

Feng Shui, beyond magic and superstition

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

From the first moments of mankind's existence, human beings have been interested in the natural environment and have been trying to explore it. Perfect knowledge about the laws of nature and acquired experience were vital and concerned simple survival. This primary exploration boiled down to, in the beginning at least, simple observation of cause and effect; eating certain plants caused specific results, striking a stone upon another stone produced a spark and so on. Also a good assessment of a where to live was important. There should be an abundance of water, the forests rich in herbs, fruits and animal life. Primitive man tried to adapt to the environment and worshipped it. During this period man's impact upon the environment was limited; he used simple tools and possessed technical knowledge on the level of a present-day child.

In ancient India and China, Man began to accumulate our present store of knowledge about the Earth and the Universe. Neolithic graves were unearthed in the village of Yangshao (China, Henan province) in 1988. They date from about 6,000 BC and show impressive knowledge of astronomy. The arrangement of the finds mirrors the Chinese image of the cosmos, wherein a circle symbolizes Heaven and the Earth is represented by a square. The remains of the body were accompanied by two figures outlined in shells, a dragon to the east and a tiger to the west. In the center of the grave was a representation of *Bei Dou*, the Northern Ladle (or Dipper). Since the dragon and tiger are also constellations in the Chinese sky, it is clear that the Yangshao people were already orienting their tombs in accordance with the annual revolution of the Big Dipper around the North Star.

It would be impossible to enumerate all Chinese inventions; but paper, the printing press, gunpowder, compasses, seismographs and the planetarium come to mind. However, despite the strong development of various sciences and technology, it seems that in matters concerning their relation to the environment, the Chinese remain as primitive as ever. It is quite funny for us, Western people, this "ritual" of seeking a good place for the building of a house, a fear of cutting down trees, the perpetual adjustment to the laws of nature, the examination of how our surroundings are influencing us. We have triumphed over the laws of nature after all (it seems so to us at least), we have superb and unfailing (?) technology at our disposal, we can cut down the forests to build our cities, we change the course of rivers if we want, we interfere in the plant's and animal's genetics (always for good reasons of course!), we try to influence the climate and we believe that this all makes our life easier and better.

Well, why then does modern society feel like it has gone astray, why we are plagued by diseases connected with civilization, we have witnessed the destruction of the traditional family structure. Nobody respects elderly people and their life experience anymore. Disabled people are only trouble. The psychoanalysts' consulting rooms are full of the frustrated and depressed...

It makes us laugh when a Feng Shui consultant advises against building a house in the vicinity of a little mountain stream (the house may be built there according to the town planning board after all), or he warns against building a house on a beautiful and picturesque slope. Or he insists (for absolutely incomprehensible reasons) that the house be oriented in a certain direction. We say 'ok fine' but we build the house as we like, because it is nice and elegant. Because the architect has designed this all so wonderfully and the construction engineer has calculated the smallest details. It happens that we may live many years there, quietly, not harassed by any particular misfortune, sneering at that "funny guy with a compass". But there comes one summer when that little river becomes a raging juggernaut and we can only look helplessly from a distance as our greatly designed villa collapses. There comes one autumn when that uphill slope, loosened by rain, slides into our home and the cracks in the walls force

us to flee our dream-house. It happens that immediately after moving into a new home (built of the healthiest materials of course!) we start to suffer from disease, we divorce, lose our job. We experience strange, incomprehensible events, bringing our peaceful life into ruin. Then the long forsaken idea comes into our heads that maybe...it would have been possible to predict what happened? Well, the "guy with a compass" told us something about high water, but no flood had occurred for more than a hundred years! The slope was thoroughly examined by geologists before construction but nobody paid attention to the fact that the forest once absorbed the rain water; but has since been timbered. We were very healthy and had good family relationships before we moved into the new - "ill" - house, we had good jobs, the envy of our circle... Why then, we may ask our selves, is my neighbor doing so well, although he has an identical floor plan?

Well, is it indeed identical? Maybe it has more windows on the western side? Maybe the other home has the master bedroom in the place where I have the bathroom?

