

Examining Feng Shui as Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

by

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Abstract

Feng Shui is a widely known and practiced tradition in Asia and Asian communities across the globe. It is commonly acknowledged and referenced in planning, design, and organizing of the built environment, living spaces, and functional and cultural landscapes such as burial sites and gardens. Feng Shui employs techniques including literature-based rational thinking and experience-based judgment based on a systematic cosmology. Similar traditions and practices are found performed in different cultures and regions as well. While Feng Shui faces challenges from urbanization and globalization, it has overcome its complicated past and successfully reforming and revitalizing itself to continue to serve as a widespread practice in the world today. Feng Shui crosses many boundaries in the contemporary heritage discourse, such as material versus immaterial and cultural versus natural, which creates difficulties to categorize. The authorized heritage discourse also plays a critical role in its definition and future use. Heritage and Feng Shui take shape in an interactive relationship, where the use of Feng Shui may differ/surpass the contemporary practice of heritage conservation.

This thesis focuses on Feng Shui as a cultural phenomenon and its relationship with the field of contemporary heritage study.

Introduction

316 W. Valley Blvd, in San Gabriel, California has a sign in Chinese: “Li Ju Ming Feng Shui Goods and Supplies” (李居明風水用品中心). In-between a dental clinic and a golf equipment store, it is an excellent location for retail and restaurants near the commercial hub of the San Gabriel Valley, one of the largest Chinese and Asian communities in California. Contrary to its excellent location, its popularity remains modest. More people are featured on its showroom windows (four to be exact) than in the store. A pedestrian can hardly see through the posters covering most of the window. Its sign is in a typical combination of red and green. This store is almost exclusive to those who know its purpose. It remains a mystery in the community to all others.

Stores like this are easily hidden in the corners of a sizable Asian community. One can find objects like ornamented mirrors, chains of coins with red threads, animal sculptures in gold color, and particular compasses. Usually, most goods here hardly



Figure 0.1: At 316 W. Valley Blvd., San Gabriel, CA, a store categorized as convenience store on Google Maps in the heart of the entertainment district in San Gabriel is actually a store selling Feng Shui products. Photo courtesy of Google Street View.

have obvious functions other than ornaments at home. Nonetheless, it is believed that if placed or used at the right location, they have the power to change one's fortune.

While this thesis does not limit its scope to Feng Shui and cultural heritage in any country, region, or cultural group, this type of Feng Shui store symbolizes part of the development of contemporary Feng Shui.

This thesis will include little content of the exact method, potential outcome, and divination of Feng Shui, nor will it engage in the debate about whether Feng Shui is remanent of feudal tradition. I believe such debate is grossly simplistic, more political than academic, and provides little insight helping us in the discourse of Feng Shui as a cultural heritage with an international background.

I prepared and proposed this topic based on my experience with Feng Shui in my childhood, daily life, and career. In my childhood, Feng Shui was a mystery knowledge exclusive to only its practitioners and some religious practitioners. It remains partly a mystery to people today but undoubtedly less so due to its media exposure and even criminal activities. Shops, stores, and consultants related to Feng Shui can be easily found in cities and communities. In my career as an urban designer and planner in China, Feng Shui often discreetly gets into my projects and unexpectedly impacts the outcome of those projects. Finally, the literature review gives different perspectives and background illustrations of Feng Shui, which are helpful insights on expanding the topic.

Fate, Fortune and Feng Shui

A well-known Chinese folk proverb ranks the influential factors on one's life, "Fate first, fortune second, Feng Shui third, good deeds fourth, and reading fifth".¹ On this descending order of consequence, it is believed that Feng Shui plays a critical role in determining one's achievement, wellbeing, and fortune. Today, many people still firmly believe in Feng Shui and that the location and orientation of their living environment and tombs of their ancestors have a solid relationship to the success, health, and fortune of themselves and their children.

"Feng Shui," which means "Wind" and "Water" in Chinese, also has many other names. "Kan Yu" is used more often in the later time, with a much more literate context. "Di Li," which in modern Chinese refers to the science of geography, was referring to "Feng Shui" in historical literature. The less common name includes "Qing Nang," which refers to one of the earliest writing on Feng Shui, "Qing Nang Jing" (Book of Qing Nang). "Qing Wu" refers to another early writings on Feng Shui, "Qing Wu Jing" (Book of Qing Wu). "Bu Zai," "Xiang Zai," and "Xiang Di" all mean "Divination for home/location." "Xing Fa" is an early school of Feng Shui. Before the booming influence of Feng Shui boosted its chance of appearance in media, scholars often used the term "Chinese geomancy" in the academic setting. The direct Korean translation of Feng Shui, "Pungsu," is also a known name in Korea and refers to the Feng Shui profession and cultural tradition.

¹ "Reading" often refers to education in Chinese proverbs, sometimes specifically education of Confucian classics. In the rest of the work, when it comes to translation of Chinese quotes, proverbs and metaphors, I use the direct translation in Chinese and avoid giving a translation of its meaning as it may alter the experience in the process.

Every different name is a variation in the theme. Over time, the practice and development of Feng Shui and Feng Shui study, the discourse of Feng Shui, and Feng Shui as a system of knowledge absorbed various other concepts and techniques, becoming a broader concept that includes and represent the above names. In this thesis, we will not deeply differentiate those concepts but use the name “Feng Shui” as a term for the whole heritage discourse, which is also the most used name in both popular and academic domains.

Seven Contradictions

Feng Shui is a comprehensive system of knowledge. While contemporary scholars have multiple ideas on how Feng Shui was invented, we know it has been practiced and passed on for hundreds of years. However, Feng Shui in history differs from the one today. Feng Shui was invented to help people understand, plan, design, and improve their living environment (a tomb for the afterlife). In modern scholastic structure, it was a combination of knowledge from geography, architecture, planning, landscape, interior design, mortuary service, and divination. The amount of knowledge and experience required for Feng Shui practitioners provided them both fame and social reputation. Due to its predominant role in the knowledge system of natural philosophy, some Confucian scholars (government officials included) study Feng Shui as their interest. Many famous Feng Shui masters in history, such as Yang Yunsong, Lai Wenjun, and Jiang Dahong, are either government officials themselves or relatives of

government officials. The potential achievement of practicing Feng Shui historically was promising to laypeople.²

Today Feng Shui has become an alternative spiritual practice for many people. Although it is still a living tradition or somewhat a popular tradition in many communities, as many aspects of historical Feng Shui have been displaced, it is not as popular and respected compared to its standing in history. Some Feng Shui masters in Hong Kong and Taiwan have excellent reputations. With the globalization of tradition and culture, its influence travels farther than ever, but the value and belief of Feng Shui are far from universal.

A similar contradiction can be seen between traditional Feng Shui and modern Feng Shui. While it is not a clear definition of what is or is not traditional, it is typically involved in contemporary technology and lifestyle. Just like the transition of how people use paper money to make paper houses and sports cars to worship and memorialize their ancestors, some Feng Shui practitioners are heavily influenced by modern technologies and lifestyles. From helicopter-riding Feng Shui master to satellite Feng Shui compass orientation, Feng Shui and technology work well together. Cars are also a game-changer. Traditional Feng Shui tends to avoid roads being too close to the house, but today, most people would not sacrifice their conveniences, so Feng Shui changed its rule accordingly.

Another similar contradiction extended to Feng Shui in the western world. As more and more people in America and Europe started using Feng Shui ideas, problems emerged, mainly in areas such as lifestyle and religious belief. One of the biggest

² Various versions of historically social classes can be found, but in most cases Feng Shui masters are relatively higher social classes.

taboos in Feng Shui is having more than one main door or a door of excessive size in a residence. However, today, standard American suburban units with built-in garages have multiple main doors, and the garage door is sizable compared to the house. One of the services provided is to repair one's Feng Shui by reorganizing the residence in different ways, including placing specific items at a specific location. In traditional Feng Shui, those items are often Buddhist or Taoist implements. To cross those religious barriers, Feng Shui masters in the West avoid the religious parts and recommend the implements that adapt to the client's religious beliefs accordingly. For example, if the result of Feng Shui is to place a Yin-Yang Mirror (Taoist implement) to avoid conflict, the master may suggest placing a piece of crystal or a cross in the place. Those strategies and consequences of adaptation and flexibility show the resilience of Feng Shui in a foreign culture.

Nonetheless, the biggest challenge for Feng Shui historically maybe urbanization. Although cities appear in every stage of human civilization, modern urbanization has reshaped the built environment and created entirely new lifestyles in the world. Because the basis of Feng Shui is rooted in the rural or village context, the historic classics of Feng Shui never teach how to define good Feng Shui in today's concrete jungle. The life form in the city has invaded and challenged every aspect of Feng Shui. In traditional Feng Shui schools such as the "eight dwells," the first step is to find the "entrance of Qi," usually the front door and the largest opening of the dwelling. While many people have moved into high-rise condominiums, an emerging problem is whether Qi enters from the orthodox front door, which often opens to a dark and empty hallway, or the balcony, which is the more sizable door of the dwelling and

opens to the fresh air and sunlight. Similar arguments take place at the public cemetery, where the shape of the tomb to the form of the remains has been regulated.

Of course, the average size of families, especially in the cities, shrinks significantly with urbanization. Historically, a clan-like family in a rural village was usually sizable, with solid social, economic, and emotional ties. Industrialization and urbanization often break those large families into the common small and atomized families today. The response of Feng Shui practitioners is represented by the rise of dwelling Feng Shui and a slight fall of burial Feng Shui, an understandable result of individualization.

The argument between superstition and the science of Feng Shui presents a challenge. Under a progressive government that desires all superstition to be eliminated, Feng Shui was treated as superstition and an unwanted remnant from an uncomfortable history. Although Feng Shui is no longer banned in China, it takes time to recover from a complex and challenging view.

The last contradiction is between the two primary schools of Feng Shui, the form school and the compass school. To clarify, their name "form" and "compass" is not an accurate description of their content and methodology. The form school uses the Feng Shui compass a lot, and the compass school also pays attention to the form. In practice, techniques from both schools are often used simultaneously. Both major schools and many minor schools use slightly different approaches to Feng Shui. Form school uses the classics like "Zang Long Jin" and "Yi Long Jin," in which topography and the relationship between specific locations and its whole environment are critical to

good Feng Shui.³ The compass school uses classics in the later period, which focuses on the spacetime characteristic of a location and its relationship to the owner/user. The form school introduces various divination and occult methods and concepts, such as astrology and prophecy, to its algorithm.

Although there are already many exciting and thoughtful scholastic works on Feng Shui, few view it as a heritage, and almost none view it as an issue of conservation. The heritage discourse becomes challenging when its subject is uneven, unclear, and unregulated. Instead of Feng Shui itself, this thesis focuses on its relationship and interaction with its users as that relationship and interactions constantly reform and adapt to new challenges. Like other heritage in Asia, Feng Shui has a relatively long history and profound roots. Although its historic lineage becomes less traceable over time, it survived centuries of dynastic secession, political reform, cultural revolution, social change, and urbanization. Furthermore, it survives time, overcomes its geographic limitation, and expands its boundaries. In some sense, Feng Shui and its carriers share the same memory.

Nonetheless, the heritage discourse hardly addresses Feng Shui. Regardless of the symbiosis of Feng Shui and its counterpart (refers to different subjects in different contexts), Feng Shui is not the most orthodox belief or research subject today. On the one hand, together with Chinese medicine, the book of Yi, and other relative subjects, Feng Shui may be seen as superstition based on its spiritual foundation. On the other hand, for some fanatic believers and users, using the scientific or “western” method of

³ Zang Long Jin and Yi Long Jin are both classics of Feng Shui. See Bibliography for a full list of Classics of Feng Shui referenced in the thesis.

research with Feng Shui could be potentially disrespectful and incompatible, thus leading to an untrusted and doubtful result.

In the past decade, joint efforts of international collaboration on recognizing and conserving intangible heritage has elevated the discourse on intangible heritage to an unprecedented level. Many countries, especially countries in Asia, Europe, and South America, have been heavily involved in building an international platform for intangible heritage based on the existing UNESCO structure. In 2016, a total number of 366 intangible heritage practices were listed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. We can find Acupuncture and the Twenty-four Solar Terms on the list, but not Feng Shui.⁴

This thesis focuses on the status and potential improvement on the sustainability and development of Feng Shui, as well as its fragility and characteristics as a cultural heritage. It is mainly limited in the circumstance of society in mainland China with some methods, policy, and organization expandable to international discourse.

The first chapter is on the historical lineage of Feng Shui, in which the fundamental philosophy and its relationship to other concepts of similar origin are explained. The following chapter takes a closer look at the "physical" part of Feng Shui. The specific terrain, planning, layout, and design of an environment that Feng Shui and its believers' value. Such preference and value are extracted both from the classic and, more importantly, a more conventional method, from examples of our physical world. The third chapter focuses on Feng Shui as a tradition, folklore, value,

⁴ 'UNESCO - Files 2019 under Process', UNESCO, accessed 21 September 2019, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/files-2019-under-process-00989>.

and way of living, shared by a mass of people that inherit, fortify, develop and spread Feng Shui. It also suggests the international transmission and transformation of Feng Shui and how it reacts and evolve, just like other intangible heritage, with modernization. Finally, a last chapter discusses the concept of culture itself and how the contemporary discourse of heritage may possibly influence and affect the identification, conservation, and management of Feng Shui as cultural heritage. A case studies of acupuncture and moxibustion are also discussed as precedents of officially designated intangible cultural heritage.

Chapter One

In early academic anthropology and folklore study, primarily of Euro-American background, the term "Feng Shui" was not commonly used. Instead, "Chinese Geomancy" was often used to describe this subject. The idea of geomancy refers to a form of divination based on location, earth, and patterns of human settlement, which exists in different forms in many cultures. In ancient Arab, geomancy may be "ilm al-raml" or the "science of the sand."⁵ In India, Vastu Shastra was used to obtain the location for building temples and villages.⁶ In Tuva and other parts of central Asia, Kumalak was practiced by shamans.⁷ In China and many parts of East Asia, it is Feng Shui.

The wide existence of geomancy in different cultures may indicate that our ancestors, both of nomadic and farming traditions, considered and decided the time and location of settlement and reproduction as a priority in the early times. With generations of knowledge accumulation about different geographic features and their impacts on settlement, divination of land became more systematic. In China, the mainstream contemporary response to Feng Shui, especially from government officials and some scholars, is that Feng Shui is a feudal superstition. However, as the international movement to recognize and safeguard our intangible cultural heritage

⁵ Iman Chahine, "Ilm Al-Raml: A Case Study in Mathematizing Divination Systems Using Modular Arithmetic," *The Oriental Anthropologist: A Bi-Annual International Journal of the Science of Man* 21 (2020): 0972558X2097564. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0972558X20975648>.

⁶ Nimita Kanyal, "Religious and Scientific Importance of Vastu Shastra." *Himalayan Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 16 (2021): <https://doi.org/10.51220/hjssh.v16i1.12>.

⁷ Dider Blau. *Kumalak: Mirror of Destiny, Ancient Shamanic Wisdom from Kazakhstan to Reflect Your Past, Present and Future* (London: Connections, 1999).

develops and evolves in political and social realms, the discourse of Feng Shui is viewed as a more cultural and social practice instead of a political one.

Primitive Geomancy and Land Divination Practices in China

Most practitioners trace their lineages of Feng Shui knowledge to Guo Pu in the Sui Dynasty and Yang Yun Song in the Tang Dynasty. Some scholars like Liu trace back to Guan Luo in the Late Han dynasty, but Guan Luo was not as recognized as Guo Pu and Yang Yun Song among practitioners. However, the formal invention of the coherent concept of Feng Shui is based on writings of the informal practices of land divination; hence its origin can be traced further into history. One of the predecessors of Feng Shui, ancient geomancy, or merely location divination, existed centuries before Guo Pu. However, it was not until the Tang dynasty that economic, technical, and social prosperity advanced the economy and building technology to a new level that allowed the further fortification and popularity of both contexts and practices of land divination and Feng Shui. After that, from palaces to vernacular residences, all components of the built environment, including location, layout, form, and construction method, are all related and regulated by Feng Shui and its practitioners.

According to historical records, the use of the Rites of Zhou to select a location for "Luo Yi" was one of the earliest recorded practices of land divination, which is closely related to ancient divination. At the beginning of the Western Zhou Dynasty, to build the new capital "Luo Yi," King Cheng summons a duke, Duke Shao, for divination of the location of the new capital. This story is the earliest record of divination for

residents in the formal history records of China. Many later writings of Feng Shui often reference the Rites of Zhou as proof for its lengthy lineage in history.

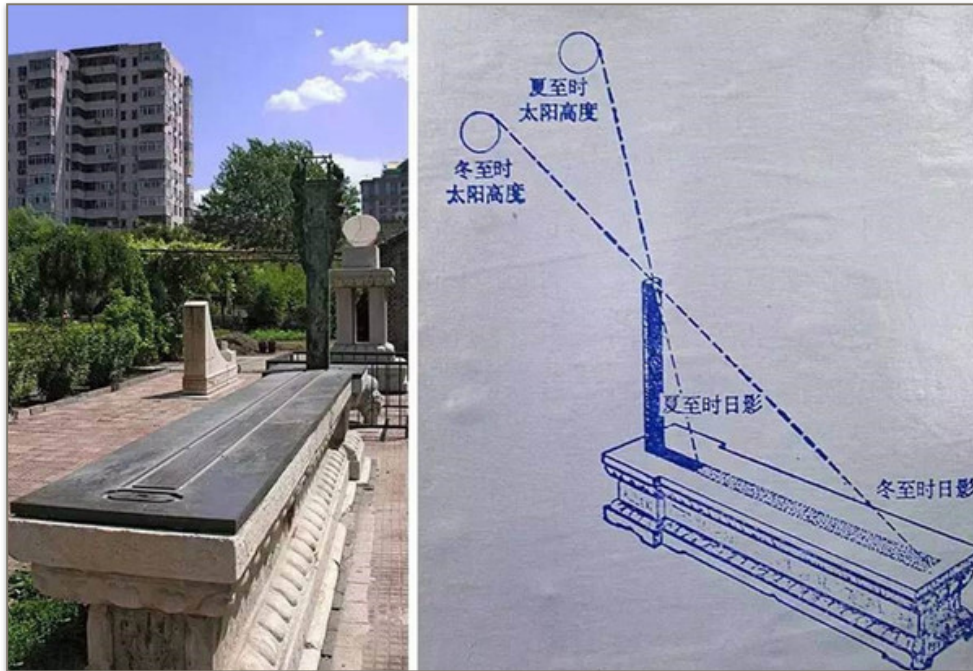


Figure 1.1: Clock of Gui. Left shows a reproduction of a Clock of Gui from the Qing Dynasty in Beijing. Right shows how the height of the sun affects the readings on the Clock. Source: <http://story.kedo.gov.cn/c/2018-04-26/917256.shtml>.

The exact procedures of Duke Shao's divination were not recorded. However, another chapter of Rites of Zhou explains the divination for land and may be similar to what Duke Shao used.⁸ The "clock of Gui," a specific tool, was used for divination. The optimum result and location would be "the center of the earth." The "clock of Gui" measures the length of the shadow of a place at different times of the year. [Figure 1.1] The primary function of the clock would be, first, the relative latitude of a place and second, the change of seasons (earth's relative location with the sun). However, to calculate "the center of the earth," which we know now is nowhere close to the earth's

⁸ Xuan Zhen 鄭玄(127-200). *Zhou li: shi er juan*. 周礼： 12卷 (Beijing : Beijing tu shu guan chu ban she, 2003).

surface, further divination or calculation was used but unfortunately not recorded in the text. A couple of other methods recorded in history use different tools to examine the woods, water, animal, plants, hills, and earth to determine whether one location is appropriate for settlement.⁹

The writing about location selection in the Rites of Zhou is both systematic and detail-oriented compared to the other historical records at the time, partially proving that "divination for land," the location of the living environment, is vital to the ancestors

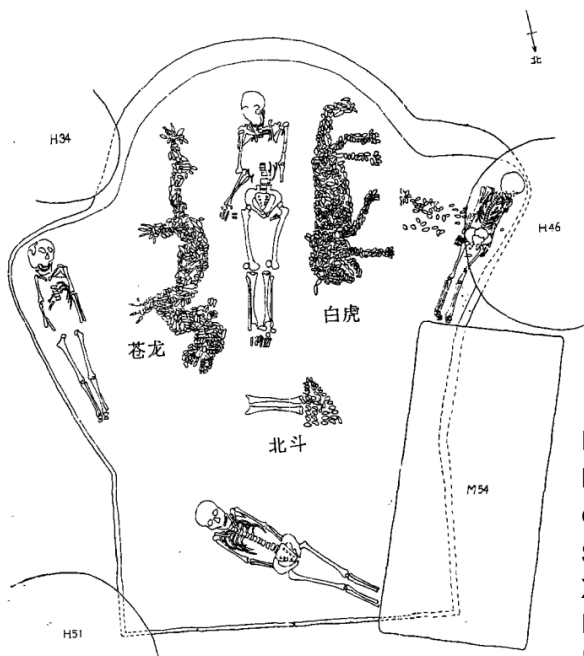


Figure 1.2: Excavation Report shows the shells piled in shapes of dragon and tiger, also the shape of Big Dipper next to the human remains.

Source: Sun Dexuan 孙德萱 et al. "Henan Puyang Xishuipo Yizhi Fajue Jianbao" (Site Archeology Report of Puyang Xishuipo Archeology Site) (河南濮阳西水坡遗址发掘简报, *Wenwu* (文物), no. 3 (1988): 1-6.

图二 河南濮阳西水坡45号墓平面图(采自《文物》1988年第3期)

of Chinese people in history.

Besides the historical records, there is other evidence from literature and archeological discoveries. "Shi Jing," the *book of poetry*, records literature dating from 11 - 7 centuries BC. One of the works praises the achievement of Gong Liu's divination

⁹ Hui Chen 陈徽(1973-). *Zhongguo gu dian jian zhu si xiang si lun* 中国古典建筑思想四论 (Four thesis on Classic Chinese Architecture)(Shanghai : Fu dan da xue chu ban she, 2012).

for his new home that brought prosperity to the clan.¹⁰ Another work by Zhu describes the details of relocation, also emphasizing the importance of the living environment to the clan's later prosperity.¹¹

Archaeological findings provide reference and evidence to the early practice of land divination records. In traditional Chinese culture, sky and land are divided into four directions. Each direction is represented by a divine animal: Azure Dragon for the east, White Tiger for the West, Vermilion Bird for the south, and Black Tortoise for the north. The uses of those figures often reference its relationship with land divination practices.

The earliest excavation of dragon and tiger figures was from the Xi Shui Po Neolithic site in Pu Yang, Henan. The figures were placed on the side of a human remain in the tomb. [Figure 1.2] The ruins belong to an early period of Yang Shao culture, which was about 6000 years ago.¹² The full four divine animals were first discovered in the Feng Jing ruin in the Shaanxi, where its figures were put on the watan.¹³

Yin Xu ruin was one of the historic capitals of the Shang Dynasty and is now a listed world heritage site. The excavation underneath more than 150 million bone and shell pieces, which gives a comprehensive picture of the Shang Dynasty. From those

¹⁰ *Shijing Daya Shengminzhishi Gongliu* 詩經 大雅 生民之什 公劉 (Book of Poetry: Greater odes of the kingdom: Decade Of Sheng Min: Gong Liu). Chinese Text Project. Accessed February 19, 2021, <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/gong-liu>.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Dexuan Sun 孙德萱 et al. "Henan Puyang Xishuipo Yizhi Fajue Jianbao" (Site Archeology Report of Puyang Xishuipo Archeology Site) (河南濮阳西水坡遗址发掘简报), *Wenwu* (文物), no. 3 (1988): 1–6, <https://global.cnki.net/kcms/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD1988&filename=WENW198803000>

¹³ Itō Chūta 伊东忠太 and Liao Yizhuang 廖伊庄. *Zhongguo Jianzhu Shi* 中国建筑史, (Beijing: Zhongguo Huabao Chubanshe 中国画报出版社, 2017), 87.

bone and shell pieces, we know that although Feng Shui was not invented in those early periods, the fundamental concepts like eight trigrams, five elements, and four divine animals matured in the Shang dynasty. Those concepts are fundamental to later day Feng Shui.¹⁴

Until the East Zhou Dynasty, methods of location assessment and selection advanced, and were more detailed.¹⁵ Liu argues, no later than the Zhou Dynasty, people shifted from passive divination to subjective geomancy, which indicates a more active approach to location selection.¹⁶ For example, the *Classic of Poetry* have recorded a story that the people of Wei need to determine the orientation, location, and time for building. To do that, they observe the stars and shadows.¹⁷ The *Book of Han* also describes the process of location assessment including tasting water, observing the geographic characteristics, and examining the growth of local plants. There are also records of debate between different approaches to land divination and assessment. Zuo Zhuang records a debate between two possible locations for new capitals for the country of Jin. One of the locations has fertile earth and salt resources, which is beneficial to the country's growth. Another is close to streams with gullies,

¹⁴ Shan Ding 丁山 (1901-1952). *Zhongguo Gu Dai Zong Jiao Yu Shen Hua Kao* 中国古代宗教与神话考 (examining on Ancient Chinese religion and methology)(Shanghai: Shanghai shu dian chu ban she, 2011).

¹⁵ The East Zhou Dynasty: Year BC 770 - 221.

¹⁶ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 30-31.

¹⁷ *Shijing Yong Dingzhifangzhong* 詩經 邶 定之方中 (Book of Poetry: Lessons from the states: Odes Of Yong: Ding Zhi Fang Zhong). Chinese Text Project. Accessed February 19, 2021. <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/ding-zhi-fang-zhong>.

Also:

Shijing Daya Mian 詩經 大雅 緜 (Book of Poetry: Greater odes of the kingdom: Decade Of Wen Wang: Mian). Juan 15, 3. Chinese Text Project. Accessed February 19, 2021. <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/mian>.

which helps transport wastes out of the city to maintain hygiene. At the time, the location had already been associated with the health and wellbeing of residents.

The methods and debates of divination for land in the early time of China is primitive and intuitive. Although there are still debates on how land-divination transforms into Feng Shui later, traces of the relationship, such as focusing on geographic variation and hydrology, are easily found in historical records, literature writing, and archeology discoveries. It is also noticed that, in the development of land divination, it also absorbs other forms of divination like primitive Astrology and bone divination.

***Qi* and The theory of *Qi* induction**

In another relative to the origin of Feng Shui, Liu concludes in his book that Feng Shui originates from the ancient philosophical idea of Yin and Yang and the divination classic, I Ching.¹⁸ He also agrees other factors like *Qi* and *Qi* induction and primitive genital-worship have contributed to the theoretical foundation and reflects in Feng Shui today.¹⁹

The Chinese think that *Qi* is everywhere and within everything. The concept of *Qi* is an important concept embedded in the philosophy and theory of Feng Shui and other traditional heritage. Without the understanding of *Qi* and *Qi* induction theory, the whole system of Feng Shui would seem unreasonable. Every school or practitioner of Feng Shui might have a slightly different explanation for *Qi*. However, as many

¹⁸ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 2-4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-24.

differences of divination of Qi happen at the edges and corners of where Qi was discussed, the main body of Qi theory lineages and developed from an early stage of history.

In the context of modern Chinese, the word Qi means gas, air, or anything in the form of gas when combined with a different word, "Shui Qi," literally means water vapor. However, the embedded meaning of Qi is far more subtle than its meaning in modern Chinese. The ancient dictionary gives a slightly different definition to Qi that it is an imitation of the form of cloud and refers to all objects in the form of gas.²⁰ The earliest records of Qi are in *Guo Yu*, where a servant explains to his master the relationship between agriculture and seasons. Yang Qi (Yang as in Yin and Yang) were used to explaining why farming should occur in spring.²¹ Bruun evaluates the historical meaning of Qi in Feng Shui, compare it to the Greek concept "ether" while refer it to "breath" or "breath of nature."²² Chan has a more comprehensive and delicate discussion on the meaning of Qi and its accurate translation in English. He uses "material force", "vital force," or "subtle, activating force" to show the multiple meanings of the same concepts in different contexts, by different translators.²³ Personally, what thought to be the best explanation of Qi in the context of Feng Shui is in *Huai Nan Zi*, where writes in *Dao Yuan* chapter that the physical body (形), Qi or vital

²⁰ Duan Yucan 段玉裁(1735-1815), *Shuo wen jie zi zhu* 說文解字注 (Notes on Dictionary). (Taipei : Yi wen yin shu guan, 1966).

²¹ [unknown](4th century BC), *Guo Yu* 國語 (Words of states) Zhou Yu Shang (周語上) (Beijing : Shang wu yin shu guan, 2018).

²² Ole Bruun, *An Introduction to Feng Shui* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 107-110.

²³ Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1963).

force (气), and spirit (神) together complete the vitality ("Qi" has been translated to "vital energy" here):²⁴

The physical body is the abode of vitality; the vital energy is the source of vitality; and the spirit is what regulates vitality. If one of these loses its position, then the other two will be harmed. Therefore, sages ensure that each rests in its appropriate position, preserves its specific functions, and does not interfere with the others. Thus, if the physical body resides where it is not safe, it will be destroyed; if the use of vital energy does not match what replenishes it, it will drain away; if the spirit acts in an inappropriate manner, it will become darkened. These three must be attentively guarded.²⁵

In the later chapter of *Huai Nan Zi*, the characteristics of Qi are further explained in terms of the characters of different Qi in the Tian Wen chapter and how it relates to the health of human beings in the Jing Shen chapter.²⁶ The description of Qi in *Huai Nan Zi* has corresponded with a later discuss of Qi induction. It is particularly difficult to translate a comprehensive concept such as Qi accurately into another language without losing a lot of its meaning. Ancient Chinese is a poetic language that the meanings of a word are most likely relay on its context. For now, it is important to know that Qi in general refers to a force and mechanism that embedded in our nature and give characters to things. It had already been delivered and used as an abstract concept of nature mechanism instead of a description of its physical form.

The other observation is the concept of Yin and Yang. As words themselves do not have conceptual meanings, as written in the dictionary, Yin and Yang are

²⁴ Liu An 劉安 (179-122 BC) and [Liu's followers], *Huai Nan Zi* 淮南子 (Debates in King Liu's Court) (Nanjing : Feng huang chu ban she, 2021).

²⁵ An Liu and John S. Major, eds. *The Huainanzi: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China*. Translations from the Asian Classics (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 98.

²⁶ Liu An 劉安 (179-122 BC) and [Liu's followers], *Huai Nan Zi* 淮南子 (Debates in King Liu's Court) (Nanjing : Feng huang chu ban she, 2021), Tian Wen 天文 and Jing Shen 精神. Also: *Ibid.*, 148 and 292-312.

geographic references of location towards a mountain. Yin refers to the north of the mountain, and Yang refers to the south of the mountain. In the northern hemisphere, where East Asian culture is rooted chiefly, the north of the mountain is often cooler and wetter than the south of the mountain due to the length and strength of sunlight received. Today, the meaning and concept of Yin and Yang are much refined and enriched. Yin and Yang became a classic dualism to represent husband and wife, sky and ground, fire and water, and mountain and river. All hot, enlightened, upward, hard, outward, positive, moving, growing objects and effects are Yang, and the opposites are Yin.²⁷

Regardless of the time of abstraction of Yin, Yang, and Qi, they were linked together quickly. As Chen argues, the people of Zhou believe in their gods and kings. A theory combining Yin, Yang, and Qi are developed to explain that everything, including the destiny of kings and kingdoms (represented by the dualism of Yin and Yang), is in motion (represented by Qi). In time, the Qi of Yin and Qi of Yang circulate the world and create motion and pattern of change. At the same time, the sky and ground represent the dominant Yang and Yin in the world. Kings, their kingdoms, and their destinies no longer directly represent the sky. Instead, its relationship is represented by Qi. The disorder of Qi will lead to disasters or the fallen of the dynasty.²⁸ Liu also agrees that, from the examination of Feng Shui theory and Feng Shui classics in the period,

²⁷ Hui Chen 陈徽(1973-), *Zhongguo gu dian jian zhu si xiang si lun* 中国古典建筑思想四论 (Four thesis on Classic Chinese Architecture) (Shanghai : Fu dan da xue chu ban she, 2012).

²⁸ Ibid.

theories like Feng Shui in the later Qin and Han dynasties period went through a merging process with the other popular natural philosophies in the pre-Qin period.²⁹

Since the Spring and Autumn (Chun Qiu) Period, the concept has further developed. Everyone, regardless of their social status, even animals, are created by and connected with the Qi. The theory of Qi-bearing, which later developed into the primary response to the origin of humans, explains that individual difference comes from the amount and types of Qi one bears.

Before induction theory emerged with Qi, it existed more like a myth between humans and gods: Hou Ji, the ancestor of the people of Zhou, was the son of the god of the sky. His mother, a layperson prays to the gods that she wants a son. The god then showed his footprint on the ground, which Hou Ji's mother steps on and becomes pregnant.³⁰ In the later period of the Zhou dynasty, with Qi emerging with Yin Yang, induction theory also joined and refined into a discourse of general relationships within the material world.

The Qi induction theory is developed to explain the mystery of internal relationships between "events" in the world. Scholars today often recognize the development of the Qi induction theory as a new foundation for cultural disenchantment. With the emergence of Qi and induction, people discovered that things in the universe exist by bearing Qi, and Qi dissipates back into the universe after

²⁹ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 25-43.

