



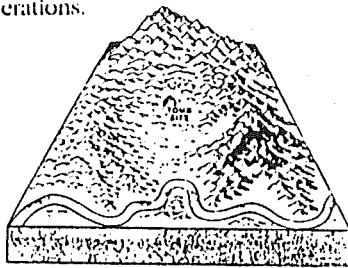
An  
Introduction  
To  
**FENG  
SHUI**  
by William Spear

As modern society begins to discover the profound implications of traditional medicine, natural healers continue to broaden their focus by including the effect of the environment on individual health and well-being. The entire field of design and housebuilding has already been radically changed by studies showing that potentially toxic elements are used in many common building materials; moreover, investigations into effects of colour and light on human behaviour have helped many interior designers to create more harmonious environments for the home and workplace.

The integration of the outside world and our internal environment is a cornerstone of most traditional philosophies. The Japanese saying 'shin do fu ji' reminds us that human beings and the soil are 'not two'. Indigenous people all over the globe have always understood that we are not separate from our earth, our homes or each other. It is no surprise, therefore, to witness a growing interest in the field of geomancy—the art of placement known as Feng Shui. Through an in-depth study of the principles of unity and an observation of the timeless perfect order in the universe, Feng Shui brings together the external and internal environment by creating balanced, peaceful dwellings in which occupants can develop health and happiness.

Practised in Asia since the earliest of times, masters of the art of placement were originally employed in order to locate the most auspicious site for the tomb of a departed loved one. After the general area was selected by the family, the Feng Shui master would arrive with a luopan, or diviner's compass, and locate a site perfectly situated between mountain ranges, near the bend of a river, or in a valley where the ancestral spirits could be in harmony with

heaven and earth. There, a tomb would be built and blessed and the family's good fortune enhanced by the effects of the properly cared for spirit on future generations.



Over time, this practice of classical Feng Shui grew to include detailed observation of the living world and the way in which earth's energy affected all of daily life. Good Feng Shui meant prosperity and long life—a conscious connection of the outside environment and the world within. Considered part of the philosophy of the I Ching, Feng Shui remained an integral part of daily life until Western influences and political change began to erode this long held, deep appreciation for the invisible.

All matter has vibration. Referred to as Chi by the Chinese, Ki by the Japanese, Prana or Brahmin by Indian peoples or 'The Force' by Obi Wan Kenobi in 'Star Wars', this invisible, electromagnetic energy radiates in particular patterns from objects of all shapes and sizes. Detailed maps of Chi in the body reveal pathways of energy called meridians and form the basis of the entire practice of acupuncture and shiatsu massage therapy. The experience of an amputee known as phantom pain causes a knee which isn't there to itch; although the visible material has been removed, the energy that created it still remains. This phenomenon can be demonstrated through the use of Kirlian photography. A picture of a leaf using a Kirlian camera shows the 'energy' of the leaf radiating from its edges. Cut a corner of the leaf off, and a new

picture will still show the whole leaf, although a part is now missing in the material plane.

This invisible energy flows constantly through all life forms, closely observed and carefully detailed in the chakras and meridians of the human body. Our earth has similar meridians, called ley lines, which even in relatively recent times were acknowledged as places of power and spirit and where great cathedrals and shrines were erected. A day in Avebury should convince most sceptics of the significance of this energy, a site of incredible power where this energy is intensely focused. Indeed, all over the globe these sites are now being explored and appreciated for their potential healing qualities. Although recognised long ago these qualities are now all but forgotten, with so much attention being paid to technology and material gain.

The geomancer's compass employed the eternal pattern of the spiral to reflect the movement of Chi between Heaven and Earth. After positioning the eight or more rings to align with the directions, rivers or mountain ranges, the Feng Shui master could detect blockages or surges of Chi much like a dowser or acupuncturist does through the use of a divining rod or pulse diagnosis. The geomancer would then make suggestions for the shape or orientation of a dwelling, the placement of entrance ways, and other design features such as the location of bedrooms or kitchens for the most harmonious environment. Consideration was always given to the occupants since important decisions would always depend upon their occupations, proposed use, activity and the overall understanding of the more subtle aspects of the invisible.

