

***Kanyu, Fengshui and Court Energetics***

***PART I***

**THE TRADITIONS OF  
KANYU AND FENGSHUI**

**Based on the teachings of Eva Wong**

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## INTRODUCTION

As human beings we aim at leading a happy and meaningful life, in which we not only need to care for ourselves and those around us, but also want to develop in a spiritual sense in order to work with our daily experiences. Many traditions over many millennia have aimed at providing the conditions for a happy life and spiritual development. In Asia some traditions stand out in this sense: in Tibet it is the Buddhist spiritual path and the Warrior traditions that have evolved over many lifetimes. In China the Daoist path and the wisdom traditions of K`an-yü and Fengshui have provided the means for spiritual development as well as the means to live harmoniously with the land.

In their efforts, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and Eva Wong strive to bring these traditions together to shape a bright and clear path for spiritual development as warriors in the modern day world. In this document we will discuss Sacred Space, or the spatial conditions that will allow us to connect with our Basic Goodness or Buddha Nature, through meditation practices, rituals and ceremonies. The depth of the connection made depends of course on many factors such as effort, insight, wisdom and karma. But apart from the mental space, it also depends on the physical space one is in.

In this document we will highlight a number of themes based on the teachings of Eva Wong given over the course of a number of years during her travels in the service of Shambhala.



## KANYU AND FENGSHUI.

### General

The Shambhala vision is vast and extends beyond our national borders and beyond our lifetimes. In fact we are the inheritants of countless generations of ancestor warriors, who paved this particular path. We in turn will be ancestor to countless generations of warriors succeeding us. The mandala we help to build has as its view the notion of Enlightened Society, which is based on compassion and fearlessness.

With that view, we are creating sacred spaces to attain enlightenment. Space effects the mind and therefore it is important where you practice. You also gain or loose people by space, so this adds weight to the carefulness with which we select appropriate locations to fulfil certain purposes.

The land is the most powerful carrier of energy and in Asian countries landforms are studied and used, to determine the optimal configuration for aligning their inherent energy with human effort and purposes. This is used for spiritual, governmental and for domestic purposes.

### What is Fengshui?

The purpose of Fengshui is to study the way the energy of the land affects the people living on it. So ideally, we would lay-out our cities and houses and their appearance, in accordance with the landforms and their energies. In that we align land energy with human energy. The words *Fengshui* actually mean 'wind' and 'water'. These have multiple meanings, all connected with dispersion and collection of energy.

Authentic Fengshui practitioners are more concerned with these aspects of land, time and compass-directions, than with for example the colours of your walls. The energy of the land is very strong and exerts a constant influence on us. Also heaven or time makes energy fluctuate.

You might wish to consult a Fengshui practitioner to learn how you can best use a space for your house or business. That space should facilitate your health, your well-being, your finances and your spiritual development. Your space should not work against you.



*Fu Hsi*

During a consultation, a practitioner of classical Fengshui will describe the environment of your house or business, and he/she will ask you for the building date of the house and your own date of birth. In addition he/she will take some readings with a special Chinese compass called a Lo-p'an. The outcome will show you the visible and invisible energies at work in your home or business. Knowing these, you will get advice on how to plan the usage of the various rooms and spaces. This will benefit your health, wealth, relations and mind.

### Background

Several thousand years ago, ancient China's shamans, diviners, and sage-kings laid down the three building blocks of Fengshui:

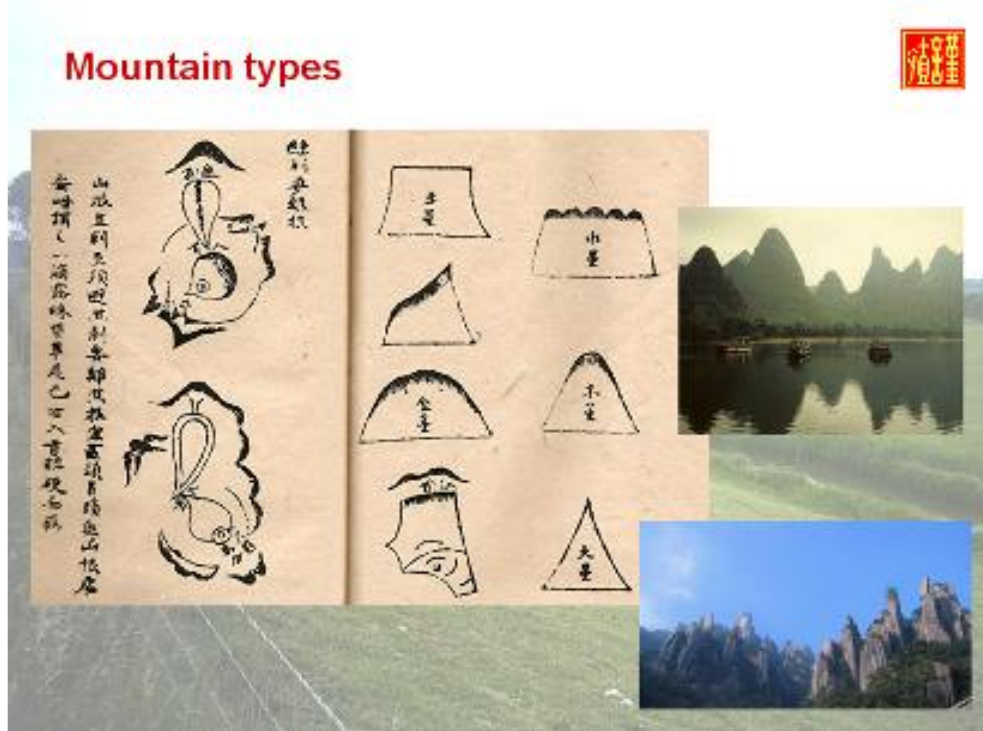
- the compass,
- the *pa-k'ua* (eight trigrams),
- and the theory of change (as presented in the I-Ching).

Legend has it that during the time of the Yellow Emperor in prehistoric China, the compass was originally used for navigation. This navigational compass would be modified later for use in Fengshui. Through the shaman-kings *Fu Hsi* and *Yu*, patterns of numbers -the *Ho-t'u* and *Lo-shu*- could be employed to describe the underlying nature of all things and their fluxes and changes. Over the centuries, during many dynasties, this knowledge was expanded. Added were the *I Ching*, the compass and calendar systems, forming the basis for Chinese geomantic and divinational arts.

At the beginning of the Chou dynasty (1122-207 BCE), King Wen first used the pa-k'ua to describe patterns of change in the natural world. By the eighth century BCE, the Chinese were using the pa-k'ua and the theory of change to promote the flow of nourishing energy inside a city or a palace and thus bring the kingdom harmony and wealth.

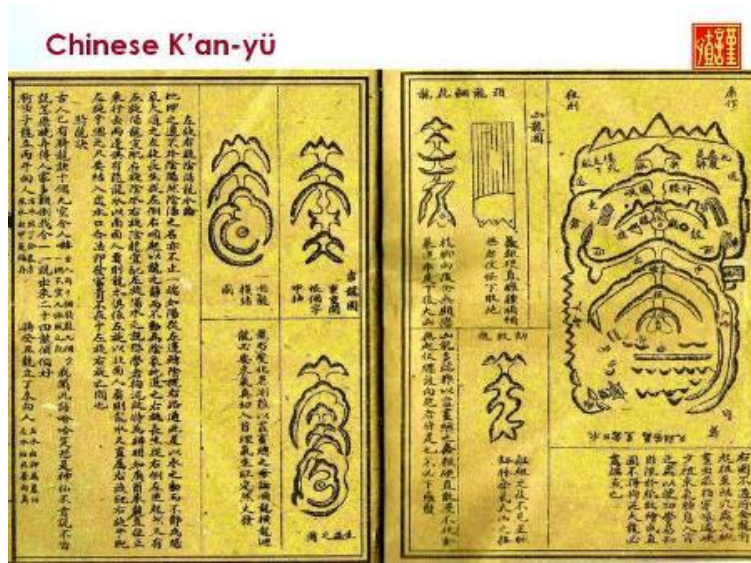
These divinational arts were practiced in this form, from the 8th century BCE onward and later by a group of experts called the *Fang-shih*. The *Fang-shih* or 'experts of esoteric techniques' became absorbed into the developing Taoist sects in the 6th century CE.

