, a section of the Vedas dating to the second millennium BCE. Vedic medicine was practiced until around 800 BC, with the Vedas listing ailments and suggesting various herbs for treatment. Between 800 and 1000 BCE, Indian medicine experienced a golden age, primarily distinguished by the writing of the Caraka-samhita and Susruta-samhita.

The first mention of the word “yoga” appears in *Rig Veda*, a collection of ancient texts. Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word “yuj,” which means “union” or “to join.” It is a well-known fact that yoga is the most sublime and meant for everyone’s welfare, the heritage of our seers which houses the complete solutions to the problems concerned with life and living. In this 21st century, the term ‘yoga’ has made its place on the tip of the tongue. Yoga nourishes the entire world like the sun: the ultimate source of energy.

Vastushastra is a *Vēdic* science that explains the difference between pleasant and distressing frequencies generated in premises. The five fundamental elements of Vasthu: earth, water, fire, air, and sky—are the basis of this centuries-old architectural design science. It serves as a basis for improving prosperity, wealth, vitality, and health as well as fostering a calm environment. With the sky standing for growth, Vayu for happiness, Agni for force, and water for spirituality, Vasthu principles—which are incorporated into architecture promote harmony, stability, and concord.

The environment as the first manifestation of shelter has been the subject of many rules and principles of Vastu science of architecture. Its presence in the spatial configurations of the plan, its geometry and directions, besides the arrangements of water pools and vegetation around the building construction is highly evident through Vastu guidelines.



Review of related Literature

Dr. Karthikeyan S (2023) This research paper explores Vastu Shastra, an ancient Indian architectural doctrine, in the context of modern architecture and urban planning. It examines Vastu's historical roots, core principles, and its focus on the relationship between space, design, and cosmic energy. The study assesses how Vastu principles affect the functionality and well-being of occupants in contemporary architecture. By analyzing historical texts, case studies, and current design trends, the paper offers a balanced view of Vastu, highlighting both its strengths and limitations. It aims to guide architects and planners in integrating Vastu with modern design for harmonious and sustainable environments.

Soumya Kanti Biswas and Monojit Debnath (2017) The significance of **Yoga** and **Ayurveda** in promoting health and preventing diseases. Yoga, widely practiced in India, is seen not only as a physical practice (like **Asanas**) but also for its therapeutic value, addressing both physical and psychological aspects. Ayurveda shares a similar preventive focus and has influenced Yoga. The text emphasizes the growing interest in using these traditional practices in modern biomedical sciences for preventing diseases such as respiratory, cardiovascular, hepato-biliary issues, and diabetes.

Integrating Ayurveda, Yoga, and Vastu: Their Expanding Role in the Modern World

Ayurveda

Ayurveda, an ancient system of medicine, has been a foundational pillar in traditional Indian science and health practices for over 5,000 years. It focuses on the holistic treatment of the body, mind, and spirit, seeking to maintain balance through natural methods. Here are some of its contributions:

- **Holistic Healthcare:** Ayurveda promotes a balance between the body's physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. Its approach to well-being emphasises prevention, personalised treatment, and the use of natural remedies. This has influenced modern wellness and alternative medicine practices.



- **Herbal Medicines:** Ayurveda introduced a vast pharmacopoeia of plant-based treatments. Medicinal plants like turmeric, neem, ashwagandha, and tulsi are widely used today in both alternative and conventional medicine for their anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and therapeutic properties.
- **Diet and Nutrition:** Ayurveda's emphasis on diet as a key factor in maintaining health has had a lasting impact on nutrition science. It recognizes different body types (doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and prescribes personalized diets, a precursor to modern nutritional approaches like personalized medicine.
- **Surgical Techniques:** Ancient Ayurvedic texts like Sushruta Samhita describe early surgical techniques, including plastic surgery and cataract removal, showcasing an advanced understanding of human anatomy and medical interventions for their time.
- **Concept of Body Types (Doshas):** Ayurveda's classification of individuals into three primary doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) to guide diagnosis and treatment foreshadows modern personalized medicine, where treatments are tailored based on an individual's constitution and lifestyle.
- **Diet and Nutrition:** Ayurveda's principles on diet and nutrition emphasize the role of food in maintaining health and treating diseases. Its focus on fresh, seasonal, and organic foods and the concept of "food as medicine" are in line with contemporary trends in nutrition science.
- **Detoxification and Rejuvenation Therapies:** Techniques such as Panchakarma, a series of five therapies aimed at detoxifying the body, have influenced modern detox practices. These therapies help eliminate toxins, rejuvenate tissues, and improve longevity.
- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Ayurveda addresses mental health through practices like meditation, yoga, and the use of adaptogenic herbs. Its focus on mental well-being as part of overall health has influenced modern mental health care approaches, including mindfulness and stress management therapies.