Although the art of placement is still widely practised in some parts of Asia, the classical school employing the luopan is becoming more obscure. In its place, an emerging practice of what is being called intuitive Feng Shui is fast becoming popular among designers, architects and many in the healing arts who acknowledge the relationship between environment and health. Still rooted in Oriental philosophy, intuitive Feng Shui depends upon an understanding of basic design principles, which are then integrated with an understanding of the arrangement of the eight basic trigrams of the I Ching in any given space. Incorporated from the beginning of the design process, architects using Feng Shui can create extraordinarily powerful structures setting the stage for the occupant's good fortune. Architect I.M. Pei, among many others, employs Feng Shui principles in the design of skyscrapers.

Constantly imitated, top architects like Pei remain on the cutting edge due, in part, to the great advantage this profound wisdom brings. However, a building which may look similar in design to Pei's Bank of China World Headquarters in Hong Kong, but designed without an understanding of Feng Shui, can easily create disaster for its occupants rather than good fortune.

Understanding that any imbalanced space can be corrected and improved by intuitive Feng Shui, interior designers have begun to explore this art for use in major projects. At the annual convention of The Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario (Canada) last year, the standing-room-only workshop of Feng Shui was the most popular among 50 offered, with tickets unavailable to disgruntled latecomers in the hall. Feng Shui courses in London, Switzerland and Scandinavia are increasingly popular with designers, architects and lay people who all wish to incorporate aspects of this profound wisdom into their overall view of 'environmental medicine'.

Understanding Feng Shui intuitively rests upon many things, but none is more important than a working knowledge of the *I Ching*. This traditional oracle is said to have been written in Ancient China by Fu Hsi, the father of civilisation. As the legend tells us, this wise sage was meditating one day by the banks of the Lo River in Northern China when a tortoise emerged from the water. In a moment of divine inspiration, Fu Hsi realised that the entire universe was reflected in the orderly markings on the back of the shell of the tortoise. The configurations of solid and broken lines, arranged in threes, reflected the macrocosm in the microcosm of eight trigrams — all the possible combinations of three solid and broken lines. These eight markings symbolised every aspect of nature: Heaven, Earth, Fire, Water, Mountain, Lake, Wind and Thunder. Furthermore, all emotions, physical matter, spiritual qualities — everything — could be ascribed to one of the eight trigrams. From this, Fu Hsi saw a world in motion and laid down the pattern of change and movement known as the Lo Map. Reflective also of the nine cardinal numbers (where the middle number 5 had no specific trigram) the pattern created was the original magic square.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

*The Book of Changes* was composed by combining these eight symbols in all possible ways, resulting in 64 chapters of wisdom on the nature of change. Passed on by word of mouth for thousands of years until the early Chinese method of writing was invented, this oracle was considered the most direct link to man's understanding of his place between heaven and earth. In 1100BC, two royal scholars, King Wen and the Duke of Chou, amplified the verses, resulting in a more detailed description close to the texts available today. Five hundred years later, no lesser sages than Confucius and Lao Tse would spend their whole life studying its profound wisdom as an inexhaustible source of inspiration and spiritual guidance.

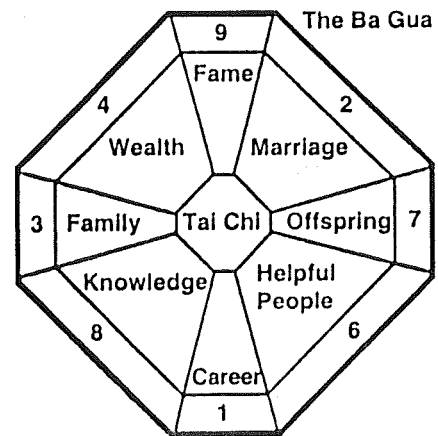
Today, there are nearly 100 translations of the *I Ching* published in English, with thousands of other books and articles available, ranging from scholarly examinations of their cultural symbolism to simplistic fortune telling guides for the market investor. Considered together with Lao Tsu's classic *Tao Te Ching* as the basis of Taoist philosophy, the *I Ching* remains as a personal oracle which defies description or comparison with any other historical body of knowledge.

