



## **The Magic of Ritual and Feng Shui**

**Helen and James Jay**

One Autumn morning, we were getting ready to perform a ceremony and blessing ritual on our new property. Inspired by the beautiful day, our young son Anthony asked if we might go up to the high mountains to look for antlers that the deer had shed. His questions made us stop and reflect on how much more children are in tune with Nature's energies than we grown ups are. It is this intuitive understanding of the changing energetic realm that is at the heart of Feng Shui.

Feng Shui rituals are important tools for strengthening the link between our earthly, physical existence, the energy of the Earth, and the cosmos. When this link is connected, balance, peace, and harmony follow. Since ancient times, rituals have been used for celebration, spiritual connection, renewal, and blessing. The Chinese, for example, viewed their world as filled with spirits. Their rituals were designed to insure protection and favor from the spiritual realm.

The ancients had the keen ability to directly experience the energies of the Earth. Intuitively they understood their dependence on Mother Earth; they saw her as their supreme deity. Rocks, streams, plants, mountains, air, and oceans were considered her flesh; any alteration or destruction was an act of sacrilege. They lived respectfully on the land and left the Earth as they found it.

The ancients used ceremony and ritual to honor the Earth's gifts and to help them become part of the universal consciousness of nature and the cosmos. They consulted the spirits and asked for protection and bounty. Before hunting, they asked the spirit of the animal kingdom for forgiveness and later gave thanks for the take. Ritual was an integral part of their daily lives.

As settlements and cities began to surface, a dramatic new age with a radically changed lifestyle emerged. The plowing of fields and

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construction of living environments redirected the free flow of the Earth's Chi. New rituals were born to honor the spirit of the Earth and the changes being made to her.

Certain natural sites<sup>1</sup> were chosen for the special energy they possessed. Wells, springs, rivers, and lakes became common places of celebration and ritual. Mountain tops, valleys, and woods were also honored. This era heralded the beginning of *sacred space*. In this Nature-centered outlook, many rituals were developed and specialized for the sacred space selected. Each space had its own unique purpose and intention: fertility, healing, divination, birth, or death.

In modern times, people live within well-defined boundaries that are out of sync with the natural surroundings. Our large cities offer little connection to the natural world.

**The need for ritual and reconnecting with Nature and Spirit  
is greater now than ever before.**



How often do you walk in the park or spend time in the country? Do you ever take the time to lie beneath a tree to feel that overwhelming sense of peace and belonging that Earth gives? It is this sense of feeling connected that is at the heart of ritual.

**It is your birthright; you must reclaim it!**

How do you make your environment into sacred spaces? How can you reconnect with the Earth? Albert Einstein had wise advise. He said, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level which created them." The solution must *transcend* the problem, and ritual provides this link.

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to "Energy Systems and Feng Shui" p. 275, and *Earth Design: The Added Dimension*, Chapter 3.

So how do you bring ritual into your life? The following are powerful rituals that can be performed to transform your space and your life.

**Let go of old attachments and bring in new energies!**

## The Elements of Ritual

### Offerings

All rituals should contain some form of offering. Candles and incense are commonly lit to offer light and fragrance<sup>2</sup> to the spiritual realm. Other items such as food, drink, flowers, evergreens, or personal items can also be used.



### Sound

Sound is universally used in ritual to call forth Spirit. Chanting a mantra or prayer is an offering and ritual of the highest form. A mantra can consist of pure, sacred sounds or *bijas* like the sound *Om*, or they may consist of words with a particular meaning. A mantra sends the message of the Divine into the environment and calls on celestial help.

In Sanskrit, the word mantra means a tool for thinking (from *man* - to think and *tra* - tool). Mantras have been employed since antiquity as a means of clarifying and focusing the mind, offering praise, thanks and gratitude, and calling on the spiritual realm for help.

Two commonly used mantras in Feng Shui are the heart-calming mantra: Gatay, Gatay, Para Gatay, Para Sum Gatay, Bodhi Swaha, and the six true words: Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to "A Scentual Reminder of Feng Shui Remedies," p. 329.

<sup>3</sup> Loosely translated: *I am one with Nature, I am one with God.*

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The **Heart-Calming Mantra** or Heart Sutra<sup>4</sup> is considered by many to be one of the most important teachings of the Buddha.

