



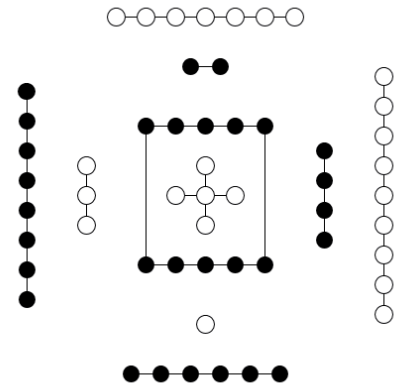
# International Feng Shui Federation

## 國際風水專業學會

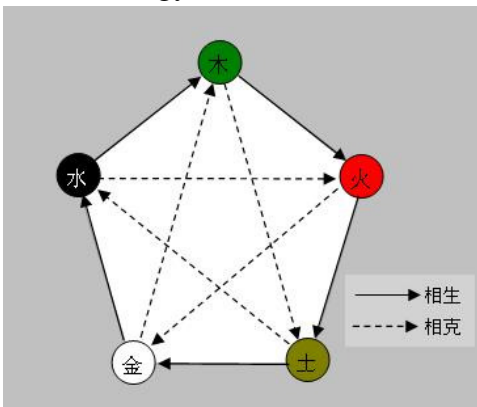
### Feng Shui (Chinese Geomancy) is Scientific or Superstitious

Traditional Feng Shui has always been treated as superstitious and NOT scientific.

The science of Feng Shui (Chinese Geomancy) is a study of the effects of environmental energies, the operating principles of these energies, and the steps that can be taken to improve circumstances by harmonizing environmental forces and incorporating the environment's inconspicuous forces into architectural and landscape design.



The awareness of energy or power flowing through the land is hardly restricted to Asiatic cultures. In the Celtic tradition, the earth is diffused with spirit, and its power is present in the rocks, caves, hills, springs, rivers, wells, and trees. When energy moves, it travels through the ley lines, or the Old Straight Tracks.



When it is still, it is concentrated in grottoes, springs, and groves. The ancient people of Europe experienced these energies directly and understood that they were the source of power that renewed the earth. If the places of power were damaged or destroyed, then life on earth would NOT be renewed and everything would wither and die.

The sense that there is power in nature was central to the ancient Greeks as well. From the poetry of Hesiod we get the impression that nature is alive and that this power is “generous.” It gives freely to nourish all things inter-twined with it, and its power is primarily concentrated in caves, streams, and mountains.



Even when Celts and the Greeks settled in towns, the architecture that was built in places of power was a linkage between earth spirit and human existence. Any incorrectness in orienting such structures or errors in selecting the site would bring uncontrollable disaster.



The land has become real estate that can be bought and sold, and is no longer being felt as a source of energy and nourishment. Our modern temperament has a tendency to dismiss the indigenous and ancient views of the environment as primitive and the product of illiterate minds, just as many “objective” and “detached” observers have regarded Feng Shui as superstitious belief.

To recover the meaning of the environment, people should see the land in a radically different way. Some geographers and ecologists have already called for a change in our geographical experience of the environment to include the entire realm of feelings, and the acts and experience of individual in

which one should apprehend oneself in a distinct relationship with environment. It is required to conceive the environment as a network of potential places capable of inviting and sustaining a complex of physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual interactions.

In the ecologically centered approaches to the environment, “landscapes” take on the very character of human existence. They can be full of life, deathly dull, exhilarating, sad, joyful or pleasant. Feng Shui can help us recover this experience of nature.



To experience the power of land, people should set aside their views that the nature is composed of inanimate objects. In the world of Feng Shui, the land is alive and filled with energy. It breathes, it feeds, it sleeps, and it frolics. It is sometimes playful, sometimes mischievous, and at times it can even be malicious and angry.



Apart from a sense of openness to nature, we need to work on the relationship between the natural landscape and the structures we build on it. When we build our buildings in the environment, we need to ensure that a harmonious relationship exists between the natural and the built. In this regard,



Feng Shui can give us guidance. Some buildings blend with the environment, while others clash with it. In Feng Shui sense, buildings with irregular shapes and sharp features are NOT conducive to both people and environment. Buildings that have long, dark corridors stifle those who inhabit them because they shut out the “Yang (陽)” energy of the sun.

