



WISDOM ACADEMY

Introduction to Feng Shui

JAMPA LUDRUP

Lesson 4:
Essentials of the Form School, Part 3

Reading:
Feng Shui: Seeing Is Believing
“Building Profile,” pages 57–62

FENG SHUI: Seeing Is Believing

Essential Geomancy for Beginners and Skeptics

by Jampa Ludrup

Foreword by Lama Zopa Rinpoche



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BUILDING PROFILE

Many office and apartment blocks have a rectangular profile and in general this is considered an auspicious shape. This is because in the table of the trigrams the rectangle shape is associated with wood, and wood is associated with growth. So it is good for both businesses and homes. If the building tapers toward the top this is also auspicious. An example of this is the Empire State Building in New York.

It has always been well known in Chinese feng shui that two identical towers are not auspicious—indeed I have warned students about the dangers of twin towers since my very first courses. Nowadays of course twin towers have taken a

whole new negative meaning and this is a traumatic subject for many. However, it is important to analyse this phenomenon in some detail.

The Chinese are superstitious about twin towers because they look like the two joss sticks that they offer to ancestors, but there are more subtle reasons to avoid building them. If you look at the table of the trigrams and their characteristics, you can see that the number two is associated with Kun, which is the most yin of the trigrams. The number two has a negative connotation in Flying Star geomancy, usually foreboding sickness, and is also associated with the element “big earth.”

In the case of the towers of the World Trade Center, the situation was made worse because they had square-shaped bases, which is also associated with the earth element. Earth is generally considered to be yin in nature. Also, the corners of the towers were pointing directly at each other, creating very powerful poison arrows. Additionally, the attacks took place in September—“between” summer and autumn, which is also associated with Kun. It seems that this extremely heavy combination of very yin influences was too much for the buildings to sustain. The negative energy of the site, now known as “ground zero,” was palpable for years after the terrible event. The building of the Freedom Tower at the site will go a long way to restoring good energy. This new tower has a modified octagonal shape, which is well known to have protective properties, as I will explain later.

I am sometimes asked if a similar fate awaits the famous twin towers of Kuala Lumpur—until recently, the world’s tallest buildings. The prognosis is a bit more optimistic in this case. Indeed there are two towers, but they are joined by a bridge at about one-third of the height, which may help. The footprint shape of the towers is based on the eight-sided Ba Gua. In addition, the towers are mostly clad in metal; in the cycle of elements metal exhausts earth, so the heavy earth influence is somewhat reduced. “Big metal” is associated with Qian, which is the most yang trigram, and in this way the yin and yang influences of the towers are balanced. On the negative side, the towers have a lot of

corners that are firing poison arrows in all directions and also at each other. So from this analysis there seems to be less danger to the Kuala Lumpur towers than there was to the New York ones. Would I live anywhere near them? No way!

In general, the conventional, triangular style of roofline is considered auspicious. The upward-pointing arrow shapes symbolize growth and upward movement, although, as I mentioned earlier, sometimes they can be poison arrows for neighboring buildings. You should also beware of having downward-pointing arrow designs above the front door.

These triangular roofs attract yang energy; the triangle shape is associated with the fire element and is thus considered very yang. An example of a very yang-shaped roofline is the Sydney Opera House. One may think that a building with a roof that represents the fire element and juts out into a large expanse of water such as Sydney Harbour would suffer from an imbalance of the fire and water elements. However, this is clearly not the case. An opera star I asked about the building praised its energy compared to other opera houses. She said that it has a wonderful energy for performers and they enjoy singing there very much, even though the theater itself leaves a lot to be desired in terms of acoustic and backstage conditions. The Opera House brings the fire element into the water in a supportive or “friend” relationship in the cycles of elements. The fire energizes the water, symbolically producing steam. This must be why the artists feel energized when they perform there. I always find it a





great place to go to when I am feeling a bit down. If there was less water then the fire element would be too strong and the balance would not be so good.

An example of a building with a very negative profile in Australia is the Newcastle City Council administration office block. Locally it is known as the “mushroom” because of its top-heavy shape with the belly cut out. It does not have proper support, and as this is a community building, support for the community seems to have been undermined. It may be just a coincidence, but not long after the building was constructed there was a terrible earthquake in the city. Large earthquakes are very rare in Australia and this was one of the worst ever in Australian history, in which many people lost their lives.

Pyramid shapes are said to be very yin, mainly due to their funeral connotation—their association with the pyramid tombs of Egypt. So you would not want to build a house with this shape; nor would you want to have a square-

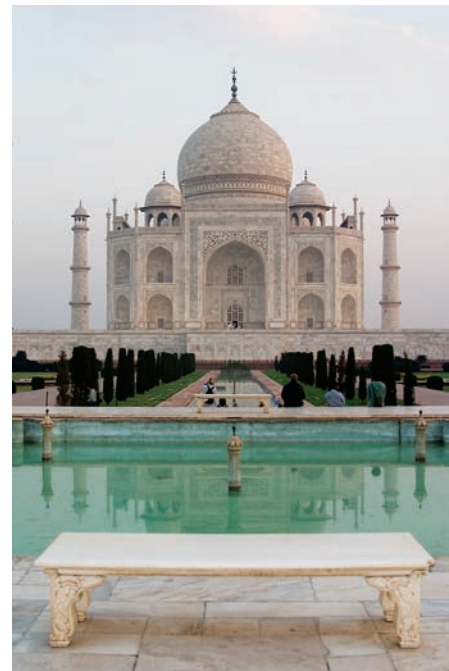
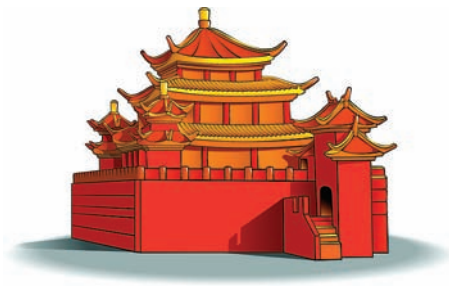


based pyramid shape on the roof. However, this shape is okay for buildings with more yin purposes—such as museums. A good example of a place where this has been very successful is the Louvre in Paris.

When it was first proposed, putting a glass pyramid in the heart of such an old building seemed a very radical design indeed, but from a geomancy point of view it was an inspired move and contributed greatly to the success of the museum. The pyramid is a yin shape but it has been constructed from glass, which gives balancing yang light energy. It also brought a square-shaped footprint into the extremely large U-shaped empty space between the wings of the museum. The square shape is associated with the earth element, and hence provides the overall supporting energy that was missing at the center of the original design. The glass used in the construction is also associated with the earth element. The triangular shapes of each side of the pyramid represent the fire element, which produces earth in the productive cycle of the elements. So the energy of the whole building became much better balanced.

Chinese temple roofs have a curve at each corner, pointing to the heavens. In this way, neighboring buildings are not hit by poison arrows from the roofline. This style of roof is also common in a lot of other countries, so this seems to be common wisdom.

A dome-shaped roof, such as that of the Taj Mahal in India, is rather yin in character and is good for places of worship. The famous Millenium Dome in London, on the other hand, is not popular at all and nobody seems to know quite what to do with it; the dome shape does



not provide enough yang energy for the shows and exhibitions it was meant to house and so it is unlikely to be successful for these purposes. Additionally, the building is almost completely surrounded by a sweeping curve of the River Thames—this is like a hangman’s noose, symbolically strangling the site.