These are only some of the important aspects in an environment assessment. We often aren't even aware of the impact of the environment upon our lives. Although it seems to us, that we can interfere with its laws with impunity, sooner or later we will meet defeat. Wouldn't be better to go with the flow than to lose the best time in life in a fight with wind and waves? Wouldn't it be better to end one's days in health, harmony and prosperity? Well, it is at least the motto of the "guy with a compass", who we will call the Feng Shui consultant from now on, and Feng Shui - seeking harmony - is the ancient knowledge we will now explore.

WHAT IS FENG SHUI?

In Chinese, Feng Shui means "wind and water". It is the traditional Chinese art of designing our surroundings and houses in a special manner to enable us to benefit from positive energy and to avoid bad - "ill" - energy. Feng Shui deals not only with apartments or private homes, but also with commercial buildings, hospitals, gravesites and even whole cities, regions and countries. In the broadest sense, it is the ability to design space and knowledge of *qi* circulation in the physical world. Another name is geomancy or qimancy - what professor Stephen L. Field ¹ calls - divination according to *qi*. In Chinese metaphysics the term *qi* means mysterious energy, which impacts us and our lives. In our culture we may refer to it by other names, such as bioplasma or bioenergy, the universal energy of life. But we have failed so far in our effort to discover the nature of that energy and the way it works. The latest physicists' theories point toward *qi* having something to do with tachion energy². It could be said that Feng Shui is for the environment, as acupuncture is for the human body. The word "Feng Shui" appears for the first time in excerpts from The Book of Burial³, which dates to IV CE.

Many of us know Feng Shui as a collection of wind chimes, bamboo flutes, red ribbons, mirrors, statuettes, colored cushions and other superstitious "gadgets". So it's small wonder that we smile indulgently when someone suggests a Feng Shui consultant. We imagine somebody who would change our home into a New Age museum. After all, Feng Shui has come to be associated with the New Age movement, a set of ideas difficult to rationally explain. This form of Feng Shui, which came to us on the crest of the New Age wave, has hardly anything to do with the ancient geomancy. It was 1986, when professor Thomas Lin Yun⁴, presented his idea of 8 Life Aspects, to share with the West Chinese metaphysics in its most simplified form. This theory originates from the Tantric Buddhist Black Hat Sect and it promotes the intuitive approach to surroundings' assessment. It doesn't take into consideration time aspects or geographical directions. It also means that if ten consultants visit our home, each one of them will offer a different set of solutions. Additionally they would hang various strange things on beams and ceilings, place some mirrors, do some rituals, maybe they would even sprinkle our threshold with salt. After ordering us to repeat various incomprehensible mantras - they typically depart, taking a bundle and leaving us completely consternated. Nevertheless, Lin Yun's theory has a large number of adherents. The theory is simple; one can place a statuette and some flowers in the proper corner and he/she will become rich! When we place the statuette with two dolphins in the other corner, we will find a

partner for the rest of our lives! We – Westerners – love simple solutions. To place a statuette, repaint a room, that's it! A quick solution is what we need! When we have a headache, we don't reflect as to the cause. We don't consider if we have good or bad lighting at our desk, or if we maybe work too much, or eat incorrectly. Why should we think about it when there are simpler solutions on offer?

There is a pill against a headache after all. There is also a pill against depression, aggression, a pill for strengthening, for.... The Black Hat sect's theory puts forth just such a pill for our troubles.

However the genuine Traditional Feng Shui has hardly anything to do with wind chimes, flutes, mirrors or any other "gadgets". It is a vast and serious body of knowledge, containing astronomy, physics, geophysics, sun physics and studying the forms of terrain – concerning a building – but also humanity's physiology, psychology, diet, medicine and so on. That is because, in accordance with the ancient Chinese sages, Man is a link between Heaven and Earth. Both our planet and the cosmic energies impact on human beings. But it is not enough to build a house in accordance with all the rules of geomancy. The Chinese say that there are three kinds of luck:

- Heavenly Luck (destiny – but not as we in the West understand it; we will discuss it later, and the aspect of time)
- Earthly Luck (fulfilled rules of Feng Shui in a building and the surroundings)
- Man Luck (behavior, diet, exercises, self-reflection and meditation)

