

FENGSHUI (風水): THE
WAYS OF WIND AND
WATER

Richard J. Smith
Rice University

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WATER

From Paleolithic times to the present, human beings have sought to find ways to live in harmony with their environment. Here are a few examples:





The Lascaux caves in France (c. 17,000–c. 15,000 BCE)

An Igloo (Iglu) on Baffin Island, Canada



A houseboat in France





Upper and lower right: Yurt (*ger*) in Mongolia

Stilt houses in Indonesia



Sod-roofed houses in Iceland





An oasis in Huacachina, Peru

Mobile homes Palo Alto, CA



Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater House in Pennsylvania



An “eco-friendly hotel,” Bozen, Italy



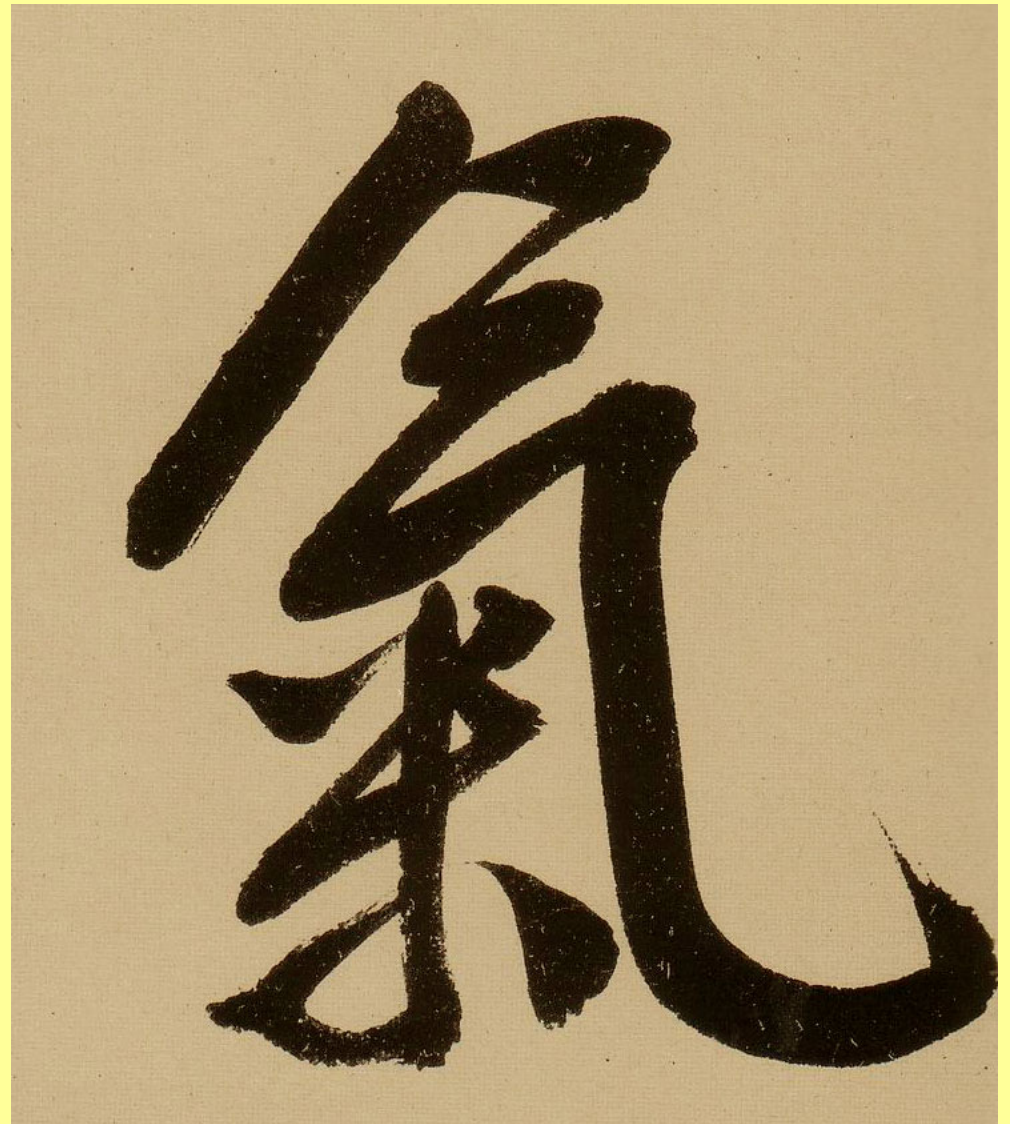
In China, for at least three thousand years, efforts to achieve harmony with the environment have led to a distinctive approach to the land, an approach known as *fengshui*

WHAT IS *FENGSHUI*?

The Chinese term literally means **wind** (風) and **water** (水). It is also translated “geomancy,” meaning a system of prediction based on landforms.

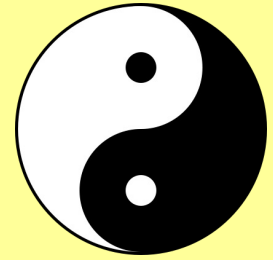
The basic assumption of *fengshui* is that **currents of energy**, called *qi* (also spelled *ch'i*), animate the earth.

For a location to be auspicious, these currents must be in balance





This notion of balance is expressed in the ancient ideas of *yin* and *yang*



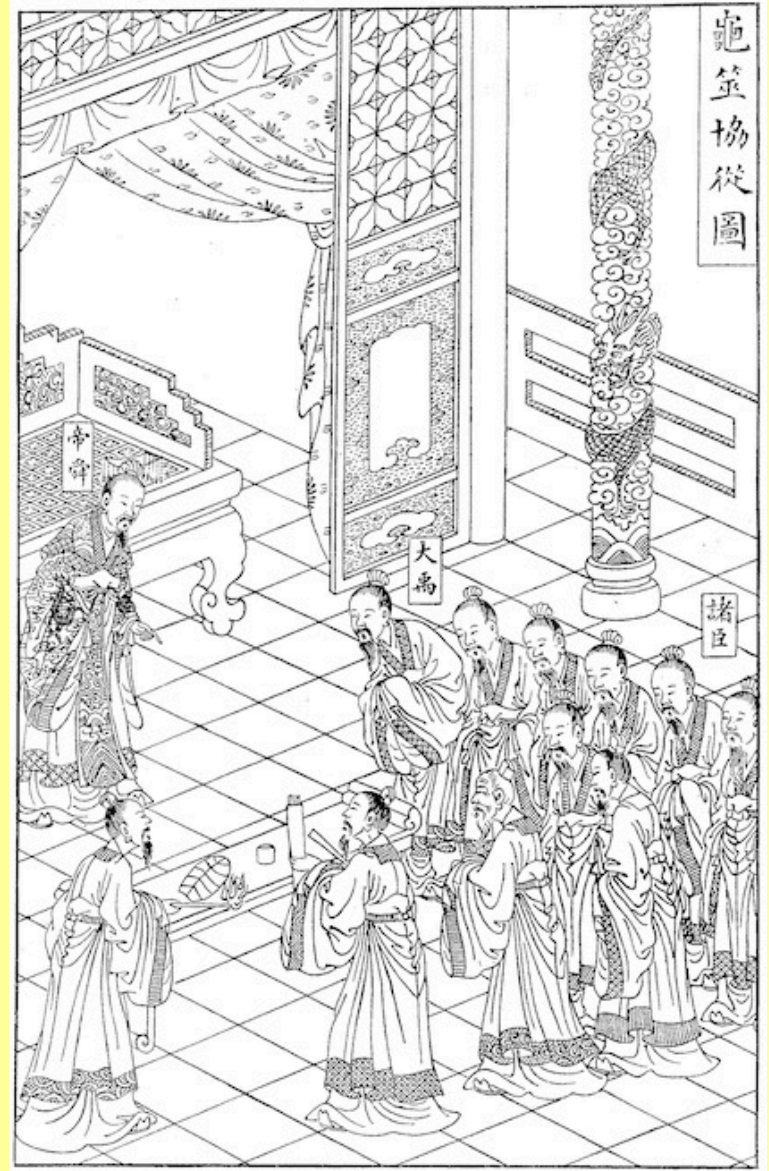
<i>Yin</i> 陰	<i>Yang</i> 陽
dark	light
passive	active
cold	hot
moist	dry
retreat	advance
contraction	expansion
emptiness	fullness
North	South
Autumn-Winter	Spring-Summer
square	round

