

The Art of Feng Shui — Inviting Chi and Zen into Your Home

Would you believe it if we told you that inviting peace and good vibes into your life can be as easy as rearranging furniture? That's what Feng Shui — an ancient Chinese art of setting up one's home in harmony with the positive energies of the environment — teaches us.

Feng means 'air' and *Shui* means 'water' and according to Taoist vision, Chi is the understanding that the land (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) is alive and buzzing with energy. Together, Feng Shui believes in harnessing the energies of the environment to bring good luck, health, and positive energy into living spaces and thereby, into lives.

In order to bring about very specific life improvements with Feng Shui, one needs to position objects, use particular colours, understand and make space for opposite energies (Yin and Yang), and make use of the *Bagua* map (guide) to balance out the vibes of the space and open the home to their flow.

For bedrooms, this means using warm, earthy tones like browns, creams and corals or soft, natural hues like greens and lavenders to create a more tranquil and restorative sleeping space. Your bed should

be placed in a commanding position, which means far away from the door and next to a solid wall instead of a window; this subconsciously makes a person feel more secure when asleep.

Furniture with sharp corners have pointed energy and can direct negative energy to you so one should always opt for fixtures with softer lines and curves. As a bedroom is usually meant for sleep or personal time, it is best to get rid of all equipment that represents work or entertainment, like television sets or workout gear, from there.

Feng Shui believes that all "eyes" other than those of the people inhabiting the room should be avoided. This would include eyes in pictures, sculptures or paintings.

Positioning furniture to allow lots of natural light into the room is a great way to boost serotonin levels in the morning and Feng Shui is all for it. It also encourages the use of soft evening lights and pitch darkness for the night to ensure that your evenings are relaxing and your nights, restful and rejuvenating.

Furniture in the living room should be placed facing an entryway as that is



considered empowering, and all sofas and armchairs should have solid walls behind them. Bathrooms should just give off relaxing vibes and this can be achieved by using soft towels, a calming wall colour or a scrumptiously scented candle.

Home workstations and offices should have desks in commanding positions and

all wall hangings with water features, such as paintings and mirrors, should be placed lower than level with your nose just like in nature; water features above the nose could represent debt or insecurity. Colours like purples, greens and some blues, all of which signify wealth and abundance can be added to the walls of this room.

Decluttering is very important to Feng Shui, as is minimalistic beauty. Getting rid of unnecessary paraphernalia in the kitchen and the home can make way for new things in your life and adding greenery and tasteful hangings where you can see them will add joy and freshness into your living space.

Feng Shui is a vast concept with different schools of thought. However, one common belief binding all these thoughts together is that people are not immune to the energies of their environment and once the basics of this art are mastered, Feng Shui can offer powerful benefits like health, wealth and peace to those practicing it. So, what's holding you back from rearranging your life to wellness and prosperity?

By Munira Fidai

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

#LITERATURE

Gift of prophecy: Khona's origin story in Bangla folklore

Khona, the mythical lady of ancient Bengal was as keen and clever as her prophecies, or so history depicts her to be. She still lives on in our hearts as a mystery that is enshrined by folklore.

But who was she actually? And what is her story?

Books tend to describe that there are many versions to Khona's story, the most popular being the distressing story from twelfth century Gupta period. And snippets of the story go as follows:

There was once a famous astrologer and mathematician in the later years of the Gupta period living in Ujjain by the name of Boroha Mihira (Varaha Mihira). Boroha was a key member in the royal court of king Bikram Aditya (Vikram Aditya). The famous astrologer's wife gave birth to a son with an inauspicious lifeline. His father, the famous Boroha sketched the little boy's horoscope and was astounded by it. The ill-fated boy was supposed to die within the year.

In order to prevent the ill-fated forecast Boroha concocted a plan, which forced him to abandon his one and only child



inside a vessel and let it flow down with the river. The child was later rescued in Sinhala (today's Sri Lanka) and raised by the king of the nation. He later grew up in the Sinhalese royal court and married the daughter of the king (Khona). Later they travelled together, back to Ujjain, to reunite with Boroha.

One day in the royal court of Bikram Aditya, Khona defeated her father-in-law in a debate, hurting his ego tremendously. This is when Boroha ordered his son to cut



the tongue of his wife, to which he heeded, and Khona as a result of the atrocity, succumbed to her wounds and died.

While the story has millions of loose threads which forces it to qualify as folklore, we cannot but take archaeology into consideration. Strangely enough there are actual ruins (mounds of Khona-Mihir) 40 km northeast of Kolkata, in a place called Deulia, near Berachampa, Barasat. Archeologists says the specific site dates back to times as early as third century B.C.

—somewhere between the times of the Maurya and Gupta dynasty.

The bewildering mix of these folk tales keep us inspired till now. Was the mound the burial place of the legendary Khona? Or was it simply an observatory challenging the archaic mindsets of the Gupta people including her father in law's?

Some contexts portray her story to be more political. Since most of her adages are related to agriculture, few depict her to be an emblem of the village farmers. The story of her tongue being cut construed from the fact that the farmers did not have much say in worldly matters, even though they were experienced enough to concoct valuable prophecies that mattered everywhere from daily lives to the world of cultivation and farming.

Few others say that Khona actually lived and was a mouth piece for the illiterate farmers of ancient Bengal, and voiced out their concerns when required. Class conflict was the major reason that caused enragement in the royal courts. In addition to that male chauvinism had a huge part to play which ultimately encouraged the livid members of the court to order for her execution.

Whatever the story maybe, the mystery still remains vast. And maybe the 'butchery part' has a strong association; maybe history simply wanted Khona's identity to remain 'hidden' forever.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury

Photo: Collected