These ancient guidelines from Feng Shui are similar to the ecologically oriented approaches in modern architecture.

Actually Feng Shui advocates living in harmony with the universal environment and its energy field, so that there is a proper balance between the forces of nature. Feng Shui contends that the environment is crowded with invisible but powerful energy fields (some auspicious and some pernicious) and that these energy fields carry with them either harmony or discord, health or sickness, prosperity or poverty.



The practice of Feng Shui is concerned with harnessing the energy fields that are auspicious (i.e. what the ancient Chinese refer to as “the Dragons’ cosmic energy lines” or “Sheng Chi (生氣)”.



Auspicious energy fields travels in a meandering manner. Feng Shui is also about avoiding inauspicious energy fields that represent “killing energy lines” or “Shar Chi (煞氣)”.

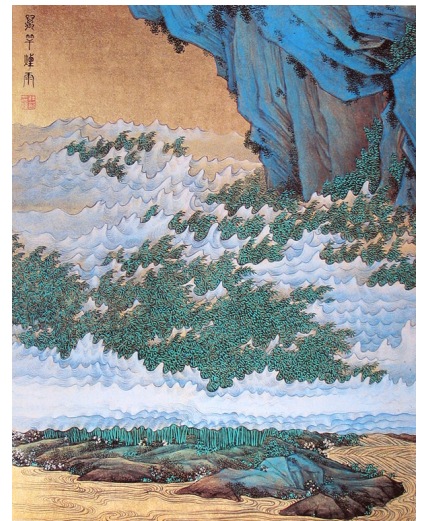
Feng Shui practitioners strenuously warn against sleeping, sitting, working, eating, and living in places that are hit or attacked by the pernicious and invisible killing energy lines. Generally, killing energy lines is caused by the presence of sharp, pointed objects or structures that convey bad Feng Shui. Individuals are inadvertently harmed if killing energy lines point directly towards main entrance, bedroom, beds where people sleep, and desk where people sit.



Our destiny and luck cycles can be influenced by the Feng Shui. Luck refers to variations in our fortune – the ups and downs in our life. If we address the factors that control our luck, we can moderate the downs and maximize the ups and even transform a poor fate into a successful one.

## Foundation Theories of Feng Shui

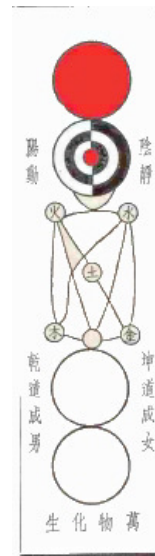
The goal of feng shui as practiced today is to situate the human built environment on spots with good “qi.” The “**perfect spot**” is a location and an axis in time. Some areas are not suitable for human settlement and should be left in their natural state.



Some current techniques can be traced to Neolithic China, while others were added in later times (most notably the Han dynasty, the Tang, and the Ming).



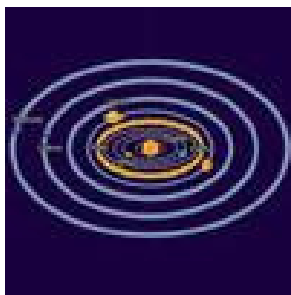
Today, to determine a perfect spot, local manifestations of “qi” must be assessed for quality. Quality is determined by observations and by using a compass (Luopan).



## Qi (ch'i)(氣)

Qi is a difficult word to translate and is usually left untranslated. Literally the word means “air”. In feng shui, “Qi” means “flow of energy”. Max Knoll suggested in a 1951 lecture that “qi” is a form of “solar radiation.”

A “Luopan” is used to determine many things. One those being to detect the direction of the “flow of qi.” Compasses reflect local geomagnetism which includes geomagnetically induced currents caused by space weather. It could be said that feng shui assesses the “quality of the local environment and the effects of space weather” - that is, feng shui is qimancy, or qi divination.



Beliefs from the Axial Age, feng shui among them, hold that the heavens influence life on Earth. This seems preposterous to many people, yet space weather exists and can have profound effects on technology (GPS, power grids, pipelines, communication and navigation systems, surveys), and the internal orienting faculties of birds and other creatures.

Atmospheric scientists have suggested that space weather creates fluctuations in market prices.

## Polarity (極)

Polarity is expressed in feng shui as “Yin(陰)” and “Yang(陽)”. The polarity within feng shui is buildings of the living (yang) and buildings of the dead (yin).