FENGSHUI: A BRIEF HISTORY

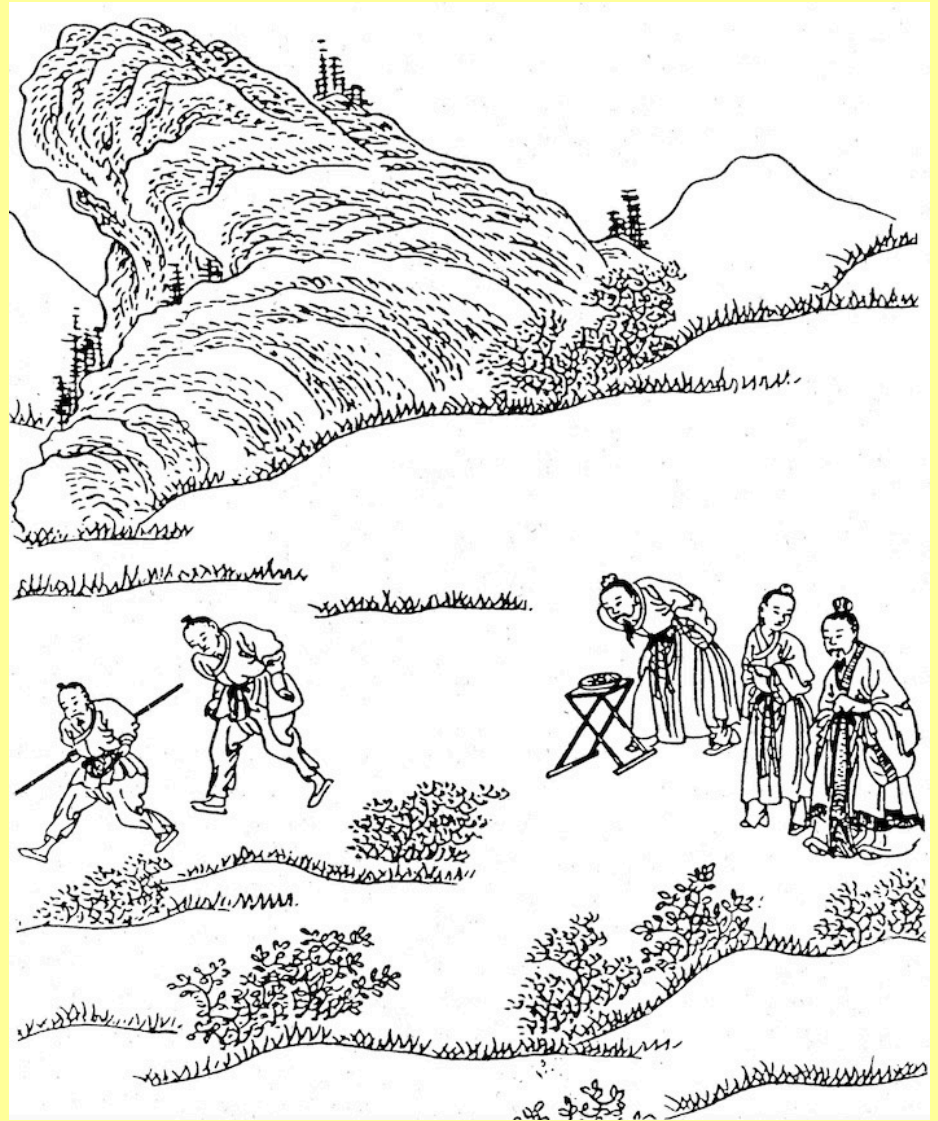
The Chinese practice of locating auspicious sites for burials can be dated to Neolithic times, 5,000–6,000 years ago.



During the Shang dynasty (1766–1046 BCE) royal diviners sought to find auspicious locations for buildings, graves and entire cities.



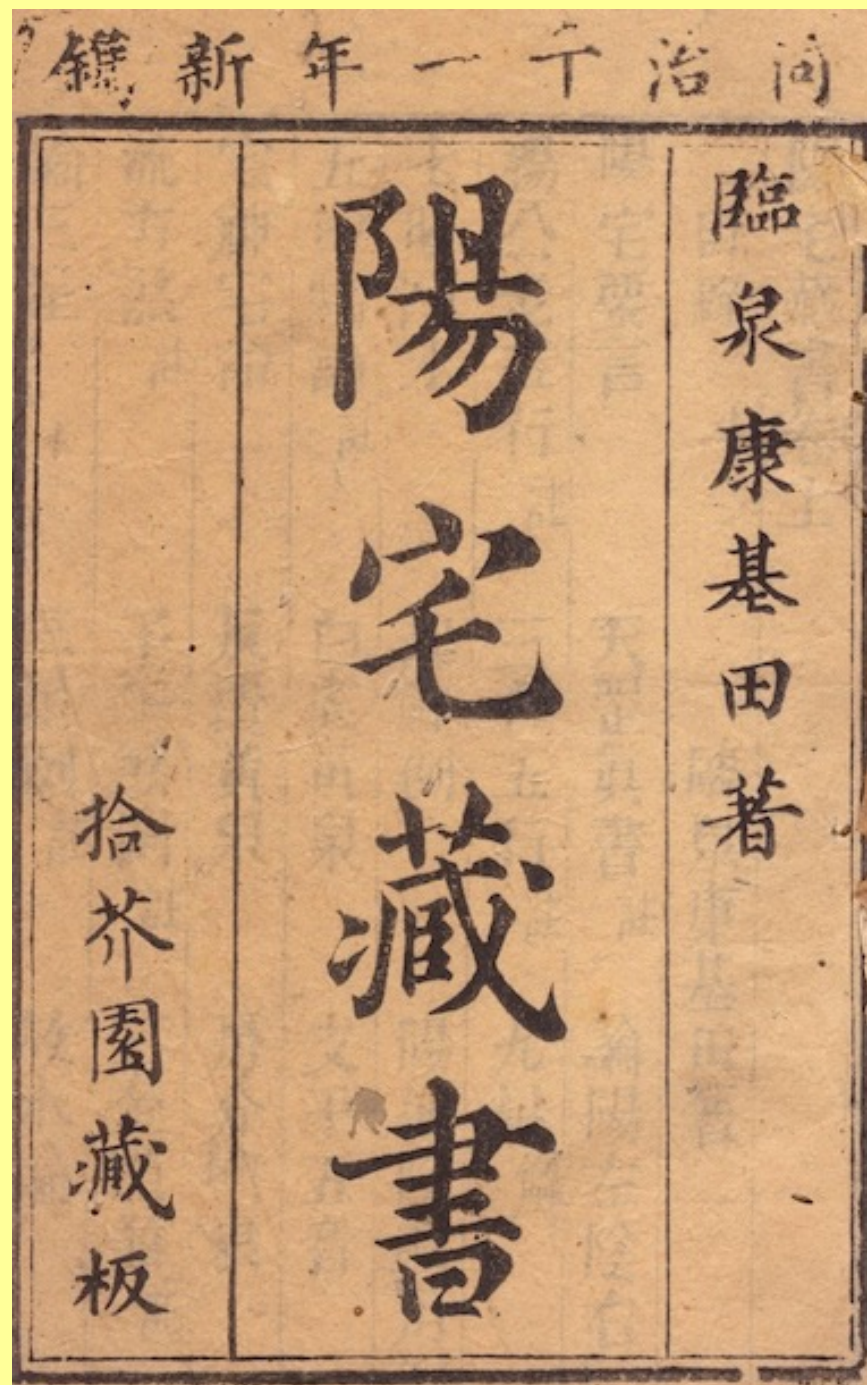
The late Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) witnessed the emergence of a group of specialists who determined auspicious sites by observing landforms and/or making astrological calculations.



Early Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) plate for making astrological calculations



From the Han dynasty to the present, siting specialists in China (also called *fengshui* masters or geomancers) have used direct observation and astrology to identify the most auspicious locations for buildings, graves and cities.



A FEW PRELIMINARY CONCEPTS

Cosmology: The study of the universe

Divination: Foretelling the future

Heaven (Tian 天): “Nature”

***Qi* (氣):** “Energy” or “life force”

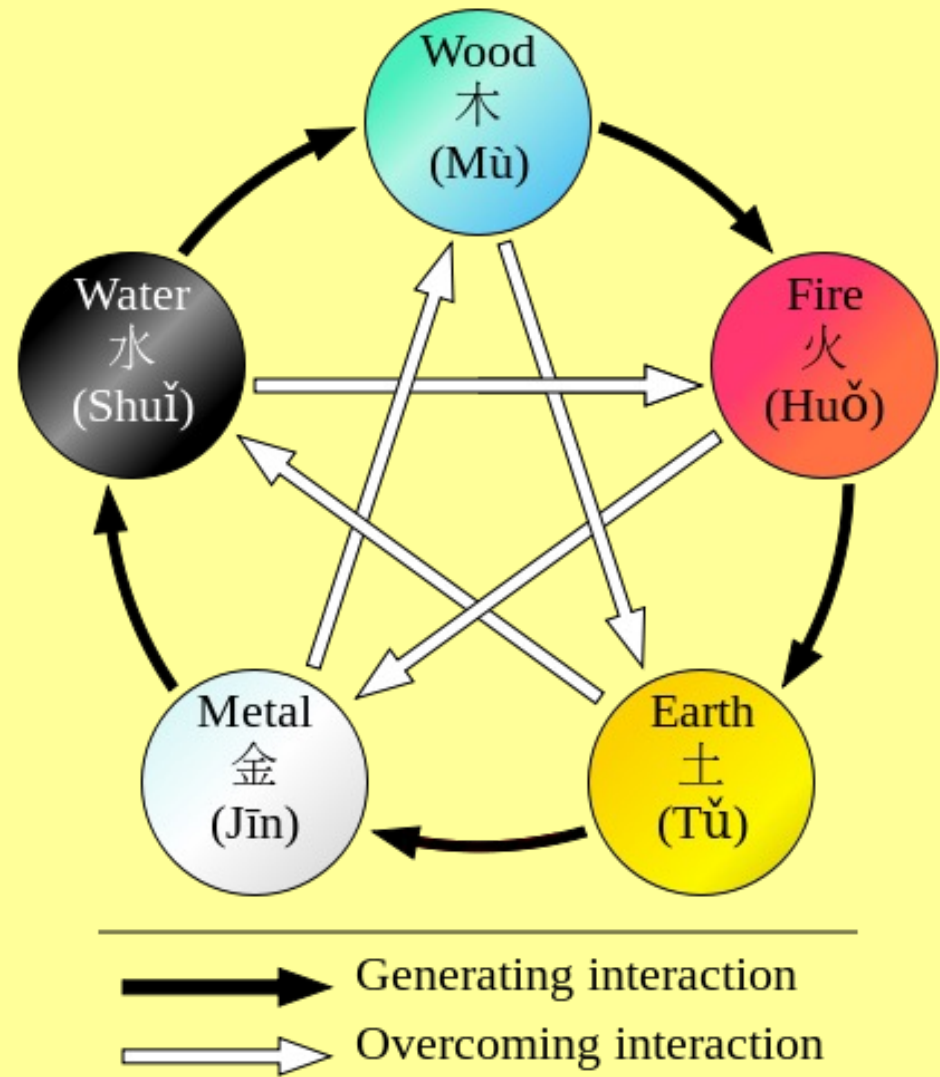
***Ganying* 感應):** Stimulus and response; the Chinese idea that every thing in the universe interacts with every other thing

MANIFESTATIONS OF *QI*

All things are comprised of various combinations of *yin* and *yang* energy and various combinations of the so-called five agents, which represent the qualities and tendencies of **wood**, **fire**, **earth**, **metal** and **water**.