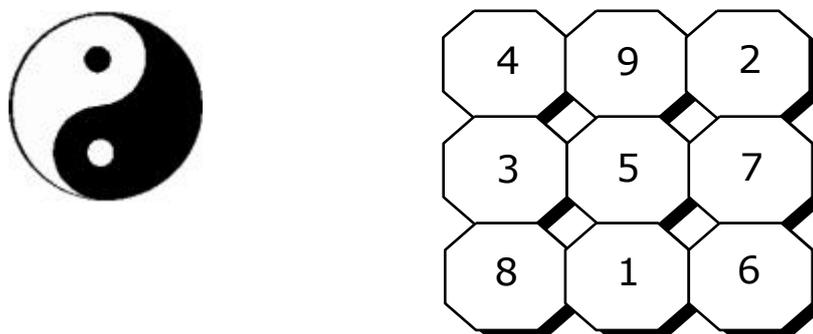
These three factors taken together decide if a man will find harmony in his life and if he will be able to realize his plans. So it seems to be more complicated than it at first appears. The statuette is not enough anymore, we are forced to work with the house's surroundings (Lin Yun focuses mainly on interior design), maybe we should consider our goals, step off the treadmill, maybe we will even....change our diet!

Destiny in the Chinese metaphysical meaning, it is often fundamentally misunderstood. It has nothing to do with telling what will happen and when. An experienced Feng Shui consultant often uses the so called Four Pillars of Destiny. It is a sophisticated astrology domain, dealing with the defining character profiles, depending on date of birth. According to this astrological system, every one of us is born having specific character traits, abilities and even the tendency to develop some diseases. The date of birth marks out a limited field of action for us. We do have, however, a small supply of trump cards. It's up to us to take advantage of them and how we choose to go about doing that. If we live in a house built in accordance with all the principles of Feng Shui, we will be able to extend our wings and it will be easier for us to reach our goals. If we choose to live in a hostile, not-harmonious environment – we will not have enough power and opportunities to perform. Also our physical and psychological condition depends on food intake (it is known that food impacts our behavior), our conduct (our choices), exercise, self-reflection and meditation. If we eat properly, and we are fit, it is possible to reach our goals. Which is to say, according to Chinese metaphysics - we choose much of our luck and destiny. It is perfectly presented and proved in Master of Feng Shui – Roel Hill's (Heluo)⁵ lectures.

One of the most fundamental and consistent observations in Chinese cosmology is, that all within our Universe – and the Universe itself – moves in a spiral movement. All in the Universe is a manifestation of Qi, but in various stages of waxing and waning. These statements appeared long before the invention of writing. So this knowledge was codified as dots, rope knots, or lines – interrupted or not – as in trigrams and hexagrams.

The diagrams of the Former Heaven Sequence, Later Heaven Sequence and the Luo Shu were created in this way. The two former diagrams I will not discuss here, although they are a basic tool in a Feng Shui consultant's work, instead I will explain the idea behind the Luo Shu

diagram, because it is present in all the popular books on the subject. (The author of the pictured graphics is Roel Hill).



On the left we see Yin-Yang symbol, which we know from many books. It is a symbol of the Universe's dynamics and all its laws. On the right we see another representation of this idea. In the circular diagram the binary model of creation is shown, so there is a division between Yin (the female element, black) and Yang (the male element, white). One force can not exist without the other, in each is present part of the opposite force. According to the Chinese – cyclical – notion of time, both forces continually change, blending into each other. This diagram is also the recorded observation of the earth's movement in its orbit around the sun. However it could also be a representation of the natural cycles here on our planet, for example the seasons, winter on the bottom and summer on the top. The light and the warmth increase in the middle of winter (Yang aspects) and first signs of waning of Yang come in the middle of summer (shorter days, colder) – the Yin force then increases (darkness, cold). We can also observe here a representation of day and night on our planet.

