

International Conference on
Feng Shui (Kan Yu)
and Architecture in Berlin

Edited by Florian C. Reiter

2011

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

ISSN 0948-9789
ISBN 978-3-447-06592-4

Contents

Foreword	VII
FLORIAN C. REITER Considerations about the assessment and application of Feng Shui in Berlin.....	1
OLE BRUUN Feng Shui: a universal mode of thought?	19
HONG-KEY YOON Cultural ecological links in “The geomantic landscape of a sailing boat”	31
MICHAEL Y. MAK Scientific research of Feng Shui applications for the built environment.....	49
WANG YUDE Feng Shui and architecture in Taizhou	69
HOWARD CHOY Spatial appreciation with Yin Yang dialectics – a Feng Shui way to make Sense of our environment.....	81
GYDA ANDERS Traditional Chinese architecture and Feng Shui.....	93
EDUARD KÖGEL Feng Shui in Germany. The transculturation of an exotic concept by Hugo Häring, Hans Scharoun and Chn Kuen Lee	113
TSAI SUEYLING Mount Hongding: Buddhist cosmology in geomantic topography	129
ALBERT T. SO AND MICHAEL Y. MAK Study of flying stars method of the compass school with case studies.....	149
MICHAEL PATON The cosmology of Yang Yunsong and science.....	165
STEPHEN L. FIELD, J.K. AND INGRID LEE The origin of Bazhai Feng Shui.....	185
ELLEN VAN GOETHEM The four directional animals in East Asia: a comparative analysis.....	201
List of Contributors	217

Foreword

In China the terms Feng Shui and architecture describe an amorphous welter of methods and theories that are used to work out constructions to house the living people, taking into account social relations and other civil requirements. We notice that Chinese architects in antiquity as well as in more recent times refer to notions of Feng Shui (Kan Yu) to select local sites and fix the features of the prospective constructions. Chinese traditional scholars phrased codes to describe the results of practical efforts. They strived to do justice to architectural requirements and analyzed the geophysical conditions when they designed new constructions. Geophysical forms and principles are the main elements of a practical and theoretical knowledge that shaped human habitation, which the designation Feng Shui (Kan Yu) summarizes. The experts in interpreting the landscape fostered their crafts as family traditions which resulted in an insufficient literary documentation. Today, more or less cryptic geomantic texts are accessible in modern compilations. The texts are difficult to read, and we lack the indispensable oral instructions of the antique masters. Do we unknowingly combine planning and construction with a possibly wanton selection of cosmological theories? Such doubts and the ensuing uncertainty are uncomfortable. They were not dissolved by modern esotericism which, in fact, threatens to spoil the field for the sinologist and the specialist in architecture. There is the dire need for scholarly attempts to lift the pall of esotericism. An attempt was staged when Humboldt University with the help of co-organizers* conducted the International Conference on Feng Shui (Kan Yu) and Architecture from 09.-11. November 2010. The conference was generously sponsored by the German Gerda Henkel Foundation for which we express our heartfelt gratitude. We also thank very much the publishing house Harrassowitz Company (Wiesbaden) for the great support that we enjoyed preparing the publication of the conference volume. I most sincerely thank my secretary Mrs Elisabeth Schulze who actually did the work of formatting and preparing the layout.

The volume presents thirteen contributions in the sequence of the agenda at the conference. They span a wide range of approaches to Feng Shui and architecture. Korean and Japanese interpretations prove Feng Shui to be part of the East Asian cultural spheres beyond China. Feng Shui was a unique way of perceiving the potential of earth and the geophysical conditions which, for example, early Chinese

* Architects Gyda Anders, Howard Choy, Profs. Michael Y. Mak, Albert T. So and Dr. Eva Sternfeld

Buddhists exploited for religious and missionary purposes. Centuries ago they believed in the same notions of Feng Shui that today lay architects also could rely upon. Geomantic and cosmologic theories, numerology, scriptures, local culture, ecology, modes of thought, and transculturation are key terms that identify the scholarly contributions from Australia, China, Denmark, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Taiwan, and USA. We thank the authors for their enthusiastic engagement and present gladly this volume that may enrich the world-wide knowledge and study of Feng Shui and architecture.

Florian C. Reiter,
Chinese Department of Humboldt-University,
Berlin, Germany, July 2011