

STUDIES ON *FENG SHUI* IN RESIDENTIAL GARDEN

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

STUDIES ON *FENG SHUI* IN RESIDENTIAL GARDEN

By _

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This research study is submitted in partial fulfillment of the
Bachelor of Landscape Architecture

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ABSTRACT

Feng Shui is considered as one of the oldest art and the youngest science. Why is it so? *Feng Shui* was first practiced as an art but westerners are not trying to incorporate scientific principles into the art, to try and determine if there was any connection between this art and science. *Feng Shui* has always been regarded as a mystical force, especially among the Chinese community. But there is nothing mystical about it. *Feng Shui* does not have any religious connotations. It has been practiced and acknowledged for more than 300 years. If there were no truth in it, it would have died a natural death a long time ago. *Feng Shui* is the art of divination into the truth. More importantly it is about living harmoniously with the environment to derive maximum benefits to bring about prosperity, good health, longevity, peace, and harmony to the people. There are many guidelines for applying *Feng Shui* in the garden or in the space outside the home. Landscaping is always a good idea, but people do need to know how to incorporate *Feng Shui* principles in the garden design. If the land and air that surround the home do not reflect a balance of the environment and do not encourage *Chi* (energy) to settle, people cannot enjoy good *Feng Shui*. It is believed that certain plants can attract *Shar Chi* (bad spirits) into the house. Remember that placing a plant in a wrong position may bring bad luck and misfortune instead of enhancing the *Feng Shui*.

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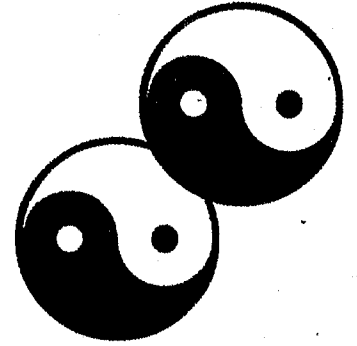
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CHAPTER 1

FENG SHUI IN RESIDENTIAL GARDEN



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The interest of doing this research was caused by a deep curiosity in studying the unique aspects of Chinese cultural mysticism which is *Feng Shui*. Actually, *Feng Shui* means “winds and water”. In its literal sense, this refers to the topography of the earth, its mountain, valleys and waterways whose shape and size, direction and levels are created by the continuous interaction of these two powerful forces of nature. To the people of Chinese origin all over the world, *Feng Shui* is a mystical practice that blends ancient wisdom with cultural tradition, a body of knowledge that lays down guidelines for life in different situations.

For centuries, *Feng Shui* was accessible only to the ruling elite of China and withheld from the main populace. Under the imperial patronage, *Feng Shui* flourished. Many of the palaces, tombs and family mansions that still stand in China today show clear evidence of the practices of *Feng Shui*. To the practitioners, these features reveal much of the rich symbolism incorporated into old Chinese architecture and proof that the *Feng Shui* doctrine was utilized in orienting important homes and palaces, gardens' planning, furnishing rooms and interiors decoration.

Down the centuries, snippets of information about *Feng Shui* filtered out of the palaces and made their way to the rest of the populace, initially to the less educated but more traveled merchant classes, and then to the uneducated peasants. (Lillian Too, 2002). Overtime most of the more simplistic guidelines of *Feng Shui* were adopted and eventually were incorporated into Chinese tradition. Because it was orally transmitted from one generation to the next, *Feng Shui* came to be regarded as either superstition or a natural component of the divinatory and fortune telling sciences. By directly addressing the abstract concepts of lucks and fortune in its philosophy of the trinity of luck, inevitably became immensely popular.

In landscape, *Feng Shui* encapsulates a number of important principles concerning the characteristics of the land and environment surrounding the house. Landscape *Feng Shui* evaluate topography and provides guidelines on how naturally good features can be enhanced as well as how potentially dangerous ones can be diffused. Landscape *Feng Shui* is infinitely more important than the *Feng Shui* of interior. To get the environmental *Feng Shui* correct is important before proceeding to the interior of the house.

1.2 RESEARCH AIM

The aim of this research is to understand the principles of *Feng Shui* and its implementation in landscape design especially in Malaysian residential gardens.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research on *Feng Shui* residential garden is mainly to achieve the above research goal or aim and the objectives are as follows:

- i. To identify the related principles, the laws and elements involve in the *Feng Shui*
- ii. To understand what is the importance and need of *Feng Shui* in balancing the nature and the surrounding.
- iii. To understand what is the importance and need of *Feng Shui* in design as it is believed affecting human life.
- iv. To study the implementation of *Feng Shui* in garden design especially in the residential area.