The Indian government's Department of AYUSH plans to collaborate with countries worldwide in education, healthcare, and research in Ayurveda. The aim is to integrate Ayurvedic medicine into current medical practice and diverse healthcare systems without compromising its principles. The Department of AYUSH is working with NGOs in Europe and the USA to establish a cooperative mechanism for quality and professionalism in



Ayurvedic training, research, and practice. In Italy, Ayurvedic and other nonconventional medicines have been recognized since 2002. The first international congress on Ayurveda in the West aimed to bridge the gap between Indian and Western scientific and biomedical thinking to improve healthcare.

Ayurveda's deep-rooted understanding of natural medicine, preventive health, and personalized treatments has impacted traditional and modern healthcare systems. Its holistic approach, which integrates body, mind, and environment, continues to inspire both traditional practices and innovative approaches in wellness, pharmacology, and surgery today.

Yoga: Yoga, a system of physical postures, breath control, and meditation, originated in India over 5,000 years ago. It is both a philosophical and practical science aimed at achieving mental and physical harmony.

- **Mental Health and Well-being:** Yoga's contribution to stress management, mental clarity, and emotional balance has been well-documented. Techniques like meditation and pranayama (breathing exercises) have been integrated into modern psychotherapy and stress-relief programs, especially mindfulness-based interventions.
- **Physical Health and Fitness:** Yoga offers a comprehensive system for physical fitness, promoting flexibility, strength, and balance. It addresses musculoskeletal problems, improves cardiovascular health, and has been integrated into physiotherapy and rehabilitation sciences.
- **Therapeutic Yoga:** In recent years, yoga has been studied for its therapeutic applications in chronic conditions like hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and anxiety. Medical systems worldwide have recognized its role in complementary and alternative medicine.

Yoga

A timeless practice with deep roots in India, yoga has spread throughout the world to become a symbol of well-being, peace, and health. Yoga's journey from the ancient Indian subcontinent to the global scene, where it began more than 5,000 years ago, is evidence of its significant influence on both mental and physical health.

