

Title: *Fengshui* as a narrative of localisation: Case studies of contemporary architecture in Hong Kong and Shanghai

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## Abstract

The practice of *fengshui* has evolved over millennia. This classical tradition has been transformed from a method of auspicious siting for houses and graves, to a broader approach gathering disparate elements including technology, folk religion, and cultural diversification. Significant to its transformation is an increasingly global audience. In this context *fengshui* is often decontextualised and used as a cultural symbol to imbue Chineseness, or a Chinese identity to a project in the constructed environment. *Fengshui* as a sign or narrative without context has both political and commercial implications.

Through analysis of the processes of globalisation and brandscape theory this thesis examines why cultural identification is frequently used as an important narrative in contemporary Chinese architecture, and further, how *fengshui* is used as a symbol in this context. This use of *fengshui* and its narratives as a method of cultural identification is not without complication. Various paradoxes characterise the contemporary adoption of *fengshui*: although sometimes the practice is largely symbolic, there is an assumption that because Chinese in origin, it represents all Chinese people. However the current practice of *fengshui* is illegal in the People's Republic of China (PRC). On the one hand *fengshui* represents traditional beliefs and values, but on the other these representations are anti-modern and feudal, sourced from outdated belief systems and underpinned by conventional values.

Through the use of case studies *fengshui* is examined as a mode of conveying narrative and cultural identification. In diverse contexts, landmark buildings in Hong Kong and Shanghai, provide a reading of *fengshui* in this contemporary adoption. This examination demonstrates differing levels of intention by those who drive a commercial agenda, and others who's intentions are more political, cultural and even traditional. The subjective nature of these outcomes contributes to the complexity of interpreting the contemporary use of *fengshui* and the misappropriation of symbolic devices.



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Dr Toni Roberts edited the thesis for language, clarity, and style, and offered some suggestions about structure and content.



## **Declaration**

The examinable outcome contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome; to the best of the candidate's knowledge contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the examinable outcome; and where the work is based on joint research or publications, discloses the relative contributions of the respective workers or authors.

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Kirsten Day





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## Introduction

This thesis examines the *fengshui*'s development and evolution from a traditional practice to a narrative of localisation in the context of urban design and architecture. Traditional *fengshui* practice adopted a holistic approach that encompassed all aspects of life and death, but many *fengshui* practices in contemporary China (the practice is illegal in the People's Republic of China) have been reduced to a system of composed symbols, which are used as cultural signifiers, rather than as was traditionally intended.

While there are many cities in Asia that utilise *fengshui* in contemporary architecture, this thesis is focused on an analysis of contemporary architectural projects in Hong Kong and Shanghai. The associated *fengshui* narratives that are created, forms the basis of this study. The analysis shows how the traditional custom of *fengshui* developed over thousands of years, from a system which was intended first as a common-sense guide to sensible building and siting for dwellings and graves. Later *fengshui* developed ritualistic values, both spiritual and symbolic, which would provide a behavioural guide enabling the creation of harmony in the relationship between the pillars of human existence: of heaven and earth, gods and humans. So *fengshui* plays a fundamental role in the understanding and beliefs of Chinese people and how they might inform the making of a place, construction of a building and relationships between structures.

This research is directed at practitioners in the field such as urban designers, architects, interior designers, planners, and those interested in the cultural development of China in the 21st century. It focuses on the work of western architects and the complex manner in which they have adopted *fengshui* to create an appropriate architecture in Asia. It highlights the paradox of using *fengshui* as cultural imagery or as a brand to connote a sense of Chinese qualities or characteristics in architectural design.

Much of this complexity arises due to the value placed on *fengshui* practices and the different values placed on their adaption, for example, in the two cities of Shanghai and Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the practice is openly entwined with everyday life, but by comparison, in Shanghai, it has been legislated as a "feudal superstition" and the practice is officially illegal. However, evidence of *fengshui* and its associated symbolism

is in many ways more explicit in the architecture of the “new China.” This study incorporates an explanation of *fengshui* principles and geomancy practice, which explains the traditional practice in its historical context and explains how it has developed over centuries into a contemporary search for cultural context.

A number of theoretical considerations are addressed in the thesis, which analyse the adoption of *fengshui* symbols and how these are adapted to *fengshui* narratives, especially when applied to contemporary architecture within the context of the sociology of architecture. These symbols and narratives are examined in relation to the two Chinese global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai. Detailed examination of landmark buildings reveals that there is a transformation from the traditional practice of *fengshui* to a dependence on narrative *fengshui* as an expression of contemporary Chinese “cultural identity.”

There are two common methods for commissioning architects to design for the global city environment. One is the use of “starchitects” who provide buildings whose brand is specific to the architect. The other means is to commission the design of buildings for global corporations that are characteristic of a global culture. The second of these methods is the focus of this research. Aside from buildings constructed for the 2008 Olympic Games, the landmark buildings of the twentieth and early 21st century China are predominantly corporate in nature. These buildings include office towers and skyscrapers.

A driving factor in the design of many of these buildings is the use of cultural identity as a method of “branding” architecture and the city to create a perception of local character that sets that city apart from other global metropolises. Further, this thesis explains the principles behind the Chinese version of the global city, and how localised identification of a Chinese character has become important as a contemporary form of architectural expression. This research identifies how the ancient practice of *fengshui* is employed now, in late twentieth and early 21st century architecture.

*Fengshui* is examined in a theoretical context, along with its direct relationship to the creation of contemporary architecture. Of note is the reality that the significant landmark buildings of Hong Kong and Shanghai are designed predominantly by American and other western architectural practices. In current architectural theory and practice, it is common to include expressions of cultural localisation in building design to

help set the building apart from its global relations. However, these symbolic references need to be carefully considered to provide suitability to a particular city rather than just a generic image of universal “city.” This study explains the values, meanings and readings of the *fengshui* symbols that have been appropriated for the purpose of branding and signifying a recognisable characteristic in contemporary China.

It is not the intent of this study to outline detailed techniques of *fengshui* practice, nor to present a case for its validity. The purpose is to examine how *fengshui* is adapted, adopted and used in contemporary Chinese culture, and to what extent it functions in architecture as a method of branding to reflect a perceived local Chinese character. The position of the researcher is to outline the complexity of Chinese culture and to establish an argument that the simplified architectural application of a custom such as *fengshui*, intended to express notions of “Chineseness,” is naïve at best and possibly condescending at worst.

Despite official bans in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), references to narrative *fengshui* are found in practice in Shanghai, and more so in Hong Kong where the strict laws which apply on the mainland are less prohibitive. In situations where the representation of *fengshui* is considered as a religion and superstition, and thus anti modern, there is a paradox in its representation within these new global city images. In mainland China’s prominent cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, western architects design many of the buildings that display narrative *fengshui* or similar cosmological references. However, the paradox of this particular use of *fengshui* is that the foreign architects used to design modern cities are referencing imagery that is conceptually anti-modern. This brings into question the appropriateness of narrative *fengshui*. While *fengshui* practice was, and remains, an intrinsic part of Chinese culture, there needs to be greater consideration as to whether *fengshui* is the most appropriate gesture in contemporary design, or whether it is simply ornamental.

To examine the question of how *fengshui* is practiced in contemporary China, this thesis will describe its principles and seek to locate them within the context of contemporary architecture in the Chinese global city. The outcome of this research is to provide urban designers, architects, interior designers, and planners with an understanding of how *fengshui* has been implemented in the growing global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai, and to examine its use and relevance within these contexts through case studies.

## Fengshui

In this text, the spelling “*fengshui*” is used, following the practice of the Oxford Chinese English Dictionary. There are other ways of spelling *fengshui*. Most common are “feng shui”, “feng-shui” and “fung shui.” There is no consensus within scholarly texts on the use of *fengshui*, but the single term is used by the principal references for this research. The method of Romanisation used in this thesis is Hanyu pinyin, the standard system used in China, Singapore and Taiwan since 2009. Although the Wade-Giles system is commonly used in Hong Kong, by overseas Chinese communities and UK based/educated authors, in this thesis all Chinese terms use standard Putonghua (also known as Mandarin) and Hanyu pinyin unless quoting or otherwise specified. However, when there is a common usage that is Wade-Giles, the common usage will be used with the pinyin footnoted.

*Fengshui* is an ancient historical Chinese philosophical system that was traditionally implemented to inform the selection of auspicious sites intended for the location of dwellings and graves. Its purpose was to create a harmonious relationship between heaven and earth, the gods and humans. The Chinese characters *feng* (wind) and *shui* (water) comprise the single linguistic term *fengshui*. The definition of *fengshui* varies from “geomantic omen” (Cowie, Zhu, Wu, & Evison, 1986, p. 131), to more detailed definitions such as Feuchtwang’s “*Feng* (wind) + *Shui* (water), as a single term stands for the power of the environment ... Behind it is a whole cosmology of metaphysical concepts and symbols. By placing oneself well in the environment *fengshui* will bring good fortune” (Feuchtwang, 1984, p. 2).

*Fengshui* developed within a Chinese agrarian society as an adaptive response to the local environment. It was and is not a singular and coherent practice. Even from its earliest development, *fengshui* was a dual system — one technique used land formation and the other used the compass — to determine the *qi* (life force) of a particular location. These methods of practice are termed “classical *fengshui*.” The schools within the classical tradition continue to evolve and adopt regional variations within China as well as other areas in East Asia. In addition to regional differences, the meaning and value placed upon the system are adjustable.

*Fengshui* uses a language of correlative thought. This language is an expression of correspondences between humans and the cosmos, the microcosm and the macrocosm (Henderson, 2011, p. 2). This system of the personification of natural forces in China existed from Neolithic times. It developed into a sophisticated and refined system by the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) and remained dominant in Chinese intellectual life until the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). The correlatives expressed in the Chinese classic texts were used by the Confucians, Mohist, Daoist and Legalists as a method to express the organisation of the human world (Lai, 2008, p. 213).

The underlying principle of the correlations was the concept of self. In this context, it is critical for a person to understand his or her place in an environment, which has many interconnected dimensions, and within them, a rich diversity of beings and entities. This language extends over numerous fields in China including alchemy, music, geomancy, astronomy, medicine and religion. A key underlying assumption is that, from an understanding of correlative imagery, (along with its respective associations and references to the past) a person can create for themselves a fitting or correct response to their built environment.

While this may be achievable in a private dwelling, the use of *fengshui* in public buildings, and in particular within a contemporary corporate environment is limited. More often an applied symbolism, emblematic of basic concepts rather than the actual complex procedure of *fengshui*, are incorporated into contemporary architecture. In many contemporary buildings this symbolic use of *fengshui* is used as part of a branding strategy, to label a place or establish a building's character as "Chinese".

From a western perspective, *fengshui* is seen as part of Chinese culture. The issue of Chinese culture will be described in detail later, however suffice to say that perceptions of "culture" are complex and far from homogenous. From an architectural perspective, it is all too easy to use a system such as *fengshui* when designing cities, buildings or interiors, as a method of branding, localising or providing a "Chinese identity" to what would otherwise be perceived as western, modern, or contemporary design. This aspect is discussed in greater detail in the examination of *fengshui* through brandscape in Chapter 4.

Examining city branding, and identifying a method of localisation or providing an understandable identity to an outsider, branding specialist Wally Olins from the brand



consultancy Wolff Olins discusses the messages that countries use to communicate their particularity. These messages include brands and symbols that are quickly and easily recognised and are communicated through popular culture, products, services, sport, behaviours, arts and architecture (Olins, 2004, p.169). Further, it may be the task of government to set the tone for these intentions. China's government is based in Beijing, and pushes a generally homogenous image of Chinese culture. While architects and others may be complicit in representing cultural symbols in the design of buildings and urban spaces, many assumptions are made about what constitutes Chinese culture.

The use of, or reliance on symbols to differentiate or localise what might otherwise be considered bland global architecture can be problematic due to variations in the perception, translation, and interpretation of these symbols. These discrepancies may be due to cultural difference that may result in a misreading due to a lack of understanding or lack of perception of cultural nuance, or simplistic assumptions made about concepts of identity. The use of imagery in the city may be aspirational on the part of the client, such as the use of high-rise and skyscraper buildings to build the image of a global city. Alternatively, using symbolism or imagery that has some type of cultural value signifies something as belonging to a particular set of traditions. In the context of this thesis, the investigation centres on finding an understanding of the way *fengshui* is used to represent a "Chinese identity" in architecture.

### **Chinese identity and fengshui.**

The umbrella term "China" is similar to the umbrella term "Europe." Under the "China" umbrella are 33 provinces, four municipalities, five autonomous regions and two Special Administrative Regions (SARs), that in 2013 contained 1.35 billion people (The World Bank Group, 2014). By comparison, the European Union contains 504 million people. Within China, there are 56 recognised ethnic groups and eight recognised language families. Putonghua or standard Chinese (also known as Mandarin) is the official language, except in the case of the two SARs (Hong Kong's official languages are English and Cantonese and Macau's official languages are Portuguese and Cantonese). Given this diversity, any references to China and Chinese identity are necessarily generalisations.

Much of western exposure to *fengshui* is via Chinese migration, and from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1980s the majority of this migration was from the Guangdong region and therefore much of western exposure to Chinese culture is from that region. These

questions of identity and its expression are an ongoing discussion as part of the process of globalisation and the expression of national identity and the nation state. The application and expressions of identity to architecture will be discussed further in the chapter on brandscape. Despite the regional variations of language, culture and identity, Professor of Chinese studies Zhang Juwen sees *fengshui* as a “communication, a marker of common identity” within the worldwide distribution of Chinese communities (Zhang, 2004, p. 32)

<sup>1</sup>. Zhang writes about *fengshui* from a research perspective regarding it as part of traditional Chinese funeral rites. He argues that *fengshui* would not exist or be relevant to contemporary Chinese people if it were not for this link. Numerous scholars make this connection, including anthropologist Ann S. Anagost, sociologist Angela P. Cheater, and Zhang, all of whom write about *fengshui* as part of the funerary process (Anagost, 1987; Cheater, 1991; Zhang, 2004).

*Fengshui* in China has always had a tenuous relationship with authority and power. During imperial rule, it was variously embraced, tolerated and suppressed by different rulers. More recently, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) was spear-headed by the Campaign of the Four Olds (K. Li, 1995, p. 427). During this campaign, *fengshui* was outlawed, books on the subject were burnt and its practitioners vilified (Skinner, 2012). In the Chinese Constitution, *Document 19: The basic viewpoint and policy on the religions question during our country's Socialist period* (Chinese Communist Party, 1982) : which defines those religions which are legal in China: *fengshui* remains categorised as a feudal superstition law and it is therefore illegal to practice in the PRC. However, *fengshui* practice persists, even at the highest levels of government (Cheater, 1991, p. 89). The relationship between *fengshui* and political power is discussed in detail in *Chapter 3: Fengshui*.

The practice of *fengshui* is not unique to China. It has variations in Korea (*pungsu-jiri-seol*), Vietnam (*Phuong Thuy*) and Japan (*fusui*). There are subtle differences in the practice in those countries. *Fengshui* expert Derek Walters notes the difference in compass design between Vietnam and China (a less complex version in Vietnam); and Japan has added a “pantheon of spirits” that protects the 60 compass points (Walters, 1995, p. 13). Yoon argues that because of this localisation, the description *geomancy* is a better general term for the practice than the more specific term “*fengshui*.” The use of the

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<sup>1</sup> For this thesis I use Chinese names as used in China – this means that the surname is listed first and the first name is listed second. However, many overseas Chinese commonly use the western framework. If a person is commonly referred to or is published in the western model, this will be used.

word *fengshui* identifies it as specifically Chinese when in fact it is widely practiced outside China (Yoon, 2006, pp. 3–5). For this thesis, I use the term *fengshui* because the focus of the research is on Chinese cities.

### **The Research Question**

The research falls into two parts. The first defines *fengshui*, its division into classical, modern and populist readings and how these interpretations are used as a narrative for localisation. The second part uses specific case studies of contemporary architecture in Hong Kong and Shanghai to test this narrative.

The Oxford Dictionary defines localisation as, “making something local in character” and “to assign something to a particular place” (Oxford University Press, 2014). To localise architecture is to include characteristic elements in the planning or design which identify the built form as being “of” a particular place.

Localisation has been an ongoing design issue since China opened its doors to the West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Architectural academics Peter G. Rowe and Seng Kuan document the development of western architecture in China from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the tension between retaining a Chinese identity and westernisation (Rowe & Kuan, 2002). Some of the elements used to convey a sense of Chinese identity include proportioning principles, traditional roof bracketing systems, a big roof, and organizational elements such as axial planning. The integration or addition of “Chinese” architectural elements continues to be used. In 2010, for example, with the aim to impress international tourists visiting Guangzhou, the city government implemented a “beautification project” to add PVC traditional style red roofing to existing apartment buildings (Carter & Tomba, 2012, p. 35). Decoratively attached to otherwise modern constructions, these roofs appeared to have instilled a Chinese characteristic to the city.

In this thesis I focus on the architecture of two cities: Hong Kong and Shanghai. Both cities share similar histories, including a colonial past, a similar period of development and, as they are both port cities they share trade and commercial activity. They are differentiated by politics and culture. Hong Kong was a British colony from 1842 to 1997 when sovereignty was handed over to the PRC, while Shanghai was a colonial port city with settlements or concessions belonging to France, Britain and the USA (International), until reclaimed by the PRC in 1949. Both are global cities with leading (and competing) financial credentials. Detailed discussion of the implication of

politics, *fengshui* and cultural identity of each city are in *Chapter 5: Case Study 1: Hong Kong: The Tale of Three Buildings* and *Chapter 6: Case study 2: Shanghai: Lujiazui Financial District, Landmark Architecture*.

Specifically, I examine how commercial buildings brand and create a skyline identity. Urban sociologist Anthony D. King comments that the “super tall” buildings that create the skyline in many global cities, are “the most symbolic product of the world economy” and are used as a strategy for attracting international attention:

What gave rise to this modern phenomenon were not only the competitive conditions of modern American industrial capitalism, particularly as they played out in the corporate world of the newspaper industry but also the emergence onto the world stage of what compared to the older states of Europe, was a new and youthful United States of America (King, 2004, p. 5).

King continues, “... in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the tower has come to symbolise a particular type of modernity. A deliberate decision to use the tower for its skyline image — which puts them [former third world cities] in the first world” (King, 2004, p. 16). Exemplary cities that have used architecture to this end include Shanghai and Dubai. Architecture is a vehicle to enhance their image and elevate their position in the global village (Klingmann, 2007, p. 2).

### **Literature on fengshui**

Published books make up a significant proportion of available information about *fengshui*. These typically fall into a number of subcategories such as scholarly and non-scholarly, classical *fengshui* and modern *fengshui*, and theory and practice. Kate Bramble, an architect and authority on *fengshui* is uncompromising about the differentiation of these categories. Bramble states:

Traditional fengshui is part of Chinese traditional science (ethno science) and follows a long history of interactions and knowledge of the world — empirical knowledge built up over generations and grounded in practical evidence. It also emphasises an attachment to place. Anything “new age” (and especially ‘new age’ feng shui which I call McFengshui) is nineteenth century spiritual and occult

ideology in posh packaging. Moreover, “new age” feng shui has no basis in traditional science, legitimate science, or traditional practices (Bramble, 2003, p. 15).

The majority of published books on *fengshui* are non-scholarly in style and constitute what Bramble terms *McFengshui*. Titles include *Fur shui: An introduction to animal Feng Shui* (P. Brown, 2008), *Feng shui fusion* (Butler-Biggs, 2002), and *Feng shui and the tango: In twelve easy lessons: Why feng shui works and how to make it work for you* (DeAmicis & DeAmicis, 2001).

Of note, when distinguishing between classical and modern *fengshui*, most texts that can be defined as classical, usually fall within the category of scholarly works. Within modern *fengshui*, there are a number of further subcategories. Black Sect Tantric Buddhism (BTB), for example, is an American religion established in Berkeley California in 1986 by Thomas Lin Yun. Practitioners of this religion (or style of *fengshui*) and those associated with its simplified methods write roughly 40% of the modern *fengshui* texts. Prolific authors affiliated with BTB include Lillian Too, Simon Brown, Collins and Sarah Rossbach. Titles include: *Creating abundance with feng shui* (Too, 1997), *Feng shui for wimps* (S. Brown, 2002), *The western guide to feng-shui: Room by room* (Collins, 1999), *Feng shui chic: Stylish designs for harmonious living* (Stasney, 2000), *Feng shui: the Chinese art of placement* (Rossbach, 1983) and *Living color: Master Lin Yun's guide to feng shui and the art of color* (Rossbach & Lin, 1994).

All of these authors are based in the USA. In these examples, *fengshui* is fused with “New Age” or western concepts that are not part of classical *fengshui* and are Western in origin. BTB is marketed to an American audience, and its characteristics and differences from other forms of *fengshui* are discussed in the Chapter 2 *Fengshui*. However, this area of *McFengshui* is of little interest to the research undertaken as part of this thesis. It is included because, as part of an analysis of globalisation and *fengshui*, it is fundamental to acknowledge how popular *fengshui* has become outside of China and outside Chinese communities. However, in this realm it has become westernised and its original purpose subverted. It is also worth considering that a western understanding of Chinese culture, and in particular Chinese architecture and interior design, might be interpreted via these texts, even though they have little to do with traditional practice. This paradox will be examined in greater detail in the chapter on globalisation.

Academic journal articles about *fengshui* come from a range of disciplines including architecture and planning, psychology and marketing, cultural studies, geography, business, management and tourism. Unlike the unscholarly texts discussed above, these articles are generally not about the practice of *fengshui* but focus on its cultural implications. These will be discussed in the following chapters.

## The Gap

There is a gap in literature on the subject between the popular notion of *fengshui* as a contemporary commodity and the practice of *fengshui* for cultural and branding attribution. The literature about *fengshui* for an architectural audience is predominantly about practice and procedure. It is limited to popular *McFengshui* subjects, a “do it yourself” attitude towards “capturing” luck which rarely addresses architects, or provides content on the history or development of *fengshui*. Authors such as Barb Rogers, for example, who writes that it is not necessary to understand “why” *fengshui* works, only that it does, are typical (Rogers, 2005, p. 112). The aim of such popular authors is to concentrate on the “how” of practicing *fengshui* while ignoring the “why” and, as a corollary, just what *fengshui* actually comprises. In general architectural discourse and analysis, *fengshui* practice is not deemed an area worthy of serious inquiry, even though there are dominant landmarks in Shanghai and Hong Kong which incorporate the practice. However, both cities have robust *fengshui* narratives present in their urban design and architecture, just as much of the region contains elements of *fengshui* practice.

The “why” question is examined in areas such as anthropology and cultural studies but has not been linked back to architecture. Feuchtwang’s *An Anthropological Analysis of Fengshui* (1984) for example, and his subsequent research on popular religion, *The Anthropology of Religion: Charisma and Ghosts and Popular Religion in China* (2010), explore ideas about belief systems at both state and popular levels, and the subsequent interpretation of these ideas into the design and decoration of the constructed environment. Bruun’s *Introduction to Fengshui* (2008) and *Fengshui in China: Geomantic Divination between State Orthodoxy and Popular Religion* (2003) discuss how *fengshui* became popular in the eighteenth century and examine its historic and contemporary political position in China. More specific to architecture, Knapp researches the Chinese house and how social structures have influenced both city and house (Knapp, 1986, 1989, 2000; Knapp, Lo, & China Institute in America, 2005). While Knapp links

the expression of social structure directly with Confucian thought, popular religion provides the detail to the Confucian inspired conceptual planning.

Further, there is no discussion of the localisation of *fengshui* and the relevance of this practice in different communities in China — and in overseas Chinese communities such as Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia. These broader uses of *fengshui* are beyond the scope of this thesis.

### **Contribution to existing knowledge — research question**

This thesis aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on *fengshui* by identifying the reason for its use in the case studies of Hong Kong and Shanghai. These case studies also examine how the practice of *fengshui*, narrative *fengshui* and its associated symbolism are used in contemporary architecture in China. This study will outline how *fengshui* is employed in contemporary Chinese architecture and urban design as an appropriated identity, and as a tool for cultural and corporate marketing and branding. It also outlines the political aspirations of governments, and their demands for the newly constructed and enlarged cities of China. It discusses the appropriateness of this application, and underlying socio-political narratives and power that contribute to contemporary practices of *fengshui*.

There are a number of areas of discussion that inform this research. At first examination, it appears that foreign architects pay more regard to *fengshui* than their Chinese counterparts, at least on a level of designing appropriate architecture in China. Despite political and cultural differences between the north and south of China, there is no clear understanding of the application of *fengshui* with consideration to cultural differences within China, as it seems to commonly inform design in all parts of China.

While there is a strong tradition of the practice of *fengshui* in Hong Kong, there are significant reasons why it would not be as dominant in Shanghai (such as legislation that the practice of *fengshui* is a feudal superstition and thus deemed reactionary, with subsequent government bans on the registration of *fengshui* consultancies). Yet its symbolism is evident in the landmark buildings of both those cities skylines. *Fengshui* and cosmological narratives are important aspects of the architect's design descriptions and intentions; however the appropriateness of the symbols used is to be questioned.

We can speculate on the reasons for its use. Perhaps *fengshui* is used in contemporary construction as a method of cultural differentiation, where previously it was appropriated as an expression of nationalism in colonial Hong Kong (and Taiwan). It may be used to make a project more acceptable to the local populace, such as its use by Disney for Hong Kong Disneyland, which suggests marketing and commercial reasoning. And it may contribute to making a project more culturally suitable to overseas and regional Chinese who invest in Shanghai. These issues will be explored in *Chapter 6: Case study 2: Shanghai's Lujiazui Financial District, Landmark Architecture* and *Chapter 7: Case study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland*.