Agent	Wood 木	Fire 火	Earth 土	Metal 金	Water 水
Colors	green	red	yellow	white	black
Numbers	3, 8	2, 7	5, 10	4, 9	1, 6
Directions	East	South	Center	West	North
Planets	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
Trigrams	Zhen 震 and Xun 巽	Li 離	Gen 艮 and Kun 坤	Qian 乾 and Dui 兌	Kan 坎

Since *qi* is in constant flux, the five agents operate in one of two primary sequences at any given time, restoring or maintaining cosmic harmony (i.e. balance)

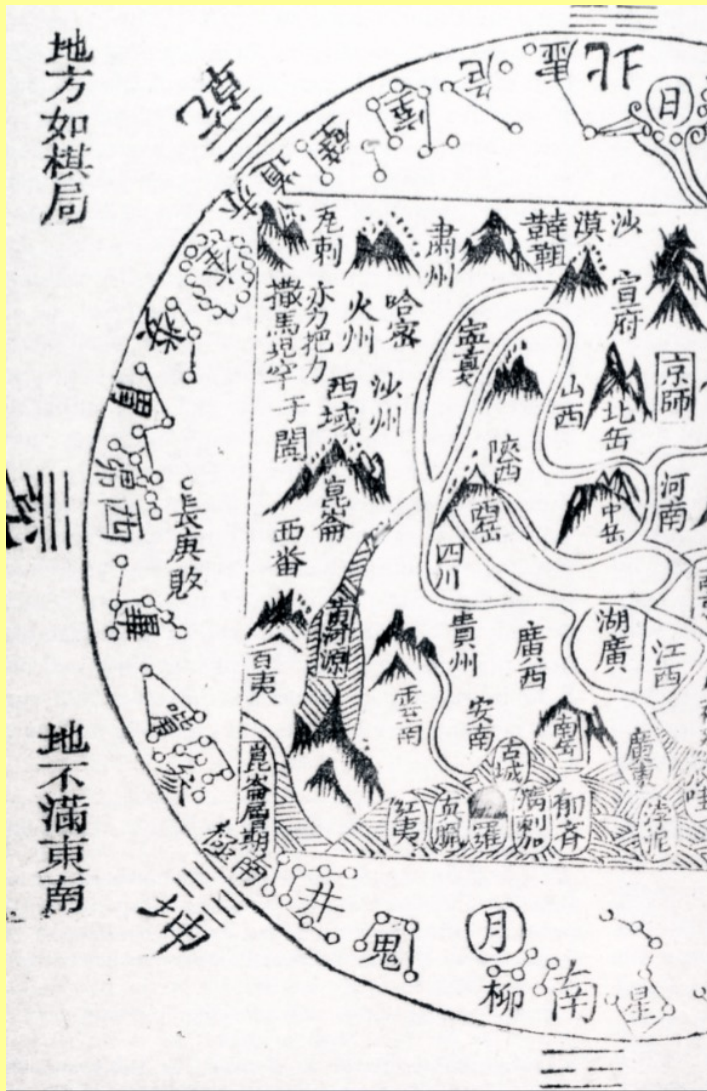


THE EIGHT TRIGRAMS

Like *yin* and *yang* and the five agents, the eight trigrams represent cosmic forces that operate in conjunction with, or in opposition to, other forces.

Name and trigram	Qian ☰ 乾	Kun ☷ 坤	Dui ☱ 兑	Li ☲ 離	Zhen ☳ 震	Xun ☴ 巽	Kan ☵ 坎	Gen ☶ 艮
Primary symbolism	Heaven	Earth	Lake	Fire	Thunder	Wind	Water	Mountain
Direction (King Wu)	NW	SW	West	South	East	SE	North	NE
Direction (Fuxi)	South	North	SE	East	NE	SW	West	NW
Agent	Metal	Earth	Metal	Fire	Wood	Wood	Water	Earth

TRIGRAMS AS COSMIC FORCES



Partial map of the world (1721)



Incense burner, Temple of Heaven

THEORIES OF *FENGSHUI*

Two main schools
c. 1200–1912 CE):

**(1) Directions and
Positions**

**(2) Forms and
Configurations**

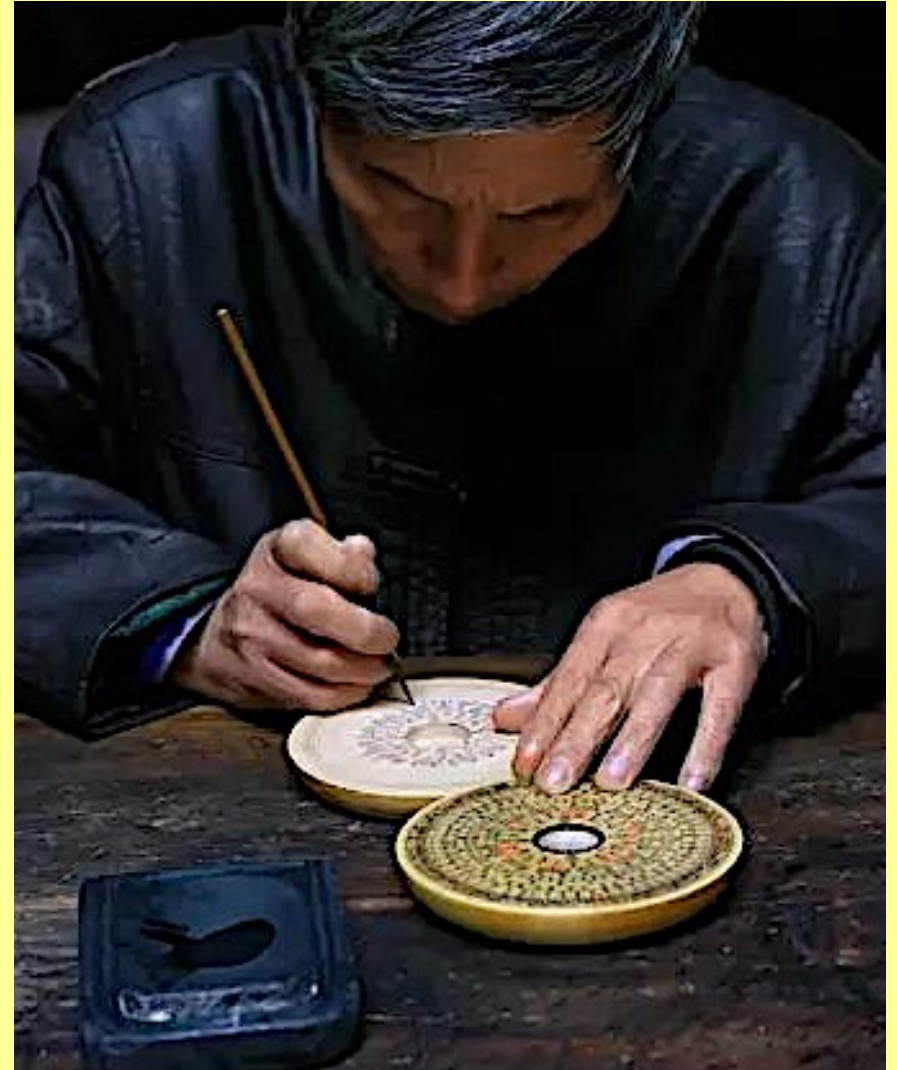
But in fact, both
“schools” drew
freely from each
other

