



## THE EIGHT DIVINE LAWS OF LIVING

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Feng Shui, pronounced as 'fung schway', is the study of the effects our surroundings have on our subconscious mind. This ancient Chinese practice originated around 4,000 years ago at the time of the Tsang Dynasty.

"It is a complicated discipline with an aim to create harmony in our environment so that the energy surrounding us works for us rather than against us," says Pinky Kapoor, a Feng Shui consultant based in Calcutta.

### Cosmic energy

The words 'feng' and 'shui' translate to wind and water, and the practice itself revolves around making the life force 'chi' (energy) flow well in order to promote prosperity, health and happiness. Colour, geographical direction, light, movement, sound, and the five Chinese elements of fire, water, wood, metal and earth supposedly affect 'chi'. By studying the principles, of Feng Shui we can improve our health, our relationships, attract prosperity both at home and in business. However, the way it is applied can be, either beneficial or detrimental to the way we live. Believers of Feng Shui say that a house where it is practised is, filled with a high level of energy. Good Feng Shui involves :

- Understanding the existing and potential 'chi' patterns "
- Taking into considerations the cyclical changes in nature. Energy changes with seasons.
- Keeping the 'chi' flowing but contained so that it nourishes and nurtures us. Eliminating and deflecting harmful energy.
- Making sure the flow of 'chi' is appropriate to the needs of the humans in the environment. For example, for a spiritual environment, you need spiritual objects like incense stands, religious symbols; for a child's study, you need things that help in concentration, like inspirational paintings, famous quotations and pictures Of role models. Surround yourself with positive things, to get a balance between inner and outer 'chi, 'by way of fitness, exercise, food, and good thoughts.

### Mastering the art

When a Feng Shui practitioner arrives at your home or office she first inspects the surroundings of the property. "This is done to get a feel of the energy of the area, as well as to judge how side elements may be affecting the property," explains Kapoor. Next, she requests the birth dates of the residents and employees of the house, and sets about to make sketches of individual rooms on the *pa kua*. Then she discusses your goals and desires in life. And accordingly she advises you on how to energise that particular area (refer to diagram).

### Healing power

Nowadays prospective buyers insist on thorough inspection of potential homes so that they are Feng Shui-friendly. One of the reasons being the shortage of space. Therefore, one can replace a lawn with a green carpet as the greenery stays in the subconscious mind and provides positive mental strength. In Feng Shui these representations are accepted and called symbolic Feng Shui.

Dramatic improvements can be made without huge expenses To transform a Feng Shui of a room, there is no need to break walls and do reconstruction work. Mrs Saloni Gujral, a house-wife is a happier person today after applying Feng Shui. "I can feel the change in my house. It is lighter and full of life. I have, done away with clutter and arranged my crystal in the way suggested"

However, Kapoor is quick to add that Feng Shui should be confused with interior design, although it uses elements of design in its principles. It also uses ecology, architecture, mysticism, common sense and applies them on the layout of the building and the arrangement of furniture within a room. In short it tries to arrange the environment to maximise your harmony with nature.

### **The right balance**

"To create that perfect balance in your house, you have to first clear it of the clutter. Clutter is a heavy load on our subconsciousness mind. Clutter could be anything from old shoes to chipped crockery. Anything that has no value," says Kapoor. Here are a few tips from the expert:

If your main door faces a staircase inside your house, it is not good because when people go up and down, you get imbalanced energies.

The stove and the water basin should be in correct positions. If the stove is opposite the sink or refrigerator chances are that the husband and wife usually quarrel over small things. Water should never be opposite fire as they clash and cause friction between couples. Never sleep under beams.

Capitalise on the fire element symbolism, such as pictures of nine red trees, nine fish with a red lotus in the centre. These are symbols of growth, wealth, enlightenment. Fish represents abundance and vitality. Mirrors are very powerful, and can energise homes, but they should never be kept face to face, as they cause conflict by bouncing energies to and fro. Crystals can be used to strengthen the earth energies in special areas of the house. Hanging crystals strengthen and change the flow of energies, and have the power to purify stagnant energies.

All living creatures are instinctively drawn towards light. If you leave a light on where you would like to see more activity, it will be beneficial. However, one needs to be careful with its placement. Dim lights can, for example, cause headaches and depressions.

Propagators of common sense theory however say: "Feng Shui is as simple as friendly faces and pleasant personalities playing on your feelings. Comfortable, secure surroundings in the workplace make everyone feel at ease and therefore it is more productive. People who are comfortable, relaxed and secure are usually pleasurable to associate with and make you feel better.