### **Copyright.**

In this thesis standard academic procedure regarding copyright and correct attribution is undertaken as a matter of due course. However, my third case study, Hong Kong Disneyland, is an exceptional case. In the design of the case study and the representation of collected data, publication of any image from within the resort environment (including the theme park and the hotels) is not permitted without authorization of the Walt Disney Corporation (WDC). The gathering and the format of documentary evidence that is critical to my argument have been undertaken with WDC's copyright policies in mind. In *Variations on a Theme Park*, architectural theorist Michael Sorkin comments on Disney's litigious nature:

This is the sky above Disney World, which here substitutes for an image of the place itself. Disney World is the first copyrighted urban environment in history, a Forbidden City for postmodernity. Renowned for its litigiousness, the Walt Disney Company will permit no photographs of its property without prior approval of its use. Is there a better illustration of the contradiction of the space of freedom represented by places like Disney World than this innocent sky? (1992, p. 206)

Corporate Disney is a global brand that relies on very specific products and copyrights of those products for its very existence. For decades it has protected its imagery, Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Snow White, Main Street USA, Fantasyland, and Tomorrowland



among them. Just as other global monoliths (McDonalds, Coca Cola, and Starbucks) protect their recipes and brands, Disney controls the dissemination of its packaging. Consequently much of the data collected for this thesis, from fieldwork and the collection of artefacts, consists of hand drawings of the original images and maps as required by copyright.

## Method

The research paradigm used in this thesis is that of urban sociology, with a focus on the sociology of architecture. Two research lenses provide a broad understanding of what *fengshui* has become in the contemporary architectural context. The application of *fengshui* and its adaption to the construction of a global city cannot be fully understood from the viewpoint of a single discipline. The two research lenses used are globalisation and brandscape. From these studies, a theory of a contemporary *fengshui* narrative is established. This narrative is then tested via three case studies: *Chapter 5: Case study 1: Hong Kong: A Tale of Three Hong Kong Buildings*; *Chapter 6: Case study 2: Shanghai: Lujiazui Financial District, Landmark Architecture*; and *Chapter 7: Case study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland*. The methods used in this research are outlined in detail in *Chapter 1: Methods*.

## Chapter Structure.

The thesis is in three parts, outlined in Table 1:

**Table 1: Chapter Structure**

Part	Chapter
	Introduction
One: Outline	1 Methodology and Methods
	2 <i>Fengshui</i>
Two: Research lenses	3 Globalisation, Modernity and the Global Chinese City
	4 Brandscape
Three: Case studies	5 Case Study 1: Hong Kong: The Tale of Buildings
	6 Case Study 2: Shanghai: Lujiazui Financial District: Landmark Architecture
	7 Case Study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland

	Conclusion
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### **Part one: Outline.**

The first part of the thesis outlines the research topic and methodology. The Introduction establishes the research question and gives an overview of the literature and position where this research sits within the existing knowledge on *fengshui*.

*Chapter 1: Methodology and Methods*, outlines the epistemology, methods and techniques of the examination of *fengshui* through the different research lenses. It discusses in more detail the relationship between the three parts of the thesis.

*Chapter 2: Fengshui* provides basic definitions and considers *fengshui* in the context of Chinese philosophy. The literature on *fengshui* is outlined and common themes examined. *Fengshui* is scrutinised both as a popular religion and superstition, and its evolution to its current form of practice investigated.

### **Part two: Research lenses.**

Part two uses the research lenses of Globalisation and Brandscape. These perspectives establish a series of narratives describing how *fengshui* is understood and interpreted in a contemporary architectural context. To determine the implications in this context, a number of debates are engaged. The first debate, globalisation, describes the influences of global process on the city and how these specifically influence the Chinese global city. The second debate, brandscape, focuses these global issues to describe the influence of branding and identification in architecture, which establishes a sense of “place” in city skyline and imagery of the buildings that make up cities. The narratives established via these research lenses will be tested in Part Three: Case studies.

### ***Chapter 3 Globalisation, Modernity and the Global Chinese City.***

Globalisation is the result of a set of processes that exist to explain the condition of a universal cultural and its economic circumstances. While this is not a new phenomenon, the development of technology has increased along with the speed by which information is transferred, so that our experience of the “global community” is enhanced. Levitt’s *Globalisation of Markets* (1983) argues that in order for companies to

be successful they need to standardise their systems and products. That principle which was once applied to a company is now being applied to cities and their buildings.

The global city as outlined by Sassen can be identified as containing a standardised set of international businesses including international financial institutions, corporate headquarters and political and administrative centres (Sassen, 2001). These city types contain headquarters for commercial leaders that cluster in these environments, where they do business together. In addition, a global city has shared characteristics with Levitt's global company. Services and activities are standardised and available through an international system of affiliated connections that strengthen city-to-city transaction networks (Sassen, 2001, pp. xix–xxii), and in turn assist in the process of globalisation, by weakening the perception of localised borders, which enables operations across boundaries. According to this theory, the global city becomes increasingly homogenised at the expense of a localised presence.

#### ***Chapter 4 Brandscape.***

The chapter on brandscape explores the impact of marketing and product identification (branding) on the architecture of the global city. It explores how global trends, such as the transition from an industrial to service-based city, change not only the operation of the city, but also the planning and architecture needed to facilitate its functions. *Fengshui* is located within this context and examined to determine the role it plays as a symbol of cultural recognition in the urban environment.

Klingmann argues that, within a capitalist system, architecture functions as a “product” or a “commodity.” Therefore, comparable to many “commodities,” the identity of architecture has shifted away from the function of the object (performance and efficiency as championed by modernists such as Le Corbusier) to become a vehicle for symbolic meaning, such as projection and identity (Klingmann, 2007, p. 17). Klingmann uses Pine and Gilmore's *The Experience Economy* (2011) as a departure point for her theory of brandscape and how the experience economy applies to architecture.

Pine and Gilmore make the distinction that people are prepared to pay more for a commodity when there is an experience attached to it, and as a corollary, they will use it more often. Architecture can either be the background to that experience (for example, as

a theme to an experience, such as a store chain like Starbucks, Nike or McDonalds) or architecture can be the “experience” such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao. By extension, the design techniques that we use in architectural design become marketing tools, and the use of *fengshui* in design becomes a tool to give symbolic meaning to a building. While this symbolism was once linked with cosmology, the contemporary use, particularly in public buildings, is as a device to demonstrate an acknowledgement of Chinese sensitivity. It is rarely used in context with its original purpose and as such is tokenistic and can be viewed as simply a tool used in the creation of brandscape.

Architecture does not happen in isolation. The final architectural artefact represents the complex conditions and background of economics, politics, planning, ambition, need/requirement, social structure and artistic/architectural skill. It is important when making an analysis of architecture that the cultural and historical context is understood.

While we are examining Hong Kong and Shanghai from the perspective of a global city and from the perspective of a “Chinese” city, we must also examine them as Cantonese and Shanghainese cities respectively. Both cities have colonial backgrounds. Hong Kong continued as a separate entity until the handover to the Peoples Republic of China in 1997, and even now it has Special Administrative Region status. The term SAR, as it applies to the system of governance in Hong Kong, is commonly described as “one country, two systems,” referring to a more limited level of democracy that exists in Communist mainland China. In Hong Kong, being Cantonese is a cultural indicator and the Hong Kong people use this identity to distinguish themselves from mainland Chinese. Choi describes this special identity for Hong Kong people whereby they see themselves as different from, or ... “superior to cities in China, culturally, economically, and politically” (Choi, 2010, p. 2). She cites Mathew’s term for this local consciousness as “Chinese Plus” that encompasses themes ranging from cultural taste, wealth, and rule of law reliant on principles of democratisation.

During Shanghai’s “golden period” (1912-1937) (Bergère, 2010, p. 147), the term *haipai* was used to express Shanghainese style. The term was an expression of the commercial and cosmopolitan culture of that version of a modern China (particularly during the 1920-30s). While the term originally described a regional genre of opera, it was appropriated to express all Shanghai forms of literary and artistic expression. However, supporters of high Chinese culture viewed *haipai* as a source of moral

degradation and intellectual vulgarity and denigrated it. At this time there was a cultural struggle between the scholarly mandarins of Shanghai who held power, and the merchant class who possessed wealth. Overreaching these concerns there was a rejection of the Beijing style, known as *jingpai*. Indeed critics went so far as to argue that culture in Shanghai was no longer Chinese, although it had not completely descended into a western model. This cross-cultural environment went into quick decline from the Sino Japanese War (1937) to World War II and through to the Communist Revolution. By 1952, Shanghai was a communist city. As the communist regime gained strength and adopted the Soviet model of development, Shanghai entered a long period of reprimand administered by central government policy, because “the metropolis embodied all that the communist dogma condemned: the triumph of capitalism, the arrogance of imperialism and all the fruits of cosmopolitan culture” (Bergère, 2010, p. 342). Shanghai remained at a disadvantage until there were changes in the Shanghai leadership in 1985 and Jiang Zemin became the mayor.

In China during the dynastic period (ending in 1911) there was an original and identifiable Chinese architectural style that was fostered primarily by Chinese master builders and craftsmen. In the last 100 years of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) exceptions to that style were the buildings in the foreign concessions and missions. In the main, foreign architects designed buildings in these areas and their commissions were ordered by foreign entities. Also at this time, local Chinese travelled overseas to train as architects then returned home to practice. Designers, both local and foreign, applied what they thought was Chinese style to architectural expression, and as a result we have forms such as the gate, the tower, the wall and the large roof being widely used in this period. This method of expression has been ongoing since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

More recently, urban governments in China compete with one another to construct high profile architectural projects in an attempt to reorientate the image of their cities and attract international investment and tourism (Ren, 2011, p. 10). Shanghai, for example, has built a new international airport (1999), an opera house (both designed by French architect Paul Andreu) and the flagship Pudong financial district. Ren observes that international architectural firms have designed all of the buildings and masterplans for the Pudong. This type of design is global in context and its scope reaches beyond issues of localisation as the Chinese nation seeks to expand its global credentials. On the other hand, the use of *fengshui* as a narrative may be able to provide a means by which Chinese identity is attached to a building, however tenuous that narrative might be.

### **Part 3 Case studies.**

The first two case studies presented in Part 3 examine the use of a *fengshui* narrative as applied to architecture in the global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai. The third case study identifies how the global corporation of the Walt Disney Company has used *fengshui* as a localisation tool.

#### ***Chapter 5 Case Study 1: Hong Kong – The tale of three buildings.***

The first case study examines the relationship between the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Headquarters, the Bank of China Tower and the Cheung Kong Building, all located in Central, Hong Kong. This chapter analyses how *fengshui* was used as part of the design process and investigates the subsequent interpretation of *fengshui* as a narrative of the buildings, including underlying influences on these narratives such as politics and assertions of power. The purpose of this case study is to examine how *fengshui* is used in landmark buildings in Hong Kong. While there are numerous buildings that use *fengshui* in the city, these three have a *fengshui* narrative that is popular and contains several political agendas. This chapter discusses the relationship (architectural, political and the *fengshui* values) between the Bank of China Tower designed by I.M. Pei (completed 1990), the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Headquarters designed by Norman Foster (completed 1985) and the Cheung Kong Centre designed by architects in association, César Pelli and Leo A Daly (completed 1999).

There has been an ongoing rivalry between these two major Chinese banks, which is expressed also in the *fengshui* narratives of their buildings. Significantly, Foster's and Pei's designs have been inextricably linked to *fengshui*. To this mix was added the political instability and mistrust of Beijing's intentions prior to the handover of Hong Kong from British colonial rule to the PRC in 1997. The Cheung Kong Centre has been described as the "superman building" (Cheung Kong Centre, 2012). The *fengshui* narrative was that the building was designed to absorb the *sha qi* (negative energy) from the Bank of China tower in its relationship with the HSBC building in particular and Hong Kong in general. This was achieved by drawing an imaginary protective line between the height of the Bank of China tower and the HSBC building. Whether or not this is factual, there is an established *fengshui* narrative that the building is the "superman" that protects the HSBC and the rest of the city from the "evil" Bank of China

tower, and of course the Chairman of Cheung Kong Holdings, Li Kai Shing or “Mr Superman,” has guided it.

***Chapter 6 Case study 2: Shanghai’s Lujiazui Financial Centre – Landmark architecture.***

The second case study investigates three “super tall” buildings in the Shanghai Financial District: the Jin Mao Tower, the Shanghai World Financial Centre and the Shanghai Tower (under construction).<sup>2</sup> This chapter examines *fengshui* in the context of Shanghai and as part of the PRC, including the political implications of this relationship.

In the late 1980s a decision was made by the central Chinese government that Shanghai was to be revived as the financial centre for China.<sup>3</sup> This decision had many underlying implications including the creation of a rivalry with Hong Kong. It was engaged through the power brokering of Shanghai’s politicians led by then mayor Jiang Zemin (Bergère, 2010, p. 408). The symbol for this financial centre was the *Lujiazui* Financial District. It is the most prominent finance and trade zone in mainland China. There are a number of skyscrapers in the city, however only the “super tall” buildings are studied. Each of the buildings was designed by foreign architects and directly references either *fengshui* or cosmology.

***Chapter 7 Case study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland.***

The final case study is Hong Kong Disneyland. The theme park has been proactive in the promotion of its use of *fengshui*. The chapter examines the park’s *fengshui*, the type of *fengshui* used, and the reasoning and marketing of its use. In the Hong Kong Disneyland case study I investigate why a global corporation would adopt a design system like *fengshui*. Disney has a distinct set of identifying design principles, which are so pervasive that two cultural critiques, Disneyization and Disneyfication, have been developed to describe the company’s business and design practices respectively.

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<sup>2</sup> Super tall is generally used to refer to buildings that are taller than 300 metres (roughly 1000 feet).

<sup>3</sup> The history of Shanghai as a global city (colonial, postcolonial, communist and post market reform) will be discussed in Chapter 8 in greater detail.

The company is extremely litigious about its own copyright and design brand. So why would Disney modify its design methods with *fengshui*, and at the same time issue proactive promotion of its adoption and use of this system?

Hong Kong Disneyland, as the third of the Disney global international parks (after Tokyo and Paris), has been a testing ground for a fourth park under construction in Shanghai. The Disneyland Report summarises claims about the adoption of *fengshui* in their Hong Kong resort, made by the Walt Disney Corporation, along with those that have been attributed to the park (The Disneyland Report, 2004). I have attempted to link these 17 claims with their original source and where they were published.

*Fengshui* has had varying levels of popularity through its history, ranging from being embraced by different imperial courts in ancient China, to the practice being outlawed and actively repressed in modern China (as part of the Campaign Against the Four Olds). There are many arguments about the significance of *fengshui* within an old and new Chinese culture, and its links with burial rites as part of Confucian practice. The impact of westernisation on *fengshui* has been rewritten and reinterpreted over centuries resulting in an application that is very different in the contemporary globalised world (Bruun, 2003; Feuchtwang, 2001; Zhang, 2004).

The general adaption of the practice in contemporary China has been to enable globalisation with a Chinese expression, which is largely represented through the application of elements of *fengshui*. My research extends Klingmann's brandscape theory to examine how *fengshui* is applied in China, including the way *fengshui* is received and managed in the context of global architecture.

*Fengshui* is often used as a symbol to denote something as Chinese, or as an expression of Chinese culture. A question we need to ask is: which culture? While there is a blanket term for Chinese culture, the differences between north and south, and between those who reside in China and those who are overseas Chinese, rural and urban, Han Chinese and "other," all need to be addressed when considering the appropriate use of *fengshui*.

Bruun argues that *fengshui* was a point of differentiation during the colonial period in China as a subject of western fascination. During this period it became elevated as a symbol of national identity, even though it had been considered prior to that merely a dated form of religion or past superstition. From an educated and elitist perspective



*fengshui* was not considered as a subject worthy of study. This is still reflected in many texts on Chinese architecture today. While in China especially, *fengshui* may not be respected as an appropriate subject (bearing in mind the practice is officially illegal), the use of cosmology and the adoption of *fengshui* is nevertheless evident in the largest building projects of late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century China. This duality of opposing forces, positive and negative, is itself characteristic of Chinese culture, where two opposites are working as one to create a harmonious whole.

There are forceful architectural forms appropriated to style a building as “Chinese”, such as suggestions of the traditional wall, gate, large roof and bell tower, and the underlying implementation of *fengshui* principles. Even in the face of being considered feudal, peasant-based, uneducated and illegal, *fengshui* remains a dominant design strategy in the creation of skylines for new and existing major Chinese cities.

## Chapter 1

### Methodology and Methods

As discussed in the introduction, there is a significant void in available literature which seeks to shed light on the location of *fengshui* as a method of cultural identification in architecture. Without the solid grounding of an established compilation of literature, the first step in this research endeavour was to collect relevant data. The aim was to enable and accurately describe the phenomena of *fengshui* and its employment in the landmark architecture of Hong Kong and Shanghai.

The two main methods employed for this thesis were firstly, secondary research and secondly, observation. This data was illustrated in the three case studies. To explicate the transformation of *fengshui* from its role in traditional practice to its developed role as a symbol employed to express cultural identity, key authors and texts were identified. This exercise determines if there was a link between the appropriations of traditional practices to create something emblematic and reflects on how the development signifies the original custom.

A parallel argument is the use of signs in architecture and in particular the signification of place and culture. This type of signification may have had its origins in notions of political power, however this has become more a marketing exercise in contemporary global cities. The homogenising global spaces provide the platform in which global networks can operate – but these have also evolved a need for differentiation from one another (albeit superficially) and this differentiation has become signs in the urban landscape.

The Chinese global city is unique in the speed in which new cities have been built. Shanghai's Pudong, like its counterpart Dubai, has been built since the late twentieth century. The planning of Pudong was meticulous in ensuring the involvement of international architects, marketing and publicity, designs that evoke "Chinese characteristics" and a grand monumentality. The planning for this "new" Shanghai was not a new exercise. There have been many strategic plans for Shanghai dating from Nanjing Decade, the 1980s when a strong political base was growing in Shanghai, and finally when Deng Xiaoping's reforms enabled Shanghai to once again be the financial

centre in mainland China. Hong Kong however, has been developing over a longer period as an outpost of the British Empire and has a pre-emptive standing as a global city/trading port and financial centre the Asia, similar to Singapore.

The complication in the use of *fengshui* as a tool of localisation in architecture lies in the fact that it is not given the same value in different regions in China. In the People's Republic of China *fengshui* is considered a feudal superstition, while Hong Kong – for the moment – is the epicentre of *fengshui*.

### **Research question**

To understand the role that *fengshui* plays in contemporary architecture the research topic required disassembling into a number of parts. *Fengshui* is an ancient practice that has adapted to science, technology, philosophical and political conditions, but is now adapting to globalisation. There is much debate about this new tangent on which *fengshui* is being dragged. The distinction between classical and modern *fengshui* has become apparent as the practice is globalised. This issue will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 2.

The topic identifies *fengshui* as a narrative of localisation. Thus it is imperative to understand the role of narrative in architecture and the role of narrative in localisation. The definition of localisation was also important. In addition, the context in which it was important to understand what localisation is and in what conditions it exists and what impact this has on the built environment and specifically in the case study cities. The research lens of globalisation was used to explain the dichotomy of global and local, and this effect on the urban landscape. Chapter 3 examines the condition of localisation within global processes.

While it is important to understand that this relationship exists, it is also important to understand why this relationship has significance in the contemporary architectural design. Examination of brandscape assists in explaining the importance of this relationship and the emphasis on marketing and branding within the global city.

### **Data collection.**

This chapter outlines the methodology, methods and techniques undertaken to address the questions of how *fengshui* is used as narrative of localisation, how this is manifest in contemporary architecture in the global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai, and how it is employed by global corporations such as the Walt Disney company.

My own background as an architect led to an initial assumption that the appropriate investigative process was via architectural research. This methodology is traditionally about a building, a style or an architect, and concentration would be on the artefact, or a process or technique that used to create the artefact (Groat & Wang, 2002). While specific buildings are examined as part of the case studies, it was apparent that an investigative path based solely on the architectural product would not provide the explanation I was seeking. The practice of *fengshui*, while it impacts on the architectural artefact, is the product of cultural rituals. This requires drawing on other areas of expertise and research methods.

In this thesis a distinction is made between the practice of *fengshui*, the symbols used (which may or may not be associated with the practice) and the narratives of *fengshui* that are associated with buildings (which also may or may not be associated with the practice). Similarly, a distinction is made about the type of architecture to which *fengshui* is applied. The building types researched in the first two case studies are corporate towers and skyscrapers; these are symbols of the global city and the expression of cultural identity as design or a narrative associated with the architecture. The final case study looks specifically at this use of symbol and narrative by a global corporation to leverage integration of its brand with the local community. This case examines the use of *fengshui* by the Walt Disney Corporation as a means of cultural identification and differentiation at Hong Kong's Disneyland.

Even though the built form is the product, the practice of *fengshui* informs that result and it is adopted in architecture for a number of reasons. At a domestic level these can be reasons of belief, or for social and cultural application, but the application may vary when it applies to larger buildings. One focal point is the buildings constructed for public use, with corporate patronage. Another point of focus is the symbolic application of *fengshui* and how it is used to localise by denoting a particular cultural context — in this case to define some thing or place as Chinese. Of further interest are the decisions behind this application — why the need to articulate “Made in China”? Further, why

choose *fengshui* and its associated symbolism? As discussed previously there is not an agreed value placed on this practice in different regions of China, so who makes this decision?

When a new building is commissioned the process traditionally involves a client who has a site on which to build. A brief is established that outlines the client's requirement of the building, and this process usually provides the architect with some information about the client's expectations for the project. The decision to use *fengshui* is usually introduced at this stage along with other factors, such as planning regulations, cost and statutory requirements, which also contribute to the brief. If *fengshui* is to be used, there is a decision as to how influential it will be on the design. The artefact or the building is the final product. Usually the appointment of the architect is made well after the decision to use *fengshui* in a building, and in fact the architect may be commissioned due to his or her expertise in practicing *fengshui*. The decision to use *fengshui* or not extends beyond a specific building or a specific architect; it is a decision which is culturally based, so to understand why *fengshui* is used I needed to look at the sociology of architecture, and how the built environment is essentially a "social and cultural product" (King, 1980, p. 1). A key component of this investigation was to explore the use of *fengshui* in the disciplines of architecture and sociology to determine the most appropriate methodological path for investigation and to consider the research question in the context of an existing body of knowledge. Using this broad perspective led to a richer understanding of how *fengshui* is used as a symbol of identity, and how this links with the expression of identity as represented in an architectural form.

The research question, "How is *fengshui* used as a narrative of localisation in the contemporary architecture of the global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai?" is scrutinized to determine the appropriate method and evidence required to provide answers. This section examines the research question in three different parts.

1. To understand what *fengshui* is.
2. To understand the global conditions that contribute to a need or desire to express the localisation of place both in global cities in general, and in cities such as Hong Kong and Shanghai in particular.
3. To understand what influences globalisation has at both the universal and the particular level, and then to be able to position the use of *fengshui* within these. To understand the function of the narrative:

what does *fengshui* communicate when used in contemporary architecture and what is the effect of the layering of different narratives?

The assumptions that might be made regarding this question are that *fengshui* is a representation of cultural identity, as something that is uniquely Chinese, but the practice of *fengshui*, like architecture, is not immune to the processes of globalisation and what *fengshui* once was is not necessarily what it is now. The practice of *fengshui* is not universal or constant across Chinese society, and this becomes one of the complications in addressing the research question, along with the fact that the adaptation of *fengshui* by other cultures has modified further the possibility of a uniform interpretation of *fengshui*.

## Methodology

The research undertaken in this thesis falls within the epistemology of Constructionism, thus placing emphasis on the way people create meaning of the world through a series of individual constructs. Constructionism represents the intellectual filter through which reality is comprehended, which allows for a particular understanding of a change in reality. In this case the study is informed also by the practice of making architecture. Within this epistemology, there is a diversity of methods which aims to bridge the gaps between theory and practice, just as Michael Crotty proposes that, “Reality is independent of human thought but meaning or knowledge is always a human construction” (1998, p. 3).

Within the broad theory of Constructionism, the sociology of architecture provides a more focused emphasis on the imagery and symbols used in architecture to represent an expression of identity, whether this be cultural, political, or economic power, as discussed earlier. Sociologist Paul Jones presents the concept that a major concern of sociology

... involves revealing the ways in which power is socialised in the cultural sphere, with such an approach seeking to question how structure of power come to be taken for granted as legitimate and ‘natural’. From this perspective, addressing the role that architecture has in codifying and reproducing social identities requires analysis; architecture is one cultural space in which political projects attempt to become socially meaningful, and where particular vision of publics are forged (2011, pp. 1–2).

Reflecting on Jones' discussion, this application of coding is then applied to examining China and specifically why *fengshui* is used as part of this cultural coding/identification. Traditionally in Chinese society power resided with the emperor, and his symbolic position reflected the understanding of his relationship as the mediating point between heaven and earth. What would be the new symbolic power in this context? To understand this manifestation in the built environment, we need to identify the importance and meaning of *fengshui* within the context of contemporary Chinese culture, along with the means of exerting power and influence in the contemporary world.

As well as a material construction, architecture also represents a distinctly social production, whose cast of characters is far more extensive than those professionals who formally inhabit the architectural field. Works of architecture are used and conceptualized by a wide range of citizens, who not only organize their spatial practices in response to them but also who come to understand buildings as symbols of wider social order. (Jones, 2011, p. 27)

The perspective taken in this research is sociological, that is, to understand the background representations of identity and the symbols used in the architectural environment to represent this process. However, these symbols are not so easy to represent in built form without resorting to cliché or kitsch (such as with the red roofs in Guangzhou). Sudjic questions this problem:

Is there, in fact, such a thing as a totalitarian, or a democratic, or a nationalistic building? ... Can classical columns be described as the signs of fascist or democratic buildings, as some have claimed? Are these fixed and permanent meanings, or can they be changed over time? (2005, p. 6)

There are many symbols used within architecture that may represent power, or contribute towards a reading of the city as a brand. Using the framework established by Jones, areas of analysis (such as the political, cultural and social), are intended to interrogate how particular regimes have used *fengshui* in architecture to materialize their power and simultaneously to help legitimise it, which leads to an analysis of the manner in which architects, by adapting *fengshui* habits, might respond to the constraints and opportunities associated with significant commissions within a wider discourse.

