



Why a consecrated structure shaping up in Tennessee has a global significance.

ABOUT 300 MILLION PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ARE PRACTITIONERS. More than 40 million Americans avidly practice it. But where did yoga come from?

To find out, we need to go back a few millennia to the Himalayas. In these remote snowy peaks the first yogi dispensed his knowledge of this sacred science of yoga. Because he was the very first, he was known as the “Adi Yogi” in Sanskrit and was called “Shiva.”

Sadhguru Vasudev, a profound mystic of our times, explains, “The word ‘Shiva’ literally means ‘that which is not’ – boundless nothingness. ‘That which is’ is creation. In the night sky, the first thing most people notice are innumerable stars. But these are just spots of creation; the biggest presence is actually a vast emptiness, which is referred to as ‘Shiva.’”

The splendor of Shiva, this boundless nothingness, which is nevertheless the very basis of everything that exists, cannot be overstated. Thanks to astrophysics, today we know that creation exploded from nothing and will eventually dissolve back into nothing. Anyone who grasped the immeasurable source of creation and experienced “that which is not” was called “Shiva,” in the yogic culture. In this context, the originator of yoga, the Adi Yogi, is also known as Shiva.

This resplendent Adi Yogi has been beautifully described in yogic lore. A being of glorious beauty and enormous intensity emerged on this planet forty thousand years ago. His power and capabilities were of a kind unknown to humanity. His exuberance was boundless. When he danced, the earth shook. When he was still, he sat lost in meditation for millennia, cradled in the lap of the Himalayas. There, he would slip from states of utter stillness into states of rapturous dance, and then back again to stillness, awash in his own tears of ecstasy.

People beheld this spectacle, mystified. What wondrous thing was creating such ecstasy? Certainly no earthly pursuit could be the source of such delight. After seeing Adi Yogi’s ecstasy, even the pleasurable promises of paradise seemed trivial. “We are missing out!” they lamented. In their hearts arose a desire to taste this mysterious elixir. Many sought him out and implored him to teach them all he knew, but Adi Yogi was unmoved with their weak propositions.

Eventually, Shiva handpicked seven intrepid seekers, the doughtiest of all who approached him, to impart this sacred science. Taking them as disciples, he assumed the role of the Adi Guru (the first Guru) and taught them the very nature and mechanics of the human cosmos, and illustrated seven different ways to approach this great knowledge.

These teachings were not religious instructions or philosophies – they predated all religion. Rather, they were a methodology to take humans to their ultimate potential. So sophisticated were the instructions that no aspect of the human system was excluded as a means to elevate human consciousness. These seven disciples became the means through which this powerful science reached every part of the globe, and eventually became the basis for every spiritual process on the planet.

Sadly, most of those who teach or learn in today’s yoga studios are unaware of Adi Yogi— himself. “Today what is being practiced in yoga studios has rendered yoga into a sophisticated exercise form and completely innocent of the immense possibilities embedded in the yogic science,” Sadhguru observes. It is to Shiva, the Adi Yogi and Adi Guru, that the world owes its knowledge of Self—the sacred science of yoga.

Those seven luminous beings who Shiva personally chose to impart his knowledge came to be known as the sapta rishis – the “seven sages.” Agastya Muni, one of the sapta rishis, was sent to southern India to carry Adi Yogi’s message.

One of the methods that Agastya Muni used to facilitate the transcendence of human nature to the peak of consciousness was the “consecration” of the physical territories he encountered. He consecrated every human habitation south of the Deccan Plateau in some form and made sure that a live spiritual process was on. He had said that when the world truly goes off the track— when knowledge becomes poison – his work would rise and act.





The Adi Yogi Project at the Isha Institute of Inner-sciences (III) in McMinnville, Tennessee, is a modern-day undertaking that seeks to rekindle, perpetuate, and strengthen the foundations laid down by Agastya Muni by spreading to the West the significance of consecrated spaces. Spread over 1200 acres in the Cumberland Plateau of Tennessee, the III is the U.S. center of the Isha Foundation based in India. A spiritual center free from dogma and religious philosophies, III is dedicated to those seeking ultimate wellbeing through the sacred science of yoga.

Its founder Sadhguru Vasudev is a yogi, mystic, visionary, author, poet, speaker, and more. His peerless insights into the human condition have helped him create a global foundation that has touched over 7 million people through his signature program called “Inner Engineering: Technologies for

Wellbeing.” With a seemingly inexhaustible supply of energy, Sadhguru has worked relentlessly for human wellbeing in the realms of inner spirituality, humanitarian work, the environment, primary education, and global leadership forums, to name a few. Sadhguru oversees one of the largest volunteer force in the world, numbering over two million volunteers from all walks of life.

Elaborating on the significance of consecration, Sadhguru explains, “Consecration is a live process. If you transform mud

into food, we call this agriculture. If you make food into flesh and bone, we call this digestion. If you make flesh into mud, we call this cremation. Similarly, if you can make this flesh, or even a stone or an empty space into a divine possibility, that is called consecration.” He continues, “Today, modern science is telling you that everything is the same energy manifesting in a million different ways. What you call divine, what you call a stone, what you call a man, a woman or a demon, are all the same energy functioning in different ways. For example, the same electricity becomes light, sound, heat and so many other things depending upon the technology used. Similarly, if you have the necessary technology, you can make the physical space around you into a divine exuberance, you can take a piece of rock and make it into a god or a goddess—this is the phenomenon of consecration.”

In ancient India, there used to be a temple at every corner. A temple was not a place of prayer, nor did it have anything to do with God. It existed to enclose a part of the world within a cocoon of grace so that every human being within its aura had the good fortune of living in that grace. Access to consecrated spaces gave people balance and strength. It provided a space to disengage from the vacillations of the material world and to ground oneself in deeper dimensions. Consecrated spaces laid the foundation for spiritual growth and both inner and material wellbeing, and they enabled people to live peacefully, joyfully and harmoniously.

Over time the understanding of the value of consecrated spaces eroded as societies slowly forgot their purpose. The underlying spiritual science of temple construction was gradually lost to dogma and custom. Temples became places simply to pray and worship. Now, due to the ravages of time, the loss and distortion of knowledge, and destruction and invasion, consecrated spaces have all but disappeared.

In order to re-establish the path to inner balance and growth, to raise human consciousness on a mass scale, and to promote widespread spiritual wellbeing, Sadhguru has resolved to create as many consecrated spaces as he can. It is Sadhguru’s vision that a grid of such energy centers across the world, beginning in North America, Europe and India, would provide the possibility of inner wellbeing to a large number of people, allowing them to benefit from the subtle but powerful influence.

The proposed Adi Yogi Project at the Isha Institute in McMinnville, Tennessee is the beginning of this auspicious undertaking. “If America begins to meditate, you will see, the whole world will long for it,” says Sadhguru. The two-level structure will be built to last for thousands of years. A central feature will be the 21-foot metal statue of Adi Yogi and a powerful copper lingam with which one will be able to make physical contact. The design and layout will be in alignment with cosmic properties. The building will be 111 feet x 111 feet for each of the two levels, 24,647 square feet in total.

The Adi Yogi Project in McMinnville marks the bridging of the gap between antiquity and modernity and between the East and West. But more importantly, it is a doorway to return to grace for those who are willing.

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