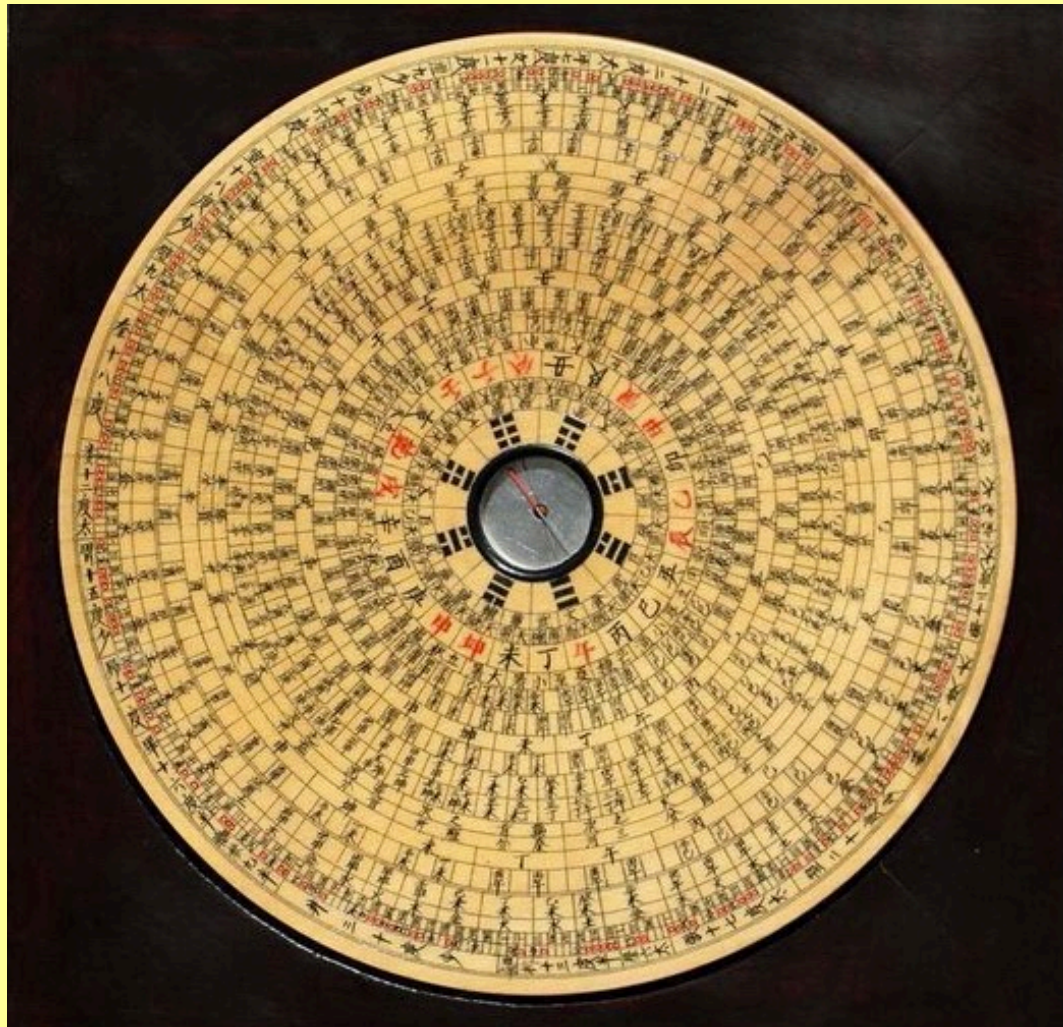


A Ming dynasty *fengshui*
specialist (right) and his client

DIRECTIONS AND POSITIONS

Geomantic compasses, which had ancient antecedents (c. 300 BCE), were used from the Song dynasty (960–1279) onward to identify auspicious sites for buildings and graves.





Geomantic compasses had a magnetized needle and a series of concentric rings that contained the major variables used by Chinese *fengshui* specialists to deal with space, time and cosmic change.

FORMS AND CONFIGURATIONS

The five agents were often manifest in landforms. They were important because of:

- (1) The need for a balance of agents in any given location.
- (2) The need to be compatible with a person's birth date



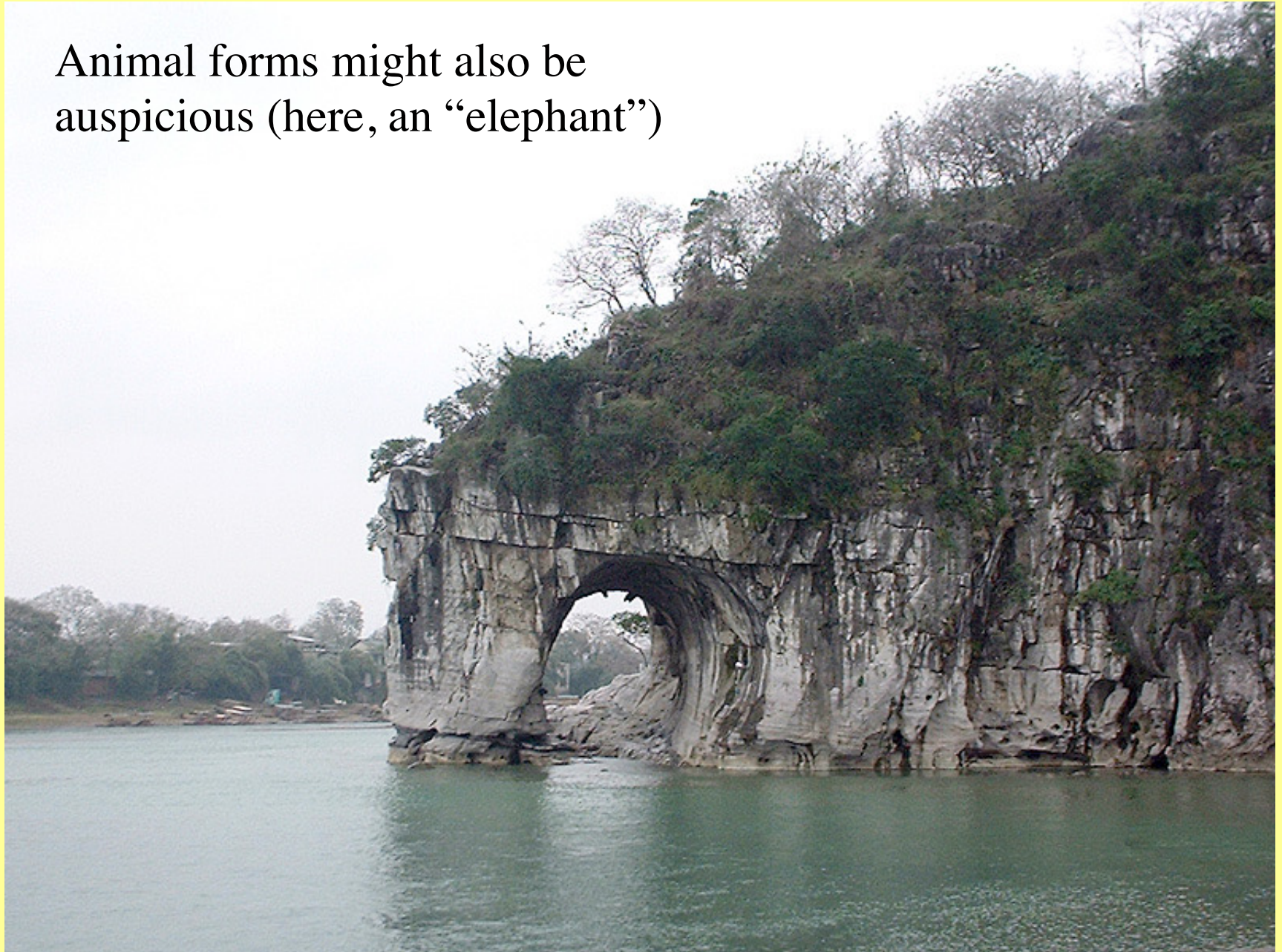


A classic “fire” landform



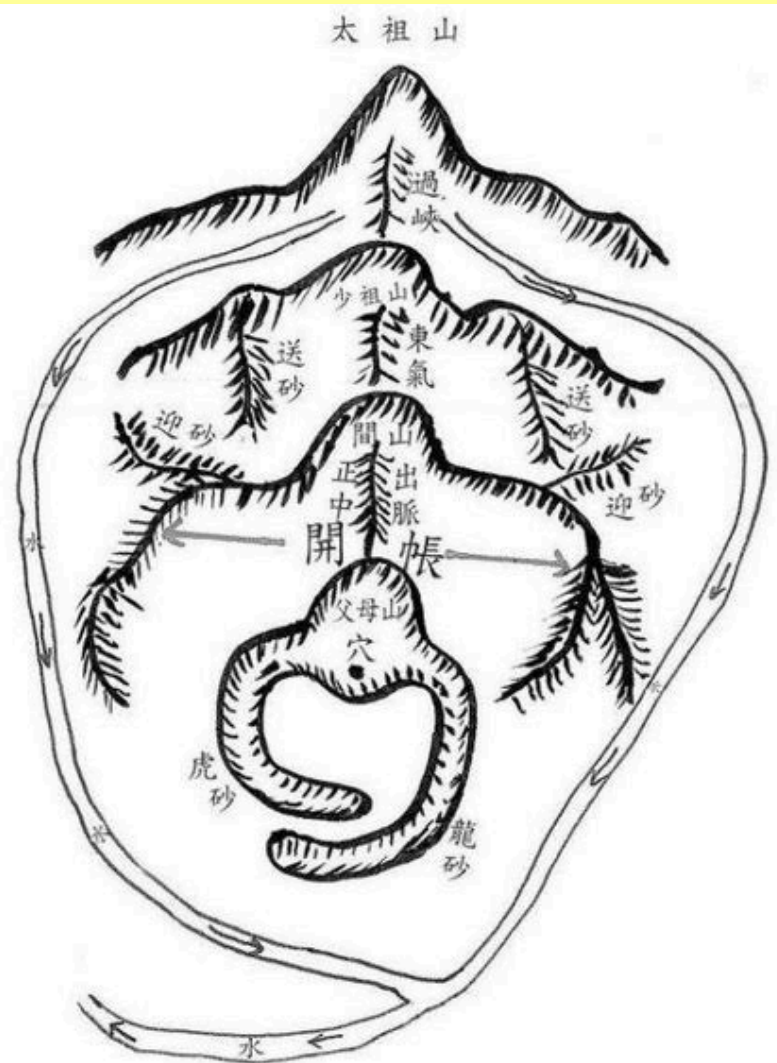
Five agent landforms at a single site

Animal forms might also be auspicious (here, an “elephant”)

