



Foundations of Feng Shui

By Jini Rayne

Most of the earlier people on our earth sought to live in harmony with their surroundings in order to facilitate an easier life.

The Chinese system, called feng shui, has been handed down through the generations in several iterations, and is available for us to use today. Feng shui posits that all of life, our fortunes and destiny, are closely linked with nature and the workings of the whole universe. Indeed, our physical surroundings affect every aspect of our lives.

Records of feng shui elements date back to the fourth century B.C., so the foundations were established much earlier. Human survival depended upon the successful cultivation of crops, which in turn, depended on the caprices of nature. The Chinese saw the cycles of heaven and earth, rain, drought, flood, frost, and sun, as being entwined with the workings of the whole universe.

In order to survive, they realized they needed to be in harmony with nature. Nature was venerated. To go against the natural course of the landscape was to leave oneself vulnerable to disaster. Therefore, they took great pains to avoid disturbing the balance of nature when building anything, be it a road, a city or even just a house or barn.

Ch'i: energy, human spirit, or cosmic breath, is the force that links

all of our universe together. There are different kinds of ch'i as the varying synonyms seem to imply. There is the ch'i that circulates in the atmosphere and the heavens. The ch'i of the earth is the energy that creates landscapes and influences what flora and fauna thrive or struggle in a given area. The Chinese speak of "drag-on points" which are similar to the energy paths once traced in Europe.

Human ch'i moves within us and is different for each person. It is with us from birth and is the energy that animates us. While a person's appearance may change greatly through the years, one's signature ch'i pattern typically allows others to recognize us even at that fiftieth class reunion. Ch'i is the energy necessary to



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maintain physical, mental, emotional and environmental balance. Feng shui seeks to help us position ourselves in such a way as to harness good environmental ch'i to enhance the flow of ch'i within our bodies to improve all aspects of our life. Clutter blocks the flow of ch'i, so clearing out clutter is one of the first tasks in feng shui.

The Chinese believe that there are five factors that contribute to one's fortune in life. Most important is one's fate or destiny, which can be good, fair or poor and determines around seventy percent of one's fortunes. Fate is determined by the place, time, direction and speed with which you hit the road at birth. We have all heard of someone being born with a silver spoon in their mouth and the advantage that good start implies. Fate also has to do with one's astrology.

The second factor is luck, the pattern of events that impact you as you head down your life path. Third is feng shui, your placement or positioning on the earth. Making sure that you are aligned with good feng shui is the most important single thing you can do to improve your fate and luck.

The fourth factor contributing to your

fortune in life is charitable actions, those positive actions or good deeds done without hope of recognition or reward that many believe influence your karma. Fifth and least important percentagewise is self-improvement. Improving one's character and moral fiber, as well as going to school or learning new skills, invites good people, events, opportunities and well-being into your life.

In the Western world, when things are not going our way, we tend to look at ourselves and believe that gaining some new skill or personality trait might be what is needed to make the difference that we desire. The Chinese would be more likely to begin by examining their feng shui to locate what is blocking their success,

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and make those changes first before moving on to charitable actions and self-improvement. Perhaps we would do well to add feng shui to our list of strategies to facilitate our efforts to accomplish our goals.

Let's start by getting a little bit better understanding of feng shui. The term feng shui is composed of the two Chinese words for wind and water. These two natural elements flow and circulate everywhere on earth. Both are necessary to sustain life. Their combined qualities largely determine climate which, in turn, influences food supply and lifestyle, an important factor in our health, energy and even mood.

In his book *Gun, Germs and Steel*, Jared Diamond concludes that the determining factor governing the rate

of progress and destiny of human societies is the environment in which they exist. This is entirely consistent with the feng shui tenet that your immediate environment affects you daily and contributes to your long-term destiny.

Much like a grain of sand or small pebble in the shoe, if not removed, will cause a blister that might get infected and cause a cascading series of misfortune over a period of time, a small environmental irritant can start a downward spiral in one's life. While one might appreciate the quiet or even solitude afforded by living on a road marked "dead end" or "no outlet", the subconscious suggestion of a lack of possibilities could cause inhabitants to become frustrated or limit themselves.





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There are many tools and approaches used in feng shui. To become an expert requires many years of study and practice. As implied in the last paragraph, analysis of the symbolism both chosen as in artwork and other decorating features, and unchosen as in that road sign referenced earlier, is one important aspect to consider. For example, when consulting with a single person who wishes to find a partner, I often find that most of the art in their home depicts a solo item. Usually there are no pairs of anything to be found on display, not even two candlesticks on the dining room table. This is reinforcing their singleness. Consciously populating their home with representations of pairs sets the stage for a different outlook and outcome.

The bagua is an energy map or mandala of right relationship and is an important tool in feng shui. Getting the right balance and arrangement in the bagua of your home or office aligns you with the larger energy resonance pattern. This map can be used on a macro level in analyzing a country or city, or on a micro level in looking at the energetics of one's desktop or even bed. It is typically used in analyzing the plot of land or site before a home is built, the blueprint of the whole home, and also each room within the home.

Generally, the more time you spend in a given environment, the more impact it has on you. Therefore adjustments made to your bedroom or office are likely to be more effective than those made in the guest bedroom or another room where you spend little time. Next time we will look at how to use the bagua to evaluate and improve the feng shui of your home. Until then, clear out your clutter and look at the symbolism in your surroundings and see if they are in sync with your life as you wish it to be.

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