Within an established sociological paradigm, theoretical perspectives are employed to provide triangulated data on a contemporary understanding of *fengshui* in China. Globalisation and brandscape are used to provide a broader understanding of what

*fengshui* has become, the definition of localisation of *fengshui*, and how *fengshui* might be suitable as an expression of contemporary “Chinese” culture. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what is the relevance of this ancient practice? Who uses it and why is it embraced over such a long period of history? Of particular interest to the research is the examination of how *fengshui* has changed over time, and its contemporary utilisation as a design tool to express cultural identity in modern China. From these theoretical perspectives, a proposition is suggested about how *fengshui* is used as a narrative of localisation within a global world of modernisation and brandscape. By examining *fengshui* within the context of Constructionism, we are directed to an understanding that this construction is social in nature. For Crotty, “We have to reckon with the social origin of meaning and the social character with which it is inevitable stamped” (1998, p. 52). Using case studies of Hong Kong and Shanghai, a comparison can be drawn between the expression of *fengshui* (as represented in their skylines) and an appreciation of the different perception of those cities, which is an embedded *fengshui*, and which is also represented by their buildings.

A number of methods were considered to frame the collection and analysis of data for this thesis, however, careful consideration of the research investigation determined that what was being identified was actually a narrative about architecture, and not the actual building itself, where the *fengshui* narrative may or may not be evident in the final artefact. Further, the decision to incorporate *fengshui* or *fengshui* symbolism has been found to be not necessarily as expected, nor the resulting narrative to be intended by the architect or the client of buildings. The assumed methodology of architectural historiography, while still appropriate for most of this study, was not sufficient to answer the entirety of the research questions. While there is a level of historiography incorporated in the methods and techniques of this research, much of the methodology incorporates an urban sociology.

## Methods

To establish the basic structure of the thesis, secondary research was undertaken to identify the most appropriate way to approach the research question. Techniques used included database searches, such as Google Scholar, EBSCOhost and the Swinburne University library database. To ensure the quality of this analysis, a set of impartial reference databases was used to determine the survey of literature, and from that metadata a number of categories were identified. Using an analytic framework, texts were categorised into initial themes and subthemes, and data was sorted and reviewed



(Silverman, 2001, p. 123). By establishing a system of coding and developing affinity diagrams, emerging themes were determined (Martin & Hanington, 2012). The data was coded to include information as follows:

- Scholarly or non-scholarly: The most significant proportion of publications was non-scholarly in nature and has been discussed in the introduction. The selection of texts used in this thesis was biased to the scholarly publications, however the non-scholarly texts were a useful source demonstrating how the practice of *fengshui* has been localised.
- Classical or modern tradition of *fengshui* practice: As discussed in the introduction, classical *fengshui* uses techniques from classical texts, and the use of instruments such as the *fengshui* compass (*lo'pan*). Most of these texts identified were academic in nature.
- Research perspective: A number of different disciplines produce commentary about *fengshui*. The most common identified in the initial survey were architectural, cultural geography, social and cultural anthropology, history, business, tourism and marketing.

From this database literature reviews were written. The data collected was qualitative in nature. By drawing information from a number of disciplines, a broader understanding of the use and cultural implications of *fengshui* became apparent. Using this broad base of information, a richer understanding is gained of how *fengshui* is used as a symbol of identity, and how this links with the expression of identity, and its representations in architectural form.

The purpose of the textual analysis is to understand the subject of *fengshui* as a narrative of localisation, but also how *fengshui* is understood and perceived in a contemporary context within the field of *fengshui*, within the context of architecture and then within the global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai. Bringing together, juxtaposing, and deconstructing the interactions between the different disciplines can lead to an understanding not only in terms of *fengshui* practice, but how this practice broadens to incorporate architecture in a contemporary context. The method of analysis follows Silverman's approach to understanding the different levels of representation in the text: content analysis, analysis of narrative structures, ethnography and ethnomethodology

A textual analysis is used initially to collect data from a number of different disciples and examining these to see if there is a link that is not identified when looked at in isolation, where the text is used to identify data consisting of words and/or images which have become recorded without the intervention of a researcher (e.g. through an interview) (2001, p. 119).

The method of disseminating *fengshui* concepts is that of a narrative. This narrative might be explicit, by describing a *fengshui* reading, but often, particularly at a populist level, these narratives can also be implicit. For example, the implicit *fengshui* narrative for the Bank of China Tower might be reflective of political uncertainty at the time preceding the 1997 handover of Hong Kong from British to Chinese rule. Sociologist Donileen Loseke writes

...that the more social relations involve people who are strangers to one another, the more these relations are — and must be — informed by pre existing images ... Images that circulate widely are central to social life because they can be used as ‘schemes of interpretation’ interpretative structure or ‘membership categorization devices’ to comprehend and organize experience. (2012, p. 252)

In this case, there was an uncertainty that the influence of Beijing political rule would dramatically change Hong Kong life and there was a genuine fear felt by people in Hong Kong about this.

Narrative in the context of this study is cultural. The storyline is about cultural differentiation within China, and *fengshui* is the vehicle for this differentiation. In the collection of *fengshui* narratives it is important to also note the time, the place, who is telling the story and who the audience might be. Returning to Pei’s Bank of China Tower to exemplify this point, there are two different stories: from the Chinese perspective, building the tallest building in Hong Kong with a world famous architect was seen as a way of demonstrating that Beijing, the Chinese government and its major financial institution believed in a strong and vibrant Hong Kong as part of a future for China. The Hong Kong people, on the other hand, saw the building as an affront, a demonstration of power. So it was one building with two interpretations, and each interpretation was politically informed.

The value of the narrative depends on who tells the story (Polletta, 2012, p. 231). Looking at an explicit *fengshui* narrative, different groups of people place different emphasis on the value of *fengshui*. By using the different case studies, a close

examination of this aspect of cultural narrative will be undertaken. In the case studies, the explicit narrative will be explored, for example, the explicit narrative of why it was important for the Walt Disney Corporation to be seen to use *fengshui* in the design of the theme park. In this particular case the audience is important. Silverman describes that the “positionings in the performance of identity are enacted in an immediate discursive context — for an audience. Put differently, narratives are not simply a record of experience; they are composed for the listener/questioner and perhaps other audiences to accomplish something — to have an effect” (2011, p. 315).

Silverman cites Atkinson and Coffey to illustrate the point that ethnographers are more concerned with the processes through which texts depict “reality” rather than with whether such texts contain true or false statements (2001, p. 128). For the purposes of this thesis, the intention is not to determine if there is fact, or reality in the practice of *fengshui*.

In paying due attention to such materials, however, one must be quite clear about what they can and cannot be used for. They are “social facts”, in that they are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. They are not, however, transparent representations of organizational routines, decision-making processes or professional diagnoses. They construct particular kinds of representations with their own conventions (Atkinson & Coffey, 2004, p. 47)

The purpose of the thesis is to identify and understand how *fengshui* is used as a symbol and a narrative for the purposes of identification and localisation of a building and/or place as Chinese.

### **Research lenses.**

The initial database established on *fengshui* provided information about its practice and the use, however there was a gap in the initial literature database addressing *how* and *why* it is used in contemporary architecture in China.

In order to address these questions, the first lens identified was brandscape. Anna Klingmann’s theory seemed to be a useful means of explaining how *fengshui* is used as a design tool in contemporary architecture, although she does not mention it specifically in her book. In most cases the use of *fengshui* in a contemporary architectural application appeared to be tokenistic and in no way used the full techniques of the practice as

identified in the initial literature. Brandscape identified the application in contemporary architecture, but it did not fully explain the global condition that promoted this type of architecture.

Globalisation was identified as the second research lens and post colonialism was initially also included as a research lens. While postcolonialism is an extremely important area of research, the focus of the thesis was becoming too broad. In the presentation of information, globalisation is addressed first to outline the global condition (and thus selected over postcolonialism), while brandscape is presented second to exemplify global conditions as applied to architecture and the urban environment. Postcolonialism is an area for future research to add breadth to this area of investigation.

The same scoping exercise was undertaken to establish the literature for *fengshui*, and included in this was a desire to ensure that key texts were included because they provide a broad set of definitions of the research lens, to which an identification of more specific texts is linked to the practice of *fengshui*.

Although in some cases the literature overlaps between the different research areas, the hierarchy of relevance of these themes is determined as follows:

1. Relationship to the influence on design or decision making processes.
2. Relationship to architecture and urban planning.
3. Relationship to contemporary design.
4. Relationship to a Chinese context.

For each of the areas of research (globalisation and brandscape) and for the city background case studies (Hong Kong and Shanghai) numerous categories of material are analysed. These include published books, journal articles, newspaper articles, advertisements and audiovisual material.

To ensure that a consistent quality of research was undertaken, a number of steps were taken to control objectivity, any influences on the research situation and on the presentation of the research. Triangulation of data was employed to ensure a standardisation of the research situation.

### **Globalisation.**

The chapter on globalisation is presented in three parts. The first outlines general theories of globalisation. The second part focuses on global cities and the overarching concepts that influence the restructure of existing cities from an industrial to a service based economy. Further to this point are the implications on function and form of the city. When a city is designed from tabula rasa, it is interesting to examine the design processes to identify not only the requirements of the physical city, but the application of a symbolic vision of the city – whether this is actual or aspirational. The value of the symbolic in comparison to the physical is addressed in the chapter on globalisation, and then in greater detail in the brandscape chapter.

The final part of the chapter on globalisation refines the discussion to the context of China and in particular Hong Kong and Shanghai. While both cities have a similar colonial background and are now both considered “global,” the period of time from the Treaty of Nanjing (1842) to the handover of Hong Kong back to the PRC (1997) resulted in a differentiation for each of the cities which complicates notions of what is Chinese, who is Chinese, and which Chinese are we talking about? Mathews identifies this complication clearly when he states, “who can sum up in a single label four thousand years of history and a billion people?” (2000, p. 138).

Using this information, the narrative of localisation can be understood within the context of global processes, the influence of these processes on the contemporary city, in particular the Asian global city. The use of case studies is appropriate to this research to explore how the set of theoretical ideas established by the research lenses to a practical application. Yin defines the case study as “an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon ... set within its real-world context — especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (2009, p. 18).

The case study buildings used in this research all have known *fengshui* narratives and can be described as “landmark” buildings. These are iconic in the sense that they are used in public advertising for the city and employed by corporations to locate their business as part of the city. In some cases their imagery even appears on the currency. All of the buildings discussed are public and can also be described as commercial in nature.

Architecture is defined for this research as that part of the built environment that is designed by an architect. There is significant research on the use of *fengshui* in vernacular buildings which may not have been the creation of an architect, in particular

Knapp's work on domestic architecture (1986, 1989, 1992, 1999, 2000, 2010). The link between the commercial nature of these researched buildings, globalisation and the rivalry of global cities, is important to not only the identity of the city, but also to the changes to existing models (by using localisation devices such as *fengshui*). I am particularly interested in the localisation of the skyscraper and the adaption of what was originally an American symbol into something that is uniquely Chinese. King comments that,

...changes in society occur, so too does change in its built environment. New building types emerge and existing ones become obsolete. Some buildings are modified, extended and take on different functions; others may simply disappear. Society produces its buildings, and the buildings, although not producing society, help to maintain many of its social forms (1980, p. 1).

### **Brandscape.**

The chapter on brandscape focuses on the use of buildings as part of the marketing and branding of a city. This research draws on concepts of globalisation, deindustrialisation and the paradigm established by global city networks. It works on the basic definitions as outlined by sociologist Saskia Sassen that market forces have a strong impact on the city development. However, given that Shanghai is still largely controlled by the state, it raises a number of questions that need to be addressed, such as whether *fengshui* has become a technique used within development activity as a commercial method of enhancement of the investment.

The same method of data collection will be used for brandscape as for the research on globalisation. This data will provide evidence that will enable an analysis for the case studies that examine how culture is expressed in this brandscape environment.

There are two discussions that require definition. The first is who are the Chinese and what is Chinese. The second concerns the definition of culture and cultural identification. Mathews identifies culture as a way of life of people, and culture as information and identity (2000, p. 6). To use *fengshui* as a possible expression of Chinese identity, there needs to be a dialogue about what Chinese identity is. Zhang uses anthropologist Li Yih-Yuan's argument that *fengshui* is an expression of Chinese culture, but we need to question whose Chinese culture (2004, p. 5). Li concludes that all Chinese covered by the concept of "culture China" have three characteristics in common:

1. Specific customs and beliefs relating to diet.
2. A Chinese style (Confucian) family ethic that extends to the outside world of non- familial interpersonal relationships.
3. A cosmology largely based on fortune telling and geomancy.

These three characteristics are fully expressed through funeral rites for Chinese of all backgrounds, as is confirmed by studies on Chinese history, philosophy, religion, anthropology, and folklore. The Cultural Revolution in many ways obliterated these customs in mainland China, and some argue that colonialism in Hong Kong similarly repressed many traditional Chinese customs. Given this, the research seeks to find via textual analysis where *fengshui* sits within this debate, and whether *fengshui* is part of contemporary Chinese culture, or is a relic of a nostalgic cultural past.

### Case studies

Secondary information provided data on the practice of *fengshui*, examples of its application to architecture, and data explaining the research lenses. Case studies were deemed the most appropriate method of bringing together this information and testing how the theories established in globalisation and brandscape worked in a real world application of *fengshui*.

Three case studies were undertaken as part of this research. Embedded in each of the case studies is the question established by the research lenses: is *fengshui* used as part of globalisation processes and expressed in the brandscape and is used as a tool for marketing and a means of identifying a building, urban space or interior as Chinese in Hong Kong and Shanghai?

Stake defines case studies as instrumental and their purpose as “an examination that might provide insight into an issue or refinement of a theory” (1998, p. 88). In this research, the question is how *fengshui* is expressed as a society identity via its architecture, and the purpose of these studies is to understand what is common and what is particular to each case.

#### Case study 1 Hong Kong: The tale of three buildings.

Available data on Hong Kong contributes to an understanding of how *fengshui* is used locally, and how it was used specifically in the three case study buildings. There is a distinct Hong Kong identity that has emerged since the city was a British colony. This

identity was originally mounted in opposition to colonial rule, and then, leading up to and after the 1997 handover, the identity has been redefined to a position of opposition to mainland Chinese and the identity of what Mathew's describes as "Chineseness plus":

... although Hong Kong people may see themselves as ethnic Chinese, many see themselves as different or even superior to mainland Chinese and see Hong Kong city as different from or, again, superior to cities in China, culturally, economically, and politically (2000, p. 144).

This sense of Hong Kong identity also encompasses themes ranging from cultural taste, wealth, and rule of law to democratization (Choi, 2010, p. 2). One of the questions is how *fengshui* fits into this sense of identity.



**Figure 1. Website for Hong Kong Tourism Board 2013**  
**Image: Hong Kong Tourism Board**  
<http://www.discoverhongkong.com/au/index.jsp>

The HSBC Headquarters, the Bank of China Tower and the Cheung Kong Centre were selected because they have an established *fengshui* narrative that has been widely documented, and they are landmark or signature buildings which are significant in the Hong Kong skyline and contribute strongly to the identity of that skyline. Architecture is no longer viewed as an artistic pursuit, but as an integral part of a larger system — economic developments, technological advancements and social change (Klingmann, 2007, p. 3). The image of the modern skyline represents a city that is “first world,” a “world city” and a “global city” (Refer to Figure 1), which exists both as a physical form, but also as an image. This image is represented as a visual element in advertising, company logos, and currency (Refer to Figure 2) and it can also conceptually represent the city, such as in novels, cinema and video games.





**Figure 2. Hong Kong currency as issued by Bank of China, with Bank of China Tower image on notes**  
**Source: John Bull Stamp Auctions**  
<http://stampcircuit.com/sites/default/files/john-bull-stamp-auctions/coinauction/china-asia-worldwide-coins-and-currency/1847.jpg>

### **Case study 2: Lujiazui Financial District: Landmark Architecture.**

The Lujiazui Financial District was included as a case study for a number of reasons. First, the building type is the same as the Hong Kong buildings and provides contrast not only as a competing global city in China, but also demonstrates disparity in socio-economic and political aspects. Second, similar to the Hong Kong buildings, the three landmark buildings of this district all have narratives that include *fengshui* as part of the design brief.

Available literature on Shanghai provides a context to test the narrative of *fengshui* as established by the research lenses. The background data includes a historical background of the city in relation to the practice of *fengshui*, the fall-out from its practice by criminalisation (initiated by the CCP), its relationship with Beijing, and possible changes in attitude since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Initially the Bank of China Building and the Oriental Pearl tower were included as part of this analysis. The Bank of China building includes geomantic references, however, I chose to focus on what are regarded as the three “super tall” landmarks: the Jin Mao Tower, the Shanghai World Financial Tower and the Shanghai Tower. Similar to Hong Kong, all three buildings have geomantic references and all were designed by western architects.

### **Case study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland.**

The final case study is Hong Kong Disneyland (HKD). This study was included to examine how global brands use and interpret *fengshui* in their design process.

The literature on HKD crosses over a number of disciplines. This includes areas of anthropology, design, devotee material, marketing, tourism and business. The literature is sorted by relevance to design decisions made by Disney to incorporate *fengshui* principles into the park design. The case study also tests the claims made within the Disneyland Report, which establishes design guidelines and the level of adoption of *fengshui* principles at HKD, along with the promotion of *fengshui* as part of HKD's public relations and marketing.

There are two distinct parts of HKD: the theme park and the hotels. The park is referred to as the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. While I will make reference to the resort as a whole, the fieldwork was specific to the theme park. It will be interesting to note the differences between HKD and the Shanghai Disney Resort. The Shanghai project is currently under construction and due for completion in late 2015/2016. The brief demands that "Chinese characteristics" be incorporated into the park. Whether the same process as HKD will be implemented, in particular the geomantic aspects and use of *fengshui* will be a future area of reach extend the scope of established by this thesis.

### **Case study techniques.**

Fieldwork was required for all case studies. The method used was systematic observation. Techniques for the collection of data included sketches, mapping, gathering of artefacts (such as commercially available maps), and photographs of evidence. The criteria for the evidence collected were based on a set of *fengshui* claims promoted by Disney which are explained in detail in *Chapter 7: Case study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland*.

An example of a *fengshui* narrative fiction is the Repulse Bay apartments, shown in Figure 3, designed by Anthony K.K. Ng (1989). While the building was based on Arquitectonica's Atlantic Building in Miami (1982) including the hole in the building as shown in Figure 4. The popular *fengshui* narrative given to this building was that the hole was designed to allow the flow of *qi*, or dragon's breath (depending on who is telling the story) from the mountain peak toward Repulse Bay below.



**Figure 3. Repulse Bay Apartments (1989)**  
Source: Author 2010



**Figure 4. Atlantic Building Miami (1982)**  
Source: Arquitectonica  
<http://arquitectonica.com/blog/portfolio/residential/the-atlantis/>

In some cases the balance between fact and fiction in the case of *fengshui* is hard to identify. Some architects have learnt from I. M Pei's experience with the Bank of China building, that it is better to control the *fengshui* narrative from the beginning rather than let the public create their own narrative. This is discussed in detail in Chapter 5. In some cases, such as the Repulse Bay apartments, this can be complimentary, but in others, such as Pei's Bank of China Tower, the narrative is anything but flattering.

Invitations for participation were sent to the architectural practices involved in the Hong Kong and Shanghai projects, and to *fengshui* masters who were either involved

in or have published commentary on these projects. Ethics approval was granted by Swinburne University for this project (SUHREC Project 2013/15 granted August 09 2013). While waiting for responses from the invited participants, most of the information that was to be collected via this technique was identified in other literature and not pursued further.

The primary and secondary research undertaken for this thesis is qualitative. Two research lenses (globalisation and brandscape) were used to establish a theoretical framework to understand how fengshui is used as a localisation tool in contemporary landmark architecture. Each of these examines the fine grain of how *fengshui* sits within these fields and the narratives that are generated. Through classifications and coding of the narratives, emerging themes from the literature are recorded. These contribute to a better understanding of the case studies.

These were then tested via case studies in Hong Kong and Shanghai. While the knowledge established from this data collection is broad, it assisted in filling the gap identified in the literature. This gap concerned the use of cultural identity in contemporary architecture within the context of the global city, and how fengshui is used in a Chinese situation. The findings will be limited due to the small selection of projects, however further research beyond the scope of this thesis will be undertaken to allow for other research lenses (including postcolonialism), other cities (including Singapore and Taipei), research methods (including interviews and questionnaires) and the verification of the data gathered using quantitative methods.

## Chapter 2

### *Fengshui*

This chapter outlines the basic principles that are universal to most of the different schools of *fengshui*. It is not an exhaustive explanation of the practice but provides a brief description of concepts and their relationship to discussion in the following chapters. By understanding some background to the practice of *fengshui*, including its origins, history, and development, we can better understand its contemporary applications. These include *fengshui* symbols and narratives being stretched to incorporate concepts of Chinese cultural identity.

As mentioned in the introduction, there is no general consensus on the spelling of *fengshui*, neither is there agreement on a “correct” method for its practice. In many cases authors interchange words such as *fengshui*, *kanyu*, geomancy and divination with the intention of representing a single idea. To provide clarity and to highlight subtle differences in these terms, they are defined in this chapter. On the subject of *fengshui*, Anthropologist Ole Bruun describes it as:

... a complex concoction of cosmological speculation and practical techniques, manifested in a huge literary production and countless popular varieties that were always in continuous interaction. We can only see the contours of this giant tradition, which may be approached from many angles (2003, p. 264).

Trying to identify what is authentic *fengshui* (if there is such a thing) as distinct from superstition is a difficult undertaking. The closest we can get to this is the differentiation between classical *fengshui* and modern *fengshui*. To further complicate this research task is a necessary reliance on information translated into English, which is by definition biased within a western intellectual framework. On this subject Bruun concludes:

We can only catch glimpses of what fengshui meant to different groups through the Chinese imperial history. With the coming of foreigners after the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, the Chinese elite’s monopoly on representing Chinese culture was broken and the self-representation of the Chinese state seriously challenged. It is, of course, a heedless postulate that we only get a sense of the dynamics of Chinese society through

the writings of Westerners, but it is still beyond doubt that these writers provided a novel perspective on Chinese society and their diverse approaches and backgrounds induced unprecedented debate and criticism, both internally in China and abroad (2003, pp. 282–283).

Part of the reason for such as reliance on western information is the reluctance in China to examine *fengshui*, with the exception of historical research. This is related to the fact that its practice in the PRC is against the law. *Fengshui* expert Stephen Skinner notes that

Predominantly, the Chinese academics permitted to research feng shui are anthropologists or architects by trade, studying feng shui from the point of view of history, or the theories behind the design of ancient buildings (Skinner, 2012, p. 133).

There is a determination to explore *fengshui* from an academic perspective, which protects the practice within current political and legal constraints despite the broad application of its principles in reality throughout the PRC. However, in the Special Administrative Regions (SARs) and former colonies of Hong Kong and Macao, *fengshui* is freely practiced and written about.

Academics from a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, and architecture have re-examined *fengshui*. The *Academic Journal of Fengshui* was launched in March 2013. It is based in Australia and published by the School of Architecture and Built Environment at the University of Newcastle. The objectives of this journal are:

1. To promote academic research in all areas of Feng Shui.
  2. To collect publications and sources of information for Feng Shui research.
  3. To provide news and information on academic activities related to Feng Shui.
- (ajofengshui, 2013)

Michael Mak and Albert Ting-Pat So's book *Scientific Feng Shui for the Built Environment: Fundamentals and Case Studies* (2011) and Xu Jun's PhD thesis *A Framework for Site Analysis with Emphasis on Feng Shui and Contemporary Environmental Design Principles* (2004), for example, argue that *fengshui* should be

situated in the context of “science” and “ecology” to be relevant in the context of contemporary architectural design.

There is now emphasis not only on the practice, but also on establishing a dialogue about *fengshui*’s influence on society. Discussion topics include urban design, architecture and identifying and understanding its complex history within a broad description of a global China or Greater China, and localised Chinese culture and society.

### **The history and definitions of fengshui**

The current practice of *fengshui* is significantly different to its earliest applications which originated some 2000 years ago, and both Zhang and Bruun argue that its function today is different also to the way it was practised more recently in 19<sup>th</sup> century China. With globalisation, the change has become more distinct. Zhang describes this evolution from a practice performed as a privilege on behalf of kings, emperors, and nobility to a practice performed on behalf of ordinary folk. It simultaneously changed from a passive action of divining to avoid natural disasters to actively divining to search for good fortune. Indeed it is this active search for good fortune through *fengshui* practice that embodies the core belief and behaviour in Chinese culture that, in turn, imbues this practice with vitality (2004, pp. 7–8).

Zhang links the notion of an all-encompassing Cultural China, as debated by Confucian philosopher Tu Weiming and anthropologist Li Yihyuan, as one that is defined as having three common characteristics - which includes cosmology, based largely on fortune telling and geomancy – along with food and burial rites. This ties in with Zhang’s research specific to *fengshui* practices and they relate to funeral rites (2004, p. 5).

Zhang notes that western interest in *fengshui* suffered from three shortcomings: a lack of studies of the Chinese classics from historical perspectives (rather than focusing on one or two books or collections); a lack of fieldwork investigating how *fengshui* functions in the everyday life of the common people; and a lack of interdisciplinary perspectives (Zhang, 2004, p. 3). This thesis argues that all of these areas have an impact on the use of *fengshui* in contemporary Chinese architecture. In particular, there has been a lack of research that identifies how building styles have changed and adapted to more western planning and how *fengshui* might fit into this new context; that architects and other designers irrespective of nationality or cultural background utilise *fengshui* into

their design; and finally that *fengshui* is used as a tool to identify something as Chinese due to its perceived bond with Chinese culture.

