



FENG SHUI AGENCY

DIVINE ENERGY DESIGN

SCIENTIFIC FENG SHUI DESIGN FOR WELLBEING - HOW TO COMBINE THE HUMAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

Paper presented at RIBA Wellbeing Conference 2011 Birmingham UK

The Chinese have gifted the world with an ancient design skill that is universally applicable regardless of culture, to assist the human being in harmonising with the environment. Feng Shui offers both diagnostic and curative tools for the wellbeing of communities and individuals. In fact, for thousands of years classical Feng Shui was commissioned more to help with health than with wealth and power and is considered one of the 8 Brocades of Chinese Medicine along with Tui na (Chinese Massage Therapy), Acupuncture and Moxibustion, Herbal Medicine, Food Therapy, Qigong and meditation, T'ai Chi Chuan and Chinese Astrology.

In this paper I will show how the roots of classical Feng Shui are remarkably similar to the principles of biomimicry and present authentic Feng Shui as the original ecological design and how a Feng Shui consultant's perspective can offer town planners and architects an important opportunity to increase their awareness of wellbeing in the built environment.

By taking you step by step through various examples of Feng Shui application I will also be revealing how classical Feng Shui can be distinguished from the mainstream and woefully diluted versions of Feng Shui popularized by authors and journalists which tends to focus on using Feng Shui for wealth alone or has created a market for Feng Shui trinkets. This commercialized and trivialized version of Feng Shui bears no resemblance to the traditional roots.

Classical versus 'new-age' Feng Shui

Let me start by indicating what classical Feng Shui does not encompass, so that we can swiftly progress to understanding the deeper sense of true Feng Shui rather than try to water down an immensely complex subject. Classical Feng Shui does not necessitate the use of Colour Therapy, Clutter Clearing, Crystal Therapy, Reiki, Wabi Sabi, Electromagnetic Detection and Protection, Dowsing, Spirit/Space Clearing, 9 Star Ki or Black Hat Sect. Some of these subjects such as Space Clearing and Electromagnetic Detection and Protection are complimentary to Classical Feng Shui however, they are not true Feng Shui in their own right. Some of the other terms (Wabi Sabi, 9 Star Ki) that seem to be put under the Feng Shui umbrella are actually of Japanese origin, whereas Feng Shui is of Chinese origin.

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The truth of the matter is that these other subjects are simpler and easier to understand than the classical Feng Shui systems which require an understanding of Chinese Characters, a flexible intellect and many years of study with a good teacher. The focus on the simpler subjects is a way of providing short term gratification for people seeking to distract themselves with the latest fad or they can sometimes act as an introduction to the subject, but in my experience largely act to repel the modern person interested in intelligent design and keep them at a distance from the profound beauty of the classical systems.

The components of Classical Feng Shui – how to combine the human with the environment

Feng Shui is essentially showing us how to combine the human with the environment. In a classical training much time is spent outdoors in nature, observing the landform, flora and fauna and how it all works together symbiotically and changes over the seasons. There is a dual focus on form and directional energy measured by a Lohan Compass. Form, as the name suggests, concerns itself with the topography of the natural surroundings and the shapes in the manmade urban environment. The compass focus concerns itself with the quality of energy provided by different compass directions. The cycle of a day itself shows us that the quality of sunrise and the sun from the North East/East is tangibly different from the quality of the sunset in the West. The sunrise has an energetic, rising and uplifting feeling to it whereas the sunset has a dreamy, settling, relaxing quality. Classical Feng Shui considers not only with the Four Cardinal Directions and the Four Sub-Cardinal Directions but these can be further subdivided into 24 then 64 sections, each with unique characteristics.



Figure 1. The intricate classical Chinese Lohan Compass demonstrating the refinement of 64 kuas within the 8 directions

Feng Shui is not just for the Chinese but is a universally relevant wisdom

It must be clearly understood that whilst Feng Shui has its roots in China it is not simply a cultural superstition or belief system. Chinese speaking people cannot understand Feng Shui terminology just because they speak Mandarin or Cantonese, because it uses a language of its own, so it is also erroneous that Chinese practitioners are somehow better or more suited to Feng Shui. In fact, some of the Hong Kong style Feng Shui on offer today is largely made up of old wives tales and superstitions that are actually just inaccurate renditions of ancient stories and because Feng Shui was outlawed under Chairman Mao's regime, many practitioners fled to Taiwan and Singapore, and much knowledge was either lost, destroyed or mistranslated, so it is very important to learn from a teacher with an undiluted lineage, such as Grand Master Chan Kun Wah who is a Yuen Hom Master from a lineage going back to the Imperial Courts of China.

Life-force energy is a universal force governing all mankind

Feng Shui is primarily concerned with how to observe, protect and strengthen 'chi' or life force energy. Many other wisdom traditions, not just the Chinese, have words describing the animating force of life – in Japan it is known as 'ki', in Ayurvedic tradition it is referred to as 'prana', in Cherokee Shamanic traditions

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'the spirit that moves through all things' and even in the West we have terms such 'orgone' (Wilhelm Reich) and the Latin term Genus Loci, meaning 'spirit of place' also indicates that space has a spirit or energetic quality and is not just a physical resource for the manipulation or dominion by humans. When a corpse is presented to us we can see the shell of the person or animal that was there and we have a visceral sense of the spirit or animating force no longer being contained in that physical shell. Society has long since moved away from Newtonian physics of world as machine towards a greater awareness of quantum fields and theories of interconnectivity.