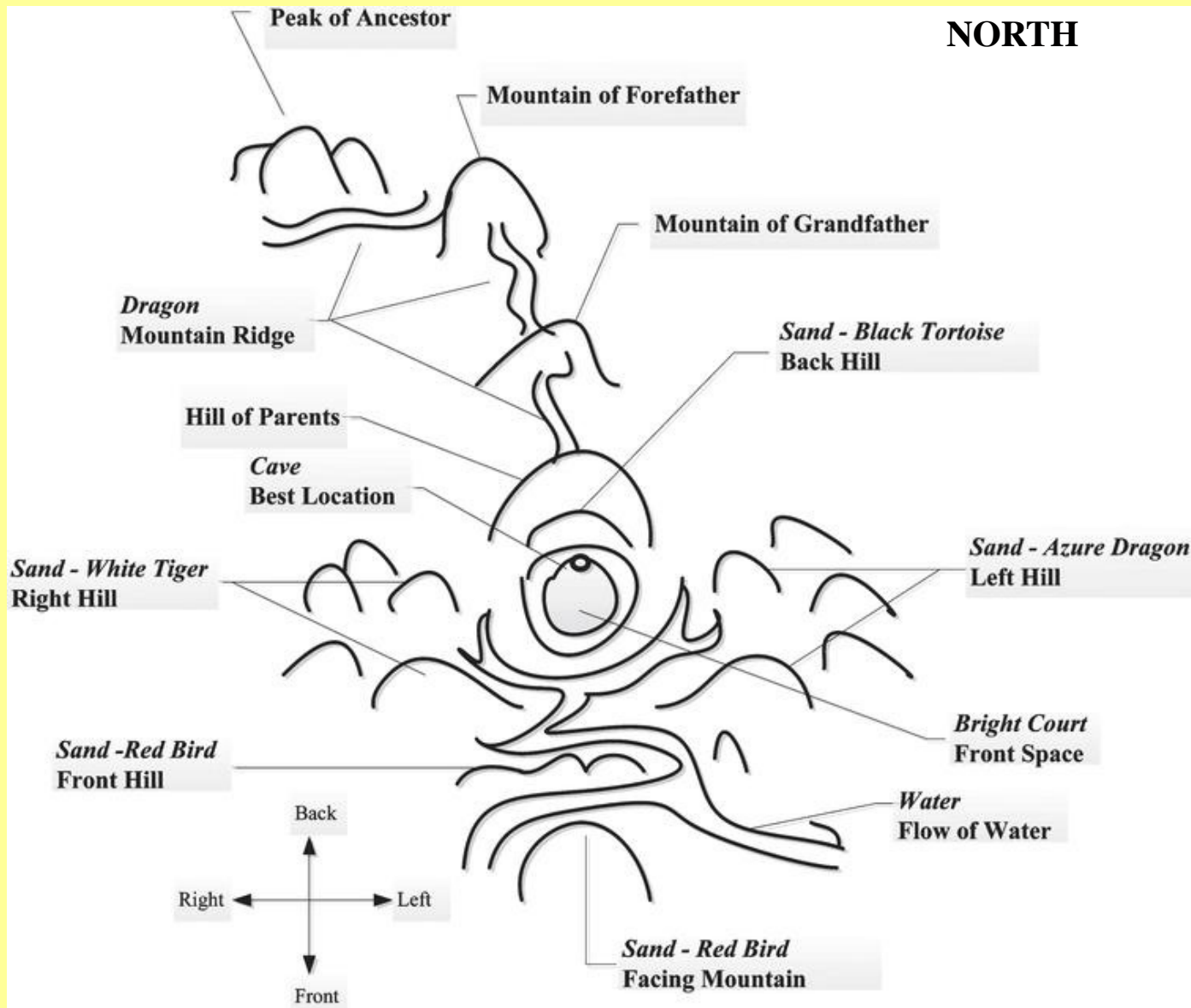


A Chinese sketch of an auspicious site

Features: A “major ancestral peak;” a “lesser ancestral peak;” an “opening” in the middle; a “father-mother mountain,” behind the “lair,” where the body is buried. The fringes denote major “dragon veins” and water flows around the site and exits in the south.



Western rendering of an auspicious site

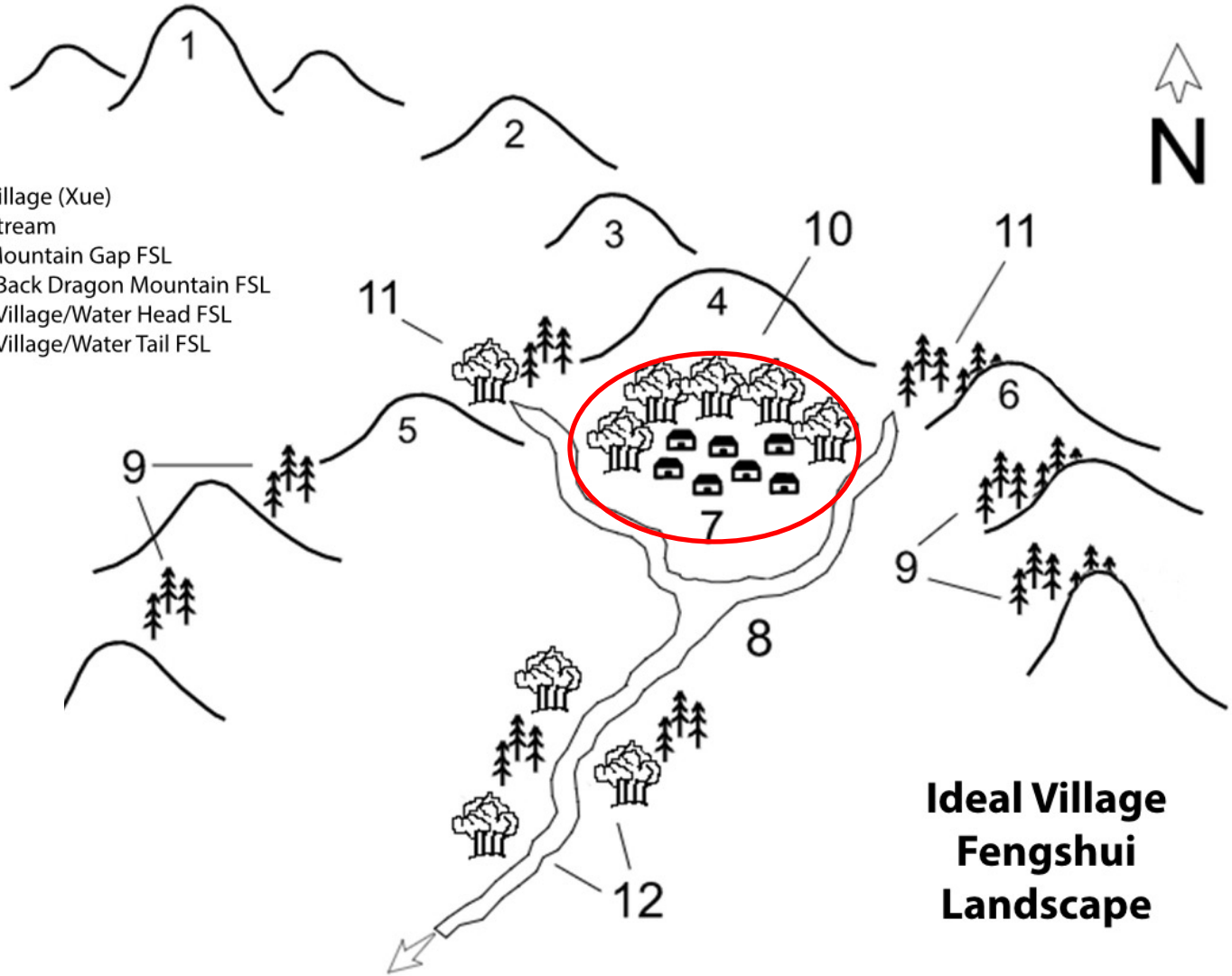




An ideal individual gravesite

Key

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Kunlun Mountains | 7. Village (Xue) |
| 2. Grandparent Mountain | 8. Stream |
| 3. Parent Mountain | 9. Mountain Gap FSL |
| 4. Master Mountain | 10. Back Dragon Mountain FSL |
| 5. White Tiger Mountain | 11. Village/Water Head FSL |
| 6. Azure Dragon Mountain | 12. Village/Water Tail FSL |



**Ideal Village
Fengshui
Landscape**



“Dragon Veins”



Many traditional *fengshui* manuals emphasized the importance of personal morality

Hence, numerous titles such as *Book on Geomancy That Must Be Read by the Humane and Filial*.

Some *fengshui* masters claimed that “A good heart is better than a good site.”

Some geomancers would not assist people who seemed insufficiently moral, insisting that their clients must “accumulate virtue.”

SUMMARIES OF REQUIREMENTS FOR AUSPICIOUS GEOMANTIC SITES

BURIAL SITES

Ideally facing south

Dragon veins should
not to be obstructed
or severed

BUILDINGS

Ideally facing south

Dragon veins should
not to be obstructed or
severed

BURIAL SITES

Oriented according to balanced cosmic variables (*yin* and *yang*, five agents, trigrams, numbers, etc.), as well as physical features

BUILDINGS

Oriented according to balanced cosmic variables (*yin* and *yang*, five agents, trigrams, numbers, etc.)

BURIAL SITES

Protection from
“noxious winds”
emanating from the
north

Plants and trees for
protection

Water should flow in
front of the grave, but
not into it.

BUILDINGS

Protection from
“noxious winds”
emanating from the
north

Plants and trees for
protection

Water must not run
straight into a human
dwelling

BURIAL SITES

Auspicious shapes
(dragon, lion, tiger,
etc.)

Burial at an
auspicious time

Moral behavior
(loyalty, filial
piety, etc.)

BUILDINGS

Roads should not run
directly into
buildings

Building at an
auspicious time

Moral behavior
(loyalty, filial piety,
etc.)

