

The Book of Burial: Origin of Feng Shui (Complete Pure Translation)

Canon Edition: Master Guo Pu (Pure English Edition) | Period: Jin Dynasty Foundational Treatise (c. 300 CE)

Overview: The historic cradle of the term 'Feng Shui' (Wind and Water), defining the universal law of vital energy: 'Qi disperses when riding upon the wind, and gathers when bounded by water.' Comprising the complete foundational chapters on Vital Breath, Mountain Veins, The Four Sentinels, Watercourses, and Environmental Auspiciousness.

CANONICAL CHAPTERS & PURE TRANSLATED TEXT

1. Chapter 1: The Inner Book — Yuan Qi: The Primordial Breath (Sǐ {Ç})

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

To reside properly is to ride upon the living circulation of Vital Energy (Sheng Qi).

The Yin and Yang breaths travel through the heavens as wind and clouds, and condense within the earth as fertile life.

Earth is the body of Qi; where the earth is rich, the Qi flourishes.

Life is the condensation of Qi; when Qi coalesces, bone and flesh are generated; when Qi disperses, decay ensues.

When this vital energy travels with violent wind, it is scattered and dissipated into void; when it encounters living water, it halts, pools, and accumulates.

The ancients gathered it so that it would not scatter, and directed it so that it would come to serene rest; therefore, this sacred discipline is named 'Feng Shui' (Wind and Water).

In all methods of environmental harmony, securing water is of first importance; shielding against violent winds is second.

Why is water first? Because water is the boundary of Qi; where water halts, Qi concentrates.

Why is wind second? Because wind is the thief of Qi; where wind howls, Qi is robbed away.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

This single, immortal paragraph written in the 4th century CE gave birth to the term 'Feng Shui.' A healthy home or workspace must be sheltered from chaotic gusting currents, while being embraced by tranquil, life-giving circulation.

2. Chapter 2: The Inner Book — Gathering Wind and Securing Water (Sǐ {Ç})

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

The wind of heaven has four dispositions:

- The Fierce Wind that tears leaves and pierces the marrow: this is Killing Qi (Sha Qi). Dwelling in its path breeds nervous breakdown, sudden financial ruin, and respiratory decay.
- The Stagnant Air that sits in damp pits without circulation: this is Dead Qi (Si Qi). Dwelling in its midst breeds melancholy, financial inertia, and chronic disease.
- The Rushing Gale through narrow canyons or between towering skyscrapers: this is Knife Qi (Dao Qi). It severs domestic harmony and invites legal warfare.
- The Gentle, Curving Breeze that kisses the grass and warms the skin: this is Living Breath (Sheng Qi). Therefore, choose a site surrounded by embracing arms of hills or buildings, where the air moves like a soft silk ribbon.

Look then to the water:

Let the water curve gently in an embrace, never shooting straight past the entrance like an arrow.

Water that shoots straight carries away the family fortune; water that winds lovingly retains blessings for generations.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

The physics of comfort and vitality. Modern architecture validates this ancient rule: spaces with harsh wind drafts cause unconscious anxiety, whereas sheltered spaces with gentle cross-ventilation foster creativity and calm.

3. Chapter 3: The Outer Book — Mountain Formations and the Living Veins of Earth (山經地記•{Ç})

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

The Earth is like a vast living body: its craggy rocks are the bones, its fertile soil is the flesh, its streams and subterranean aquifers are the blood vessels, and its undulating mountain ranges are the living arteries of Qi.

The mountain range that travels for thousands of leagues before opening into a basin is called the Grand Ancestor Dragon (Tai Zu Long).

Where the dragon travels, observe its posture:

If the mountain range meanders gracefully, rising and dipping with rhythmic curvature like a swimming serpent or galloping stallion, it carries vigorous, youthful vital breath.

If the mountain range runs rigid, sharp, and straight like a row of spear points, it carries dead mineral rigidity that brings conflict and barren lineage.

Where the mountain ridge pauses, opens into a gentle south-facing amphitheater, and welcomes flowing streams, there the vital knot of fortune (Xue) is born.

In the topography of human cities, elevated highways, bridges, and mountain ridges act as dragons, while avenues and rivers carry the circulating Qi.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

Energy follows form. Natural, undulating contours distribute vital force gently, whereas rigid, monotonous grids concentrate pressure and exhaust human vitality.