In the Luo Shu diagram (on the right), we see numbers, which are the codes of different phases of the same energy. We must remember here that the Chinese have always placed south at the top of maps and diagrams. To characterize these energy phases, the ancient scholars used analogies, for example number 3 in the east, they connected to wood and ascribed the color green to it, number 1 is connected to water (blue and black color) and so on. It is interesting that the numbers 8, 5 and 2 are connected to the earth and that the sequence of these numbers roughly relates to the earth's tilt on its axis. That's not all, because if we add together the numbers in any line or even slope; we always get the same result: 15. Odd numbers, symbolizing the Yang force (1, 3, 9, 7) grow clockwise (excluding number 7, which – together with 6 – are the link between the two cycles: Yang and Yin). Even numbers are Yin (2, 4, 8, 6) and grow anticlockwise. Even numbers in the Luo Shu form a square, the symbolic representation of the earth (so Yin element), whereas odd numbers form the Heaven sequence (Yang, circle) and we can read it as the record of the earth's movement in its orbit around the sun. The Yang cycle starts in the north (at the bottom of Luo Shu – number 1) and that moment occurs on the December Solstice (about the 21st of December). This date coincides with another astronomical event, the Perihelion, which is Earth's closest approach to the sun (between the 3rd and the 6th of January). The ancients associated this moment with *an extremal withdrawal* and defined it as the Water phase. After this event, the Earth will proceed in its orbit, moving away from the sun and finally reaching the maximal distance, astronomically known as the Aphelion (between the 3rd and the 6th of July). It coincides with the June Solstice (about the 21st of June). The ancients associated it with the Fire phase. In our Luo Shu these will be number 1 (December Solstice, Perihelion) and 9 (June Solstice, Aphelion). Between these two points are two Equinoxes, number 3 (March) and 7 (September). After the Perihelion, the Earth will gradually move away from the sun, a phenomenon connected to *expansion* and the Wood phase. After the Aphelion, the Earth again

returns closer to the sun and the ancients connected this phenomenon to *contraction* or the Metal phase.

The Chinese sages knew that which happens to the sun and the Universe tremendously impact life on Earth. They were convinced that the macrocosmos had its representation in our planet's microcosmos, inside each building and even in the human body (our heart repeats the tilt of our planet).

Chinese metaphysics and the Chinese exploration of their world are rooted in Daoism – a philosophical system claiming, that the best way to reach the Truth is communing with nature, observation of phenomena and meditation. Ancient Chinese scholars – astronomers and geomancers, wandered through the mountains and valleys, deserts and settlements, keeping in mind that “what is above, is also beneath”, so that they looked for the Universe's laws to be mirrored in nature. They traced water and the shapes of the hills, examining soil (color, density and humidity), plant life and many other factors. In time, the scholars observed certain regularities, which they diligently noted and which, after codifying in rhymes, they conveyed to disciples. After hundreds of years, this body of knowledge became an impressive collection of observations concerning the selection of the best place for the building of a house, a grave, a settlement, a city or even a country. The aforementioned Book of Burials, ascribed to Guo Pu (276-324 AD), describes much besides the building of graves. Is indeed a treasury of knowledge for a Feng Shui consultant.

Meanwhile Chinese medicine, developed in a similar spirit, diagnosis of illness was based upon a patient's pulse, the iris of one's eyes, skin, the very rhythm of breath. Diseases were considered an effect of a non-harmonious Yang-Yin condition, that one force was predominant over the other in a specific part of the body. The majority of these magnificent, legendary Chinese healers had never seen the interior of a human body (unless by some accident, when dressing a wound...). At the time the autopsy was not applied as a research method.

The oldest form of practicing Feng Shui was The Form School (Xing Fa). Later (720-480 AD) the School of Qi Patterns (Liqi Pai or Compass School) was introduced. This school was based on the assumption, that each of eight geographical directions represented a different kind of qi, where qi was connected to the Earth's magnetic field. Each type of qi, had different properties depending on its Time aspect. Building a house in a certain time period and orientating its front in a certain geographical direction, leaves an energetic imprint on that structure, it “catches” certain specific qi qualities. So how does a Feng Shui consultant convert space into time? He studies the specific “here and now” of some chosen space. After plotting a special energetic chart, a consultant is able to tell, what kind of energy has been prevailing in a building or what kind of the energy will develop in the future. On that basis it can be diagnosed whether that building will harmoniously impact its occupants or not. A clever and experienced consultant is even able to tell, what kind of diseases or problems may harass the occupants. But the role of a Feng Shui consultant is primarily to avoid the negative influences of environmental qi and to promote good qi. Unfortunately, neither a green cushion nor the most beautiful statuette or Chinese flute can change an energy pattern fueled by the power of the Earth's magnetic field. Luckily, Traditional Chinese Feng Shui has at its disposal an arsenal of “cures” for unfavorable situations.

