



International Feng Shui Federation

國際風水專業學會

What is Feng Shui (Chinese Geomancy) ?

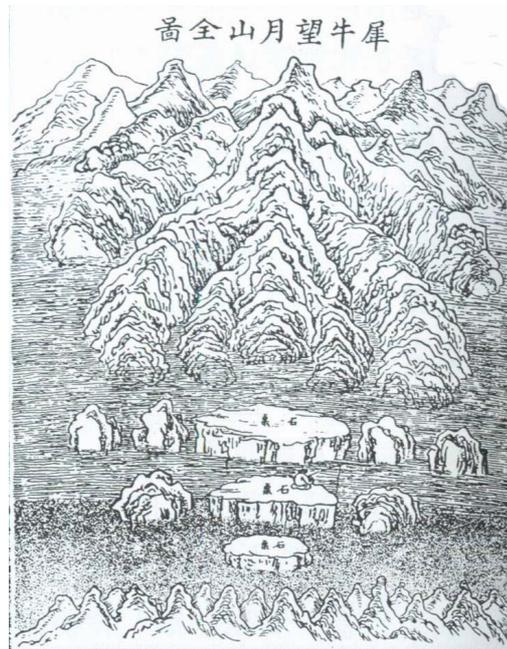
In ancient times as well as today, Feng shui, pronounced in English as [fʊŋ'ʃweɪ] ("fung shway"), was known as "Kan-Yu" which means "The Law of Heaven and Earth."



Today's Feng Shui schools teach that it is the ancient Chinese practice of placement and arrangement of space to achieve harmony with the environment. Feng shui literally translates as "wind-water." This is a cultural shorthand taken from the following passage of the Zhangshu (Book of Burial) by Guo Pu of the Jin Dynasty:

“The qi that rides the wind stops at the boundary of water.”

Feng shui is a discipline with guidelines that are compatible with many techniques of architectural planning as well as internal furniture arrangements. Space, weather, astronomy, and geomagnetism are basic components of feng shui. Proponents claim that feng shui has an effect on health, wealth, and personal relationships.



Early feng shui relied on astronomy to find correlations between humans and the universe and it is inseparable from an understanding of political power in premodern China.



Chinese often used the celestial pole determined by the pole stars to determine the north-south axis of settlements. This technique explains why Shang palaces at Xiaotun lie 10° east of due north. In some cases, as Paul Wheatley observed, they bisected the angle between the directions of the rising and setting sun to find north. This technique provided the more precise alignments of the Shang walls at Yanshi and Zhengzhou.



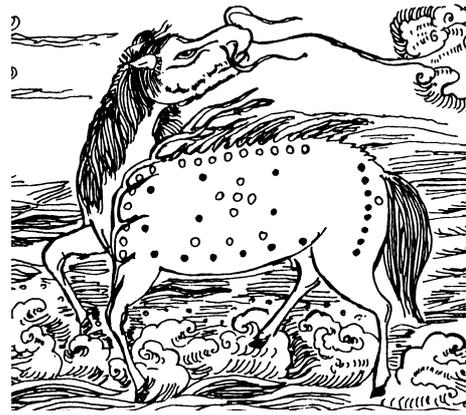
Currently Early Yanshao and Hongshan cultures provide the earliest evidence for feng shui. Professor David Pankenier and his associates reviewed astronomical data for the time of the Banpo dwellings (4000 BCE) to show that the asterism Yingshi (Lay out the Hall, in the Warring States period and early Han era) corresponded to the sun's location at this time. Centuries before, the asterism Yingshi was known as Ding. It was used to indicate the appropriate time to build a capital city, according to the Shijing. Apparently an astronomical alignment ensured that Banpo village homes were sited for solar gain.

The grave at Puyang (radiocarbon dated 5,000 BP) that contains mosaics of the Dragon and Tiger constellations and Beidou (Dipper) is similarly oriented along a north-south axis. The presence of both round and square shapes in the Puyang tomb, and at Hongshan culture ceremonial centers, suggests that the gaitian cosmography (heaven-round, earth-square) was present in Chinese society long before it appeared in the Zhou Bu Suan Jing.



Cosmography that bears a striking resemblance to modern feng shui compasses (and computations) was found on a jade unearthed at Hanshan (c. 3000 BCE). The design is linked by Li Xueqin to the liuren astrolabe, zhinan zhen, and Luopan.

