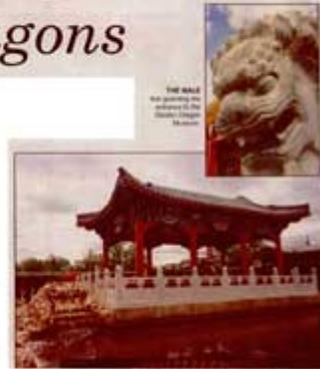




Defeating discord and *dragons*

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If you build your house on the middle of a dragon's back, it's less likely to collapse. That's according to Mikelle Dingwell, museums officer at Bendigo's Golden Dragon Museum, who is something of an expert on the Chinese art of feng shui (pronounced foong shoy).

Feng shui aims to harness the energy (ch'i) in the environment to bring happiness and health. The millennia-old art is experiencing something of a popularity craze at the moment in Australia.

Jodi Brunner, who runs a feng shui consultancy in Melbourne.....said harnessing the beneficial forces of nature to produce health and happiness paved the way to prosperity.

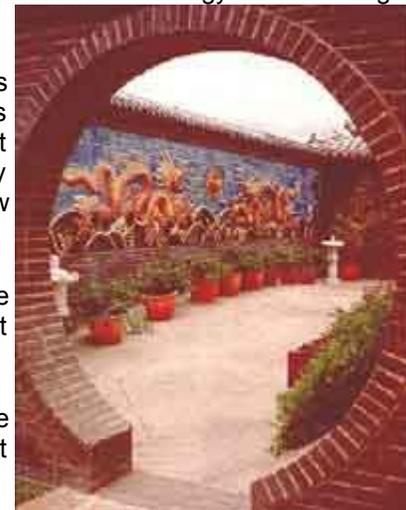
"Wind and water are both energy, and they flow in smooth, curvy ways in nature," she said.

"Feng shui is a combination of architecture, interior design, philosophy and psychology, symbolism and energy flow. It can get very esoteric."

Many of the principles involved though, can be put down to common sense. A house that is locked up, or has no free flow of air, can become musty or stale. In feng shui terms, this may be a build up of "sha ch'i", or negative energy. Sha ch'i may also be caused by straight roads in front of the house, power poles nearby, a neighbours pointed roof deflecting energy into your home, or even too much greenery at the front of the house, blocking the free flow of ch'i.

"I would look at the external environment of the home, at the public face we show to the world. Then I would look at the interior, at the placement of the furniture so it didn't interrupt the flow of ch'i," Jodi said.

If you really want to delve into feng shui, you can investigate 20-year-cycles, the five elements (water, earth, wood, fire and metal) and the complicated Chinese horoscopes, but for the homeowner, that may be delving more deeply than you'd want, or need to.



“You should never place chairs with peoples backs to large windows, “ said Mikelle, of the Golden Dragon Museum, bringing the issues back down to earth.

“Negative energy can come in from outside and create disharmony and discord in the room. Anyone facing the window will suffer from the glare, perhaps rising tension, and it may raise barriers to communication, “ he said.

“It’s very important for us to be in the correct place at the correct time,” Jodi Brunner said, “I look at feng shui as personal empowerment through placement.”

According to Jodi, many people report improvements in their home after seeing a feng shui expert. But as for the dragon under your house, you’d probably be wise to keep it one a very short lead.

Jodi Brunner holds a Master of Feng Shui with Master Joseph Yu, Feng Shui Research Center, Canada. She is primarily a Feng Shui practitioner and trainer, also an accredited speaking member of the National Speakers Association of Australia and the founder of the FENG SHUI network. Contact Jodi at www.fengshuimaster.com.au for more info.

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