"If we looked at nature as a model for design we could find that in its intelligence everything is connected. This connectivity is expressed in the smallest electron arrangement to the largest macroscopic stellar alignment. Everything seems to produce an effect on something else, a connection...a link between its surroundings...a relation to its Whole." [1]

Contrary to popular belief, the concept of Chi is not as mystical as it might at first sound. When we truly understand the nature of energy we can actually become more and more grounded and pragmatic in our approach to design. Like natural structures and animal habitats work with what they find in the surrounding environment and seek to build in an energetically sustainable and minimally laborious way, the Feng Shui consultant seeks wherever possible to harmonise and integrate with what is already in the environment both from a physical and energetic perspective. This does not mean that we design everything with soft curves and focus only on some sort of vague 'flow', there is much more to Feng Shui than ergonomics.

Chi follows form - the acupuncture of space

Just as the contours of the seabed influence the currents of the sea, the physical topography and physical design of a space influences the flow of chi. Looking beyond the obvious organisational and psychological benefits of a tidy and clutter free environment, we are creating spaces which are in alignment with natural law and natural energies that the Chinese have charted for thousands of years. For instance, without the need for microscopes or quantum physics the Chinese already perceived the system of energy meridians throughout the body connected to internal organs and developed the highly effective system of acupuncture. Feng Shui is essentially the 'acupuncture of space'.

Suspension of disbelief – using the Feng Shui 'Pattern Book'

We all know that the Moon governs the tides and the Sun fosters life and water falls in the form of rain from the skies to nourish the Earth, so is it really such a leap of faith to include the rest of the planetary and stellar system and entertain the idea that Venus, Mars and Mercury might also influence life on Earth? It is particularly foolish to disregard the notion of Feng Shui when consultants over and over again are experiencing Feng Shui as a really effective tool, to both diagnose sickness in a building and offer curative or preventative measures. I invite you to put on a pair of Feng Shui glasses to view the world through the lens of Feng Shui wisdom and accompany me on a journey of discovery.

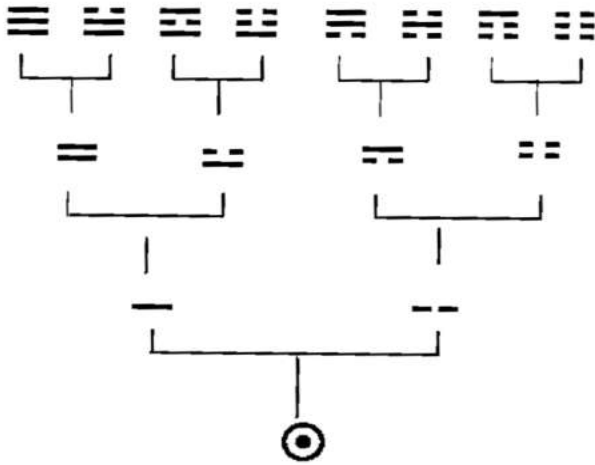
Just as architects and urban planners have worked with pattern books to maintain the look of a certain neighbourhood or development, Feng Shui can be considered as a type of pattern language and a template through which to create designs. This can be both restrictive and also freeing. Sometimes when faced with a blank canvas or a large flat piece of land with no particularly prominent features it can be equally hard to create a scheme than if the designer had restrictions placed upon them by local topographical conditions. With Feng Shui you can quickly create a cohesive sense of the place and gain inspiration for a suitable design and utilise a variety of Feng Shui techniques, some more suited to larger spaces and some more suited to smaller spaces and some focusing purely on the qualities of auspicious timing.

Classical Feng Shui starts from the outside of a property or from the surroundings of a city to determine how the property or how the city is 'sitting' within a certain area. Once the observations have been made regarding the physical surroundings the aim of harnessing and circulating the natural life force energy can be better achieved. One of the most important dynamics in Feng Shui is the relationship of Yin and Yang (Female principle and Male principle) which constitute the 8 Trigrams.

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8 Trigrams of the I Ching

One of the most important Feng Shui patterns or templates is the two arrangements of the Trigrams. A trigram is a three lined symbol consisting of Yin & Yang.



In the beginning, there was one universal energy.
One gave birth to two - male and female - yang and yin.
Two gave birth to four - the four directions, the four seasons
together with the centre, these made up the Five Elements.
Four gave birth to eight - representing the 8 trigrams.

Figure 2. The metaphysical model of life force and the interplay of Yin/Yang creating the I Ching Trigrams

Feng Shui terminology can seem abstruse or generic to the uninformed. However, the multifaceted nature of manifestation is such that there are no absolutes, only tendencies, so the Chinese language aptly describes principles that are ever changing yet similar. Mystery of the Void – this is the specialism of Chue Style Feng Shui that I practice and it alludes to the invisible becoming visible, the unmanifest becoming manifest. Central to this style of Feng Shui are the 64 hexagrams of the I Ching that are comprised of the 8 Trigrams. Ultimately if we deconstruct the trigrams we end up with simply yin (feminine or minus) and yang (masculine or plus). Out of a primordial nothingness the identity of yang (or light or positive pull) requires by necessity the identity of its opposite yin (or dark or negative pull) otherwise it cannot be a distinctive impulse without the opposite dynamic. Yang can then be joined by another yang line or a yin line. Yin can be joined by another yin line or a yang line. We are reminded of binary code of computer code 1010001 etc.

