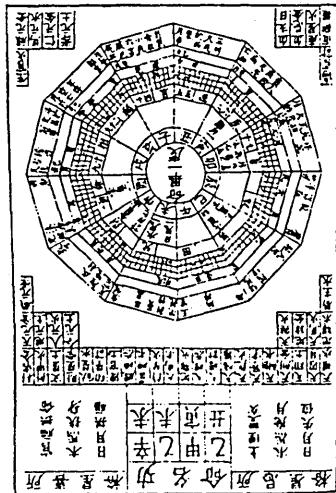


Starting Over

William Spear

Feng Shui is a method of understanding the relationship between our external environment and our consciousness within. When properly practiced, this profound, ancient art creates a polarity between these two worlds, which stimulates movement and change. This sounds easy enough, but for anyone studying Feng Shui beyond the media sound bites and popular magazine features, one overwhelming truth quickly appears: There is a vast body of knowledge requiring many years of study, and confusion can easily conquer clarity.



It has been said that no lesser sages than Lao Tsu and Confucius spent their whole lives studying the I Ching or Book of Changes, which is the basis of Feng Shui.¹ Indeed, their words are wise, but is their teaching practical in today's world?

More a philosophy than a science, Feng Shui defies description or a superficial approach. While it might be presented as a collection of universal principles, the wise student searches for deeper understanding by consulting the source, the guidebook, the I Ching. Posing the question, "What is Feng Shui?" more than fifty experienced practitioners around

¹ Please refer to "Energy Systems and Feng Shui," p. 275.

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During such an inquiry, we find concepts that are powerful intoxicants for an aspiring ego. The mind's constant activity of bringing meaning to why things are the way they are is exposed as a full-time tyrant holding our gut feelings, instinct, and intuition prisoner. It is not until we surrender to a *higher power*, often in the face of great difficulty, that we are able to return to the teaching of the I Ching, that change is from the inside out.

Most educators in the field of Feng Shui readily admit that their personal abilities to teach, guide, and counsel emerge more from their intuition than their intellect. Those seeking consultation frequently comment that the advice given supported what they already felt but could not easily access. In Japanese, writing the word *intuition* results in the characters for *original ability*. It is the source of our own truth, our higher self, recovered from among the many messages of parents, teachers, friends, and learned behavior.

As children, like the people of *primitive* cultures, our view of the world was of *one big family*. Bringing two hands together to clap made a noise; unifying crayon and paper made a picture; placing one foot in front of the other moved us closer to where we wanted to go.

It was all so simple then. And as we remember to cultivate *a beginner's mind*, we are empowered to follow the words of Lao Tsu, to "give up learning and put an end to our troubles."



Come forth, and bring with you a heart that watches and receives.
William Wordsworth

Our role as teachers of this vast body of knowledge continues to be one of drawing out what is already there, not pouring in more. Listening, observing, and reflecting are our most valuable tools; gratitude to those

who came before us is our most precious view. The *backwards facing path* may seem less enticing than the one that moves forward, progressing. But as our vessel² empties, energies like wind and water stream in. As we experience the energy within ourselves, nature constantly nourishes us. Rudrananda said,

“It is surrendering and stretching and reaching and taking in more energy that accomplishes the impossible.”

Every individual knows *the Truth*, and no one can possibly claim mastery of it for anyone but himself. His Holiness The Dalai Lama calls us to embrace a *spiritual democracy*, a deeply held reverence for the many different interpretations of the Way. The opportunity to study is not easily overlooked, however, by anyone seeking a life. Even Sir Isaac Newton attempted, at the end of his life, to reconcile biblical passages with astronomical occurrences. Modern physicists sound more like ancient mystics these days; great discoveries come from what Albert Einstein called “the feeling that lies behind appearance.” It was his personal definition of *intuition*.



The Oracle Points the Way

The main theme in the I Ching hexagram of Water over Wind is *self development*; the message is to return *to the origin*. Society is changing its direction, its journey. The symbol for this movement in the I Ching is Water. As we individually examine our path in life and collectively realign our innermost intentions, our thoughts and consciousness will be reflected in the external environment. Floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and torrential downpours reveal this shift within; they are similar to the way our goals of self-enlightenment and illumination change. Symbolized by the element of Fire, the outer atmosphere heats up with record temperatures and spontaneous combustion. Droughts, wildfires, and intense geological change reflect the inner tumult.

² Please refer to the explanation of the Anthology's cover on the opening pages.

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Could it be that instead of life moving from the outer environment to us that *we are the creators of our entire destiny*, that life moves from within us to nature, so that what is happening now in the atmosphere and society is the reflection of our collective consciousness? The organic opposites of Water and Fire, beginning and end, life and death, are manifest in our everyday world. Maybe we have more to say about our future than we imagine.

A miracle, my friend, is an event which creates faith.

George Bernard Shaw

The principles of Feng Shui have inspired the spirits of thousands of people all over the world. Deep within each person lies the *possibility* for peace, health, and freedom. How we realize these endless dreams externally has little to do with the political agenda of the time, the religious doctrine of a particular sect, or the conceptual dogma of any specific culture. There are universal principles underlying all of what we do, a perfect order to this natural world of constant change. By cultivating the space within, each person reflects a different reality without. It is this place within where we will all meet. Songwriters and sages have long guided us toward such a reality. As we move forward, together, we will transform ourselves, and miracles will happen, from the inside out.



**Excerpted from
*The Feng Shui Anthology***

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