4. Chapter 4: The Outer Book — The Four Celestial Sentinels in Landscape (四靈圖•{Ç})

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

A truly auspicious sanctuary fulfills the exact structural harmony of the Four Celestial Guardians:

1. The Black Tortoise (Xuan Wu) in the Rear: Behind the dwelling must rise a solid, tall, and tranquil landform or architectural backing. It shelters the spine against cold northern gales, representing psychological security, ancestral support, and unshakeable backing.
2. The Azure Dragon (Qing Long) to the Left: On the eastern or left side must rise the higher embracing ridge. Active, vibrant, and proud, it represents male leadership, intellectual distinction, and rising fortune.
3. The White Tiger (Bai Hu) to the Right: On the western or right side must crouch the lower embracing ridge. Watchful, gentle, and subordinate to the dragon, it guards against surprise intrusions and preserves domestic savings. If the tiger is higher than the dragon, domestic conflict and litigation ensue.
4. The Red Phoenix (Zhu Que) in Front: Before the entrance must open the Bright Hall (Ming Tang): a wide, luminous clearing embraced by curving water where ambitions take wing without obstruction.

When these four celestial guardians embrace the center, Heaven and Earth pour blessings into the household without ceasing.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

The Four Guardians form the universal ergonomic sanctuary. Even inside a modern office, sitting with a solid wall behind you, an open view before you, and balanced armrests replicates this exact geometry.

5. Chapter 5: The Miscellaneous Book — Water Methodologies and Wealth Retention (水經•{Ç})

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

Water is the blood of the Earth; where water gathers, wealth, population, and culture flourish. In observing water, distinguish between Living Water (Sheng Shui) and Dead Water (Si Shui). Living Water is clear, sweet, flowing with gentle murmur, winding like a jade belt around the dwelling. Dead Water is turbid, stagnant, foul-smelling, or rushing down cataracts with deafening roar. The incoming water (Lai Shui) should be wide, luminous, and expansive, as if arriving from the horizon to bestow gifts. The outgoing water (Qu Shui) should be hidden, winding behind hills, lingering as if reluctant to depart. If the outgoing water rushes straight away, money earned by day will evaporate by night. If the water forms a pool before the main entrance, reflecting the sun like a mirror, wealth accumulates effortlessly without greedy striving. He who understands the curving flow of water understands how to preserve generational prosperity without causing envy or strife.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

The economic principle of Feng Shui: wealth generated too fast in straight rushes evaporates with equal velocity. Lasting abundance requires curving circulation, patient containment, and social distribution.

6. Chapter 6: The Miscellaneous Book — The Five Deadly Soils and the Living Earth (W • (T QǒÇ)

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

There are Five Deadly Sites that must never be inhabited by human beings:

1. The Craggy Rock Mountain: where boulders are dry, jagged, and devoid of vegetation. Qi has no soil to condense; poverty and accidents result.
2. The Broken Vein Mountain: where quarrying, mining, or excavation has severed the subterranean arteries. Miscarriage, severed partnerships, and sudden health collapse follow.
3. The Solitary Mountain: standing naked without flanking ridges to left or right. Loneliness, betrayal, and abandonment by allies ensue.
4. The Overgrown Swamp: where water stagnates into foul mud and sunlight cannot penetrate. Tuberculosis, melancholy, and loss of intellectual clarity result.
5. The Wind-Tunnel: where wind roars day and night between steep cliffs or high walls. Complete dissipation of family wealth and early mortality.

Seek instead the Living Earth (Sheng Tu):

Dig three feet into the ground: the soil should be fine, moist without swampiness, glowing with five subtle colors, warm like freshly steamed grain.

Such earth harbors the sweet milk of the Earth Mother; dwell here, and your descendants will be wise, healthy, and honorable.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

Environmental geology in antiquity. Barren rock, severed faults, toxic swamps, and wind-tunnels are hazardous to human biology, while fertile, well-drained, sheltered soil fosters vitality and flourishing generations.

7. Chapter 7: The Master Canon — Cosmic Mandate and Environmental Unity (Y)N°T N ~È<º)

PURE CANONICAL TRANSLATION:

Heaven possesses time; Earth possesses geography; Humanity possesses virtue.

He who possesses the most majestic geography but lives with greedy, cruel, and corrupt heart will see his dragon veins wither into dust.

He who possesses humble geography but lives with upright integrity, practicing benevolence and harmony, will cause the earth to awaken into living spring.

Geography does not create character; it responds to character.

The ancient kings observed the stars above and the soil beneath, not to escape moral duty, but to

establish cities where virtue could flourish unhindered by elemental violence.

Align your dwelling with the sun; shelter your family from chaotic wind; let pure water embrace your gate; and let your heart remain as tranquil as an ancient mountain pool.

When Humanity aligns with Earth, and Earth aligns with Heaven, destiny unfolds in supreme peace, health, and eternal honor.

PHILOSOPHICAL INSIGHTS:

The grand moral culmination of Guo Pu's Book of Burial: Feng Shui is not mechanical sorcery; it is the sacred covenant between human virtue and ecological harmony.