64 strands of DNA and the 64 Hexagrams

According to Dr Martin Schoenberger there is a direct correlation between the characteristics of the 64 strands of DNA and the characteristics of the 64 Hexagrams. The DNA helix is denoted as either plus or minus – hexagrams are comprised of either yin (-) or yang (+). There are four letters, three of which determine the DNA label - there are four states of yin/yang, three of which determine the trigram. The direction in which the DNA code words are read is strictly determined, as is the direction in which a trigram is read. There are 64 DNA triplets and 64 hexagrams. [2]

Did the Chinese discover a binary code of creation and natural law? How would this be relevant to wellbeing and the built environment? The position of the trigrams are related to certain directions and body parts or organs and the quality of energy in these directions affects the health of the body part/organ. See the diagram below for the Exterior space or Early Heaven conditions.

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EARLY HEAVEN SEQUENCE

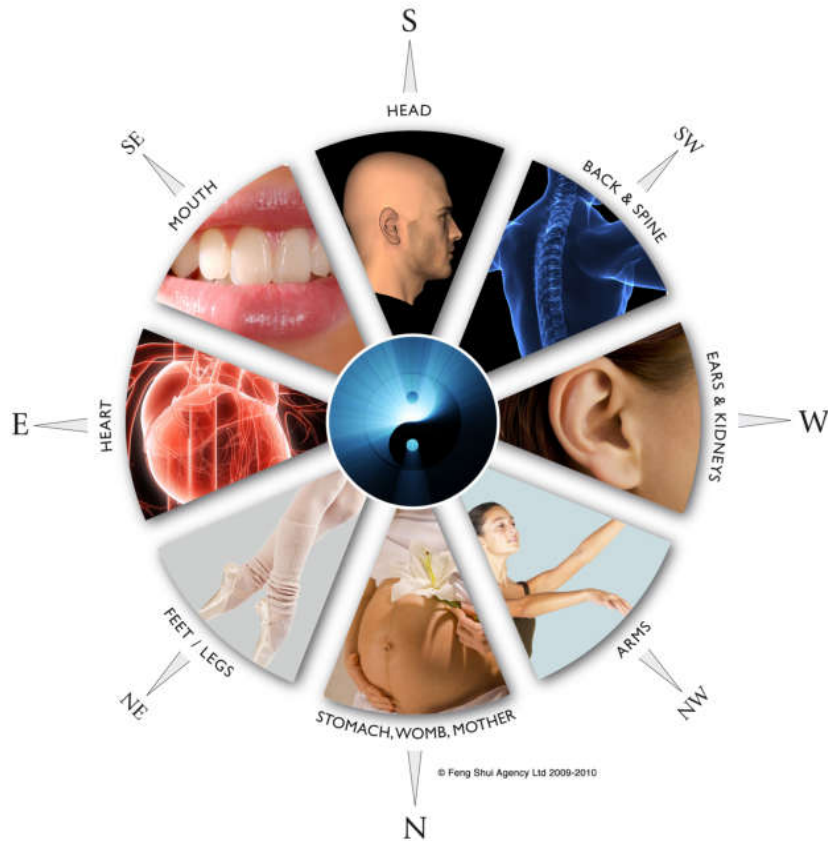


Figure 3. The Early Heaven Directional Arrangement of I Ching Trigrams and Associated Body Parts used to assess the Exterior environment of a property or area zone

Bodily Health Linked to Environmental Exterior Energy

According to Chinese cosmology different directions have a resonance with different internal organs or body parts as depicted in the Figure.1 above. So if we find a problematic influence such as an excessively tall tree close to the house in the South it could cause problems associated with the head, such as headaches, migraine and even brain tumour because the tree is cramping or leeching the energy circulation in that area, so this direction can no longer support the occupant /s with vital energy but has become sick. Similarly, problematic design in the North sector of the grounds can cause upset with the womb and stomach. The diagnosis is based on simple principles but the consultant requires years of experience to confidently ascertain whether the energy of these areas is affected or not and this is only one layer of a complex system of methodological analysis, which also takes into consideration the birth date of occupants and the precise orientation of the property, the way the roads nurture the property etc.

In my own practice I have seen cases where electricity pylons in the West have caused problems with the Kidneys particularly as the affected child occupied the West Room as well so was facing the very problem. The trigrams also relate to family members, so the West outside is affecting the second son and on the inside it is the youngest daughter. These are not meant to be taken too literally and could equally apply to a son or a daughter or a male or female family member, but more often than not there is a direct correlation, enough to provide sobering food for thought and it is my opinion that any designer looking to work with ecological principles would greatly benefit their clients by incorporating the principles of Feng Shui which reveal a universal code of life that informs all our activities not just our health. The principles

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also apply inside a property and because we are no longer in the pure dynamic of nature, but dealing with a man-made environment the energetic qualities are deemed to shift and correspond to the Later Heaven Sequence.