*Shariputra, listen carefully to these syllabic sounds which contain the entire Perfection of Wisdom, as a vast tree is miraculously contained within a small seed. This is the mantra which awakens every conscious stream into pure presence. This is the mantra of all mantras, the mantra which transmits the principles of incomparability and inconceivability, the mantra which instantly dissipates the apparent darkness of egocentric misery, the mantra which invokes only truth and does not acknowledge the separate self-existence of any falsehood: gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha (gone, gone, gone beyond, gone beyond even the beyond into full enlightenment, so be it!)*<sup>5</sup>

On the **Six True Words**, L. Austine Waddle in his classic study of Tibetan Buddhism said:

*And no wonder this formula is so popular and constantly repeated by both Lamas and laity, for its mere utterance is believed to stop the cycle of rebirths and to convey the reciter directly to paradise. There is no mantra that can be considered superior to the mani, which includes not only all the functions, but also all the power and blessings of all other mantras. The learned sages of the past, like the great Karma Chagme, for example, were unable to find anywhere in the scriptures a mantra more beneficial, quintessential, or easier to practice than the mani; so it was this mantra that they took as their main practice. Even just hearing the mani can be enough to free beings from samsara.*<sup>6</sup>

### **Movement**

Bring movement into your ceremony. Dancing and ritual actions put the body in motion and involve you directly with the energies of the ritual. Hands held in a mudra or prayerful fashion crystallize your intention in

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<sup>4</sup> Please refer to the Heart Sutra Meditation in "Spirituality and Feng Shui," p. 357.

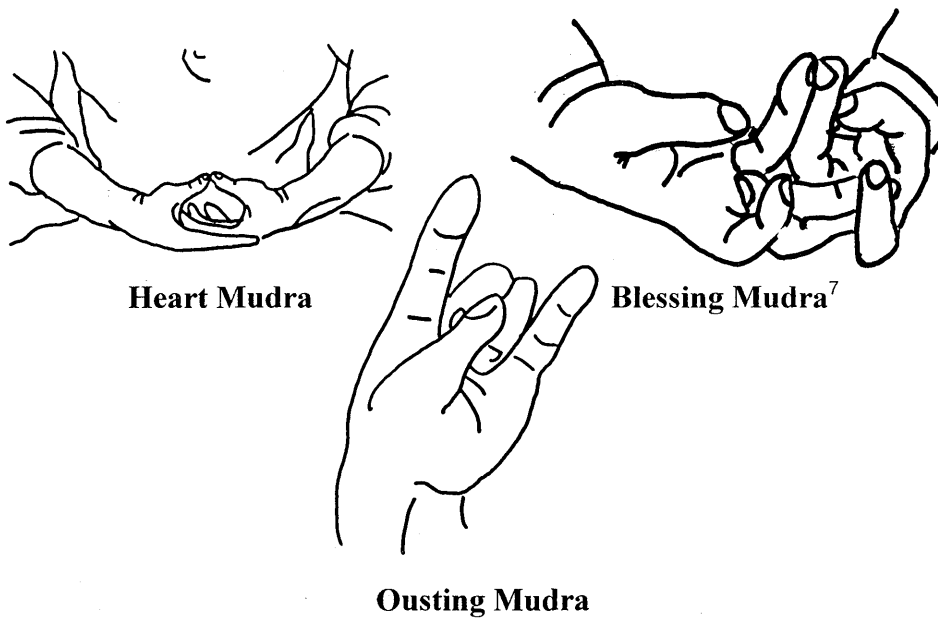
<sup>5</sup> Lex Hixon, Mother of the Buddhas, Quest Books, 1993.

<sup>6</sup> Patrul Rinpoche, The Heart Treasure of the Enlightened Ones, Shambhala Publications, 1993.

the ritual. These specific hand gestures are often portrayed in images of the Buddha.

**A mudra helps to evoke a calm and centered state of mind.**

Two commonly used mudras in Feng Shui rituals are the **Heart Mudra** (left hand resting on right, with thumbs lightly touching while placed in the lap 2-3 inches below the navel) and the Angali Mudra (palms held together at chest level similar to Judeo-Christian hands in prayer).



Other common mudras are the **Blessing Mudra** (a portable mandala formed by the hands) and the **Ousting Mudra** (first and little fingers pointing out while the thumb holds the middle two fingers) which is used for breaking up negative energies.

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<sup>7</sup> This Mudra creates an offering mandala. The two ring fingers together represent Mt. Meru or World Mountain in ancient Indian cosmology. The fingers around Meru represent the continents of the world: the hungry ghosts dwell below and the high devas and gods above. Also above are the realms of pure form and formlessness, and the Buddha fields above the pure land.