The *Fang-shih* systematized the knowledge into an art called *Kanyu* or harmonizing the way of heaven, and the way of earth. *Kanyu* as a discipline dates from the first century BCE, but as we saw, its roots lie in the Chinese Bronze Age. The aim of *Kanyu* is to understand the landforms one can observe and the patterns of energy associated with these. Around the 3rd to 4th century CE a sage named *Kuo-p'u* made *Kanyu* a recognized branch of Taoist arts.



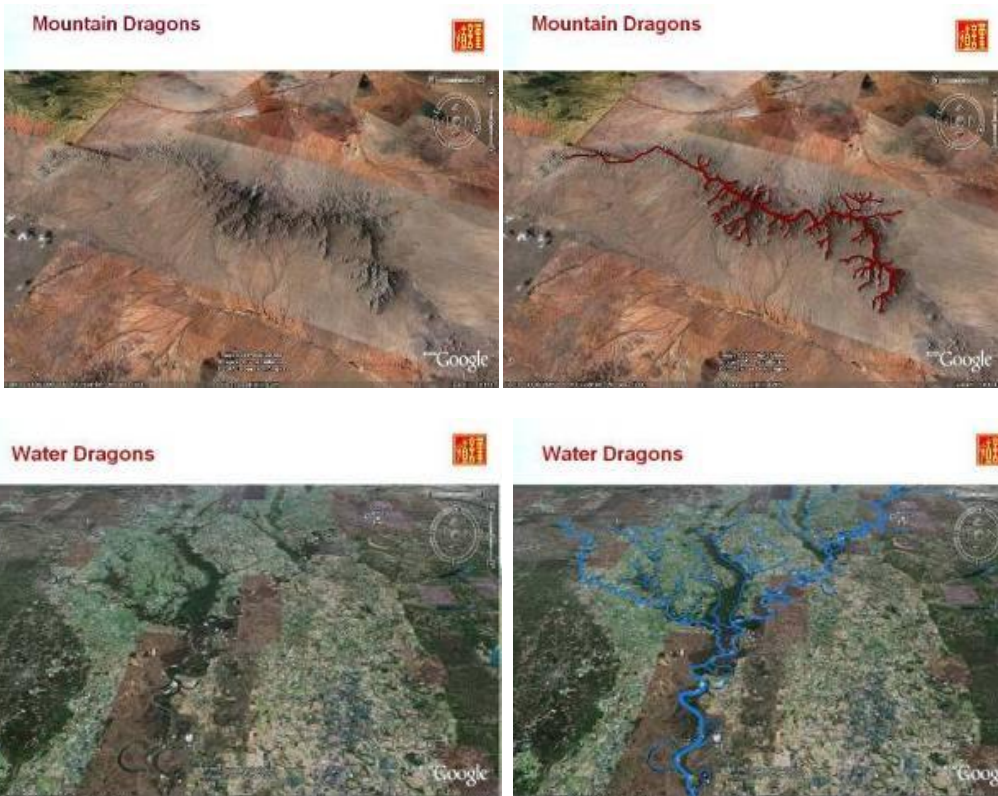
*Kanyu* continued to grow as a science and around 1000 CE in the Sung-dynasty a whole corpus of books and methods existed. For example, the *Lo-p'an* or geomantic compass still used today, was added during the T'ang dynasty (ca. 7th - 10th century CE). Somewhere around the 16th or 17th century CE, *Kanyu* became known as '*Fengshui*' and its forms and methods were developed further.

In Fengshui, two main areas are distinguished: first and oldest is the selection of burial sites, called '*Fengshui of the Yin domain*'. Later the '*Fengshui of the Yang domain*' was developed, dealing with residences, businesses, etc.