*Fengshui* is one of a handful of Chinese words that is translatable directly into English. While the sentiment of “wind” and “water” is understood, the concepts behind the term are difficult to define precisely. Definitions of *fengshui* tend to be prejudiced by different writers’ personal perspectives on subject. Literal translations, such as provided in the *Oxford Dictionary*, include “wind” and “water” as “geomantic omen” (Cowie et al., 1986, p. 131). The Chinese encyclopaedia *Cihai* gives an account of *fengshui* as follows:

*Fengshui*, also called kanyu. A superstition of the old China. Considers wind directions, water streams and other topographical features in the surroundings of a house or a gravesite in order to indicate the inhabitant’s disaster or good fortune. Also a way of directing residences and graves (cited in Bruun, 2003, p. xiii).

Anthropologist Stephen Feuchtwang, who wrote the seminal work *An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy* provides this definition:

Fengshui involves observation of earth and sky, relating features of both to the horoscope of a client and calculating the best time for an action or the best place for a dwelling or tomb. Its most technical instrument is a compass with a floating magnetic needle at its centre, surrounded by radiating rings of symbols for the marking out of space and time. They bring together a large number of correlations and numerological schemes (1984, pp. 17–18).

Sinologist Joseph Needham discussed *fengshui* as part of “The Pseudo-sciences and the Sceptical Tradition” (Needham & Ronan, 1978, p. 191). Early Sinologists such as M. T. Yates (1868), E. J. Eitel (Eitel & Michell, 1993)<sup>4</sup> and J. J. M. de Groot (de Groot, 1892) wrote in the late 1800’s about China from their perspective as Christian missionaries. Anthropologist Stephan Feuchtwang makes note that “they adopted a deeply entrenched condescending opinion of the system and put it down as ‘rank superstition’” (1984, p. 5).

Given the suggestions that *fengshui* can be both a functional practice and also the application of long-held superstitious beliefs, it would be safe to assume that it is a sphere

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<sup>4</sup> Eitel’s first edition 1873 published by Truber & Co.



of human experience located outside normal realms of logic - based on a complex web incorporating common sense, art and the application of historical doctrine.

### **Geomancy and Divination.**

The art of geomancy is to place oneself appropriately in relation to the disposition of the natural processes (Feuchtwang, 1984, p. 9). Over time, divination (of which geomancy is one method) became popularised in Chinese society and became a means through which the classical literary works were used by all sections of the populace. At the same time, it was subject to interpretation by a number of factions, each claiming to be the orthodox form. Although Confucianism repeatedly opposed site divination as “overblown magic”, many Chinese thinkers took the subject seriously and thus contributed to its popularisation (March, 1968, p. 1).

Site divination has been a controversial practice with unspoken support from the Chinese state powers through recorded history, although imperial rulers formally supported it from time to time. Orthodox Chinese philosophers have mostly shunned geomancy as it has no firm place in classical Chinese traditions, just as western commentary on Chinese philosophy tends to neglect it, perhaps because it is seen as a spiritual or localised practice. However it remained a significant part of Chinese history as it emerged from imperial records, and was later to gain a heightened prominence in popular cosmology, particularly from the Song period (960-1279) onwards.

### **Kanyu.**

There is a general agreement that the descriptive title for the practice *kanyu* preceded *fengshui* (Bruun, 2003; Yoon, 2006; Zhang, 2004). Other terms and phrases that refer to *fengshui* include *dili* (land divination), *xingfa*, *qingwu*, *qinglang*, *puzhai*, *xiangzhi*, *tuzhai*, and *yinyang* (*yin yang* studies). All of these terms express the broad link between Chinese cosmology (heaven) and Chinese social reality (earth) (Ding, 2008, p. 1). Some authors such as architect Evelyn Lip frequently interchange the word *kanyu* with *fengshui*. Lip uses the term *kanyu* as a broader designation of *fengshui*, and there is a series of classical works which define *yinyang xue* (*yin yang* studies), *dili* (land divination), and *kanyu* (heaven and earth). Later, *fengshui* became ritualised leading to its application as a paradigm for planning buildings, cities and graves.

Lip defines *kanyu* as an:

... abstract term to represent the pseudo-physical science of climatology and geophysics. It is the art of placing, siting and orienting a building so that the building is in harmony with everything that surrounds it, and the art of finding balance in nature and harmony in the home and working environment. It addresses cultural and social issues of a particular society and makes reference to the natural, metaphysical and cosmological influences (1995, p. 61).

Han Dynasty (205BC-220AD) historian Sima Qian (139-86 BC) devoted a chapter to the lives of *kanyu* practitioners in the *Records of the Grand Historian* entitled “Shi Ji 127: The Biographies of the Diviners of Lucky Days” (Sima, 1993). *Kanyu* is an older term that described a general philosophy, rather than *fengshui* that became defined by published manuals at a later date. The *Zang Shu* (Book of Burial) written by Guo Pu 276-324AD and is recognised as the first published book that describes *fengshui*.

### **Superstition.**

Superstition flourished in China just as strongly as in every other ancient culture. Divining the future by astrology, geomancy, physiognomy, the choice of lucky and unlucky days and the lore of spirits and demons was part of the background of ancient and medieval Chinese thinking (Needham & Ronan, 1978, p. 191).

The use of superstition is technically outside classical *fengshui*, and is of course illegal in the PRC, but as discussed earlier, it is used in other parts of greater China. However it is commonly applied to architecture and is very much entwined with *fengshui* symbolism in building. An examination of superstition and its application to architecture is outside of the scope of this thesis, however I will touch on homophones that are an important element in the case studies.

The use of homophones in the Chinese language allows for puns to be made when changing the tone used for a word, or using a word that sounds similar to another word. Tones are used to distinguish different spoken monosyllables. Different dialects and languages within Chinese have a different number of tones. The most popular homophones in buildings and architecture are for the use of numbers. There are intricate sets of formulations for different numbers, their combinations and subsequent meanings. For example:

318 (sān yī bā) = business will profit (shēng yì fā);

168 (yī liù bā) = on the road to wealth (yī lù fā)

2828 (yī bā yī bā) = easy to gain wealth (yì fā yì fā)

The most common are the use of the number 8 八 (*bā*), 6 六 (*liù*) and 4 四 (*sì*). 8 八 pronounced as *bā* when spoken, sounds similar to the monosyllable *fā* 发 to prosper (Sung, 2002, pp. 214, 217). This play on words is purely linguistic as the characters are distinctly different. The use of combinations of the number 8 (*bā*), or 88 (*bā bā* = double happiness/joy), or 888 (*bā bā bā* = prosper, prosper, prosper) is used extensively from buildings to number plates (Woo, Horowitz, Luk, & Lai, 2008) to pricing (Simmons & Schindler, 2003).

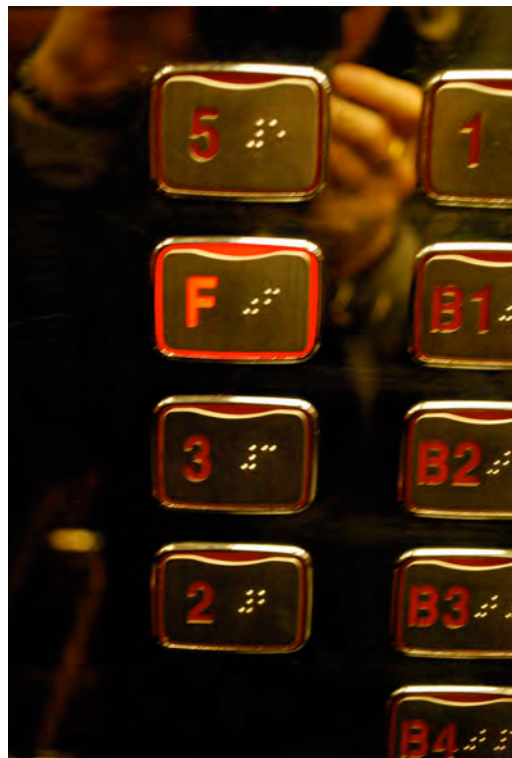
The use of such auspicious numbers has become a common occurrence in buildings. An example of this is the 2IFC building, the premium financial building in Hong Kong. It is located at 8 Finance Street. It has 88 floors above ground (not including the six basement levels). The Hong Kong Monetary Authority is responsible for the monetary and banking stability in Hong Kong. The Chairman of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority is located on the 88<sup>th</sup> level. Other buildings that use 88 are the Jin Mao Tower in Shanghai and the Petronas towers in Kuala Lumpur. The opening of the Beijing Olympics was adjusted to open at eight minutes past eight (Chinese time zone) on the eighth of August 2008 (08.08.08).

Similarly, 6 六 (*liù*) sounds like 錄 (*lù*) which means prosperity, so six is used to symbolise rank and promotion (Sung, 2002, p. 83). Like the multiple uses and in combination with other numbers, the double six adds emphasis to the notion of prosperity in this interpretation. Therefore 66 is understood to mean greater promotion. The combination of six and eight in 68, joins the associated symbolism of prosperity due to rank and promotion with the symbolism of wealth to be understood as “promotion to wealth”.

The number 4 四 (*sì*), when changed from the falling tone of the spoken monosyllable to a falling and rising tone (*sì*) 死, changes meaning from “four” to “death.” This connotation of four is shared across the dialects and languages of Chinese and it is also shared by regional neighbours Korea, Japan and Vietnam who also share *fengshui*.

Due to this association with death, many buildings will avoid floors with the number four (Refer to Figures 5-6).

The Hong Kong developer Henderson Land was questioned regarding the practice of selective numbering of floors and apartments number. The project at 39 Conduit Road in Mid-Levels is a 46-storey apartment building, and the top three floors were labelled 66, 68, and 88. The apartments on level 68 were reported to be Asia's most expensive property at the time (Yiu, 2009; S. Li, 2009). Missing numbers in the buildings include 14, 24, 34, 64 and all the numbers in between 40 and 59. In this case, the technique is to identify or imbue an artefact or building with a *fengshui* quality because that is considered to be a wise commercial investment.



**Figure 5. Elevator panel, Beijing.**  
Source: Author 2010



**Figure 6. Elevator panel, Hong Kong**  
**Source: Author 2014**

There are multiple regional and dialectic variations of the use of homophones. While they are widely shared, they are not necessarily evenly or equally translated.

### **Classical fengshui**

During the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties the Form and Compass schools of *fengshui* developed as separate entities. Both schools developed by adapting the existing divisions between competing factions of divination. To some extent, geography determined the popularity of these schools. The Form School adapted to the more mountainous regions of the south and west of China (such as Guilin), while the Compass School suited flatter topography (in areas such as the north China plain to the south of Beijing). Fairbank describes this contrast between north and south:

The dry wheat millet area of North China and the moist rice growing areas of the South divide along a line roughly halfway between the Yellow (Huang) River and the Yangzi River on the thirty third parallel. Rainfall, soil, temperature, and human usage create striking contrasts between these two economic regions (Fairbank, 1998, p. 4).

### **Form School.**

The Form School is also known as *kanzhou* or the Jiangxi School, as its founder Yang Yun Song (618-907AD) held the office of Imperial Geomancer in Jiangxi Province during the reign of *Ji Zhong* (874-888) during the Tang dynasty.

The primary principles of this school concern the influence on the movement of *qi* through the “forms and outlines” (*jing shi*) or “forms and terrain” (*xing shi*). This includes mountains, hills, and watercourses. The geomancer’s compass is still used in this school; however, there is less emphasis on intricate calculations. Instead, emphasis is placed on site analysis, the interpretation of shapes and imagery in the landscape.

Feuchtwang cites the nineteenth century missionary and writer Joseph Edkins’ description of the geomantic procedure and diagnosis undertaken in the Form School style:

When the professor (of geomancy) goes to the hills to search for a site, what method does he pursue?

Having first chosen an auspicious day, he goes in a sedan chair to the hill, accompanied by the man who has ground for sale. Having carefully inspected the position on each of the four sides, and noted the shape of the hill in its depressions and elevation, he descends and makes a circuit of the hill three or four miles off, carefully looking to see if there are any breaks or landslides, observing the direction of the watercourse with each bend and turn, and finally, after these preliminaries, adjusts his geomancer’s compass to discover the position of the stars in relation to the spot. This is the general mode of proceeding (Feuchtwang, 1984, p. 156).

Figure 7 shows a late Qing Dynasty illustration of a Zhou Dynasty *fengshui* master, Zai Bao (second from the left) surveying a site. The interpretation of forms and symbols in the landscape is a mostly subjective exercise based on recorded precedents. There are numerous symbolic configurations of mountains and watercourses. The most significant symbols to be identified in the landscape are the celestial animals comprising the Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Black Warrior (also referred to as the dark turtle or tortoise) and the Red Bird (Z. Li, 1994, p. 14). These animals, also referred to as the Four Gods, have been

used symbolically for millennia and have been found in excavations that predate the practice of *fengshui*. These are identified in early Chinese imperial cities and their associated royal necropolises. One example, shown in Figure: 8 is the Qianling Mausoleum for the third Tang emperor Gaozong (628-683) and his wife Wu Zetian (624-705) in Shaanxi Province. This necropolis locates the celestial animals in the landscape.



**Figure 7. Site selection.**  
**Source: Eitel & Mitchell 1993 (foreword).**

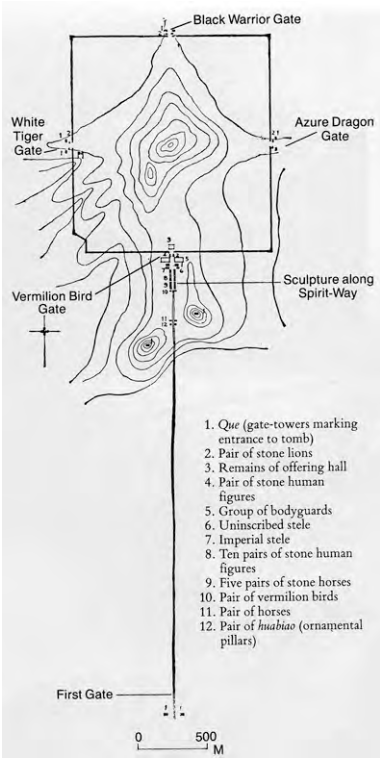


Figure 8. Symbolic directions at Qianling  
Source: Steinhardt (1990) p. 18

Correlative symbolism can be used to locate where these symbols are in relation to an “ideal” site. Table 2 outlines the symbolism of each of these animals. The relationship of these symbols in the landscape and in the constellations can be considered either auspicious or inauspicious. Guo Po’s *Book of Burial* includes many diagrams of mountains and waterways with explanations of the correlative nature of these features.

Table 2: The Symbolism of the Celestial Animals

	Dragon	Bird (Rose finch or phoenix)	Tiger	Turtle/tortoise (Or dark warrior)	Snake
Direction	East	South	West	North	Centre
Colour	Azure, blue, green	Red	White	Dark blue, black	Yellow
Element	Wood	Fire	Metal	Water	Earth
Season	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter	
Direction	Right	Front	Left	Back	Centre



### Compass School.

The Compass School is more specialised and more complex in terms of the mathematical calculations used in comparison with the Form School (Feuchtwang, 1984, p. 157). This school is also called the Fujian School after the place of work of its principal representative, Wang Ji (also known as Wang Zhaoqing), to whom several works are attributed, including *Class of the Core and Centre* and *Disquisitions on the Queries and Answers* (Bruun, 2003, p. 279). The most prominent scholar associated with this school is Zhu Xi (or Chu Hsi) (1130-1200). According to Skinner, “Chu Hsi helped define the relationship between *li* (natural laws) and *Ch’i* [*qi*], a definition which helped define *feng shui* itself” (Skinner, 2012, p. 91).<sup>5</sup>

By granting principal importance to the *bagua* (Refer to Figure 9), the branches and the constellations, this school or method became closely attached to the compass from which it derives its name. The *bagua* and subsequent calculations used by this school are for the purpose of calculating time and space as part of a *fengshui* analysis. Steven Bennet writes of these two systems “For centuries the Form and Compass schools prevailed without any significant competition from other denominations. A number of other texts combined theories, supposedly unique to one denomination, just as late classical siting literature often attempts to include them all” (S. J. Bennett, 1978, p. 4).

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<sup>5</sup> Skinner uses the Wade-Giles method of romanisation.

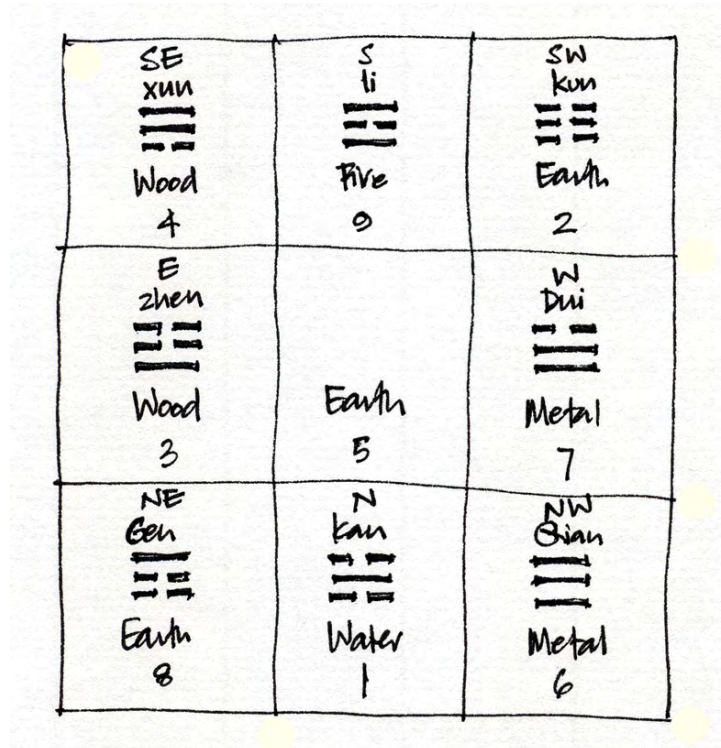


Figure 9. Bagua and its correlations

Source: Author – adapted from (Moran, Yu, &amp; Biktashev, 2005)

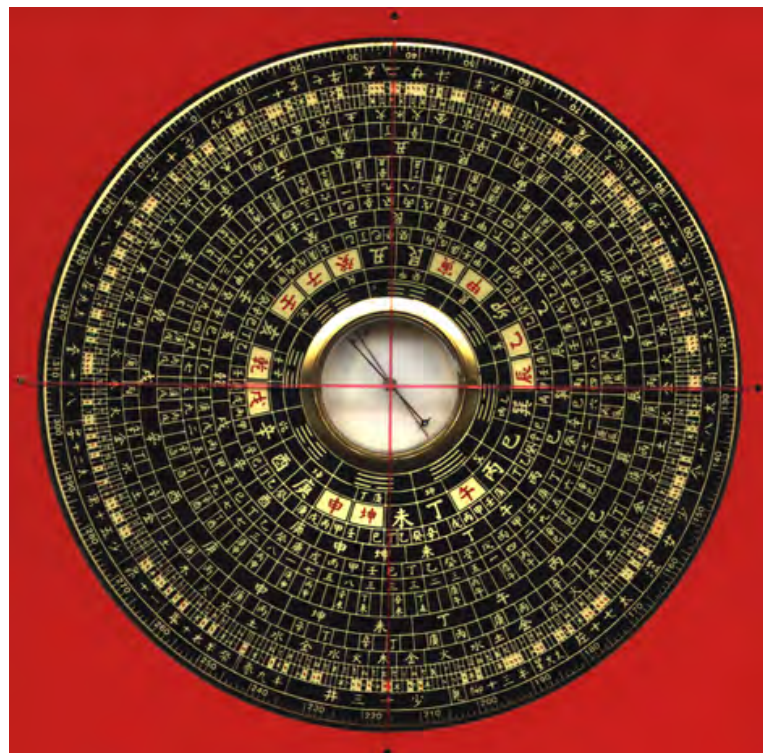


Figure 10. Fengshui compass, the lo'pan

Source: KDay collection

### Modern fengshui

As discussed previously, the literature on *fengshui* is extensive. However, due to different practices of *fengshui*, different schools, traditions, methods and different purposes of practice, not all literature can be weighted equally. Leaving modern *fengshui* to one side, there is a number of different themes emerging from the literature that briefly require discussion.

For this thesis, I use the definition of modern *fengshui* literature to refer to texts that do not fit necessarily within the classical traditions. Skinner delineates between what is classical and what is deemed modern by the use of the *fengshui* compass (Skinner, 2010, p. 178). By this rule, a simplified practice such as Black Sect Tantric Buddhism (BTB) that does not use the compass is considered modern.

BTB was established in Berkeley California by Thomas Lin Yun (1932-2010) in 1986. Lin's successor Khadro Crystal Chu Rinpoche claims that Lin introduced *fengshui* to the western world in the 1970s (2014; KMTV - Silicon Valley Community Media, 2011). This school uses an over-simplified version of *fengshui*. There is a greater emphasis on religion and "magical" elements rather than on the redirection or accumulation of *qi* according to the rules of *fengshui*. The system of *fengshui* used by BTB does not use a compass. It works on the premise that you do not need compass directions, but can simply interpret the front door as north (or north east/ north west) and proceed from there. As a result it is not deemed to be within the classical *fengshui* tradition, as explained by Skinner,

It is revealing however that Black Hat Sect fengshui never attracted any Chinese converts: all of Lin Yun's students were American. His mixture of so many disparate elements, like Buddhism, Tantra, meditation, mudra, mantra and blessings, made [BTB] an ideal New Age product (Skinner, 2012, p. 178).

Zhang asserts that the fashion to peddle *fengshui* as a solution for a wide range of problems is not a positive one. "It can be extremely misleading to take such a culture-specific practice out of its original cultural context and practice and study it as an isolated form" (Zhang, 2004, p. 5).

### **Fengshui as a practice unique to China**

While the Chinese diaspora has been responsible for the transmission of *fengshui* across Chinese communities globally, there are regional variations and practices within China. To account for this variety Yoon outlines an argument that the term geomancy should be used instead of *fengshui*, because the latter refers specifically to a Chinese context, whereas the practice is a regional one. This debate can also be extended to the different regions in China, relative to the concept that “China” is more an umbrella term for a grouping of different languages, regions and beliefs.

Many writers substitute the term *fengshui* with other terms such as *kanyu*, geomancy, and divination. This can be confusing because they are separate concepts, although they share similar ideas. As mentioned in the introduction, cultural geographer Yoon Hong-Key argues that “geomancy” is the preferred title because “*fengshui*” is China specific (Yoon, 2006, p. 3) and , although originating in China, it is now ubiquitous throughout the East Asian region, which Yoon argues, should have a title that reflects the change of scope.

### **Fengshui as a part of Chinese Identity.**

Zhang expands on Li Yih-yuan’s proposal that *fengshui* exists only because of its links to the concept of filial piety (2004, p. 14).<sup>6</sup> This notion was widely written about by the early Sinologists working in China, particularly de Groot. Many Western officials were sceptical of the activity and motives of many of the missionaries (Bruun, 2003, p. 47). Bruun makes the significant point that the growing profile of *fengshui* for the Chinese came about because foreigners treated it with a high level of respect, and because it functioned as a convenient means of manipulating popular sentiments and aggression towards foreigners (2003, p. 57). He puts forward the case that the British administration assisted its popularity in Hong Kong:

... from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British administration in Hong Kong paid out considerable amounts in compensation to local Chinese who felt their fengshui was being obstructed by new public construction such as roads, bridges, office blocks and housing (Bruun, 2008, p. 130).

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<sup>6</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2: Methods

This was an ongoing practice until the handover to the PRC in 1997.

### **Fengshui and burial rites.**

Social anthropologists Ann Anagost and Angela Cheater have discussed *fengshui* with regard to its links to burial rites. PRC traditional burials rites are discussed in terms of CCP policy that cremation is now required current practice for dealing with the dead in mainland China (Anagost, 1987; Cheater, 1991). While *fengshui* is used for both the symbolic orientation of graves (*yin fengshui*) and for dwellings (*yang fengshui*), there is a dispute among scholars as to which was the original version. de Groot (1892), Li (1995), Ebrey (2004), and Zhang (2004) each make a case that the concept of ancestor worship is responsible for the genesis of geomantic art in China, and subsequently *fengshui* for housing originated from burial rites. To explain this point, Yoon cites Huaizhen:

The concept of geomancy has had a very long history in China. The concept originated in the system of ancestor worship. The Chinese have always emphasized the importance of filial piety. Therefore, when parents are alive, the children must express their filial devotion by serving them properly; after their death, they should bury them and offer sacrificial services for them in the proper way. Besides the concept of filial piety, Chinese also believe that after their death, their spirits remain in this world. The children must somehow make the spirits of the dead comfortable by using all kinds of methods. It is believed that if the spirits of the parents do not rest comfortable the children will not be prosperous. In short, most Chinese believe that deceased parents could determine the prosperity of their children. This belief has been very popular since the middle ancient time; the concept of burial arose in that period to meet the beliefs of the time ... Not until after the custom of burial had already been established did the art of geomancy become popular (2006, pp. 16–17).

Huaizhen and Yoon agree that the basic principles for site selection are the same as those for housing. The two most salient aspects of the origin of geomancy are first that Chinese geomancy originated for the selection of house sites and was later applied to the selection of graves; and that second, Chinese geomancy originated from central China in the areas around the Yellow River.

Bruun speculates that the further *fengshui* is considered over time since the Song Dynasty the more *fengshui* philosophy merges with natural philosophy in general and

with ancestor worship in particular. Due to the shared symbolic language it is difficult to determine the exact origin of *fengshui*. Critical examination of available sources reveals that it was quite late in Chinese history, and more specifically during the early Song (960-1126), when the court patronized popular religion, and during the late Song (1127-1279), that *fengshui* became a separate branch of study while simultaneously a new profession emerged from its practical implications (Bruun, 2003, p. 272).