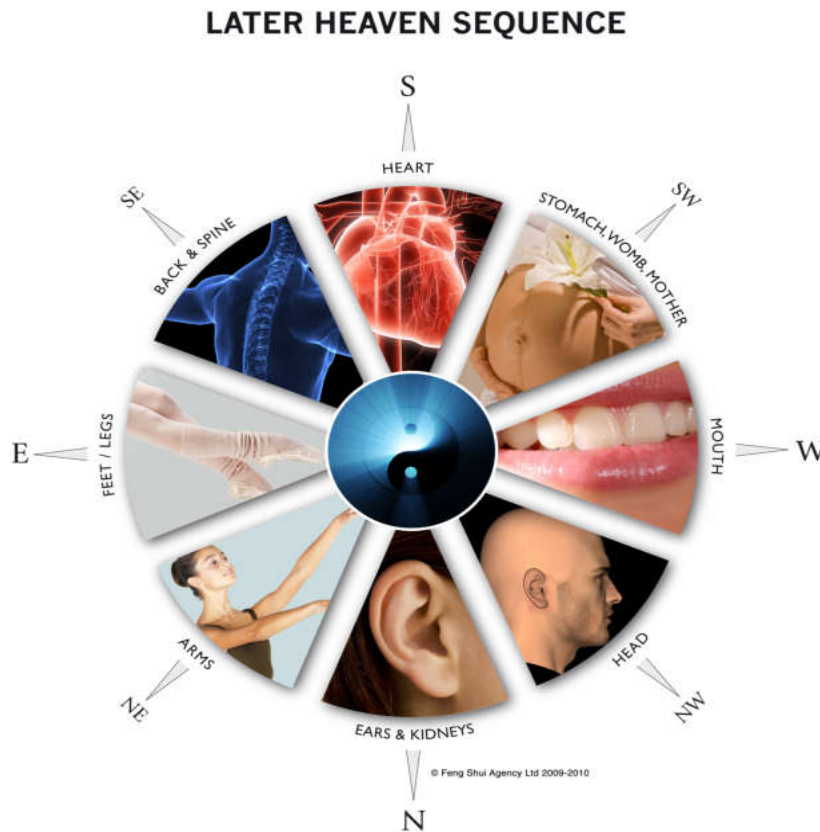


Figure 7. The Later Heaven Directional Arrangement of the I Ching Trigrams and associated body parts used to diagnose the Interior of a building

Macro Feng Shui – how to understand the Feng Shui influences of a City.

My specialism and passion is Feng Shui Urban Planning and whilst it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail Feng Shui urban planning, we can look at fundamental principles of collaboration necessary to facilitate Feng Shui design for a city and the potential rewards for the communities. Feng Shui principles can be translated into any environment, temperate, desert, mountainous, flat and the ideal process would be to scout out a good location for the building of the new city, one that complies with as many good Feng Shui principles as possible, and can be fed by either existing or new infrastructure such as roads, rail lines, airports etc. Once the site is established an orderly plan can be designed with due consideration for not only practical requirements, soil and engineering conditions etc. but also with functions of the city allocated to areas most suited to them. Some of the techniques such as Form and ‘Sam Hap Double Mountain’ are not time sensitive so they can confidently be used to plan a city for centuries to come.

The direction of the main roads approaching and exiting the city is of vital importance as they sustain the energy and feed the city – even in urban planning there are terms such as arterial routes - indicating an almost literal association with the heart and circulation. In Feng Shui, the city is seen as an organism and holistic entity, not just a collection of jurisdictional areas and boundaries or areas to develop for profit alone. Happily, today’s modern planning policies do demand of developers more respect for local flora/fauna, historical references and social cohesion so there is more consciousness in planning than ever

before, offering the perfect opportunity to incorporate holistic Feng Shui as part of the plan from the very outset either for the design of a new city or to regenerate part of an existing city or town.

Circulation of Chi at the town of Bo'Ness

We use traffic flow models and physical observation to assess which roads are busiest and the road coming from Edinburgh carries most of the visitors to this town as well as the road from Glasgow but the 'energy' from Edinburgh is closest therefore the strongest. This activity stimulates the quality of chi in this direction, which is called Toi, meaning pregnancy. Bo'Ness has a very high rate of teenage pregnancy. It also has a high rate of drug users and another main road enters from Mo Yuk (Dirty Water) which is associated with drug use. Had the town planners originally taken greater heed of the Roman Camp and distributed the roads from the Roman centre this town might have developed differently because the more auspicious areas of the town would have been better used and the inauspicious areas drained or weakened. I am sure the residents of Bo'Ness enjoy living in the town and it has plenty to offer them, I am simply using this example as a case study to observe the impact of Feng Shui in a town environment. It would be very beneficial to find sponsorship to fund research over a span of 1 – 20 years of different towns and the effects of new traffic flows or new traffic routes etc. according to Feng Shui principles.