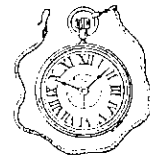
### **Intention and Visualization**

Intention and visualization are the unseen ingredients that give the ritual its power of transformation. Visualization also helps to focus the mind and unleash its power to manifest reality. This brings to life the creative potency of one's thoughts and dreams.

### **Three Secrets Reinforcement**

Sound, movement, and visualization form the pillars of the three secrets reinforcement. They represent the speech, body, and mind of the enlightened being. The three secrets reinforcement is an integral part of Feng Shui. When performing any ritual or placing a cure, you should recite a mantra or prayer, hold your hands in a gesture of mudra blessing, and focus the mind on a visualization or prayer.

It is said that when you are mindful, every action is a focused movement of being in the here and now.<sup>8</sup> The unification of the speech, body, and mind enables you to focus completely on the ritual and give it the mystical potency that only full attention can bring.<sup>9</sup>



### **Timing**

Lastly, timing should be taken into consideration. A ritual is most powerful when it is performed at an auspicious time. Full moons, new moons, solar eclipses, lunar eclipses, astronomical, or astrological events were traditional times for ritual ceremonies. Also New Years Day, birthdays, specific hours during the day (between 11am-1 pm or 11 pm-1 am are especially auspicious), or any time of trouble or bad luck.

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<sup>8</sup> Please refer to "Zen Feng Shui," p. 409.

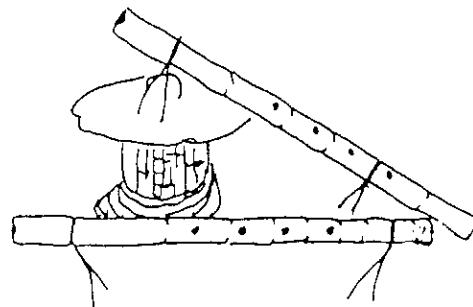
<sup>9</sup> In quantum healing, Dr. Deepak Chopra suggests that your thoughts are molecular energy that combines with such physical matter as furniture, accessories, or other cure items. The thought and item become molecularly connected through your intention. Master Lin Yun confirms that idea or visualization in this way, Feng Shui is 110% effective, while placement alone is only 10% productive.

## Rituals

### Bamboo Flute Ritual

*The melodic notes of the bamboo flute fill the air. The listeners are transported to an ancient time, and the breath of the musician is transformed into a vehicle of spirit. Thus, the music of the simple flute made of bamboo has the power to lift our spirits and enhance our Chi. --Anonymous*

The simple elegance of the bamboo flute represents peace and safety. Traditionally used to herald news of peace, the music of the bamboo flute brought happiness to those who heard its beautiful sounds. In Feng Shui, the flute has many functions:



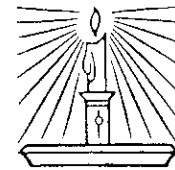
1. It brings peace and safety. When still a shoot underground, bamboo already has its joints. This symbolizes the innate integrity of the bamboo. Although it grows high and lofty, it always remains humble. Hang flutes to bring a sense of peace.
2. It provides support. When properly hung, bamboo flutes can lift any oppressive element. Flutes hung on overhead beams will counteract their oppressive effect. Always hang them in the direction of growth; this assures an uprising force.
3. It fights evil. Flutes hung over the door can counteract negative influences of the first room entered, a staircase, and so on. They can be used to drive away evil spiritual influences.
4. It can be used to accent any area of the Bagua.
5. It can be used for rituals.

The following is a powerful bamboo flute ritual from the Black Sect Tantric Buddhism tradition, as taught by Feng Shui Master, Professor

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Thomas Lin Yun. This ritual can be used when moving into a new home or opening a new business location.

1. Place a bamboo flute, mouthpiece up, in an empty flower vase. Tie a 9-inch red string around the vase. The red string is important, as it symbolizes the removal of any negative energies. Performing the Three Secrets Reinforcement, chant the Six True Words: Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum 108 times. Visualize the sound of the mantra infusing the flute with great spiritual power.
2. Carry the flute and vase into all the rooms of the house or building. Visualize the flute bringing safety and peace and removing all evil from the premises. You may use the order of the Nine Star Path<sup>10</sup> blessing.
3. Place the vase with the flute in a prominent place that can be seen upon entering the building. Or take the flute out of the vase and hang it on the wall. It can be used to reinforce an area of the Bagua by hanging it in the corresponding location. In order to enhance your wealth, for example, it may be hung in a wealth corner of a room or of the building.
4. Again, perform the Three Secrets Reinforcement as a final blessing, and close the ceremony. Visualize that all is well in this location and that you will experience good health, long life, and abundance.