1.4 RESEARCH ISSUE

Feng Shui is believed to be an abstract thing. It is an art of placement of physical object in relations to one surroundings to generate a conducive living environment which can enhance good fortune, good health, prosperity and honor to the people living in a place or building.

(Propertywise 2003:4)

- i. **The above facts will influence everyday life of the believer, and thus house and garden design.**
- ii. Besides, there are **numerous information such as books and articles** that can be found in the market. This will spread the knowledge of the *Feng Shui* itself.
- iii. **The seminar on related topic**, which is at every beginning and at the end of the year. All famous practitioners or speaker is hectic organizing the seminar on 'How will your *Feng Shui* work for this New Year and this coming New Year' and so forth. This will attract the people to join and gain the knowledge of *Feng Shui*. And sometime become their routine to come to the seminar, every year no matter how expensive the ticket is.
- iv. ***Feng Shui* is mentioned as designing with nature.** Refer back to the literal meaning of *Feng Shui*. *Feng* means wind and *Shui* means water. It is strongly referred to the topography of the earth, mountain, valleys and waterways whose shape and size, direction and levels are created by the continuous interaction of these two powerful forces of nature. So, incorporate this *Feng Shui* in the surrounding is the some like designing with nature. Where as the nature is the first element that need to be considered.
- v. Since, there are **bad spirits or *Shar Chi* everywhere** within the environment, *Feng Shui* is needed in order to naturalize the bad spirit of the house or even owner of the house.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research underlines three major stages in collection related information that are primary and secondary data. Primary data has collected through three methods namely interview, observation and photograph analysis whereas secondary data is mainly collected from literature sources, such as books and articles.

In order to understand the sequence of data collection throughout the research period, a sub topic of operational of the research process in the following paragraph should be referred.

1.5.1 Operational of the research process stage

These research is operationalized by three major stages, namely, stage 1; theoretical study, stage 2; data collection and analysis and stage 3; detailed analysis. The details of those stages are as follow:

1.5.1.1 Stage 1 – Theoretical Study

At this stage, a thorough reading on what is *Feng Shui*, related to the principles and elements are being explored. *Yin* and *Yang* is a very important element in *Feng Shui* since *Feng Shui* is very stringent on *Yin* and *Yang* or balance of the environment.

There is no *Feng Shui* consequence if there is imbalance in the environs meaning that their goals to encourage good health, improve relationship, boost the career, and bring prosperity in the home will not be attain. Good arrangements of the design will persuade *Chi* or good energy to stimulate in order to complete all of the goals above. There are some related sources to books '*Feng Shui for gardeners*' (Lillian Too: 2002)' and '*Feng Shui in garden*' (Gill Hale: 2002)'. All of the collected data are discussed thoroughly in chapter 2; literature review.

1.5.1.2 Stage 2 – Data Collection and Analysis

The criteria of choosing case study are based on three considerations which are:

- i. The case studies chosen are residential comprise with garden. And its context should be in urban area.
- ii. The design of the garden should emphasize on the implementation of *Feng Shui*. The size does not matter as long as it could implement *Feng Shui*.

- iii. The case studies must provide a spatial quality in terms of indoor and outdoor connection.

1.5.1.3 Stage 3 – Detailed Analysis

In order to understand the principles of *Feng Shui* in residential garden well, a few methods / approaches have been employed for detailed analysis which are as follow.

- i. Physical Mapping
- ii. Interviews
- iii. Photograph Analysis

1.5.1.3.1 Physical Mapping

Physical mapping is a method to maps out the garden. The purpose of this physical mapping of the case studies will enable to identify the specific design which incorporate with the *Feng Shui*. This method of Physical Data Collection is adapted from a research by Cooper Marcus and Barnes, (1995:4)

1.5.1.3.2 Interviews

In order to collect the correct and explicit from the interviewees, a recorded interview method by using the tape recorded is used with permission. (Leedy, 1989). This will help in the process of analyzing the interviews contents. The need of interview method of this research is to obtain specific points of views and comments of the interviewee who practicing *Feng Shui* in their daily life. As this method is broadly use by researchers to get a specific information on particular user (M. Tyson, 1998:21).

1.5.1.3.3 Photograph Analysis

Photograph is very important for the researcher to analyze the details of the site which was not being covered during the observation.

Photos that have been taken are comprised surround the property which is about 3 kilometers within. The most important photos that need to capture are the poison arrow or 'killing breath' that the house posses instead of garden's elements photos.

1.5.1.4 Stage 4 – Design Suggestion

After comprehensively analysing the data, a few design suggestions and solution can be hypothesized. *Feng Shui* design is really aware to the direction of the compass where as every sector of the direction will indicate their own characteristics. The character will determine how to implements the elements in the garden.