It is no problem for modern people to grasp the astronomical and geophysical references of Feng Shui. Every modern teenager is quite well acquainted with the aforementioned fields and concepts. But it was a huge problem for peasants and common people in ancient times. They needed that theory but it was only dispersed in simplified, easy to chew nuggets. We are talking about a time when the sharing of information and science was sometimes limited. There were eras when knowledge of cosmology and metaphysics were reserved for the use of the emperor's court only. Then, spreading knowledge, was punishable by death, not only the unfortunate scholar but by the death of the scholar's whole family.

That is why the ancient masters of Feng Shui used analogies. They created picturesque stories full of dragons, tigers and colors connected with seasons and geographical directions. Thus types of earthly energies got names after famous Chinese zodiac animals (the Snake, Tiger, Horse etc.). It allowed the simple associations of certain facts and the use of Feng Shui knowledge in agriculture or building.

Unfortunately, it is mostly this simplified version, full of analogies, which has spread over much of the world. Many of the original concepts are lost. During the passage of time, much folklore, and religious and cultural elements have grown up around the original knowledge. The burning of books has done the rest, as classical texts and ancient scholars' notes often existed in only one copy, and are now gone forever.

Once more, whole branches of Feng Shui were purposely falsified. Some of them were even especially created for people from adjacent countries; it was done to take control of these nations.

Taken together, these facts, including the codification of true knowledge into mysterious and ambiguous rhymed verses, could seem useless. Who among us is able to grope among this dark jungle, where only a part is true and all has many meanings? Some have dared.

Masters of Feng Shui such as Yap Cheng Hai, Joseph Yu, Raymond Lo, Howard Choy and Roel Hill – Heluo, have taken great pains to purge from the vast and extraordinary knowledge all unnecessary additions. All this for the purpose of returning to original sources and to present us with genuine and reliable knowledge.

It is a pioneering effort and an extraordinary task indeed, taking into consideration how deformed versions of the ancient relays have managed to spread. Necessary to the task is a thorough knowledge of all aspects of Chinese culture, philosophy and the specific oriental approach to exploration and perception of the world. Besides that, in Chinese literature there are not too many valuable documents and in the western publications they are almost non-existent. The point being that not every translator is able to decipher the hidden meanings of ancient Chinese pictograms. Dedicated scientists devote their lives to the rehabilitation of Feng Shui. They realize how much this knowledge can be of benefit to people of the 21st century. One of these extraordinary pioneers is Stephen L. Field, Ph.D., and a Professor of Chinese at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, USA. He not only translates invaluable, ancient Chinese texts, but also adds his commentaries, which are especially precious for us – people of the 21st century – for understanding a culture far removed in time and space. I am grateful for his kind permission in allowing me the use of his translation of the *Book of Burials*, to translate it from English to Polish and upload the book on my website for the benefit of Polish readers.

WHAT CAN FENG SHUI OFFER US?

This question invariably accompanies all discussions on the subject of ancient geomancy. Western culture has taught us a different kind of thinking, which is based upon logic and reasoning. Since antiquity (Pythagoras and Aristotle), where we find the beginnings of deductive and inductive thinking, through Isaac Newton with his classical physics (introduction to the separation between science and religion, physics and metaphysics) and Immanuel Kant's treatment of natural phenomena as mechanical schemes, to Darwin and science's final schism with religion - we have been building the fortresses of science, religion, mind and spirit. This tendency to separate and categorize is our heritage and is the basis of all of Western scientific development. The discoveries made by 20th century physicists, were shocking to the scientific world, because they showed the Universe as a system of mutually connected events. Already Albert Einstein had claimed that mass is simply a different manifestation of energy and also space and time are connected one to another and together they form four-dimensional space-time. Also the works of Niels Bohr (1885-1962), Max Planck (1858-1947) and Werner

Heisenberg (1901-1976), concerning quantum theory, prove the unity of all things and that the separation can not be the only method used to seek comprehensive knowledge. From this framework originated modern holistic theories, developed by such scientists as David Bohm (1917-1992), Rupert Sheldrake (a contemporary biologist) and Andrew Newberg (1967-). According to these theories, the Universe is like a hologram, where every part of the picture contains the whole picture and the evolution of events is managed by the holistic force, what is referred to as morphic resonance. So have we taken a different road to reach the same conclusions as the Chinese did several thousands years ago?