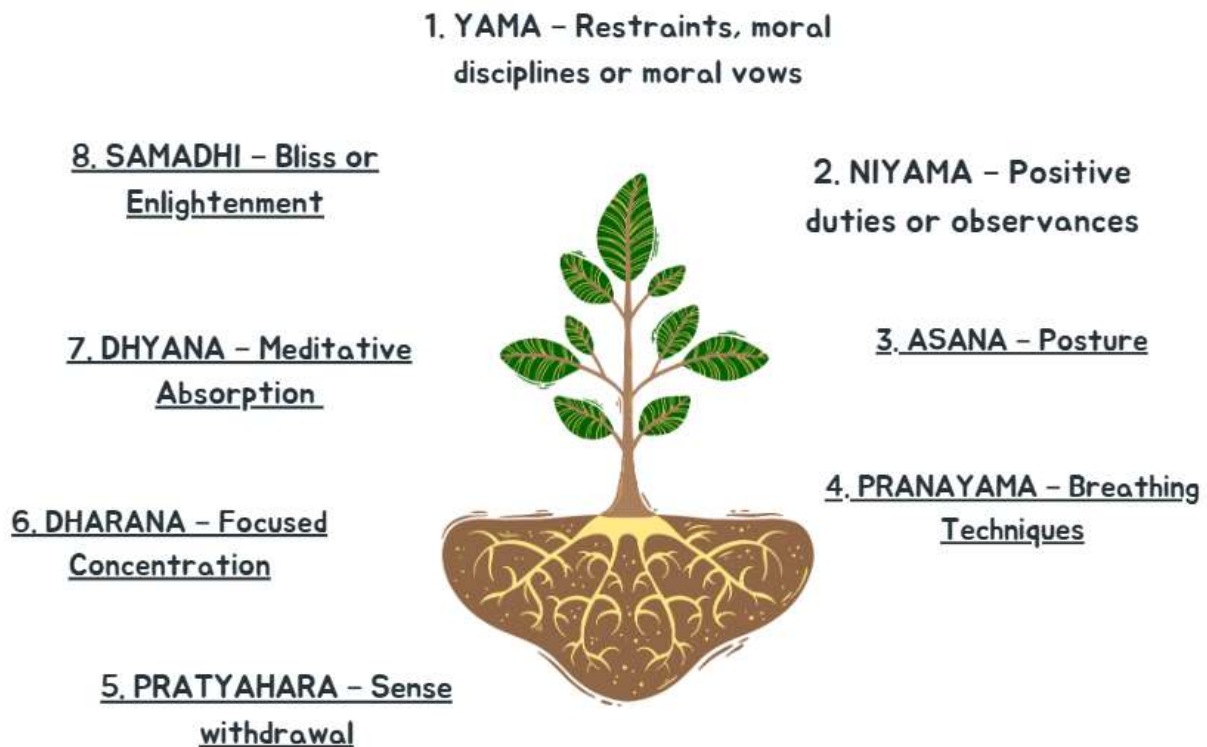


The History of Yoga: An International Gift from India The ancient Indian civilization is where yoga first appeared. One of the oldest sacred texts, the Rigveda, contains the earliest mentions of yoga. The Upanishads, where the discipline was connected to philosophical and spiritual objectives, further developed it. The foundation of modern yoga was laid by Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which were composed circa 200 CE and combined a variety of yogic philosophies and practices.

Yoga, with its roots firmly planted in Indian soil, has blossomed into a global movement for health and peace. India has always been the birthplace of yoga, fostering its development and guaranteeing its internationalization. From the ancient sages and yogis who created the first yoga practices to contemporary establishments like the Yoga Institute and the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, which have trained innumerable practitioners and instructors across the globe, the nation has made enormous contributions to yoga. Narendra Modi, the prime minister of India, has been instrumental in advancing yoga internationally in recent years. In 2014, the United Nations recognized June 21st as International Yoga Day because of his advocacy. This yearly event, which brings together millions of yoga practitioners worldwide, honours the mental, spiritual, and physical advantages of yoga.

The eight limbs of Patanjali's eight principles guide a meaningful life, focusing on health and spiritual aspects. Yoga, based on these principles, has evolved into various disciplines, each with its own techniques for disease prevention and treatment. Hatha yoga, a popular form, enhances physical body capacity through postures, movements, and breathing techniques. The Iyengar style, based on B.K.S. Iyengar's teachings, emphasizes standing poses for strength, stability, stamina, concentration, and body alignment. Yoga is a form of mind-body medicine that integrates physical, mental, and spiritual components to improve health, particularly stress-related illnesses. Stress is linked to heart disease, cancer, and stroke, making yoga a holistic stress management technique. Recent scientific studies have shown significant therapeutic effects and benefits of yoga.

Figure 1: The eight limbs of Patanjali's eight principles



Vastushastra

Contributions of Vastu Shastra to Traditional Science and Technology

Vastu Shastra, the ancient Indian science of architecture and design, has played a crucial role in shaping traditional construction techniques and harmonizing human living spaces with nature. With origins tracing back to over 5,000 years ago, Vastu Shastra provides guidelines for designing buildings, temples, cities, and even entire communities to ensure balance, prosperity, and well-being. Its principles have influenced modern architectural practices, environmental psychology, and sustainable design. Key contributions include:

➤ *Architecture and Design Principles:*

Harmonizing with Natural Elements: Vastu Shastra emphasizes the importance of aligning buildings with natural forces like sunlight, wind, and magnetic fields. It dictates the orientation of



structures, ensuring optimal ventilation, lighting, and energy flow. This aligns with modern architectural principles of designing energy-efficient and environmentally responsive buildings.

Vastu Shastra and Patterns in Geometry

- ♣ Inspired by natural elements, mandalas are the earliest geometric pattern used in floor layouts.
- ♣ Important environmental elements that determine the principles of architectural building include Sun Rays, Magnetic Poles, Geopathic Zones, and Concentric Zones.
- ♣ The eight directions of Vastu Shastra science are based on the climatic characteristics of each direction, with the four cardinal directions being the most significant.
- ♣ The constructed environment is in harmony with the earth's energy grid when it is properly aligned with these directions, according to Vastu scientists.
- ♣ According to Vastu, buildings should be constructed by the four cardinal directions because energy flows from the centre and outer space to the inside through "Yonis" or "lifelines."