³⁰ *Shijing Daya Shengminzhishi Shengmin* 詩經 大雅 生民之什 生民 (Book of Poetry: Greater odes of the kingdom: Decade Of Sheng Min: Sheng Min). Juan 16, 1. Chinese Text Project." Accessed February 19, 2021. <https://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/sheng-min>.

objects "die." Therefore, everything is a transform of Qi. Mountains, hills, and water also bear their own Qi, which is also part of the cosmic Qi.

Furthermore, Qi connects things and objects that seem irrelevant in the world through a mechanism of induction. The status of a home, including its location, landscape and internal space of buildings, determines and facilitates the wellbeing of people and family living in because the Qi of the family and Qi of the place are inducted and connected. The induction theory states that everything does not exist in isolation; they have and will continue to interact with each other. Induction is not a limitation but a source of cosmic movement and vitality.³¹

Dong Zhongshu in the West Han period is commonly recognized for assembling the Qi induction theory. Dong is traditionally associated with the promotion of Confucianism, at the time most writings by Confucius and his followers, as an official ideology and policy agenda of the Han government. By assembling Qi induction theory, Dong inherited and combined the mainstream philosophies from the Axial Age.³² However, part of the Qi induction theory infers that the power of the emperor and his government comes from the sky, Heaven, or divine supernatural, which interact with the world as natural phenomenon like weather, disasters, and stars. Dong's religious view of the world, a belief in the divinity of nature per se, was argued and later objected to by Wang Chong. Wang follows another lineage of Confucius, Xun Zi. He argues that the induction between divinity and humans though Qi was a natural phenomenon

³¹ Hui Chen 陈徽(1973-), *Zhongguo gu dian jian zhu si xiang si lun* 中国古典建筑思想四论 (Four thesis on Classic Chinese Architecture) (Shanghai: Fu dan da xue chu ban she, 2012), 11-12.

³² A term coined by German philosopher Karl Jaspers. It refers to broad changes in religious and philosophical thought that occurred in a variety of locations from about the eighth to the third century BC.

hence not impacted by human activity or a will of the divine.³³ In Chinese history, the debates on the existence of the free will of divinity have occasionally been recorded. However, regardless of the results of debates, their influence stays among elites and scholars. While Feng Shui and the concepts employed are based on laypersons view of the world, which in pre-industrialized China is primarily religious, superstitious, and full of occults beliefs.

The *Book of Burial*

An etymology study indicates that Feng Shui is directly extracted from one of the critical writings in history, *Zang Jing*, *The Book of Burial*, by Guo Pu. At the beginning of the book, he writes:

Qi rides the wind (Feng) and scatters, but is retained when encountering water (Shui), so the ancients collected it to prevent its dissipation and guided it to assure its retention. Thus it was called Feng Shui.³⁴

Qi is an essential concept in Feng Shui and many other Chinese heritages like medicine and martial arts. Though it means "air" or "gas," the book did not write a contextual definition of Qi in Feng Shui. However, at the time, its theory has developed from the vital force and components of the world into a force both material and spiritual. However, note that Qi is not always beneficial. In many Feng Shui writing,

³³ Shouxian Gao 高寿仙. *Xing xiang, feng shui, yun dao: Zhongguo gu dai tian di zhi dao tou xi* 星象·风水·运道：中国古代天地智道透析(Astrology, Feng Shui, Destiny: Understanding of Ancient Chinese wisdom of nature). (Nanning: Guangxi jiao yu chu ban she, 1995), 5-7.

³⁴ [Guo Pu 郭璞?] (276-324), *Zang shu* 葬书 (Book of burial) (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guang ling gu ji ke yin she. 1990), 1.

harmful Qi is also an important concept and subject of discussion. Humans could manipulate the relevant Qi through adjustments to our living environment.

It is still a debate on whether Guo Pu is the actual writer of the *Book of Burial*. It is also hard to differentiate the original edition from the later comments and interpretations from the editor. An interesting phenomenon in Chinese Classic Study is that schools of traditional knowledge often trace back in history and try to connect them to ancient figures to fortify their credibility. Usually, the further the lineage means enhanced credibility since they directly inherit the ancient knowledge. It remains unknown whether Guo Pu is the real author of the book or was written in the Sui Dynasty.³⁵ Although doubtful of its time of publication and author, it does not change its significance in Feng Shui and Feng Shui study.

The *Book of Burial* has its status among all the writing of Feng Shui because it presents the logic of Feng Shui and Feng Shui practice. Most importantly, it states the relationship between burial practice and the wellbeing of their decedents.

Man receives his body from his parents. If the ancestors' bones acquire Qi, the descendants' bodies are endowed. The classic says: Qi is moved and responded in kind; the blessings of ghosts extend to the living. This is why, when Copper Mountain collapsed in the West, the palace bell tolled in the East. When the tree flowers in the spring, the chestnut sprouts in the hall. Truly, life is accumulated Qi; it solidifies into bone, which alone remains after death. Burial returns Qi to the bones which is the way the living are endowed.³⁶

Above is a partial translation of the first chapter (the inner chapter) of *Book of Burial*. Other than the importance of burial tradition, we may find traces of Qi and an

³⁵ Taiping Chang and Knechtges David, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2010).

³⁶ [Guo Pu 郭璞?] (276-324), *Zang shu* 葬书 (Book of burial) (Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling gu ji ke yin she, 1990).

induction basis if looking deeper into the text. The development of historic burial traditions in China itself was another field of study, but an easy comparison may be helpful here. As *Zhou Li* states, "All lives will die, and all dead will go into the earth." Undoubtedly, many more writings regulate and guide the burial tradition and rituals regarding one's social class. However, in comparison with cremation or water burial, earth burial was the general concept of burial in early China. However, Confucianism, which has excellent writings on family and social ethics of people, has its thoughts on burial practices. The idea of "man receive his body from his parents" comes from one of the Confucian classics, "the book of Xiao," which talks about how one should be good to their parents and thus be helpful to the kings and their nation.

Liu has made a great conclusion of what *Book of Burial* elaborates on the composition of Feng Shui:

1. Qi and Lively Qi. *Book of Burial* further developed and illustrated the Qi theory. The primary purpose is to differentiate Qi into the lively and beneficial ones and the contrary, thus giving Feng Shui the purpose to find and use the lively Qi.
2. Water and Wind. *Book of Burial* gives water and wind, mainly water, a particular position in Feng Shui that water later becomes a defining factor of Qi and Feng Shui.
3. Topography and Qi. *Book of Burial* affirms the interaction between landform and Qi. Thus topography determines how the Qi congregate and move through a location.
4. Orientation. The importance of orientation was also reaffirmed in the *Book of Burial*. The traditional figures of Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and

Black Turtle, which represent the east, west, north, and south directions, are given spiritual meanings.

5. Induction of remains. As described above, the induction between the parents and their offspring remains to set the theoretical foundation for Feng Shui.³⁷

The *Book of Burial* becomes the reputed classic of Feng Shui because it clarifies what Feng Shui is and paves the foundation for the methodology and logic of Feng Shui practices. Furthermore, it provides the possibility for further development of Feng Shui and the later existence of Feng Shui schools.

It is also worth noting that the *Book of Burial* was the peak of Feng Shui theory in the era. However, the most famous Feng Shui books at the time focused solely on the “Five Elements” and the “Five Notes.” The popularity of the primitive “Five Notes” divination can be seen in the critique at the time by Wang Chong.³⁸ Five Notes simply locate people’s residences according to the pronunciation of their clan’s name, a primitive approach compared to the theory in the *Book of Burial*.

Development of Feng Shui after the Jin Dynasty

In general, in the Tang and Song Dynasties, China progressed in both social and economic status. Those progressions set the economic foundation for the further development of building practices, hence the development of Feng Shui.

³⁷ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 48-49.

³⁸ Chong Wang 王充, *Lun heng* 论衡. Guo xue ji ben cong shu. (Shanghai: Shang wu yin shu guan, 1934).

The vernacular architectures of the Tang and Song dynasties hardly survive history, so writings and the remains of mausoleums provide the best evidence. In the Tang and Song dynasties, two Feng Shui masters gained their reputation from their writings and are still worshiped and respected today.

Yang Yun Song, was also named the “Yang, the Savior of the poor.” The widely told story of him is that he was once the government official in the palace of the Tang Dynasty. In the event of rebellion, he ran away from the palace with the knowledge of royal Feng Shui theory and then traveled and observed Feng Shui for the rest of his life. His legacy was so respected that many Feng Shui books in later times borrowed his name. Three books were generally acknowledged to represent his concepts and practice of Feng Shui: “*the book of mighty Dragon*,” “*the book of mystery Dragon*,” and the “*Principles of burial*.”³⁹ The main focus of all three books is on the geographic form, such as the mountain, river, and place of burial. Regardless of the techniques used, due to the importance of form in Yang’s theory, Yang inherited much of the tangible part of the Feng Shui, becoming the authorized ancestor and founder of the Form School. However, the name of the school was never mentioned in his writings.⁴⁰

Another notable figure is Lai Wen-Jun, also known as “Lai, the Commoner.” He was also a local government official and left to pursue the myth of Feng Shui. Although his story is less dramatic, his reputation and legacy are no less than Yang’s. His book “*Incubation of Officer*” focuses mainly on explaining and finding the good Feng Shui

³⁹ See Bibliography for a reference of Feng Shui Classics.

⁴⁰ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995). 50.

with methods extracted from Astrology and Eight Trigram, making him the representation of the Compass School.⁴¹

The popularity and reputation of Yang and Lai show that the further development of Feng Shui in the Tang and Song dynasties evolves into two different schools. Although Yang and Lai later became the representative figures of Feng Shui, there were many other less-known writings of relative matters at the time. The official public records show at least fifteen different books on Feng Shui in the Tang Dynasty and fifty-one in the Song Dynasty.⁴² Though many of them have lost their popularity and are extinct, they still show how Feng Shui turned into a field of interest in the Tang and Song dynasties.

Feng Shui further developed into hybrid studies of history, geography, and occult practice in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Many Feng Shui writings in Ming and Qing were named “reflection,” “addition,” or “edition” of the previous writings.⁴³ Besides further development of previous knowledge, books that combine previous writing were also popular.

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, the further development of Feng Shui was also reflected in its reference with other disciplines. “Zang Jing Yi,” a book to help people understand the *Book of Burial* in the Ming Dynasty, has looked at Feng Shui with the perspective of Traditional Chinese Medicine, which also shares many concepts with

⁴¹ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 51.

⁴² *Xin jiu Tang shu he chao: fu bian shi liu zhong* 新舊唐書合鈔：附編十六種, Guo xue ming zhu zhen ben hui kan (Taipei: Ding wen shu ju, 1972).

⁴³ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 54.

Feng Shui but contains distinct practices such as Chinese herbs, acupuncture, and cupping. Others include Feng Shui writings specifically focused on water and its movement. As Xie describes the relationship between Chinese medicine and Yin Yang as "the discourse of Yin Yang and Five elements do not produce or develop Chinese Medicine, but regulate it."⁴⁴ In general, the Ming and Qing practitioners further explained and developed the concepts and practices within the context of the Ming and Qing communities. Most writings and publications today are derived from these Ming and Qing texts.

Lastly, Feng Shui started to engage with prevalent religions after the Jing dynasty. The most intimate relationship is between Feng Shui and Taoism. For some practitioners, this connection is profound and ultimately crucial in the development of Feng Shui. They claim that Feng Shui is an "integration in Taoism training" and de facto a "Taoism art."⁴⁵ As a native religion, Taoism sources many traditions as its theoretical foundation. Primitive beliefs, sorcery, and philosophies by Huang and Lao are its primary foundation, and I Ching, Five Elements, Eight Trigrams, Yin and Yang, and Qi are all extensions of its contexts. As Feng Shui shares those concepts, Taoism claims Feng Shui as part of it in many ways. Since Feng Shui theory reflects Taoism religion, they collect Feng Shui writings in their religious texts. In Korea, Taoism was not as popular, but Buddhism from China became the predominant religion in history. According to Yoon, Geomancy influenced the location of temples and pagodas, and

⁴⁴ Songling Xie, *Yin Yang Wu Xing Yu Zhong Yi Xue*, Di 1 ban, Shenzhou Wen Hua Tu Dian Ji Cheng (Beijing: Zhong yang bian yi chu ban she, 2008), 134.

⁴⁵ Eva Wong, *Feng-Shui: The Ancient Wisdom of Harmonious Living for Modern Times*, 1st ed (Boston: [New York]: Shambhala; Distributed in the USA by Random House, 1996). I.

almost all Buddhist temples have been built in vital places.⁴⁶ Though it cannot be proven that Korean Buddhist monks use Feng Shui to select their temple site, it does show a connection between the sites of temples and the principles of Feng Shui.

In a nutshell, the development of Feng Shui after the Jin Dynasty, at least from the records of writings and histories, took different stages. In the Tang and Song dynasties, it developed into different schools and integrated other concepts, and those concepts were further elaborated and matured in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Feng Shui After 1850

The weakening and eventually perishing of the Qing Dynasty in the late nineteenth century marks a period in Chinese history of political instability, warfare, and social modernization. The revolutionary changes toward social and economic order threatened and eventually subverted the foundation of Feng Shui.

Scholar Ole Bruun has further studied the history, transformation, and conditions of Feng Shui, especially in the context of recent centuries. With his original site research in Sichuan province and Jiangsu province, his work was presented in *Feng Shui in China: Geomantic Divination Between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*. His analysis of practice, procedure, and practitioners in the primarily rural environment, Bruun reveals a picture of Feng Shui unseen in general eyes of scholars. From an anthropological approach, the practice and condition of Feng Shui in rural China are evaluated and critiqued as a popular religion.⁴⁷ The most valuable fact is that it

⁴⁶ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976). 232.

⁴⁷ To be excluded from the five main religions by the government of PRC.

documents the pressures on top of its users and providers from both inherent political suppression and criticism from social groups.

The role that Feng Shui plays varies from a feudal Qing government to a modern republic government. As recorded by various early missionaries and colonists, criticism of Feng Shui was often used as a weapon and excuse against foreign investment and the development of railways, utility poles, and church with religious symbols.⁴⁸ Some of those preferences became part of modern Feng Shui. As Wong suggests, the shape of objects and architecture surrounding a place plays a definitive role in Feng Shui in an urban environment. Objects like light poles, utility poles, and satellite dishes should be generally avoided.⁴⁹ It is unknown if the logic to avoid those shapes and objects originates from the theory or practice of Feng Shui or a combination of both.

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, with the military and political pressure and eagerness to become a modern socialist nation, the new republic government pushed for progressive policies in all fields.⁵⁰ One of the most focused areas is the moderation of its rural society. Feng Shui, together with other popular divinations and religious practices, were banned. At the end of the political movement, Feng Shui practices and others once again appears. In rural China, practitioners from previous periods picked up their business again to serve the local community.⁵¹ Some of them even find ways to maintain their business during the political movement since

⁴⁸ Xixian Yu, *Feng Shui Wen Hua Dui Shi Jie de Ying Xiang*, Di 1 ban (Beijing Shi: Shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 2010).

⁴⁹ Eva Wong, *Feng-Shui: The Ancient Wisdom of Harmonious Living for Modern Times*, 1st ed (Boston: [New York]: Shambhala; Distributed in the USA by Random House, 1996). Chapter 11 & 12.

⁵⁰ PRC established on October 1, 1949.

⁵¹ Taiwan and Hong Kong were not governed by PRC at the time, Hong Kong returned to PRC as an autonomous "Special Administration Area" in 1997. Taiwan retains their own government.

they have no other means of living. Others were selected as local government officials since practicing Feng Shui requires reading and they are slightly more educated than most.⁵²

The more focused discussion and observation of Feng Shui in recent history are within the context of an urban area, partly due to the mass migration of peasants to the urban area that brought Feng Shui tradition with them. Also, the early stage of economic development in China relies on foreign investment, in which many of them come with a cultural background of using Feng Shui. Together, Feng Shui practices emerge in the city, although criticism and suppression also come from urban elites.

The urban elites in China did not penetrate its social classes until the late Qing dynasty and early Republic period. At the same time, the rise of the New Cultural Movement provided the opportunities and media for them to “speak and educate” their fellow citizens. With the pressure and threats of social and cultural failure of the nation, urban elites, many of them with educational backgrounds from western countries, strove to save China and its people. Urban elites compare the law, society, economy, and traditions in each country to those of China. The ideology of urban elites has either become or largely influenced the later republic governments, shaping a radical political view towards its past as “feudal tradition.” Although urban elites were further divided into many smaller groups, anti-feudalism and anti-imperialism were always a core concept, thus uniting the urban elites and becoming an inherited value and tradition in many different realms of society today. In general, the representation of anti-feudalism for urban elites is an attack on folk traditions and prevalent religions such as Feng Shui

⁵² Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011).

and claims those traditions and religions to be blamed for weakening the already vulnerable nation. This ideological tone about Chinese folk tradition and religion still influences many parts of society and shape their attitudes towards the revival of Feng Shui in China today.

In academia, the increasing interests and support on Chinese “classicism” studies promote and encourage various studies, Feng Shui included. As Bruun writes, several top universities in China have held seminars for Feng Shui, and many professors openly publish their academic work on Feng Shui, but when considering setting a standard course of Feng Shui for students, despite its popularity they have faced pressure and ultimately failed to continue.⁵³

Feng Shui is seen as a double-edged sword to government and government officials. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, Feng Shui was seen as one of the representatives of feudal tradition and targeted for elimination by aggressive government action. Underneath official discourse of feudal tradition, sometimes we see government officials use Feng Shui as a cultural symbol or ways to progress on their career. On the other hand, under the central government's general directory action and guide, the rising of environmentalism has encouraged so-called "green development" in China. Under the current Xi ministration, environmentalism reaches its peak in Chinese history, and the environment conservation policy reaches the historical level. A sign of that was the discourse on "Two Mountains" and the leader's announcement of

⁵³ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), XIX.

"Carbon Neutral by 2060."⁵⁴ Rising environmentalism attracts both public and private interests, and Feng Shui sometimes enters the discourse as a tool for conservation of the natural environment, like its counterpart in Korea as stated by Yoon.⁵⁵ Moreover, the consideration is about its value as cultural heritage and cultural tourism. Bruun believes that the establishment and recognition (by public officials) of the first Feng Shui museum in the city of Taizhou marks a progression in its official status.⁵⁶ The museum was promoted as part of local tourism of the city which got permitted by the local officials.⁵⁷ In a predominantly rural area like Sichuan Province in the late 1990s, the changing attitude of local village level administration of culture (Wen Hua Zhan as written by Bruun, meaning culture station in Chinese) also reflects a similar shift in the attitude of the rural government. While the "culture station" was responsible for enforcing and keeping the ban on feudal tradition like Feng Shui during the cultural revolution, now it is in the position of documenting local cultural tradition such as local Feng Shui practices, although Bruun also questioned the seriousness of such duty as

⁵⁴ Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed: "Clear water and green mountains are gold and silver mountains", which has been a call from the central government for collective effort toward environmental-friendly growth. Also "'Enhance Solidarity' to Fight COVID-19, Chinese President Urges, Also Pledges Carbon Neutrality by 2060," UN News, September 22, 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1073052>.

⁵⁵ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

⁵⁶ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), XXI.

⁵⁷ Florian C. Reiter, ed., *Feng Shui (Kan Yu) and Architecture: International Conference in Berlin*, Asien- Und Afrika-Studien Der Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin, Bd. 38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 69-80.

he found out that the cultural station was idle and empty of staffs most of the time in Longquan, Sichuan.⁵⁸

In general, Feng Shui in China experience its rise and fall after 1950. Despite the suppression it faced from urban elites and government, its root in rural society was firm, even during the cultural revolution when political suppression targets the holders of such knowledge and retired practitioners. It was not only a way of divination for good fortune but one of the most promising and widely available spiritual services, hence during the political movements, its practitioners suffered from discrimination, isolation, and sometimes personal attacks. Relevant tools and books were also either voluntarily or forcibly discarded and destroyed. When the political movement calms down, the practice of Feng Shui once again recovers, first in the rural area, then made its way to a revival in the city. Both academic and government officials, two representative urban elites, have complex views toward Feng Shui and its revival. To an extent, urban elites have a mindset since the New Culture Movement that splits feudal tradition with modern society, which tends to ignore or deny the continuity of history at the turning point of a “New China.”⁵⁹ However, we observe that Feng Shui as an inherited tradition has slowly reclaimed its position in the community, even within academia. Each year, new research on Feng Shui has been conducted and published. Government officials also slowly recognized its heritage and social value towards conservation, economic and cultural development. However, as Bruun concludes in his

⁵⁸ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), Chapter 4.

⁵⁹ In the contemporary Chinese, this term refers to the people’s republic of China (PRC), established in 1949 by Chinese Communist Party.

book, Feng Shui as a popular cosmology and religion, may be fundamentally incompatible with the government in China, which may lead to potential suppression and criticism.⁶⁰

Schools of Feng Shui

Traditional Feng Shui scholars as generally known and practiced in East Asia sort themselves into the Form School and the Compass School. The form of school focuses on geographic form and location. The compass school covers a wider variety of concepts and methods, in general, compared to the Form school. The compass school also considers time, including the time of construction, move-in, birth time of owner and users, in their practice. Another characteristic of the compass school is their avoidance and neutralization of negative Qi, a restorative, incremental approach to Feng Shui in the existing built environment. Liu states that the difference between Form School and Compass School started as early as the Han dynasty.⁶¹

The Form School is based on four fundamental subjects: Dragon, Gravel, Water, and Lair (Xue). Together, all four subjects in combining refer to the form of topography and how the topography "acts" toward the place of choice. Although different schools may have different definitions for each concept, in general, Dragon refers to the primary mountain range in the area; sometimes the main water line such as a river or linear shape lake can also be a "Water Dragon"; in the plains region where primary mountain

⁶⁰ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), Conclusion.

⁶¹ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 61.

range does not apply, a serial of connecting hills can also be considered a Dragon. Locating a "Dragon" is one of the primary tasks of Feng Shui practice in the Form School because the Dragon is the primary source of Qi.

Gravel refers to the mountains and hills secondary to "Dragon," the mountain range, specifically the hills surrounding a particular location. They serve as the function to divert and congress Qi to better serve the Lair. Water refers to water bodies, either ground or surface. Water many times serves as the "counterweight" of the Dragon. It also diverts, gathers, and clarifies Qi. The Lair, or Xue, as mentioned earlier, refers to the selected locations that congregate beneficial Qi hence being a good location for settlements or burial grounds. Besides the form itself, land use was also considered an influential factor to Xue. Uses like temples, government, jail, and cemeteries all have their good or bad influence on the Feng Shui of a particular site. The architecture itself also impacts the congregation and the circulation of Feng Shui within the building. Liu references the *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyaoyao* (Annotated Catalog of the Complete Imperial Library) and states that Yang Yun Song and his theories become the essential foundation for the development of Form School.⁶² We will discuss this in more detail in Chapter Two and Three.

On the other hand, the compass school relies more on Qi and believes that the Qi changes with time and is created with different people in different ways. Though they recognize the importance of the Dragon, Gravel, Water, and Lair, they also have more personalized and case-specific practices. As the name reflects, compass schools also rely on their specific compass, Luo Pan, to guide their measurements of Feng

⁶² Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 63.

Shui. We will discuss the compass school and the compass in Chapters Two and Three.

Another contributing factor to the compass school is the function of apotropaic practice. Like other civilizations, the Chinese have the tradition to dispel evilness, mostly in symbolic ways. Some of those traditions are sustained and exist today. During the lunar new year, most Chinese communities maintain the tradition of firing some fireworks, which are also used in many other celebrations like opening new business and political campaigns. The origin of fireworks is to scare hence dispel an evil child-eating beast named “Nian.”

The tradition also becomes part of Feng Shui, especially in the compass school. In the compass school, different orientations and time has been given characters, either good or evil. One of the core logics in the compass school is to avoid the evil orientations and time, hence welcoming and encouraging goodness. Another phenomenon in the compass school is the use of suppression. The tool of suppression is used to suppress evilness. If an evil orientation or spatial plan is inevitable or has been in place, tools of suppression come into use to neutralize the situation. A commonly used and seen tool of suppression is a small mirror inserted in the middle of a plate carved with eight trigrams. The so-called “eight trigram mirror” is believed to stop evil spirits from entering the residence. People hang the mirror over their main entrance. Although Feng Shui employs many more complicated ways to either avoid evilness or use tools of suppression, people tend to attribute most types of dispelling efforts to Feng Shui. In a sense, the tradition of dispelling the evilness, especially with

the use of the tool of suppression, has merged with Feng Shui's practice in history and represents Feng Shui in various situations.

The debate between Science and Superstition

Feng Shui in preindustrial China was seen as a reasonable social belief. Many Confucian scholars and officials themselves believed in Feng Shui. Early founders and masters of Feng Shui, such as Guo Pu, Yang Yun Song, and Lai Wen Jun were Confucian scholars and government officials themselves. Due to the close relationship between Chinese occults and Confucianism, Feng Shui was never seen as a threat to orthodox philosophy, but rather a valuable addition.

The opposition and conflict between Feng Shui and orthodox practices of science and western tradition were rooted in the observation of early European missionaries, as discussed in the introduction. However, the conflicts and non-compliance of Feng Shui in society peaked during modernization. Traditional practices, including Chinese medicine and Feng Shui, were seen as superstition and criticized by scholars and politicians. Throughout the twentieth century, institutional alienation of Feng Shui was considered politically correct. The attack on Feng Shui peaked during the Great Cultural Revolution, where all traditions, tangible or not, were seen as regressive and hence should be abolished. At the time, Feng Shui and Feng Shui practices were seen as superstition and banned from the new socialist nation. However, in areas that the People's Republic of China did not govern at the time, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Chinese immigrant communities in other countries, Feng Shui was sustained as a culture and tradition.

As the political movement faded away and economic reform began at the end of the twentieth century, the connection and economic relationship between mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan improved. Feng Shui also returned to the mainland. However, only recently have scholars started to study the subject.

Part of academic reluctance to research Feng Shui is the discourse of science versus superstition. With its atheist ideology, the communist party of China and its government like to keep a distance from religious and folklore practices. Although the government values the traditional culture in recent years, Feng Shui, with its mystic tones, is still discouraged by mainstream media and politics. Such influence also penetrates academia, where research on Feng Shui grows slowly.

The debate over whether Feng Shui is scientific has not yet come to an end and may never come to a satisfying answer. Chen has engaging writing on the science and Feng Shui that may help to understand this context from a philosophical understanding:

The fact that science can exist primarily based on a western cultural tradition with two primary psychological resources: an ideological method of dualism and value orientation of rationalism, where dualism has separated our cosmic into an ideal world and a material world, and rationalism made us believe that the relationship between object and subject are provable, precise and clear.⁶³

A considerate but often neglected point of the argument is that the context of "science" varies with time. In the nineteenth century, when science and philosophy disengage, science turns into positivism, as argued by Chen. He also argues that the development and prosperity of positivism and positivism science leads to a concept of scientism in our society. Our society indeed becomes a public domain judged and

⁶³ Hui Chen 陈徽, *Zhongguo gu dian jian zhu si xiang si lun*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai Shi: Fu dan da xue chu ban she, 2012), 178-185.

regulated by scientism and positivism, where the opposite is criticized and becomes secondary.⁶⁴

Feng Shui is also based on a traditional Chinese philosophical tradition that rarely speaks of a dualism of object and subject. Instead, this philosophical tradition pursues the wholeness of cosmology. In observation, this philosophical tradition encourages people to sense and comprehend the world without objectification and abstraction.

Disenchantment of Feng Shui

For people who are not familiar with Feng Shui, the rituals and practices may seem mysterious and religious. Although Feng Shui may have a mythological lineage, it is based on a materialized foundation. As documented in the official history, the early precedent of Feng Shui is land divination. However, the development of Qi and the induction theory transform land divination to a more "logical" and "predictable" way. We know that the concept of Qi and Qi induction soon merges with land divination, and Feng Shui was produced. Despite that Qi is the foundation of the cosmos and everything within, we hardly found records of veneration of Qi. On the contrary, the concept of Feng Shui itself was based on taking advantage of Qi and benefitting the living.

Another important concept of Feng Shui is that the cosmos is in movement. The movement of cosmic response and follows the movement of Qi. When Yin Yang, Five

⁶⁴ Hui Chen 陈徽, *Zhongguo gu dian jian zhu si xiang si lun*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai Shi: Fu dan da xue chu ban she, 2012), 175 - 178.

Elements, and Eight Trigrams emerge, the essential goal is to discover the pattern of movement of the Qi. That is why Guo Pu writes, "Qi rides the wind (Feng) and scatters, but is retained when encountering Water (Shui), so the ancients collected it to prevent its dissipation and guided it to assure its retention. Thus it was called Feng Shui." In the later development of the compass school, time has also been added to the movement. Concerning the stars and astrology, Feng Shui develop its timing system to calculate and hence take advantage of the movement of Qi.

Three prerequisites of Feng Shui

As one of the first scholars who research Feng Shui from a western context, Dr. Yoon's work lays the foundation for many later studies of its kind. One of the important discussions is the prerequisites of Feng Shui. There are three prerequisites in the logic of Feng Shui:

1. One location is better off than others in terms of building a home or tomb.
2. A beneficial location can only be found with the principles of Feng Shui or geomancy.
3. Once owned and occupied a location, the offsprings of the ancestor who lives or buried at the location will benefit from it. ⁶⁵

The three prerequisites deconstruct the purpose of Feng Shui and reorganize it in plain language. The first prerequisite talks about the comparative advantages of location, yet the word "better" sounds vague. " Better " was explained differently in the

⁶⁵ Hong-key Yoon, "A Theory on the Origin and Development of Ancient Chinese Geomancy (FENG-SHUI)," *Studies in the History of Natural Sciences* 1 (1989).

context of different Feng Shui manuals and writings. From a cosmological perspective, a location is better than another due to the flow of Qi. A location where good Qi passes through and congregates tends to benefit its user. Again, what exactly is the benefit of a good Qi? It all comes down to a couple of values that may or may not be universal. A general understanding of the benefits of good Qi is that it provides energy, vital energy specifically. Typical life achievements in traditional Chinese culture such as success, fortune, fame, and male offspring are often understood as good Feng Shui, especially good Feng Shui linked to the burial grounds of one's direct ancestor.

However, if we look further into history, the results of good Feng Shui may not seem as promising. One achieving political success may later be involved in political conflicts and end up worse than before. One with great fortune may avoid certain unfortunate events but rely on them so much that they become vulnerable to avoidable risk. One who owns land or government position, which is a typical promising outcome of good Feng Shui, often has a comfortable life but may face imprisonment and attacks in the time of unexpected peasant riots. The fate and dynasty of any person are so unpredictable that even Feng Shui and vital energy may not guarantee an absolute "better" result.

The second prerequisite of Feng Shui describes the uniqueness and integrity of Feng Shui. Yoon argues that Feng Shui is oriented from the inherited knowledge and experience of building shelters in the northern region of China, where building resources are rare, and the environment is harsh. To adapt to the climate and harsh environment, the region's residents build their shelter by digging caves in the mountain. This kind of Yao Dong shelter is still widely seen and used in the region. He also argues

that the principles of Feng Shui are directly depicted from the knowledge and experience of building Yao Dong. Scholars and researchers in China have various attitudes toward Yoon's argument; many agree partially and encourage more in-depth research.⁶⁶ Although Yoon uses much evidence of Feng Shui to prove the source of Feng Shui comes from the residential practices of Yao Dong and Northern China, it lacks materials to prove the beneficial location can only be found with Feng Shui's principles and geomancy. In contrast, many folklores and indigenous stories agree that Feng Shui exists and functions without the methodical practices of finding it. In other words, one can find good Feng Shui by accident or by training.

Transformation of Family and Family Values in Chinese Communities

The third prerequisite by Yoon is about the beneficiaries of good Feng Shui, usually, the offspring, which reveals the subtle connection between Feng Shui and the traditional family values of Chinese culture, more precisely, Confucian family values in East Asia.

With industrialization, urbanization, and globalization, modern values and ideology such as individualism developed and reshaped East Asian families and societies, creating new challenges for the Feng Shui ideology. One of the most notable changes is family size and family values in China. With the social transition, individual life goals and measurement of personal success transform slowly and steadily, and Feng Shui has to evolve to adjust to the new era. The transition of family form and

⁶⁶ Yiding 一丁, *Zhongguo gu dai feng shui yu jian zhu xuan zhi*, Di 1 ban, (Shijiazhuang Shi: Hebei ke xue ji shu chu ban she, 1996).

family value in East Asian societies is beyond the scope of this thesis. For the connection between family value and Feng Shui, a couple of characteristics of the Chinese family will be discussed here, together with how they shape the value of Feng Shui.

The basic unit in society is the family instead of the individual. Scholars such as Liang write about this interesting phenomenon.⁶⁷ Liang also states this idea oriented from Zhou dynasty.⁶⁸ Traces of his theory can be also easily found in many other areas. In formal history, historical records of the population nearly always use Hu (households) as the unit for the population. The most extreme form of criminal penalty applies not only to the criminals themselves but the whole families.

In contemporary times, Asian parents are still famous for either protective or demanding attitudes in interaction with their children. We often hear news and reports on how the demographics of a community change because of their quality of education, especially for Asian families.⁶⁹ While famous for pushing the next generation and generous patronage for the success of their children, the reason parents are willing to pay the extra cost, and may sacrifice their personal life for their kids, may be the mindset of family value, in which the family as a whole is sustained and developed through reproduction, and the spirit of the family is delivered through generations.

⁶⁷ Qichao Liang 梁啟超, *Zhongguo jin san bai nian xue shu shi*, Min guo xue shu jing dian wen ku 11 (Beijing: Dong fang chu ban she, 1996).

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Winnie Hu, "School District Tries to Lure Asian Parents," *The New York Times*, November 11, 2008, sec. Education, <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/12/education/12parents.html>.