What does Feng Shui offer to us? Condensed to one sentence: this ancient knowledge can make possible a holistic view of man and all manifestations of nature that surround him. We are proud – we people of the West – of the knowledge and level of science we have achieved while simultaneously striving for humanization of medicine and architecture. Until recently a doctor sought to cure the body only. The matter of where we live, how we are feeling and what we eat, was far from a normal physician's interest. A modern doctor, treating the same patient for years while not obtaining satisfactory improvement, simply claims that the case is hopeless, beyond treatment. So many, swallow a handful of pills every morning, two pills for the liver, three for the heart and five pills just for strengthening. Who has the time and the motivation to review the environment and its impact upon such hopeless cases? Sometimes people instinctively feel that something at home is not in order; if they are out they somehow feel better. But with whom could they share that observation? Who would be receptive to addressing that problem? In the modern world, everyone considers himself or herself educated – and treats all things which are not explicable scientifically, with a little bit of contempt but also with compassion for other's "ignorance".

If it concerns an architecture, Marek Gajdzinski says very accurately in his book "Feng Shui – Tao dobrego domu" (Feng Shui – Tao of a good house):

"Modern architecture is in large part the fruit of rebellion. A rebellion which could be symbolically defined as a child's against his or her parents.(...) Parents symbolize home and all the tradition connected to it. So a child, or modern man, rebels against his home and tradition – and also traditional building, which have developed over centuries. That is why buildings designed nowadays are so unfriendly, uncomfortable and unhealthy. Being built in bad places and in an unsuitable manner, these buildings are a gathering of awful blocks, overpowering their occupants with ugliness and lack of space. Monumental skyscrapers where a man feels like an intruder..."

This means aggression and protest instead of desired peace and quiet. If someone in his/her own home doesn't feel safe and comfortable, if the surroundings show a decided lack of harmony, how can that man function normally in society? Where is he to draw motivation from and most importantly draw his power to act, to engage in new enterprises?

Here Feng Shui complements our view to the world, adding a new quality, a new hope for finding harmony. A Feng Shui consultant using the ancient geomancy, is one to whom we can turn to for help in finding harmony in our lives. A consultation or a Feng Shui audit is a holistic look at man and his surroundings. From selection of the best place for the building a house (an assessment of the environment), through creation of a harmonious space in an existing house, to characterological, vocational, dietary and health guidance. Modern medicine more and more is willing to admit that the human psyche is a cause and a factor in the progression of disease. A healthy and harmoniously designed environment will favor health in our society, not only physical health but also mental balance.

However, Feng Shui is not only about space design. This knowledge goes deeper, than it may at first appear. It facilitates something that we have lost during our mad run toward civilization, something much missed – a bond with the nature surrounding us. A man is part of that nature after all, but simultaneously wants to free himself from it, to reject it and even to destroy it not bothered by the consequences. Yes, we are a part of nature. We breathe oxygen produced by plants, we drink water from mountain springs, we eat grains, vegetables and

fruits full of the earth's minerals and the energy coming from our sun. Then this oxygen, water, energy and minerals become our very cells and tissues. A human organism is adapted to the use of all things natural. In destroying nature we destroy ourselves. We undercut the branch we are sitting upon. We, step by step, build a barrier between nature and us. We are able to spend whole days in closed air-conditioned rooms, sometimes without any windows, illuminated artificially.

We surround ourselves with computers and a virtual world. We roll in electromagnetic smog and eat fast food meals bereft of all nutritional value, but we will see in time – that our organism, separated from its natural environment, will fail us. It is not only that we have broken off contact with nature; it has become difficult for us to even make contact with other people. Some people have problems with talking to other people. It is a known phenomenon in psychology – a fear of direct visual contact. There emerges a new sort of patient in psychologists' consulting rooms; people addicted to virtual contacts via the Internet. Poor human beings, locked in a world of their own creation, only able to feel safe in that context. Going out, if only for a walk, arouses fear. They are simply missing a sense of inner harmony, they have lost their self-acceptance and that is the cause of their fear of close contact with other people. Here we can observe the different approaches of Western and Eastern experts to the problem. A psychologist will examine a patient, very thoroughly of course. He will approach the matter, taking under consideration the individual character of the case, maybe he will even go back to the patient's past and will try to find the reason for the patient's present state. Anyway, the problem will be solved within the psychologist's office.