### Kanyu and Fengshui

The Han dynasty (206 BCE-219 CE) saw the founding of the art of *Kanyu* (*Kan* means "mountains" and *Yu* means "low places"), or the study of the energy carried in landforms. *Kanyu* was championed by the Taoists Huang-shih Kung and Ch'ing Wu, who argued that geological bodies, particularly mountains and rivers, are filled with vital energy. The pathways of energy in mountains are called dragon veins, while those in waterways are called water dragons.



The ancient Chinese thought the land's energy could make or break a kingdom. For instance, if the capital city was built on land with nourishing energy, the country would prosper; if it was built on land carrying malevolent energy, the country would suffer catastrophes. Likewise, if an emperor were buried on or near landforms with positive energy, his dynasty would last, and if he were buried on or near landforms with negative energy, his dynasty would fall.

So *Kanyu* experts looked for so called Xue or powerspots in the land, to use the most appropriate energy for any single purpose. By tapping into the resident energy, much like an acupuncturist finds the points of the meridians in the body, the *Kanyu* expert either uses or calms the existing forces in the land.



*Making use of a powerspot by building a pagoda there*

In fact, *Kanyu* was first used only by emperors and nobles to select propitious burial sites. Not until the Chin dynasty (265-420 CE) did everyday citizens start using *Kanyu* to choose sites for houses (yang-domain Fengshui) and burial grounds (yin-domain Fengshui).

## Fengshui Schools

The T'ang (618-906 CE) and Sung (960-1279 CE) dynasties were the golden ages of *Kanyu*. In the T'ang, the geomantic compass (*lopan*), with its twenty-four directions and seventeen rings, was incorporated into *Kanyu* practice. (Today's *lo-p'an* differs only slightly from the *lo-p'an* of the T'ang dynasty.) Yang Yun-sun, the era's foremost *Kanyu* master and founder of both the Three Periods (*San-yüan*) and Three Combinations (*San-ho*) Fengshui schools, theorized that you could chart the energy carried in mountains by looking at the features of surrounding valleys.

During the Sung dynasty, Hsü Jen-wang expanded the purview of the Three Periods School to include buildings as well as landforms and founded the Hsüan-k'ung (Mysterious Subtleties) school. To evaluate buildings, Hsü's school used the Flying Stars System, which combines information about the direction a building faces, the year it was built, and the *pa-k'ua* to locate auspicious and inauspicious energies inside the building. As cities grew and more and more houses were built far away from natural landscapes, the Hsüan-k'ung school increased in popularity.

Fengshui's last phase of development overlapped with the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911) and the Republic China period (1911-1949). Early in the Ch'ing, Jo-kuan Tao-jen founded the Pa-chai (Eight Mansions) School. Applied exclusively to the Fengshui of residences, Pa-chai tries to match the occupant's guardian star (based on his or her year of birth) with the direction in which the main entrance of a house faces.

During the Republic years, the Hsüan-k'ung school began to use the principles of Landform Classification, in addition to the compass and the Flying Stars system, to evaluate the Fengshui of a building. Also during this period the *San-yüan* school expanded to include the study of residential and commercial buildings as well as landforms. The *San-ho* school, on the other hand, remained exclusively devoted to the study of mountains, valleys, and waterways. Today, the *San-yüan*, *San-ho*, Hsüan-k'ung, and Pa-chai schools remain in practice and are known as the Four Schools of traditional Chinese Fengshui.

For further reading:

- <http://www.shambhala.com/fengshui/>
- Wong, E. 1996. *Fengshui, the ancient wisdom of harmonious living for modern times*. Shambhala Publ. 276 pp.
- Wong, E. 2001. *A master course in Fengshui*. Shambhala Publ. 393 pp.
- Shatzman Steinhardt, N. 1999. *Chinese imperial city planning*. Univ. of Hawai'i Press. 228 pp.
- Ronald G. Knapp, 1999. *China's living houses. Folk beliefs, symbols and household ornamentation*. Univ. of Hawai'i Press. 185 pp.

## COLOPHON

This overview is a small reminder of the various aspects that have been addressed during the consultation by Eva Wong. It is based on notes made during several consultations throughout Europe between 2002 and 2006.