### **Burning Ritual**

Burning is an ancient method of transforming energy. As a substance burns, it releases energy in the form of heat and smoke, which then travels skyward. A burning ceremony is a symbolic method of letting go of mistakes and failures and ushering in a new start.

Joss<sup>11</sup> papers are brightly colored, ornate papers in varying sizes with special spiritual symbols printed on them.

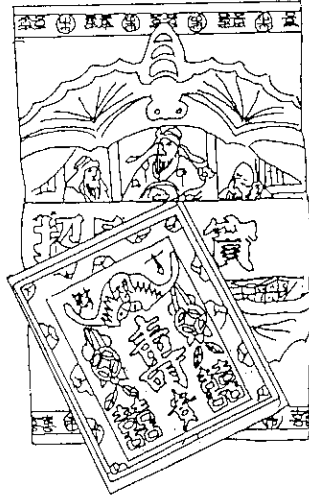
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<sup>10</sup> Please refer to "Spirituality and Feng Shui," p.357.

<sup>11</sup> Joss translates into luck or fortune, when wishing someone "Good Joss," it is to bless them with good fortune, good luck, and auspiciousness.

Please see the author's biography for information on obtaining joss papers and in the order pages.





For thousands of years, joss papers have been burned as an integral part of Taoist and Feng Shui rituals.<sup>12</sup> Different papers have distinct intentions: longevity, money, prosperity, good health, and fertility.

The act of burning these papers in a ritual sends messages to the spirit world, and you receive blessings and help in return. They are burned in accordance with your most sincere earthly wishes. This ritual is performed whenever you move to a new location, on such designated ceremonial days as New Year's Day, or in times of bad luck or trouble. One package is known as The Wish Fulfilling package. It is a bundle of brightly colored papers wrapped with a depiction of the 3 immortals of Taoism.

Here is a simple burning ritual that can be performed for financial or relationship problems, and which can also be modified for other problems.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *James and Helen graciously sent us a Money/Relationship Joss Package. On the full moon, at midday, during the final week of putting the anthology together, Maggie, Rita, Elizabeth and I performed an "unlimited success and all levels of abundance ceremony" for the book, for all the wonderful authors, and for you.*

*On each new moon, I burn all the red envelopes I have collected during the past cycle, as I set the intent of my clients' blessings to help them manifest their desires through the Feng Shui we did. You can also burn sage, incense, or candles. Consider burning an old lover's letters to release unwanted feelings.*

<sup>13</sup> The Taoist/Buddhist tradition of Raymond Lee, Feng Shui master and Buddhist priest in San Francisco, suggests not eating beef on the day of the ceremony.

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1. Go to your backyard, porch or balcony. If they are not available, use a fireplace or wood stove. Be aware of fire safety. Use a fire-proof bowl or receptacle, and have a lid or cover handy in case the flames get out of hand.
2. Light candles and then incense. If you do not have an incense burner, use an apple or orange to hold the incense. Ask that spirits come to the light of your candles and accept the offering of incense.
3. For money problems, mention the name of your business or job and ask for help from the spiritual realm to increase your wealth. For relationship problems, ask for spiritual help and understanding to create healthy partnerships. Repeat a prayer of your choice nine times while holding your hands together in a mudra or prayer-like fashion. Visualize money flowing into your life and that your relationships are healthy, loving, and strong.
4. Burn the papers from the package all at once or in small groups.
5. Perform this ritual during the day. The hours between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. are especially auspicious.

### **Creating Your Own Ritual**

You may choose to create a personal ritual.<sup>14</sup> Sincere intention is the most important ingredient. Feel free to experiment. It is not uncommon to feel a bit apprehensive or nervous at first. Relax and open yourself up to new possibilities.



As nature proves, everything comes full circle. What became of Anthony's excursion to the high mountains to find deer antlers? On that same Autumn day, we finished our blessing ceremony by walking around the perimeter of our sacred space, our land.

We traveled up hillsides, through thickets of manzanita, oak, and pine trees, enjoying nature. At a small bend in the trail, Anthony suddenly stopped in his tracks. On the path was a full set of deer antlers. It felt as though our ritual had been acknowledged by the spiritual realm, and the deer, no longer needing his old antlers, had left them as a gift to bless our new beginning.

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<sup>14</sup> Please refer to "Using the Components of Feng Shui Cures," p. 65.