### **Controversy of fengshui.**

Geomancers were a common feature of social life in the Song Dynasty and consulted to families at all social levels. Historically, however, *fengshui* was not without criticism. In Ebrey's introduction to Zhang's *Book of Burial* is the example of Sima Guang (1019-1086) the historian of the Song Dynasty:

Sima Guang ... described the Book of Burial as vulgar, convoluted talk and pointed to the harm caused by those who delayed burying their parents because of the advice of a geomancer. He told how his skeptical brother, to appease relatives who believed in geomancy, bribed their preferred geomancer to pronounce his chosen site auspicious, dressing it up in language from the Book of Burial. Both Sima Guang and Cheng Yi (1033-1107) used the example of the success of their own families to prove that families who refused to follow the advice of geomancers did not necessarily suffer misfortune (Zhang 2004: x-xi).

It should be noted that both Sima Guang and Cheng Yi were neo-Confucianist philosophers and as such regarded geomancy and superstition as foolish.

It was not until the Song and Late Song Dynasties, however, that attempts were made to synthesize all the previously mentioned elements into a single scheme for interpreting the exhaustive influence that heaven and earth may exert on humans and their society, presumably close to what we know as *fengshui* in its more literal form.

### **Fengshui as anti- modernity.**

The rise of rationalism and western education in China since the end of the Imperial era (post 1911) saw the destruction of traditional knowledge in the fields of religion, medicine and *fengshui*. The Nationalists and the Communists regarded *fengshui*

and other feudal superstitions as a deterrent to modernisation. Sun Yat-Sen's "Three Stages of Revolution" is part of *A Program of National Reconstruction* (1918)

The first stage [of revolution] is the period of destruction. During this period martial law is to be enforced. The revolutionary army undertakes to overthrow the Manchu tyranny, to eradicate the corruption of officialdom, to eliminate depraved customs, to exterminate the system of slave girls, to wipe out the scourge of opium, superstitious beliefs, and geomancy, to abolish the obstructive *likin* trade tax and so forth (De Bary, Bloom, Chan, Adler, & Lufrano, 2000, p. 328).

It is interesting to note that *fengshui* (included with superstition and geomancy), is included (with opium, slavery and the *likin* tax (a tax the provided revenue for local government)), as an outdated feudal practice which restrained China from developing a modern presence.

After the death of Chairman Mao Zedong and the end of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), the official attitude became more tolerant, but restrictions on *fengshui* practice are still in place in China. For example, it is illegal in the PRC to register a *fengshui* consultancy as a business, and similarly advertising *fengshui* practice is banned (Skinner, 2012, p. 133). However, as discussed in later chapters, the application of *fengshui* and symbolism is evidenced in contemporary architecture in the PRC and in particular the landmark architecture of the Pudong.

### Context in Chinese philosophy

*Fengshui* employs correlative thought (see chapter below) , as do many of the philosophical schools in Chinese philosophy. Similar to other applications of Chinese philosophy, its influences cross over many traditions (Lai, 2008, pp. 16–17). The language of *fengshui* is shared with other *yin-yang* school systems of Chinese philosophy, and is linked to the *Yijing* (*The Book of Changes*).<sup>7</sup> As such it shares a common language alongside other disciplines including Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), music and

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<sup>7</sup> The earliest layers of the Yi Jing are thought to date back to 2000 BCE. It was reinterpreted as a system of cosmology and philosophy during the Warring States period (475-221 BCE)

painting, and they share basic terminology include *qi*, *yin* and *yang*, and *wuxing* –which will be defined later in this chapter.

The development of the different layers of the *Yijing* (the interpretation and reinterpretation by a variety of thinkers with different perspectives and agendas) has contributed to an understanding of numerous areas of philosophy, including *fengshui*, where its principles are elaborated, re-interpreted, applied to different debates, and appropriated. The effect of these approaches to the different philosophies is an ongoing layering of themes, concepts and ideas, making it immensely difficult to clearly differentiate specific characteristics of each of the original schools of thought associated with its founding thinker or thinkers.

Because there is a shared symbolism across the Chinese classics, which is a characteristic of the correlative nature of the culture, it is difficult to identify exactly the date or period in history that *fengshui* started. There are many examples of the origins of *fengshui* from ancient times, for example, the White Tiger and the Azure Dragon are among the oldest symbols in Chinese culture, however, this does not mean that *fengshui* can be extended back to the first use of these symbols.

### **Correlative thought.**

Correlative thinking in general draws systematic correspondences among aspects of various orders of reality, realms of the cosmos such as the human body, the body politic, and heavenly bodies. Although it is not exclusively Chinese, it is the most basic ingredient in Chinese cosmology. In China, many systems of correlations are recorded. One of these was *wuxing*, or the five phases, which has become a comprehensive theory explaining change in the cosmos (Henderson, 2011, p. 6). The earliest reference is in the *Shu Jing* (Documents Classic)<sup>8</sup>. There is no precise answer as to why this system eclipsed other systems. Henderson speculates that it might be because there were five visible planets, but he/she remains non-committal. *Wuxing* will be explained in greater detail in this chapter, however it is necessary to note that this correspondence was developed over centuries. The most universal mode of correlative thought to appear in early China was

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<sup>8</sup> The *Shu Jing* is known as the Documents Classic, Classic of History and Book of Historical Documents. It was compiled by Confucius (551-479BCE) from pre-existing documents. There is no consensus on the exact date when these documents were first written.



that based on the correspondences between man and the cosmos, microcosm and macrocosm (Henderson, 2011, p. 2).

### **Evolution to current practice.**

When the Communists succeeded in 1949 in ousting the Guomindang, who fled to Taiwan, the latter took with them much of the imperial art, antiques and library, with its many *fengshui* classics. With the formation of the PRC, opposition to what was seen as an antiquated and superstitious practice increased and *fengshui* was effectively driven underground in China itself. Similar pressure was applied to Traditional Chinese Medicine, which has only recently begun to reassert itself in China. Many masters of *fengshui* went to Taiwan or Hong Kong where the political climate was not so determinedly materialist.

The Cultural Revolution of the 1960s-1970s did even more to persuade practitioners of *fengshui* to leave mainland China and migrate to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada or Australia. This migration had the secondary effect of helping spread the knowledge of *fengshui* throughout the world. Persecution was most severe during this time, when *fengshui* was identified as one of the Four Olds scheduled for destruction in 1966, along with many other Chinese cultural artefacts, books, paintings, temples and even family genealogies. The Four Olds were Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits and Old Ideas. *Fengshui* practitioners were beaten and abused by Red Guards, or were marched through the streets to be vilified and their books burned (Skinner, 2012, p. 132). Figure 11 shows a poster from the Cultural Revolution depicting “Crushing the Four Olds.” Objects underneath the foot of the revolutionary include *fengshui* diagrams, a crucifix, classical texts and a statue of Buddha.

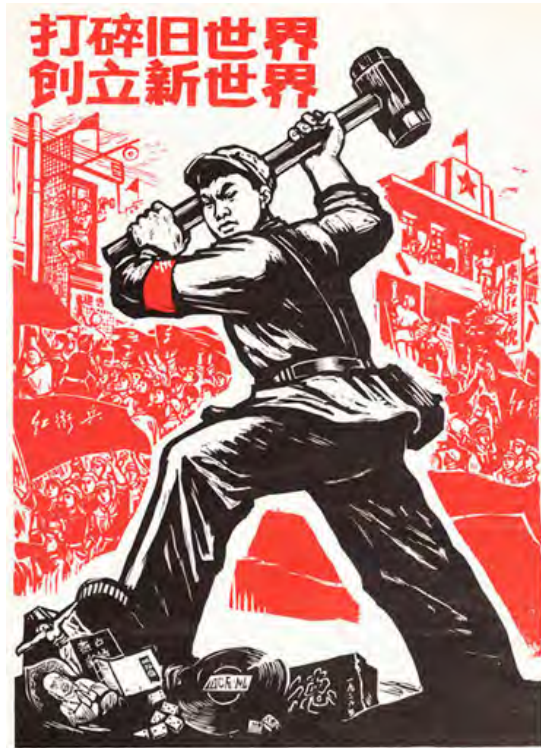


Figure 11. Revolutionary poster “Crushing the Four Olds.”

Designer unknown (1967) - scatter the old world, build a new world

<http://www.crestock.com/blog/design/vibrant-chinese-propaganda-art--part-1-revolution-revolution-revolution-171.aspx>

### Fengshui principles

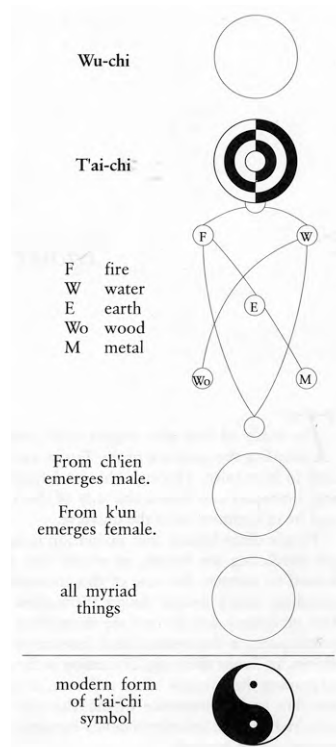
There are basic principles and a common language that is shared by all schools of *fengshui*. These are *yin* and *yang*, *qi* and *wuxing* (the five phases).

#### **Yin and yang.**

*Yin* and *yang* are defined as the two polar energies that, by fluctuation and interaction, are the source of the universe. *Yin* represents the passive principle in nature, exhibited by darkness, cold and wetness. In relation to human life, *yin* symbolizes femininity and inertia. *Yin* also represents the realm of the dead.

*Yang* represents the active principle in nature, and is evidenced by the presence of elements of light, heat, and dryness. It represents masculinity and the “positive” side of emotions, and also the realm of the living. It is tempting to simplify the concepts of *yin* and *yang* as positive and negative, and make further assumption that one is better than the other. The symbol of the *taiji* (T’ai-Chi) illustrates that one cannot exist without the other to retain a balance, which is another representation of the correlative nature of Chinese culture. The

diagram in Figure 12, designed by *fengshui* practitioner and Daoist scholar Eva Wong. It is based on the diagram established by Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073). Zhou was a neo-Confucian philosopher and cosmologist. The diagram was established to explain the transition from the non-polar *wuji* and supreme polarity *taiji* through its various manifestations.



**Figure 12. Development of the *taiji***

Source: (Wong, 1996, p. 42)

Architecturally, *fengshui* upholds the desire to achieve this balance. Excess is discouraged. The idea of yin and yang emanates from a story about the mythic character, Yi the Archer, in which the ten suns represent the excess of *yang*.

In architectural terms, *yin* represents the void, a curved form and landscape. It is expressed in architectural features such as the inner chamber, corridors, verandas, and interstitial spaces. Conversely, *yang* represents solid structures, geometrical form, the physical environment, and, in traditional palace architecture, the outer court (Zhang, 2004, p. 47).

The sensory experience of built space and materials is explored through an objective understanding of consciousness (including making judgements, using perceptions and the analysis of emotions). The manipulation of materials, shape, light and shade is used

to alter, influence or direct an experience. In contemporary architecture, Tadao Ando's work in Japan illustrates this collision of positive and void form. Koshino House (1979-1981), for example, uses concrete and the sharp contrast between positive and negative space to produce a dramatic architecture with minimal materials. Such stark contrast is also explored in the Church of the Light (1987 – 1989).

Danish artist Olafur Eliasson, in his 2005 installation for the Paris flagship store of Louis Vuitton, designed a sensory deprivation lift, which took guests from the ground floor to the gallery on the seventh level (Wallpaper, 2006; Zompanti, 2009). This journey presented an environment of darkness in a claustrophobic space, blocking all light and sound. Without a visual or sensual reference, there could only be a sense of motion without a sense of direction. Upon arrival at the seventh level, the doors opened to the bright gallery. This describes, symbolically, a dramatic voyage from pure *yin* to pure *yang*.

In Chinese mythology the story of *Yi* the Archer illustrates this concept. *Di Jun* and *Xi He* were the gods of the eastern sea. They lived with their family in a giant mulberry tree (known as *Fu Sang*) that grew just beyond the eastern horizon where the sun rises. They had ten sons and they were strict in their decree that there should never be more than one to make the daily journey across the sky. The sons obeyed this for thousands of years. One morning *Xi He* woke to find her ten sons chasing each other across the sky. At first the people on the earth thought the spectacle of the ten glowing suns wonderful, but as the day continued the earth began to burn. The parents saw what was happening and called to their sons to return, but they were having too good a time while the earth burnt. The Emperor heard the cries of the people and sent *Yi* the archer and his wife *Chang E* to assist. *Yi* had a bow with 10 magic arrows. *Yi* took an arrow, aimed at one of the suns and fired. The sun fell from the sky; the remains that fell to earth were of a black, three-legged raven with the arrow through its heart. He continued with this process until there was only one sun left in the sky that would be allowed to set in the west (Lin 2001, 13-21).

*Yin* and *yang* are expressed in correlative thought in Table 3.

**Table 3: Correlations of Yin and Yang adapted from (Walters, 1995; Moran et al., 2005; Zhang, 2004; Lai, 2008)**

	<b><i>Yang</i></b>	<b><i>Yin</i></b>
<b>Ideas of</b>	Warmth	Cold
	Bright	Dark
	Hard	Soft
	Light	Heavy
	Dry	Moist
	Expand	Contract
<b>Aspects of</b>	Maleness	Femaleness
	Senior	Junior
	Positive	Negative
	Active	Reactive
<b>Represented by</b>	Sky/ Heaven	Earth
	Unbroken line	Broken line
	Dragon	Tiger
<b>Topography</b>	Mountain	Valley
<b>Directions</b>	Above	Below
	Left	Right
	Front	Back
	Upwards	Downwards
	Outwards	Inwards
<b>Seasons</b>	Spring, Summer	Autumn, Winter
<b>Time</b>	Day	Night
<b>Numbers</b>	Odd	Even
<b>Architecture</b>	Solid structure	Void space
	Geometrical form	Curved form
	Physical environment	Landscape
<b>Palace</b>	Outer court	Inner court
<b>Politics</b>	Big states, important states	Small states, unimportant states
	Ruler	Minister
<b>In philosophy</b>	Confucianist	Taoist

The balance of *yin* and *yang* is central to our experience of space. In architecture, the attempt to create such balance can occur quite naturally, without reference to *fengshui* or the principles of *yin* and *yang*. If a space is too dark, we add more light. If a space is too light, we can add features to reduce the light. If there is not enough air movement in a room, we open a door or window, or install air conditioning.

### **Qi.**

*Qi* is a fundamental concept of *fengshui*, yet also one of the most difficult to define. It is the concept that gives life and spirit to all forms and to the tools and raw materials from which all things are made. In *The Shambhala Guide to Taoism*, *fengshui* practitioner Eva Wong translates *qi* as “air, vapour, breath, ether and energy” (Wong, 1997). In relation to Taoism and traditional Chinese medicine, it is described as “temperament, strength, and atmosphere.”

According to Taoism, *qi* is the vital energy, the life force, and the cosmic spirit that pervades and enlivens all things and is therefore synonymous with primordial energy (Wong, 1997, p. 16). Professor Ho Peng Yoke proposes the resemblance of the concept of *qi* as “matter energy” to the *pneuma* of the ancient Greeks and the *prana* of the ancient Hindu. He also outlines the similarity between *qi* and the concept of psyche or spirit.

Water and fire possess subtle spirits (*qi*) but no life (*sheng*). Plants and trees also possess life, but no perception (*zhi*). Birds and animals possess perception, but no sense of justice (*yi*). Man possesses spirit, life, perception, and in addition, a sense of justice. Hence he is the noblest of earthly beings... (Xunzi (313-283 BC), cited in Ho, 1985, p. 11).

### **Wuxing.**

*Wuxing* is a Chinese word that represents the five elements. A basic and literal translation of *wuxing* is that it describes the five (*wu*) agents which are phases or elements (*xing*). The phases or elements are: wood, fire, earth, metal and water. However this does not accurately capture the concept of *wuxing* and it is therefore best to use the original Chinese term. *Wuxing* is often compared to the elements of Greek philosophy of fire, air, water and earth. Table: 4 outlines some of the correlative categorisations.

Interpreting architecture in terms of *wuxing* is complex because the means of classification can be subjective, which will be discussed in further detail in this chapter. Buildings generally do not fit into a single category. Furthermore, the essential features of the surrounding landscape must also be assessed in relation to the five elements. For instance, tall, cylindrical features belong to the element wood, as they resemble the trunks of trees. The Hong Kong and New York skylines contain constructed examples of these iconic images, and the buildings produce an elementary symbolism for the cities. Sharp peaks are equated to darting flames and described as fire. Guilin, for example, a mountainous area in southern China, is classified as a fire landscape. Flat, eroded terrain is categorized as earth, whilst rounded hills are considered to resemble coins and are therefore defined as metal. Wavy, undulating ground is described as water.

**Table 4: Correlations of the Five Elements adapted from (Walters, 1995; Moran et al., 2005; Zhang, 2004; Yoon, 2006; Lai, 2008)**

	<b>Wood</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Earth</b>	<b>Metal</b>	<b>Water</b>
<b>Direction</b>	East	South	Centre	West	North
<b>Season</b>	Spring	Summer	Neutral	Autumn	Winter
<b>Geomantic landforms</b>	Azure dragon	Vermillion bird	Geomancy cave	White tiger	Black turtle
<b>Musical note</b>	<i>Jue</i>	<i>Zhi</i>	<i>Gong</i>	<i>Shang</i>	<i>Yu</i>
<b>Taste</b>	Salt	Bitter	Sweet	Acrid (hot pepper)	Sour
<b>Organ</b>	Spleen	Lung	Heart	Liver	Kidney
<b>Sense organ</b>	Eye	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ear
<b>Colour</b>	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
<b>Emotion</b>	Anger	Joy	Desire	Sorrow	Fear
<b>Sacrifice location</b>	Inner door	Hearth	Inner court	Outer court	Well
<b>Planet</b>	Jupiter	Mars	Saturn	Venus	Mercury
<b>Grain</b>	Rice	Broomcorn millet	Millet	Wheat	Bean
<b>Weather</b>	Wind	Heat	Thunder	Cold	Rain
<b>Climate</b>	Windy	Hot	Humid	Dry	Cold
<b>Mountain</b>	Mount Tai (east)	Mount Heng (south)	Mount Song (centre)	Mount Hua (west)	Mount Heng (north)
<b>Emperor</b>	Fu Xi	Shen Nong	Huang Di (Yellow Emperor)	Shao Yu	Zhuan Xu
<b>Yin Yang</b>	Lesser <i>yang</i>	Greater <i>yang</i>	Neutral	Lesser <i>yin</i>	Greater <i>yin</i>
<b>5 <i>qi</i></b>	Wind	Hot (heat)	Moist	Dry	Cold
<b>Building material</b>	Timber	No record of suitable material	Earth, stone, concrete	Metal	Glass
<b>Architectural plan</b>	Rectangular	Triangular or pointed	Square	Circle, circular	Organic
<b>Architectural elevation</b>	Tall	Sharp corners, angles, points	Square, squat or flat	Dome, curved arches	Curved or cascading surfaces

### ***Wood.***

Wood symbolizes all life, femininity, creativity, and organic material. A wood environment may literally include wood, trees or forests, or contain symbolic representations of them in features such as columns. Thus a cluster of skyscrapers may be of similar proportions to tall trees and is therefore considered a representation of a forest or bamboo. Wood is architecturally represented by rectangular planning, by tall buildings, pagodas, columns and towers in elevation, by the colour green and by the use of wood in construction. Overall, wood buildings are representative of growth, expansiveness and power.

### ***Fire.***

Fire is correlated with the south, the colour red, a bitter taste, and the smell of burning. The direction south is always considered in the location of Chinese buildings. The

main gate of the imperial cities would always face south. Sharp corners represent fire in architectural planning, as do sharp angles in elevation, and the colour red.

### ***Earth.***

Earth is related to the endurance of the earth itself. It is correlated with the middle position, the colour yellow, and the number two. The earth is represented as a square which may be traced to early cosmology, which sees the world represented in a chariot located under a canopy (Major, 1993). This canopy is round, symbolizing heaven, whilst the rectangular box in which travellers are seated, or rather its floor, corresponds to earth. The flat earth is said to be connected to the circular contour of heaven by the eight pillars, representing the eight winds (Major, 1993). Heaven and earth were regarded as a generative pair, the earth a square and heaven a circle. Earth is architecturally represented by square planning, by quadrangular, flat or gently sloped roofs in elevation, by warm tones, particularly the colours yellow and brown, and by the use of earth, brick and concrete in construction.

### ***Metal.***

The term for metal, *jin*, can be used to symbolise gold, and has correlations with west and the colour white. According to the ancient teaching contained in the *Hong Fan* or Great Plan, metal also correlates to the lungs, as one of the five viscera; to hearing and understanding, as one of the five bodily functions; and to cold as one of the five heavenly signs of the seasons.<sup>9</sup> In the *Hungdi Neijing* (Yellow Emperor's Inner Canon) metal also corresponds to the nose, as one of the body's orifices, and to grief, as one of the affects (Eberhard 1986, p. 186)<sup>10</sup>. Metal, through its association with the west and autumn (the season in which vegetation dies) is coupled with the symbolism of death. Metal is also symbolic of coins, money and wealth, therefore buildings that are represented by this element are considered appropriate to activities that share its symbolic element metal such as commerce or manufacturing.

Metal is also associated with competitiveness, business acumen and masculinity. Metal is architecturally represented in circular plans, elevations that appear curved or rounded, such as domes, by the colour white and the use of metal in construction.

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<sup>9</sup> The *Hong fan* is a chapter of the *Shujing* (Book of Documents).

<sup>10</sup> This document is a fundamental text of Traditional Chinese Medicine.



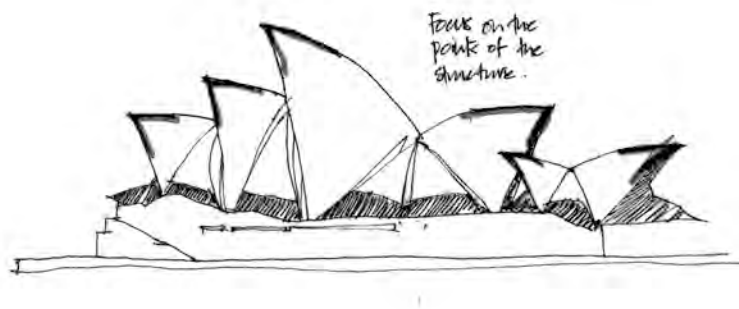
***Water.***

Water symbolizes transport and communication. It is associated with the north, the colour black, and the moon. Water also symbolizes *yin*, the primeval female principal; it is cold, peaceful, and symbolic of regeneration and hours of darkness. The water landscape is identified through the literal presence and dominance of water itself, or through the gentle undulating shape of the land. Water is architecturally represented by curves and organic shapes in planning, by horizontal curves in elevation, the colours dark blue and black, and the use of glass in construction.

***Element combinations.***

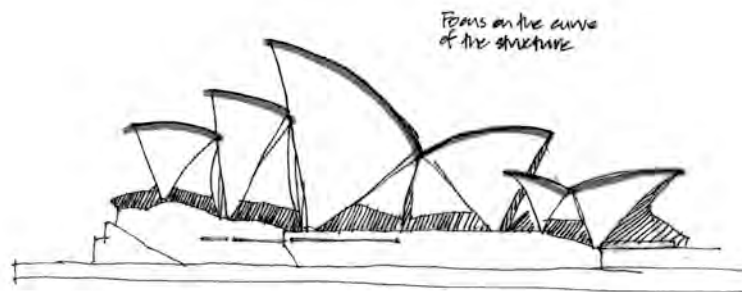
Many buildings are not easily identifiable as a specific element, but are composed of a combination of elements. Various materials associated with different elements are often used in the construction of a single building. Buildings may be made of ferro concrete, which combines concrete (earth) and steel reinforcement (metal). Buildings may be a combination of glass with other materials such as timber and steel to provide structural support.

Even designating an element with reference to a building's shape may not be straightforward. For instance, *fengshui* Master Lam Kam Cheun describes the Sydney Opera House designed by Danish architect Jørn Utzon, as “irregular triangles...[that] lick the sky like flames” (Chuen, 1996, p. 70). Thus, the shape in terms of elevation, a series of triangles, means it should be classified as fire. Yet there is dispute amongst *fengshui* masters as to whether the building is fire as described by Lam (Refer to Figure 13) or water as described by Derek Walters (Refer to Figure 14) (1995, p. 74). From Utzon's drawings and models, the Opera House may be interpreted as a series of spheres and curves, and he has established that the forms were generated by his slicing a spherical orange fruit, to enable all the variants of the sails, small and large, long and short, to be formulated using one single physical form. That technique was adapted by the engineers Ove Arup for the project as a guiding principle to their design. Furthermore, the whole structure has the quality of a sailing craft with full sails, which correlated to a Chinese reading of the buildings as one with the energy of wind and water moving together (Refer Figure 15).