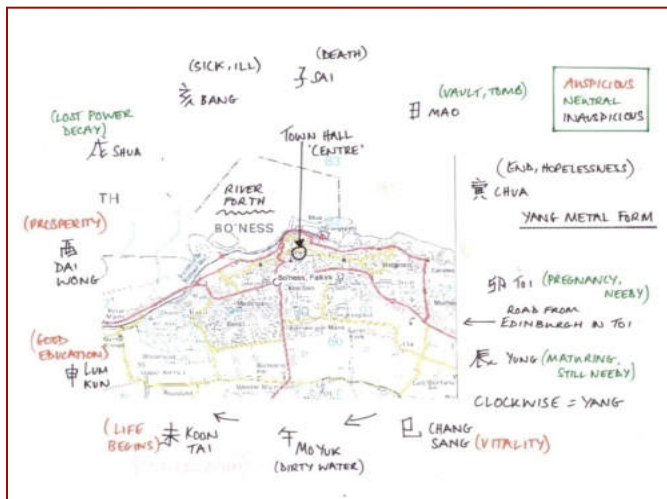


Figure 4. The 'Double Mountain Water method' analysis of Bo Ness town centre showing the main chi coming into the town from Toi (Pregnancy) and Yung (Maturing, Still Needy)

Linlithgow on the other hand has the main chi coming from a totally different 'palace' or 'portent' and the story of Linlithgow echoes the more positive chi alignment measured by the Feng Shui compass. No doubt Linlithgow has some social problems somewhere but on the whole the visitor feels the space is vibrant and successful. The roads are wider and more orderly indicating a larger town planning budget and a more genteel lifestyle than in Bo'Ness where the streets are more cramped and orientated towards the docks for the purposes of trade. Linlithgow also has a stronger architectural 'heart' than Bo'Ness whose town hall is quite unremarkable. Similar studies have been carried out on the city of London (interestingly explaining why Kings Cross and Camden have been hubs for drug use and why places like Fulham and Chelsea are stable and wealthy) and Geneva, Moscow, Washington, Tehran, Dubai and The Vatican, to name but a few. We see patterns of behaviour and neighbourhood quality that strongly correspond with diagnostic Feng Shui assessments.



Figure 5. The 'Double Mountain Water Method' of Linlithgow town centre showing the main chi coming into the town from the Vitality position

Use of water in a city or town

Ideally, a city needs to have a good and useful relationship with the water (river, lake, coast, inlet etc) and there needs to be a balanced proportion of water to land – too much water and the people can become listless and wasteful, too little water or cramped water and the people can become angry and poor. There are exceptional conditions such as Amsterdam where water creates its own unique chi called Ocean Dragon.

Water is vital for life throughout the planet (and indeed a human can survive without food for many days but not without water). In Feng Shui water is associated with wealth because it was a means of transport to facilitate trade and also because it brings energy to the body and energy to the environment – water is known to release negative ions into a space which is why waterside environments feel so energising and why water attracts life-force. After a thunderstorm and downpour of rain the air is charged with negative ions and smells sweet and refreshing. The very words Feng Shui mean wind and water and refer to the cosmic energy (wind) and how to gather it for our use as vital energy (water). Physical water actually also slows down the flow of wind, thereby helping to literally store the chi.

Use of one-way systems and pedestrianisation

In some cases a one-way system can be useful and help to push sick chi out of an area, but sometimes the one-way system and/or pedestrian zone will literally kill off circulation to the area, resulting in shoppers going elsewhere to place their business. In the case of Cahors in France the one-way system goes against the natural flow of the river yet follows the same course on dry land, resulting in a queasy feeling of quite literally going against the flow.

It is no coincidence that most of the world's most successful cities are built within classically good Feng Shui conditions. The most basic of considerations is to have the protection of mountains and proximity to water. Consider Hong Kong with Victoria Peak behind the Central Business District and the water in front. Think of Geneva protected by Switzerland's mountains and with access to the Lake of Geneva.

How does Feng Shui expertise help design dilemmas?

Take a design dilemma regarding the entrance to a hotel building for instance, I helped architects broaden their viewpoint by suggesting an awareness of a trinity of directions; one for an entrance, one for elevators and one for an exit. This helped them see design possibilities previously closed to them because they were not thinking like a Feng Shui consultant. The senior partner acknowledged that their already impressive design was even better after my involvement. This project is confidential so I am

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unable to give precise details. The point is that the Feng Shui perspective is very unique and by its very nature, it is dynamic, so it can be applied to any design scenario – from industrial or product design to the design of airports. It can also be applied to systems architecture and even political debate and social policy making. There is such a profound elegance to the systems of Yin/Yang and 5 Elements that they remind us of the power of simplicity and how difficult it can sometimes be to remain simple. People become frightened that they will appear somehow unsophisticated or unscientific, when actually, the ability to think at the bigger picture level and to be able to drill down to detail is what is needed for members of steering and management groups. So very often it is not what you know but how you perceive an issue. I am interested to use my unique awareness and perception skills to contribute to problem solving groups within design or any field requiring innovative thinking.

Can Feng Shui design save on development costs?

Another example of using Feng Shui to help with achieving greater practicality, is when I suggested to a resort developer that he reshape the entrance road to his members only resort – this actually allowed for the creation of an extra plot of land. Furthermore, I also suggested he remove several water features from the main beach club design as too much water can create financial problems, and also in the Caribbean climate they are very expensive to maintain, so the developer gained a plot of land and dramatically cut his upkeep budget, all as a result of using my skills – no-one could have predicted this outcome at the outset of the project and few clients realise the vast scope of Feng Shui and how it can help them. I often suggest to business people that they have a consultation on their home as well because this of course influences their levels of luck just as much as the commercial premises.

