

Feng Shui for Small Spaces

veers away from common perception that
feng shui is superstitious and religious in nature.

Providing a fresh and modern perspective to feng shui
and its practices, this book is an introduction to home
geomancy. It focuses on the fundamental concepts:
the placement of furniture and lighting as well as the
organisation of space. Isometric 3-D illustrations accompany
the easy-to-understand text that explains the principles.

- Introduction to feng shui for homeowners
- Using feng shui principles to enhance small spaces
 - Modern presentation of a traditional subject
 - Simple and easy-to-understand information
to create harmony in your home
 - An essential guide that makes an
excellent gift for homeowners

Alan Chong

Feng Shui for Small Spaces

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FENGSHUI

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An introduction to geomancy

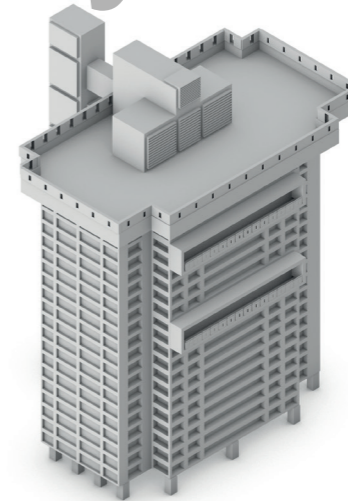
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Dedication

To my family, Chong Shee Mang, Khoo Hiang Lee and Anna Chong with gratitude for decades of love, support and belief, and to my partner Sarah Fun for her continuous encouragement and support.

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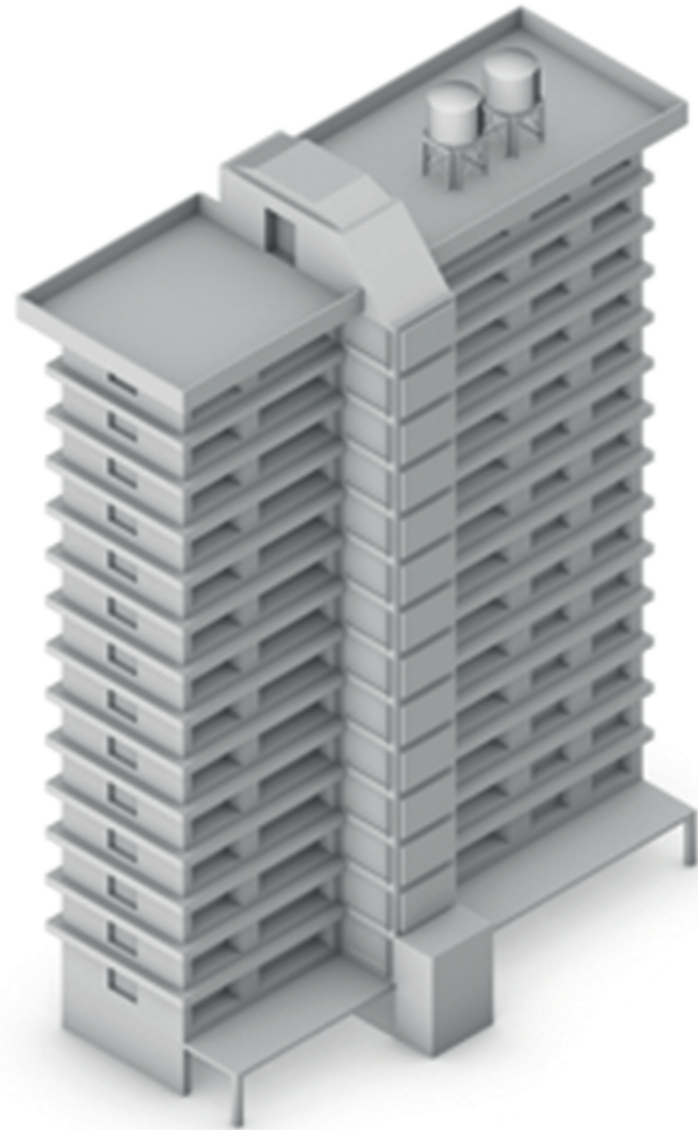
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Preface



Contrary to common belief, feng shui is often misunderstood as being superstitious and religious in nature which is just part of the picture. The subject is in fact, derived from an organised system of science, rites and rituals (religion), religion (faith), philosophy, astronomy (or astrology) and human affairs.

This project re-imagines feng shui culture and its practices in a fresh perspective. It injects a fresh design direction through the use of isometric view illustrations which are accompanied by easy-to-understand text explaining the principles.

The colour theme and design direction has been kept neutral to allow readers to focus on the fundamental feng shui concepts: the art of placement, lighting as well as the organisation of spaces.