Because of this spiritual tie in-between generations, parents tend to be more “selfless” to their kids, both in terms of providing and control.⁷⁰

The role of Feng Shui in this kind of family tradition and family relationship is tricky. It is both costly and time-consuming to find a good place, in terms of Feng Shui, as a burial ground for the dead. It is particularly burdensome in the predominantly rural community where every piece of farmable land is valuable, and many presents do not own land. Part of the reason a costly tradition as Feng Shui is sustained in the resource-limited rural society may be a family factor. When the needs of an individual can be sacrificed to serve the greater good of the family, it is understandable and encouraged to do so. Good Feng Shui benefits the family as a whole. The complex and consuming ritual of Feng Shui represents and imitates the many common sacrifices between the parents and children, the dead and the living. Hence, Feng Shui is sustained between generations to manifest family value. Yoon has also concluded a similar statement, “Geomancy is practiced mainly to extract benefits for oneself or one’s descendants, rather than for dead ancestors. Thus, the wishes of Koreans, as reflected in geomancy tales, have mainly to do with prosperity for one’s descendants rather than with blessings for the dead.”⁷¹

Human, Time and Change of terrains

⁷⁰ East Asian family study is a whole field that attracts much attention in the past decades. Further reading: Chinese Family Study (中国家庭研究) by 上海社会科学院出版社, 中国家庭史 by Wang/Zhang.

⁷¹ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

In the last century, like many other places in the world, urbanization and industrialization in China have broken down the basic unit into individual people, as many people are able to leave their families and make a living in the city. Although the family tradition still keeps most of them busy moving between city and their home in the countryside, the ties between people and their families have loosened. Like their family relationship, work, and lifestyle change, the needs and desires of people also diversify, so the promises of classical Feng Shui may not be as attractive as before.⁷² Chapter four will discuss how Feng Shui evolves to adopt these changes.

Besides the three prerequisites of Feng Shui by Yoon, additional principles and limitations of Feng Shui theory may be explored.

Feng Shui is, in the end, a human-centric science. To an extent, the system of Feng Shui is built on the foundation of human settlement. Though the theoretical foundation of Feng Shui, the Qi and induction theory, is supposed to be universally applicable, it deals with everything despite whether they have life or not. Feng Shui, on the other hand, rarely mentions non-living. Farming crops and domestic animals are included, but mainly as a sign of the family's prosperity. In history, Feng Shui masters and writers seem solely focused on its benefit on its human user.

Another valuable discussion of its range of application and effectiveness construct among the other forms of human settlement, especially the nomads from the Mongolian plateau and Tibetan plateau. In the early history of China, tribes that were not part of the Han farming culture, were seen as primitives and barbarians. A name was given for those neighbors in each of the four directions. When the Chinese farming

⁷² See Chunyun, or Spring Festival Travel Season, one of the greatest periodical migration of people in world. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chunyun>.

culture and settlement model was thought superior to their nomadic counterparts, it is hard to imagine that the nomadic settlement, with the superiority in mobility but lack of endurance and protection, can also be Feng Shui applicable. According to Wang, both the form of settlement and the religious tradition of Shaman did not enter the discussion of Feng Shui until the Yuan and Qing Dynasties where nomads ruled China with a promotion on their cultural significance.⁷³

Besides the human aspect of Feng Shui, it is also fragile. To determine the Feng Shui of a location requires delicate calculation, and the outcomes are only promising if the result is accurate. For example, most Feng Shui schools use the "Twenty-Four Mountains System," a Feng Shui orientation system with twenty-four equally divided directions. Some schools use three sets of slightly twisted Twenty-Four Mountains for different calculations and combine with the divination of the house orientation and various interior features. Due to the number of variables in the process, a small mistake could jeopardize the calculation and subvert a Feng Shui divination as a whole.

The mutative nature of Feng Shui comes from its ever-changing nature. We know that natural geography and terrains undergo slight changes all the time. Violent geological activities such as earthquakes and volcanic activities can often refresh a terrain in a couple of days. Rivers are constantly changing their route and shaping the terrains in their vicinity. The Yellow River has changed its route twenty-six times from 602 BC to 1946 AD, vastly changing the terrains and life of residents in its region of overflow.⁷⁴

⁷³ Wang Yuwu, *Zhong Guo Feng Shui Wen Hua Yuan Liu* (中国风水文化源流) (Wuhan: Hubei Education Publishing House, 2008), Chapter 7.

⁷⁴ Ruth Mostern and Ryan M Horne, *The Yellow River: A Natural and Unnatural History*, 2021.

Other than the natural change of time, various human activities also change the terrain, either with the purpose of Feng Shui or not. For a long time, people have learned to edit and bend their natural surroundings for the needs of safety, security, and convenience. However, most of those early activities are minimal in size and scale. Deliberately changing the terrain may also have the reverse result on Feng Shui. In some literature, terrain modification to harm one's Feng Shui can be a weaponized function of Feng Shui.⁷⁵ This sometimes is also seen as the witchcraft component of Feng Shui. The fear and confusion that culminated in history also put Feng Shui in a difficult position as heritage, discussed in Chapter Four.

As the context of Feng Shui uses more materials and concepts from other schools of divination, Feng Shui gradually become more individualized. Data such as one's birth year, day, and time is collected and added to the divination calculation. A good location is universal but varies with different people.

Feng Shui is fragile, especially with time. A location divined as “lucky and fortunate” may have an opposite Feng Shui character as “lonely and dying in desperate” hundreds of years later due to natural and human activities. As the family lineage extends, the effect of one's burial Feng Shui on his offspring becomes vague and remote.

In this chapter, Feng Shui's concept and its origin are briefly examined, emphasizing its history, context, transformation, and migrating influence.

⁷⁵ *Shan Ben* (山本, 2018) *Shan Ben*, currently untranslated.

Chapter Two

Cultural heritage in the international context primarily consists of built heritage, tangible heritage from the formation of the built environment, and its relative intangible heritage. Tangible heritage consists of three main categories: architecture, city, and landscape.

As discussed in the first chapter, the existence and influence of Feng Shui can be found throughout the historic built environment of China and Chinese communities. All three categories of built heritages are influenced or contained by Feng Shui in different ways. Because of the built-in spiritual aspect of Feng Shui, tombs and cemeteries are usually under the more significant influence of Feng Shui.

China is located in the northern hemisphere, on the eastern edge of the Eurasia continent, and the west coast of Pacific Ocean. The geographic location made the climate of this region greatly influenced by trade wind. In winter, northern wind from Mongolia Plateau and Siberia dominate the climate of the northern region of China. The strong and gusty northern wind requires shelters and locations that protect people from freezing. In summer, trade wind from the South brings a large amount of water from the ocean, dominating the climate of southeastern China. Frequent floods and high precipitation made the mountain slope a preferred location.

A fundamental transition from geomancy to Feng Shui is that the aesthetic and spiritual value was endowed to topography. As a result, the settlers preferred certain forms of topography, and we see those trends in all scales of human settlement. Furthermore, from having a catalog for preferred and avoided topography, practitioners

started to have ways to repair or reverse the not-so-good topography, most times in the form of structures like a tower, Buddhist temple, or Taoism temple.

The tangible aspect of Feng Shui is mainly embedded in three types of tangible historical and cultural heritage in China: vernacular settlement, official architecture, and cultural landscape. In the latter part of the chapter, examples will be presented. However, settlement, official architecture, and cultural landscape in many cases are mixed.

In the previous chapter, the essential characteristics of forms, the preferred or avoided topography such as Dragon, Gravel, Water, and Lair, were briefly explained. However, we will go further into the concept and its relationship with either settlement or structure. We will also look at the catalogs of a different combination of topography. Understanding what Feng Shui values in geomancy will help us further recognize the composition of heritage.

The Ideal Model

In early settlements, ancestors of Chinese people realized that buildings on the northern bank of the river and the mountain's southern slope received more sunlight and avoided harsh and cold wind from the North. Floods can also be avoided while regular agricultural irrigation needs are met. It was beneficial if hills were located on both sides to hide and protect residents from possible invaders.

Of course, the ideal environment is rare. When such an ideal environment is unavailable, people tend to compensate for that with spiritual powers. Practitioners of

Feng Shui put together their observation of the natural environment, mixed with mysterious phenomena, to fulfill their desire for an ideal environment.

Dragon, Gravel, Water, and Lair are typical defining features of the Feng Shui form, providing and shaping the Qi of a place. It is essential to observe and feel the sources of Qi and how the above features are shaping it. Classics of Feng Shui, especially those within the form school, are mainly content with the different features models. Different schools may differ in detail on the dominant feature, but the general principles of features remain unchanged.

Dragon refers to the primary ridge line and the main gate of incoming Qi. For finding the sources of its Qi, many geographic features and patterns of China are used in Feng Shui. As early as the Zhou dynasty, writings on geography summarized mountains, rivers, natural resources, and human settlements in China.⁷⁶ Later geographers, surveyors, and travelers such as Pei Xiu, Xu Xiake and Li Daoyuan, has added details to the system.⁷⁷ A general pattern of Chinese geography is altitude high to low from west to east, and most rivers follow a west-to-east pattern as well. One of the main mountain lines, Kun Lun Mountains, in the West was given a higher position culturally.

⁷⁶ Mao Huang 毛晃, (11th century) *Yu gong zhi nan* 禹貢指南, Cong shu ji cheng jian bian (Taipei: Taiwan shang wu yin shu guan, 1965).

⁷⁷ *Jin shu* 晉書, (Taipei: Taiwan Zhonghua shu ju, 1966).

Also:

Xu Xiake 徐霞客 (1587-1641), *Xu Xia Ke You Ji* 徐霞客遊記 (Xu Xiake's Travels), Chinese Text Project, <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=196805>.

and,

Li Daoyuan 酈道元(466 or 472 - 527), *Shui jing zhu* 水經註, Si bu bei yao. Shi bu (Taipei : Taiwan Zhonghua shu ju, 1966).

The cultural importance of the Kun Lun Mountains is later used by Feng Shui practitioners as well.⁷⁸ In Feng Shui, the Kun Lun Mountains are seen as the “ancestor” and origin of all mountains in China. To its eastern direction, Kun Lun Mountains spreads into three major mountains that covers most of the area of China. Those three mountains, also known as “Three Dragons,” are dominant mountains of China. The “Three Dragons” are located relatively north, middle, and south between the Kun Lun Mountain and the eastern ocean. Using the Yellow River in the North and the Yangtze River in the South, the eastern end of the Eurasian continent is divided into three parts which is named three stems in Feng Shui. The northern stem is the northern mountains of the Yellow River, like Yin Mountain, Yan Mountain, and Tai Hang Mountain. The middle stem is mountains between the Yellow River and Yangtze River, like Qinling, Da Ba Mountain, and Da Big Mountain. The southern stem is mountains southern of the Yangtze River, like Wu Yi Mountain, Tian Mu Mountain, and Bai Yun Mountain. In each of the stems, smaller mountain “branches” are extended from the main stem. In such a way, all mountains in China have been given a lineage relative to Kun Lun Mountain. [Figure 2.1] Thus Feng Shui practitioners know where and how the Qi is delivered to locations via “dragons.” Liu concludes that the three stems theory was based on the geographic description of Yu Gong, the first regional geographic writing in Chinese history, written in the Zhou Dynasty. Later, the three stems theory becomes a view of China's primitive view of geography.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Historically Feng Shui and geography may be bounded closely as the cultural importance of Kun Lun Mountain coexists.

⁷⁹ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 63-68.

Feng Shui uses specific terms to describe the features associated with the location.

- Grand ancestral mountain: The mountain that the Dragon can be traced farthest away. Usually a stem or well-known mountains.⁸⁰
- Latter ancestral mountain: The mountain that the parent mountain can be traced to, usually the regional mountain ridge
- Parent mountain: The ridge that is immediately behind the Lair, usually the local peak or ridge.
- Dragon Lair or Lair: The preferred location of dwellings, settlement or tomb.
- Ming Tang (illuminate plaza): the open space in front of the Lair. There are inner and outer Ming Tang. Inner Ming Tang is immediately in front of the Lair, preferred to be small so Qi can gather. Outer Ming Tang, in contrast, should be spacious for future development.
- Hugged Water: Water body in front of Ming Tang, often pool or stream. Hugged Water is preferred to be a shape that surrounds the Lair, also for the purpose of gathering Qi.
- Azure Dragon: As known in Chinese culture, the Azure Dragon is the deity of the East. The Azure Dragon represents the geographic features on the east of the Lair.
- White Tiger: The White Tiger is the deity of the West. The White Tiger represents the geographic features on the west of the Lair.

⁸⁰ The origin of naming mountains as in a family tree is still debated and may be an invention of later stage of development. There were no records of using these terms until the Ming Dynasty, and Chinese Kin were not popular until later Song Dynasty.

- **Protective Mountain:** Protective Mountain is the mountains that surrounds the Ming Tang, the outermost layer of Ming Tang. Also known as Gravel Mountains.
- **Water Gate Mountain:** The mountain where Water leaves Ming Tang. Preferred to be in a pair, meaning the mountain is facing each other at the Water Gate. Those preferred Water Gate mountains are called Lion Mountain and Elephant Mountain, or Turtle Mountain and Snake Mountain.
- **An Shan (desk mountain):** An Shan represents the mountain immediately in front of Ming Tang.
- **Chao Shan (Aiming mountain):** Chao Shan represents the mountain furthest in front of the Ming Tang.
- **Dragon Vein:** the ridge connecting ancestral mountains, parent mountain, and Lair.

The ideal model of a prefect land in Feng Shui contains logic and considerations of agriculture and social reasoning. In the winter, mountains and hills behind the settlement block the cold air from the North. In summer, water in front gathers the chill breeze from the South. The enclosed environment also protects and defends residents from unpredictable military conflicts. Those logics and considerations are internalized in Feng Shui, and in a sense, represents the needs and desires of people in feudal China.

How to Find the Lively Dragon

Feng Shui also employs other ancient cosmological concepts to spiritualize the landscape and further understand and differentiate different dragons. Dragon

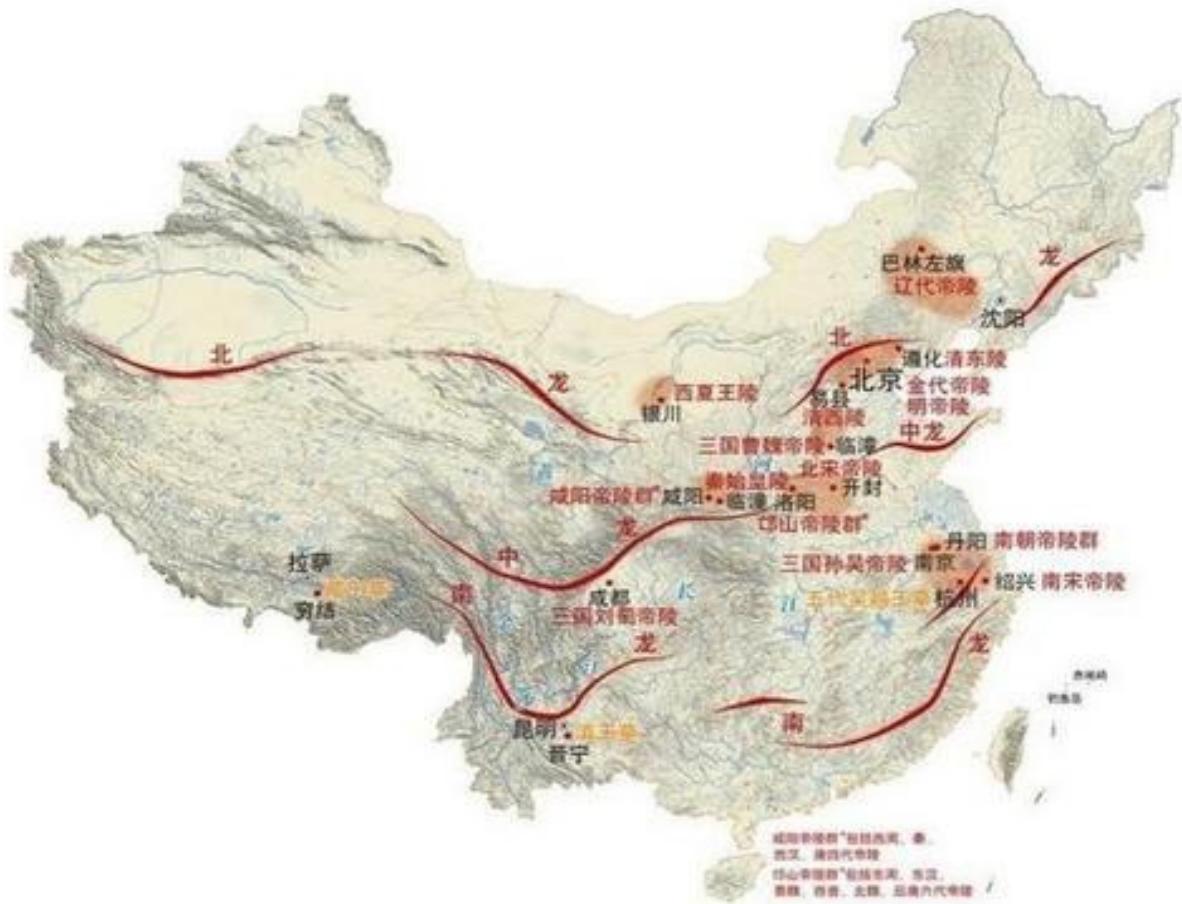


Figure 2.1: A typical visualization of the "Three Dragons".
 Sources: <https://zhuanlan.zhihu.com/p/44728505>

eneration was easily found in decoration and ornamentation. In Feng Shui, the Dragon is usually referring to the mountain.

In the practices of Feng Shui, the Dragon veneration in Feng Shui is a further development in detail. Different categories and grades of dragons are determined by their shape, components, and relationship to the groundwater in proximity. In general, the bones and skeletons of dragons refer to the rugged rocks that form the mountain, and accordingly, the meat and skin of a Dragon refer to the surface soil of the mountain. Liao in Song dynasty has written that a large mountain is preferred because

its skeleton is strong and can hold the weight of the soil on top.⁸¹ Sometimes Feng Shui practitioners also observe the mountain by sourcing the groundwater. A mountain in-between great rivers is preferred; a mountain in-between creeks and stream should be reconsidered. Feng Shui generally prefers the more prominent mountains with long, continuous ridges. Cheng and Kong argue that it is reasonable because the more prominent mountain is usually older and statistically has a more stable geological structure.⁸²

In the form school, mountains are classified by their form. Many analogies were used to describe those ideal forms. For example, those with the form like a tiger looking back, or beast coming out of the woods, running horse on the field, or bird with wings extended were preferred. Another Feng Shui writing, “Catalog of Mountains,” uses a similar concept, Five Postures, to criticize a mountain on its orientation, shape, ridgeline, and relationship to Water.⁸³ Neither the form classification and Five Postures are an objective standard nor methods to determine a mountain. Experience of the master, mountain details, and many other factors may alter the result.

The Compass School has its way of determining the lively Dragon. Followers use nine stars and five elements to differentiate the forms of a mountain. Accordingly, metal, wood, water, fire, and earth refer to round, straight, curved, sharp, and square shapes. This method is called “five-star form.” Five elements are arranged in its

⁸¹ Qingjiang Wei 魏青江(1711-1742), *Yang zhai da cheng* 陽宅大成.

⁸² Jianjun Cheng and 程建军, *Feng shui yu jian zhu*, Di 2 ban., 第2版 (Nanchang Shi: Jiangxi ke xue ji shu chu ban she, 2005), 51.

⁸³ Miaoying Huang 黃妙應 (820—898), *Bo Shan Pian* 博山篇 (Collection of mountains) (Taipei: Da fang chu ban she, 1978).

generation scale.⁸⁴ If a mountain range contains the five different shapes in the generation arrangement of five elements, it can be determined as a lively Dragon. Cheng and Kong believe that the lively Dragon preference reflects the diversity of geological features and views.

Mountains of metal usually have a round top and wide bottom; mountains of wood have a round top and a straight body; mountains of water contain an even, sustain, and continued ridge; mountains of fire have a sharp peak and wide foot. Lastly, mountains of earth have even ridges and large bodies. Many compass schools believe that if a mountain ridge contains all five elements, especially in the correct order, it determines the good Feng Shui. Other similar methods include using the astrology of nine stars to classify mountains instead of elements.

A lively Dragon is always accompanied by its Gravel and Water. Gravel refers to the smaller and minor mountains, hills, and geographic features in the vicinity of dragons and Lair. Practitioners believe that the location and quality of Gravel and Water as well as their relation to dragons, all play an important and definitive role in the quality of Feng Shui in general. According to Liu, the relationship embedded between Gravel and Dragon is a personification or imitative projection of social hierarchy where the gravels are supposed to “serve,” “guard,” or “greet” the Dragon. Liu also argues that the need for protection from the wind has also played a part in the Gravel requirement.⁸⁵ The quality of Gravel itself relies much on its appearance. The shape

⁸⁴ Five elements are usually arranged in either generation scale or overcoming order. Generation order: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water, Wood. Overcoming order: Metal, Wood, Earth, Water, Fire, Metal.

⁸⁵ Peilin Liu, *Feng Shui: Zhongguo Ren Di Huan Jing Guan*, Di 1 ban (Shanghai: Shanghai San lian shu dian, 1995), 108-109.

further determines the preference for the Water, amount of water, origin, orientation, and appearance of the water body. Dragon and Gravel alike, rhetoric description, and subjective standards are used in most measurements. [Figure 2.2]

In the eyes of Feng Shui masters, different geographic features are put together as an organic structure. The organic structure projects the society and contains their

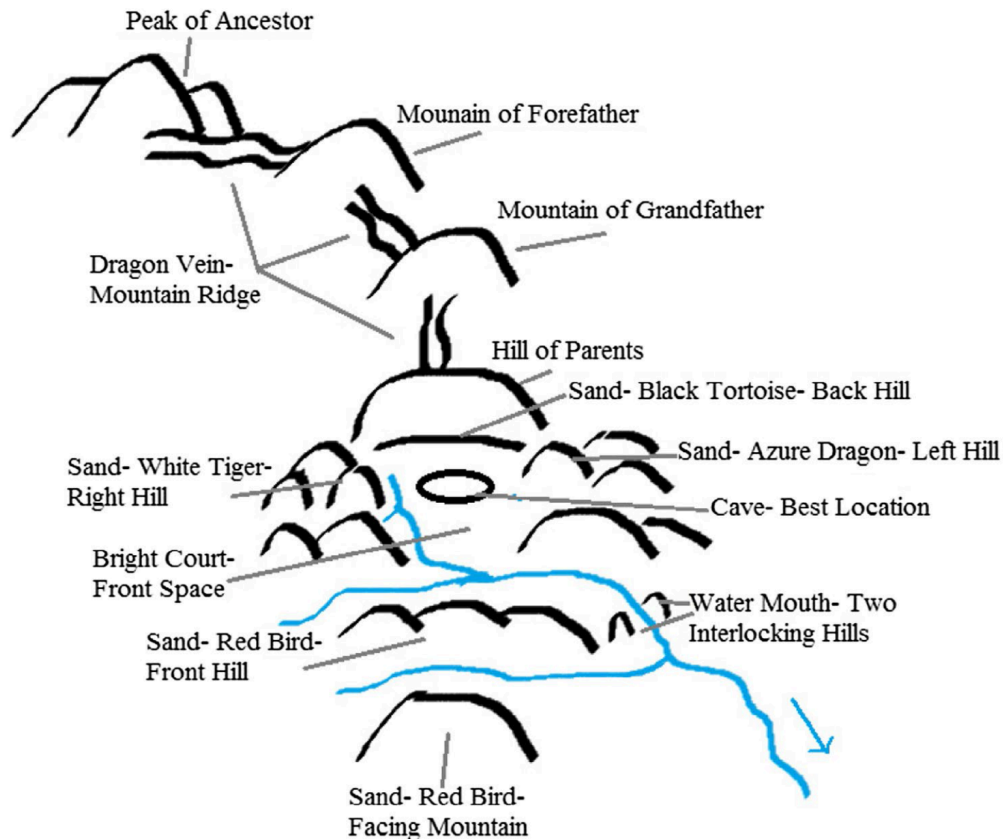


Figure 2.2: a visualization of the ideal model of Feng Shui.
 Sources: Mak, M. M., and S. T. Ng. "APPLYING KNOWLEDGE-BASED EXPERT SYSTEMS APPROACH FOR FENG SHUI DESIGN EVALUATION." *Undefined*, 2006. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/APPLYING-KNOWLEDGE-BASED-EXPERT-SYSTEMS-APPROACH-Mak-Ng/239ace97404d1a2261d88c458b7f20d7d66905d5>.

characters and emotion. Thus, Feng Shui turns from observation to interaction with nature.

Lair and Yuan Ju

A “Lair” in Feng Shui refers to the specific point where the lively Qi springs. The lively Qi is both gushed and contained at the Lair, so the Lair is always filled with lively Qi. A smooth pond of spring water hiding in the grove is an often-used analogy on an excellent Lair.

“To point out the Lair” is often used by practitioners to describe the most significant move of their service and sometimes to conclude their service in general. The Lair location will usually result from a Feng Shui service, where practitioners direct their clients the advantages and disadvantages of the Lair.

Yuan Ju is a Feng Shui concept commonly used in recent history. The idea of Yuan was borrowed from Chinese classic astrology originally referring to the walls of a city or village, an enclosure.⁸⁶ In astrology, the known use of the word is for the “San Yuan,” or the “Three Enclosures”. The “Three Enclosures” is a core concept in Chinese Astrology.⁸⁷ While the ancients observed that all stars circulate the Northern Pole, most stars are given names and ranks according to their distance and movement in relation to the northern pole. Like the feudal society and social classes in historical China, the star closest to the northern pole is given the name of the emperor and noble family, as well as the official positions. In addition, three enclosures, each of the enclosures made of dozens of individual stars and a couple of constellations, were also created according to their position to the northern pole. The Purple Forbidden enclosure is in

⁸⁶ “垣的文言文解释及意思—文言文字典,” Accessed January 14, 2022, <https://wyw.hwxnet.com/view/hwxE5hwx9EhwxA3.html>.

⁸⁷ The three enclosures are Purple Forbidden enclosure (紫微垣 Zǐ wēi yuán), Supreme Palace enclosure (太微垣 Tà wēi yuán) and Heavenly Market enclosure (天市垣, Tiān shì yuán).

the center of the northern pole, hence representing the royal family and the core of central government. Supreme Palace enclosure represents the rest of the central government. Heavenly Market enclosure represents the civilian and market quarters. Each star was also named according to its position and representation. The northern pole consists of five stars (nine after the Ming Dynasty), with stars' names such as the Emperor Star, Prince Star, and Queen Star. In the Purple Forbidden enclosure, stars are named Royal Secretary and Chief Judge. The Emperor's Bodyguard and Usher are also to the Court in the Supreme Palace enclosure; Butcher's Shops and Jewel Market in the Heavenly Market enclosure.⁸⁸ The core concept of Chinese astrology is that the stars represent the lively physical world, especially the political aspect and structure of the physical world. Accordingly, the movement of stars also reflects the events of the world.

A shared theory in Feng Shui disciplines is that the star characters were added to gravels. A good Feng Shui “Lair” usually is accompanied by “Water” and “Gravel” that resonate with the stars. Although the style and method to determine whether that resonance exists varies, in the end, all four characters of Feng Shui facilitate a set of spaces, just like the enclosures above. Yuan Ju is always not constant either. One of the predominant Feng Shui disciplines, Flying Star Feng Shui, was famous for employing many concepts and components of Chinese astrology. The heavy use of star and star composition for spatial and time calculation, adding the star movement into the Yuan Ju of a place is a defining character of the discipline. The belief that Heaven and ground internally connects, and stars represent the pattern of nature was

⁸⁸ Ximing Wang 王希明 (active 8th). *Tang bu tian ge: 1 juan* 唐步天歌: 1卷. Si ku quan shu cun mu cong shu. Zi bu 55. (Jinan: Qi Lu shu she chu ban she, 1997).

commonly seen in the Feng Shui description, especially the Feng Shui of important places such as emperors' mausoleums and capital cities.

Today, Yuan Ju refers to the combination of space and features, or a field under the influence of Feng Shui. In the educational and practical context, Yuan Ju refers to the ideal models or prototypes of a specific arrangement of features that creates the best Feng Shui scene or field. Those models may come out from either theoretical inference or practical experience and are recorded to deliver a simplified method of examining and arranging Feng Shui.

Like other discourses of Feng Shui, because schools evaluate features differently, catalogs of Yuan Ju are also interpreted differently in different schools. Some may require more conditions like time or use of the location to active the Yuan Ju. Some may only consider one or two important features instead of all. Through those ideal Huan Ju, we see what a good Feng Shui is and how they shape the built environment.

From the Ming and Qing periods, writings that focused on the practice of Feng Shui could help teach Feng Shui quickly hence become popular on the market. Various tips and shortcuts are included for readers. Many of those tips describe settings or features as either good or evil without explaining the reason and philosophy. In the later Qing dynasty, those tips were added with graphics. The idea of Yuan Ju is both explained and distorted in the form of tips and added graphics. [Figure 2.3]

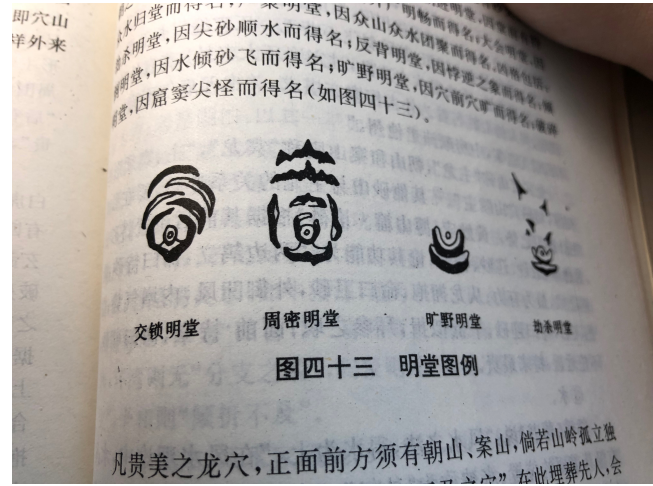
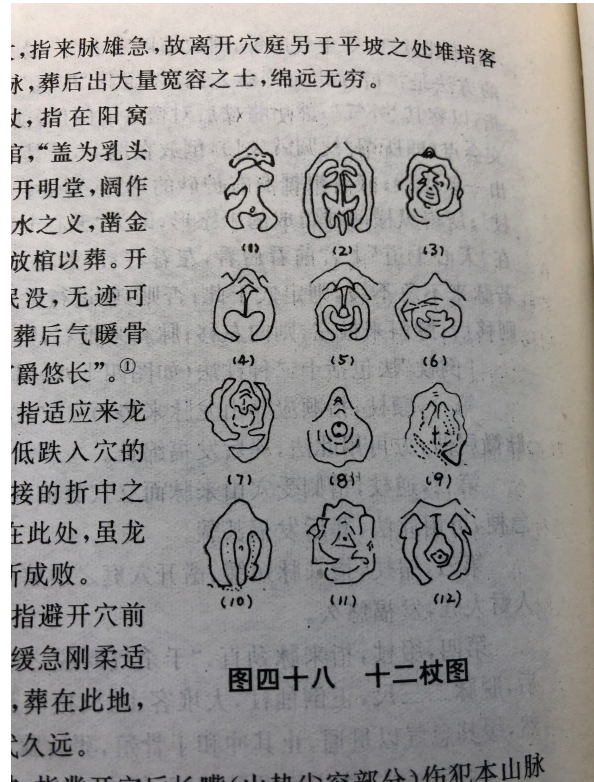
Regional and Urban Feng Shui

While the origin and definition of a city; where, when, and on what scale does a human settlement become a city, do not have clear boundaries, the congregation of shelters and social function in relatively high density to be considered as what we call a city today exists in as early as the Shang dynasty in China. For ancient civilizations, building a city was a difficult task. Thus, for cities' locations, especially those important ones such as capitals or regional political centers, serious consideration was taken on where and how a city was built.

Both Feng Shui practitioners and historians discuss the influence of Feng Shui on historic cities and towns. Chen and Liu conclude that the influence of Feng Shui in historical Chinese cities is within four categories. First is the consideration of its "Dragon vein," second is the consideration of the context of its vicinity or the "Gravel," the third is consideration of its Water, and last is a consideration of security and defense.⁸⁹ The last category of defense and security is a little disconnected from the other three categories. Every place has its own Feng Shui story to tell, although every city varies in scale, geographic environment, and function in history. The capital of China today and also the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, Beijing, can be traced back to its foundation three thousand years ago. Feng Shui practitioners claim it to be a "seat for kings and emperors." Its Dragon vein comes from the north stem, congregates at its parent mountain position as the Mt. Yan and Mt. Tian Shou. On its white tiger position lays Mt. Tai Hang. Yellow River and various smaller streams from

⁸⁹ Hong Chen 陈宏 and Peilin Liu 刘沛林, "Feng Shui de Kongjian Moshi dui Zhongguo Chuantong Chengshi Guihua de Yinxiang" 风水的空间模式对中国传统城市规划的影响 (Impacts of spacial model of Feng Shui on the planning of traditional Chinese city). *Urban Planning* 城市规划, no. 04 (1995): 18-21+64.

the north and west flow by its Ming Tang position, creating a perfect Water Yuan Ju. Both Mt. Tai and the mountains south of River Huai can be traced as their An Shan and Chao Shan. The whole picture of Feng Shui of Beijing was great but with a scale so large that it contains almost half of China. Its features, such as Mt. Yan and Mt. Tai, are famous and reputed mountains in history. Feng Shui believes that the scale of the set



Left: Figure 2.3: Feng Shui Yuan Ju for Yang's Twelve Methods for finding lairs. Photo by author.
 Right: Figure 2.4: Feng Shui Yuan Ju for examples of the Ming Tang. Photo by author.