Micro Feng Shui - using Feng Shui to help the health of residential occupants

When applying Feng Shui to any situation we can hope to have a 30% influence on someone's health or general success in life. *"Humans are part of a very complex and delicately balanced ecosystem. Thus, to understand humans fully it is necessary to study them within the context of the ecosystems in which they survive. Environmental Psychology is the field that attempts to develop an understanding of this interdependency."* [3]

The definition for environment in Chinese Metaphysics theory falls into three main categories each affecting the individual by approximately 33.3%:

- Actual physical environment – design, climate, physiological response – also known as Earth Luck - this includes the Feng Shui of your environment, such as home or office.
- Social environment – who your peers/friends/family are, behavioral responses, conditioning – also known as Human Luck - this is almost entirely within your control.
- Cosmic environment – the uncontrollable aspect of Luck, spiritual response – also known as Heaven Luck.

Primarily Feng Shui seeks to manipulate the Earth Luck environment to align with the best Feng Shui energies but it also looks to incorporate some aspects of the Heaven Luck such as the horoscope of the occupants and the conditions of time – which season, month, day and hour to take action, start demolition or refurbishment or set foundations etc.

In traditional Feng Shui theory the exterior is more important than the interior, yet most modern consultants work only with the interiors, largely out of necessity as more and more people inhabit apartments but also due to lack of knowledge. Form School principles as the name suggests focus on the topographical quality of our surroundings and whether the site is exposed or sheltered for example. The qualities of yin and yang (female and male dynamics) such as receptivity or solidity, dark and light, quiet and loud are also taken into consideration, as are the behaviours of surrounding flora and fauna. When building a new home it is wise to acknowledge and take cues from the surrounding natural kingdom. You could even go as far as to construct your home in a shape that is in keeping with the habitat of a certain species, for instance near the seaside incorporate a crab or turtle shape in the construction, particularly if that particular shape can offer intelligent design principles.

Even the very shape of your plot and the landforms themselves can influence your choice of building shape. For example, if a certain rock formation forms fingers looking like spider's legs, you could

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incorporate web shapes or web structures into your building design and could expect to see more spiders in this area than in neighbouring areas. To the uninitiated this can all sound fantastical but to those who have spent time in nature and are acquainted with her many moods and atmospheres it is just a natural and logical respectful way of co-habiting on this planet.

Just as we can construct buildings from principles of biology, imitating the natural cooling systems of termites or the tensile strength of spider's webs or tortoise shells we can use design to combine with the environment in an even deeper way that can embrace not only utilitarian functional requirements and biomimicry but align with the spirit of the place or Genus Loci.

Not everyone has the luxury of locating and purchasing a plot of land with perfect Feng Shui topography but these principles apply even in cities because energy follows form. To understand the interior Later Heaven influences you need to have first understood the external influences.

Diagnosing and curing 'sick' homes

8 out of 10 NE –SW homes have sickness and disaster in them since 1996. This is a scientifically significant conclusion based on real consultations and the experiences of real people before and after the recommendations have been put into place. Before the Feng Shui consultation, people living in NE-SW reported similar experiences including feeling stressed, not sleeping well, aware of some sort of 'presence', woman of the house particularly unwell, a feeling of being stuck and a feeling of claustrophobia. In the Feng Shui science we diagnose an excess of Earth element in the property (this is referring to Earth in the 'flying star' system, not Earth as in bricks/mortar) and this Earth element creates a type of feeling or quality to the chi, that resembles the behaviour of Earth in our environment. For instance too much Earth can lead to stagnation – silting up of waters, damning effect on water, being too Earth bound and not dreaming enough. The sickness that is caused in these properties can be a sickness of the soul like depression or a sickness in the womb/stomach (Earth element). The cure for this is to drain the Earth in the Five Elements Cycle by using Metal (white, silver, gold colours on walls and materials) and when people repainted the central section of their house either white or white with silver they noticed a tangible sense of relief and a lightening of the energetic feeling of the property which meant that the chi circulating in the property was more vital- therefore the occupants are absorbing far better energy and experience more success. The other option is to use white with a hint of green (Wood or Tree energy) as this 'crashes' the Earth to get it moving. Again, those who opted for the use of white with a hint of green (i.e. A very pale apple green or very pale pistachio) reported a distinct improvement in the feeling of the home. Many colour decisions in "Flying Star" technique are based on creating a balance within the Five Elements.

The Five Actions

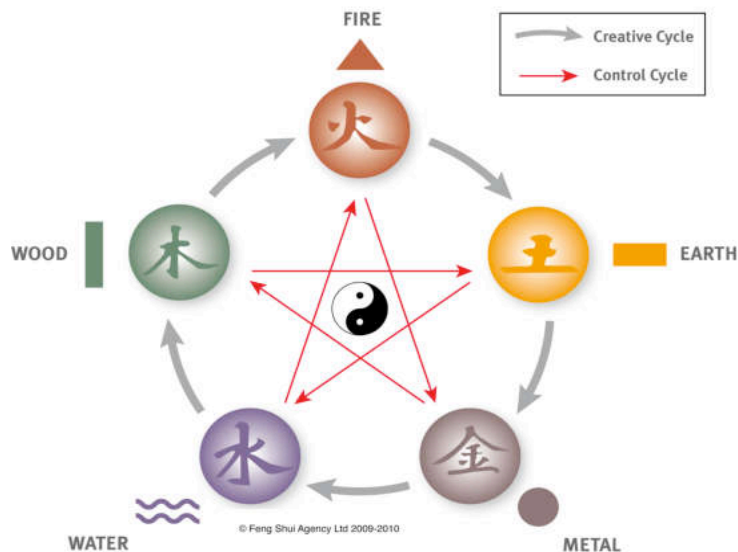


Figure 6. The Creation and Control sequence of the Five Elements of Five Actions

The elements are more correctly referred to as actions as this more precisely indicates their dynamic nature. They all have a physical and emotional representation. Water can literally refer to the sea, ocean, river, lake, pond, water feature and it can also refer to bodily organs, the kidneys, bladder, to activities such as sleep, dreaming, generation of ideas, to the time of year and time of day - winter and midnight and to colours, blue, black and even to emotions such as fear and courage. All such associations are relevant to Feng Shui considerations in one form or another, whether for design or timing or helping people make the most of their constitution.