As living spaces are gradually getting smaller, new homeowners have difficulties in adapting to them. This book presents an alternative solution and provides knowledge for new homeowners who have just received the key to their new apartments as well as families who are moving to smaller premises.

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Introduction

Comfortable Living with **Smaller Spaces...**

Our personal space is getting smaller and the constraints on space become even greater with a growing population. Some of us may just feel an imbalance of temperament and moods while others are badly affected by it. The constraints on space can have a diverse effect on our health, both physically and mentally.

Our homes and how we live, define how we grow up, our personalities as well as the company we choose to be with.

Most people visit parks, gardens and reserves to enjoy nature and also for the sense of space there. It is an escape from the rigidity and monotony of city living. Many of us have forgotten how we should be living and thus, encounter many difficulties in our lives. To live is to be happy and carefree.

These difficulties are primarily caused by our surroundings. They begin at home and affect our mood. It is important that we maintain our environment to make ourselves feel comfortable, instead of creating more issues to worry about.

This book discusses spaces based on generic public housing in Singapore, and incorporates feng shui principles on managing our living space. However, these basic concepts are applicable anywhere in the world. Contrary to common beliefs that feng shui is for those whom are superstitious and religious, it is actually the art of arrangement based on the cumulative wisdom of natural philosophy, the spiritual understanding of the cosmic order and the experience of ancient Chinese scholars and philosophers. It is said to mirror the natural order of things, and also believes that the interior of a room reflects the personality of its owner.

As with everything we read or come across, heed the advice in this book with a pinch of salt and keep an open mind!



2.3 Meander like **the River**

Household feng shui principles caution us against protruding corners which can create vertical sharp corners that “send” out negative energy and decrease the “luck” of family members with prolonged exposure. Presently, corners at awkward places cause an irritable sight, which is similar to having a cupboard blocking half of the entrance, making exit and entry difficult.

A favourable setup would be to transform any awkward shapes into regular ones such as a square, rectangle or circle. The goal of feng shui is to arrange the home in a way that allows *qi* to meander and linger, creating a sense of a balanced and conducive environment. The *qi* is believed to flow in a wave-like or in a circular pattern, and the home must admit its natural flow by emulating nature and avoid sharp corners and straight lines — which is similar to that of a meandering river.

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Alternatively, installing bright lights to “lift” the energy in the space may help too. In feng shui manuals, the instructions regarding house forms and arrangements are associated with certain features of Chinese rites and the Confucian moral system. For instance, the house should not possess a sharp or inclined silhouette or else it may reflect the unfavorable habits of the home owners.



2.4 What is Qi (气)?

The concept of *qi* — also commonly called breath, vitality, the ether or cosmic breath, breath of life/nature — is fundamental to Chinese natural philosophy. It is said that *qi* is prevalent in Heaven and Earth; and it is believed to flow underneath the Earth as a conduit and is related to the growth and change of all the phenomena in the world.

