

FENG SHUI

Creating Places of Peace

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Feng Shui
Interior Design
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Chapter One

History of Feng Shui

Feng shui's roots run deep in Chinese culture, dating back as far as 4000 B.C. During any specific dynasty, one feng shui method may have been outlawed while during another era, the same method may have been highly regarded in the construction of sacred and secular sites.

Archaeologists have determined that in the beginning, the art of feng shui was used to bring astrological alignments to earth. This form of geomancy is now called "Astronomical Geomancy" and has its roots dating back to Neolithic times (10200-8800 BCE).

It is believed that these early architects were marking energetic ley lines, astral alignments and setting specific energies using their knowledge of the movement of the sun, stars and planets to create energized spaces on earth. Creating a balance of life force energy, which they call qi (chi), was of utmost importance to the Chinese, as well as many other cultures across the globe. You will find more information on geomancy in Appendix A.

Throughout China, as well as other ancient sites such as the pyramids of Egypt, Stonehenge in England and structures such as cathedrals, stone rings and labyrinths, geomancy was used to enhance the energy of these sites and also as a means of discovering places on earth that naturally emitted higher levels of "positive" qi.

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When there is a balance of qi, often represented by the Taijitu or yin yang symbol, it is believed that one will have better health, wealth and clarity of mind.

Thus, in China, the use of feng shui, which is a geomantic tool, was used in the construction of important sites such as sacred places, tombs and eventually in the building of secular sites such as homes and places of business.

Today, with the popularity of feng shui in western cultures, there are many myths that have actually diminished the energies of those who are taught to adhere to specific sets of rules that are not natural, affecting the natural flow of qi and one's intuition. Thus, the basis of this book is to help separate fact from fiction and place high emphasis on using feng shui as a means of creating Places of Peace in the home, office, landscape or garden.

The majority of American cities, homes and businesses were not built on principles of utilizing "positive" natural earth energy. No recognition has been given to positions of the sun, moon or celestial events such as solstices and

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equinoxes or even the rising sun, except for homes constructed by “those in the know” such as Native Americans who are still tied into the knowledge of their ancestors.

Therefore, by following “strict guidelines” of the original feng shui masters is like trying to put a square peg into a round hole. It just doesn’t fit. Unfortunately, there are many western self-proclaimed “masters of feng shui” who are creating havoc by spreading doctrines that are detrimental to one’s belief codes, causing more problems than solutions by their readers who hold onto every word they say. We shall expound more on that later.

As we look at each area of feng shui, I will point out features that come from the ancient Chinese masters and those that have been adapted by western philosophers. You are encouraged to work with your intuition, what feels right to you, after all, you are creating sacred space to meet *your* needs.

The main goal to keep in mind is that feng shui is all about energy. The flow of energy (qi) is palpable and measurable. Finding and correcting areas in your home, office and landscape that have stagnant energy is important. Science is proving that improper energetic flows cause disease in the human body, as well as being capable of influencing human behavior. This is the basic understanding behind the science of the meridian system in the human body used by acupuncturists.

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It is common knowledge that the full moon has an effect on human behavior, often causing more accidents, visits to the emergency room and increased violence. It is all about energy flow.

With that said, let's look further into the facts and myths of feng shui so that you can create your own Places of Peace.

Chapter Two

Feng Shui Defined

Feng shui is the ancient Chinese method of creating the design and location of buildings, and the placement of objects to maximize the energy flow or qi, which they call “life force.”

The word “feng shui” literally translates to “wind-water,” with its roots coming from the following statement recorded in the ancient Chinese Book of Burial (Zangshu). “Qi rides the wind and scatters, but is retained when encountering water.” You will discover the importance of this philosophy when we look deeper at the meaning behind the Five Elements in Chapter 6.

Each Chinese dynasty treated feng shui differently, resulting in several schools of thought. Through the years, rules were defined and specific codes were adhered to in written carpenter’s manual. Evidence suggests that at times, these codes were enforced over several generations.

The earliest records of feng shui indicate that astronomy was used to correlate the movement of the sun, moon and stars to locations on earth, both natural and manmade. These alignments were important in China and across the globe. Most well known are sacred sites that align to the solstices and equinoxes. Many believe that the alignment of celestial events, when mirrored on earth, enhances the energy of the site. These correlations were used after many years of observing the movement of the stars.

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Archaeologists have discovered artifacts estimated to date as far back as 4000 B.C. that resemble modern feng shui devices. Historical evidence suggests that ancient Chinese sages used a gnomon to determine the direction of north. A gnomon is the part of a sundial that casts the shadow to determine the time of day. Determining the direction of north became easier with the Chinese invention of the magnetic compass around 300 A.D.

Later, a more sophisticated magnetic compass, the luopan, was invented by the Chinese. Often called a “feng shui compass,” the luopan is often used by feng shui specialists to detect the flow of earth qi in a specific area and to determine the exact directional flow of an existing building or one that is about to be constructed.

The magnetic compass that we are most familiar with relies mainly on the four cardinal directions (north, south, east and west). However, the luopan, as pictured below, is more complex, dividing the directional flow into 24 segments, making it a much more precise tool when determining the directional flow of Earth’s energy.



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