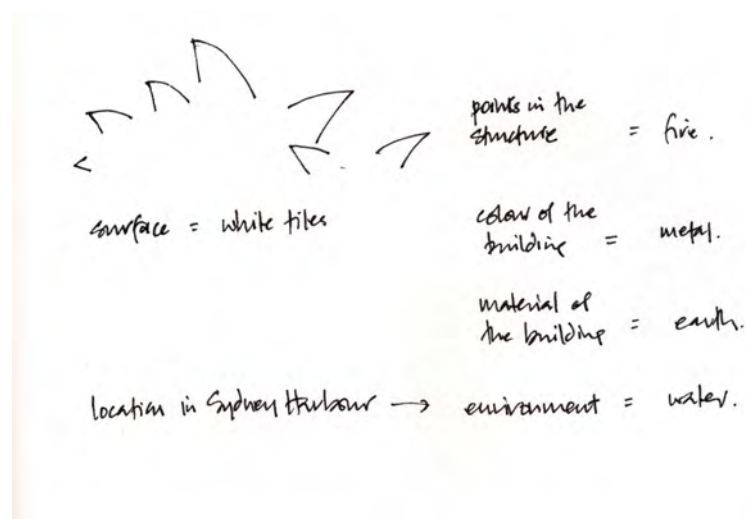
**Figure 13. “Fire aspect” of the Sydney Opera House**

Source: Author



**Figure 14. “Water aspect” of the Sydney Opera House**

Source: Author



**Figure 15. Analysis of elements**

Source: Author

The building's environment encourages greater consideration in terms of the five elements. The Sydney Opera house is located on Bennelong Point (a finger of land) on Sydney Harbour

(water). While the land around the opera house has a rounded topography (metal), the material of the building is concrete (earth), and the colour is white (metal). Thus, elements can intermingle in a single structure in complex ways. When considering such combinations, the generative order of the five elements must be taken into account.

### ***Orders of the agents***

Another method of analysis or interpretation includes the order of the different agents. The five elements are interactive and ordered with regard to their qualities. The generative order is a framework that places elements in a positive sequence, each considered beneficial, generating and stimulating to the elements succeeding it. Certain combinations defy the generative order and are considered negative sequences that are weak or harmful, depending of the proximity of the elements.

#### *Generative order of elements.*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Result / consequences</b>
Wood	Burns, which creates
Fire	Which results in ash, or
Earth	From which is obtained
Metal	Which when melted can flow like
Water	Which is needed to sustain the growth of
Wood	Burns ... and so on (Walters, 1995, p. 47)

In a similar manner, in architecture, particular shapes work beneficially together. A round building (metal) can combine with a non-geometric form (water). A rectangular plan (earth) is compatible with a round building (metal). The productive combinations are water with wood, wood with fire, fire with earth, earth with metal, and metal with water. Possible negative sequences arise from the domination order of elements and the reductive order of elements, such as the following:

#### *Domination order of elements*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Result / consequences</b>
Wood	Draws the goodness from the earth
Earth	Pollutes water
Water	Quenches fire
Fire	Melts metal

Metal	Chops down wood
Wood	Draws the goodness ... and so on (Moran et al., 2005, p. 70)

Thus, the counter productive combinations are earth with water, water with fire, fire with metal, metal with wood and wood with earth.

### *Reductive order of elements*

<b>Element</b>	<b>Result / consequences</b>
Wood	Absorbs water
Water	Corrodes metal
Metal	Moves earth
Earth	Reduces fire
Fire	Burns wood
Wood	Absorbs water ... and so on (Walters, 1995; Moran et al., 2005)

According to the way the domination order and the reductive order interact, some combinations may be remedied with an additional element, but some should be avoided. These are determined by a geomantic chart (Wong, 2001).

### *Relationship between elements*

Productive	Domination	Reductive cycle	Remedy
Fire + Earth	Yes	No	None
Fire + Metal	No	Yes	Earth
Earth + Metal	Yes	No	None
Earth + Water	No	Yes	Metal
Metal + Water	Yes	No	None
Metal + Wood	No	Yes	Water
Water + Wood	Yes	No	None
Water + Fire	No	Yes	Wood
Wood + Fire	Yes	No	None
Wood + Earth	No	Yes	Fire

(Moran & Biktashev, 1999, p. 69)

Lam Kam Cheun (1998, p. 71) interprets the pyramid at the Louvre in Paris as a superb fire structure, drawing intense energy down from the heavens and making the site a prodigious

attraction for visitors. Lam views this structure as perfectly balanced with the water structure of the Louvre. Walters, on the other hand, claims that “the frightful glass pyramid at the Louvre reveals the unfortunate collaboration of the elements of both Fire and Water”.

The *Yi Jing* (also commonly used is the Wade-Giles romanisation *I Ching*), the *Book of Changes* or *Classic of Changes*, is the oldest of the Chinese classic texts. The book is a symbol system intended to perceive order in what seem to be random events. The text draws upon the philosophy of *yin* and *yang*, and a broader cosmology based on the dynamic balance of opposites, the evolution of events as a process, and an acceptance of the inevitability of change. This cosmology is summarised in the three basic concepts: simplicity, variability and persistence (Manuel, 1998). Simplicity describes the fundamental law that everything in the universe is primarily plain and simple, no matter how perplexing or complex things may appear. Simplicity is the root of substance.

Variability describes everything in the universe as continually changing. By comprehending this, one may realize the importance of flexibility in life and may thus cultivate an appropriate attitude for dealing with a multiplicity of diverse situations. Persistence refers to the concept that while everything in the universe seems to be changing, there is a persistent principle, a central rule, which does not vary through space and time. Persistence is the essence of substance.

The *Yi Jing* consists of a series of symbols, rules for manipulating these symbols via poems, and commentary. It is based on combinations of *Yin* and *Yang* represented in abstract lines, *Yang* as an unbroken, or solid line, and *Yin* as a broken, or open line with a gap in the centre. These abstract lines are combined in stacks of three, forming trigrams, which are once again combined to form hexagrams. Thus, traditional *Yin* and *Yang* philosophy describes the derivation of the hexagrams:

The *Yi Jing* may be considered a basic text of Chinese cosmology and philosophy, and the trigrams and hexagrams have been rearranged and at times combined with other concepts for specific purposes. Two examples of such rearrangements used in *fengshui* are the *bagua* map, and the *ho-t'u* and *lo-shu* maps.

*Fengshui* has evolved over millennia from a handful of basic principles embedded in the *yin yang* school of thought. There is no singular system of *fengshui* and the practice is progressing continuously. It has evolved into a complex system embracing different schools, diverse methods, and a range of rituals, in addition to localised variations. These differences make possible disparity in the reading and interpretation of fengshui practice. Further, *fengshui* is still vulnerable to adaption and change. This has occurred within Chinese culture, as demonstrated by Lim's Black Sect Tantric Buddhism that has a strong practitioner base in the USA. There are many examples of modern *fengshui* that simplify the practice, eliminating the use of the compass and complex calculations. This generalised version of *fengshui* is often referred to as McFengshui, implying that the idea as expressed in this form of fengshui, or a commodity, which is more about style than substance.

*Fengshui* has strong links with folk religion, and the blurred borders between the original forms of *fengshui*, folk belief, and superstition, inevitably result in many things being labelled *fengshui* that have little to do with the location of a meaningful place in the landscape.

*Fengshui* has enjoyed varying levels of popularity during this long-term period of development. In particular in the relationship with power, both within China and with foreign cultures, it has been influential as a method of resistance to change. This is evidenced particularly during the last years of imperial power and in relationships with colonial powers. In particular the British government in Hong Kong was lenient in regards to a Chinese "natural religion" and afforded more significance to the practice than it had experienced since it was ritualised during the Han Dynasty. As a result, this highly subjective method of geomancy also became a method of expression of a Chinese identity in Hong Kong.

However, in other parts of China *fengshui* did not acquire the same status. Under both Nationalist and Communist political policy, *fengshui* was considered anti-modern. Under PRC law, *fengshui* is considered a feudal superstition and its research limited to architecture and anthropology. Yet, as will be discussed in later chapters, there are many contemporary examples of the practice of *fengshui* in the architecture of modern mainland cities such as Shanghai, and also in Hong Kong. This creates an interesting paradox, as the role that *fengshui* provides is not entirely that of a

geomantic/superstitious/cosmological device, but more about cultural signification, and it is more about the signs and symbols of a Chinese character than of the practice of *fengshui* in its traditional role. While there are still elements of the practice that focus on issues of fortune and luck, the integration of *fengshui* is more symbolic. In the following chapters the condition which establishes this environment will be discussed in terms of (Globalisation) and how architecture plays a role in the identification of place, and (Brandscape). Subsequent chapters will provide case studies to exemplify these theories.





### **Chapter 3**

#### **Globalisation, modernity and the global Chinese city**

The previous chapter provided background to the practice of *fengshui*. This chapter will outline the circumstances that define the global city condition and first how this relates to China and second how *fengshui* is situated in this context. Globalisation is the first of two theory chapters. The following chapter on brandscape will build on the concept of the Chinese global city and expand these concepts, particularly regarding their application to architecture and how *fengshui* has moved from traditional practice to include cultural identification to differentiate Chinese cities from others. This chapter is divided into three sections; the first outlines theories of globalisation, the second looks at how these overarching concepts shape not only existing cities, but also the design of new ones, and the third part introduces the case study cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai in the context of globalisation.

#### **Globalisation theory**

The outcome of the globalisation processes is that contemporary events, including national, cultural and economic exchanges, operate at a scale that extends beyond national borders. As a result, the progression of globalisation collapses both space and time. Sociologists John Boli and Barry Lechner describe this phenomenon thus:

A journey that once required months now required less than a day; a message that once must travel for weeks now arrives in milliseconds. The shrinking world impels expanding consciousness of ever larger geographical and social spaces, above all consciousness of the world as a single interconnected society, an all-encompassing yet distinct arena of culture and action (2009, p. 323) .

Globalisation also implies that a certain level of homogeneity impacts on local environments, the consequence of the common ground of international culture and its

attendant style. The global arena in which these events occur is, as anthropologist Jonathan Friedman describes,

... a product of a definite set of dynamic properties, including the formation of centred/periphery structures, their expansion, construction, fragmentation and re-establishment throughout cycles of shifting hegemony. These dynamic properties ... are what we refer to as the global system or global processes. (1995, p. 74)

Consequences of these processes include the interconnectedness made possible by advances in technology and cross border transactions. Paradoxically these transactions increase the awareness of the 'local' in contradistinction to the homogenising 'global.'

### **Globalisation as a one-way process.**

Early research on globalisation made a broad assumption that the relationship between the local and the global was one way, that is, that the global overwhelmed the local condition (Robertson, 1992; Featherstone & Lash, 1995; Friedman, 1995; Klein, 2000; Sassen, 2001). This conviction raised issues about cultural imperialism and in particular the dominance of western or American culture in places such as Asia. Klein wrote about this issue as "The twentieth century's familiar bogeyman, "American cultural imperialism," and she has in more recent years incited cries of "cultural Chernobyl" in France (Klein, 2000, p. 116).

Klein's 'cultural Chernobyl' refers to Euro Disney (the original title of the Disneyland franchise in Paris, now rebranded as Paris Disneyland) and the negative reaction of the French cultural elite in response to its opening in 1994. Disney's response to these accusations prompted fundamental changes to the Paris theme park including the rebranding, but also influenced the design for future theme parks such as those in Hong Kong and Shanghai. The level of localisation and change to the Disney brand will be discussed in Chapter 9: Hong Kong Disneyland. However, as Klein points out, the main reaction against the dominant global brand and the application of its processes into a local culture, is generally promulgated at the local community level.

Much of the early research on globalisation was Euro/US-centric and focused on the perceived supremacy of these mainly western cultures over others. However, the

domination of one culture by another is not a fixed relationship (Eriksen, 2007a, p. 142). While a wealthier country might be seen as economically, politically and culturally dominating at any particular time, the situation inevitably changes. As Sklair writes:

Britain in the nineteenth century, and the United States of America in the twentieth century, is the hegemon of global capitalism, though rather different versions of it. Through their (respective) straightforward colonial and convoluted neo-imperialist trajectories the transnational practices of these two countries etched the forms of capitalism onto the global system. (1995, p. 8)

For example, from a humiliated position with the western powers (England, France, Germany and the USA) less than a century ago, China is now leading the “Asian Century” and prompting serious discussion as to whether China is developing a credible hybrid political economy that is as an alternative to the current hegemonic capitalist economic system.

### **Globalisation as a two way process.**

More recent research reveals that globalisation processes do not always behave on a global scale and can operate as effectively at a regional one (King, 1995; Mathews, 2000; Sassen, 2006). Eriksen demonstrates that the model of domination is not as simple as the one that Klein proposes. “China, India, South Korea and other formerly poor countries are emerging as equal players, and regional powers such as South Africa and Brazil are both exploited and exploiters in the global economy” (2007a, p. 5).

Appadurai makes the point that globalisation processes and the resulting dominance of one culture over another are not always revealed as “Americanisation”, ‘westernisation or a ‘north over south’ dynamic. Appadurai argues that,

... for the people of Irian Jaya, Indonesianization may be more worrisome than Americanization, as Japanization may be for Koreans, Indianization for Sri Lankans, Vietnamization for Cambodians,

Russianization for the people of the Soviet Armenia and the Baltic Republics. (1996, p. 295)<sup>11</sup>

In some cases, the content of the dominant culture, whether global or regional, can be indigenised to become more appealing and empathetic within a local context. While the discourse of economics and international relations focuses on the influence of the global over the local, social science (including sociology or urban environments and architecture) views this dynamic as only one of many diverse systems. These include glocalisation (Robertson, 1992), hybridisation (Hannerz, 1996), and creolisation (Friedman, 1995). Robertson coined the term 'glocalisation' in relation to social science, adapting the word from Japanese business jargon during the 1980s. In this context, the concept of glocalisation bears a close relationship to the idea of micro marketing. This tailors the advertising of goods and services on a global, or near global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular markets. Friedman uses the term 'creolisation' to describe the transference of the term Creole to the notion of culture and expresses the idea of mixture of two or more cultures. However, within this 'mix' the disparate elements are still recognisable and maintained as part of this identity over time. While the perception of national boundaries is weakened by economic globalisation, it still exists, and continues to exert influence over global culture. In this model, the interdependence between the position of local and global is highlighted, rather than the economic model that reflects domination of the global over the local condition.

In using globalisation theory to understand how global processes have influenced the shape of the global city, Sassen acknowledges that further research needs to be undertaken to provide a more nuanced understanding of the forces that shape this particular type of contemporary environment:

Existing theory is not enough to map today's multiplication of practices and actors contributing to these rescalings. Included are a variety of nonstate actors and forms of cross-border cooperation and conflict, such as global business networks, the new cosmopolitanism, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), diasporic networks, and spaces such as global cities and transboundary public spheres (2007, p. 6) .

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<sup>11</sup> The text from which I have quoted Appadurai is originally published in 1990. There have been significant changes in Asian popular culture since this publication, and as a result different regional tensions.

### **National identity and the expression of culture.**

The concept of a national identity is a relatively new construct, used to describe the establishment of the modern nation state (in China and elsewhere). Thus the idea of the homogenous culture is a modern construct (Chun, 1996; Evans & Tam, 1997; Mathews, 2000). National identity is understood as new (post 19<sup>th</sup> century) and the idea of the nation state is considered a contemporary paradigm. With this in mind the historian Benedict Anderson makes the observation that nationalism, and with that notion, the concept of “nation”, are both hard to identify and describe in definitive terms. In agreement with Anderson, historian Hugh Seton-Watson adds that while the “scientific definition [of nationalism] is yet to be devised ... the phenomena [sic] has existed and exists” (Seton-Watson, 1977, p. 5).

Both Anderson and Seton-Watson debate nationalism mainly from a Eurocentric standpoint (more so Seton-Watson) and fail to explain the complexity of China’s modernisation that does not mirror western culture. Professor of Chinese Studies at the National University of Singapore, Wang Gungwu, argues that China’s development of nationalism is essentially different from the European experience:

Nationalism was tied to anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism as the key to almost all of the political struggles of the twentieth century. Both Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung were propelled into politics by their nationalistic urges.<sup>12</sup> And, despite the romantic internationalist slogans after the communist victory in 1949, national pride and interests remained in the forefront of the goals of the People’s Republic. With the collapse of communist ideology, little now stands in the way of the current leaders’ returning to nationalism to seek a stronger mandate for their rule. Simply put, this would mean a return to the quest for wealth and power by the nation state. (1995, pp. 46–48)

By expanding notions of nationalism to include a description of the culture that contributes to this sense of nationality, nationalism and national identity — we can make a distinction between the two main contemporary notions of culture: ideological and analytical.

The ideological notion of culture concerns the question of a gap between high culture and low culture; that is to say that the views of the elite versus those of the

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<sup>12</sup> In pinyin these names are Pinyin: Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong respectively.

populace are at odds. In the case of *fengshui*, it has had moments when the practice was embraced by the Chinese Imperial Court (high culture) for example, during the Song Dynasty, however it was then and has remained, part of popular culture (low culture). Reformers of the late Qing Dynasty, the Nationalist movement led by Chiang Kai-hek, and Mao's Communist Revolution all pushed for modernisation. In each case *fengshui* and other 'feudal superstitions' were to be suppressed in favour of a more appropriate modern identity. While there has been a recent re-examination of Confucian principles as part of a current Chinese identity, *fengshui* remains in a grey and unspecified area of concern for Chinese scholars, along with some other elements of Chinese traditional culture.

The analytical representation of culture centres on a concern which attempts to construct an idea of a particular culture as something homogenous, something functional and measurable. This concept argues that societies are held together because individuals and groups within them hold a common set of values and beliefs, i.e. a common culture (Evans & Tam, 1997, p. 11). However Chun puts forward the argument that if there is an attempt to put together something by function and by need, as something homogenous, it will necessarily be a construction, "... the idea of (a national) identity is new, any notions of *culture* invoked in this regard, no matter how faithfully they are grounded in the past, have to be *constructions* by nature" (Chun, 1996, p. 114).

Grant Evans and Maria Tam add that culture is an ongoing social process which includes language, ritual, and the recognition of symbols. Concepts of a common social identity are held together by a customary set of values and beliefs. This can include text including characters or logograms, vernacular language, and behaviours (Anderson, 1991, pp. 37–42). These are usually transferred from one generation to the next via socialisation, history, mores and word, thus ensuring cultural and social continuity over time.

In the case of China, until the mid 1950s, traditional Chinese characters provided a continuous method of communication even though dialects and language might make oral communication difficult. From 1956 simplified characters were introduced by the PRC in mainland China in an attempt to increase literacy. While the level of literacy may have improved, it created a schism in the ability to communicate between many Chinese dialects. While the method of pronunciation was different, the characters had provided a constant base for understanding. Also at this time, it can be argued that the banning of

geomantic activities such as *fengshui* halted the transfer, or altered the value placed upon *fengshui* in the PRC for future generations.

Anthropologist Li Yihyuan summarises it thus:

All Chinese covered by the concept of ‘culture China’ have three characteristics in common:

1. Specific customs and beliefs relating to diet
2. A Chinese style (Confucian) family ethics that extends to the outside world of non- familial interpersonal relationships
3. A cosmology largely based on fortune telling and geomancy.

(Cited by Zhang, 2004, p. 5)

These characteristics are fully expressed through funeral rites for Chinese of all backgrounds, confirmed by studies on Chinese history, philosophy, religion, anthropology, and folklore.

While Zhang’s research focuses on burial rites and the role that *fengshui* plays in that area – he also comments on the impact of globalisation on the practice of *fengshui*, and in particular the influence of westernisation on more recent practices. Bruun points out that while *fengshui* is one of the universal elements in Chinese culture, it is “... considerably more outspoken in popular culture than in the Chinese literary self identification” (Bruun, 2008, p. 6). However Mathews suggests that there is more to cultural identity than a model cultural narrative. Globalisation has provided greater awareness of culture, international and local, and as such “culture may be defined as ‘the information’ and ‘identities’ available from the global cultural supermarket” (Mathews, 2000, p. 4). This increased consciousness not only influences a self-perception of culture and identity, but provides more knowledge of other identities.

In the debates concerning the globalisation of culture, there is an increasing link between global symbols and global culture (Evans & Tam, 1997, p. 11). Discriminating between different cultures provides distinct symbolic reference points., However, returning to Allen Chun’s earlier point, the notion of culture is a conscious construction, which, in China (both the PRC and greater China) has developed as a discrepancy in the

understanding of what is Chinese who is Chinese, and what is represented as Chinese. Evans and Tam conclude that “people in different locations in China have different ideas about what it means to be Chinese” (Evans & Tam, 1997, p. 7). This incorporates traditional Chineseness, Chinese customs and religious practices for example, which have been obliterated in mainland China by communism over the past 50 years, just as they were eroded in Hong Kong by colonialism (Mathews, 2000, p. 138). The notion of a definable sense of identity that can provide more detail of Li’s characteristics of Chinese culture, or that an ideal Chineseness may not exist.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Chinese Nationalist Party (Guomindang) believed that superstition, geomancy and the like had no place in a modern Chinese culture, and as discussed in Chapter 2, Sun Yet Sen’s *Three Stages of Revolution* included the abolishment of geomancy or *fengshui*, along with the abolition of slave girls, opium and the *likin* trade tax. Evans and Tam point out the irony that these abolitions were made when the Nationalists fled to Taiwan in 1949 (after their defeat at the hands of the Communists), and yet they had positioned themselves as the protectors of traditional Chinese culture. He notes, “In other words, the cultural content of Chinese nationalism has been under continuous renegotiation” (Evans & Tam, 1997, p. 8).

### **Homogenisation.**

Homogenisation, standardisation, and universalisation are processes that are symptomatic of a dominant globalising force. Economist Theodore Levitt celebrated this concept via an economic perspective as a way forward for international businesses to be successful in the global market in the mid 1980s in his seminal essay, “The Globalization of Markets” (Levitt, 1983). He argues that to achieve success in international business, companies must move from a multinational or international strategy and structure to a global one. He defines “multinational” as companies that operate in an international market, but customise their product to suit local conditions. This customisation might include different sizes, voltages or materials. Levitt makes the point that companies that standardise their product for global consumption rather than customise to suit local conditions will be more economically successful. As markets become increasingly global, it is easier and more profitable to operate in this way.

This regulation of the constructed global product is also a key feature of modernity and an instrument of “disembedding” (Eriksen, 2007a, p. 65). The term



disembedding implies a ‘lifting out’ of social relations from a local context of interaction and restructuring it across infinite spans of time and space i.e. global. Klein, however, criticises Levitt’s essay as a call for American cultural imperialism:

Levitt’s “global” corporations were, of course, American corporations and the “homogenized” image they promoted were the images of America: blonde, blue eyed kids eating Kellogg’s cereal on Japanese TV; the Marlboro Man bringing US cattle country to African villages; and Coke and McDonald’s selling the entire world on the taste of the USA. As globalization ceased to be a somewhat kooky dream and became a reality, these cowboy-marketing antics began to step on a few toes. (Klein, 2000, p. 117)

There are many critics of the concept of global homogenisation as a form of cultural imperialism, implying that the dominant factor overwhelms the weaker with no change to the dominant force. Ricoeur is such a critic who views this development as “wearing away the cultures of the past” and the creation of “mediocrity”:

Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machines the same plastic or aluminium atrocities, the same twisting of language by propaganda etc. It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse at a basic consumer culture, were also stopped en masse at a subcultural level (Ricoeur cited by Frampton, 1985, p. 313)

In such critiques of globalisation there is often the condescending assumption that what is at risk is the “authentic” or “natural” culture of the developing world and that it will be replaced by something “artificial” or “lacking in authenticity” from the advanced “West”. This fetishisation of the local in many cases assumes that the receptive audiences are passive, and that the local is of little importance.

However, despite Levitt’s proscription, globalisation does not *always* equal homogenisation. Nor is it necessarily a threat to a sense of local identity. Robertson proposes two processes regarding globalisation. The first is the universalisation of the particular, as in the nation state. The second, the particularisation of the universal, as in the appropriation of the universal in local contexts (Robertson, 1992). The idea of “local” is a global product and as such, part of the globalisation process rather than its

complementary opposite. Local and localising phenomena, including ethnicity, nationalism and indigenous movements can in this way be understood as global products (Robertson, 1995).

The tension between cultural heterogenisation and cultural homogenisation is an area that Appadurai suggests should be described by multiple systems. Variations on heterogenisation include indigenisation (when a homogenised flow into a new society adapts for local consumption), hybridisation (fusion, mixing or combining cultural forms), and transculturation (cultural forms flow in many exchanges via time-space interaction, resulting in new cultural forms).

Transnationalism is a description of the social phenomenon of connections between populations and the lessening of financial and social boundaries between nations, it develops as an economic procedure which allows for the production of goods and services across national boundaries, in an attempt to reduce the cost of production. The result of this movement is realised as a flow of people, ideas, information and products across traditional national boundaries, while other forms of movement between states, such as diasporas, are more definitive than the abstract transnational form. These movements and the subsequent sites for their activities, provide the framework for the function of the global city.

There are a number of global processes that influence the function and shape of the global city which includes the flow of information, services and people resulting in a homogenising set of circumstances for individual places. There is an acceptance of the idea that there is a dominant flow from “west” to “east” or “north” to “south”, however the literature reveals, and extended research shows, that these global flows are far more complex, which sociologist Xuefei Ren explains in terms of a large variance in the types of flow, and also in the types of participants engaged in transnational and global activities:

In the age of globalization, urban space is increasingly shaped by transnational articulations. Transnational architectural production has become a major mode of spatial production, characterized by the involvement of a wide spectrum of actors — architects, developers, investors, media networks, and state bureaucrats — in the de-

territorialized production, consumption and interpretation of urban space.  
(Ren, 2011, p. 2)

### **The Global City**

Capitalist production has unified space because it operates across boundaries by adopting a universal behaviour for production and marketing. The concept is no longer bounded by external societies. This unification is at the same time an extensive and intensive process of *banalization*. The accumulation of commodities produced for global masses for a perceived abstract market, extinguished traditional regional and legal barriers, such that the corporative restrictions of the Middle Ages, for example, that preserved the *quality* of craft production, also had to destroy the autonomy and quality of places. This power of homogenization is the heavy artillery which brought down all Chinese walls.  
(Debord, 1983, sec. 165)

The characteristics that define a city as “global” are a set of universal qualities, which include homogenising services, concentrations of economic power, and agglomerations of financial and specialized services in addition to established transnational networks that require accommodation (Sassen, 2001). Historically, important cities relied on strategic location or centrality in order to maintain a superior position relative to others. In contrast, the model for the contemporary global city is one that is embedded in global networks and is disembedded from a local or national focus. These cities are often identified in isolation of their nation state, such as New York, London and Paris.