What if the cause is hidden in a patient's dwelling?

Of course no Feng Shui consultant seeks to replace a psychologist or a doctor. But he can pay attention to certain factors, which are seemingly without meaning to others, for example where is the bed in the room, what is the view from the window, does a patient sit at his desk with his back to door or is he facing the door, what is the color of walls (green is not always and not for all people calming...), the floor plan in relation to geographic directions, and finally the food – too Yang or too Yin. Sometimes even where we park the car is important as well as the location of the new outdoor swimming pool.

We are not aware of how much our surroundings impact us. We haven't yet mastered the majority of mechanisms, which transform the stimuli received by us into specific reactions of our body and psyche. It was a shocking discovery for us, that the tiny pineal gland is able, with great precision, to adapt our organism's functioning to the changeable amount of light in our surroundings. Meanwhile we are also perfect "antenna" for other manifestations of nature, such as the Earth's magnetic field or geopathic zones. Why do we sometimes sleep better after changing our bed position?

Feng Shui deals with these matters based upon observations made over hundreds of years passed down from generation to generations. That knowledge can give us answers to many questions preying on modern scientists' minds. For thousands of years Feng Shui has applied its concepts with success in the regulations of our environment and its effects upon us; it nullifies negative influences and promotes beneficial ones. It also takes into account that each human being reacts differently, each house and its occupant is like a microcosmos; part of the entirety, but displays autonomous features as well. For example, according to ancient geomancy, sleeping on a North-South axis, in the South sector of a dwelling, for one it can mean health and harmony, for the other it is detrimental. Magic and superstition? No, it is only the influence of the surroundings, about which not enough is yet known.

People need a contact with a harmonious environment because of their psychic requirements. Many people, imprisoned in the cages of modern block housing, have the same view everyday – the gray concrete of the adjacent block. How differently would they feel if from their window they could see a beautiful forest and a little river nearby? It sounds like a charming fairy tale, but it may be reality. More and more often the architects make use of Feng Shui consultation specialists, to design houses and settlements in accordance with the art of geomancy, and thus in accordance with nature. There also appear some pioneer diploma projects on the subject of concrete implementation, for example "Centrum świadomego kształtowania przestrzeni Feng Shui w Zielonej Gorze" M. Kuberka ("The center of conscious forming of Feng Shui space in

Zielona Gora”), or “Koncepcja zespołu zabudowy mieszkaniowej w otwartym krajobrazie wiejskim w rejonie Srody Wielkopolskiej” (The idea of a house in the open rural landscape in the region of Sroda Wielkopolska), where the author: Slawomir Pawlowski refers to the principles of geomancy, which can be successfully applied in modern architecture. Also on their website, architects Saniewski and Mojsiuszko give advice concerning space organization in accordance with Feng Shui.

“No Feng Shui consultant can replace an architect, but he can effectively help an architect in accomplishing a desired effect. It is not by accident that many talented creators design in accordance with Feng Shui, often not even being aware of it (the best example is the housing architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright).”

One of the most spectacular applications of Feng Shui by a Western architect is the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank – a work of the world-famous designer, Norman Foster. He consulted Koo Pak Ling, a Feng Shui expert, at many stages of his project. The aim of these consultations was not to give a Chinese look to the building. Koo Pak Ling was to examine if the rules of geomancy had been compromised and if the site, structure and appearance of the building were in maximum harmony with the surroundings. The Feng Shui expert had also a decisive voice in the matter of arranging, colors selection, furnishing and other details, for example the famous sculptures of lions guarding the entrance.

The psychology of environment

The psychology of one’s environment has become a very interesting and valuable contributor in architecture and town planning. In the 1960s, interdisciplinary research began with the purpose of working on a new system of knowledge useful in the architectural planning of environmental and town planning. Through this effort the fact emerged that we know little about man’s functioning in residential space. Especially that space which provides us with the most stimuli of all, our own home. During the 1980s the POE method was developed further (Post Occupancy Evaluation), which means a process of thorough and systematic evaluation of occupied buildings (Ocena jakości w architekturze i urbanistyce). The researches focused on occupants or employees and their feelings, what experiences resulted from certain designing decisions. On that basis it is possible to create a foundation of knowledge to build better buildings in future. Three elementary matters are stressed: technical quality, functional quality and behavioural quality. The behavioral quality covers general values important in the life of society, like intimacy, territoriality, seeking the way to a target, feelings of safety, mental and physical health, subconscious reception of space (esthetics or so called friendly space), and many others.