Use of Cardinal Directions: One of the primary contributions of Vastu Shastra is the strategic use of cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) in planning and designing spaces. According to Vastu, different directions correspond to various energies (e.g., east for sunlight and life force, north for prosperity), influencing where certain rooms or functions should be placed.

➤ *Sustainable and Eco-friendly Design:*

Use of Local Materials: Vastu Shastra promotes the use of locally available materials, reducing the environmental impact of transporting building materials over long distances. This is akin to modern sustainable architecture practices that prioritize the use of eco-friendly and locally sourced materials to minimize the carbon footprint.

Environmental Integration: The science of Vastu emphasizes building in harmony with the surrounding environment, whether it's the topography, vegetation, or nearby water bodies. This



early understanding of environmental sustainability resonates with modern urban planning, which aims to minimize disruption to ecosystems and integrate green spaces into urban environments.

➤ ***Psychological and Physical Well-being:***

Impact of Space on Health: Vastu Shastra posits that the design and arrangement of spaces directly influence the well-being of the inhabitants. By following Vastu principles, living and working spaces are designed to promote mental peace, physical health, and productivity, which aligns with the concept of environmental psychology in modern architecture.

Energy Flow (Prana): Vastu Shastra emphasizes the flow of life force, or prana, through spaces, which is similar to concepts of energy flow in modern design philosophies like Feng Shui. The placement of doors, windows, and furniture by Vastu principles ensures a balanced and positive energy flow, contributing to the occupants' well-being.

➤ ***Urban Planning and Civic Design:***

Town and City Planning: Vastu Shastra has also contributed to the planning of entire cities. Ancient cities like Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa are thought to have been influenced by Vastu principles, with their systematic grid layouts, advanced drainage systems, and aligned streets. These principles are reflected in modern urban planning, where grid systems and zoning are integral to city development.

Public Spaces and Temples: Vastu Shastra provides detailed guidelines on designing public spaces, such as temples, gardens, and squares, to foster community interaction and spiritual harmony. The layout of Hindu temples, for example, follows precise Vastu principles to channel divine energies and enhance the spiritual experience for worshippers.

➤ ***Balance of the Five Elements:***

Panchabhutas (Five Elements): Vastu Shastra is based on the balance of the five elements—earth, water, fire, air, and space. The correct integration of these elements in a structure is believed to ensure stability, harmony, and prosperity. This ancient understanding of the relationship between



human habitats and the natural elements prefigures modern environmental design, which seeks to balance energy use, water management, and natural light.

➤ ***Vastu in Modern Architecture:***

Integration with Modern Design: Many architects and builders today integrate Vastu Shastra principles into modern architecture. It is used to design homes, offices, and commercial spaces to promote health, prosperity, and harmony. These practices influence contemporary architecture, blending traditional knowledge with cutting-edge building technologies.

Vastu for Green Architecture: The focus on natural ventilation, sunlight, and open spaces in Vastu Shastra mirrors principles in green architecture, which seeks to create sustainable, energy-efficient, and environmentally friendly buildings.