ONE MORE IMPORTANT STIPULATION FOR HOMES

A house must not be surrounded by appreciably higher houses, or be located at a point where the corners of other houses converge on it

Devices for improving *fengshui* sites



Stones that “dare to resist [evil influences]”



“Shadow Walls”

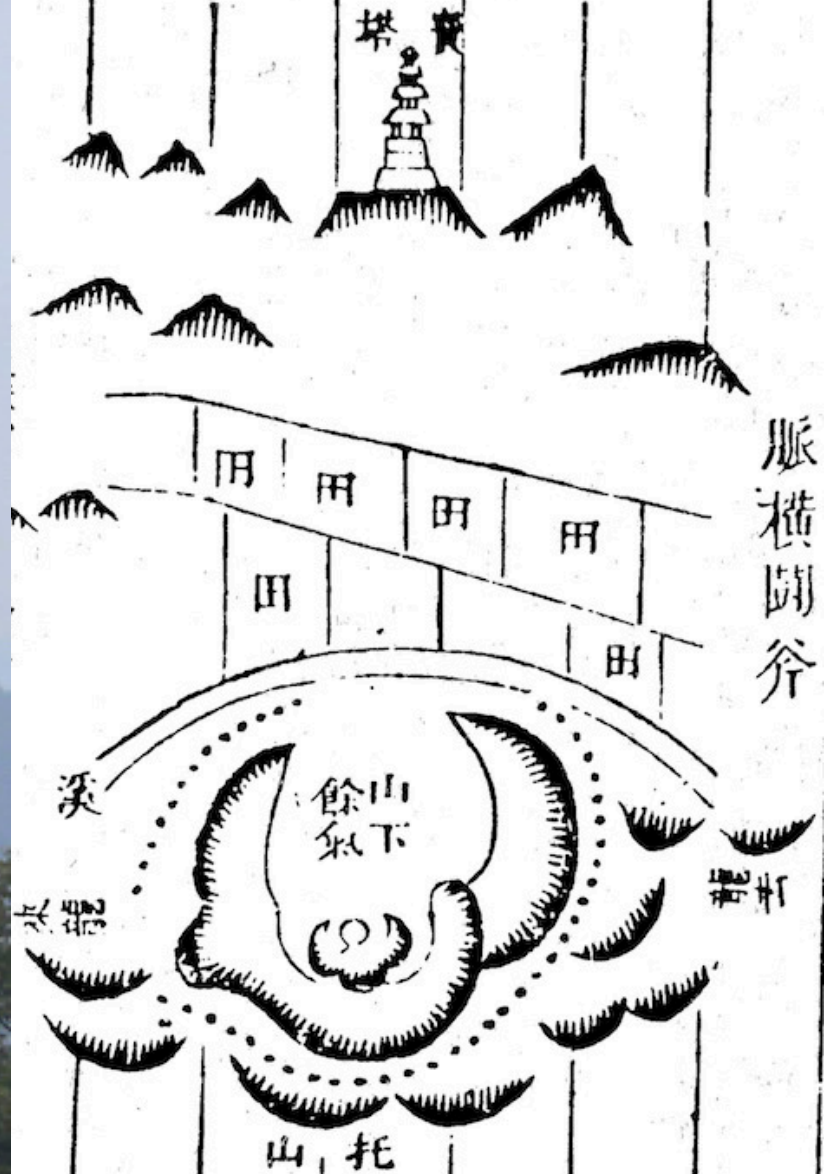


Artificial “Ponds”

Pagodas



形窩燕上梁



張天師鎮諸煞神符

鎮獸衣等符	鎮鳥人等符	鎮馬畜怪符	鎮釜等神符	鎮帳被怪符
冠污鳥	家入禽	等犬牛	怪甌灶	等枕床

--	--	--	--	--

此佩大	此貼門	此貼處	此貼房	此佩大
帶符書	大符書	怪符書	厨符書	帶符書

鎮般怪靈符	鎮鵝等之符	鎮獸人等符	鎮車怪靈符	鎮皿具怪符
總諸	怪鳥鷄	家入野	速等舟	等物器

--	--	--	--	--

此與怪佩	此井上	此貼上	此壓處	此壓處
見人符	窩栖符	門符書	怪符書	怪符書

Charms

月 日
 太歲乙丑年陳泰星君到此鎮
 太陰星君 太陽星君
 北斗星君 南斗星君
 敕令六丁天兵 敕令天官賜福 敕令鎮宅光明
 招財進寶 合家平安



白虎

奉天

天師了天兵

六神將

符籙

青龍

青龍



玄武



朱雀

招財



法法之間
不神

奉地

符掃天下

無道鬼

龍神

Political life:

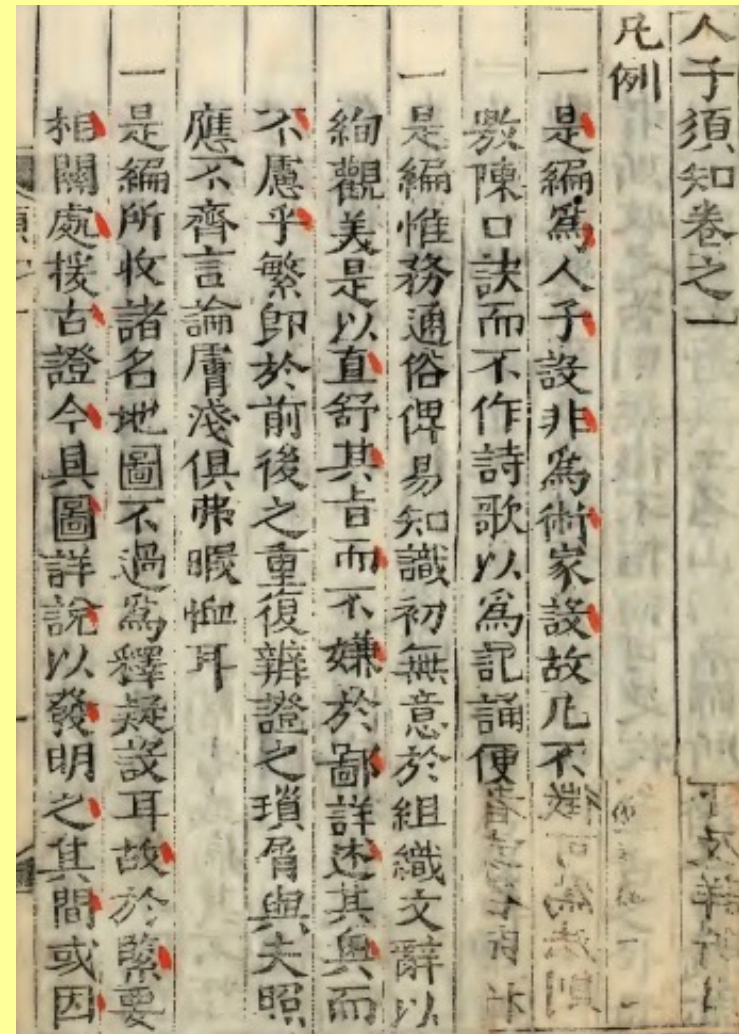
The Chinese state employed *fengshui* specialists at every level, from the imperial palace down to the offices of county magistrates.

The Significance of *Fengshui* in Traditional Chinese Society



Qing imperial tombs

Social significance:
Ancestor worship was a cultural universal in traditional China, and the proper burial of an ancestor according to the principles of *fengshui* was essential.



Guidelines for a book titled *What People Must Know about Geomancy [in the Service of Filial Piety]*.

Social significance (continued):

Fengshui specialists played extremely important roles as advisers to families, clans and government officials regarding structures of every sort, from buildings and roads to bridges, dams and mines.

Legal significance:

Many lawsuits revolved around claims of damage to the *fengshui* of a piece of property.

Economic significance:

Fengshui beliefs constrained the exploitation of domestic resources (esp. forestry and mining). Also, when Westerners came to China in the nineteenth century, Chinese often claimed that foreign economic enterprises (railroads, telegraphs, mines, etc.) disturbed the local *fengshui*.

Fengshui as “science”:

Fengshui was perhaps the single most important way that people at all levels of Chinese society understood and responded to the physical world.

It was also closely linked to many other areas of knowledge in premodern times, including geography, astronomy and medicine.

Fengshui as a source of psychological and aesthetic satisfaction





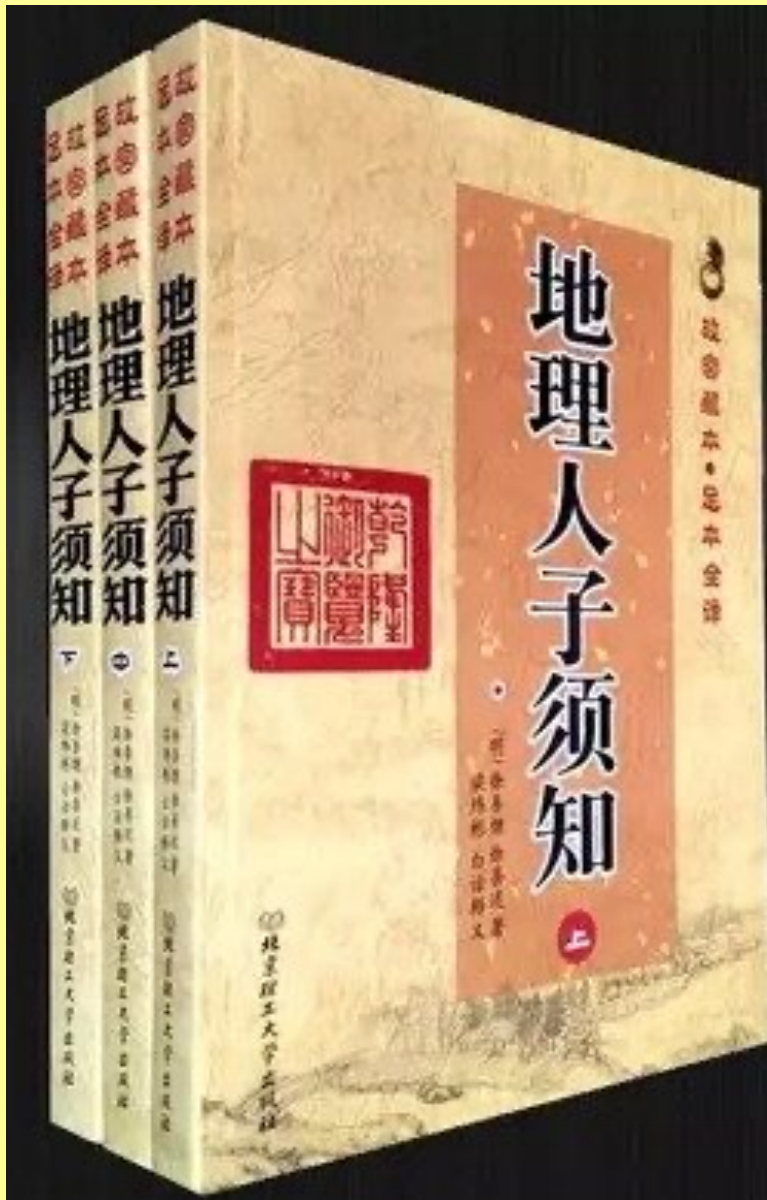
Fengshui as an inspiration for landscape gardens