Characteristics of the global city rely on positioning within international frameworks rather than the national one. By operating at a global level rather than at a nation, the function and operation of the city inevitably changes. Many cities are now adapting from the layout and function of the industrial national model to one based in a global service-orientated economy.

The post industrial city is run differently and at its core lays an entrepreneurial stance that is all about creating the appropriate conditions conducive to capital accumulation. In effect, the city becomes the spatial expression of globalisation  
(Miles, 2010, p. 36)

Not all global cities follow the post-industrial transformation model, however in cities such as Shanghai, and its Pudong district, and Dubai and Abu Dhabi, there is the initiation of a fresh 'tabula rasa'. The projects which result in those places are designed not only with the provision of services required to be part of the global city network, but also to provide skylines and iconic architecture which are consumed with ease by a media audience. The consequence of creating accommodation for a homogenous set of services is such that, "these cities will have more in common with each other than with their respective nations" (Sudjic, 1992, p. 5). As Miles points out "the ultimate irony ... is that this model of urban investment has become so popular and is reproduced so readily that any competitive advantage is soon lost" (Miles, 2010, p. 39).

Cities can strategically develop to compete as part of the global city network, which involves broad ranging plans for city development models. This includes the development of infrastructure, thus encouraging large multinational companies to operate in the city. The development of support networks such as infrastructure, secondary suppliers and a workforce surrounds these companies and enables their operation. These 'universal qualities' influence not only how the city functions but also its physical appearance. Just as the industrial city influenced the function and layout of its component parts, the change in technology and the current emphasis on service in First-World cities alter the requirements of the global urban fabric and shape its parts. Art historian and sociologist Anthony D. King states:

We do not in short, live only "in a "global world", presupposed of interdependency, and "consciousness of the world as a whole"; we also live in a "worldly globe" where nations, cities, institutions, and human subjects — as well as transnational and global institutions — vie with each other, in a very tangible way, to display and represent themselves on the politically and economically uneven surface of the globe. (King, 1996, p. 100)

The design of the global city therefore takes into consideration not only the city's function but also the image that represents its iconic buildings are used in media for marketing and branding of both a place and its representative elements, a process Zukin explains as:

This image is transmitted via media, particularly in cinema, television and advertising, which resides in the imaginations of persons and groups. These independent but inter-reliant cities influence both international economic activity and the urban form. This form is not just the ‘real’ form, but also the “image” of the city — its scenographic and semiotic form. (Zukin, 1993, p. 12)

This scenographic and semiotic form of the city will be explored in more detail in the next chapter on Brandscape.

### **High-rise to skyscraper.**

One of the key visual clues to the existence of a global city is the development of clusters of high-rise office towers. While the purpose of the individual tower resides in its economic efficiency and the maximisation of usable space, that is rentable space, its adaption as one skyscraper among many has become a symbol of the modern city, such that it has become an essential factor in the visualisation of a global city.

High-rise buildings provide both economic and high-density accommodation. It is not unusual to find that the central business district (CBD) of one city is similar to CBDs in other cities, no matter where it is located geographically, politically or culturally. While the modern high-rise might have originated from advances in construction and engineering technology, central property prices and corporate need, it is not so much about what the high rise towers *are* (the maximum available accommodation on the smallest amount of land), but what they *represent* in Money, Wealth, Modernity.

For the skyscraper is not only the building of the century, but it is also the single work of architecture that can be studied as the embodiment and expression of much that makes the century what it is ... for better or for worse, its I measure, parameter, or apotheosis of our consumer and corporate culture. No other building type incorporates so many forces of the modern world, it has been so expressive of changing belief systems and so responsive to changing tastes and practices. It romanticizes power and the urban condition ... The tall building probes our collective psyche as it probes the sky  
(Huxtable (1984:11) cited by McNeill, 2009, p. 114)

For many years, the skyscraper has been viewed as a representation of capitalist modernity and progress (Frampton, 1985; McNeill, 2009). The high rise, historically created for economic reasons, has now attained a “symbolic value” equal if not greater than its function as a container for human activities. These buildings contribute to the city’s skyline and give visual evidence to an image of modernity and membership to the global city competition. In addition they provide the infrastructure to enable the function of a service-based economy. On one hand there is the use of highrise buildings and skyscrapers to provide this accommodation for the provision of service and symbolism modernity, however, on the other hand there is an aspiration to include *something* that reflects the local culture.

### **Symbolism of the skyline.**

Lynch describes how we are “... continuously engaged in the attempt to organise our surroundings, to structure and to identify them” (Lynch, 2011, p. 509). City skylines made up of numerous high-rise and skyscraper buildings are curated to project a narrative, in this case a representation of a developed world city. “A skyline is the urban signature that defines the city’s identity and reflects its economic and global standing” (Al-Kodmany, 2013, p. 67).

Mixed with first world imagery, global connections and the inevitable one-upmanship of the global city scramble, high rises have ascended into super tall skyscrapers and other novelties such as revolving floors, lighting so the building appears as a giant billboard, or using cutting edge sustainability, all of which are designed in an attempt to be noticed. Lynch's observations of the city were based on the forms that contributed to the overall image of the city via experience. These included path, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks (Lynch, 2011, p. 506). Al-Kodmany extends these elements beyond the experiential relationship with the city to one as an external observer. The focus is on the imagery that incorporates these identifying features to include skyscrapers. In particular, their role is as a landmark that acts as a space marker in a city skyline (Al-Kodmany, 2013, p. 106).

Architecture and “the modern city skyline” demonstrate a visible transition from Third World to First World, when the imagery of the modern city becomes as significant as the function of the city. Architect and author Eric Höweler uses the term “mediatic” to describe the skyline that uses towers, as in highrise and skyscrapers. The use of

architecture in this manner is to ‘communicate to the masses’ (Höweler, 2003, p. 158) via dramatic scale and iconographic status.

### **Bilbao and the starchitects – global implications.**

The image of the city plays a significant role in global city rivalry, which is designed to attract attention to a particular area and encourage its fame and function as a global city. Klingmann singles out Bilbao, Shanghai and Dubai as old cities remade, that have utilised architecture to “enhance their image and elevate their position in the global village” (2007, p. 3). Buildings in these cities are used to define urban, regional and national identities. The Guggenheim Museum could be described as the “jewel in the crown” of Bilbao. It combines “... deeply politicised place marketing, the architectural branding of an aspirational art institution, and the worldwide projection of Frank Gehry as celebrity architect” (McNeill, 2009, pp. 81–82).

The resulting process, i.e. the Bilbao Effect (sometimes referred to as the Guggenheim Effect), implies a recasting of post-industrial cities into cultural centres by the construction of an iconic building designed by one of the global “starchitects.”<sup>13</sup> However the term, as it has come to be used, is a gross simplification of the strategic planning that was undertaken by the Basque regional government, with the Guggenheim Museum (Architect: Frank Gehry 1997), in Bilbao as the centrepiece of a success story. In addition to the opening of the Guggenheim Museum new infrastructure included: the relocation of the shipyards away from the city centre to a larger facility at El Abra Bay; the construction of the Bilbao Metro (Foster + Partners 1988-1995); a number of new bridges including Santiago Calatrava’s Zubi Zuri pedestrian bridge (1995), Pedro Arrupe bridge (2004), Euskalduna Bridge (1997) and new bridges as part of Zaha Hadid’s masterplan for Zorrozaurre a new airport (Calatrava 1999); a recovery program for the riverbanks; and removal of obsolete structures and railways allowing for a new system of urban spaces and linear parks (Marshall, 2001, p. 61). Projects that were part of the redevelopment of Bilbao from industrial to service based economies included new cultural districts, including: Euskalduna Music and Congress Centre (Federico Soviano and Dorlores Palacios 1994 -1999); Bilbao Exhibition Centre (ACXT 2007); Alhóndiga

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<sup>13</sup> Starchitects operating during the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century include (but not exclusively): Rem Koolhaas, Frank Gehry, Zaha Hadid, Jean Nouvel, Daniel Libeskind, Steven Holl, Toyo Ito, Renzo Piano, and Philippe Starck.

Bilbao (Philippe Starck 2010); and new governmental buildings, hotels, and university buildings.

The business plan for the Guggenheim Foundation is that of a global art franchise. Devised by Thomas Krens, the intention was "to establish a chain of museums throughout the world operating on a franchise basis" (McNeill, 2009, p. 82). This plan was created in response to financial difficulties experienced by the museum during the late 1980s. The Guggenheim Foundation currently has collections based in New York and Venice (which was established by Peggy Guggenheim in 1951, and became part of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation in 1979), and in the Spanish city of Bilbao. They will open a new museum on Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi in 2017. The Abu Dhabi building, like that in Bilbao, is also designed by Gehry.<sup>14</sup> Saadiyat Island will house a collection of cultural institutions, all designed by famous international architects. Other institutions such as the Louvre Abu Dhabi designed by Jean Nouvel will open in 2015 and the Zayed National Museum designed by Norman Foster will open in 2016. In later stages of the island's development, the Performing Arts Centre designed by Zaha Hadid and the maritime Museum by Tadao Ando will open although the developers have not yet published an expected opening date.

Bilbao is a post-industrial coastal city in northern Spain. Political tensions and a decline in industry influenced the decline of investment in the region as well as tourism. The consequence was a loss of economic and political power until the 1997 construction of the Guggenheim Museum. Since the opening of the museum, Bilbao has attracted over 10 million visitors in the first 10 years of operation. It has had a significant impact not only on the economy of the region, but also on the recognition of the city by a worldwide audience and the global perception of the city. It has become a model for regenerating towns and cities using a cultural and architectural icon.

In the later parts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the town's leaders created a concept for the reinvention of the city. based on inserting into the urban fabric of Bilbao a new representative of its culture which would place it as an architectural and cultural leader ,

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<sup>14</sup> The Guggenheim Hermitage Museum in Las Vegas (2001-2008) closed. Rem Koolhaas designed this museum. Planning was undertaken for the Guggenheim Guadalajara, Mexico (2007-2009) designed by Enrique Norton; and the Vilnius Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, Lithuania (2008-2010) was designed by Zaha Hadid. Neither of these projects was completed.



not a follower, in terms of medium sized European cities. In America, it is known as “boosterism,” where a small town or city deliberately represents itself using urban design and cutting edge architecture to enhance its reputation on the world stage. This is done in the hope that recognition will attract tourists and investors that will have a spill over effect to enrich the local economy. The iconic representation of a global culture becomes the vehicle by which the refreshed city is acclaimed, which allows it to command world headlines and become an instant member of the global competition for recognition. Friedman notes that globalisation is particularly about an international awareness, and that the nature of culture is reducible to the question of identification and thus identity (Friedman, 1995, p. 74). By using a starchitect to produce a highly visible and distinctive building, the city will draw greater attention to itself, which either announces itself as a global city, or differentiates it from other global cities. The use of buildings to create a universally memorable skyline and the iconic buildings that contribute to that reading of a city is captured by Sudjic:

This state of mind is the entirely predictable outcome of the bizarre quest for the icon that has swept architecture and has become the most ubiquitous theme of contemporary design. To stand out from an endless procession of economic basket cases equally determined to build an icon of their own to bring the world beating a path to their doors, an ambitious city must come up with something really attention grabbing. One Bilbao can shock its way into the headlines, but repeating the trick is the way to an architecture of diminishing returns, in which every sensational new building must attempt to eclipse the last one... form no longer follows function — it follows image. (Sudjic, 2005, p. 319)

Thus there is a concern that this focus on image becomes a replication of hope for a Bilbao Effect, rather than reliance on other factors associated with a building project such as function, budget and design for its purpose. Bilbao’s success is not simply the “serendipitous by-product of a startlingly original design, but the result of a conscious move on the part of city fathers to reposition Bilbao on the world stage” (Giovannini, 2001). Using this formula, China and the United Arab Emirates have used starchitects to bring caché and international attention to their new cities. Since the mid 1990s architectural projects have included those in Table 5.

**Table 5: Starchitect Projects in China, 1994-2014**

City	Architect	Building	Year
Beijing	Rem Koolhaas	CCTV Building	2008
Beijing	Norman Foster	Beijing International Airport Terminal 3	2008
	Zaha Hadid	Galaxy Soho	2012
		National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) (shortlist)	2013
		Wangjing Soho	ongoing
	Jean Nouvel	NAMOC (competition winner)	2013
		Beijing Opera House	1998 unbuilt
	Frank Gehry	NAMOC (shortlist)	2013
	Phillipe Starck	Lan Club	2007
Shanghai	Norman Foster	Jiushi Corporation Headquarters	2001
		UAE Pavilion Shanghai Expo	2010
		Vantone	2012 proposal
	Jean Nouvel	Volar	2006
Hangzhou	Norman Foster	Citic Bank Headquarters	2009
Guangzhou	Zaha Hadid	Guangzhou Opera House	2010
Changsha	Zaha Hadid	Changsha Meixihu International Culture and Art Centre	2013 proposal
Chengdu	Zaha Hadid	New Century City Art Centre	ongoing
Central, Hong Kong	Phillipe Starck	Yoo	2004
Central, Hong Kong		Mikli	2002
Kowloon, Hong Kong		Peninsula Felix	1994
Central, Hong Kong	César Pelli	Two International financial Centre	2010
Central, Hong Kong	César Pelli in association with Leo A Daly	Cheung Kong Centre	1999
Cheng Lok Chap, Hong Kong	Norman Foster	Hong Kong International Airport	1998
		Cyberport	2008
Shatin, Hong Kong	Zaha Hadid	Wirl Sculpture	2008
Various sites, Hong Kong		Chanel Art Pavilion	2008
Victoria Peak, Hong Kong	Frank Gehry	Opus Apartments <sup>15</sup>	2012

<sup>15</sup> The 8<sup>th</sup> floor apartment sold for \$470 million Hong Kong dollars and became the most expensive apartment in Asia when sold.

### The Chinese global city

In the literature on globalisation, modernisation and westernisation are often used interchangeably. When discussing these concepts in relation to China, we need to make a clear distinction between these terms. The method by which China has modernised is not a mirrored reproduction of a western model. Modernity, or the quality of being modern, was understood by the Chinese as a desirable concept in the years following the restoration of the Qing Dynasty from the 1860s onwards. There was much debate in China as to how this ‘modernisation’ was to occur, particularly in the face of western powers that sought greater advantage from trade with China. From this period onwards, Chinese reformers understood that China needed to modernise. The question remained how to do so under Chinese terms:

In 1890, Zhang Zhidong of the late Qing Dynasty proposed a compromise solution towards the overwhelming penetration of western influence suggesting “Chinese learning for the essential principles (*ti*), western learning for the practical application” (*yong*) (F. Wu, 2006, p. 3) <sup>16</sup>

Historian John Fairbank compares the concept of a “Chinese” essence with its focus on ethics and principles, to the alternative forms of “Western” culture, and its highlighting of science and practice. He describes the idea as “slick but inconsistent” and “attractive though misleading”, because it ascribes a priority to Chinese values at the expense of Western learning. Fairbank describes the differential of “Chinese learning as the fundamental structure, western learning for practical use” he continues “as though western arms, steamships, science and technology could somehow be utilized to preserve Confucian values” (Fairbank, 1998, pp. 217, 258). It was understood by the Chinese that the exact replication of western methods, ideas and strategies was not applicable to the Chinese perspective. The historic, political and cultural circumstances were too different. “Early attempts to import European ideas and graft them outright onto the existing social order failed to provide a sound ideological foundation for a new modern China” (Gandelsonas, 2002, p. 21).

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<sup>16</sup> Zhang, a politician during the late Qing Dynasty, was a strong advocate of controlled reform. While his focus was on military reform, his stance on reform is echoed to in contemporary politics.

Fairbank continues by arguing that much of the failure of modernisation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was the result of obstructionist attitudes of retaining Confucian principles by the Imperial Court:

... these attitudes handicapped early industrialization. Conservatives feared that mines, railroads, and telegraph lines would upset the harmony between man and nature (*fengshui*) and create all sorts of problems – by disturbing the imperial ancestors, by assembling unruly crowds of miners, by throwing boatmen and carters out of work, by absorbing government revenues, by creating a dependence on foreign machines and technicians. Even when modernisers could overcome such fears, they still faced enormous practical difficulties such as the lack of entrepreneurial skills and capital. (Fairbank, 1998, p. 219)

*Fengshui* was often used as an official excuse to mask other factors. A possible explanation for this was the positive response *fengshui* received from the British administration in Hong Kong.

#### **Alternate modernity.**

Prior to the signing of the Nanjing Treaty (August 1842) there were many debates about the issue of Chinese modernisation, particularly in light of the aggressive nature of western interaction. Chinese philosopher Liang Shu Ming (1893-1988) called for a synthesis of Chinese and western cultures which, nevertheless, would be distinctively Chinese (cited in Spence, 2013, p. 369). Liang wrote many books on the nature of Chinese culture and comparisons with western culture. The acknowledged differences in perception and social structure dictated that reform needed to be different to western replication. Liang was also critical of folk religion, including *fengshui*, and believed that its primitive nature would hinder Chinese development. He felt that Confucianism was China's answer to religion.

The challenges of modernisation and modernity are an ongoing debate in China. In 1988 CCTV produced the documentary *River Elegy*. The overarching theme of the series was modernisation, and it comprised part lament, part call to arms. The program was criticised for its evaluation of the past, in particular the failures of the Cultural Revolution and the need for cultural, social, economic and political reform:

This led to movements for westernisation and the “Chinese principles with western techniques.” There were still debates as to whether Chinese or western Culture was superior. Both the fantasizing of the “total westernisation” faction and the wishful thinking of the “3<sup>rd</sup> flowering of Confucianism” faction seem to return to old ground ... No wonder some young scholars sigh: the great cultural assets became a great cultural burden, the great cultural superiority became the great cultural guilt, which is undeniably a major psychological obstacle to China’s modernization. (Mi, 1988)

Li puts forward an argument about the adoption of previous, traditional cultural frameworks and the adaption of new, global western ideas, where the complexity of the relationship is often not only a matter of custom and change, but also to do with the translation in meaning created between the two divergent frameworks, which is not necessarily explained by a literal translation. The question of modernity and modernisation, including methods of modernisation, has not always been clearly understood nor satisfactorily explained in the case of contemporary China.

The word “modern” is translated into Chinese as *xiandai* — which simply means “the current generation.” *Xiandai* does not and cannot carry the rich meaning inherent to the word modern. And *xiandaihua* — modernization — carries only material meaning. *Xiandaihua* has been the overwhelming objective of the Chinese nation. One of the founding fathers of the People’s Republic, Premier Zhou Enlai, announced to the Chinese people at the end of the tragic Cultural Revolution that the Four Modernizations were China’s national aspirations: modernizations of agriculture, industry, national defence, and science and technology. These by no means add up to modernism. (E. Li, 2011, p. 65)

The principle of modernity in this case is both an ideological and an analytic one. It is ideological in the sense that Chinese modernisation should occur under Chinese terms and not as a replication of a western model, and it is analytical in the sense of finding suitable terminology to best express the complex notion of modernity in the Chinese language.

Commenting on the debate of an “alternative modernity” Rem Koolhaas is less diplomatic in his assessment:

As a city [Asian cities such as Hong Kong, Pearl River delta cities (such as Guangzhou and Shenzhen) and Singapore], it represents nothing more or less than the coexistence of a number of apparently unconnected buildings which, by the simple fact of sharing proximity, form an urban condition — and which is inhabited without apparent anxiety.

We find this kind of habitat a bit sinister, rather strange. This has two reasons. First, the conceptual difference separating Europe and Asia makes the latter difficult to understand, perceive, and analyse. Second, there is the Asian's defence of their values, the claim that a new modernity is being constructed, very different from what we are familiar with here [presumably the USA or Europe]. This last assertion is partly a mystification, but that there is a new urban condition that is clear. (Koolhaas, Boeri, Kwinter, Tazi, & Obrist, 2001, p. 310)

While not supporting the Koolhaas assessment, King proposes the argument that the wholesale construction of skyscrapers to signify notions of modernity, or “first world” is an outdated practice replaced by issues of sustainability. “From this perspective, China, as well as other nations in Asia, may well be entering a global competition which most of the other competitors have already abandoned” (King, 1996, p. 111).

Despite King's prediction, the competition within the global city network remains strong. Warned off by the universal negative claims for developed world modernism in the industrialised West, however, China has been searching for an alternative modernity, that is, a modernity transformed to meet the particular cultural, political and economic conditions that exist in China today.

### **National identity and culture**

The Treaty of Nanjing (1842) is an important demarcation point in the histories of Hong Kong and Shanghai. After the signing of this treaty, Hong Kong Island was ceded to British control until 1997, and China opened five treaty ports: Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, Xiamen and Guangzhou. The treaty ports established allowed foreign countries to establish settlements or concessions in the ceded ports areas. The governance structure enabled these to operate outside of Chinese control. This system replaced the existing tribute system which was a ritualistic and symbolic means of communication, designed to encourage progressive assimilation with non Chinese who were generally regarded by the

Chinese as barbarians. States that paid tribute signalled their recognition of the superiority of Chinese civilization by regularly bearing gifts to the capital. In return, the emperor manifested his goodwill towards the tribute bearers, along with the desire to ensure that peace reigned, thanks significantly to the tribute. States that offered tribute included Korea, Annam, Siam, Burma and Nepal (Vohra, 2000, p. 23). The tribute system had been operative in China since the Han Dynasty (206BC-220AD) (Fairbank, 1998, p. 112).

The principles behind the tribute system were based in Confucian doctrine, working with the assumption that China, the Middle Kingdom, was the epicentre of civilization and that the emperor, the “Son of Heaven” was at the top of this civilized society. Chinese tradition made no distinction between internal and external politics. As such the emperor was considered to rule the entire world. Bergère explains that China engaged in active relations with a number of Asian countries, and was not “closed to the world” as was often reported by merchants, diplomats and missionaries after the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The relations with other Asian countries worked on this tribute system, “in which westerners were unable to find a position that suited them” (Bergère, 2010, p. 15). Post 1842, the discontinuation of the tribute system called into account the perception of the Middle Kingdom, not only by the former tribute vassals but also by the Chinese rulers.

One important aspect of globalisation is the defining of national identity within its practices. The Chinese identity has been linked to a set of shared principles, rather than language, cultural definitions or social and political practices in China, but as discussed earlier, which China is represented? There are a number of components that constitute current Chinese culture, which have evolved following the political division over the past century, and include Nationalist China now based predominantly in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, foreign powers established their own communities in China, including the treaty ports of Shanghai, Qingdao and Ningbo. “Eventually these ‘Concessions’ or ‘Settlements,’ as they were called in places like Shanghai, became the centres of modern cities from which contemporary western ideas and technologies were propagated” (Rowe & Kuan, 2002, p. 2). In these treaty ports architects arrived from their country of origin and replicated the styles of architecture that were current in their

homelands. Some examples include Friedrich Mahlke's (1871-1944) buildings. Mahlke held a position as the German government architect in Qingdao (Refer to Figure 16).



**Figure 16. German Administration Building, Qingdao, designed by architect Friedrich Mahlke.**  
**Source: Bundesarchiv, Bild 134-B2410 / CC-BY-SA.**

In Shanghai, Scottish architect William Kidner designed the first Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation headquarters (1875) (Refer to Figure 17). Stewardson and Spence, also Scottish, designed the Shanghai General Post Office building (1922-1924) in the classical style (Refer to Figure 18). In Hong Kong and Shanghai British architects Palmer and Turner designed many buildings including the third generation of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Headquarters (1935-1936) (Refer to Figure 19), the Bank of China Building (1948-1952); and in Shanghai the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Headquarters (1921-1923) that replaced Kidner's building, Sassoon House (1926-1929) and the Bank of China (1936-1937). Some of these buildings included some Chinese details, but the overwhelming planning and style was European.





**Figure 17. Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, Shanghai, designed by architect William Kidner.**

Source: Virtual Shanghai

<http://old.virtualshanghai.net/GetFile.php?Table=Image&ID=Image.ID.311.No.0&Op=O>



**Figure 18. General Post Office, Shanghai, designed by architects Stewardson and Spence.**

Source: <http://english.eastday.com/e/shmb/u1a7633690.html>



**Figure 19. Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building, Hong Kong, designed by architects Palmer and Turner.**

**Source: P+T Group**  
<http://www.p-t-group.com/history.php>

### **Place and the design of space: Hong Kong and Shanghai.**

The global cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai have interesting similarities. Both cities were of minor importance prior to becoming a western colony, although Hong Kong was not the barren rock and fishing village as suggested by Lord Palmerston (Tsang, 2007). Both cities have complex histories that reveal that their “success” was not entirely the result of their interaction with foreign powers. The Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) resulted in many Shanghai businesses relocating to the British colony of Hong Kong, taking with them money and expertise. After 1949 and the establishment of communist rule, Shanghai entered a period of exclusion while Hong Kong was able to take advantage of being the gateway to China, with access to cheap raw materials and labour from the mainland.

### **Hong Kong: from ‘barren rock’ to global city**

Hong Kong was formally ceded to Britain under the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). Britain extended its lease of Hong Kong Island to incorporate the Kowloon Peninsula in 1860 and the New Territories in 1896. Hong Kong remained a British territory, except for the

period of Japanese occupation 1941-1945, until the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997.

Since its inception, Hong Kong has been a key intersection of different worlds, forever a strategic exchange node for firms from China to the rest of the world and from the rest of the world to China, as well as among all the overseas Chinese communities. (Sassen, 2004, p. 17)

Post WWII and post Japanese occupation large waves of migrants arrived from the mainland escaping the Chinese Civil War. With the proclamation of the PRC many more migrants arrived, and many corporations from Shanghai and Guangzhou shifted their operations to Hong Kong. Under British colonial rule, Hong Kong industrialised and became a centre for manufacturing using by mobilising the use of relatively low cost but locally available materials from the unindustrialised mainland.