Source: Zinan Zeng 曾子南 (1907-2006). *Kan yu shi zheng; wu shi zi tong* 堪與實證; 無師自通. Taizhong: Rui cheng shu ju, 1960.

represents its achievement, so Beijing has the potential to be the capital, but a city with a smaller scale Feng Shui may only be a regional or local center. More importantly, Feng Shui practitioners claim Beijing to represent one of the constellations in Chinese

astronomy that seats the royal palace of Heaven, making it the perfect location for the royal palace and capital of the whole nation in the human world.

Taipei is one of the cities with official records that Feng Shui was used in its original foundation and plan. Classics from different era like the *Rites of Zhou (Zhouli Kaogongji)* regulate city planning and design in most periods of the history of China. That regulation includes the size, streets, and the number of doors in the city. However, in the case of Taipei, the actual decision-makers at the time believe in Feng Shui, which then employs specific techniques and preferences in the city's plan. Cheng, the governor at the time, believed in an orientation toward the Polaris (an essential star in the night sky). A North-South Direction grid system was planned for the primary center section of the city, including most of the city's official buildings like institutions and temples. The later general of the city, Liu, questioned the layout for its irrelevance to the geographic settings. When the city wall was built later, Liu tilted the orientation of the city wall towards the northeast, where Mt Datun and Mt Qixing are used as the ancestral mountain. Today, although most of the walls and the historical building did not survive from later warfare and development, the city's inception is embedded in local roads and historical maps.⁹⁰ The Feng Shui of Taipei has also been closely captured by Kang and Kang, which they claim to be a beneficial Feng Shui from its form. One of their theories is that Taiwan's island and its Dragon vein come from the "South Stem," where Mt Kunlun spreads its lineage south of the Yangzi River. The "South Stem" travels across the southern part of China and approaches the ocean at

⁹⁰ Sheng-Ching Chang 張省卿, *De shi du shi gui hua jing ri ben zhi min zheng fu dui tai bei cheng guan ting ji zhong qu zhi ying xiang 德式都市規劃經日本殖民政府對台北城官廳集中區之影響* (The influence of German style urban planning on the central area of administrative buildings in the city of Taipei by the Japanese colonial administration) (Tai bei: Fu ren da xue chu ban she, 2008).

Mt Wuyi. Then the Dragon submerges into the ocean and reappears as the central mountain range of Taiwan, where it ends at the north tip of the island as Mt Datun and Mt Qixing hugs Taipei Basin. The significance of Feng Shui here is the end of the stem, meaning places and mountains further away from Mt Kunlun are preferred as those places are believed to have "fresh" Qi. Second, when the south stem travels to the coast at Mt Wuyi, Qi quickly dissolves and becomes harmful as Mt Wuyi rushes into the ocean. However, Kang believes that when the Dragon travels under the water and reappears, the Water neutralizes the harmful Qi it carries, and beneficial Qi is again produced in Taiwan. Third, when the tip of the mountain range curves back, creating a so-called "Dragon Looking-back" where the city of Taipei is located, Taipei is well-protected in the eyes of Feng Shui.⁹¹ However, post-war city development has also reshaped many geographic features of Taipei. Some amendments, such as the bombing of the "lion rock" of Tamsui River for building the sewage line, are frequently argued to harm Feng Shui, supported by ecological evidence.⁹²

Langzhong is among the famous cities for having good Feng Shui. Being a county-level city in the Sichuan basin, its size and function have remained small and regional since it was built. Langzhong is located at the north edge of the Sichuan basin, in the southwest of China. Although never a city of significant influence, it has always been an important political, commercial center, and military base in the region. It first

⁹¹ Liang Kang and Yu Kang, *Feng Shui Yu Cheng Shi*, Di 1 ban (Tianjin: Bai hua wen yi chu ban she, 1999).

⁹² [子逸 (stevencat8020)]. *Zha Kai Shi Zi Tou Ai Kou Lishi Lange Jushi Jinian Bei* "炸開獅子頭隘口歷史沿革巨石紀念碑 @ 子逸的風水教室 :: 痞客邦 ::" 子逸的風水教室. Accessed March 13, 2020. <http://stevencat8020.pixnet.net/blog/post/37818341>.

appears in the later Warrior States period, around 2300 years ago.⁹³ Much of the original city did not survive, but the city built in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties survived and remained as the city's historical quarter. Despite its historical significance and authenticity of the built environment, various scholars and practitioners such as Zhuang, Li, and Wen have mentioned its characteristics and uniqueness in Feng Shui.⁹⁴

Li and Wen have explained Feng Shui and its cultural reflection in Langzhong.⁹⁵ Mt. Pan Long is the prominent mountain north of the city. Its continuous ridge to the Qinling Mountain Range and Daba Mountain Range is clear and undisturbed, making Qi's connection from the Dragon vein of the city both solid and influential. Other than the mountains being at the right places and the perfect shape, its water system is nearly identical to one of recorded Water Yuan Ju, the prototype of good Feng Shui. Lang Shui, the river that flows across the city of Langzhong, circles the city from east, south, and the west, fits the description of the Feng Shui pattern of Water, Guan Dai Shui (Hat and Belt Water). Many Feng Shui classics contain a similar chapter of Jiu Gong Shui Fa (the Water patterns of nine palaces). The local water system's pattern, shape, and direction were classified and evaluated. At the position where Lang Shui enters and exits the pattern, two ancient towers stand on the back of the mountains,

⁹³ Chang Qu 常璩 (active 265-316), *Hua Yang Guo Zhi* 華陽國志 (Recording of Hua Yang Guo) (Changchun: Shi dai wen yi chu ban she, 2008).

⁹⁴ Xing Li 李惺 and Jiyong Xu 徐繼鏞, *Langzhong Xian zhi: 8 juan* (China: sn, 1), <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.FIG:007463433>.

⁹⁵ Shaoqiong Wen 文绍琼 and Xiaobo Li 李小波, "Deconstruction of the Geomantic Omen Imago of Langzhong of Sichuan and the Significance of Its Planning 四川阆中风水意象解构及其规划意义," *Planners* 2005, no. 8 (n.d.): 84-87.

watching over Lang Shui. Various classics and poets such as Zizhi Tongjian and Yudi Jisheng have recorded the significance of Langzhou's water system.⁹⁶

For the heritage discourse and use perspective of heritage, the city of Taizhou in Jiangsu province may also be worth a look. Taizhou is located on the north alluvia plain of the Yangtze river with no clear association to a mountain range or unique special geographic features. Taizhou actively uses its association to I Ching and claims to have its unique Feng Shui culture to advocate and promote its local heritage and heritage tourism. Despite the pressure from both the political and social spectrum, the first Feng Shui museum was opened here with the support from local government.⁹⁷ As illustrated by Wang, the tradition and culture of Feng Shui in Taizhou, once recognized by the local government officials, was put together with the local historic preservation and heritage conservation plans, showing the great flexibility of Feng Shui theory in explaining and connecting historic built environment and built heritage. Also, if interested by stakeholders, Feng Shui can be used as a tool for heritage tourism as well.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Guang Sima 司馬光, *Zi zhi tong jian* 資治通鑒 (Peking: Zhongguo you yi chu ban gong si, 1984), Juan 5. Also:

Xiangzhi Wang 王象之, *Yu di ji sheng* 輿地紀勝, Song dai di li shu si zhong ; zhi yi. (Taipei Yonghe Zhen: Wen hai chu ban she, 1963).

and

Hong Chen 陈宏 and Peilin Liu 刘沛林, "Feng Shui de Kongjian Moshi dui Zhongguo Chuantong Chengshi Guihua de Yinxiang" 风水的空间模式对中国传统城市规划的影响 (Impacts of spacial model of Feng Shui on the planning of traditional Chinese city). *Urban Planning* 城市规划, no. 04 (1995): 18-21+64.

⁹⁷ Taizhou Cultural Tourism 泰州文旅. *Feng Shui Wenhua Bowuguan* 泰州风水文化博物馆 (Feng Shui Culture Museum in Taizhou). Accessed February 28, 2020. <http://www.tzwenlv.com/a/dongtai/minsheng/120.html>.

⁹⁸ Florian C. Reiter, ed., *Feng Shui (Kan Yu) and Architecture: International Conference in Berlin, Asien- Und Afrika-Studien Der Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin*, Bd. 38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 68 - 80.



Figure 2.5: The embedded Tai chi in Langzhong's landscape.

Source: Wen Shaoqiong文绍琼 and Li Xiaobo李小波. Deconstruction of the Geomantic Omen Imago of Langzhong of Sichuan and the Significance of Its Planning 四川阆中风水意象解构及其规划意义. 规划师 Planners 2005, no. 8 (n.d.): 84–87.

Furthermore, scholars argue Feng Shui not only influenced the location but also the setting of the city. Chen and Liu have concluded the impact of Feng Shui on the overall arrangement of buildings and city gates of historic cities in China, which prefer a certain direction but avoid certain directions.⁹⁹

However, as many scholars and practitioner try to prove the influence of Feng Shui on the historic city by making the connection of observation to Feng Shui theory, another possibility could be that Feng Shui learns and concludes from the cities that survive over time. Because the influence could be both ways, more research is needed

⁹⁹ Florian C. Reiter, ed., *Feng Shui (Kan Yu) and Architecture: International Conference in Berlin*, Asien-Und Afrika-Studien Der Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin, Bd. 38 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 68 - 80.

to claim the actual influence of Feng Shui concerning the built environment of historic cities in China.

The tangible remnants of Feng Shui can be found in other parts of Asia as well. Historically, people who live in Korea have engaged in various kinds of connections with the dynasties in China. Yoon concludes that the “diffusion of geomancy to Korea” was “along with the initial flows of Chinese culture” long before the middle of the Three Dynasty period.¹⁰⁰ Since then, Feng Shui, or in Korean, “Pungsu”, has been part of Korean culture and tradition. The influence of “Pungsu” in historical Korea may be profound, as argued by Yoon, villagers were discouraged from digging wells thus have to use the untreated river water.¹⁰¹

In the year 2003 to 2004, the Korean government announced their plan to move their capital from Seoul due to economic, security, and social consideration. It is believed the Feng Shui of the capital will impact the fortune of the nation, so the Korean government assembled a committee of Feng Shui experts to discuss and endorse the further capital. The committee first visited the forbidden palace of Beijing and convene the first “international Kan Yu cultural seminar.” In 2005, a group of Chinese Feng Shui masters was invited to Korea to discuss the Feng Shui of the new capital, Sejong City. The new capital city was liked by Feng Shui masters for its setting

¹⁰⁰ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 245-264.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 232.

and features.¹⁰² Shin explains and advocated for the new capital in *The Korean Times* that the Feng Shui at Sejong City is good and will benefit the nation.¹⁰³

The Royal Burial Ground

Many ancient philosophers have all considered the question of death. Despite the social inequality in the ancient civilizations, nobles and slaves face the same destiny. In many ancient cultures, death is seen as a transformation of life, and the spirits remain and continue living in the world. Some people wanted to sustain their power and wealth after they pass away. As a result, various forms of burial practices are practiced for this purpose.

In ancient and historical China, kings and empires had ultimate power. To show their power and to perpetuate their power after they passed away, enormous and luxurious palaces were built as their tomb and shrine. Similar to other ancient cultures, human, and animal sacrifices and object burial were common. The living life was recreated in underground burial structures. Since the Han dynasty, human sacrifices were less popular due to the opposition of Confucianism. On the other hand, the development of Feng Shui and other occult provides a more “civilized” approach to the afterlife.

According to Feng Shui, the Feng Shui of the host’s tomb determines the destiny of the family. The Feng Shui of the emperor’s tomb determines the destiny of a

¹⁰² Xixian Yu, *Feng Shui Wen Hua Dui Shi Jie de Ying Xiang*, Di 1 ban (Beijing Shi: Shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 2010), 80-83.

¹⁰³ Janet Shin, “(78) Seoul and Sejong City as Seen by Feng Shui and Korean History,” *Koreatimes*, February 18, 2010, http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/culture/2020/02/148_61065.html.

state. Every dynasty has a well-planned location and architecture for its royal tombs. Although tombs in each dynasty have their individual character, they are all close to the state capital at the time. West Zhou, Qin, Han, Sui, and Tang Dynasties used Chang An (Now Xi'an) as their capital, so the royal tombs are all nearby. Beijing was the capital of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, so their royal mausoleums are close to Beijing. The royal tombs of the Tang and Song Dynasties are themselves megastructures, but since the rules of Feng Shui were rather primitive and diverse at the time, it is difficult to measure them with Feng Shui today.

The mausoleums of royal families became the sample of the best architecture and building consideration in Chinese history. The Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (UNESCO World Cultural Heritage) are some of the most comprehensive examples of Feng Shui location and setting.

The Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties are the burial places of dozens of emperors and the royal families of the Ming and Qing dynasty. Although every tomb is independent with its own set of amenities, the proximity and internal connection of royals between the tombs have put them together into one heritage. The main body of world heritage of Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties are three different mausoleum groups combined. Ming Tombs, located forty kilometers northwest of Beijing, contains thirteen emperors and their families from the Ming Dynasty. Eastern Qing Tombs and Western Qing Tombs are both mausoleum groups for the emperors and their families in the Qing Dynasty, located east and west of Beijing. There are a couple more tombs and mausoleums in Nanjing, Shenyang, and Hubei.

Ming Tombs, began with the construction of Chang Ling in 1424.¹⁰⁴ For more than two hundred years, the construction of new mausoleum hardly paused. The stories of Ming Tombs started with an order from the Yongle Emperor, soon after he moved the capital to Beijing. Liao Junqing, a Feng Shui master at the time, was hired to find a “Fine Earth” for a royal mausoleum.¹⁰⁵ He spent two years traveling in the mountains and finally found a good location, drawing a map and presenting it to the Yongle Emperor. While visiting the location himself, the emperor was happy about the location and ask Liao to start construction immediately. Soon rumors travel into the palace that the Lair Liao chose was undesirable because a watering spring was found inside. Liao was criticized for damaging the fine earth. Liao explains to the angry Yongle Emperor that the emperor’s visit is required for stopping the spring. So, the emperor visited the site, and the spring was stopped when Liao announced the emperor’s authority over nature in the emperor’s name.¹⁰⁶ After the Yongle Emperor passed away, Chang Ling became his resting mausoleum. Over next two hundred years, his children built dozens of other mausoleums adjacent to Chang Ling, forming one of the largest collections of empirical mausoleums in Chinese history.

While the story contains some literature, the landscapes and settings of the Ming Tombs offer the opportunities to examine its Feng Shui. Tianshou mountain north of the site serves as the parent mountain, it is the extension of Yan Mountain Range of the north stem. The mountain surrounding the Ming Tombs forms a valley opening to

¹⁰⁴ Chang Ling: the mausoleum for Yongle Emperor, Ling means mausoleum in Chinese. There are other mausoleums in the area like Xian Ling, Jing Ling, Yu Ling and others.

¹⁰⁵ “Fine Earth” refers to good location in Feng Shui here.

¹⁰⁶ “转载风水实录：廖均卿点明十三陵_景于杭州_新浪博客,” accessed February 19, 2021, http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_7e82ccc20100wmfv.html.

Beijing in the south. Long mountain and Hu mountain are located on either side of the valley, serving as the azure Dragon and white tiger. Ming Tang in front of the Chang Ling is a wide semi-basin. The Wenyu River flows out of Tianshou mountain from the northwest direction, and exits the basin in the southeast, creating a perfect hugged Water for the site. The basin, water, and mountain valleys here also provide great military advantages for the troops guarding the mausoleums.

A hundred kilometers east of Ming Tombs are the Eastern Qing Tombs. Within an area of forty-eight square kilometers, there are fourteen mausoleums, burial sites for more than a hundred fifty royal family members. The first mausoleum is the Xiao Ling, containing Shunzhi Emperor. When he settled his empire and government in Beijing, his mother and uncle soon send many people out to search for a great mausoleum spot. The Shunzhi Emperor visited the location himself and threw a ring of his to mark the exact spot of the mausoleum, which later become Xiao Ling and other mausoleums were built accordingly.

In the north, Changrui Mountain is also a branch of Yan Mountain Range, going east and west direction. In the south, Yandun and Tiantai Mountain serve as the watergate mountain, sending hugged river out of Ming Tang. Hunghua, Kouniu, Tiantai, Nianyu, and Malan mountains are all Gravel mountains guarding the mausoleums. The whole mausoleum is built on a clear central axis that links Changrui Mountain (parent mountain) and Jinxin mountain (Chao Shan). In this semi-enclosed space, mountains, architecture, and landscapes were well planned to represent a socially diverse and engaged ideal world. In the process, Feng Shui becomes both a tool and a result of planning and design.

Cultural Landscape

The cultural landscape is a relatively new concept in heritage discourse. In many cases, it represents a specific landscape heritage on a relatively large scale. For example, the Neckertal pasture hillside of Switzerland, or the Batad rice terrace in the Philippines, or the Inca trails system in the mountains of South America. The World Heritage Committee defines a cultural landscape as:

Cultural properties that represent the combined works of nature and man. They are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.¹⁰⁷

Although the cultural landscape is supposed to be a combination of works of nature and man, the composition of each is variable. For the nominated UNESCO world heritage which belongs to the cultural landscape, we see a great variety of works of nature and man. The Batad rice terraces in the Philippines are a landscape formed by centuries of continuous agricultural work by local village residents along the contours of the mountain. Its heritage value and integrity come from the skills, effort, and ingenuity of man in agricultural production with the sediment of time. Serving as media of human activity, its topography and physical form as heritage comes in second on the contrary. On the other end of the spectrum, the first couple UNESCO nominated cultural heritage include the Tongariro National Park in New Zealand and Uluru-Kata

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, Pub. L. No. WHC.21/01 (2021), 31 July 2021, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>.

Tjuta National Park in Australia. Both national parks feature the spectacular natural beauty that is unique to the world. Other than the ingenuity of the work of nature, they are both unique in their relationship with the indigenous people in the region. Although once interrupted by the immigration of non-indigenous population in the transition of culture and society, awareness and respect to the spiritual and religious connection between those landscapes and the indigenous communities has been prioritized in the recent decades. The nomination of both national parks as cultural landscapes symbolizes the effort to recognize and emphasize the spiritual and religious value embedded in the unique landscape. However, like many other cultures, the respectfulness and connection of indigenous communities are not in the way of developing and using the space but rather keeping distance and preserving the natural form of the landscape from human intervention. The respectfulness and effort to preserve sometimes raise conflicts between the general intended recreational use of nature and indigenous communities, for example, nudity or camping on the peak of certain mountains.¹⁰⁸ The heritage value of those cultural landscapes is embedded in the aesthetic natural beauty, as a combination of both natural landscape and effort of seeing, changing and preserving such landscape. Tangible heritage like architecture, monuments, and relics are a common form of effort of changing and experiencing, but intangible beliefs and traditions can also be universal values and support the cultural heritage.

¹⁰⁸ Maya Oppenheim, "Playboy Model Says Maoris Angered by Her Naked Photo on a Sacred Volcano Aren't Indigenous," The Independent, May 12, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/model-naked-pose-jaylene-cook-sacred-maoris-new-zealand-not-indigenous-a7732726.html>.

Feng Shui as the tradition, folklore, and practice of geomancy of indigenous communities of China, also uses geography and topography as a medium to deliver its promises. In the eyes of Feng Shui practitioners, landscapes and their variation are the vehicle of good fortune. Certain internally consistent knowledge and logic are used to locate and develop the best settlement. In the process, a cultural landscape is created. Feng Shui might be another tool to define a cultural landscape, both natural and artificial. In a place like Mt Beimang of Luoyang China, or some Korean mountains, mausoleums and grave sites via the standard and practice of Feng Shui are everywhere.¹⁰⁹ In the name of improvement of Feng Shui, modification of landscape is also encouraged with artificial hills, temples, etc.¹¹⁰ But Feng Shui could also be a well-preserved (or avoided) natural landscape due to the influence of Feng Shui.

Nature has no preference for the landscape it creates but people do. To avoid disasters and pursue prosperity, the spiritual and religious connection between geographic environment and quality of life was established and studied, and further enhanced in the practice and development of Feng Shui. The tangible geographic environment is deconstructed via Feng Shui and its contexts were reinterpreted in Feng Shui. Natural phenomena become Feng Shui elements like Dragon, Gravel, and Lair.

Unlike other specific cultural landscapes, Feng Shui is not a landscape but a way to interpret it. Feng Shui endows the natural environment with personification and aesthetics.

¹⁰⁹ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 232.

In this chapter, the methods, forms, and representations of Feng Shui is introduced, and the paradigm of Feng Shui and its value are related to the concept of cultural landscape.

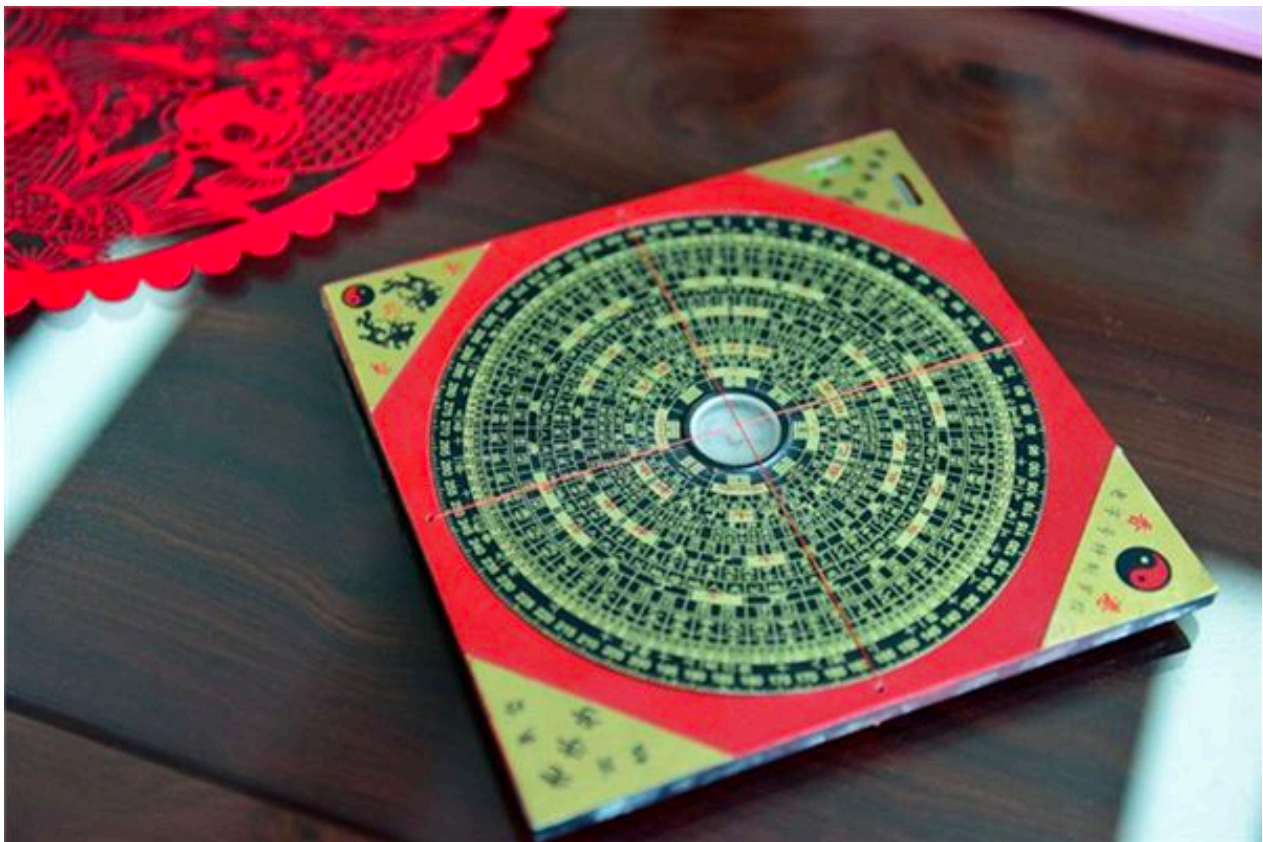


Figure 3.1: A modern Luo Pan. Source: “风水罗盘知识 如何看风水罗盘_风水知识_卜易居手机版.” Accessed May 10, 2022. <https://www.buyiju.com/fengshui/zhishi/3377.html>.

Chapter Three

Tools of Feng Shui, Luo Pan

A Feng Shui compass is a tool used by many Feng Shui practitioners. Like any compass, the Feng Shui compass uses magnetic needles for orientation. Other than the orientation, the Feng Shui compass also has many layers or rings of words surrounding the magnetic needle, which endows a spiritual function to an orientation tool. The compass is still an essential tool and symbol of Feng Shui, and some English writings compare it to the dousing-rod in practice.¹¹¹

The dousing-rod has become more popular in Feng Shui practices in recent times. Although there is a lack of data on its usage in Feng Shui consultation in North America, some news articles show that at least some Feng Shui practitioners use a dousing-rod as a handy tool.¹¹² However, its usage in China has experienced an increase in the last couple of years. The dousing-rod was given a name with a fake sense of history, the Ruler of Dragon-seeking. The new name is so associated with Feng Shui and Chinese myths that someone may mistake it as a Chinese invention by ancient Feng Shui masters.

The compass is still the dominant and most reputed tool of all Feng Shui schools. The development of the compass itself has an interesting history in China. The word “pan” means plates and refers to all plate-shaped objects. Primitive compasses and their remains and models were found in the many archeology sites across

¹¹¹ Harry Rolnick, *Feng Shui: The Chinese System of Elements* (Hong Kong: FormAsia, 2004), 8.

¹¹² Colleen Seto, “Feng Shui Makes Positive Energy Flow: [Final Edition],” *Edmonton Journal*, September 29, 2007, 14.

China.¹¹³ According to historic writing, as early at the warrior states, a tool named “Si Nan” was recorded for orientation and divination.¹¹⁴

A specific type of plate for divination was found and recorded from the Han dynasty. The accurate name for the Shi Pan is Liu Ren Pan, which is designed to serve the popular divination technique Liu Ren. Shi Pan is usually made of two overlapping plates, the lower one in rectangle shape symbolize the earth, the upper one in round shape symbolize the sky. Both the plates have specific symbols of divination written on them. The sky plate can rotate according to the center of the land plate.

Notwithstanding the lack of magnetic needle for orientation, the Shi Pan divines according to the time, orientation and the relationship between the sky plate and land plate.

Both Si Nan and Shi Pan lays foundation for the later Feng Shui compass design. In the Tang and Song Dynasties, the prosperity of international trade, especially trade development via sea greatly improved the design and manufacture of the compass. Cheng Kuo in Meng Xi Bi Tan recorded different types of compass installations, the magnetic declination.¹¹⁵ Records of common use of compasses can be also found in other historic records at the time as well.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Donald J. Harper, “The Han Cosmic Board (SHIH 式),” *Early China* 4 (1978): 1–10.

¹¹⁴ [Hanfei 韓非] (280b.c.-233b.c.), Han Fei Zi 韓非子 (works by Hanfeizi) (Changsha: Yue lu shu she, 2020).

See also:

[Guiguizi 鬼谷子] (active 4th century B.C.), *Gui Gu zi* 鬼谷子 (Works by Guiguizi) (Beijing: Jin dun chu ban she, 2019).

¹¹⁵ Kuo Shen 沈括(1031-1095), *Mengxi Bitan* 夢溪筆談(Writings in Mengxi), Zhongguo zi xue ming zhu ji cheng 096 (Taipei: Zhongguo zi xue ming zhu ji cheng bian yin ji jin hui, 1978).

¹¹⁶ Jing Xu 徐兢, *Senna hōshi Kōrai zukyō* (Tōkyō: Kokusho kankōkai, 1995)

Also:

Lin Zhao 趙麟(8th Century), *Yin hua lu: 6 juan* 因話錄: 6卷, Bai hai 10. (China: Zhen lu tang, 1662).

Until the late Song Dynasty, the development and prosperity of Feng Shui requires additional complexity for Feng Shui compass, eventually setting the foundation for the form of Feng Shui compass we normally see today. Comprising up to dozens of rings and layers surrounding the needle, as indicated in several manuals on the methods of making and using Feng Shui compass at the time, many layers and sections are used beyond Feng Shui as place selection but as divination and cultural discourse in general.¹¹⁷ The existence of other schools of divination in layers on the compass represent the emerging history of different concepts co-lived in the society. This phenomenon will be discussed in more detail later.

As Feng Shui itself evolves into different schools, the compass makers changed accordingly to adopt its internal and technical difference. The layers and contents of a Feng Shui compass vary by its size and maker. Compasses made in Anhui province are different from compasses made in Fujian province. Compasses made in Hong Kong and Taiwan have a greater difference than those made in mainland China. Some of the makers of Feng Shui compasses have been family businesses for decades, even centuries. Wu's Lu Heng is a brand in Xiuning county, Anhui. The store claims to have a lineage of more than three hundred years and eight generations of compass making.¹¹⁸ Researchers such as Li also put Wu's Lu Heng as one of the oldest surviving compass makers in China.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Zhimo Xu, *Jing jiao luo jing ding men zhen* (Tai bei shi: Wu ling, 1994).

¹¹⁸ <http://www.wawlhld.com/index.php?m=Page&a=index&id=28>.

¹¹⁹ Jianjun Cheng, *Zhongguo feng shui luo pan*, Di 2 ban (Nanchang Shi: Jiangxi ke xue ji shu chu ban she, 2005).

There are three basic types of compasses: San He, San Yuan and Hybrid. A San He compass contains three rings of twenty-four sections (see next paragraph), each slightly rotated to represent the sky, earth, and humans. The San He compass is mostly used in Feng Shui schools that require a more accurate and delicate measure of orientation. On the contrary, San Yuan compass only has one ring with twenty-four sections, with an additional ring of Yi Trigram, a sixty-four-variety system from the transformation of the eight trigram. The additional ring of Yi Trigram can be better for users performing Feng Shui with other aspects of divination. The hybrid compasses are a combination of San He and San Yuan compasses, with both three rings of twenty-four sections and the Yi Trigram ring. The hybrid compass is usually larger and more complex than the other two.¹²⁰

Today, the more advanced compass includes attachments like laser positioning and cellphone synchronization. Various technologies are used in the compass to generate a more accurate and synchronized results.

The Make and Use of Compass

Before the Ming dynasty, the water compass was the mainstream form of compass. As its name indicates, the compass requires pouring water into the center of compass, and then put the magnetic needle tied with a rooster feather in the water.

¹²⁰ Dingxin Li 李定信, Zhongguo Luopan 49 Ceng Xiangjie 中國羅盤49層詳解 (Explanation of 49 rings of Feng Shui Compass) (Hong Kong: ju xian guan wen hua you xian gong si, 1997).

This complicated method was later replaced by the dry compass, which the needle is fixed in the center of compass yet can rotate freely.¹²¹

The sky pool is located in the center of the compass. It is the cylindric space where the magnetic needle can rotate freely. It is called the pool because the early compass model requires water to be poured into the sky pool. The magnetic needle is usually painted in red and black. The red points to the south because the fire and Vermilion Bird represent the south. The black points to the north because the water and turtle represent the north. There is usually a red line at the bottom of the sky pool fixed to the center of the Zi and Wu sections. This red line is used as the reference for the needle when using the compass.

The inner plate is the circular plate surrounding the sky pool. Words and measurements of Feng Shui are written on the plate and divided the plate into various rings. There are rings of different meanings and functions, such as the twenty-four sections and the Yi Trigram. Depending on the use and functionality, some of the rings can rotate.

The outer plate is the square platform that holds everything together. Usually, the outer platform does not have words or symbols. In some cases, the outer plate can be ornamented. The contemporary compass often has marks on the outer plate called the sky cross, where a pair of red vertical lines marks on the outer plate can help the user skim the measurement in all directions.

¹²¹ Zhenduo Wang 王振铎, "Zhongguo Gudai Cizhen de Faming He Hanghai Luoqing de Chuangzao 中国古代磁针的发明和航海罗经的创造 (The Invention of Historic Magnetic Needle and Maritime Compass in China)," *Cultural Relic* 文物, no. 3 (1978): 55–63.

The general geographic direction was too simple to undertake a complex Feng Shui theory. The fundamental and usually the first layer of a Feng Shui compass divides its orientation into twenty-four sections with equal angles, fifteen degrees each. The twenty-four sections are represented by different letters in the ancient Chinese alphabet, Tian Gan and Di Zhi. Tian Gan has ten different characters, and Di Zhi has twelve. However, to make up the twenty-four sectors, the compass needs two more symbols, so the first two trigrams in the Eight Trigram are borrowed and used to complete the orientation circle. The sections are named: Qian (Eight Trigram), Kun (Eight Trigram), Jia, Yi, Bing, Ding, Wu, Ji, Geng, Xin, Ren, Kui, Zi, Chou, Yin, Mao, Chen, Si, Wu, Wei, Shen, You, Xu, Hai.

A master of Feng Shui often briefly scans the approximate orientation first by holding the compass steadily in front of one's chest and aiming for the parallel between the wall and edge of the compass.