龍馬負圖 (河圖)



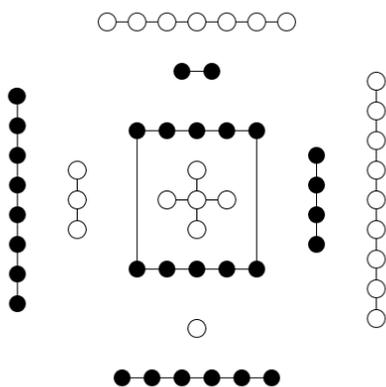
All capital cities of China followed rules of Feng Shui for their design and layout. These rules were codified during the Zhou era in the "Kaogong ji" (Manual of Crafts). Rules for builders were codified in the "Lu ban jing" (Carpenter's Manual). Graves and tombs also followed rules of Feng Shui. From the earliest records, it seems that the rules for the structures of the graves and dwellings were the same.

Feng Shui is an enticing composite of mystical beliefs, astrology, folklore, and common sense. Feng Shui should be a very complex wisdom, based on the Chinese understanding of the dynamic flow of energy throughout the universe, and described through colorful symbolism.

The study of Feng Shui is a fascinating journey of Chinese cultural practice, which brings us to the intangible world of dragons (青龍) and tigers (白虎), wind (風) and water (水), positive and negative forces, Yin (陰) and Yang (陽), energy flows, cosmic breaths, and the interactions of nature's elements, constant changing, and constant state of energy flux.



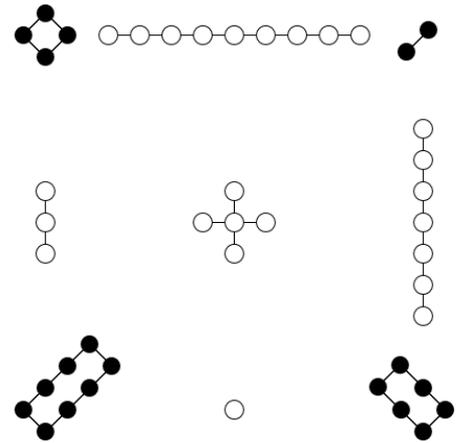
To people of Chinese origin all over the world, Feng Shui is a mystical practice that blends ancient wisdom with cultural tradition, a body of knowledge that lays down guidelines for life's different situations.



Feng Shui practice is enjoying a spectacular revival in the country of its origin. Plans for new buildings and huge property developments around southern China and in many of its coastal cities now bear testimony to the Feng Shui practitioner's input. Like their fellow Chinese in Mainland China, Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR, Taiwan, Singapore, and elsewhere, increasing numbers of Chinese now actively look to Feng Shui to give them an additional edge in business.

History of Feng Shui

A feng shui spiral at LA Chinatown's Metro station. Emperor Di Ku was said to dabble in astronomy. Shun consulted the stars before he assumed the throne. There were feng shui devices before the invention of the magnetic compass, which occurred comparatively late in the long history of feng shui.



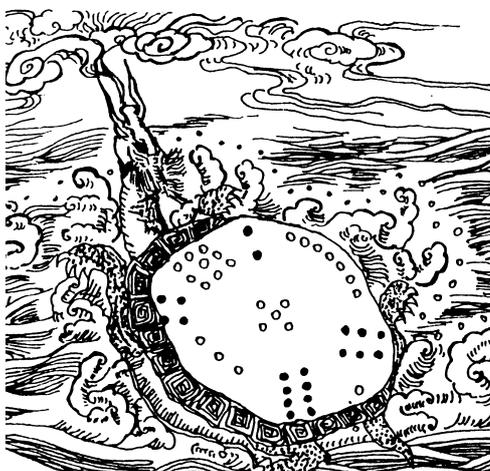
According to the Zhouli the original device may have been a gnomon, although Yao, Huangdi, and other figures were said to possess devices such as the south-pointing chariot.

As Derek Walters observed, “The luopan was originally a scientific instrument, used for astronomical observation.” The oldest excavated examples of instruments used for feng shui are liuren astrolabes. These consist of a lacquered, two-sided board with astronomical sightlines. Liuren astrolabes have been unearthed from tombs that date between 278 BC and 209 BC. The markings are virtually unchanged from the astrolabe to the first magnetic compasses.

Since the invention of the magnetic compass for use in Feng Shui, authentic feng shui has required the use of a compass. This compass could be a Luopan (Chinese Feng Shui compass of the types San Yuan, San He, and Zong He) or one of the earlier versions such as a south-pointing spoon (zhinan zhen).



烏龜背書 (洛書)



The history of the Luopan compass takes us back to the Zhou dynasty (770-476 BCE), when emperor Shing combined the knowledge of the compass with that of the I-ching. The compass consists of a magnetic needle that point towards magnetic north not true north. The foundation of the I-ching is in the trigrams.

The trigrams are the set of three broken and/or solid lines that you typically find around a Chinese mirror.

In Traditional Compass techniques these trigrams determine the divination of fortune. The traditional Luopan has 36 rings of information. These trigrams occupy the first circle of the luopan. How these rings line up with the compass and the combination of the reading of these rings determines your fortune.

