

HomeSweetHome

by Alison Northey

Feng Shui

The practice of living harmoniously

Ever wonder how some people seem to be born with a silver spoon in their mouth while others are destined to have one disaster befall them after another? According to ancient Chinese philosophy, this isn't just a matter of luck. The path your life takes is affected by *ba zi* — the date and time of your birth, and by *feng shui* — the practice of living harmoniously with the energy of your surrounding environment.

"To unravel a person's fortune requires a complex study of his date of birth, astrological sign, geographical locations, and the Five Elements," says *feng shui* master Sherman Tai, of Richmond. "Combined with the art of *feng shui*, one can accurately predict a person's fate where life and death; wealth and poverty; and success and failure are concerned."

Feng shui (pronounced *fung shway*), literally translated as wind and water, is all about the art of detecting and utilizing the circulation of life energy, or *ch'i*, for perfect health, harmony, wealth and happiness.

The core of *feng shui* focuses on examining the Five Elements — Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth — of both the environment and the people who live or work there.

"It is important to understand that there is a generative cycle of the elements that leads to harmony, prosperity and happiness," explains Tai, acknowledged as one of the leading *feng shui* specialists in this province. There is also a destructive cycle which causes bad events and calamities.

"The generative and destructive cycles of the Five Elements reveal the interactive relationship between things and people. They help to explain, why certain sites for homes or businesses are better than others, or why one person is luckier than another."

In Hong Kong and within BC's Chinese community, no one would dream of buying or building a home before it had been surveyed by a *feng shui* practitioner. Here in the west, the concept is now being applied to banks, government buildings, and housing. "About 40 per cent of my clients are Caucasian," says the *feng shui* master for The Bank of Hong Kong, and Richmond City Hall, plus, Forest Lawn and Ocean View cemeteries.

When *feng shui* is applied to a home or business many different features are examined. These include neighborhoods, streets, sites, directions, shapes, roofs, doors, windows, rooms, stairs, location of stoves and other equipment, chimneys, drains, beams, columns, lights, and many others. *Feng shui* is used to recognize, avoid, and correct a situation with an excess of bad *ch'i*.

There are two ways of achieving good *feng shui*, both of which are traditionally used in conjunction with each other. The first is to choose your home according to your *ba zi* (date of birth), making sure it is naturally favourable for you. However, unless you are currently house hunting, the likelihood of your existing home exactly fulfilling these specifications are pretty slim. Therefore the second approach to achieving good *feng shui* is geared towards making changes to your home which will improve those aspects that are not as lucky as they might be. Energy levels in the atmosphere can be influenced by the precise positioning of furniture and certain colours; water, moving objects, wind chimes, mirrors, crystals, or plants are also good *ch'i* enhancers.

While the *feng shui* theories are grounded in ancient Chinese philosophy, the principles of *ch'i* are universal. This system from China's distant past can be a helpful and effective tool in realigning your home for harmony, prosperity and happiness.