Wood – forest, woodland, houseplants, garden shrubs and trees, insight, eyes, liver, gallbladder, anger, patience, green colours.

Fire – log fires, gas fires, ovens, hobs, candles, sunlight, heart, small intestine, heart protector, triple heater, love, joy, red, pink and sky blue.

Earth – stone, brick, ploughed fields, mountains, desert, slate, stomach, womb, spleen, nourishment, safety, worry, thinking, yellow, brown, grey.

Metal – gold, silver, steel, swords, cutlery, jewellery, lungs, large intestine, skin, optimism versus pessimism, singing, white, silver, gold.

I need water (water) and warmth (fire) to survive along with food (earth and wood) and social connection (metal and fire). Using implements (metal and wood) makes my life a little easier. Technology (fire) gives me more free time to enjoy. Every process of life, from cooking a meal to designing a house can be viewed through the model of the five elements.

Tendencies to exist - no absolutes

Fritjof Capra is a well known author who has studied the similarities between quantum physics and Taoist philosophies and his research firmly demonstrates that modern science is now able to confirm the reality described by many ancient cultures, that the world is an interconnected web of life force energy.

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Furthermore, the behaviour of atoms show only tendencies and no absolutes. Therefore, the fluid and elegant simplicity of the 'Feng Shui glasses' and theoretical models are perfectly able to function in a world of constant change because their very foundations are based on a living and vibrant universal life force, not a finite measurement.

Many Feng Shui terminologies embrace the symbiotic relationship of man with nature. The name of a specific area of land called "Hundred Flowers Welcome the Guest" evocatively conveys the instant first impression you receive upon entering this certain meadowland area in the Lake District. The beauty of poetic terms is that they are open to interpretation and allow for individual assimilation rather than a prescriptive label which can lack vitality and connection with the present moment. "General presenting the treasure" describes a space which has a commanding aspect (General) and an open view (presenting) and a body of contained water (Treasure). It is this type of unusual awareness combined with the scientific and logical Feng Shui systems that offers a very unique way of understanding and interpreting design and its impact and relationship with the surroundings; the greater harmony in the built environment the greater the health and success of the occupants. *"Biomimicry does not imitate nature instead it learns from nature's design and is a process of imitating natural ideas. It is an applied science inspired by human's ability to solve problems through the study of natural designs; ultimately it leads to the creation of sustainable building or maximum performance building."* [4]

The Universal DNA of an individual - Chinese Horoscopes

Feng Shui looks not only at space but also at the time of birth of the occupants. Whether or not you 'believe' astrology works, when it is proven to be accurate so many times, how can one deny its validity? It is a blueprint of a person's energy system that can be used to help with issues of health, starting a family, career, money and personal power and marriage. And isn't it about time that the skeptic is asked to politely grant a suspension of disbelief? How can real progress be made if the conditions are too hostile in the design industry and architects see Feng Shui consultants as a curious breed talking an arcane language rather than collaborators who can offer a genuinely unique insight into their designs and therefore offer themselves as problem solvers. If you crush wonder then you crush innovation.

Hour	Day	Month	Year
癸	辛	己	癸
巳	未	未	丑
丙庚戌	己乙丁	己乙丁	己辛癸

Figure 9. A sample of a Chinese Astrology Four Pillars or Ba Zi chart - each character represents a different element (Water, Wood, Fire, Earth or Metal) - this example shows a Metal person born in an Earth month.

Natural Therapy - restoring our connection to the macrocosm

Feng Shui helps people to reconnect to their awareness of nature in their lives, not only in their immediate and local environment but also by assessing their horoscopes. If we can accept the idea that some people are born with certain conditions or characteristics then surely we can accept the idea that the natural energies present at a birth will influence the quality of chi absorbed by that person which then becomes a sort of energetic building block for the rest of their life and one that means the person has a connection to nature's energies, a lucky and happy connection at some times and a less fortunate connection at other times.

It can be very restorative for someone with Weak Wood energy to walk in the forests for instance or someone with Strong Fire can find that going swimming helps to rebalance their excessively strong Fire nature. The person with weak Earth will find digging the earth very restorative and the person with excess Water in the chart will enjoy spending time in sunny warm climates to help warm them up as these types have a tendency towards feeling the cold and damp accumulation in the body.

So it is with houses and buildings – if an existing building has too much fire we try to incorporate Earth to drain it as Earth is Child of Fire therefore Fire gives its energy away to Earth. We would not introduce tall slim green columnar shaped design features to a fire house as this would strengthen the fire chi as Wood is the Mother of Fire, so it gives the fire supportive energy.