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The arrangement of trigrams in the magic square, known as the Lo Map Later Heaven sequence, is used in intuitive Feng Shui as the starting point from which all design decisions are made. This 'grid' - the Ba Gua - is the overlay on a plot of land, a house or room that the architect or designer balances using basic design principles. These employ colour and light, ordinary corrections of geometric ratios, arrangement of space for harmonious flow of traffic and a number of more esoteric solutions for important areas



of the Ba Gua which the occupants wish to enhance. For example, when a house or room's floor plan is missing the far right corner opposite the front door, the Ba Gua shows the designer using Feng Shui that there is a 'negative' space in the area of marriage or relationships. If the occupant is, in fact, single and wishes to create a relationship but cannot correct the negative place practically (the house is notched there because of a tree or the room is shaped this way due to a chimney behind the wall in that corner), the designer can correct the imbalance through the proper placement of a mirror creating the impression that the space exists, allowing energy to flow into this space and symbolically into the area of relationship. Many sceptical novices of Feng Shui, after employing this basic correction, can attest to the nearly immediate changes! Knowledgeable adjustments in any of the other areas of the Ba Gua will have corresponding results.



All that is needed to properly align the Ba Gua is to determine the location of the front door. Whatever side the door is situated that is the base of the plan and the overlay is placed accordingly. This main door will always be sited at one of the three 'houses' for Career, Knowledge or Helpful People.

# GEOMANCY

So, for instance, if the door is on the left it is in Knowledge, if the middle, in Career and if on the right then in Helpful People.

Once, upon returning from a Feng Shui seminar in Switzerland, one teacher hung a small crystal ball (another commonly used design element) in the area of Fame; over the next day, invitations arrived to appear on a television show and a radio call-in programme. A third call from a magazine feature writer interested in a major story forced him to reconsider his peaceful anonymity and remove the crystal ball!

Literally translated as 'wind-water', Feng Shui reminds us of the subtle, invisible flow of energy in all life forms. Its practice, though requiring years of patient study and observation, reveals more to each of us about the potential of the self in creating the life of our dreams. A life based upon the timeless nature of this flowing, infinite energy, this Tao, constantly reminds us of the words of George Bernard Shaw: "The visible world is not the only reality, and the invisible no longer just a dream."

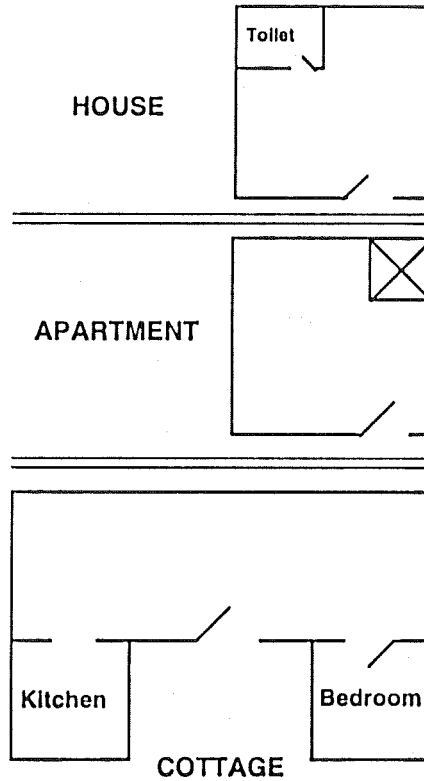
## LET'S GET PRACTICAL

These three floor plans are actual examples from students attending a Feng Shui seminar. Using other diagrams, see if you can tell how the corrections made could work - and what you might do in your own living space!

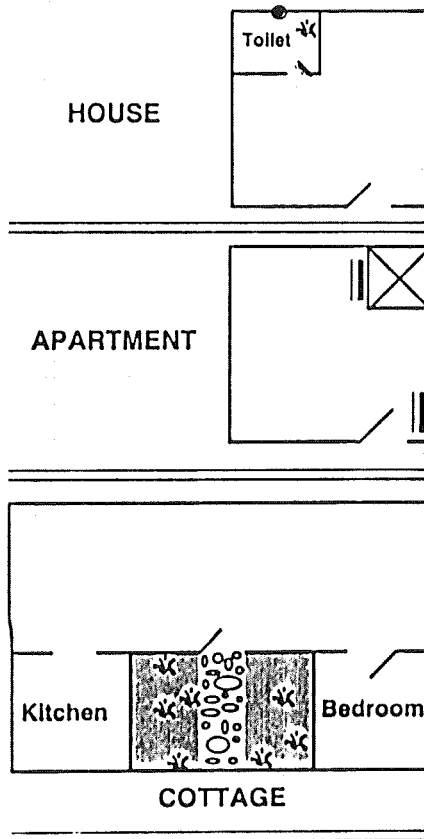
1. The occupants of the **House** were always struggling with their finances. Although the woman was a talented singer/songwriter and her husband a fine carpenter, money just seemed to come and go without ever accumulating. Budgeting with their three children helped only slightly, but when they realised that the location of the WC in the House of Wealth meant that they were