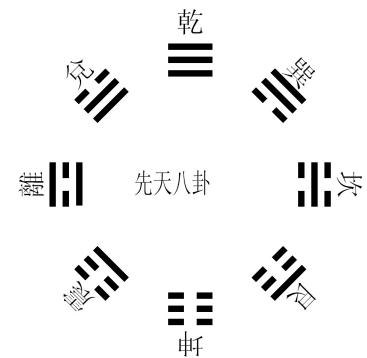
## Magnetic North and Luopan Compass (羅盤)



The stability of Magnetic North is critical for the accuracy of reading your fortune with a compass. Earth has an electromagnetic field. Our solar sun also has an electromagnetic field. Our solar sun goes through 11 year cycles of solar fluctuations called solar flares that create solar wind.

In 2003 two of the strongest flares ever recorded. This solar wind creates a vibration that disturbs the electromagnetic field of the earth.

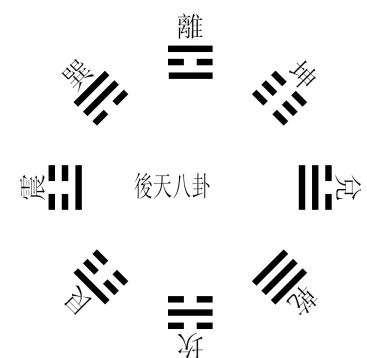
Magnetic North and True North (the Earth's axis) are not the same. Magnet North moves an average of 40 kilometers every year. In the last 100 years Magnetic North has moved approximately 1200 kilometers. Due to solar flares, Magnetic North is always in constant movement, creating conflicting readings on a compass.



## Bagua (eight symbols)(八卦)

Two diagrams known as “bagua (or pa kua 八卦)” loom large in feng shui, and both predate their mentions in the “Yijing or I Ching (易經). The Lo (River) Chart (Luo Shu (洛書), or Later Heaven Sequence) and the River Chart (Hetu (河圖), or Early Heaven Sequence) are linked to astronomical events of the sixth millennium BCE, and with the Turtle Calendar from the time of Yao. The Turtle Calendar of Yao (found in the Yaodian section of the Shangshu or 'Book of Documents') dates to 2300 BCE, plus or minus 250 years. It seems clear from many sources that time, in the form of astronomy and calendars, is at the heart of feng shui.

In Yaodian, the cardinal directions are determined by the marker-stars of the mega-constellations known as the “Four Celestial Animals.”



**East:** the Bluegreen Dragon (Spring equinox) --- Niao (Bird),  $\alpha$  Hydrae

**South:** the Red Bird (Summer solstice) --- Huo (Fire),  $\alpha$  Scorpionis

**West:** the White Tiger (Autumn equinox) --- Xu (Emptiness, Void),  $\alpha, \beta$  Aquarii

**North:** the Dark (Mysterious) Turtle (Winter solstice) --- Mao (Hair),  $\eta$  Tauri (the Pleiades)



The “bagua (八卦)” diagrams are also linked with the sifang (four directions) method of divination used during the Shang dynasty. The sifang is much older, however. It was used at Niuheliang, and figured large in Hongshan culture's astronomy. And it is this area of China that is linked to Huangdi, the Yellow Emperor, who allegedly invented the south-pointing spoon.

## Criticism

Victorian-era commentators on feng shui were generally ethnocentric, and as such skeptical and derogatory of what little they knew of feng shui.



In 1896 at a meeting of the Educational Association of China, Rev. P.W. Pitcher railed at the “rotteness of the whole scheme of Chinese architecture,” and urged fellow missionaries “to erect unabashedly Western edifices of several stories and with towering spires in order to destroy nonsense about fung-shuy.”

Some modern Christians have a similar opinion of feng shui. It is entirely inconsistent with Christianity to believe that harmony and balance result from the manipulation and channeling of non-physical forces or energies, or that such can be done by means of the proper placement of physical objects. Such techniques, in fact, belong to the world of sorcery.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, feng shui has been officially deemed as a “feudalistic superstitious practice” according to the state's atheistic Communist ideology and discouraged or even outright banned at times.