There is a specific way to describe the orientation of a location in Feng Shui with "sit" and "face." If a person stands in the center of the room facing the south, "Sit" indicates direction behind the person, and "face" indicates the direction the person is facing. By standing in the center of the building and measuring on the compass, the Feng Shui master can quickly tell the orientation of a building. The facing of the building is a tricky question as contemporary houses have a greater variety of plans and layouts. Typically, the main entrance of a building indicates its facing. For example, a house with its door opens to 0 degrees (straight south) will be described as "sitting Zi facing Wu," notice that the twenty-four sections of orientation are used here. Although the sit and face are always opposite to each other, the description includes both of

them may be more based on ideological principles with Qi, where a two-way indication shows the routes and linages of Qi.

Keeping the compass level is also an essential consideration for an accurate result. A traditional way of leveling the compass involves using rice as a platform for the compass. Three inches of rice is laid on the ground, with the compass placed on top of it. The gravity will do the job, leveling the compass as the weight of the compass separates evenly on the rice. Contemporary compasses sometimes install a spirit level or bubble level on the outer plate for the leveling purpose.

The compass usually consists of more than twenty rings, representing different functions. Although each ring has different functions in practice, they can be categorized into three or four types, so we generally understand their purpose.

1. Direct Inference.

The most basic and common rings of compass. They are used to directly infer the quality of certain direction. For example, the first ring of the compass is often the primordial eight trigram, which simply replace direction with the eight trigram. The most common use of primordial eight trigram directions is to determine the direction of water, good Feng Shui is achieved if the water flow in and out of a location in the correct directions. The second ring of the compass is similar, it arranges the nine stars according to the twenty-four directions, then uses the star directions for the Feng Shui of Gravel.

The most fundamental type of rings on the compass, they can be either rotatable or not depending on its function.

2. Indirect Inference

Indirect inference rings are rings that have to be combined or connected to other rings for more complex inference. They are usually rotating rings that change accordingly with the magnetic needles.

3. Auxiliary Rings

Auxiliary rings are used for the purpose of further dividing and adjusting the directions. Twenty-four mountains are not always delicate enough for larger Feng Shui project, so it is further divided into seventy-two and one hundred and twenty-eight directions. The other variation is rotation. Twenty-four mountains are twisted in each direction for half of the length of mountain (7.5 degree) to form two different twenty-four mountains. Then, those variation of directions are combined with inference rings for a detailed result.

4. Informational or Ornamental Rings

Rings do not always have practical function on the compass. There are often a couple rings that are purely informational or ornamental. They do not engage with compass because the rotation of the magnified needle does not affect their use. For example, the “twelve-star field-dividends” is a ring that references the ancient twelve stars with ancient geographic locations. For Feng Shui practitioners, it is good information to know but not really significant to the practices of Feng Shui.

Rings on the compass become more complex as they get further away from the center because the perimeter increases and there is more space for more units. For rings with sixty or one hundred and twenty-four stages, they must be the outermost rings, or the compass would not be readable.

Another characteristic of the arrangement of the rings is that the further from the center, the newer the concept. The rings close to the center of the compass usually employ those concepts found in classical writings of Feng Shui from the Ming or Qing dynasties. Some of the common rings like the “incremental sixty Dragon” was invented in contemporary era.¹²²

The difference between rings on the compass depends on its maker, region and school. Learning the way to use a compass is an important stage of study in Feng Shui. The compass can also become an entry barrier, it requires time, effort and maybe apprenticeship to master the compass and the complicated system within.

Precepts and Fundamentalism

In the old time, Feng Shui practitioners are often seen as the owners and users of special knowledge in the society. They are typically respected by layperson and enjoy a relatively good relationship with higher class as well. The best and most reputed Feng Shui practitioners are sometimes invited on projects like royal mausoleum and palace. The most successful practitioners usually gain their own reputation by either participate in those mega projects or writing books.

However, as a sustained, reputed and independent industry, there are also regulation and limitation. Even today, there was hardly signs of any type of guild or industry association, so those form of regulation may not be at the industry level. However, other efforts may be traceable such as precepts and rules on individual

¹²² Jianjun Cheng 程建军, *Zhongguo feng shui luo pan* 中国风水罗盘(*Chinese Feng Shui Compass*), Di 2 ban (Nanchang Shi: Jiangxi ke xue ji shu chu ban she, 2005), 113.

levels. Reputed Feng Shui master Eva Wong shared the inspiration and inception of her career. He begins with documentation of grave sites in nature and reading bios of historical masters and eventually had the chance to study as apprentices of two different masters for Yin and Yang Feng Shui. At the end of her apprenticeship, he was examined for skills and knowledge.¹²³ Although the details of apprenticeship or the “oath” mentioned was not mentioned, most traditional apprenticeships in China contains both complex etiquettes and strict precepts between the master and apprentices. Most of them are ethical standards for the moral character of the apprentice such as “respect the master,” “has little attachment to riches or material gains,” or “no records violent activity towards mankind.”¹²⁴ Those ethics associated with training and practice of Feng Shui are necessary professionally to keep the sustainability of the industry.

However, there is no evidence of such precepts in any formal way or across the industry at known period of history. Unlike authorized religions in China like Han Buddhism or Islam, where precepts or religious taboos are big part of the religion and its practices, popular religion practices like Feng Shui have less behavior or practice regulation. More interestingly, since Feng Shui is rarely away from community and mostly based on the needs and activities of the community, precepts would be reshaped and repurposed via its interaction with the communities.

Another interesting phenomenon is the sign of Fundamentalism in Feng Shui. As described by Bruun and Yoon, the practice of Feng Shui, especially in rural

¹²³ Eva Wong, *Feng-Shui: The Ancient Wisdom of Harmonious Living for Modern Times*, 1st ed (Boston : [New York]: Shambhala; Distributed in the USA by Random House, 1996), 1-10.

¹²⁴ Eva Wong, *Feng-Shui: The Ancient Wisdom of Harmonious Living for Modern Times*, 1st ed (Boston : [New York]: Shambhala; Distributed in the USA by Random House, 1996), 10.

communities of China and from a foreigner observation, has long been different from the classic of Feng Shui. Some scholars and practitioners try to defend the orthodoxy of Feng Shui, which is claimed to be an inherited knowledge system from Yang Yunsong. In the eyes of fundamentalists, only theories and rituals written as classics in history makes orthodox Feng Shui and the improvisation and optimization by either rural Feng Shui masters or practitioners outside China are not legitimate Feng Shui thus should be criticized.

The attacks from fundamentalists on the rural Feng Shui practices are rare and gentle if not completely ignored. As described by Bruun, at least in village of Longquanyi, Feng Shui practitioners have relatively regular service boundaries, and it seems a reasonable unspoken rule of business. On the other hand, those rural service providers hardly engage with clients coming from outside of their “designated” community either. In fact, rural Feng Shui practices were hardly mentioned in the discourse of urban Feng Shui masters where they often took a “educated” and “orthodox” stance toward their rural counterpart.

The stance toward the foreign practitioners and scholars seems more defensive. In terms of argument of those fundamentalists, the complexity and integrity of Chinese tradition and Chinese cultural were often used as a weapon to the outsiders. Bruun and a couple others has written of the criticism received on their topic.¹²⁵ A common statement is that it is both disrespectful and wrong to analyze, observe, and practice Feng Shui in any means of “Western ways,” as westerners may never understand the myth and beauty of Feng Shui. Criticism of the methodology or the racial and cultural

¹²⁵ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011).

background of the researcher themselves, clearly indicate discomfort with non-Chinese practitioners in the study and practice of Feng Shui. While its cultural orientation unknown, many fundamentalists still see Feng Shui as a solely Chinese tradition and culture.

Both questionable precepts and conflict over the sense of ownership on Feng Shui signals the chaotic and splitting status of its industry today. Increasing demand and curiosity brings revitalization of Feng Shui, but a system built on ancient classics and personal practices can hardly fulfill the diverse demand of all, from rural village to international real estate.

Transcultural influence

Feng Shui has shown its influence in a lot of aspects of many Chinese/Chinese-influenced societies. As ancient wisdom that closely relates to the built environment, geographical and living environment, it has been practiced for many years in China and surrounding Asian countries. In the past decades, the trend of increasing number of studies and practices of Feng Shui are found in the west, significantly in United States, United Kingdom and Australia.

In the United States, Feng Shui was brought into pacific west coast with early Asian immigrants attracted by the gold rush, as one of the guiding folklore traditions of the early Chinese immigrants. According to Briggs, although there are many variables in the cemetery location selection of early Chinese immigrants, the Oregon cemeteries of early Chinese immigrants do share geographic commonalities, which is at least in

part, due to the geographic principles of Feng Shui.¹²⁶ In another word, the existence of Feng Shui practice as a folklore or tradition can be traced back at least to the nineteenth century. Feng Shui has little appearance in mainstream culture and academia until the latter half of the twentieth century. For example, in 1964, Kevin Lynch suggests the use of Feng Shui (in his book, he refers to “*Chinese Pseudo science of geomantics*”) to resolve some urban landscape dilemma in his book *The Image of the City*.¹²⁷ In 1976, some of the earliest English academic research on Feng Shui was published at U.C., Berkeley, *Geomantic Relationships Between Culture and Nature in Korea* by Hong-Key Yoon.¹²⁸ Professor Yoon is one of the first scholars to examine Feng Shui as Asian folklore. And he has published a couple more on the anthropology view of Feng Shui in the East Asian Culture circle. In the 1980s, Sarah Rossbach, a student of Taiwan Feng Shui master Yun Lin, published her book *Interior Design with Feng Shui*.¹²⁹ At the same time, other non-academic writings of Feng Shui have gradually been seen in the book market, bringing this rather unfamiliar concept to the mainstream public. In the 1990s, Feng Shui academies start appearing across the United States.¹³⁰ Today, most Feng Shui practitioners are American, and they usually provide consultation and design service for their clients. Unlike Feng Shui practices in Asia, Feng Shui practitioners emphasize more on interior design and landscape instead

¹²⁶ Andrew Briggs, “Feng Shui and Chinese Rituals of Death across the Oregon Landscape,” *Geography Masters Research Papers*, March 1, 2002, https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/geog_masterpapers/18.

¹²⁷ Kevin Lynch, *Image of the City*. (Boston: Birkhauser, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783035602166>.

¹²⁸ Yoon, Hong-key. *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*. Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs ; v. 89. Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976.

¹²⁹ Sarah Rossbach, *Interior Design with Feng Shui*, New expanded ed. (New York: Penguin/Arkana, 2000).

¹³⁰ Xixian Yu 于希贤, *Feng Shui Wen Hua Dui Shi Jie de Ying Xiang* 风水文化对世界的影响, Di 1 ban (Beijing Shi: Shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 2010).

of residential architecture and yin-dwelling (tomb location and direction). Real estate Feng Shui is the new frontier of Feng Shui. For the past decade, more and more real estate developers and agents start to use Feng Shui to brand their properties.

According to *The Guardian*, real estate developer at the time, Donald Trump made Feng Shui one of his priorities and advantages when he remodeled Trump Tower New York City. Pun-Yin and his father, who was running a small Feng Shui firm in Chinatown, was hired for the job, and made famous with the Trump Tower project. Trump clearly stated he did not do Feng Shui for any spiritual reason but to attract potential buyers from Asia. This project indeed reflects how Feng Shui walks into American society, slowly but steadily.¹³¹

In Europe, Feng Shui was known much earlier and in a different way. In 1582, an Italian Jesuit priest travelled and settled in China. He wrote about the Chinese method of geomancy in the superstition section and treat it as a folklore that was not seen in other cultures.¹³² Until seventeenth century, when European countries began colonizing and forced trade in Asia, Feng Shui became more like an obstacle than a phenomenon. Germany missionary John Eitel (1883-1908) wrote in his book that buying land, building and demolishing, or even put on a flag would be a tremendous Feng Shui obstacle for China's foreigner residents. "Whether putting up an utility pole or planning a new road, a Chinese bureaucrat would humbly bow to you and announce their reluctance due to

¹³¹ Sasha von Oldershausen, "Meet Donald Trump's Feng Shui Master," *The Guardian*, September 13, 2016, sec. US news, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/13/donald-trump-feng-shui-master-pun-yin>.

¹³² Matteo Ricci and Nicholas Tregault, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610* (Random House, 1953).



Figure 3.2: Commonly seen ornaments in Asian restaurant with profound linkage to Feng Shui. Photo by author.

Feng Shui."¹³³ Feng Shui was often seen as a theme of conflicts and violence in the colonial history of Asia, for example, Commander Amaral was the governor of colonial Macau in 1846, within three years he was ambushed and decapitated by Macau natives due to his road-building policy in Macau “changed the Feng Shui” and therefore hated by natives.¹³⁴ Not only this kind of stories have proven the importance of Feng Shui in pre-industrial China, but inflict a theme of conflict between Feng Shui beliefs and the concept of “westernization” and “modernization”.

Such conflict peaked in many parts of China in the twentieth century. The birth of the Republic of China in 1911 ended the imperial system, the following cultural reform aiming a modernization of culture in China. Feng Shui, together with Chinese

¹³³ Ernest John Eitel, *Feng-Shui: Or, The Rudiments of Natural Science in China* (Hongkong: Lane, Crawford, 1873), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007473748>.

¹³⁴ Hong-key Yoon, “A Theory on the Origin and Development of Ancient Chinese Geomancy (FENG-SHUI),” *Studies in the History of Natural Sciences* 1 (1989).

medicine and acupuncture, began being seen as superstition thus often loathed and satirized by elites. Although Feng Shui was never not banned after 1949, most remains of Feng Shui as a phenomenon and practice were eliminated during the “Great Cultural Revolution” where heritages, traditions and folklores are seen as behind thus all such practices are banned. Since the 1980s when the cultural revolution ended, Feng Shui practices have gradually recovered and once again survive in China. However, in Taiwan, Hong Kong and other countries, where the influence of political movement in the mainland were isolated, Feng Shui sustained and developed. Various Feng Shui books and manuals are published, many Feng Shui societies and academies are established, Feng Shui masters are reputed and respected. When mainland China “reform and open” in the 1980s, Feng Shui theories and practices from Taiwan and Hong Kong “feedback” to mainland. With superior economic achievement of Taiwan and Hong Kong at the time, Hong Kong and Taiwan style of Feng Shui were also modernized. From 1980s to present, waves of Asian immigrants to America, Europe and Australia have brought their belief of Feng Shui with them. Feng Shui has become popular in both academic and secular world, a world phenomenon indeed.

Feng Shui practices in North America

Today both Feng Shui education and services are widely available in communities in North America, especially those in dense urban areas. Although we do not have the exact information of how it gains its status, its cultural position is accessible. Many newer Hollywood productions include Feng Shui in the story such as “Larry Crowne”(2011), “The Other Woman”(2014) and “The Wolf of Wall Street”(2013).

Regardless its dramatic function, at least it is no longer a strange thing to general American eyes. Practitioners of Feng Shui often provides design and consultant services for home and office. Education institutions of Feng Shui provides courses. With the growing number of practitioners and laypersons, Feng Shui tools and shops also enters the market. At last, various cemeteries also begin to use Feng Shui as part of their marketing strategy.

Various writers associate the popularity of Feng Shui with the New Age Movement, seeking ancient wisdom for modern problems.¹³⁵ The popularity of Yoga, cupping and acupuncture reflects this phenomenon. Most English books and writings which introduce or promote Feng Shui emphasize its profound history. One of the books starts with “history since 8000 BC.”¹³⁶ Another concept often used and emphasized is “harmony.” Harmony seems to be the key and unique concept that Feng Shui provides which others cannot. However, how is the harmony being promoted or branded remains open.

The theory and concept of Feng Shui is fundamentally based on a Chinese-origin spatial and cultural characteristics. The migration of Feng Shui took many steps to transform itself to adopt to the new environment. For example, theory of Feng Shui merges the adoration of Dragon and the sources of Qi into the “Three Stems” theory.¹³⁷ However neither the Three Stems exist, nor the cultural background of Dragon

¹³⁵ [Ka Fei Hai咖啡海]. *Pizibao De Feng Shui Yu Feng Shui Shi*“匹茲堡的風水與風水師.”(Feng Shui and practitioners in Pittsburg). 芭樂人類學 (blog), November 16, 2015. <https://guavanthropology.tw/article/6479>.

Harry Rolnick, *Feng Shui: The Chinese System of Elements* (Hong Kong: FormAsia, 2004), 6.

¹³⁶ Harry Rolnick, *Feng Shui: The Chinese System of Elements* (Hong Kong: FormAsia, 2004), 8.

¹³⁷ See Chapter two: the ideal model.

adoration exists. The challenge further develops when clients are concerned with the religious and symbolic representation of Feng Shui and Feng Shui tools. As an ongoing process, the transformation took place in many contexts to survive and serve its clients.

Feng Shui consultation and design service became popular in the 1800s with the promotion of author and journalist Sarah Rossbach and her publication *Interior Design with Feng Shui*. In both her book and practice, she started to introduce the idea of Feng Shui to her clients. Sarah claims to be a student of Feng Shui master Lin Yun, who was a famous and reputed Feng Shui master in Taiwan and Hong Kong at the time.¹³⁸ In her book, she uses “Feng Shui as a tool to capture the western imagination for design and well-being.” When her practice of combining the old Chinese tradition and contemporary American lifestyle created a successful career, many of her followers started a similar practice.

In *Interior Design with Feng Shui* and other practices, there are a couple methods Rossbach and other contemporary practitioners use to reinterpret Feng Shui. The first is concept replacement. To explain the rationale of Feng Shui, most books and writings about Feng Shui employ concepts and theories from ancient China like “I Ching,” eight trigrams, and Qi. Part of the reason may be that the ancient concepts will be seen as complicated and mysterious thus covering some of the inherent flaws and loopholes in Feng Shui.

For a clearer and more intimate use of Feng Shui, Rossbach did not use complex and strange foreigner words and concepts to interpret Feng Shui, instead she

¹³⁸ Lin Yun also has a sound reputation in Asia, many Feng Shui tool book was published either as his writing or with his name. Many of them are still available and used today.

uses the concepts that is more familiar to contemporary Americans. Mountains, Water and soil in the form school were reinterpreted to suit the American lifestyle. Rolnick's book, *Feng Shui: The Chinese System of Elements*, interpreted them as the buildings nearby and soil or gravel become the earth in one's yard.¹³⁹ Rolnick simplified the five elements theory to match the magic number of one's birthday or one's personality, which skips the steps of calculating the birthday characters traditionally.¹⁴⁰

The second is dilution of religious and cultural symbols. As interior design is the major focus of the Feng Shui practices in America, use of tool to divert and improve the Qi of the interior environment is an important content of interior Feng Shui consultation. In China, those tools are usually designed with folk beliefs, a combination of Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism. Common tools include peach wood swords with delicate decoration, or a mirror inlaid in eight trigrams plate, or golden turtle sitting on top of coins. Those tools are either symbolization and representation of special meaning or embed religious characters. For example, the turtle symbolizes longevity, and the coins symbolize wealth. Peach wood swords and eight-trigram mirrors are relics used in Taoism ritual and divination. Those cultural or religious symbols connection within Feng Shui are less relevant in American communities. To mitigate those cultural barrier and possible religious concerns, Feng Shui practitioners diluted the religious and cultural symbols and replaced them with more neutral and natural ways. A common recommendation and often used tool are crystals or artworks like painting or sculptures. In rare cases, due to respectfulness to the needs of clients, Feng Shui practitioners may use tool like the cross or home shrines to fulfill the Feng

¹³⁹ Harry Rolnick, *Feng Shui: The Chinese System of Elements* (Hong Kong: Form Asia, 2004, 33.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 40-41.

Shui. Nonetheless, with the effort of practitioners, Feng Shui was transformed to fit the contemporary life.

There are also creative additions to Feng Shui as well. A process of cleaning oneself is encouraged and emphasized as part of Feng Shui. Various types of music are encouraged in the cleaning process. Certain meditation procedures like self-examination and divination via ideomotor phenomenon was also used in the practice as a pre-requisite of Feng Shui.¹⁴¹ Those additional activities and requirements are not seen in Feng Shui practice in Asia, they are more like a collective religious ritual that maybe brought in by the New Age Movement.

With the spreading popularity of Feng Shui, education institutes also came into being. According to its own advertisement, the American Feng Shui Institute (AFSI) was established in 1991 and was the only Feng Shui institute for years.¹⁴² Today, Feng Shui institutes are spreading across the United States, offering courses of various lengths. The student body varies, from people who is interested in Feng Shui to students pursuing a professional career in Feng Shui consultations and design. The school usually have both courses like introductory class and advance certification program.

Although the detail of those courses was not disclosed, its relationship to the traditional Feng Shui practices is worth looking into. As the predominant Feng Shui consultation are residential, traces of traditional residential Feng Shui were referenced a lot. An example of that is the abundance use of Eight Mansion Feng Shui.

The school of Eight Mansion is part of the compass school, which focus not only on the spatial form of a location but its orientation and time. It is one of the common

¹⁴¹ Harry Rolnick, *Feng Shui: The Chinese System of Elements* (Hong Kong: Form Asia, 2004, 48.

¹⁴² <https://www.amfengshui.com/feng-shui-schools/>

schools focused on interior design and layout of residences. Its core concept is that a residence is divided by its components and sections. Like how modern residence has different functional room and space divided, in Eight Mansion each component and section of the residence is also divided in the ways of Feng Shui. Then, according to the owner's birthday and time, each section in each direction should be arranged with specific function. Furthermore, in case of deficiency, school of Eight Mansion provides various ways to compensate, normally includes placing specific item at specific location and orientation.

According to one of the schools, their head instructors has studied with various teachers from Taiwan and Hong Kong.¹⁴³ As an internationally recognized school, their students are coming from many different states, many of them become a consultant after getting their certifications. On their website, they also sell tools and guidebooks for the interests of public and their alumni. The course of a six-day certification program is offered at \$1795 dollars. Students graduating from the program are also required to turn in at least three case studies to complete the certification process. The majority of their students are either interested in taking Feng Shui as their future career or adding it to their existing career like real estate or acupuncture. The number of students stays relatively stable for the last ten years, but the teacher also recognized the advantage of their location having a population of energetic practitioners, more or less associated to the New Age Movement. She also did an interesting comparison between different practices in Asia and her school based on her recent travel experience. For example, the importance of Four Pillars astrology and other divinations

¹⁴³ For the purpose of the thesis, I interviewed an employee of one of the Feng Shui schools in the U.S. I do not have permission to disclose their brand and location.

are found popular remedy with Feng Shui, but in America Feng Shui practices seems more focused on Feng Shui itself. She also made a clear separation between “Yin” Feng Shui and “Yang” Feng Shui with “Yin” being burial practice and “Yang” being residential. She knows about the history of “Yin” Feng Shui but did not feel the necessity to learn and practice it. At the end she reemphasized that Feng Shui is neither a religion nor a religious practice. “Universal energy” as she refers to “makes it easier for people with various religious backgrounds.”¹⁴⁴

The popularity of Feng Shui also draws attention within design-relative professions. Architects and interior designers may easily find guidebooks and introductory books in the market. Bramble’s book, *Architect’s Guide to Feng Shui: Exploding the Myth*, uses architect’s consideration to introduce and incorporate Feng Shui to practitioners.¹⁴⁵

As Feng Shui became a hallmark of New Agers, business tycoons, movie stars, housewives and artists, the supporting manufacture and retail industry also increased. Products are sold in stores associated to New Age Movement, even organic product store like Whole Foods Market. In those store, Feng Shui products are usually placed together with other regions or spiritual representation such as status of Buddha and incense from India. One of the largest e-commerce website of handmade and vintage goods, Etsy, has a large collection of handmade Feng Shui products. Crystals are the typical tool used and they are offered in various form, either untreated or artistically processed. Untreated crystals can either comes within their rock shell with revealed

¹⁴⁴ Based on author’s interview with one of the teachers from a popular Feng Shui school.

¹⁴⁵ Cate Bramble, *Architect’s Guide to Feng Shui: Exploding the Myth* (Burlington, Mass.: Architectural Press, 2003).

crystal inside, or a raw piece of crystal. Crystals may be processed into most shapes and forms, but most of them are made as crystal balls or sphere-shape polyhedrons. There are also products with more association with its Asian origin such as chain of coins, “Pi Qiu” and other animal figures.¹⁴⁶ Feng Shui bracelets are a popular product as well. Usually made of crystals or obsidian, they are believed to benefit one’s luck, health and energy. There are also rules and precautions of such wearable item, as doing them wrong may result in negative effect.¹⁴⁷ On the other side, many products are supplied from China. One of the leading e-supplier platforms from China, Alibaba, has provided supply and wholesale of many tools and decorations. Competition of mass manufacture and wholesale made the cost of crystal balls as cheap as three cents each.¹⁴⁸

Although burial practices were the predominant part of Feng Shui in Asia since Guo Pu, its influence in America has been limited within the Asian communities. Most of Feng Shui schools and books admit that burial practices used to be and still is a predominant practice in Asia, but they focus on residential. While in Asian communities, cemeteries gradually and gladly accept Feng Shui as a business opportunity and have various arrangement for clients with requests and needs for Feng Shui. Forrest Lawn cemetery, one of the large cemeteries in Southern California, which has a lot of clients of Asian origin and lineage, according to one of their marketing team members, they see the popularity of Feng Shui as a business opportunity and embrace

¹⁴⁶ Piqiu is a mythical animal in China, it eats but does not excrete, which symbolize accumulation of wealth and crops.

¹⁴⁷ <https://fengshuibeginner.com/wearing-pixiu-bracelet-in-the-correct-way/>.

¹⁴⁸ “China Manufacture Crystal Ball Wholesale 🇨🇳 - Alibaba,” accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.alibaba.com/countrysearch/CN/manufacture-crystal-ball.html>.

it as community culture.¹⁴⁹ The cemetery has a relatively large amount of clients with Chinese origin, thus they have business promotion in Chinese and teams focusing on Chinese and Asian Community. The cemetery started in early twentieth century with an idea of becoming a cemetery that is different than others. It was built as a park with carefully planned and customized monuments, landscape and romantic atmosphere. Cemetery property and funeral service arrangement is designed to be personal, which leaves room for specific Feng Shui practice. Although the cemetery does not provide consultation service of Feng Shui, the service team often hears compliment from individual consultants bought by clients. Each year the cemetery will arrange Feng Shui seminar for those clients who is interested. Overall, she thinks Feng Shui is a considerate but not the most important factor that people choose to be their clients. The cemetery is happy that Feng Shui masters recognize and recommend them to their clients and they gladly accept and promote Feng Shui as one of their business opportunities to Chinese clients. Feng Shui is treated as important and equal as all other features they provide for a cemetery that depicts a happy eternal life for its clients.¹⁵⁰

From China to America, Feng Shui strived to resettle in the foreign land. With various practitioners, scholars and advocates, Feng Shui reshaped itself to be part of American culture and lifestyle. Moderate changes have been made toward Feng Shui but respect for its tradition and origin remains. Yet the change is also ongoing. With the

¹⁴⁹ Michelle Chiu and Haowen Yu, "Interview with Michelle," September 25, 2019.

See also:

Dignity Memorial, Forest Lawn Memorial Park & Ocean View Burial Park Virtual Tour (Cantonese), 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6niHHF-z2d4>.

¹⁵⁰ Michelle Chiu and Haowen Yu, "Interview with Michelle," September 25, 2019.

globalization and increase in both number and influence of Asian clients, Feng Shui and its relative industries like cemeteries and consultation also re-adopts some of the “authentic” features of Feng Shui that may be discarded earlier.

Feng Shui and The New Age Movement in the U.S.

Vegetarian products and yoga classes were available in most urban communities of America nowadays, although their advocates and supporters may have different reasons, it is indeed trended in 1970s with the New Age Movement. As a general speculation of the New Age Movement, Rhodes describe the New Age Movement as “loosely structured network of individuals and organizations who share a vision of a new age of enlightenment and harmony.” Due to the fact the movement is multifaceted and lack of single authority and creed, it is hardly a cult or religion.¹⁵¹ Various writings has made a connection between the popularity of oriental and neopagan traditions in the western world and the New Age Movement. The pattern of transformation and adaptation of Feng Shui also shows influence of New Age Movement to Feng Shui.

“The New Age Movement was evident in the nineteenth century and contributed to the sixties (counterculture) as much as it benefited from them”, Campion concludes in his book, *The New Age in the Modern West*. The New Age Movement origins from a couple different culture and counterculture, which also become the characteristics of the movement and shape the appearance of the movement. Both millenniums and

¹⁵¹ Ron Rhodes, *The New Age Movement*, Zondervan Guide to Cults & Religious Movements (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 1995), 7.

utopianism originated from a more profound western history and Christian tradition contributes to the New Age Movement. The contents and concepts of millenniums was used as a philosophical foundation of New Age Movement. First, the millennium is preordained and will not respond to our desires. Second, the millenarianism represents "a final battle with the evil in order to inaugurate God's eternal kingdom." The third is "the conviction that a new spiritual age is about to begin." Campion also argues the result is that "the coming of the future age is inevitable, but human action is necessary in order to guarantee its inevitability." The seemingly contradict argument represents "a matrix of interlocking mentalities dominated by the past and the future."¹⁵²

Although connects to Christianity religion and culture in various ways, the New Age Movement generally contains a syncretism perspective towards other religions and cultures. Rhodes concludes, "the New Age Movement ... combine(ing) and syncretize(ing) different and sometimes contradictory religious and philosophical teachings ... into its mystical worldview."¹⁵³ The inclusive and decentralized character of New Age Movement leaves room for the later involvement and popularity of rather unorthodox spiritual practices like yoga, penance, and Feng Shui. Generally New Agers also believe in monism. The philosophical concept of monism suggests all reality as a unified whole; therefore, it is interrelated and interdependent.¹⁵⁴ A similar monism in Feng Shui with the subject being Qi hence connected and accepted by New Agers. Rhodes also suggests that the introduction and use of energy, sometimes as cosmic

¹⁵² Nicholas Campion, *The New Age in the Modern West: Counterculture, Utopia and Prophecy from the Late Eighteenth Century to the Present Day* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), 161-164.

¹⁵³ Rhodes, *The New Age Movement*, 8-9.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 9-10.

energy, among New Agers is also a factor of the New Age Movement. The concept of energy and holistic health has engaged in the development of movement and affect the healthcare industry in the way of rise of alternative medicine such as acupuncture and chiropractic.¹⁵⁵ While acupuncture, a technique from Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Feng Shui shares most of their concepts and philosophy, it founds the popularity of Feng Shui as well.

Uses of crystals are a big part for many New Agers. They are believed to contain the energy from the nature which could potentially help with holistic healing. Pike describes how healing, crystals and acupuncture were put together for a holistic healing practice in the New Age Movement. Crystals and gemstones of different colors are thought to contain different energy. Each type of energy then spreads into the seven Chakras (Hindu term for spiritual energy centers in the body) and each Chakra controls certain aspect of health. Acupuncture is seen effective for releasing blocked energy.¹⁵⁶

Feng Shui may also engage in a larger New Age capitalism where energy is recognized as a currency as concluded by Mikaelsson that “Materialism and desire for profit become spiritualized, and spirituality commodified, through its application. The vagueness, flexibility and neutrality of the concept means that it can be continually redefined and applied to any number of new products.”¹⁵⁷ This explains how energy stones and crystals become the tools of a commodified Feng Shui.

¹⁵⁵ Rhodes, *The New Age Movement*, 13-14.

¹⁵⁶ Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 104-107.

¹⁵⁷ Steven Sutcliffe and Ingvild Sælid Gilhus, eds., *New Age Spirituality: Rethinking Religion* (Durham, England: Acumen, 2013), 160 - 173.

As Rhodes concludes, the New Age Movement is rather multifaceted and decentralize. The context of the movement also changes and evolves with time. In scholastic writings, the existence of Feng Shui is minimal but acupuncture is discussed either in form of healing practices or neopaganism. What we know is, the philosophical spine Rhodes depicts coexist with the philosophical foundation of both Chinese Medicine and Feng Shui, which provides a good foundation for the growth of acupuncture and Feng Shui.

Supporters of Feng Shui have a wider range than just the influence of New Age Movement. Bruun states and argues that Feng Shui in the Western context is also constructed as a means of environment protection and environmentalism, similar to its counterpart in Korea as concluded by Yoon.¹⁵⁸ However Bruun further argues that, although classics literatures recognize the importance of integrity of geological features such as vegetation and water, Feng Shui practitioner also recognize the bad Feng Shui at place where polluted, contemporary Feng Shui practice is de facto far away from the ideology of environmentalism. As he concludes, contemporary Feng Shui practitioners in China are likely prefer in trading environment with wealth and economic gain.¹⁵⁹

Feng Shui and contemporary burial practice in China

¹⁵⁸ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), Chapter 7.

See also:

Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs ; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

¹⁵⁹ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), Chapter 8.

In many parts of Asia, especially in Korea and China, the burial practices of Feng Shui, may be more important and popular in Geomancy than finding a suitable site for residency.¹⁶⁰ However, in contemporary urban society, the traditional burial practices are facing pressure from both conservation regulation and economic reason.

Practitioners of Feng Shui are responsible for the planning of the burial historically. The piece of land is usually preselected for the elderlies, so when they pass away the burial process is peaceful and smooth. Powerful and wealthy figures in history may plan ahead for the location of mausoleum well in advance. In the previous example of tombs of Ming and Qing dynasties, emperors chose their burial place in their young or middle age.

