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The Art of Feng Shui

Feng Shui has been an important part of Chinese culture for many centuries and used in Taoist religion to create ultimate balance. Many people that have heard of Feng Shui think that it is just the arrangement of furniture, but it is actually much more complex. It not only creates balance in a person's home or office, but it also can give good fortune and a happy life. There are also many schools of Feng Shui and different tools to use to ensure that a person can acquire harmony in their life.

Feng Shui is translated as 'wind' and 'water.' It was also originally called Kan Yu meaning 'heaven' and 'earth,' which says that a person's actions on earth will determine life in heaven, and Di Li meaning 'geography,' which describes it as a form of geomancy, or the practice of placing of buildings. All of these different names have some sort of truth in them, but the official definition for Feng Shui is "the Chinese art of living in harmony with a person's environment in order to ensure happiness and prosperity." So, the essence of Feng Shui is to find a balance in the ethics of Chinese culture and positioning of land and man-made structures of the living and the dead to create a happy and prosperous life for a person on earth and in heaven. Before explaining about how Feng Shui is applied into everyday life, however, there needs to be an understanding of the history and basic beliefs behind it.

The teachings of Feng Shui were started around 206 CE during the Han Dynasty, and were based off the principles written in the Book of Rites, said to be "a sacred book that enshrines the basic tenets of Chinese religious belief." By the twelfth century, it became a type of geomancy, however the bases of Feng Shui were never actually recorded until the nineteenth century by Yang Yun-sung after observing formations of sceneries around him. This formed the

beliefs of the traditional school of Feng Shui, the Form School sect. Later on in the twelfth century, several scholars developed a new belief system for Feng Shui, which became later known as the Compass School sect. More recently, a new sect called Black Hat was created, which is a combination of both Form and Compass caused by Americanization. Originally, Feng Shui was only practiced in Chinese and Japanese countries, but over time it has expanded all over the world, including the United States. This is the cause of pluralism within the three schools of Feng Shui. However, each sect still has its own basic beliefs of the meaning of Feng Shui.

There are deeper truths within Feng Shui such as Yin and Yang and The Five Basic Elements. These are Chinese religious beliefs that are at the center of Feng Shui that bring everything together. Without Yin and Yang and the Five Basic Elements, there would be no balance.

Yin and Yang are two forces that work together to create the universe. They are seen as two halves of a circle, one of the sides white and one black, along with two circles within each half-circle, one white and one black. Yin is represented by the black half of the circle with a white circle inside, which symbolizes Yin as being receptive, feminine and dark. It can also represent yielding, submissive, and amiable attributes in life. Yang is represented by the white half of the circle with a black circle inside, which symbolizes Yang as being active, masculine, and light. It can also represent dominant and unyielding attributes. It can be measured by the Luo Pan Compass to create balance in interior spaces.

The Five Basic of Elements of Feng Shui are wood, water, fire, metal, and earth. These five elements work alongside Yin and Yang to create powerful forces in places. They also

correlate with specific colors that represent different meanings. Along with the colors, all of the elements work together and are connected to the directions of the Feng Shui compass. The south represents fire so its color is red, and the color southeast is green so it represents small wood. The east represents big wood so its color is green brown, and the northeast represents small earth so its color is beige. The north represents water so its color is black blue. The northwest and west differ from the rest because they represent metal and have three colors: white, silver, and gold. Lastly, the southwest represents big earth so its color is beige yellow. These colors are very important because they communicate different emotions within a room or space. The elements are also very important because they act upon each other. When the elements act together, it creates a space where wind and chi can come together, which is where the term Feng Shui comes from.

After describing all of the basic elements and beliefs of Feng Shui, the application of the placement of furniture, different statues, and other important aspects can be discussed. Feng Shui can be used in spaces such as homes, offices, gardens, or grave sites.

Feng Shui is very important in the use of designing grave sites. Mausoleums are very important in Chinese culture because it is where people's ancestors' spirits are kept, so that they may remain sacred in the family, and give persons' guidance throughout their life even after their passing. Grave sites are also the first spaces that were designed with the use of Feng Shui. Tombs or mausoleums should be shaped to match the hemisphere of the area where they are located. It should also be surrounded by a lot of nature to create good chi.

Along with grave sites, homes are very important in Feng Shui because a person spends most of the time at their home, so it can be a very influential space in their life. Nature, such as

mountains and rivers, are the most influential in designing a person's home, but there are many other factors that play into Feng Shui as well. If there are mountains and rivers behind a person's home, they can give a person great fortune and financial peace, however they should be winding and crooked, and quite lively. Chi clusters gather in these types of areas, so it is important to have them around a person's home so they will be able to enter their home. Because of this, it is recommended to have four natural shields around a person's home in the distance so they are surrounded by good chi.

In addition to nature, factors such as architecture, the placing of homes, furniture and decorations, and even animals can be influential to creating the best chi in Feng Shui. First, the roof should be symmetrical to the location of a person's home, and the location of the home should also be known as a place where there has been great harmony between people and be very open to the environment. In this way, the space a person is designing will have a harmonious and humanistic quality to create strength in yin and yang and many parts of their life. Second, furniture and decorations can determine how chi and sha are placed around a person's house. Colors of walls or furniture are important because of the five elements in the compass and their meanings. Doors and windows should be symmetrical to the size and area of the room to determine the chi required in the room. The room setting depends on which room it is and how it should be arranged by Feng Shui. Lighting, which is seen as the sun of the room, is important and should not be too dim or it will create unbalance of chi and yin and yang and in attitudes of people in the dwelling. Everything else such as statues, running water, animals, smoke, etc. are determined by the Feng Shui compass and the sense of yin and yang that is meant for the room. The use of straight lines in homes are meant to deflect sha which travels in straight lines, so it is

common that a person will often see flags, bamboo poles, fishing poles, and wind chimes around a home because they are made of straight lines.

Feng Shui is also used in offices. The main room that affects the feng shui of the office is the manager's office because they hold the highest position in the company. It should always be in a quiet place, found in an area that is away from other offices to create a better space for concentration. The desk inside of the manager's office should also be faced away from public eyes, and the manager's back should not face doors or windows or the chi will be too strong and very distracting. The manager will also effect the flow of fortune and prosperity within the room. Even the height of the desk is important because it can also effect the success and wealth in Feng Shui. Decorations like plants and an aquarium of fish can affect the chi and deflect sha from a person's office. Plants and animals can bring life into a person's office, as well as growth and positive energy into a person's company. However, if a person does have an aquarium of goldfish, a person has to have an odd number of fish in the aquarium because that helps improve the deflecting of sha. The aquarium should also be put in the most unlucky place in the office because of how influential animals are in fighting against evil spirits.

In conclusion, Feng Shui is a very important aspect of Chinese culture. Not only does it involve creating a comfortable space, but it can also improve a person's life. It is so much more complex than most people would think. Overall, it is a great way to be self-aware of surroundings to ensure the most successful life.