THE SPREAD OF *FENGSHUI* IN EAST ASIA

The key common denominator: **The classical Chinese language**, which could be read by any literate person in Japan, Korea and Vietnam

Like Latin in the premodern West





Geomantic Common Denominators:

Initial borrowing of Chinese *fengshui* texts and techniques

Example (left): *What People Must Know about Geomancy [in the Service of Filial Piety]*



A Korean map of Korea (c. 1722)
with “dragon veins”

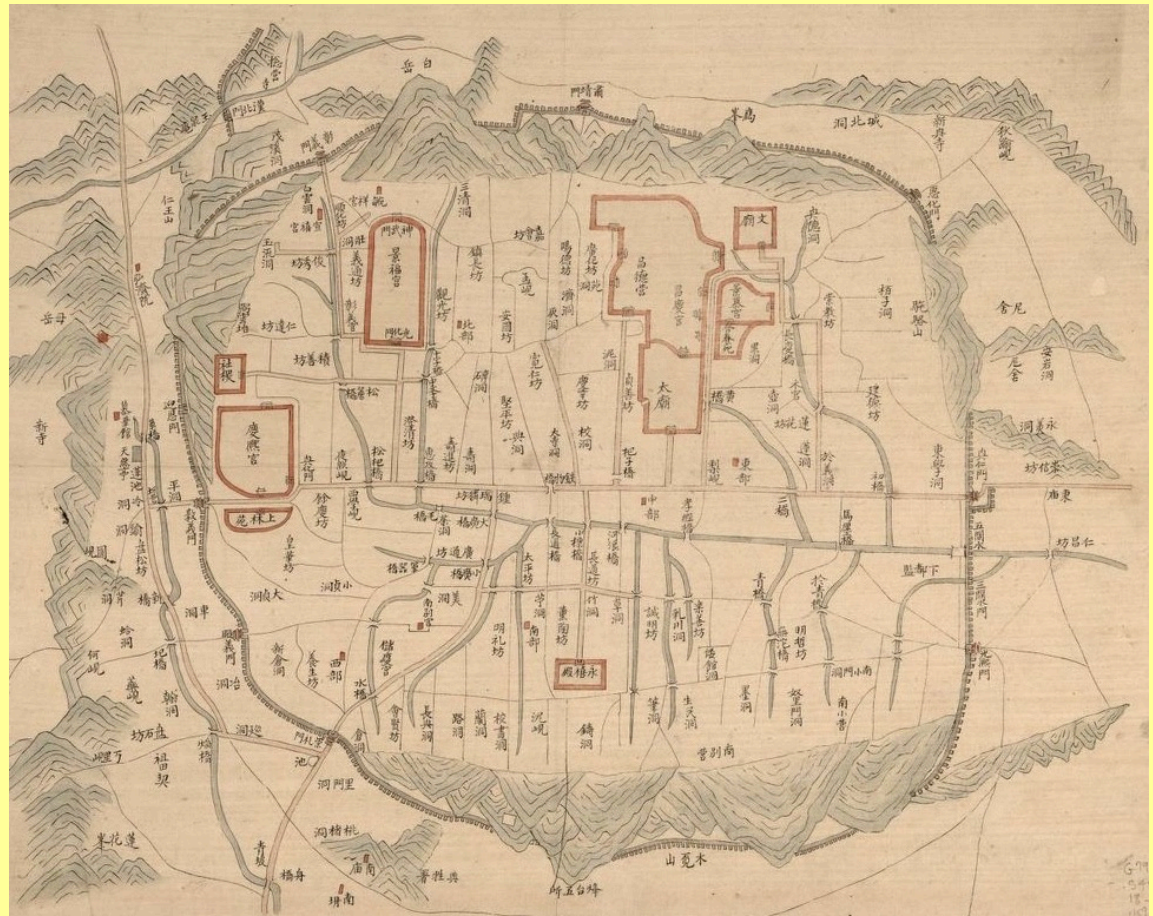
Differences:

All of the cultures of
East Asia

“domesticated” Chinese
geomantic theories and
practices—often
through distinctive
myths, folktales and
histories, as well as
references to specific
landforms

Korean *fengshui*
(pronounced
pungsu):

Korean stories
about geomancy
tended to feature
Buddhist themes
and characters
significantly more
often than their
Chinese
counterparts.

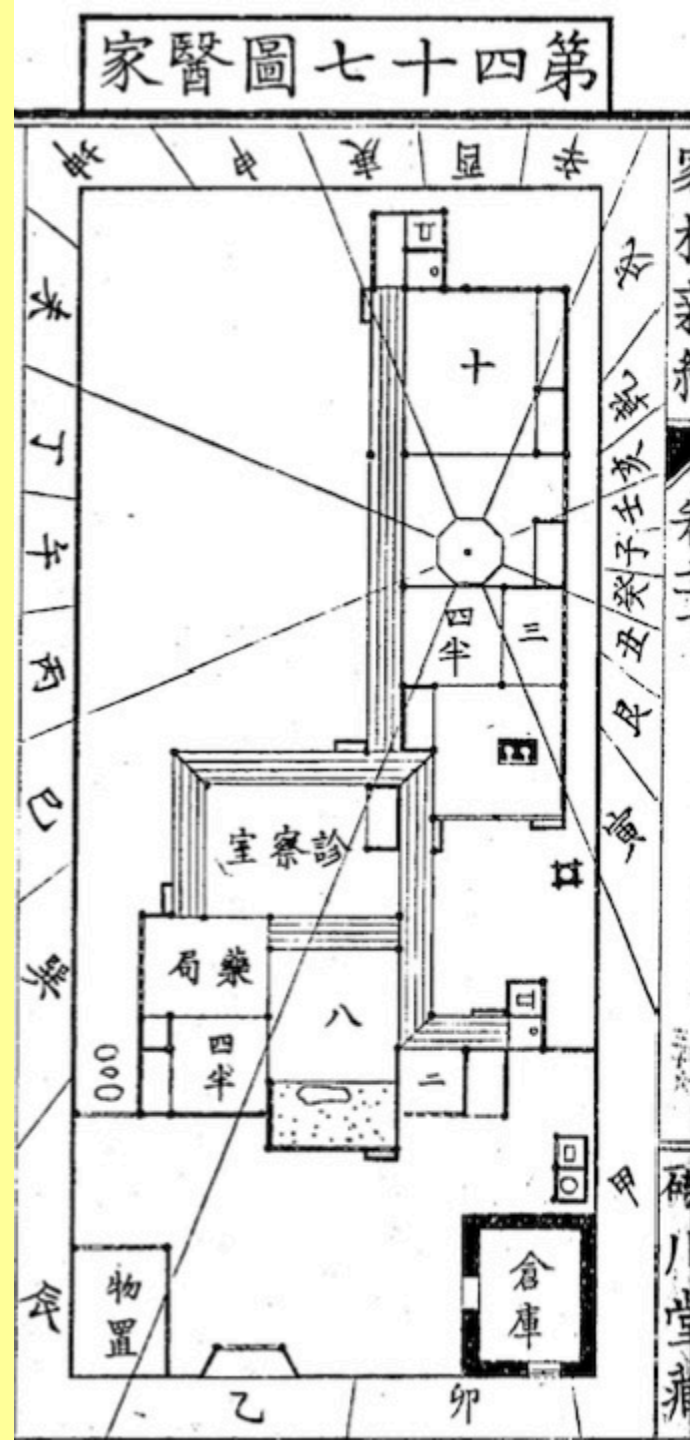


A nineteenth century map of Seoul with
protective mountains and nurturing
waterways

Japanese *fengshui* (pronounced *fūsui*)

Focused primarily on homes and buildings, not graves. Graveyards were handled primarily by Buddhist temples—usually without recourse to geomancy.

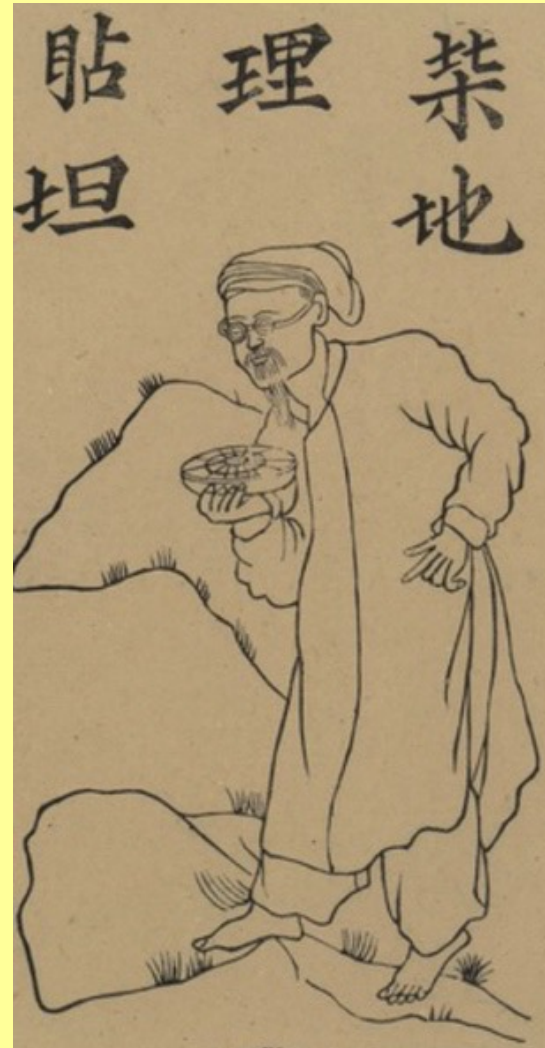
Right: A doctor's residence framed by hexagrams and time indicators



Vietnamese *fengshui* (pronounced *phong thủy*)



Map of Vietnam (c. 1885) mountains and rivers.