As documented by Bruun, burial practice has often been organized and centered with Feng Shui and Feng Shui masters, especially in the rural area of China. In fact, one of the primary responsibility and function of Feng Shui practitioners in the rural area is to look for an ideal resting place for the past-away. Bruun has documented his experience of following a rural Feng Shui master in Longquanyi, Sichuan.¹⁶¹ The village woman often come visit the master when they realize one of their family members will pass away soon. The master then obtains information about the clients and goes on looking for a nice location. Usually, the Feng Shui master will explore the local area and record the potential burial sites for future use, thus provides a more expedited result. Other than selecting the burial site, Feng Shui masters also often play

¹⁶⁰ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

¹⁶¹ Ole Bruun and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion*, 2. rev. ed, Man and Nature in Asia Series 8 (Copenhagen, Denmark: NIAS Press, 2011), Chapter 8.

a role of organizer in the burial events itself. We know from Bruun's book that Feng Shui represents a type of popular religion and its ritual in the rural China, and one of the important rituals is the process of burial. The ritual that practiced may vary a lot from place to place, and its context may not be associated with textbook Feng Shui either.

The importance of rituals in the burial practices lacks scholastic discussion and evidence. Some scholars argues that the burial practice of Feng Shui was at least as important as the site selection.¹⁶² They quote from the classics Book of Burial as, "Finding the auspicious Lair but buried poorly, this is the same as discarding the corpse."¹⁶³

However, the explanation of "buried poorly" remains arguable. In the later statement of "Three dos and Six do-nots" in the classic, it seems that "buried poorly" associates with relationship between the class and status of the buried and its selection of Lair. For example, as in the classic:

"When force is small, but intentions are great, this is the third inauspicious situation."¹⁶⁴

and

"Relying on good fortune and presuming upon influence is the fourth misfortune."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Huizhen Jin 金惠贞, "Feng Shui Wen Xian Xiao Kao 风水文献小考 (Some examination on Feng Shui Scripts)," *Gan nan shi fan xue yuan xue bao* 34, no. 1 (2013): 69–76.

¹⁶³ [Guo Pu 郭璞?] (276-324), *Zang shu* 葬書 (Book of burial) (Yangzhou : Jiangsu Guangling gu ji ke yin she. 1990).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Recalling the Chinese proverb about one's fate, dynasty and Feng Shui, the effectiveness of Feng Shui was embedded in a greater system of knowledge, in which a premise of Feng Shui emerges.¹⁶⁶ There is little research proving the argument of “buried poorly” referring to the rituals of burial practices instead of the premise of Feng Shui. It may also mean the precise and detailed spacetime requirement of the divination result.

Although the tradition encourages the burial nearby for the deceased, due to economic and political reasons, most people (especially urban residents) are cremated and buried in the cemetery. The contemporary cemeteries in the city are usually large parcels of land transferred and developed by semi-private and private developers. The developer then sells most of the subdivided, developed graves to clients. This type of so-called “operative cemetery” is the major destination of most deceased of urban residents. Larger cemeteries usually products several types of “grave products” for selection. Different grave products usually only differ in style but remain of relatively similar size. The regulatory body (usually the Civil Affairs Bureau of a local jurisdiction) often sets tough standards for the planning and development of cemeteries, especially on the size of graves. As an example, Article 21 of Funeral Affairs Rules of City of Chongqing has set a one square meter size limit for “single and double cremation grave.”¹⁶⁷ Many other cities in China have similar standard to prevent the grave taking up too much space. As a result, the grave products that cemeteries provide become similar, or in another word, modular. When a grave is purchased, a cemetery provides

¹⁶⁶ See Introduction, 3.

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China 中华人民共和国民政部. *Binzang Guanli Tiaoli 2012 Xiuzhengben* 殡葬管理条例(2012年修正本) (Code of Burial Practice of 2012). <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/gk/fg/shsw/201507/20150715849122.shtml>.

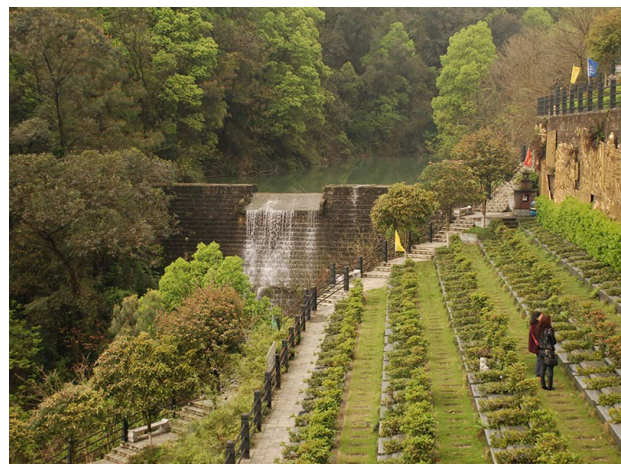
clients a few types of ornamentation style. Since clients can only modify the carving of the gravestone though the cemetery, most of the Feng Shui practices related to grave itself are simplified. Feng Shui masters are hired for selecting the exact grave from the graveyard and host the funeral rituals. In most cases, the later become a more dominant duty.

Other than graves in different styles as the main products, a cemetery usually also provides the basic maintenance and amenities to its clients. Two kinds of amenities here are provided in a typical cemetery. Functional amenities such as an



Left: Figure 3.3: A typical tomb in contemporary China with ceremony to memorialize the past. Photo by author. (partly processed to avoid impingement)

Bottom: Figure 3.4: A typical cemetery located on the hills in contemporary China. Photo by author.



incinerator are usually provided for fire safety and ritual, as one of the most important traditional rituals contains burning paper money as oblation for ancestors. Decorative landscapes relate more to the Feng Shui practices. In general, cemeteries usually avoid “bad locations” (evaluated by rules of Feng Shui). Landscapes are considered an

important index for the quality of the cemetery, depending on the region and different topics, Buddhism status and towers, flowers, as well as Christian cross are all commonly seen in the cemetery. The landscape generally improves the Feng Shui of a cemetery, while practitioners may suggest avoiding certain location specifically for some deceased, they are typically satisfied with the overall landscape of cemetery. Of course, the reason behind may be twofold. Feng Shui practitioners usually work in or with specific cemetery. As recommendation by the cemetery, practitioners tend not to give their business opportunities away. On the other side, the design and construction of cemeteries also involves Feng Shui practitioner, although only as consultant, they would generally point out inappropriateness to avoid later costly adjustment.

Cremation as a method was not popular in China throughout its history, especially regions under great influence of the Confucianism. As the early classic of Confucianism *Liji* writes, "All the living must die, and dying, return to the ground."¹⁶⁸

This makes sense considering that Feng Shui is based on the Qi being conducted through the connection between the corpse of parents and their offspring. If the corpse of parents does not maintain its physical form, cremated, the connection cannot be sustained either.

Although as early as Han and Tang dynasty, cremation was introduced into China first with the spreading of Buddhism than a social norm, whether cremation is lawful changes from dynasty to dynasty.¹⁶⁹ Today, many elders still prefer land burial over cremation, as they believe it is an ancient Chinese convention that eternal peace

¹⁶⁸ Hao Chen 陳澧(1261-1341), *Li ji ji shuo* 禮記集說 (Selection of rituals) (Shanghai: gu ji chu ban she, 1987).

¹⁶⁹ Cheng Wang 王稱 (active 12th), *Dong du shi lue:130 juan* 東都事略 (Summary of events in the Eastern Capital) (Jinan : Qi Lu shu she, 2000).

is achieved when buried in land.¹⁷⁰ In rural area of China, the customary rule for burial is more flexible. The tombs are commonly seen on the hill, in the woods or on the corner of a crop field.

The problem whether cremation hinders the process of Qi conduction does not significantly arise in the practice of Feng Shui. At least the argument did not really evolve into a debate in paganism and resurrection as in other religions.¹⁷¹ Feng Shui practitioners today take a very practical approach to this question. In the history even finest method of land burial cannot preserve the body from decomposition in a few years, but a good Feng Shui can benefit the offspring of several generations, so the form of remain, cremation or land burial should not affect the effectiveness of Feng Shui.¹⁷² However, some practitioners also argue that in the historical annotated version of the *Book of Burial*, which represents a more Confucian approach towards Feng Shui, the annotation criticize the behavior of cremation as disrespectful towards family member. Hence, cremation should be avoided if possible.¹⁷³ However, since cremation become nearly mandatory in mainland China, the majority of Feng Shui practitioners choose not to argue against public policy.

Hosts and rituals of the funeral usually depending on the background and preference of the family. An option that family have is to invite the Feng Shui master to

¹⁷⁰ The concept is contented as a Chinese Word: Ru Tu Wei An (入土为安).

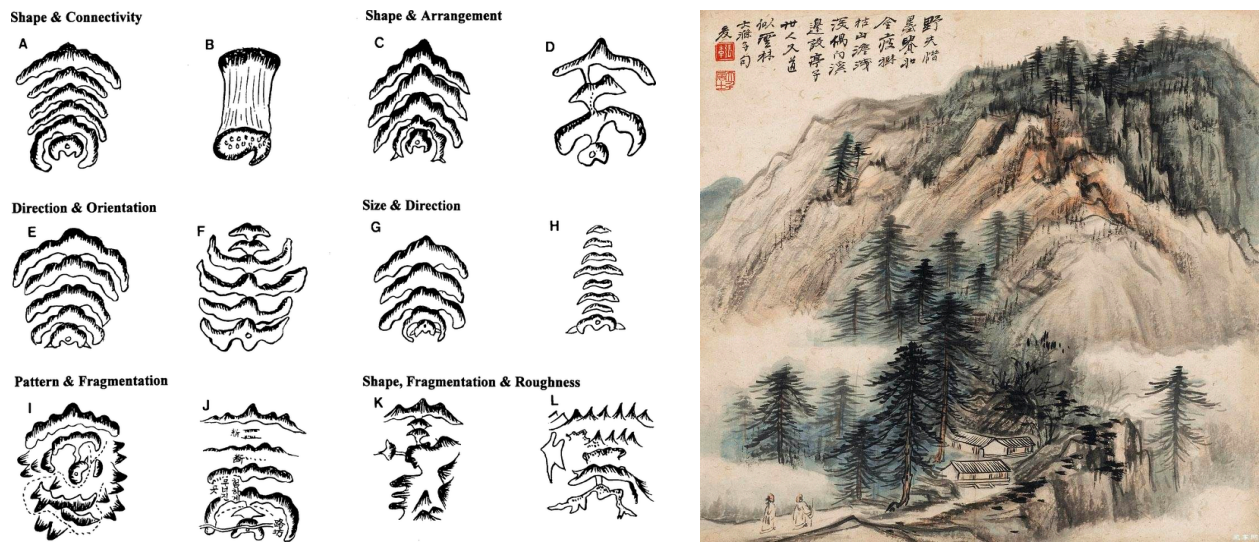
¹⁷¹ Stephen R Prothero, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2002), 74-75.

¹⁷² [Baoshuanglong 包双龙?]. *Huo Zang Yin Xiang Feng Shui Ma* 火葬影响风水吗 - 包双龙 (Does cremation impacts Feng Shui?). Accessed August 26, 2021. <https://kanyu.yunshi.com.cn/zhishi/36999.html>.

¹⁷³ [Guo Pu 郭璞?] (276-324), *Zang shu* 葬書 (Book of burial) (Yangzhou : Jiangsu Guangling gu ji ke yin she. 1990).

host the funeral where rituals and tools are planned in a combination of Buddhism, Taoism and Feng Shui conventions. Here the role of Feng Shui again expands.

There are far more varieties in the burial practices in different region, different time and different government jurisdiction. Feng Shui as a cultural phenomenon often connect to burial practice. The nature of Feng Shui, where precise spacetime result of divination is acknowledged and applied, provides a vast space for rituals and ceremony in the burial practice. From selecting the burial site, to organize the burial rituals, and other aspects depending on how practitioners vending their services. Feng Shui has exceeded its historical context from its theoretic literature in the modern burial practices but yet forms its own status and reputation in the burial practice. In another word, it is more accurate to describe the activities in Feng Shui are shaped by the



Left: Figure 3.5: Morphologic references in Feng Shui writings. Right: Figure 3.6: Classic Chinese painting by Chang Dai-Chien.

needs of ritual for modern burial practice instead of the contrary. It absorbs rituals from other religious practices and develop its own form based on the theory. Inheritance and

development of Feng Shui, facilitated by its users, has transformed itself into a manual not only for site selection but rituals post to site selection.

"A Spiritual World Based on History"

As a reservoir of the classic Chinese method of divination and folk practice, far more content and possible heritage can be extracted from the following research, such as the artistic interpretation of Feng Shui. Despite the high artistic achievement of classic Chinese painting and literature, the classic manuscripts of ancient China usually rely heavily on literature and rarely use graphics. As a practice of spatial arrangement, Feng Shui requires graphics to precisely deliver its knowledge. Hence, a simplified graphics style was transformed and invented from classic Chinese painting. It is also an exciting project to go into how philosophies of emotional resonance have both lost and enhanced the Feng Shui view of the world through documentation. However, due to the limitation of the thesis and my lack of expertise in certain areas of study, the chapter focused more on Feng Shui's instruments, rituals, and transformation of Feng Shui internationally. As an international heritage, I believe Feng Shui's conservation can hardly be discussed without its transformation clarified.

From Shi Pan to Luo Pan, from Luo Pan to hanging crystal balls, they all represent the history, power and influence of Feng Shui. As a tradition, a practice and a knowledge that has been passed on for hundreds if not thousands of years, Feng Shui qualifies for the intangible cultural heritage in sense of time. However, the modernization and adaptation of Feng Shui, its vitality, is so strong in our society and

community, sometimes we forget how it resonates with the struggles and hopes of our ancestors.

Flexibility plays a predominant role in shaping Feng Shui, its service, products, or philosophy. In Feng Shui practices in North America, I observed how consultation and education services become a successful, sustainable and localized business operations. In the eyes of Fundamentalist of Feng Shui, the authenticity of Feng Shui has lost in the process of commodification. However, commodification is not necessarily an opposition of its authenticity, to a degree it may be a reflection of its authenticity. Although classics of Feng Shui rarely mentioned religious rituals or practices other than geomancy and land divination itself, the practices often fill the voids of spirituality and religion in the local communities. In rural communities, the agricultural economy is often so small that a spiritual service (sometimes including the practice of medicine) provider has to manage all kinds of spiritual services, including but not limited to Feng Shui. In a practical sense, Feng Shui was never invented as a way of understanding and seeing the universe but a way to help taking advantage of it for the good livings. As it is used, Feng Shui must become flexible and sensitive to the needs of the community.

However, the flexibility is limited on its theoretical foundation which based on individual practices and ancient classics. While Feng Shui transform to a global phenomenon, its flexibility is challenged, and practitioners have to face such challenge individually. Although there are practitioners like Wang Yun who tries to develop the ancient classics into a more globalized and unified theory and fulfill the diverse needs

across the board, their work is often attacked by fundamentalists and sometimes marked as cult or unorthodox.

In the time of change, the heritage value of Feng Shui stands out in three aspects as intangible cultural heritage.

Feng Shui is composed by a system of knowledge and skills which survives the time. Although this system of knowledge and skills were divided into different schools, geographic characteristics and time periods, they are constructed along a lineage and shares basic theory, terminology and tools. Some of the theories and tools are embedded in their own inheritance. The make and use of Feng Shui compass, the mountain reference, and the burial practices of the form school are all facets of the whole Feng Shui knowledge system. This knowledge and skill system are also evolving as well, both internally and externally. With modernization and urbanization of the built environment, Feng Shui quickly develops ways to serve the new lifestyle and the high-density cityscape, residential interiors Feng Shui is one of them. This also paves its popularity in traditionally nonwestern countries such as the United States and Europe. Feng Shui also absorbs and renovates its techniques with new technology and concepts from other popular spiritual practices. Now practitioners could use Google Map, satellite topography and drones to analysis the general form of a place in order to look at the Feng Shui from a bigger picture. Conventional tools of Feng Shui like mirror and religious symbols are also gradually replaced by crystals or gems of other kinds, which could also be a harmonious and less symbolic decoration. The religious connection of Feng Shui, especially to traditional Chinese religions like Buddhism and Taoism, is deliberately weakened during and for its dissemination in the western world.

Feng Shui as a folk tradition is both profound and widely spread. Its manifestation contains a couple activities. First the desire to consult Feng Shui professions, then voluntarily monitoring its setting under guidance of professions and actively learn, use and advocate for Feng Shui in individual life. Historically, as the ban on “feudal tradition” was lifted in mainland China, Feng Shui as a folk tradition quickly recovered in both rural and urban setting, in both undeveloped traditional communities and developed globalized communities. The faith embedded in the folk tradition represents a cultural tradition in Chinese society that is similar to Animism or Pantheism. Even without the use of concepts like *Qi* or Energy, community members believe that certain environments are beneficial, and Feng Shui is the knowledge to understand and take advantage of it. In Korea, Geomancy has also played an important role in the loyalty which people feel toward their hometowns.¹⁷⁴ The knowledge system, methodologies, rituals and taboos of Feng Shui were later recognized and adopted by the New Age Movement which founded its popularity in the international community as well. Of course, the manifestation of the tradition of using Feng Shui is obviously distinguishable in the context and discourse of globalized community and rural community, for example the attitudes towards burial practice, thus forms diverse services and consultations of Feng Shui. The needs for Feng Shui service developed into mature industry where education, consultation, products and, communication meet.

Most importantly, Feng Shui serves as a underlying color of the nature, space and our built environment. In some practices, nature (mountain and rivers) was seen as

¹⁷⁴ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

animate due to Feng Shui.¹⁷⁵ By arranging different factors like orientation, form and time, physical space is transformed into a vivid organism. By delivering a message in the collaborate and communicative interaction between human and the living environment, this vivid organism is divinized and metaphysical. By blending the boundary between the object and subject in the process of divination as in the burial practices, Feng Shui transcends from its physical context, rationalizes not only the physical layout of our built environment but the cultural structure of the community. As Zhao stated in the description of “a spiritual world based on history”, heritage always carries the history of contemporality.¹⁷⁶ The contemporary practices of Feng Shui and the adaptability of Feng Shui as a system of knowledge, a ritual and a widely practiced diverse folk tradition comes from its infiltration of the social and cultural mechanism of China. The infiltration does not form as a knowledge or skill but the precision and empathy with the coherent material world.

In this chapter, the tools and rituals of Feng Shui are explained, as well as its transcultural development and relationship to late modern paganism. It reveals a vague lineage of Feng Shui though time and different regions, and how the procedures and practices has also been affected, shaping the contemporary practice of Feng Shui .

¹⁷⁵ Hong-key Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs; v. 89 (Taipei, Republic of China: Chinese Association for Folklore, 1976), 232.

¹⁷⁶ Tingyang Zhao 赵汀阳, *Li shi, shan shui, yu qiao* 历史, 山水, 渔樵, Beijing di 1 ban. (Beijing: Sheng huo, du shu, xin zhi san lian shu dian, 2019), 37.

Chapter Four

The effort to conserve and reuse the past exists in many civilizations across the globe. Layers of history can be found embedded both in the historic built environment and living traditions. From the euro-centric early conservation activities and practices that focused narrowly on the architectural or archaeological preservation of physical structures, to the diverse activities and practices that studies and engages the cultural, economic, social and political intangible structure behind material heritage, the discourse of heritage conservation is now technically inclusive and culturally diverse.

From the primitive practices of reusing buildings and conserving the natural environment, to the practices of Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc, to Athens Charter (1931), Venice Charter and Florence Charter, to the international conservation organizations like UNESCO and ICOMOS, to the Nara Document and commencement of effort to safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage (ICH), the history of heritage conservation reflects a lineage of the development of heritage conservation, both of its depth and circumference. Today, we are trying to figure out how heritage impacts and reshapes our communities; how knowledge, culture, and tradition are embedded and inherited in heritage; how to preserve and advocate for the history of our once ignored and disadvantaged communities; how to not only protect heritage from conflicts and climate change; how to achieve economic, social, and sustainable success from conservation; and how to recognize and conserve the unseen and untouchable heritage, the ICH. Heritage conservation is not an idle and conservative architectural movement but a field of study that collaborates with other disciplines and manages the change of our built environment in order to deliver the past to the future.

Although the discipline of heritage study and heritage conservation are developing rapidly, the discourse of heritage encompassed different disciplines. Uzzell writes, “The heritage is the meeting ground of many disciplines, and it is on that meeting ground that we are confronted with issues which as researchers we give scant regard.”¹⁷⁷ Architecture, history, sociology, and cultural study all take particular interest in heritage studies. Since heritage research and conservation are typically closely engaged with all governance and public policies, the academic discourse of heritage is often challenged by realistic practices. The interdisciplinary nature of heritage conservation also provides a wide range of direction and purpose.

Feng Shui has such a unique character that it does not fit neatly into one of the categories of heritage. The international practices of identification, categorization, and conservation of heritage challenges our ability to conserve Feng Shui as a whole. However, various scholars from different fields have been reflective and critical about heritage as a discourse, opening the door to a broader possible consideration of Feng Shui as heritage.

The essence of heritage can be a thing and a discourse. The invention of heritage is a collaboration of social and political efforts. But by its very nature, modernity and a whole new world it facilitated by, plays an essential role in the birth of heritage. Though the development of modernity, heritage is gradually publicized, authorized, and commodified. In this chapter we will first focus on the relationship between modernity and heritage. The second section reflects the heritage by its nature as an authorized discourse that serves the invention of identities and tradition, and how

¹⁷⁷ David Uzzell, “Where Is the Discipline in Heritage Studies? A View from Environmental Psychology,” 2009, 326–33.

that is been done in China. Feng Shui among other traditional practices of China has also been criticized as an unwanted laggard feudal representation. In this chapter we will also discuss Feng Shui in the context of difficult heritage. And lastly, we will focus on the conservation of Feng Shui with case studies of acupuncture.

Modernity, Heritage and Conservation

When considering heritage as an object, an architecture, or an entity, common knowledge tells us it is ancient, old, historical, or at least from the past. However, the concept of heritage, and the whole discourse and knowledge system on top of it, was a modern product. From a broad and West-centric approach, when looking back to its commencement, the history of heritage study and conservation may direct itself to the early writings and practices of conservation by Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc. Sometimes further into the past with the early historical primitive conservation such as reuse and preservation of buildings and objects. The later development of heritage study and conservation was based on those debates and realistic challenges throughout the last couple of centuries. Those conclusions, creative solutions, and meeting results to the debates and challenges were introduced as standards, Charters, and policies. However, since the invention of heritage, the concept has quickly expanded beyond the discipline of architecture and archeology. Heritages now is inclusive to records and representations of the recent past, underrepresented groups and interests, and difficult pasts. Once a separate field to cultural heritage, natural heritage has been gradually reevaluated for its cultural value.

Moreover, scholars and conservationists also try to surmount the obstacle of material-immaterial by reevaluating in the intangible value of tangible heritage and the

inventing of intangible cultural heritage. The role played by cultural heritage in politics and societies also reflected the advancement of modernity. As the records and reflections of history and public memories, cultural heritage becomes a stable median supporting identities, ideologies, and traditions, regardless of their authenticity. The public interest in cultural heritage has also risen over recent centuries, partly due to the global efforts to seek inclusive identities and traditions.

However, as a discursive formation, heritage has been facing both internal and external challenges as it coevolves with modernism and modern society. As stated before, the international standards for identification, conservation, and management of heritage were built on a European model. Although later improvements and amendments were made, and many countries developed different heritage discourses to facilitate their unique values and cultures, the concept of cultural heritage's universal values of humankind strives to justify itself in the diversifying world of the late modernity.

Intangible cultural heritage (ICH), a recent invention in the heritage discourse, represents empowered immaterial practices and traditions.¹⁷⁸ It also reflects the migrated attention from material conservation to heritage as a discourse and a value system in the world heritage community. Even though the number of UNESCO ICH

¹⁷⁸ The "intangible cultural heritage" means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

"Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003." *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12, no. 4 (November 2005): 447–58. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739105050277>.

listings has been proliferating, it is still a relatively new concept. A tradition, folk practice, or lifestyle is not only important to its people but valuable to humankind. However, although there are flexible concepts of heritage designation such as cultural landscape and ICH, heritage like Feng Shui still has trouble in categorization and conservation.

At its commencement, heritage referred to tangible objects like architecture. It is essential to realize that, as stated by Harrison, in the graduate process of dematerialization of heritage, heritage is not a thing anymore but an illustrated attitude and relationship to the past.¹⁷⁹ He also states that heritage is a contemporary creation and reflects the gaze and attention to the past. Such gaze and attention may be presented in tangible architecture and place, or intangible traditions and practices.¹⁸⁰ Regardless of its forms, heritage helps define our relationship to society and elements of our identity.

The definition of modernity varies in different schools and times. Sociologists, political historians, and art historians all have different definitions and critical representations of modernity. However, there are a few common, inter-relative representations of modernity. It is generally recognized that the age of Enlightenment marks the commencement of modernity, and the birth of the nation-state, industrialization, urbanization and global economy prone to liberalism and capitalism are all representations of modernity. As Anthony Giddens concludes:

At its simplest, modernity is a shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of

¹⁷⁹ Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiajing, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021), 16.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society - more technically, a complex of institutions which like any preceding culture lives in the future rather than in the past.¹⁸¹

A critical connection to heritage here is the shifting cognition of the past and time in the discourse of modernity. The cognition defines and regulates the relationship to the past, which facilitate the birth of modern discourse of heritage, including empiricism and rationalism as the source of predominate source of knowledge and authority, the establishment of the opposition and unity of the past and present, and creatively using “invented tradition” as a foundation of the nation-state.¹⁸² Last, modernity facilitates an unprecedented experience of time and change. The dynamics of modernity provide constant change, renewals, expansions, and declines, in which heritage becomes a survivor of the past. As stated by Bruno Latour:

The moderns have a peculiar propensity for understanding time that passes as if it were really abolishing the past behind it..... Since everything that passes is eliminated for ever, the moderns indeed sense time as an irreversible arrow, as capitalization, as progress.¹⁸³

In the development of modernity into a state of late modernity, or “liquid modernity” by Bauman, time further accelerates and tears apart past and present.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Anthony Giddens, *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1998), 94.

¹⁸² Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006); Gavin Lucas, *The Archaeology of Time*, Themes in Archaeology (London; Routledge, 2005); E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto edition., Canto Classics (Cambridge: University Press, 2012).

¹⁸³ Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1993).

¹⁸⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2000).

Quite a lot of problems and debates on heritage and conservation we face today are, in fact, displays of problems on late modernity.

Perhaps the most important display of empiricism and rationalism essence in modernity and heritage is the concept of “Outstanding Universal Value.”

Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole. The Committee defines the criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List.¹⁸⁵

Since heritage itself is an invented concept, it requires scholastic practice to engage and employ. Heritage conservation becomes a highly concentrated area of study and practice, part of the “authorized heritage discourse” (AHD) as named by Smith.¹⁸⁶ However, as stated by Evans and Smith, the discourse and management of heritage based on its universal and outstanding value have jeopardized the engagement and participation of local stakeholders and heritage communities.¹⁸⁷ Smith further argues that the practice of conservation of UNESCO conventions is principally derived from Western heritage cognition and practices. The AHD has formed an official representation of heritage that excludes the participation of certain parties and hence fortified the power and structure to manage and interpret heritage.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ UNESCO, “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,” Pub. L. No. WHC.21/01 (2021).

¹⁸⁶ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

¹⁸⁷ Graeme Evans, “Living in a World Heritage City: Stakeholders in the Dialectic of the Universal and Particular,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies: IJHS* 8, no. 2 (2002): 117–35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250220143913>.

¹⁸⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

One of the characteristics of modernity is the opposition and unity of the past and present. The supposed-to-ever-progressing society is also ever threatened by decline. What once survived hard times may further worsen.¹⁸⁹ Modernity must define itself by its opposite, the past.¹⁹⁰ As the two combine, a unique sense of nostalgia has formed, partly as an admiration of things overcoming time (temporarily) and as a sanctuary to stand off the uncomfortable crucial part of modernity. Harrison uses the museum as an example of how pieces of the past were preserved and interpreted as a remnant of the past, as proof of progression, and as the container for harmless nostalgia.¹⁹¹ The popularity of heritage tourism has further displayed how nostalgia has reflected our sense of time. From the primitive visiting, seeing, and hearing experience to the more popular experience-based heritage tourism, interpretations of heritage have carefully separated the past and present, seemingly time freezes at the most outstanding moment of a heritage once practices of conservation engage.

Harrison has pointed out that conservation is associated with heritage as a concept of civic duty in European countries.¹⁹² In 19th century Europe, the legislative process started to identify and conserve heritage, such as the foundation of "*Commission des Monuments Historique*" in France, and Britain's "*Ancient Monument Protection Act of 1882*". Those legislative actions drive heritage into the public realm and greatly bond heritage identification and conservation to a certain level of expertise.

¹⁸⁹ Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiajing, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021), 29.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁹² Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiajing, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021), 50.

The heritage practices gradually spread to different parts of the world and later inspired and founded the United Nation's heritage practices. However, it is important to point out, other than the sense of exclusion of expertise discourse, the public realm of heritage is never truly public to everyone. Varies in different countries and times, people with specific attributes such as classes, races, and genders are excluded from the public realm, which still holds true today.

After World War II, the post-war rebuilding process of both ruined material world and international world order, was later transformed into a kind of heritage conservation activity internationally. Between countries in conflict, heritage and cultural resources are often targeted as national properties to harm not only the country but the foundation of the nation-state itself. The signing of the 1954 Hague Convention (*Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention 1954*) marked the global efforts to recognize the importance of heritage in the post-war order of international society.¹⁹³

In the late twentieth century, heritage as a byproduct of modernity also transformed itself into a strategy for the conservation of our fragile late modernity. The fragility is partly represented by how vulnerable and threatened existing heritages are, and partly by how quickly our recent past has been left behind. By turning abandoned factories, offices, stations, houses, even businesses into heritages, we "give a second life" to those things.¹⁹⁴ Conservation as management and redevelopment of those

¹⁹³ Kevin Chamberlain, *War and Cultural Heritage: An Analysis of the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and Its Two Protocols*, Second edition. (Crickadarn: Institute of Art & Law, 2013).

¹⁹⁴ "Give a second life" : Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

historical resources naturally turns into an even broader field, an economically sustainable industry of heritage. Whether it is real estate, tourism, or potentially NFT in the Metaverse, the commodification seems to be unavoidable consequence of heritage in the modernity of today. Many scholars have also argued conservation and rehabilitation of our built environment from a sustainability standpoint, a topic deserving its own attention.¹⁹⁵

Here we can generally observe the three phases of heritage conservation since its commencement. In the 18th century, it was a process to collect history into the public realm. In the 19th and early 20th century, it is gradually used as the cornerstone for nation-states and national identity. In the late 20th century and 21st century, it is a management process of redundancy and waste.¹⁹⁶

It is essential to locate Feng Shui and intangible cultural heritage in today's large map of heritage theory. The conservation of Feng Shui is not only identifying what part of Feng Shui is authentic, valuable, and worth preserving but also whether and how we should manage the relationship between Feng Shui and our future. Furthermore, Feng Shui has an inclusive context of its own; it is both natural and cultural, material and immaterial, official and unofficial, almost covering all aspects of heritage at once.

Official Heritage, AHD and Politics of Representation in China

¹⁹⁵ A generalized reading on this is the work by Max Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, Why X Matters Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

¹⁹⁶ Kevin Hetherington, "Secondhandedness: Consumption, Disposal, and Absent Presence," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 22, no. 1 (February 2004): 157–73.

Today, the main body of heritage conservation practices are predominantly determined by the government of each country and the UNESCO. Modern governance usually relies on classification and identification to affirm a heritage in its jurisdiction. A concept of official heritage was invented to represent the practices affirmed by legislation or charters. On the contrary, unofficial heritage refers to those heritage practices and discourses not affirmed by legislation and governance.

Official and unofficial heritage are contradictory but united concepts that can coexist. Harrison uses Stonehenge as an example to tell the relationship between official and unofficial heritage. Stonehenge, Avebury, and Associated Sites (the official listed name on UNESCO world heritage listing) are both Scheduled Monuments (official heritage in England) and World Heritage Site (official heritage in UNESCO). The official heritage recognizes its archeological value primarily. While the ancient function of Stonehenge remains an academic discussion, people, mainly neo-druidism believers, have been gathering at Stonehenge on the Summer and Winter Solstices since the early twentieth century. While the gathering was never encouraged or officially recognized as part of the Stonehenge heritage, English Heritage (the official management body of England's cultural heritage) tolerated the conduct. Gradually, the gathering on solstice day attracts more and more visitors. Harrison argues that the archeological value and meaning are the official part of the heritage, and the modern-day usage is the unofficial heritage.¹⁹⁷ He further references Smith that the value of

¹⁹⁷ Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiajing, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021), 17.

official heritage does not relate to the essence of heritage itself, but people with expertise or authority, which is ratified and executed by the state.¹⁹⁸

Unofficial heritage is often a critical predecessor of official heritage and represents the collective community's efforts in recognizing a valuable heritage. When Pennsylvania Station in New York City was facing demolition in 1963, an interested community that recognized its architectural and aesthetic value was formed to preserve the building. Although the preservation of the material building was unsuccessful, many believe the effort later pushed the public recognition of Penn Station as lost heritage and spurred the creation of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.¹⁹⁹

The division between official and unofficial becomes even more blurry when heritage discourse steps across the material boundary. Intangible cultural heritage, many in forms of folklore and custom, may be less likely to be recognized as official heritage. Harrison argues that late twentieth-century official heritage practices focus on a “Canonical” model of official heritage - the most representative, outstanding heritage, the greatest, oldest, and most significant heritage. In comparison, folkloric and vernacular heritage, due to their consistency and dailiness, are recognized as mundane and less canonical.²⁰⁰

Hobsbawm has classify three general types of invented tradition in his writing of *The Invention of Tradition*,

¹⁹⁸ Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London ; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

¹⁹⁹ Randall Mason, *The Once and Future New York Historic Preservation and the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

²⁰⁰ Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiajing, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021), 21.

