

FEATURE STORIES



The Feng Shui of Manhattan **How the Big Apple has good chi**

by Maureen Calamia | posted February 2009

New York City has been known as the "Capital of the World." Its most famous borough, Manhattan, is the epicenter. It's no wonder, to Feng Shui experts, how Manhattan has become so prosperous.

Early settlers selected Manhattan for its deep rivers and harbor which allowed easy access for trading, transportation, and defense. Without ever hearing about the principles of Feng Shui these settlers understood some of its basic concepts.

Some Basics on Mountain and Water Chi

Feng Shui describes land as having either Mountain or Water chi (energy). In ancient times, mountain ranges, lone hills, and slopes were all considered Mountain chi. The primary function of mountains is to protect and contain chi, but they also emit chi. In today's world, buildings also take on the role of Mountain chi, although the force is much weaker than the natural element.

Land near water features such as oceans, lakes, rivers and streams are considered Water chi. Water chi includes roadways, the modern equivalent to rivers, and man-made waterways. Again, the force of these man-made waterways is much weaker compared to natural waterways. Waterways and roads are the avenues for which chi is transported. This is the major function of Water chi.

The most auspicious land will contain elements of both Water (transporting) and Mountain (containing), therefore, maintaining a balance of opposites (yin and yang).

Manhattan's Geology

When initially settled, Manhattan was full of hills, lakes and streams: the perfect combination of Mountain and Water chi. It was a land that was destined for great prosperity. Then, rapid development in the 1800's practically annihilated all of the natural contours of the island. Hills were leveled and lakes and streams were filled in with the excess earth to create space for the new inhabitants.

As the island is composed of Manhattan Schist, a very strong and dense rock, it enabled the construction of one of the largest concentrations of tall buildings in the world. These skyscrapers, these man-made structures, have become the Mountain energy.

Some water on the island has been maintained: some streams and springs are still beneath the streets of New York today.

The Armchair

The most auspicious site design for a building in Feng Shui is called the "Armchair Configuration." It is composed of four

Mountain features and a water feature and provides the protection from the elements and enemies as well as a steady flow of chi and an area to gather and contain the chi:

- a large mountain at the back of a site that serves as the primary protector—also known as the “tortoise mountain,” usually in the North
- a smaller hill to the left, called the “dragon hills”—usually in the East
- an even smaller hill to the right, called the “tiger hills”—usually in the West
- a meandering waterway will run in front of the building to provide life-supporting chi—usually in the South
- and a lower hill in the front, in the distance, also called the “phoenix,” to gather and maintain the chi – also in the South beyond the waterway

Applying this Feng Shui design to Manhattan:

- Manhattan has The Bronx, a borough with many hills to the North—that serve as the “tortoise mountain”
- To the West are The Palisades of New Jersey, cliffs of schist—that serves as the “tiger hills”
- To the East is Queens and Brooklyn, with tall buildings—that serves as the “dragon hills”
- To the South, Lower Manhattan has comparatively lower buildings, serves as the place for gathering chi. (No wonder this is the site of the Financial District!) and New York Harbor is the main waterway that provide the ever, flowing, life-supporting chi
- Staten Island is the “phoenix” that allows chi to gather and maintains the chi in the Harbor

Manhattan is a perfect location for receiving and maintaining a steady stream of life-supporting energy.

Although this story offers a simplistic view of some principles of Feng Shui, it should give you a basic understanding of how geology and geography play a large part in the science of Feng Shui. So, next time you visit Manhattan, you have a fun story to tell your friends!

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