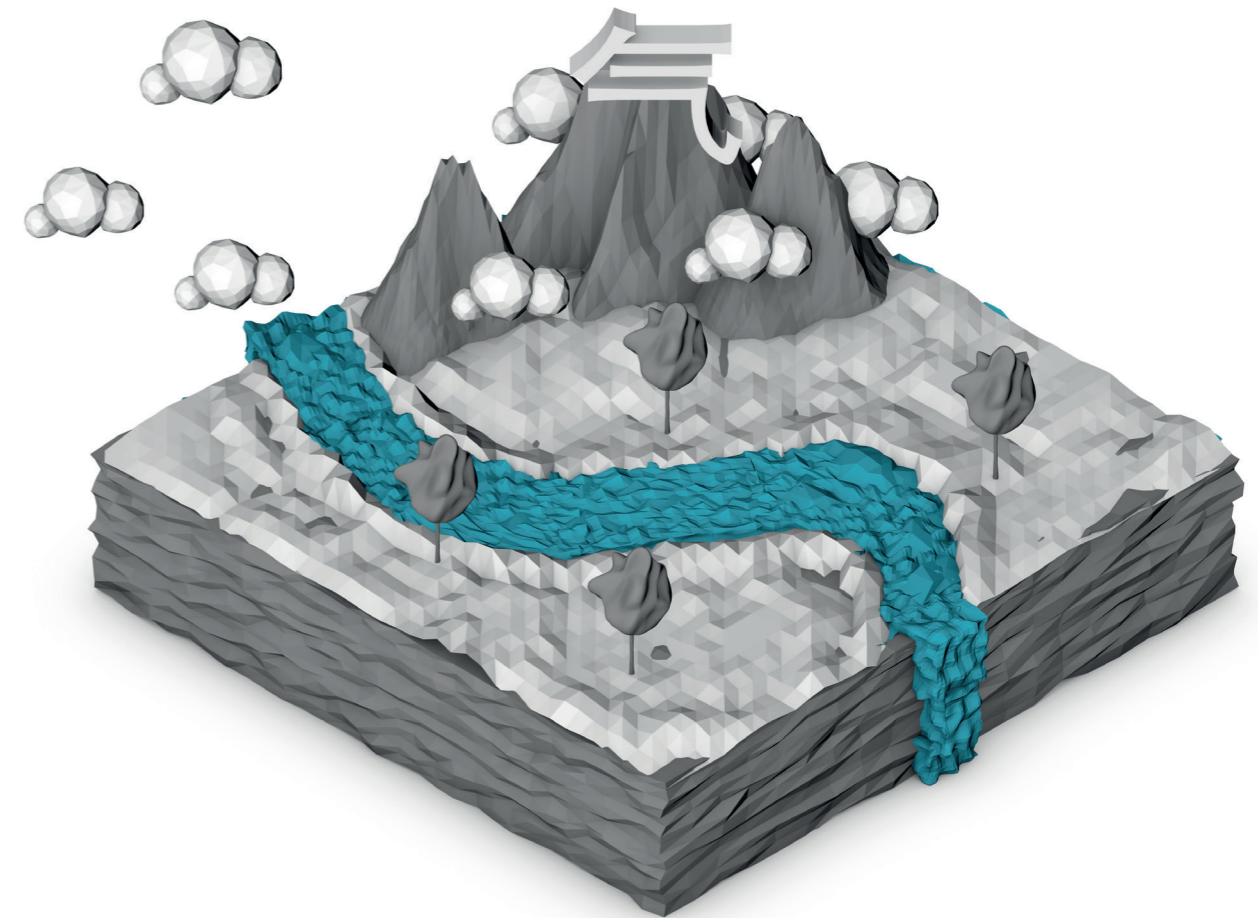
In early Chinese philosophy, *qi* exists in both the tangible and the intangible plane of our world and the universe. According to the Han Dynasty, philosophical treatise from c. 200 BC, the first original *qi* was born of the continua of space and time. This *qi* was heavy and stable, but its lighter parts rose and formed the sky. Its heavier counterparts gathered to form the earth. After that, the *qi* of sky and earth met to become *Yin* and *Yang*.

The idea that *qi* gave rise to material substance is also reflected in Daoism. The philosopher Laozi described *Dao* as one of the basic manifestations of *qi*: the beginning was undifferentiated chaos, shape without form, form without objects. *Dao* was the origin and principle of all things, from which the *Yin-Yang* duality rose. *Yin* and *Yang* combined to become plurality, and from that, individual things came into being.

Generally, the concept of *qi* is borrowed from Chinese cosmological thought. It is ambiguous and all-inclusive. It can be a physical existence but also a psychological feeling. Therefore, it brings about a mysticism and sometimes, magical atmosphere to feng shui practice and to the assessment of the dwelling. This is the relationship between people and the pedological qualities of soil temperature and soil moisture.

In the context of modern society, it refers to the characteristics of the immediate environment and the quality of house formulations. If anyone can practice the concept of “藏风纳气”, which roughly translates as keeping the *qi* (wind) and cultivating it (well-ventilated), it can be remotely termed as feng shui. This type of *qi* should not be too strong or weak otherwise, it would be problematic for the building eventually resulting in psychological problems for the people living there.