They seem to belong to three overlapping types: a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior. While traditions of types b) and c) were certainly devised (as in those symbolizing submission to authority in British India), it may be tentatively suggested that type a) was prevalent, the other functions being regarded as implicit in or flowing from a sense of identification with a 'community' and/or the institutions representing, expressing or symbolizing it such as a 'nation'.²⁰¹

Although the context of tradition was slightly different from heritage, heritage as a product of created tradition and identity, can also fall into this category. Canonical heritage can be used to create a tradition; First by collecting material (or in later practices impartial) heritage into the discourse of the public realm, then using the legislative process or authority to canonicalize heritage, and finally, proving a created or modified tradition with the material proof of heritage.

A critical transition in the process of creating heritage and tradition is the work of Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD). Although in the primitive stage, heritage discourse has already been corralled in an interdisciplinary setting, it became a further authorized discourse when heritage becomes politicalized as a part of identity or even a source of legitimization. Because heritages, especially canonical heritages, play such an essential role in the characteristic official representation, related heritage discourse are bureaucratized and specialized, refusing the proactive participation of laypersons.²⁰²

²⁰¹ E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Canto edition., Canto Classics (Cambridge: University Press, 2012), 9.

²⁰² Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

The previous section discussed how heritage is used as material representation of national identity in constructing a modern nation-state. The national identity is assembled, consolidated, enhanced, and promoted by conserving canonical heritage. However, the concept of nation-state varies in different countries. Various scholars such as Page, Mason, Harrison, and Smith have written on heritage movement development in different countries, especially between non-colonial countries in Europe and early colonial countries like the U.S. and Australia.²⁰³ In general, the historic preservation tradition of early colonial countries is rooted in Europe. In such a structure, material heritages are preserved in urban planning and development management discourse.²⁰⁴

The early conservation practices of European and early colonial countries later founded an international standard for heritage and conservation, represented by UNESCO world heritage listings and various charters regarding cultural heritage. Material-favored value discourse of heritage is especially alienating to those countries and communities with continuous cultural tradition or not having the tradition to preserve material buildings/objects. Those countries and communities face challenges from both sides. Not only do they have to reassemble their heritages in a western way, but the national identity building must also rely on a similar value discourse of heritage.

In recent decades, thoughtful comments on the deficiency and shortcomings of the technical, material, and western standards of heritage discourse have been raised by international heritage communities. Concepts like authenticity are redefined to

²⁰³ Randall Mason and Max Page, eds., *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429398896> ; Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006) ; David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (New York: Free Press, 1996).

²⁰⁴ Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiajing, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021), 24.

adopt the material heritage differently. Intangible cultural heritage was invented to recognize immaterial heritage.

As one of the first countries that joined the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, China has nominated over twenty elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In addition, China has recognized thousands of intangible cultural heritage elements at the national level. The emphasis of the Chinese government on ICH reflects some of the unique value in the development of China and its official heritage discourse.

In today's process of determination and categorization of cultural heritage in China, the overall historical discourse is predominately shaped by the Chinese government under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. In the twentieth century, with the fall of the Qing Dynasty, China began to build a modern state and remold its national identity. After the establishment of new China, under the governance of the communist party, the communist ideological tradition of Historical Materialism dominated the historical discourse and drew a clear line between the "New China" with the historical "feudal China."²⁰⁵ In its disproportionate representation, such as the great cultural revolution, cultural heritage was seen as an obstacle to the revolutionary progression of China. Although contemporary China has corrected its course on managing cultural heritage, certain aspects of the movement remain influential today and become part of the difficult heritage.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Historical materialism is Karl Marx's theory of history. It later develops into an interpretation of history by its Relations of Production, where feudalism society is process toward capitalism society and eventually socialism and communism society.

²⁰⁶ See Chapter 4: "Feng Shui: Difficult History, Difficult Heritage".

After the political movements of the 1960s and 1970s, a shared identity of China as a nation-state was reintroduced and fortified, healing the political chaos and regrouping the divergence. Other than recovering a general conservation approach to cultural heritages of historical China, “Revolutionary Heritages” as an individual category of heritage is created and mobilized to represent the history and identity of the People’s Republic of China.²⁰⁷ Conservation of traditional cultural heritage and revolutionary heritage have begun to take shape. An authorized heritage discourse has gradually formed to support the political efforts, laws, and policies regarding cultural heritage conservation. In this process, some heritage has been deemed canonical, while some are neglected.

Recent heritage in the Chinese context often refers to the heritage from the Republic of China to the first thirty years of the People's Republic of China. However, since recent heritage is often closely related to the history of civil conflicts, the ruling of the Chinese Nationalist Party, or other thought-to-be-sensitive historical times, recent heritages is often carefully interpreted by the AHD. In my professional practice in China, I have encountered several recent heritage sites in China that could not be open to the public due to worries about its interpretation. Those heritage shares a similar fate that they are recognized by the government and AHD of having (a relatively high) value, enlisted and protected as national heritage, with funding from the central government to maintain their integrity. However, despite its outstanding condition as buildings, local governments are reluctant to use them or open them to the public due to the history

²⁰⁷ Zhonggong Zhongyang Bangongting 中共中央办公厅 and Guowuyuan Bangongting 国务院办公厅. Guanyu Shishi Geminwenwu Baohuliyonggongcheng (2018-2022 nian) de yi jian 关于实施革命文物保护单位工程（2018-2022年）的意见 (2021). <http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/xwfbh/wqfbh/44687/45588/xgzc45594/Document/1704201/1704201.htm>.

associated. It is also important to mention that sometimes the government officials' personal understanding and interpretation of history cause neglect. Due to lack of reference, I cannot go into the details of the conservation of the recent heritage in China. The point is that the AHD is authorized and political regarding the recent heritage.

The purpose of the AHD in managing intangible cultural heritage and why the Chinese government is active with ICH are embodied in the *Law of Intangible Cultural Heritage of the People's Republic of China*. The fourth article states:

When protecting intangible cultural heritage, focus shall be laid on its authenticity, integrity and inheritance and such protection shall be conducive to strengthening the recognition of the culture of the Chinese nation, maintaining the unification of the country and the unity of the nation and promoting social harmony and sustainable development.²⁰⁸

As written, the purpose of ICH is to support national identity. Varutti has further concluded that the general development of museums, cultural heritage movement, and revival of traditional culture are all derivative of political construction.²⁰⁹ A common official identity of China is that China is a country of rich history and unified as a diverse nation.²¹⁰ Ying uses the museums and official exhibitions to analyze the representation of politics in three categories. The historic China represents the opposite of self, and the past serve as the opposite of contemporary. The modern and contemporary China

²⁰⁸ The 11th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress 第十一届全国人民代表大会常务委员会, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Feiwuzhi Wenhua Yichan Fa* 中华人民共和国非物质文化遗产法 (Legislation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of People's Republic of China), Pub. L. No. 42 (2011). https://www.ihchina.cn/zhengce_details/11569.

²⁰⁹ Marzia Varutti, *Museums in China: The Politics of Representation after Mao*, Heritage Matters, Volume 13 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014).

²¹⁰ Kai Yin 尹凯, Lishi yu minzu: Zhongguo bowuguan de zhengzhi biao zheng “历史与民族：中国博物馆的政治表征.” *Wen Bo Xue Kan*, no. 02 (2021): 49–55.

under the administration of Chinese Communist Party represents the self and serves as a role of transcendence compared to its historical counterpart. The inter-constructive relationship is formed to theoretically conclude the past and future between Chinese Han and minority nations.²¹¹ For the relationship between minority nations, Fei's discourse of "diverse but unified" ("inter-construct of the nation-state and minority nations" as by Jonsson) is used as an official representation.²¹² Although the politics of representation in museums differs from heritage, the shared national identities can be similar.

Identity-oriented heritage discourse also contains usages beyond politics. Heritage has been used to encourage cultural unity between Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and other regions of China.²¹³ Moreover, cultural heritage serves as a median for international collaboration and cultural diplomacy.²¹⁴ Since UNESCO started encouraging enlisting multinational heritages, China has also further emphasized its

²¹¹ Kai Yin 尹凯, Lishi yu minzu: Zhongguo bowuguan de zhengzhi biao zheng "历史与民族: 中国博物馆的政治表征." *Wen Bo Xue Kan*, no. 02 (2021): 49–55.

²¹² Xiaotong Fei 费孝通 (1910-2005). *Zhong Hua Min Zu Duo Yuan Yi Ti Ge Ju* 中华民族多元一体格局 (Diverse and unified paradigm of Chinese Ethnicity) (Beijing: Zhong yang min zu da xue chu ban she, 1999).

²¹³ Xinhua News Agency 新华社. *Guanyu Jinyibu Cujin liangan Jinji Wenhua jiaoliuhezuo de Ruogancuoshi* 关于进一步促进两岸经济文化交流合作的若干措施 (Incentives on Further Enhancing Economic and Cultural Collaboration between Taiwan and Mainland China). Xinhua News Agency 新华社. November 4, 2019. http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2019-11/04/content_5448363.htm.

²¹⁴ — — —. *Guanyu Jinyibu Jiaqiang Feiwuzhi Wenhuyichan Boahugongzuo de Yijian* 关于进一步加强非物质文化遗产保护工作的意见 (Comments on Further Enhancing the Conservation of Intangible Cultural Heritage). Xinhua News Agency 新华社. August 12, 2021. http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-08/12/content_5630974.htm.

international collaboration strategy in international heritage collaboration.²¹⁵ Lastly, as illustrated in the relationship between heritage and modernity, the heritage identity has become an experience-based commodity and international brand in today's heritage industry, generating new challenge for the conservationists.

The AHD in China has a very delicate job in heritage interpretation and management. The challenges within the organizational structure of AHD in China are multi-dimensional. The interpretation and use of heritage are constantly shaped by authority. First, the interpretation of national identity, China's rich and profound history, is the priority. Since the "othering" of feudal China supports the legitimacy of China today, the AHD must balance presenting the outstanding achievements while recognizing the historical limitations of feudal China. Second, as a nation-state with many ethnic minorities and subcultures, conserving the heritage of the ethnic minorities has been a core task for preserving the identity of a nation-state with multiple ethnic components. This process has accelerated as the concept of intangible cultural heritage has been recognized and added to the AHD. Different ethnic folk practices, traditions, beliefs, arts, music, and festivals are categorized as ICH. Some ethnic or regional traditions, like the Urtiin Duu, are shared with other countries, later becoming multinational UNESCO heritage.²¹⁶ Third, the AHD in China is separated into three ministries. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is the primary administrative government body for recognizing, categorizing, and conserving official heritage.

²¹⁵ "UNESCO - Urtiin Duu, Traditional Folk Long Song," accessed February 20, 2022, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/urtiin-duu-traditional-folk-long-song-00115>; Zhongguo wen hua yi chan yan jiu yuan, Zhongguo wen hua yi chan yan jiu yuan wai wen wu bao hu gong cheng xiang mu cheng guo ji: 2017-2019, 2021.

²¹⁶ "Urtiin Duu, Traditional Folk Long Song - Intangible Heritage - Culture Sector - UNESCO," accessed February 20, 2022, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/urtiin-duu-traditional-folk-long-song-00115>.

Ministries in managing the built environment, such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development, are authorized to handle the relationship between heritage and the built environment. A unique government body is the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party is in charge of ideology-related work. Based on how vital identity and ideology are regarding the unity and stability of the society, the Central Propaganda Department is carefully administrating the interpretation of heritage. Lastly, heritages are superimposed in states of a constructive source of identity and the stale redundancy from the past. Although the AHD strives to provide a space in-between, whether and how heritage should be interpreted and used are still predominantly elaborated by the AHD represented by the Propaganda Department. The heritage industry focuses on marketing the sense of past and fulfillment of nostalgia and creates identities for the market. While official AHD strictly limits the political representations of heritage, the heritage industry also seeks a marketable identity of heritage. Heritage in China are constantly reshaped by AHD of authority and the market.

Feng Shui: Difficult History, Difficult Heritage

In the field of heritage conservation, among conservationists and enthusiasts, the passion for protecting and sustaining a historical remnant is often a powerful drive to preserve cultural heritage. As the discourse engages in more contemporary heritage sites and places where historical events of conflict, controversy, and unfavorable history occur, a growing realization that heritage of difficult sites may further challenge, enhance and broaden the heritage conservation discourse has emerged.

Sharon Macdonald uses the Nazi past in Nuremberg as an example of difficult heritage. The concept is not about the particular heritage but looking at it through a lens of historical consciousness:

Yet whether they are perceived as troubling for contemporary identity may vary considerably; and what was once seen as a sign of a country's achievement may later come to be understood as a reason for regret.²¹⁷

As difficult heritage interacts, evolves, and is conserved, it pushes the discourse of heritage regarding its use, administration, public awareness, and struggle. Indeed, tangible and intangible heritage can be difficult in many different ways and incubate dilemmas and concerns. Tunbridge and Ashworth use “dissonant heritage” to arrange heritage in a border context of its discomfort and difficulty.²¹⁸ More recent scholars like Rowse, Waterton, McCarthy, and Wang, have written on difficult heritage with particular cases and their unique difficulties.²¹⁹

Is Feng Shui considered a difficult heritage? There is little discussion in the conservation community. The idea of difficult heritage is not yet a popular concept in the Chinese context. A quick search for “difficult heritage” on CNKI shows no more than twenty results.²²⁰ When Sharon Macdonald gave lectures about difficult heritage in

²¹⁷ Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203888667>, 2.

²¹⁸ Tuuli Lähdesmäki et al., *Dissonant Heritages and Memories in Contemporary Europe*, Palgrave Studies in Cultural Heritage and Conflict (Cham: Springer, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11464-0>.

²¹⁹ Tim Rowse and Emma Waterton, “The ‘Difficult Heritage’ of the Native Mounted Police,” *Memory Studies* 13, no. 4 (2020): 737–51, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698018766385>; Shu-Yi Wang, “A Social Approach to Preserve Difficult Heritage under Neoliberalism - a Leprosy Settlement in Taiwan and Beyond,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies: IJHS* 26, no. 5 (2020): 454–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2019.1644528>; Christine McCarthy, “Incidental Heritage: Difficult Intangible Heritages as Collateral Damage,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies: IJHS* 23, no. 1 (2017): 52–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2016.1232744>.

²²⁰ CNKI is the largest research and information publishing institution and platform in China.

China as visiting professor at Peking University, her talk “was followed by a long spontaneous commentary from the host setting out why China had not and, in his view, would not follow such a road.”²²¹ She then added, taking the “Cultural Revolution” as an example of difficult history, while there is unlikely to be an official museum yet, it is addressed in many private museums.²²² China's difficult heritages is rarely addressed either in management process or academia.

The long history of Feng Shui developing from a vague branch of the Chinese tradition of divination to a relatively independent cultural practice is a complex journey. Feng Shui and other forms of divination such as ancient astrology, alchemy, and fortune telling were once categorized with mathematics and engineering as “Method and Techniques.”²²³ These methods and techniques, including Feng Shui, sometimes raised the concern of the government and punished in the name of sorcery. The writing by sinologist Philip Kuhn, “*Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare Of 1768*,” has recorded a series of “sorcery scare” events in the eighteenth century at the peak of the Qing Dynasty.²²⁴ The book traces the causes of the sorcery scare back to its socioeconomic root. In the High Qing era, the growing cash economy, logistics, and uneven development between manufacture, trading center, and remote farming society

²²¹ Sharon Macdonald, “Is ‘Difficult Heritage’ Still ‘Difficult’?: Why Public Acknowledgment of Past Perpetration May No Longer Be So Unsettling to Collective Identities,” *Museum International* 67, no. 1–4 (2015): 6–22, <https://doi.org/10.1111/muse.12078>. 18.

²²² Evans, Harriet, and Michael Rowlands. “Reconceptualizing Heritage in China: Museums, Development and the Shifting Dynamics of Power.” In *Museums, Heritage and International Development*, 272–294, 2014.

²²³ The “Method and Techniques” is in contrast to “philosophy” which are considered more valuable in the historical knowledge system.

²²⁴ Philip A. KUHN, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare Of 1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

created a chronic unemployment wave when many peasants came to developed regions as beggars or monks.²²⁵ Been seen as a threat to local community, regional stability, and farming society in general, those disliked migrants were easily targeted in the excuse of sorcery. The struggle of the empire towards sorcery and a supernatural force is bilateral: the government and its legitimacy is associated with supernatural power in ways like official astrology and the divine right of emperor, however they must avoid associating or competing with the vernacular sorcery beliefs, which may leads to further recognition and fortification of the influence of the latter.²²⁶

Feng Shui plays an exciting role in the spectrum of supernatural power. Unlike general sorcery that lacks theoretical depth and official recognition, Feng Shui is more or less trusted by the royal family. The Law of the Qing Dynasty also gives it recognition as a subject, where cases of inserting foreign objects into one's tomb or coffin to harm its Feng Shui were punished as a sorcery.²²⁷

Today, academia does not put Feng Shui and its whole theoretic setting in the discourse of sorcery or relate it to the shamanic tradition of prehistoric East Asian society. In the eyes of researchers and trained practitioners, Feng Shui is distanced from sorcery. Indeed, according to the classics, practice manuals, and Feng Shui tools, Feng Shui is not sorcery. However, to the eyes of peasants and serfs, the promised

²²⁵ According to Kuhn, monks at the time, due to lack to identity management and its religious tradition, are not much better than beggars in terms of social status. And because monks have a religious-specific style of hair and dress, which is noncompliant with the requirement of Qing government toward the general public, they are easily recognized and sometimes depicted as noncompliance with the rule of Qing government.

²²⁶ Philip A. KUHN, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare Of 1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992). 107-120.

²²⁷ Zhu Qingqi 祝慶祺. *Xing an hui lan 刑案匯覽*: 60 juan, shou 1 juan, mo 1 juan, shi yi bei kao 1 juan; Xu zeng Xing an hui lan: 16 juan. Xu xiu Si ku quan shu 867. Shanghai]: Shanghai gu ji chu ban she, 1995.

outcome may indeed be as effective as many other sorcery promises. In the late Qing dynasty, when the conflicts between foreigner missionaries, traders and Chinese society, between religions of Christian origin and local beliefs, between strong-arm colonists and the Qing Dynasty peaked, the deep-rooted conflicts incited many troubling conflicts. Those events, roughly named anti-missionary riots, gradually evolved into a series of wars that overturned China's last dynasty.²²⁸

Until the late Qing Dynasty, especially after the First Opium War in 1840, foreign influence, primarily from euro-Americas and Japan, emerged and accelerated in China. With trade, religious missionaries and development, Feng Shui became an unofficial weapon against foreign influence, products, and development. Many western pioneers have documented Feng Shui as a formidable, sometimes inevitable obstacle in their tasks and missions. Utility poles and telegram wires brought terrible Feng Shui and misfortune, which incited many riots against their installation and people who proposed and supported the development.²²⁹ Mining, the spire tops of the church, and the building of railways are also in conflict with Feng Shui. The first railway in China, Woosung Railway, was constructed in 1876 but forced to close due to “local concerns to its influence on Feng Shui, growing crops and pedestrian safety.”²³⁰ One of the early railways which illustrated the conflict the most was the Jiaoji Railway in Shandong Province. In the later analysis of the historical material, Feng Shui was one of the

²²⁸ Jiao An (教案), see: Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (New York: Macmillan, 1929).

²²⁹ George Ernest Morrison, *An Australian in China: Being the Narrative of a Quiet Journey across China to Burma*, 2d ed. (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen PubCo, 1971). 155.

²³⁰ David Pong, “Confucian Patriotism and the Destruction of the Woosung Railway, 1877,” *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 4 (1973): 647–76, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X00013469>.

fundamental conflicts in the railway's survey, construction, and management.²³¹ Other conflicts, such as land acquisition and reimbursement and impact on the farmland, sometimes was also told in the name of Feng Shui. Lastly, in the end, Germans, who owned and operated the railway, also used Feng Shui to debate and support the railway. They reference the increasing annual numbers of scholars who passed the national exam before and after the construction.²³² Railways, as a representation of foreigners' technology, were a mystery and bizarre to the public. The nature of its building environment put it in the frontier confronting Feng Shui. In the clash, we see how Feng Shui was used, first by the Chinese, later by both parties, to debate foreign activities and colonization.

In this process, Feng Shui, like many vernacular beliefs, was transformed, weaponized, and empowered to balance and counteract the technology used by colonists and missionaries. When photography was brought to China by foreign missionaries and traders, society could not comprehend the technology despite the endorsement of the royal family. Soon rumors spread that the secret behind photography is using the human eyes, for which missionaries will lure children and followers into churches and steal their eyes. The rumor was so successfully spread out that more than 15% of anti-Christian riots in the late Qing dynasty were for this reason

²³¹ Wang Bin 王斌. *Conflicts and Adaptations in Technology Transfer to Modern China: The Jiaoji Railway Case.* Boston Studies in the Philosophy and History of Science. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62450-1_17.

²³² Ibid.

alone.²³³ The use of human body parts in rituals was a mystery in the context of traditional witchcraft, which was banned and strictly punished in the law. Books and magazines were printed to share stories about how eyeballs were taken and stored in the church, together with other rumors and speculations to promote the idea that photography was an evil sorcery tool targeting the Chinese people and China as a nation. Once the logic of sorcery organizations was constructed, technologies, modern weapons, and the purposes of foreigners became comprehensible and defensible. This example coincides with Bausinger's statement on the distrust of civil society on new technology.²³⁴ In this case, the technology is alien and hostile, and the new technology is spatial instead of temporal. Cultural phenomena such as witchcraft are born to help people understand and comprehend the unknown.²³⁵

The peak of the anti-Christian organization was the Boxer Rebellion, which was primarily made of peasants. Its strong resentment for foreigner and foreigner objects gives it an extraordinarily conservative and folk religion fundamentalism ideology. The rebellion believed that folk religious practices and rituals were effective and carried supernatural power to counterstroke the modern weapons of foreigners. Although Feng Shui was not recorded as being directly used as a weapon, it indeed serves as one of the guilty charges. Feng Shui was so involved in the daily discourse of the rebellion. It became their excuse to occupy any property on sight as their garrison. When the

²³³Wang Hongchao 王宏超. *Wushu, Jishu yu Wuming: Wanqing Jiaoran Zhong Wa Yan Yong Yu Zhaoxiang Yaoyan de Xingcheng yu Chuanbo* 巫术、技术与污名:晚清教案中'挖眼用于照相'谣言的形成与传播 (Sorcery, technology, and Stigma: How does the rumor of "eye gouging for photography" transporting in the riots against church in the late Qing dynasty). *学术月刊* 49, no. 12 (2017): 162–71.

²³⁴ Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

²³⁵ Ibid.

rebellion enters cities, their leads usually choose the mansion with a large courtyard as the garrison for their organization because good Feng Shui benefits their power. The owners must provide other amenities like food and supplies to avoid further trespassing.²³⁶ It is interesting to think that owning the mansion and courtyard meant that the land was assumed to have good Feng Shui, which was supposed to bring good fortune. However, certainly what brought with the rebellion is trouble and threat.

With the end of the Qing dynasty and the birth of a new republic government and later a new communist government of China, new culture and lifestyle were encouraged and enforced. Old traditions like Feng Shui were criticized and suppressed by legislation.²³⁷ Due to tremendous pressure from warfare and domestic production, strict rules applied to socio-economic activities, leaving little room for feudal traditions like Feng Shui. What was once thought to be hostile to the local communities, railways, and utility poles are later seen as symbols of modernization instead of Feng Shui taboos. Some villages voluntarily donated their Feng Shui forest to supply the railroad building and repair.²³⁸ However, in places conventionally strongly tied with Feng Shui, regions like Gan and Min, a subtle lineage was preserved even during the cultural revolution.²³⁹ Some practitioners today claim that they continued to study and

²³⁶ Jian Bozan 翦伯贊(1898-1968) and *Zhongguo shi xue hui* 中國史學會. *Yi he tuan* 义和团(The Boxer Rebellion) (Shanghai: Shen zhou guo guang she, 1951).

²³⁷ Guo Huaqing 郭华清. *Guomindang Zhenfu de Zongjiao Guanli Zhengce Shulue* 国民党政府的宗教管理政策述略 (Briefing on the Religion Policy of KMT government). *Shi jie zong jiao yan jiu = Shijie zongjiao yanjiu*, no. 2 (2005): 24–35. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1000-4289.2005.02.004>.

²³⁸ Feng Shui forest is a type of cultural landscape which was efforts of generations to improve Feng Shui of a place. Zhang Xingsha 张兴莎 and Chen Minyin 陈珉颖. Jiemi Bainian Yuehan Tielu 揭秘百年粤汉铁路 | 为了修铁路, 砍了守护村庄百余年的3000棵古树 (Secret behind the hundred-year Yue-Han Railway). Accessed September 28, 2021. <http://hunan.sina.com.cn/news/s/2021-07-29/detail-ikqcfnc9659280.shtml>.

²³⁹ Gan: Abbreviation for Jiangxi Province. Min: Abbreviation for Fujian Province.

communicate subtly with their master in Feng Shui. Once the suppression and ban were lifted, they soon found the opportunities to provide Feng Shui service again.²⁴⁰

Today, a great range of social class and income distributions are seen in Feng Shui practitioners. Famous Feng Shui practitioners have recognized scholarship or play an essential role in local society or have a strong reputation in Hong Kong or Taiwan. They are masters of both classics and modern writings on Feng Shui, and their studies are often posted in forms like blogs, forum posts, and seminar discussions. While their research is hardly recognized in academia, it certainly gives them credit in Feng Shui. Their educational background and title give them credibility in the local community as interpreters of Feng Shui. Those claiming to bear a lineage in Feng Shui within their family or school are considered orthodox.

The most disadvantaged practitioners are those who work part-time or are enthusiasts or peasants in the slack season. Their service is usually provided as a favor to friends and family and receives minimal compensation. Their service, especially those practitioners with less education, employs techniques from folk tradition. With the use of materials like rooster blood, rooster feathers, and donkey hoof in the ritual, the credibility of practitioners is enhanced.²⁴¹

While the upheaval of civil society and establishment of modern government has dramatically influenced and limited the use and spread of witchcraft in general, certain traditions like Feng Shui still retain their power. However, only a few practitioners encourage their children to carry on their traditions. Many even choose to discourage

²⁴⁰ Tianlai Lei 雷天来, "Research on Contemporary Gannan Feng Shui Masters 当代赣南风水师群体研究" (Master's Thesis 硕士学位论文, Ganzhou, Gannan Normal University 赣南师范学院, 2014).

²⁴¹ Rooster blood, rooster feather and donkey hoof are all tools represents the shamanic tradition of animal sacrifice.

their kids from learning.²⁴² If Feng Shui was indeed a promising career, why would people, especially practitioners, keep a distance towards it?

From the early sociological writings of Max Weber on Chinese religion to more recent writings of philosophers like Zhou Li and others, a connection between the mythology of China in the feudal era under the significant influence of Confucianism and the transformed remnant of prehistoric shamanism ritual practice has been discovered.²⁴³ 'Li' is one of the core concepts in Confucianism, but its essence is seldom mentioned in the classics. A significant number of paragraphs is on achieving the desired states of 'Li'.²⁴⁴ In a sense, the methodology of Confucianism is over its philosophical essence. Both Li and Eno have argued that its ritual's sacred process is more important than its outcome, like many shamanism and witchcraft practices observed in other parts of the world.²⁴⁵ Rituals and practices gradually transform into a code of a class and profession, which only limited members of society can perform. Confucianism and its concept, such as 'Li,' may be extracted and transformed based on those early rituals and practices. While in its development, spread, and necessary reform to serve the changing political needs, Confucianism stripped the mystery by rationalizing them into lifestyle, tradition, and social code. The core concepts still

²⁴² Tianlai Lei 雷天来, "Research on Contemporary Gannan Feng Shui Masters 当代赣南风水师群体研究" (Master's Thesis 硕士学位论文, Ganzhou, Gannan Normal University 赣南师范学院, 2014).

²⁴³ Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1962).
See also:

Zehou Li, *The Origins of Chinese Thought: From Shamanism to Ritual Regulations and Humaneness*, Modern Chinese Philosophy, Volume 17 (Leiden; Brill, 2018).

²⁴⁴ 礼, can refer to ritual, etiquette, organization or government.

²⁴⁵ Robert Eno, "The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mastery," SUNY Series in Chinese Philosophy and Culture (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990). also. Zehou Li and Qunlin Ma, *Xun Qiu Zhongguo Xian Dai Xing Zhi Lu =: Search for the Chinese Modernity*, Di 1 ban (Beijing : Dong fang chu ban she, 2019).

maintain a philosophy and cosmology of shamanism: a spiritual world that gods are molded, summoned, and countered via methods, via 'Li.' Professor Li further argues that 'Li' eventually became the religion of China in a process “from shamanistic ceremonies and rituals to social rites and customs.”²⁴⁶ There is no clear answer to whether the concept of “Qi” comes before or after this transformation of Confucianism historically. Today we see an interchangeable cosmology between the two.

Whether Feng Shui is an invisible characteristic of a place or a method to alter the former, a layer of shamanism remains. As a method to alter the characteristics of nature and force it in the will of humans, Feng Shui becomes marginalized but metaphoric. Today, when scholars and practitioners like Zhen and Su share the potential connection of shamanic tradition, Confucianism, and Feng Shui, critics are engaged from both sides.²⁴⁷ While Feng Shui is once again being criticized as a feudal tradition against the trend, many enthusiasts of Confucianism (and other Chinese religions) do not favor the potential significant shamanic influence on our cosmology and heritage either. On the contrary, they often see Confucianism as transcendent instead of inherited at its commencement.

The intangible essence of Feng Shui, as a method to perceive, manipulate, and protect the physical world, as rituals and performances to resonate with nature and sanctuaries livings from spiritual harm, carries many memories from the recent past, a time that China was in a critical turning point of history. With wars breaking the balance

²⁴⁶ Zehou Li, *The Origins of Chinese Thought: From Shamanism to Ritual Regulations and Humaneness*, *Modern Chinese Philosophy*, Volume 17 (Leiden; Brill, 2018), 52.

²⁴⁷ Yongnian Zhen 郑永年. *Zhongguo Wenhua de Wushuhua jiqi Houguo* 中国文化的'巫术化'及其后果 (The turning of Chinese culture into soccer and its impact). Accessed November 20, 2021. <https://www.aisixiang.com/data/91268.html>.

between the feudal dynasty and invading colonial power, with further development of colonial power in China, foreigner religions, technologies, and culture influx within a short amount of time, the traditions of Chinese society faced challenges to its foundation, especially when the challenger “magic” prevails over the former. With other methods embedded in the Confucian cosmology, Feng Shui stood on the frontier on this war of identity and ideology. The value of Feng Shui as a tradition is dependent on the understanding of how much its contexts represents for the whole tradition cosmology. The difficult essence of Feng Shui as a heritage comes from the delayed public reflection and rediscovery of the relationship between a thought-to-be barbaric shamanic view of the world in East Asia, and the thought-to-be disenchanting Confucian cultural tradition. As one of the most profound and systematic knowledge that resonates with the ancient shamanic tradition of ritual and performance, Feng Shui deserves attention to its value and difficulty.

Putting Feng Shui in the box

Feng Shui represents a unique type of heritage. The rise of awareness and effort to conserve and safeguard ICH is embedded in the importance of culture. As stated by Black, culture has long been seen as part of human rights in the eyes of UNESCO and the UN. However, due to the diverse and changing context of culture, conservation efforts towards culture were often challenging in the global discourse, especially in cultural rights. Until the end of the twentieth century, international organizations further developed cultural rights, marked by the adaptation of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO 2001) and Convention on the Protection and Promotion of

the Diversity of Cultural Expression (2005a). Since its commencement, UNESCO has insisted on a broad definition of culture, which states as:

...the way of life for an entire society. As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, norms of behavior such as law and morality, and systems of belief.²⁴⁸

This inclusive and diverse definition of culture paves the way for subsequent ideas, conventions, and agreements to conserve and safeguard humanity's cultural properties and rights on the international level. Cultural properties were later developed and divided into practical definitions such as cultural heritage. It is also notable the nature of intangibility is embedded in the definition of a culture where most elements of cultures were considered intangible with or without a substantial body.

Developing both the desire and concern to conserve the ICHs led to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003.²⁴⁹ The convention defines intangible cultural heritage as following:

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. For the purposes of this Convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with

²⁴⁸ “UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity: UNESCO,” accessed April 15, 2020, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13179&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

²⁴⁹ “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,” accessed April 15, 2020, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.²⁵⁰

And this definition is also manifested in the following domains:

(a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; (b) performing arts; (c) social practices, rituals and festive events; (d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; (e) traditional craftsmanship.²⁵¹

Notice how the discourse of Feng Shui relates to ICH in many ways. First, as oral tradition and expression, like many other traditional techniques and skills, the knowledge and practices of Feng Shui were delivered through both written and oral transmission, sometimes also through apprenticeship where the system of knowledge and skill was organized and delivered to the apprentice by the master.

Performing arts or performance is often an unavoidable and predominant part of Feng Shui practice. As recorded by Bruun and Yoon, Feng Shui practices in rural villages, either for geomancy other purposes, inviting the Feng Shui master to “look at” or “feel” the Feng Shui, the ritual is otherwise not complete without the appearance of the Feng Shui master. In a sense, Feng Shui services are provided as an intelligence service and a performance, which the latter is at least equally important. As Wong states, his experience as an apprentice of Feng Shui was completed in several tests, including providing Feng Shui service to clients independently, requiring knowledge, skill, and performance techniques to master such performance. Moreover, Feng Shui was understood and practiced as a social practice. Buildings and landscapes are

²⁵⁰ “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,” accessed April 15, 2020, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

²⁵¹ Ibid, I Article 2, 2.

placed according to specific locations and orientations; Feng Shui masters are invited and paid to alter one's fate and luck or alternatively use it as medicine or divination.