➤ ***Vastu and Environmental Psychology:***

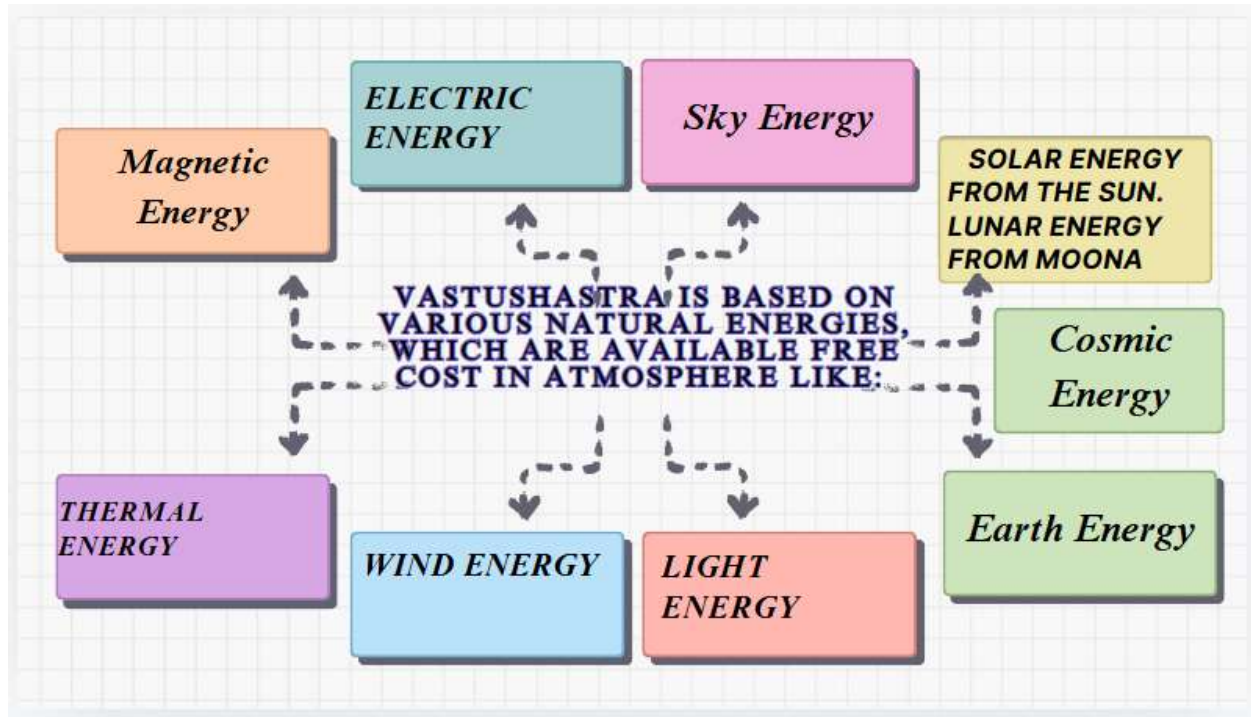
Psychological Comfort: Vastu Shastra's emphasis on creating harmonious spaces promotes a sense of psychological comfort and mental peace. This has influenced the modern concept of biophilic design, where architects and designers create environments that connect occupants with nature to improve mental well-being, reduce stress, and enhance productivity.

As mentioned in the ancient texts of Vastu, our Vastu **and health** are closely interconnected. Our house is not merely a structure of brick and concrete. It is a **living entity vibrating with energy**. Every corner of our house governs one particular organ of our body. If there is an imbalance in any corner of our house, there will be a corresponding problem in that particular body organ related to it.

Vastu is a Science

Vaastu, an ancient building science, focuses on the interplay of five elements: earth, water, wind, fire, and ether. It seeks to maintain equilibrium and guide living styles, guiding humans and other living beings. Vastu Shastra unifies science, art, astronomy, and astrology, guiding design and construction, helping improve lives, and protecting against unforeseen events.

Figure 3: Vastushastra is based on various natural energies, which are available free cost in atmosphere like



Vastu shastra, a science dating back to Ramayan and Mahabharat, is evident in cities like Mohenjo, Daro, and Harappa. Its origins are based on mythological stories, proving its importance and significance.

Thus, there is a strong connection between our health and Vastu.

As per the theory of five elements, various directions are governed by the five elements in our house. And as per Ayurveda, these elements also govern the functioning of the various organs in our body. An imbalance of any of the element causes a disease in the body, similarly, the imbalance of these very elements causes Vastu *doshas* in our houses. As a result, diseases follow. The connection is presented in a diagram below:

Figure 2: Showing the connection between Vastu and Ayurveda



Conclusion

The traditional sciences of Ayurveda, Yoga, and Vastu Shastra have made lasting contributions to modern fields such as healthcare, wellness, and architecture. Ayurveda's holistic approach to medicine, with its emphasis on natural remedies and personalized treatment, remains relevant in modern preventive healthcare and alternative medicine. Yoga, with its physical, mental, and spiritual practices, continues to benefit both physical health and mental well-being, finding its place in modern therapeutic practices. Vastu Shastra, focused on harmonizing living spaces with



natural forces, offers principles that resonate with modern sustainable architecture and environmental design. Together, these ancient systems provide a valuable framework that bridges traditional wisdom and contemporary science, offering timeless insights into human health, well-being, and living in harmony with nature.

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