Universal Laws

A little like a lawyer reads legal texts, a Feng Shui consultant acquaints themselves with universal energetic laws and just as reading tomes of legal literature can be bogging and hard work, it is also hard work and application to not only read the Chinese teachings but to also develop the mindset capable of engaging with the wisdom. One has to have a mind able to see both the bigger picture and the smaller scale details and this is quite rare. One has to be able to think in 3D, also quite rare. One also has to be able to cope happily with the fact that on the one hand some Feng Shui principles are astoundingly simple and common sense and yet on the other hand some of the principles operate as wheels within wheels and demand a more circular/ non-linear level of awareness. For some people it is totally alien to consider applying a pie chart shaped grid to a building or a town and divide the space into directions, let alone then insert certain numerical patterns into those directions and derive meaning. My interest is in demonstrating that although this way of thinking is different it is equally as valuable as concentrating on the pure logistics and mechanics of design and most certainly opens up an exploration of the multidimensional nature of wellbeing. When interpreting signs from nature we open our minds to a successful blend of non-linear and linear thinking. Ancient cultures have often been dismissed as lacking sophistication or being 'primitive' or somehow against progress, but we have seen increasingly to our dismay the consequences of 'civilization' with little or at best only token regard for the environment.

Fairer representation of Female Gender in design

Feng Shui Urban Planning is very new in the UK and Europe so we need to explore more fully the very real opportunities offered from the implementation of this knowledge and not allow prejudices or shortsightedness or overly scientific scrutiny to rob us of the opportunity to apply these amazing principles and research. Including more classical Feng Shui in government projects would also more fairly represent the female gender within design arena, as many women (and increasingly more men) naturally resonate with principles of Feng Shui rather than purely focus on utilitarianism and budget constraints.

Seeing nature as a mentor – capacity for truth.....

"In indigenous cultures around the world the natural world is regarded as the realm of spirit and the sacred; the natural is the spiritual. From this follows an attitude of respect, a desire to maintain a balanced relationship, and an instinctive understanding of the need to consider future generations and the future health of the ecosystem - in short, sustainability." [5] Feng Shui offers us a way of both scientifically and intuitively identifying and working with natural rhythms and restoring our sense of wonder and awe in nature. Testimonials from my students reveal how much their perspective on life shifts and opens up to the world around them and how they find this an empowering experience. A good Feng Shui consultant can see the building and its setting as a whole, and understand the connections between different areas and functions of the building, much like understanding the function and form of a biological structure or of a building or town infrastructure. The Feng Shui consultant can advise on different approaches to each element of the design within a cohesive set of Feng Shui principles, therefore bringing an ability to comment not only on the visual or aesthetic or interiors aspect of a building, as a limited understanding of Feng Shui presupposes, but very much more about its innate design structure, performance, orientation and landscaping, ideally right at the outset of a project. Feng Shui provides a perspective on how to provide a contextual adaptation to designs that harmonise with nature and the cosmos. I would even go as far as to say that Feng Shui awareness can challenge us to become more truthful and more aligned to our spiritual selves. Spending time in nature gives rise to an unfolding or unravelling of our habitual constructs, sometimes in a delightful way, sometimes in a painful way hence

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the intellectual resistance towards such wisdom. “When consciousness opens fully to wilderness and immerses itself in natural processes, the return is almost always a painful experience. In returning to the culture, we plunge ourselves back into the forces that split consciousness from nature, or Mind, in the first place. In the painful “reentry” experience, we feel our newly open and connected beings congeal into hardened, separate, well-defended selves. Although unpleasant, this process is perhaps a unique opportunity to experience mindfully the cultural forces that normally operate outside our awareness.” [6]

Interdisciplinary Approach

A truly holistic subject in that it encompasses many different variables, Feng Shui is part of design acumen and intellectual capital. It provides an elegant framework to ponder systematic interrelationships between physical, energetic and social influences and the individual’s wellbeing and experience. I propose that we blend the best of biomimetic architecture with Feng Shui wisdom to create buildings that are energetically efficient not just from a structural or technological point of view but also from a subjective psychological and environmental perspective. With all the wide array of new eco-technologies and the focus on carbon footprints etc it is my sincere hope that people do not once again become seduced by the economic profits to be made with these new technologies and forget again about the spirit of the environment in which they are building these new energy efficient buildings. For what is the point of building a low carbon emission building to protect the earth that is not in harmony with Feng Shui principles or ignores the unique surrounding environment for the sake of cost considerations? If we try to understand Feng Shui purely from a Western point of view, forever seeking to turn it into apps and bite size tips sheets, then it risks becoming a falsification. Actually, all that is required is earnest academic effort and professional collaboration to understand this beautifully profound subject.

Conclusion

As demonstrated above classical Feng Shui systems are not only founded upon elegant and highly plausible philosophical principles but in practice they correspond and align very closely to the behaviours of the natural world and can be considered as biomimetic. Evidence based research has proven the use of Feng Shui to both diagnose and cure problematic energetic conditions within residential properties and to assist with resolving design issues in architecture and provide greater profitability within a business context. The Feng Shui techniques and awareness also support the psychological and spiritual wellbeing of individuals and there exists enormous untapped potential to use this knowledge for the wellbeing of cities and urban regeneration to create harmonious and thriving communities.

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