Literature reviews and academic studies of Feng Shui techniques and practices often find Feng Shui close to nature or the ancient Chinese cosmology. Feng Shui is an inherent knowledge of recognizing and manipulating nature. As described in Chapter One, Qi and Qi induction theory, the fundamental theory of Feng Shui, is an ancient cosmology, combined with other ancient cosmology such as Five Elements and Eight Trigram. Feng Shui offered a unique and adoptive way to see, use and alter nature.

Lastly, traditional craftsmanship can also be found in the serial of Feng Shui traditions. Its representation is the development and design of the Feng Shui Compass. Not many tools remained actively used in the present. However, the knowledge and craftsmanship of making Feng Shui compass were safeguarded and sustained through the change of time.

As a tangible policy and effort to safeguard and encourage the safeguarding efforts of other parties toward the ICH at the international level, two separate lists were created by the convention. Like its tangible counterpart, there are the representative list and list of heritage in need of urgent safeguarding:

Article 16 – Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

1. In order to ensure better visibility of the intangible cultural heritage and awareness of its significance, and to encourage dialogue which respects cultural diversity, the Committee, upon the proposal of the States Parties concerned, shall establish, keep up to date and publish a Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

2. The Committee shall draw up and submit to the General Assembly for approval the criteria for the establishment, updating and publication of this Representative List.

Article 17 – List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding

1. With a view to taking appropriate safeguarding measures, the Committee shall establish, keep up to date and publish a List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding, and shall inscribe such heritage on the List at the request of the State Party concerned.

2. The Committee shall draw up and submit to the General Assembly for approval the criteria for the establishment, updating and publication of this List.

3. In cases of extreme urgency – the objective criteria of which shall be approved by the General Assembly upon the proposal of the Committee – the Committee may inscribe an item of the heritage concerned on the List mentioned in paragraph 1, in consultation with the State Party concerned.²⁵²

As stated by Harrison, UNESCO represents a profound and internationally accepted form of heritage discourse. Based on the core concept of Universal Outstanding Value of heritage, UNESCO constantly make adjustment to the definition, management, and understanding of heritage, responding to the shifting role of heritage in modern world. In this sense, the international discourse of heritage is less related to

Figure 4.1: Nomination documents of Acupuncture and moxibustion of traditional Chinese medicine. Screenshot by author. Source: UNESCO. Nomination File NO. 00425 for Inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2010, Pub. L. No. 00425 (2010). <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/07512-EN.pdf>.

history, but more related to a general direction between past and future, as a result of the negotiations of its member states.

Conservation of intangible cultural heritage is relatively a new concept in China, however growing rapidly due to its political push and economic and social awareness. In 2011, a specific law for the conservation of intangible cultural heritage went into

²⁵² “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage,” accessed April 15, 2020, http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=17716&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

effect. The logic and structure of the law is similar to the UNESCO charter, with the exception of the invention of inheritance person.²⁵³

Inheritance person represents individuals of a specific intangible cultural heritage recognized by the state authority. The law endows general prerequisites, duties, and privileges. The specification of an inheritance person could result from a couple of different approaches. The intangible cultural heritages in China tend to be knowledge-based traditions such as musical instruments, fabrication, or skills of various disciplines, the individual who masters specific knowledge is a “living representation” of that intangible cultural heritage. Xiao suggests that the inheritance person may be a transformed concept of Japan’s “Living National Treasure.”²⁵⁴ There are approximately three thousand inheritance persons in total.²⁵⁵ By condensing the value and content of intangible cultural heritage to individuals, the AHD can easily apply incentives, management, and possibly guidance to heritage. However, although the deliverability and applicability of ICH law are benefited, the AHD is empowered to decide who the inheritance persons are. Eventually, the inheritance persons represent an official heritage that the AHD prefers. Other than lacking community involvement,

²⁵³ The 11th Standing Committee of the National People's Congress 第十一届全国人民代表大会常务委员会. *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Feiwuzhi Wenhua Yichan Fa* 中华人民共和国非物质文化遗产法 (Legislation of Intangible Cultural Heritage of People's Republic of China), Pub. L. No. 42 (2011). https://www.ihchina.cn/zhengce_details/11569.

²⁵⁴ Fang Xiao 萧放. *Guanyu Feiwuzhi Wenhuyichyan Chuanchengren de Rendeng yu Baohufangshi de Sikao* 关于非物质文化遗产传承人的认定与保护方式的思考 (Thoughts on the recognition and conservation of inheritor of intangible cultural heritage). *Wenhua yichan*, no. 1 (2008): 127–32.

²⁵⁵ Zhongguo Feiwuzhi Wenhua Yichan Shuzi Bowuguan 中国非物质文化遗产数字博物馆. *Guo Jia Ji Fei Wu Zhi Wen Hua Yi Chan Dai Biao Xing Chuan Cheng Ren Lie Biao* 国家级非物质文化遗产代表性传承人列表 (List of National Level Intangible Cultural Heritage representative inheritor). In 中国非物质文化遗产数字博物馆, February 4, 2022. <https://www.ihchina.cn/representative.html#target1>.

ICHs are also canonical or censored by standards of canonical heritage, causing a possibly jeopardized integrity and authenticity.

A Case Study: Acupuncture and moxibustion

Previous chapters explored the similarity and interoperability between Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Feng Shui. Both of them employ a set of concepts developed and extracted from ancient Chinese philosophy. After the Jing dynasty, their similarity was further used to explain each other, as seen in Feng Shui writings like “Xue Xin Fu” and “Zang Jing Yi”.²⁵⁶

To promote the development, conservation and use of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), China nominated its most outstanding and significant component of TCM, acupuncture and moxibustion of TCM, to the convention as representative of ICH. The nomination was accepted by the convention, and it was successfully listed as a representation of ICH since 2005.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, TCM and Feng Shui share a cultural core, interpretation, and social response. A close examination of the ICH nomination documents for acupuncture and moxibustion of TCM reveal the possible precedents relevant to nominating Feng Shui as ICH:²⁵⁷

The first section of the nomination documents contains basic information such as the nominee state party and name of the ICH. The whole nomination process of

²⁵⁶ Yingtian Bu 卜應天 (Tang Dynasty), *Xue Xin Fu* 雪心賦, <https://www.zhonghuadiancang.com/xuanxuewushu/11585/>.

²⁵⁷ Without other notice, all following are part of the “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003,” *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12, no. 4 (November 2005): 447–58, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0940739105050277>.

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| <p>A. STATE(S) PARTY(IES)</p> <p><i>For multi-national nominations, States Parties should be listed in the order on which they have mutually agreed.</i></p> |
| China |
| <p>B. NAME OF THE ELEMENT</p> |
| <p>B.1. Name of the element in English or French</p> <p><i>This is the official name of the element that will appear in published material about the Representative List. It should be concise. Please do not exceed 200 characters, including spaces and punctuation. The name should be transcribed in Latin Unicode characters (Basic Latin, Latin-1 Supplement, Latin Extended-A or Latin Extended Additional).</i></p> |
| Acupuncture and moxibustion of traditional Chinese medicine |
| <p>B.2. Name of the element in the language and script of the community concerned, if applicable</p> <p><i>This is the official name of the element in the vernacular language corresponding to the official name in English or French (point B.1.). It should be concise. Please do not exceed 200 characters in Unicode (Latin or others), including spaces and punctuation.</i></p> |
| 中医针灸 |

Figure 4.2.1: Nomination documents of Acupuncture and moxibustion of traditional Chinese medicine. Screenshot by author. Source: UNESCO. Nomination File NO. 00425 for Inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2010, Pub. L. No. 00425 (2010). <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/07512-EN.pdf>.

acupuncture was curated and managed by the Ministry of Culture under the central government, with collaboration and joint effort from the the China Association of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, a non-governmental organization that serves “as a bridge between the acupuncture and moxibustion researchers and the state.”²⁵⁸ Note that the nomination specifies acupuncture and moxibustion instead of the Traditional Chinese Medicine system as a whole. The strategy embedded in this decision of

²⁵⁸ China Association of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, “中国针灸学会简介 (China Association of Acupuncture and Moxibustion - about the Association),” accessed September 2, 2020, <http://www.caam.cn/article/432>.

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|---|
| <p>B.3. Other name(s) of the element, if any</p> <p><i>In addition to the official name(s) of the element (B.1.) please mention alternate name(s), if any, by which the element is known, in Unicode characters (Latin or others).</i></p> <p>—</p> |
| <p>C. CHARACTERISTIC OF THE ELEMENT</p> |
| <p>C.1. Identification of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned</p> <p><i>According to the 2003 Convention, intangible heritage can only be identified with reference to communities, groups or individuals that recognize it as part of their cultural heritage. Thus it is important to identify clearly one or several communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned with the nominated element. The information provided should allow the Committee to identify the communities, groups or individuals concerned with an element, and should be mutually coherent with the information in sections 1 to 5 below.</i></p> <p>China Association of Acupuncture and Moxibustion, and representative successors including Cheng Xinnong, He Puren, Zhang Jin, Guo Chengjie, et al.</p> |
| <p>C.2. Geographic location and range of the element and location of the communities, groups or, if applicable, individuals concerned</p> <p><i>This section should identify the range of distribution of the element, indicating if possible the geographic locations in which it is centred. If related elements are practiced in neighbouring areas, please so indicate.</i></p> <p>Acupuncture and moxibustion of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is widely available in China and has been disseminated to some regions of the Southeast Asia, Europe and the United States.</p> |
| <p>C.3. Domain(s) represented by the element</p> <p><i>Identify concisely the domain(s) of intangible cultural heritage manifested by the element, which might include one or more of the domains identified in Article 2.2 of the Convention. (This information will be used primarily for visibility, if the element is inscribed.)</i></p> <p>According to Article 2.2 of the Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, this heritage is within the domain of "knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe".</p> |
| <p>D. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE ELEMENT</p> <p><i>The brief description of the element will be particularly helpful in allowing the Committee to know at a glance what element is being proposed for inscription, and, in the event of inscription, will be used for purposes of visibility. It should be a summary of the description provided in point 1 below but is not an introduction to that longer description.</i></p> <p>Acupuncture and moxibustion of TCM is a traditional knowledge and practice for regulating the body's balance and maintaining health. It is based on the holistic concept of the 'unity between man and nature'. Under the guidance of the theories of the channels and acupuncture points, its practice involves the insertion of needles into points or the burning of moxa to warm the superficial part of the body. It is an embodiment of the wisdom of the Chinese nation and a</p> |

Figure 4.2.2: Nomination documents of Acupuncture and moxibustion of traditional Chinese medicine. Screenshot by author. Source: UNESCO. Nomination File NO. 00425 for Inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2010, Pub. L. No. 00425 (2010). <https://ich.unesco.org/doc/src/07512-EN.pdf>.

element was stated in the media conference after the successful listing.²⁵⁹ First, it is believed that, although TCM is considered a great cultural asset and common medical practice, it may be better to be nominated as with a package, a vehicle that contains TCM to fit the standard of ICH, in this case, it is the acupuncture and moxibustion. One of the nomination committee members also stated, ICHs are more likely to be “comprehend” and “accept” when it has a semi-tangible box like acupuncture which is “visible” and “touchable.” On the other hand, acupuncture and moxibustion also represents the part of TCM with highest craftsmanship and skill. The Ministry of Culture and TCM association agreed on a more conservative approach towards the nomination and its social impact of nomination on the TCM itself.

A few individuals as “representatives of the intangible heritage” were selected based on their reputation, lineage, and personal contribution to the development of the school. For example, He Puren, as his name is listed above is renowned as “Master of National Medicine,” started his apprenticeship at the age of fourteen. Throughout his career as TCM practitioner in state TCM hospital, he rediscovered the method of “fire needle” and developed the “He Method” as a new treatment and use of acupuncture and moxibustion. At age of 84 he was entitled as “Master of National Medicine” and listed “representatives of the intangible heritage.”²⁶⁰ They are also given “inheritance person” status in domestic context.

²⁵⁹ Zhongguo Zhongyiyaoju 中国中医药局. *Zhongyiyaoju jiu "zhongyizhenjiu" shenyichenggong juxing xinwenfabuhui* “中医药局就‘中医针灸’申遗成功举行新闻发布会.” Accessed June 1, 2020. http://www.gov.cn/gzdt/2010-11/24/content_1752406.htm.

²⁶⁰ [Zhang Fengquan 张凤全?]. *Guo Yi Da Shi He Pu Ren* “国医大师贺普仁:中医针灸代表性传承人、著名中医针灸学家_风采实录_中国农工民主党.”(National Master of Medicine, He Pu Ren, representative inheritor of Chinese Acupuncture and Moxibustion) Accessed October 12, 2020. <http://www.ngd.org.cn/zhyd/dyfc/33327.htm>.

Acupuncture is indeed a successful conservation practice in terms of identity and policy and keeping the balance between political ideology and cultural identity. Acupuncture, as a representation of historical China's notable medical achievement, fits perfectly into the official identity of a country with rich, profound, and resplendent history. Enlisting Acupuncture in the international platform has also given Acupuncture a state of official heritage and canonical heritage. Together with the establishment of the association, it marks the solid official support for the development and implementation of Acupuncture as well as TCM in China. However, by focusing on the practical function, effectiveness, and popularity of Acupuncture and moxibustion, the theoretical and mystery part of TCM is avoided, or at least limited to a discourse of cultural heritage. So, the AHD can promote and develop TCM as a heritage and alternative medicine while avoiding risking the discussion of its theoretic foundation in socialist materialism.

A Heritage Conservation Approach to Feng Shui

Heritage is a product of modernity. The conservation approach to heritage represents the characteristic fragility and sensitivity of the contemporary world. Time, classification, and uncertainty co-weave the subtle public consensus of heritage. An experience of linear time creates past, present, and future. By defining what heritages are, they are located on the axis of time, reflecting the imagery of the past. Based on the imagery of the past, the present is assured. Classification and categorization are associated with the discourse of value and identity in modernity. The experience of linear time also creates the experience of linear development or progression. Heritage

is hence evaluated and categorized to assure its assets. Uncertainty represents the experience of crisis and fragility embedded within modernity, the sense of “all that is solid melts into air.” In order to defend ourselves from uncertainty, conservation of heritage is gradually developed and implicated, giving ways to change. Most conservation methods are representations of the characteristic rationalism and positivism in modernity. Altogether, heritage conservation is a highly technical selective process to create past, present, and future, indeed the art of management of change.

Sometimes the theoretical discourse is resonated in the modest question raised by the public. When Acupuncture and Moxibustion were enlisted as UNESCO ICH, people doubted “is Acupuncture and Moxibustion in danger of disappearing?” Conservation is a byproduct of heritage. Although it is possible to recognize a heritage without any material or technical action to conserve it, the definition, recognition, and classification has done enough to interpret and give ways to heritages.

The activities of Feng Shui in the public realm were not via the form of heritage but a mutual interest and belief of community. As suggested in “difficult history, difficult heritage,” Feng Shui was commonly used as a weapon against the development of colonists, such as railways, electricity, and mining. Many scholars argue that Feng Shui contains the value of cultural heritage due to its positive effect against the invasion of colonists.²⁶¹ However, the nationalism and anti-colonization attribute of Feng Shui seems stiff and awkward to fit into the political correctness in the overall discourse of national identity. Because officials were not able to make Feng Shui a solid argument. Later in the process, Feng Shui became an excuse used by both parties including the

²⁶¹ Yuwu Wang 王育武, *Zhong Guo Feng Shui Wen Hua Yuan Liu* 中国风水文化源流 (Wuhan: Hubei Education Publishing House, 2008).

colonists to their advantage. In this context, the value of Feng Shui as cultural heritage has been ignored and refilled with an imbued primitive political inclination. Such an act of extracting the form and function of a tradition in order to display its period of significance yet ignoring the essence of heritage is no different from façadism in material heritage conservation.²⁶² The nature of Feng Shui as mutual interest and belief of a community is the sustainable social intention in the public realm. In a sense, Feng Shui enters into the public realm not when it is publicly discussed but when the mutually shared spaces such as hills, rivers, forests, and temples are related to the general wellbeing of a community and its offspring. The heritage recognition should be on the subtle social structure and organization of Feng Shui and their subject of caring, the surrounding material world. Heritage categorization should limit or even carve Feng Shui into an ICH, respecting the fact that Feng Shui crosses both the material-immaterial and nature-cultural boundaries. Luckily, concepts like the cultural landscape have been invented for Feng Shui in order to help defining and defending its unique and outstanding value in the public realm.

It is understandable why the weak argument of the nationalism and anti-colonization attribute of Feng Shui is popular. Perhaps the greatest challenge of conserving heritage in contemporary China or many nation-states is whether it represents a preferred identity. As written in previous chapters, the AHD in China has a solid conservative and persistent background of political ideology. Although cultural heritage, especially those related to historical China, has been "safely" interpreted in the identity of profound, diverse, and resplendent history. An identity of historic China

²⁶² Façadism refers to the act of preserving the surface layer historic or cultural entity while its structure and interior are mostly or all lost.

as the Other of contemporary China successfully insulates the history in the discourse of historical materialism and provides a transcendence to the leadership of Chinese Communist Party. Feng Shui is as unique as TCM in supporting China's official identity. As a developed theoretical system of knowledge, Feng Shui reaffirms the profound, diverse, and resplendent history in the realm of ancient philosophy and cosmology. However, even in heritage discourse in China, idealism is still carefully interpreted and managed. Under the leadership of Chinese Communist Party, Feng Shui has been recognized as a feudal tradition not only because it is practiced in feudal China, more importantly, it represents and contains the idea of primitive idealism. Represented by religions, idealism is criticized and discouraged as reactionary. Overall, TCM gives a good example of how flexible the AHD can be in China. The multi-facet of Feng Shui may also focus on how its empiricism has fruited some beneficial outcomes in the contemporary world. Perhaps the least canonical part of Feng Shui is its predicament of morality. The notorious promising of Feng Shui is often good fortune and chance to gain powers associated with bureaucracy. Ambitious promising seems outdated in the discourse of universal value today. As we discussed in chapter one, the benefits of Feng Shui should be evaluated in the context of a traditional family-centric social structure which gradually desalinate. With Feng Shui transformed between cultures and was influenced by the New Age Movement, it predominantly adopted the needs of modern society and social structure. There may be some fundamental challenges to official recognition of Feng Shui as heritage due to the above reasons, yet the practices and reuse of knowledge and skills embedded in Feng Shui have already been a phenomenon. Just like how neopaganism believers use Stonehenge, traditions, and

skills of Feng Shui are being used and developed. Whether AHD accepts its usage and practices does not change the fact that unofficial conservation and development of Feng Shui has been continuously practiced in the community.

With the development of the heritage industry and an experience-based economy, heritage faces new challenges. Compared to its activity in the discourse, Feng Shui has a much more active role in its services and commodities. In the famous Feng Shui region such as Gan Nan, young Feng Shui practitioners have to travel to other provinces to provide their services to customers.²⁶³ Various Feng Shui stores provide tools for the different price levels. Despite its popularity in contemporary times, a sense of decay has been encircling the Feng Shui communities. Various scholars talk about practitioners' reluctance to pass the skills, knowledge, and reputation to the following generation.²⁶⁴ The source of this sense of decay comes from the uncertainty of the future of Feng Shui. Knowledgeable and reputed Feng Shui practitioners sometimes use the heritage discourse to reinforce their confidence in Feng Shui. However, the conflict and complex identity of Feng Shui has always been a challenge for them.

The discourse of Feng Shui as heritage can be further developed with more research of Feng Shui and its lineage to the early shamanic tradition of China. If future research further deconstructs Feng Shui, among other traditions such as Nuo Opera and astrology, there may be an interconnection between various traditions, folk

²⁶³ Tianlai Lei 雷天来, "Research on Contemporary Gannan Feng Shui Masters 当代赣南风水师群体研究" (硕士学位论文, Ganzhou, Gannan Normal University 赣南师范学院, 2014).

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

See also:

Wei He 何伟. "Jindai Jiangnan Kanyuye Yanjiu 近代江南堪輿业研究 (Research of Kan Yu industry in Jiangnan region in the modern times)" (Doctor dissertation, University of Suzhou 苏州大学, 2015).

practices, and heritages in China today. As for now, there is a lack of research to advance in this direction.

Recognizing, categorizing, promoting cultural heritages are, in many cases, moves of the cultural strategy of a country in international competition. Identities are not just for the fortification and unity of a nation-state but also for a message and imagery for the world. UNESCO's world heritage list was also used as tool for cultural competition. World heritage seem to be a verified brand for heritage experience that represents the uniqueness in the world, hence bringing economic and social benefits.²⁶⁵ Countries like China also strive to maintain its top-tier number of heritage sites enlisted in the UNESCO register. However, due to the limitation of the "Global Strategy," multinational heritage is favored in the nomination.²⁶⁶ How Feng Shui transforms in different countries and interacts and influences each other certainly shows how diverse and influential a single heritage can be.

Commencing with the Xi Administration in China, building an "eco-civilization" was raised by the leader. By promoting the concept of "eco-civilization," China seeks to make up for its environmental damage in the last thirty years of rapid economic growth and persist in a green, eco-responsible economy. Since then, various programs have been launched to conserve natural resources. The national efforts in promoting "eco-civilization" had support throughout the administration. Territorial spatial planning, a conservation-based regional planning system, was established. For the first time, several national parks and their specific management system recognized and

²⁶⁵ Sophia Labadi and Colin Long, eds., *Heritage and Globalisation*, Key Issues in Cultural Heritage (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, England; New York, NY: Routledge, 2010).

²⁶⁶ UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Global Strategy," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed February 22, 2022, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy/>.

established by the central government were founded. China has been revitalized its public resource management structure to better adopt the “eco-civilization” through regional planning, nature conservation program, eco-friendly urban design, and agriculture. In recent years, the national strategy of “eco-civilization” was further developed into a national internal and external identity. Internally, a consensus of the concept needs to be imbued with local governments and the general public. Internationally, “eco-civilization” has been interpreted as influential and ambitious targets such as the pledge to be carbon-neutral by 2060. Furthermore, by developing a theory of “eco-civilization” and associated political reform, China also seeks to innovate and progress the general socialism and communism ideology in the twenty-first century.

The identity construction for “eco-civilization” has been relatively limited in its historical discourse. Due to restrained economic, social, and technical development, environmental protection and conservation are hardly popular in Chinese history. The current theoretical discourse of “eco-civilization” is constructed upon a modern discourse of ecology, public policy, and humanitarian responsibility. However, its strong rationalism needs a historical connection to influence and engage with the general public. Feng Shui could be a suitable cultural heritage to construct the discourse of “eco-civilization.” Feng Shui as heritage provides a historical identity of how Chinese people interact with nature. Although Feng Shui contains both preservation and utilitarian transformation of nature, it represents the primitive preceptive-based aesthetic relationship to our natural environment. By interpretation of AHD, Feng Shui could support a national identity for eco-civilization.

Moreover, Feng Shui can also play a role in determining realistic nature conservation programs with a cultural approach. As discussed in Chapter two and four, the concept of cultural landscape provides ways to conserve natural resources with a cultural approach, and Feng Shui indeed forms its unique interpretation of nature, which nature conservation programs can be applied. The latter has already been applied in Korea. As Yoon wrote, geomancy has been a prime factor in forest conservation.²⁶⁷

The last part of Chapter three illustrated how Feng Shui struggles and transforms in urbanization and globalization and how the historically separated traditional Feng Shui and modern Feng Shui has formed competition in the market today. The fierce competition further promotes the utilitarian and mysterious aspect of Feng Shui. News like how different practitioners match in mysterious Feng Shui powers indeed catch the eyes of the public. Feng Shui is still used by lots of individual divination practitioners, adding more chaos into the discourse of Feng Shui. As a redundant tradition of the past, the conservation toward Feng Shui should have also considered its management, sustainable development, “adaptive reuse” of the heritage. While we have already mentioned Feng Shui’s possibility in building the eco-civilization, more potential could be extracted in Feng Shui. Whether standardizing the Feng Shui practices and market or further exploiting Feng Shui in the modern heritage industry, a neutral, non-profit organization such as an industrial society or union should be formed. Indeed, such an organization is undoubtedly under the influence of government and formed its authorized discourse. More research should be conducted

²⁶⁷ H. Yoon, *Geomantic Relationships Between Culture and Nature in Korea*, Asian Folklore and Social Life Monographs (Orient Cultural Service, 1983), <https://books.google.com/books?id=-SKBoAEACAAJ>, 232.

for the impact of decentralized AHD on particular cultural heritage, but a democratic professional organization for general practitioners could benefit Feng Shui communities and prepare it for future challenges.

Traditional practices like Feng Shui are unique in China and the world. More and more criticism has targeted the standardized heritage categorization, represented by UNESCO, for separation of material-immaterial, cultural-natural, and canonical-ordinary boundary of heritage. In the conservational approach to Feng Shui, issues embedded in the heritage discourse may also be reflected. Surely practical application of conservation, especially in the form of public policy, requires standings and anchor points to be executable. Due to the intangibility of cultural heritage, such anchor points are sometimes hard to be located. In the ICH law in China, the anchor point is the local cultural administration (government) and the inheritance person (communities). Funding, incentives, and management are engaged and executed to those parties. However, as Qi writes, the sole focus of inheritance in ICH represents an attitude towards preserving knowledge but not using heritage.²⁶⁸ Preservation and inheritance of knowledge embedded in the individuals are unquestionably essential, but the actual vitality of ICH requires the use and facilitation of heritage. We are not only preserving the knowledge of an ICH but its connection to community cohesion and society. Hence, conservation of ICH should include inheritance person, significant object, and cultural space. The trinity of the person (knowledge), object, and space enriches ICH's

²⁶⁸ Qingfu Zhou 祁庆富. *Lun Feiwuzhi Wenhuyichan Baohu Zhongde Chuanchen he Chuanchenren* 论非物质文化遗产保护中的传承及传承人 (Thesis on inheritance and inheritor of conservation of Intangible cultural heritage). *Xi bei min zu yan jiu*, no. 3 (2006): 114–23. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1001-5558.2006.03.013>.

context and better facilitates ICH conservation. Furthermore, the AHD can be more flexible in conserving and facilitating ICH with additional anchor points.

The heritage conservation approach to Feng Shui is based on the heritage as a discourse with modernity. Heritage discourse in modernity can be deconstructed into three stages, publicity of heritage, construction of identity, and management of redundant resources. With different stages of heritage discourse, conservation employs different tools, including definition, categorization, and facilitation of heritage. An approach to examining the possibility of contextualized Feng Shui with China and discourse of modernity, some interesting outcomes are seen. First, Feng Shui is an international cultural heritage in China. In the global context, conservation of Feng Shui's outstanding value is not only a benefit to China but an international responsibility. Secondly, Feng Shui, both as a cultural approach to the physical environment and an aesthetic-oriented identity, may be a vital attribution to ecological sustainability today, especially in the context of the "eco-civilization" of China today. In addition, the heritage industry of Feng Shui appears to be vital but chaotic. Autonomy of the Feng Shui industry may be helpful to facilitate international collaboration and sustainable development of the industry. Lastly, Feng Shui is a heritage with specific attributions that challenge today's standardized heritage discourse. Intangible cultural heritages may need additional resources to make up its material-immaterial division and the knowledge-preservation-oriented conservation.

Conclusion

The writings of this thesis are naturally composed in two parts. The first three chapters emphasize Feng Shui itself and the fourth chapter illustrates the relationship between Feng Shui and heritage. Heritage is an invented concept superimposed on a subject; it represents our attitude or sensibility towards the subject. Hence, I decided to leave the heritage discourse in the latter part of my writing.

We first looked at the beginning of Feng Shui. Feng Shui is gradually developed from primitive divination, including the techniques used for divination of land and location. In the early time, Feng Shui mixes with many other types of divination, including astrology and alchemy. In this process, Feng Shui also absorbs cosmologies and philosophies to construct its theoretic structure and cosmology. This process is predominantly associated with the political trends of early China. Perhaps the most important source of its cosmology is Qi and Qi Induction Theory.²⁶⁹ In a sense, Feng Shui is a branch that shares the same root with other traditional knowledge like Traditional Chinese Medicine and Qigong. However, the dominant Confucian philosophy has disenchanting Feng Shui and created a theory similar to pantheism. Conceivably Confucianism has also disciplined Feng Shui practice in many ways. However, as discussed in the chapter, Feng Shui may have a different picture, a sorcery-like practice in civil society. Moreover, the sorcery-like practices are connected to or directly inherited from the primitive shamanic practices in prehistoric China.²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ See Chapter One: Qi and The theory of Qi induction.

²⁷⁰ See Chapter Four: Feng Shui: Difficult History, Difficult Heritage.

Feng Shui is embedded in the material world, with different geographic or artificial features shaping and transforming it, eventually benefiting or harming people. In traditional Feng Shui, geographic features like the Dragon (mountains), the Lair (desired location), the Gravel (smaller hills and other features), and the Water are combined to determine the Feng Shui of a location. Since it is a widespread practice, especially among the upper class, a broad range of heritage should have contained the idea of Feng Shui as part of its history. In essence, Feng Shui represents an emotional connection to the physical world based on aesthetics, experience, and the perception of the material world. I interpreted this modest connection later with the concept of the cultural landscape in the discourse of heritage, trying to bridge the gap between natural and cultural heritage.

The immaterial or intangible part of the Feng Shui contains rituals, skills, and knowledge in determining and transforming a place's Feng Shui. The most exciting part of Feng Shui is how it transforms in the background of urbanization and globalization. Immigrants transmitted Feng Shui to different places in the world, but perhaps the most significant challenge was urbanization, that both the social foundation and lifestyle have come to a complete remake. The popularity of Feng Shui today may benefit from the New Age Movement, and with the discourse of the New Age Movement and Neopaganism, Feng Shui transforms itself with modern dialects. This represents the flexibility and adaptation of Feng Shui and amplifies that the essence of Feng Shui is not its innate theory or skills but faith in sensibility and perception.

Although Feng Shui is closely associated with East Asian culture, similar traditions and practices in other parts of the world like "ilm al-raml" and "Vastu Shastra" have similar characteristics, face similar challenges in contemporary world and heritages study. The difference in form, ritual, and cosmology between different types of geomancy and divination system each represents its own unique value and reflects the particularity developed based its culture, history and lifestyle. As systems of knowledge for evaluating, altering, and taking advantage of nature, Feng Shui and the others are aligned in the frontier of heritage, construct its own dialect with modernity. Although this thesis contains little discussion on other practices, chapter four gives a structure to critique and reflect on their aspects of cultural heritage.

Based on Harrison, Smith, and Macdonald's ideas and some of my own experience working in the conservation field in China, I have interpreted a reflective attitude towards the heritage discourse and Feng Shui.²⁷¹ I focus on how modernity has created and shaped heritage and heritage discourse, including the transitions in society. Heritage is created by modernity to represent its past selectively, manage its present and construct its future. In this process, conservation, including definition, interpretation, adaptive reuse, and management, has created a knowledge-based power that authorized heritage discourse. The role in managing change and its authorized power has influenced the heritage and heritage-associated policy in many ways. In addition, China, as a socialist country, has its own set of rules to manage its heritage and heritage-based identities. With the case study of Acupuncture and

²⁷¹ Harrison: Rodney Harrison and Jialing Fan Wang, Siyu, Mo, Jiaping, Shen, Shan, *Wen hua he zi ran yi chan: Pi pan xing si lu = Heritage* (Shanghai: Shang hai gu ji chu ban she, 2021).

Smith: Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London ; Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

Macdonald: Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203888667>.

Moxibustion, Feng Shui as a practice can indeed fit into the definition of heritage in UNESCO or China. However, difficulty within Feng Shui has been impacting its way to an official heritage. I have also provided knowledgeable guesses and suggestions for the future use of Feng Shui within the heritage discourse, such as UNESCO transnational heritage, an historical identity for China's contraction of "eco-civilization," and a democratic professional society for industry self-regulation.

Notably, I did not suggest containing Feng Shui within the concept of heritage today by nomination or enlisting in the official heritage. However, I believe such action is possible in the near future.

1. Assuming Feng Shui as a heritage or trying to put it into the category of heritage, either of UNESCO or China, will bring us to the binary opposition of official and unofficial heritage. Such dialect overemphasizes the already overpowered authorized heritage discourse, which may lead to a worrisome discussion based on knowledge and authority. Maintaining the interdisciplinary heritage discourse is critical to persist the critical thinking in heritage study.

2. The invention, development, and use of the concept of heritage is a byproduct of the transformation of modernity, just like how Feng Shui is engaged and impacted by it. When we strive to conserve something in the realm of official heritage, the outcome may counteract. Feng Shui may provide us an example that the concept and rules of conservation are challenged by heritage itself, instead of the other way around.

Additional research is also necessary to explore the greater context of Feng Shui. Research on the shamanic tradition as the lost commonality of Feng Shui and

many other Chinese traditional practices can be a game-changer to the identity and representation of Chinese heritages. Research and practices of contractive representation of Feng Shui and Feng Shui-based concepts can also bridge the strong desire for sustainable development.

At last, I would also like to share my unique value and nostalgia. When I see heritage, whether it is an old building, a folklore practice, a historic neighborhood, or a preserved landscape, they connect me to the past. And at that moment, I feel that I am not only an individual in the world but also part of a community. The history was delivered to me, for me to pass on to the others. To me, that is the universal value of heritage. Maybe it is also what we need the most in this divided and polarized world of today.

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