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2.5 Dialectic Theory

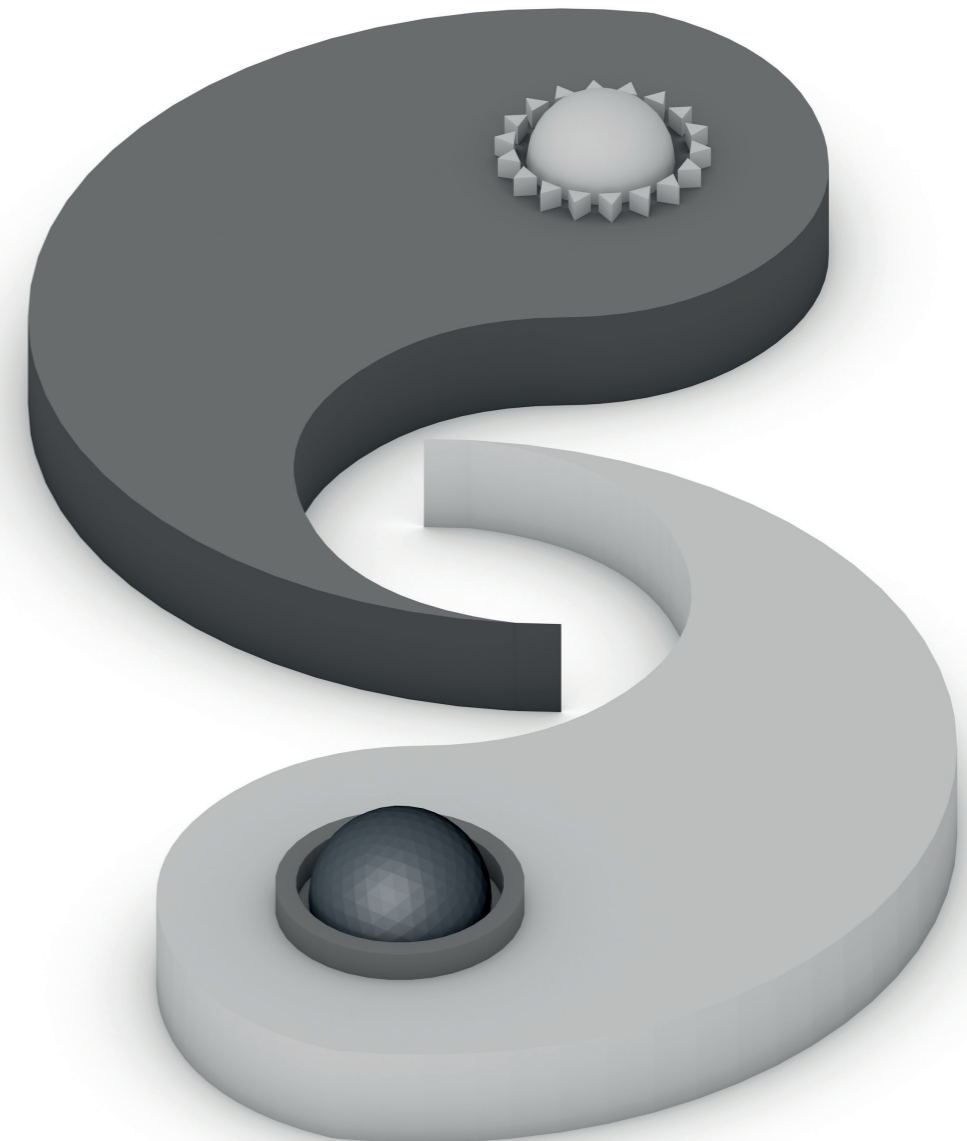
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The basis of feng shui, along with its various practices such as traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) or divination, involves an art of logical deduction by observing the positive and the negative; this theory is also known as the *Yin-Yang* (阴阳) theory.

There are no definitive answer to eastern metaphysics as there is to the western logic which was mentioned by Aristotle's law of excluded third (*tertium non datur*), "no third (possibility) is given". However, in *Yin-Yang* theory, there is always a third reconciling aspect. The motion of cyclic change produced all things, and takes place around an unmoving centre, just as in a wheel. The symbol of *taiji* is a circle divided by an S-curve into two interlocked halves, a light portion representing the *Yang* and motion and a dark portion representing *Yin* and rest (right side). Each half contains a dot, dark in the light and light in the dark; symbolising the *Yang* is never without the *Yin* nor *Yin* without the *Yang*, each portion contains the potential or the seed of the other, ready to grow when the principle containing it reaches its apex and begins to wane.

Based on its theories, the formation of the universe as well: the *Yin*, being the passive became the sediments and eventually earth and the *Yang*, bearing motion and movement became lighter and formed the heavens. In the body and also TCM theories, the *Yin* represents the organs and the *Yang* being the superficial that can be seen with our naked eyes.

Therefore, this theory forms a fundamental basis of all discussion and discourse in this ancient art of Chinese cumulative wisdom.



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About the Author

Alan Chong is a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communication graduate from the Nanyang Technological University (2015), Singapore, and is currently pursuing a Masters of Arts (Research). His research interest is in Chinese metaphysics and philosophy. He seeks to understand the concept of duality in visual language that underpins historical material cultures and iconographies.

Growing up within the compound of a Buddhist temple has exposed him to Chinese cultures and it sparked off an intimate curiosity which made him pursue this subject. A chance meeting with a feng shui practitioner led to his learning about its culture and practices. This inspired Alan to propose a design brief to reimagine feng shui tailored for Singapore context for his final year design project: feng shui for small spaces in Singapore. He hopes to create a new way of presenting this ancient Chinese tradition and practice in a contemporary setting through this new artistic direction.

He spends his free time with his black American spaniel and also enjoys aquascaping.