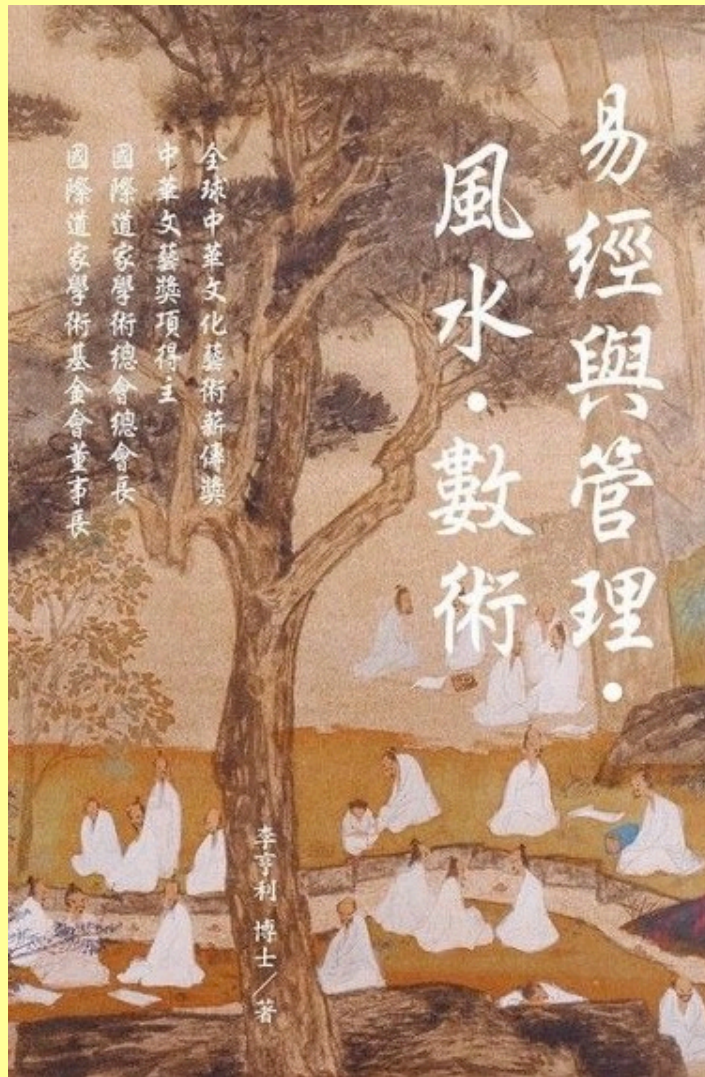
A Vietnamese geomancer

THE MODERN LEGACY OF *FENGSHUI*

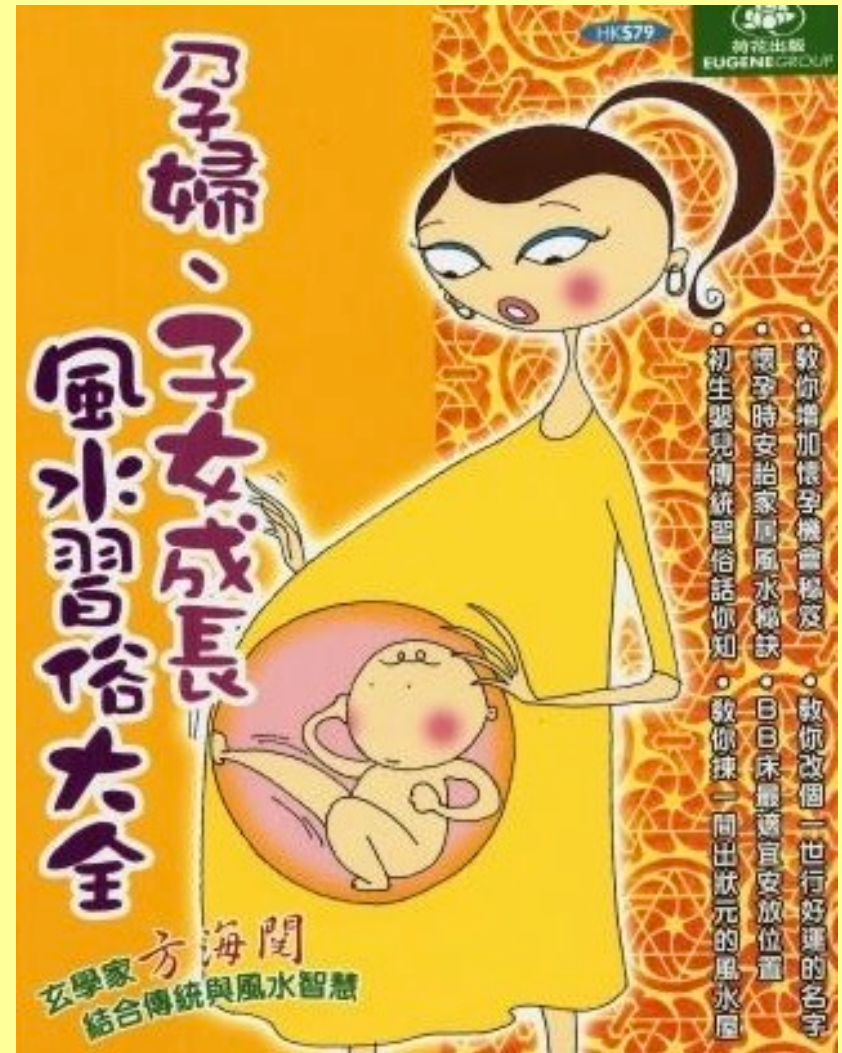


A traditional *fengshui* specialist in contemporary China

After some persecution in Mainland China (esp. from 1950–1978), *fengshui* is still prevalent in all “Chinese” environments, including not only the People’s Republic, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, but also overseas Chinese communities everywhere. It is also popular in South Korea, Japan and Vietnam



A contemporary Chinese book on *fengshui* and management



A contemporary Chinese book on *fengshui* and child-rearing

Fengshui in the West

Lillian Too has, according to her website (<http://www.lillian-too.com/>), “authored over 80 best selling books” on the subject of *fengshui*, works that “have been translated into 30 languages.”

LILLIAN TOO
FENG SHUI
EXTRAVAGANZA
2019

Year of the Earth Boar

Singapore *Kuala Lumpur*

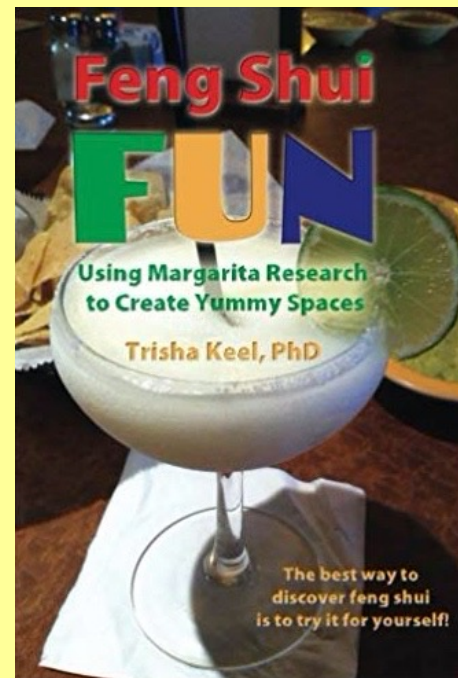
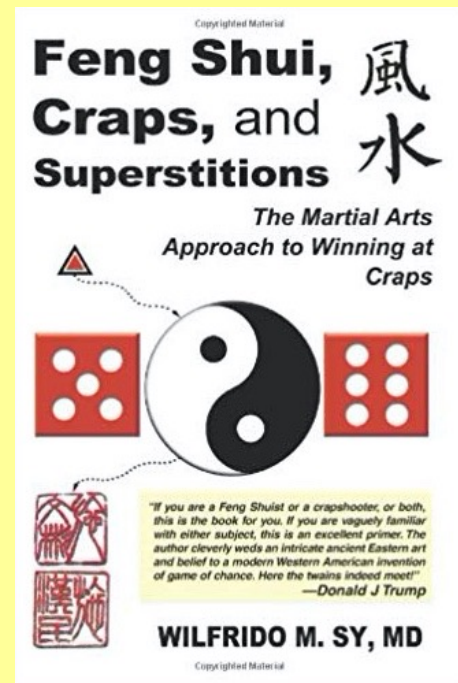
Sunday
9TH DECEMBER 2018
(10am to 5pm)
Hall 405 & 406, Level 4,
Suntec Singapore International
Convention & Exhibition Centre

Sunday
16TH DECEMBER 2018
(10am to 5pm)
Grand Mahkota Ballroom,
Hotel Istana
Kuala Lumpur

Free
2019 Booklet
for every participant

Fengshui in America

Most works on *fengshui* in the U.S. reflect stereotypical qualities of American culture: a preoccupation with love, sex, fashion, having fun, personal appearance, pets, clearing out clutter, and doing things quickly.



A few representative titles: *Move Your Stuff, Change Your Life: How to Use Feng Shui to Get Love, Money, Respect, and Happiness; Classical Feng Shui for Health, Beauty and Longevity; Classical Feng Shui for Romance, Sex and Relationships; Design Your Living Space for Love, Harmony and Prosperity; Fashion Feng Shui; Feng Shui for the Loss of a Pet; Feng Shui for You and Your Cat; Teen Feng Shui: Design Your Space, Design your Life; Beauty Feng Shui; Feng Shui for Your Baby Nursery; Decorating with Funky Shui:*

In short, *fengshui* has become a catch-all term for “trendy Asian stuff” (hence the marketing of *fengshui* products such as crystals, perfumes, music etc.).



Fengshui perfumes and *fengshui* crystals

This is all fine,
perhaps, but what
we have lost in the
shuffle is a true
understanding of a
rich and
sophisticated
tradition of Chinese
thought and
behavior.