In Poland, good resources in dealing with behavioral matters in architecture are: psychology prof. Augustyn Banka, sociology prof. Bohdan Jalowiecki and prof. Aleksander Wallis.

We – Western culture’s representatives – have reached similar conclusions as the ancient oriental scholars and we have begun to perceive human beings in a more holistic manner. We have begun to notice the complexity of human nature, we now take under consideration not only physiology and psychology, added to that equation we have added an examination of the subconscious and intuition.

CONCLUSION

Although the evolution of science and knowledge leded different ways, though these ways finally meet in certain sense. Like Yin and Yang forces, like two magnetic poles, at last like two oppositions cannot stay inactive towards one another, so also we can and we should take advantage of the Eastern knowledge abundance. Especially because that knowledge is older than whole our Western culture. Feng Shui may become the wonderful complement to our researches on an environmental influence on human being, it can offer us the answers to many questions and to solve some problems, which the Western science cannot manage on that stage of its development. Ancient geomancy can help in each individual case, not only making diagnosis of a problem (a person sleeps badly) and finding a cause (a person live in

completely energetically unharmonious room) but also offering a series of possible solutions and advices.

I will mention here an interesting outcome of Van der Ryn's and Silverstein's researches (Berkeley University, California, 1967), who have observed certain regularity that the feeling of apathy and indifference is more or less proportional to number of student house's floors. Well, a Feng Shui consultant would be able not only tell why it is like that, but also he could suggest several possible solutions of that situation.

As I mentioned before, the genuine, vast Feng Shui knowledge is based on observation of changes in our environment (the same in human behaviour), caused by earthly magnetic forces and all complex of actions between the Earth and the sun and also the other heavenly bodies. We are a part of that sophisticated entirety called the Universe and nothing remains but only accept the fact, that we are subject to some limitation. The rhythm of nature (seasons), Moon phases, geographical directions and landforms exercise major power on us than we could expect. What does the fact that the priority in these discoveries belongs to ancient China mean. We have an unusual opportunity to take advantage of all these discoveries, to verify many of our convictions and first of all – to advance in our knowledge of surrounding us world. We can look at some problems or matters in other, new manner. Not better or more perfect (although sometimes more precise though), but just another. It may be great experience for modern man, lost in created by him himself virtual world. Feng Shui and oriental metaphysics may offer us all that is the best in them, proven by tens generations, and what is still up to date and useful. By the way we needn't negate our own culture, nobody is being forced to buy Chinese gadgets, to design Chinese looking house or enroll to Tai Chi course. The Feng Shui principles are very universal and applicable to each culture, in any place on our planet. So why not to take advantage of it?

Malgorzata Galkowska-Bladek
Feng Shui consultant

Footnotes

¹ Stephen L. Field – received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin in 1985, and is Professor of Chinese and Chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, USA. He is the author of essays on various aspects of feng shui and many translations from Chinese language. He is a member of the *Association for Asian Studies* and the *Society for the Study of Early China*.

² Tachions – hypothetical particles travelling at speeds greater than that of light (*tachy* – means 'fast' in Greek). In Poland, researches concerning neutrino and tachions are conducted by Prof. J. Rembielinski from the University of Lodz.

³ *The Book of Burial* – the classical Chinese text, ascribed to Guo Pu (276-324 AD), with descriptions of the forms of terrain and an assessment of local *qi* quality.

⁴ Thomas Lin Yun – the Intuitive Feng Shui expert and teacher of Chinese culture and philosophy – mainly Black Hat School (Tibetan Tantric Black Hat Sect). In 1986 he developed his own Feng Shui conception, based on religion and philosophy of Daoism and Confucianism, including folkloristic elements and superstitions.

⁵ Roel Hill (Heluo) – Master of Feng Shui, living in Holland. He is a teacher of the Traditional Chinese Feng Shui and he conducts seminars in many countries. His teaching is profound, free from folkloristic, ritual and magical elements. Heluo's theories and teaching are based on his great knowledge in the fields of astronomy, geophysics and sun physics.