### BEFORE FENG SHUI CONSULTATION



### AFTER FENG SHUI CONSULTATION



symbolically flushing their money down the loo, they employed some basic corrections. First, in order to deflect the good chi already gathered in the house from entering the toilet, they placed a convex mirror on the outside of the WC door—and made a special effort to keep the door closed. Next, to attract auspicious chi from outside into the House of Wealth, they hung a 3 cm, faceted crystal ball in the window. Finally, they also tried to keep the toilet lid covered when not in use and placed many plants in the room. Three months later, the woman had received a \$10,000 advance for a new album (she now has four) and the man was opening a small woodstove business (it's now grown into a major business).

2. The woman who lived in the **Apartment** tried many ways to find a mate. Dozens of self-help workshops and books later, she attended a Feng Shui class and learned that the area for marriage (and relationships in general) was outside her space (the X represents a chimney). Intelligent, pretty and financially secure, she reasoned that her rigid floor plan may be having some energetic impact on her dilemma. In order to allow chi (preferably of the available, male variety) to flow into her flat, she hung a large mirror on the right hand wall at the opening of the door. This reflected the outside into her flat, and gave her a feeling of being more in relationship to the outside when the door was open. Next, she hung another mirror perpendicular to the door opening, on the far brick wall of the chimney. This reflected the negative space of marriage which was easily visible from her bed, already well placed along the back wall. Within a few short weeks, she entered into her first, serious relationship since moving to this flat five years before! Her mail now arrives at her new home addressed 'Mrs...' which, together with a beautiful baby, fulfilled her dream.



3. The occupant of the summer Cottage in Southampton, Long Island, New York is a famous writer who found it difficult to entertain or even sleep in his own home for many nights each season, although he'd spent a fortune on building a custom kitchen.

After a Feng Shui consultation, he realised that the front door 'line', if drawn straight across the house, placed his bedroom and kitchen outside the home, making eating and sleeping out an unconscious habit. Using Feng Shui principles, he decided to erect a small, white fence connecting the outside corners of these two rooms and placed a swinging gate in the centre to create a small courtyard and revive his 'floor plan'. Next, he had his gardeners install a lovely stone path from the gate to his front door with beautiful plantings and brightly coloured flowers on both sides, giving the impression that his house really began at this newly created entrance way (although it was technically still outside). He now thoroughly enjoys giving many parties each season and invites a different weekend guest throughout the year. He is still spending nearly all his spare time in his special cottage.

The corrections in these three examples cost next to nothing and employ some basic Feng Shui adjustments. Convex mirrors



can be used to deflect inauspicious chi from entering a house or room. A beautiful brass door knocker with a convex centre serves the same purpose at the entrance to a fine home. Inside, a properly placed mirror can create the sense that a negative space really exists (a common practice in small shops or restaurants that may otherwise feel cramped. Can you remember entering a restaurant

where you thought there were 60 tables instead of only the 20 that were there?). Using mirrors in this way increases light and chi flow, expanding narrow spaces and bringing energy to an area. Small, faceted crystals can also activate chi, as do wind chimes, mobiles and other attractive objects, by placing them in areas that you'd like to charge. But remember that design principles rule in Feng Shui. Hanging a wind chime or crystal ball in some areas may only attract the question 'What's that doing there?' Intuitive Feng Shui comes with study, practice and lots of experimenting. ■

*William Spear is an internationally recognised teacher, lecturer and writer on health and natural healing. He has travelled extensively throughout the United States, Europe and the Soviet Union leading seminars and workshops on a variety of health care issues including AIDS, cancer, patient involvement in recovery, healing and renewal.*

*He regularly runs courses on Feng Shui and the I Ching. He will next be giving courses in London on March 21st 1992 at the Community Health Foundation. For more details call 071 251 4076 or send a large s.a.e. with a 28p stamp to: The Community Health Foundation, 188 Old Street, London EC1V 9BP.*