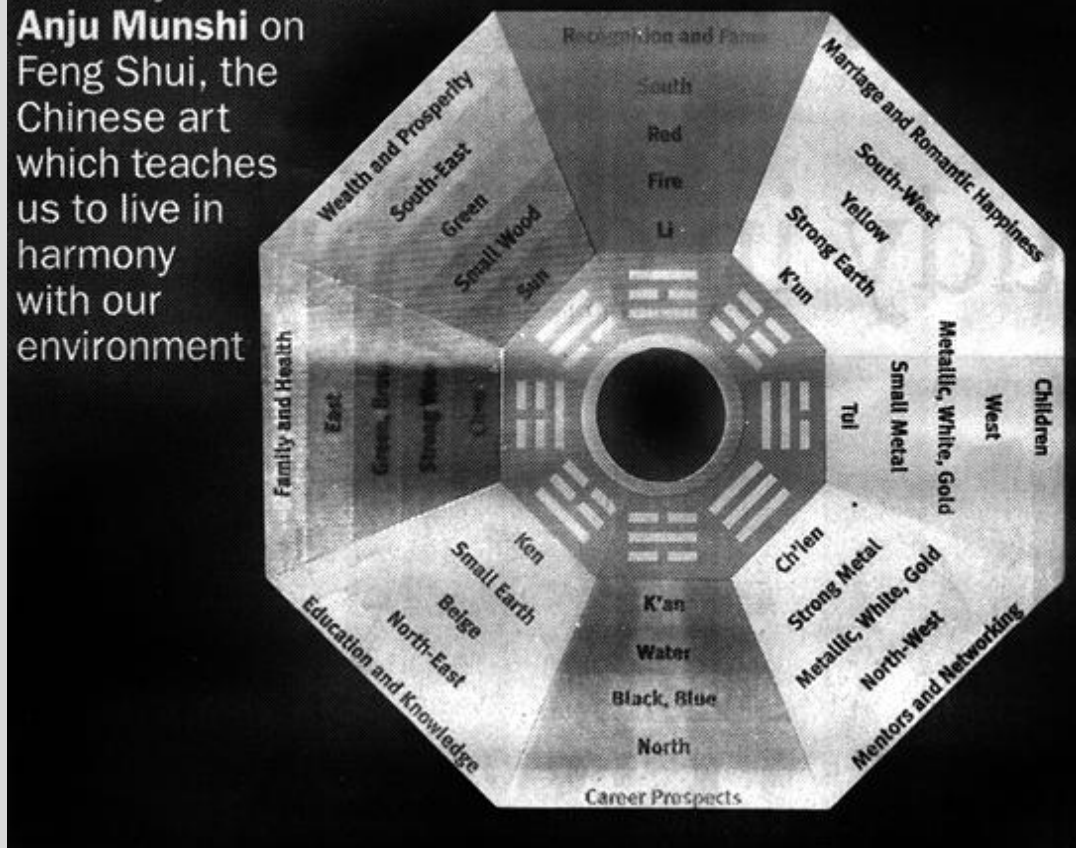
To this Kapoor adds, "Everyone experiences energy without knowing it. We need our rooms to reflect changes we are experiencing in our lives." Common sense blended with aesthetics, that is the essence of Feng Shui.

### **CIRCLE OF REASON**

while contemporary practitioners of this ancient art emphasises its benefit for the mind, body and spirit, many designers and academics are skeptical of the superstitious practice. "Feng Shui is common sense and completely scientific," asserts practitioner Pinky Kapoor. She goes on to explain the whole cycle. The sun rises in the East giving life and energy to the whole universe. We begin our life from the East and this direction is called the ancestral or growth area. This is connected with family life, growth, and happiness, the colour being green.

Have you walked into a house and felt instantly welcomed?

**Anju Munshi** on Feng Shui, the Chinese art which teaches us to live in harmony with our environment



**There are eight main aspirations in life, which can be divided into eight sectors. Each sector corresponds to a particular direction. They are:**

- 1) South-East for wealth and prosperity
  - 2) South for recognition and fame
  - 3) South-West for marriage and romantic happiness
  - 4) West for children
  - 5) North-West for mentors and networking
  - 6) North for career prospects
  - 7) North-East for knowledge and education
  - 8) East for family relations and health.
- Each of these aspirations (Wealth, Children, etc.) is symbolised in the octagonal shaped pa kua (refer to above diagram). The pa kua is one of the basic tools of Feng Shui. A word of caution: If you go wrong with the elements, the entire Feng Shui will go wrong. It is advisable to take an expert's help

Then the sun moves towards the South, signifying summer or noon time. The colour is red. This area is connected with name, fame, growth in one's career, and the attainment of one's goal. The element fire activates this area.

Then comes the West, signifying dusk, when the sky is golden with the glow of the sun. Metallic colours are thus associated, and it symbolises the future. One can energise this area for children, and introduce metallic objects here.

Lastly comes the North, symbolised by winter or night, a dark, cool area governed by the element water. The colour is blue or black, which is associated with ambition and drive.

For this entire system, support elements for each area are necessary. Wood produces fire, and fire in the productive cycle produces earth; which in turn produces metal. Metal produces water, which nourishes wood.

Therefore, whichever area we concentrate on, we must offset the main element with a supportive element. For example, crystal is derived from earth, so you have to balance it with fire symbols, like red candles, red roses, etc., anything that symbolises fire. Since the wood area should have plants, it should be energised with water forms (like pictures suggesting flowing water).