Persecution was the severest during the **Cultural Revolution**, when feng shui was classified as a custom under the so-called **Four Olds** to be wiped out. Feng shui practitioners were beaten and abused by **Red Guards** and their works burned.

After the death of **Mao Zedong** and the end of the Cultural Revolution, the official attitude became more tolerant but restrictions on feng shui practice are still in place in today's China.

It is illegal in the PRC today to register feng shui consultation as a business and similarly advertising feng shui practice is banned, and there have been frequent crackdowns on feng shui practitioners on the grounds of “promoting feudalistic superstitions” such as one in Qingdao in early 2006 when the city's business and industrial administration office shut down an art gallery converted into a feng shui practice.



Communist officials who had consulted feng shui are sacked and expelled from the Communist Party.

Partly because of the Cultural Revolution, in today's PRC less than one-third of the population believe in feng shui, and the proportion of believers among young urban PRC Chinese is said to be much less than 5%, and an overwhelming number of Chinese consider feng shui as a “social evil”.



Among all the ethnic Chinese communities the PRC has the least number of feng shui believers in proportion to the general population. Learning feng shui is considered taboo in today's China.

Nevertheless, it is reported that feng shui has gained adherents among Communist Party officials according to a BBC Chinese news commentary in 2006., and since the beginning of Chinese economic reforms the number of feng shui practitioners are increasing.

A number of Chinese academics permitted to research on the subject of feng shui are architects by trade, in the name of studying historical feng shui factors in heritage buildings, such as Cao Dafeng, the Vice-President of Fudan University, and Liu Shenghuan of Tongji University.

Feng Shui practitioners have been skeptical of claims and methods in the “cultural supermarket.”



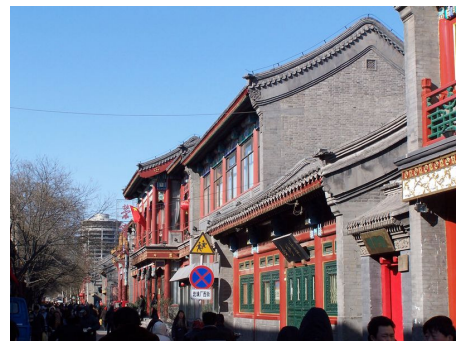
Mark Johnson made a telling point:

“This present state of affairs is ludicrous and confusing. Do we really believe that mirrors and flutes are going to change people's tendencies in any lasting and meaningful way? ... There is a lot of investigation that needs to be done or we will all go down the tubes because of our inability to match our exaggerated claims with lasting changes.”



A travelogue-type article from the **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry** explained **feng shui** initially as “a common-sense alignment of structures to conform to the shape of the land, an idea shared by any sensible architect in a land fraught with typhoons and torrential rains.” However, after reading two books (one by field researcher Ole Bruun), the writer's conclusion was that feng shui “is more of a mystical belief in cosmic harmony.”

Penn & Teller did an episode of their television show *Bullshit!* that featured several Feng Shui practitioners in the US, and was highly critical of the inconsistent (and frequently odd) advice. In the show, the entertainers argue that if Feng Shui is a science (as some claim), it should feature a consistent methodology.



People have reacted skeptically towards the alleged benefits of crystals, wind chimes, table fountains, and mirrored balls, etc., on one's life, finances, and relationships. Often, these claims are dismissed as New Age, pseudo-science, relying on the placebo effect, or even outright fraud.



## Current Research

A modern feng shui fountain at Taipei 101, Taiwan

A growing body of research exists on what is now called "traditional" or "classical" feng shui.

**Landscape Ecologists** find traditional feng shui an interesting study. In many cases, the only remaining patches of old forest in Asia are “feng shui woods,” which strongly suggests the “healthy homes,” sustainability and environmental components of ancient feng shui techniques should not be easily dismissed.

**Environmental Scientists and Landscape Architects** have researched traditional feng shui and its methodologies.

**Architectural schools study** the principles as they applied to ancient vernacular architecture.

**Geographers** have analyzed the techniques and methods to help locate historical sites in Victoria, Canada, and archaeological sites in the American Southwest, concluding that ancient Native Americans considered astronomy and landscape features.



Whether it is data on comparisons to scientific models, or the design and siting of buildings, graduate and undergraduate students have been accumulating solid evidence on what researchers call the “**exclusive Chinese cultural achievement and experience in architecture**” that is **feng shui**.