However, Hong Kong's financial and trade success cannot be simply attributed to an outcome of western colonialism. While Britain was a dominant trading partner with Hong Kong, its colonial significance was not unlike that of Singapore, where Britain assumed the role as implementer for the reallocation and distribution of Asian goods within the region. Hong Kong developed existing opportunities such as trade networks with Guangzhou (Canton) and the development of intra-Asian economic networks and the international market. The city developed from a colonial outpost that served other economic purposes into a city of trade, commerce and finance (S. W. Chiu & Lü, 2009, pp. 20–21). Hong Kong also benefited from the large waves of immigration from the mainland during the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists (1927-1950) and after the Communists came to power. These people provided a ready source of cheap labour. Today, while Hong Kong remains an important global financial centre, there is uncertainty and vulnerability due to a growing mainland economy and the promotion of mainland cities such as Shanghai and Qianhai as potential rivals (Chen, 2013).

### **The development of Hong Kong's urban typology**

In Hong Kong the limited areas available to build on together with the government land holdings put pressure on the types of dwellings constructed and the high density in which people live. Most buildings are developer led constructions. After the 1980s Hong Kong became less reliant on manufacturing, which was outsourced to cheaper labour in the PRC. Services characteristic of the global cities started to develop with improvements in the finance markets, communication and transport. Not only did Hong Kong develop the functional characteristics of a global city but it also developed the architectural characteristics of one, the ubiquitous skyscraper.

Shelton, Karakiewicz, and Kvan outline the development of skyscrapers in the then colony (2010). From the mid 1960s to 1970s buildings had reached the 34 storey level (about 100 metres). After the construction of Jardine House by Palmer and Turner in 1972, originally known as the Connaught Centre, height limits consistently rose from 50+ storeys (178m) to 415m with the construction of César Pelli's Two International Finance Centre (2003). The tallest skyscraper at the time of writing (2014) is the International Commerce Centre at 118 floors (484m).

While the archetype of the skyscraper was slow to develop, it has been embraced not only in the commercial districts but also throughout Hong Kong, where it was adapted not only for commercial buildings, but also for domestic purposes, such that the skyscraper has become the standard housing model in the city. This became acutely evident following the movement of the old Hong Kong airport. There had been planning guidelines for the urban design and height restriction of buildings nearby which were aimed at protecting the Victoria Harbour ridgeline, thus allowing for flight paths for air traffic using the airport. A 20 to 30 percent building free zone below the ridgelines was introduced in 1991 (HK Planning Department, 2011, sec. 6.2.5).

Following the closure of Kai Tak Airport on the Kowloon side of Victoria Harbour in 1998, height restrictions were lifted which enabled skyscrapers to be built where previously flight path limitations had forced a height limit of 19 storeys (Ngo & Lau, 2013). Kai Tak is typical of Hong Kong, being a mix of housing with commercial and governmental zones (The Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2013).

In an examination of the changing skyline of the Central District, Abbas comments that Hong Kong reinvents itself every few years. This skyline not only underlines the domination of the marketplace, with the architect's signature functioning as a brand name, but Abbas adopts Zukin's argument that the market erodes the sense of a particular place (Abbas, 1997, p. 63). The dominant visual image of Hong Kong's architecture and urban space is focussed on skyscrapers which are the essence of the iconic skyline, and which are used as part of marketing and promotion that supports a narrative of Hong Kong as a global city.

The use of the skyline as a marketing tool for the image of the city is evidenced in the Symphony of Lights, a laser light and firework show held every night with buildings on both sides of Victoria Harbour serving as the theatre set (Refer to Figure 20). The light show, consisting of five major themes of awakening, energy, heritage, partnership and celebration, has the purpose of "taking spectators on a unique journey celebrating the energy, spirit and diversity of Hong Kong" (Hong Kong Tourism Commission, 2005).



**Figure 20. Symphony of Lights.**

**Source: Hong Kong Tourist Commission 2014**

**<http://www.discoverhongkong.com/au/see-do/highlight-attractions/harbour-view/a-symphony-of-lights.jsp>**

Since the economic reforms made by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, there has been a concern among the Hong Kong people that Shanghai will replace Hong Kong's position and function as a global city and international financial centre for China. Chiu and Lü's argument for Hong Kong's credentials as a global city are based on the concern that Hong Kong is at the mercy of decisions made in Beijing (S. W. Chiu & Lü, 2009, p. 161).

**Shanghai: from colonial city to global city**

During Shanghai's colonial period (1840-1940) the city transformed from a small town to an international metropolis with a major port. Western settlement visibly altered the fabric of the city. Architects arrived in Shanghai to build in the same style of buildings in their cities of origin. The urban fabric of Shanghai became a collage of international architectural styles.

The two interwar decades, the 1920s and 1930s, have been described as Shanghai's Golden Era. At this time it was the most important economic centre in China, but that role ended after the Japanese invasion in 1937, when the Japanese occupied the Chinese section of the city (and by 1941 they occupied the entire city).

At the end of WWII Shanghai continued a downward spiral as a city of influence, cultural relevance and social standing. This was due mainly to the conflicts of the Chinese civil war (between the Nationalists and the Communists) resulting in a lack of progress and the inexorable dilapidation of services, infrastructure and building. (Rowe, 2011, p. 44)

After the establishment of Communist rule in 1949, Shanghai became a depressed industrial city. Its revenue was redirected to other programs around China, the population decreased as the great resettlement of citizens into rural China took hold, and highly qualified or wealthier Shanghainese moved to other cities, such as Hong Kong, to escape the purges. With them they took not only their expertise, but also capital. To this point development of the city focused on Puxi, with the Bund being the remaining symbol of colonial Shanghai.

**Fengshui and globalisation**

What possible relevance can an ancient system such as *fengshui* have in the global city? In particular, why is this practice openly expressed in contemporary architecture in both Hong Kong and Shanghai? Both cities, while they share a common colonial background, had diverged dramatically and then reconnected in competition to be the premier global city and financial centre for China.

*Fengshui* in Hong Kong became a method of asserting power over, or as an act of resistance against, the British administration during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The colonial Government in Hong Kong took Chinese superstition and folk religion seriously, and as a result, Bruun argues, *fengshui* took on a greater political role in the expression of Chinese identity in the region. Monetary compensation for government projects that adversely impacted on a village's *fengshui* was common practice. This compensation lasted until the handover in 1997 (Bruun, 2008, p. 130).

However, Shanghai does not have the continuous relationship with the practice of *fengshui* that Hong Kong has. Shanghai, as part of the PRC, was impacted by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the Campaign Against the Four Olds (started 19 August 1966). The practice of *fengshui* was outlawed and banned as a feudal superstition. While today there is a perceived relaxation toward more traditional beliefs, such as Confucianism, it is still illegal to practice *fengshui* as a business in Shanghai and the rest of the PRC. From the 1920s to the 1980s *fengshui* was considered an historical artefact (Bruun, 2008, p. 119). So why is *fengshui* evident in the contemporary landmark buildings of Shanghai?

Reviewing *fengshui* through globalisation processes there are some theories that might suggest how *fengshui* is relevant to this particular context. If we examine *fengshui* as part of the tension between local and global, the definition of local and global becomes more complex. What is Chinese and what might be considered an authentic Chinese identity can be argued from many perspectives. Chun argues that a homogenous expression of Chineseness is a fabrication, and that constructions of Chinese culture are politicised, authorized and institutionalized (Chun, 1996, p. 115).

As discussed earlier, the nation-state is a construct of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, part of the expression of representative cultural practices, made by establishing self-identifying constructions and the subsequent relationship between those differing identities. Even within the great diaspora that is Greater China (the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and other overseas Chinese communities) the definition of "ethnic consciousness" is complex and has many representative faces.

In the process of globalisation, *fengshui* has become more about public ritual in the orientation of cities and buildings (and the decoration of interiors for luck), and less to

do with its original employment as a means to establish a relationship and connection with nature, heaven and earth, so its newly developed role has become largely symbolic. This leaves little room for the traditional practice of *fengshui* and its associated values.<sup>17</sup>

The following case studies investigate in detail the meeting of the global building and *fengshui*. The Hong Kong case study examines the relationship between the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Headquarters, the Bank of China Tower and the Cheung Kong Centre. While there were some elements of *fengshui* incorporated into the projects (and into some more than others), much of the *fengshui* dialogue attributed to these projects has been created as popular narrative after the completion of the projects. In the case of Shanghai and the three landmark skyscrapers of the Pudong, it is worth noting that American architects designed all these buildings. Although this is not unusual, indeed the projects in Hong Kong were designed by British, Chinese/American and an association of American and Argentinean American architects respectively. However the use of *fengshui* in the PRC is unusual, given the government's negative attitude toward the use of feudal superstition or cosmological references at any level, let alone as its use as one of the main identifying and promotional elements of the city. Was this a decision made by the architect or the developer? Or is this part of a larger sense of identification that uses more stereotypical or simple methods of identification to say "This is China"?

All countries communicate all the time. They send out millions of messages every day through political action or inaction, through popular media culture, through products, services, sport, behaviours, arts and architecture. Collectively, all these millions of messages represent an idea of what the nation as a whole is up to, what it feels, what it believes in. It should be the task of government — with a very light touch — to set the tone of these messages, and to lead by example where appropriate so that something credible, coherent and realistic can emerge (Olins, 2004, p. 169).

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<sup>17</sup> There is an argument, however, that *fengshui* as practiced by the Imperial Courts was already a ritualised version of a more ancient practice.



Globalisation operates via numerous processes that impact both at a global level and at regional levels. Early research on globalisation focused on a two way process, however as more research is undertaken the process becomes evidently more complex. In distinction to the homogenising processes, the heterogeneous processes become more meaningful in context of this study. Understanding the influence of global processes provides background to identifying how culture and identity are expressed in architecture. Of particular relevance to China is the interaction between retaining Chinese principles and the adaption of western technology. This has occurred in many areas of modernisation in China since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, through to the contemporary application in architectural design. The highrise skyscrapers in this context are used to promote images of modernity, wealth and technological sophistication - as well as a sense of multinational culture and identity that provides imagery for these global cities. This area will be explored further in the next chapter on brandscape, and in particular the emphasis on the skyline of the twenty-first century Chinese city.

*Fengshui* has changed as part of the process of globalisation. It has been translated into multiple languages and has practitioners in many countries outside of China and its traditional area of influence (the Asian region). During the push for modernity in China after the fall of imperial rule, the use of geomancy and *fengshui* was vilified first by the Nationalist's Republic of China, and then made illegal under the CCP. These predominantly cultural, legal and political levels of scepticism regarding geomancy and *fengshui* promulgated the reduction of a transfer of information about its practices from one generation to the next. Thus it can be argued that while *fengshui* is retained relatively intact in Hong Kong, the value placed upon the traditional practice and the reading of *fengshui* symbolism is inherently different in Shanghai. It is also true that the practice of *fengshui* had a separate and parallel application as a method of resistance and a statement of Hong Kong Chinese identity (first against the British, second against the CCP, and then the PRC). Applying branding specialist Wally Olins' logic to the image of the skyline and the articulation of identity through built form, can we say that *fengshui* is a suitable representation of Chineseness? Does it matter that *fengshui* might have very different meanings for the Chinese in different areas of China, and another significance for an audience which is not Chinese?



## **Chapter 4**

### **Brandscape**

The previous chapter outlined globalisation at a theoretical level, its application to the global city, and how these are represented in Chinese global cities. Globalisation influences the design of cities and the subsequent interconnections in those cities, such as flows of people, ideas, and information between them. This commonality influences the operations of the city, and its infrastructure which supports and accommodates these functions. Global processes absorb and contract both space and time, as distances become irrelevant and the transfer of information takes only moments. In contrast to these homogenising universal factors, there is also an increased awareness and importance of local characteristics or the particular within contemporary global cities.

Of specific note is the ongoing debate about an alternative Modernity in relation to the way China has retained its sense of Chineseness during recent modern development, and how these factors operate today's global markets. This chapter on brandscape examines how these global processes influence the design and symbolism adopted for use in urban environments and the relevance of narratives of localisation. Further, it analyses how and why these might be important in the context of the global city.

The city and its ensuing architectural and urban form are the physical expression of global interactions. This chapter analyses how ideas of cultural identity and alternative modernity have been expressed in architecture both historically and in contemporary cities. In addition to the use of homogenising factors such as the Bilbao Effect (the use of starchitects to design iconic and signature buildings), the use of cultural iconography, and design for media consumption are outlined.

The term brandscape is used to describe a collection of brands using the amalgam of the suffix ~scape, and the noun "brand." The term "brandscape" used in the context of

this thesis is based on architect Anna Klingmann's theory — outlined in *Brandscapes : Architecture in the Experience Economy*.

Buildings are not built in isolation. They express the socio-political and economic conditions in which they were devised, designed and constructed. By understanding how cultural identity is represented in architecture as a method of localisation, we can identify how *fengshui* is applied in contemporary Chinese architecture for this purpose. Further, we can understand the implications of its use and why these connotations are important.

We can suppose that cultural symbolism and its use as a method of localisation are used for differentiation, and for the marketing and branding of cities via iconic architecture including the development of iconic skylines (as with the case of Bilbao). However, there is a vast range of symbols used in contemporary architecture as expressions of modernity, power and wealth in addition to localisation. In the cases of Hong Kong and Shanghai, further narratives including politics (capitalism and communism), and cultural distinction within the broader definition of “Chinese,” are employed. An example of this is the master planning of the Pudong district. This will be briefly discussed later in this chapter, and in detail in Chapter 6.

*Fengshui* is used in the contemporary architecture of both Hong Kong and Shanghai. While we might make broad assumptions that this is relative to each city's Chinese cultural identity, the complexity arises with the differences in value that each society places on *fengshui*. In Hong Kong *fengshui* is openly celebrated, and is an ongoing part of Hong Kong Chinese culture. In Shanghai it is practiced with caution and illegally under the current Chinese Communist Party policy. Yet, *fengshui* is represented in the architecture of both cities. While there are differences in application and reading of *fengshui*, its examination through the lens of brandscape provides insight into how and why it is used in the contemporary architecture of these cities.

To address assumptions about cultural identity and its representation as part of the architectural landscape, this chapter will define what brandscape is, and, through reference to the literature, establish the precedents upon which this particular theory is based. This chapter locates brandscape as an extension of globalisation theory, and investigates a relationship between its practice, architecture and urban environments, while focussing specifically on an urban Chinese identity for Hong Kong and Shanghai.

From this information we can determine how *fengshui* is used as a cultural narrative for localisation. This information will be used to understand the evidence in the three case studies of the following chapters.

The city is a complex collection of physical and conceptual realities. Cultural theorist James Donald refers to the city as an imagined environment:

... there is no such *thing* as a city. Rather, *the city* designates the space produced by the interaction of historically and geographically specific institutions, social relations of production and reproduction, practices of government, forms and media of communication and so forth. By calling this diversity ‘the city’ we ascribe to it a coherence and integrity. *The city*, then, is above all a representation. But what sort of representation? By analogy with the now familiar idea that the nation provides us with an ‘imagined community,’ ... I would argue that the city constitutes an ‘*imagined environment*’ (Donald, 1992, p. 422)

When we focus on this definition of the global city, other factors come into play. The most significant of these is brandscape. Brandscape defines the architecture of the global city. It is an alternative experience to the physical experience of the city as described by urban planner Kevin Lynch. The images are designed with external consumption in mind and thus used in the marketing and branding of a city. In addition to Donald’s “imagined environment,” there is the “hyperreal environment.” This is the image of the city that is external to the experience of the actual place, and is curated for external consumption. It is the image of the city that is dependent on marketing and advertising of place. Numerous terms are applied to this type of representation including “mediascape” (Appadurai, 1996), “hyperreality” (Eco, 1986), “themed environment” (Gottdiener, 2001), “brandscape” (Klingmann, 2007), “mediatecture” (Kronhagel, 2010), and “spaces for consumption” (Miles, 2010).

The etymology of the word “brand” is as an identifying mark made by a hot iron (for example, on the skin of an animal). This term was broadened by 1827 to attribute meaning to a particular make of goods. From 1922, the term “brand” was used in the context of a brand name (Harper, 2013). Cultural theorist Liz Moor writes that the term branding has developed from one that was initially used for the marking of property,

ownership, origin and content, to “connoting different types of values, meanings and reputations” (Moor, 2007, p. 15). Branding specialist Robert Govers adds that the “brand” assists people in making an informed purchasing decision (Govers, 2009, p. 1).

Like many words that have multiple meanings, “brand” in the context of brandscape is used to describe symbolic architecture. Klingmann’s theory is built upon previous architectural manifestos of modernism (particularly Le Corbusier’s *Towards a New Architecture*, 1927) and postmodernism (particularly Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour’s *Learning from Las Vegas*, 1972). The architectural product of brandscape is iconic architecture, themed environments and architecture for the purpose of marketing and branding. The focus of this thesis, as noted earlier, is its application to contemporary corporate architecture.

Klingmann proposes that the representation of power in the architecture of brandscape is for commercial purposes. Historically, the owners of castles (state) and cathedrals (church) were the dominant patrons of architecture and the state and church respectively. Corporations are now the main consumers of architecture. The corporation may only be the face of patronage; in most cases in China, the Chinese Communist Party is the main owner of these corporations.

Brandscape is unique to global cities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the global city has a number of homogenous functions, but uses architecture to differentiate and compete in the global network. As such, buildings in the global city environment are used for marketing and branding at many levels. These include marketing to demonstrate that a city is part of the global network — represented by modern highrise buildings, contemporary technology, and the wealth to construct them — and on another level as part of differentiation in the expression of cultural identity in architectural forms. The expression of this type of narrative via contemporary architecture is discussed in further detail below.

Hong Kong and Shanghai can be viewed as part of the same global city network, but at the same time in ideological opposition, because there is a political tension between the development and place-making of these two contemporary cities, both based on a capitalist model, but with varying national, cultural and political roles. However, China leadership appears to be seeking an alternative way for both cities, as introduced in the

previous chapter on globalisation. The use of architecture and urban imagery becomes important not only in the representation of a city that can command attention in the global network, but also in demonstrating appropriate cultural identity, and in the case of Shanghai, carefully choreographed political ideology.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section addresses the application of the philosophical terms *ti* and *yong* (essence and form), in its application to architectural expression. The determination to create an architectural language that combines Chinese essence (or cultural identity) with western form has been explored in China since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some early foreign architects worked with Chinese forms and motifs to localise what would otherwise have produced a western building, and local Chinese architects who trained abroad, returned to China with their specific ideas a localised version of modernity. This approach to localisation has over many years been taken up by architects (including the Chinese/American I. M. Pei) and is evidenced particularly in the rebuilding of contemporary Shanghai.

The second section of this chapter is the prelude to brandscape and outlines the architectural manifestos integral to the development of Klingmann's theory. These key documents are Le Corbusier's manifesto *Towards a New Architecture* (1923) and the influence this had on the development of modernism; and Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas* (1973) with its discourse on postmodernism, and its subsequent influence on the development of brandscape theory. Klingmann examines these via an economic perspective and reinterprets them in the context of the experience economy.

The third section discusses brandscape as part of globalisation and its role in the global city. It examines how architecture has become a commodity which is utilised to market and brand a city. Theming and the reliance on signification are important aspects in the identification and differentiation of cities that compete with one another in the global city network. The fourth and final section identifies how brandscape is utilised in China. This section provides the background to the three case studies: *Chapter 5: Case study 1: Hong Kong: The Tale of Three Buildings*; *Chapter 6: Case study 2: Lujiazui Financial District Shanghai: Landmark Architecture*; and *Chapter 7: Case study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland*. The use of *fengshui* as a method of branding and expressing Chineseness is explored in detail in these cases.

### **Essence and form**

Architectural academics Peter Rowe and Seng Kuan use the terms *ti* (essence) and *yong* (form) as a method of unfolding the ongoing debate about expressing Chineseness in contemporary architecture. The Chinese politician Zhang Zhidong used these terms in the debate on Chinese modernisation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century (as discussed in the previous chapter). Zhang cited by Wu proposes that the solution to the overwhelming influence of Western culture led to “Chinese learning for the essential principles, Western learning for the practical application” (Wu, 2006, p. 3). Zhang’s policies advocated controlled reform during the Self Strengthening Movement (1861-1896). This movement was essentially a factional westernisation movement within the government to address how China was to react to western intervention, particularly in terms of technology and trade. This group was in contrast to the conservative Confucian dominance in the government at the time.

Traditional Chinese architecture had specific symbolic forms. Rowe and Kuan make the point that “according to Confucian virtues, ancient town planning and building formed a part of the *li*, or ritualistic aspect, of Chinese social and moral character” (Rowe & Kuan, 2002, p. 25). These include idealised forms that were part of traditional architecture such as roof forms and the roof bracketing systems, the towers and gateways that are consistent in traditional buildings. However the direct application of these forms to modern building functions can be practically problematic. Other aspects as part of *li* include principles of *fengshui* —of which site location and orientation are particularly important (Rowe & Kuan, 2002, p. 87).

Traditional design and construction methods had no relationship to the new building types that were being built during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rowe and Kuan adapt Zhang’s term to describe the appropriation of Chinese values and western aesthetics as it became applied to architecture. In many cases, as outlined in the previous chapter, a “familiar” architecture was constructed and there was little to distinguish a building in Hong Kong or Shanghai from a similar building in Europe.

By the early 20th century, there was a conscious effort by some foreign and local architects in China to integrate Chinese and western design principles. However, there were variations in the interpretation and understanding of symbolism, and the meaning of

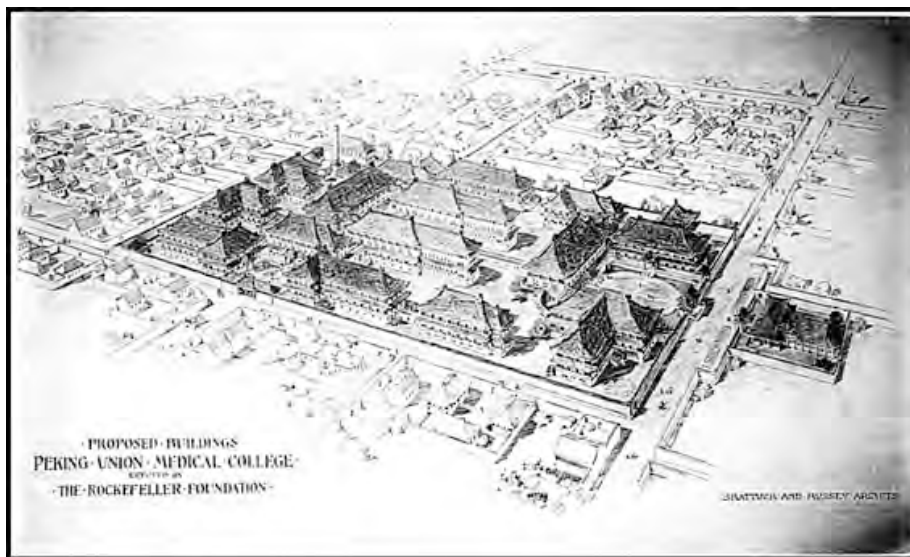


those symbols, which raised issues of appropriate application and the degree to which expression of both cultures, Western and Chinese, could be integrated. An example is the Peking Union Medical College in Beijing (1916-1918), designed by Canadian architect Henry H. Hussey (Refer to Figure 21-22).

The College was established by a number of missionary organisations from the USA and the UK with the assistance of the Chinese Republican Government, and was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. It is now part of Tsinghua University and is one of the most prestigious medical colleges in the People's Republic of China. Its planning is based on the imperial model, with axial pathways, courtyards, pavilions and south orientation such as is found at the Imperial City in Beijing. Its form also mirrors that of the Imperial City with traditional upturned roofs, tripartite massing, columns, and beams, although these are mainly decorative in this case, not structural, which reinforces the notion of a symbolic gesture rather than a literal quotation of style. Materials reflect traditional Chinese architecture, with green glazed roofing tiles, the grey massed brickwork of Beijing (which is used traditional on many local buildings including the *hutong* houses). On some of the major entry porches for the college buildings the architects have designed bright red columns to support small upturned roofs which is a literal quote of the particular style used throughout Beijing and especially the Imperial Style.

Other notable examples of adaptive architecture include Yale in China, Changsha (1913-1920) (Refer to Figure 23), the Yenching Campus (1918-1927) (Refer to Figures 24-25), and Ginling College, Nanjing (1918-1923) (Refer to Figures 26-27), designed by American architect Henry K. Murphy. Yenching Campus was a joint venture with Harvard University and is located near the Summer Palace. The university (then Harvard) was closed in 1949 and the campus is now part of Peking University. It was built on the site of the Royal Gardens that include the original ornamental lake and island, and functioned as the palace of a Qing Dynasty Prince. Its design also reflects traditional characteristics by using stylistic quotations of Chinese architectural language in its form, planning, materials and details. Roofs are pitched with upturns and tiled using conventional terra cotta rounded tiles with decorative corner sets and ornamented brackets to support the eaves. The buildings are composed using tripartite layering: a grey stone base with deeply carved windows (like the security windows of a palace); a mid layer of white rendered walls with red ornamental columns that appear to replicate the

shuttle shaped column of the Imperial Style; and the tiled roof that imitates conventional roof forms. Even at the main roof ridge points, grotesque terra cotta finials have been placed to frighten away bad spirits, and gargoyles have been fitted to parts of the roof forms for the same symbolic purpose, as they have been used in Chinese architecture for centuries. Throughout the Dynastic periods of China, finials also decorated military hats for the same purposes, although they were fundamentally ceremonial, and they were later transformed to become door furniture for the same symbolic protective purpose.



**Figure 21. Peking Union Medical College, Beijing**

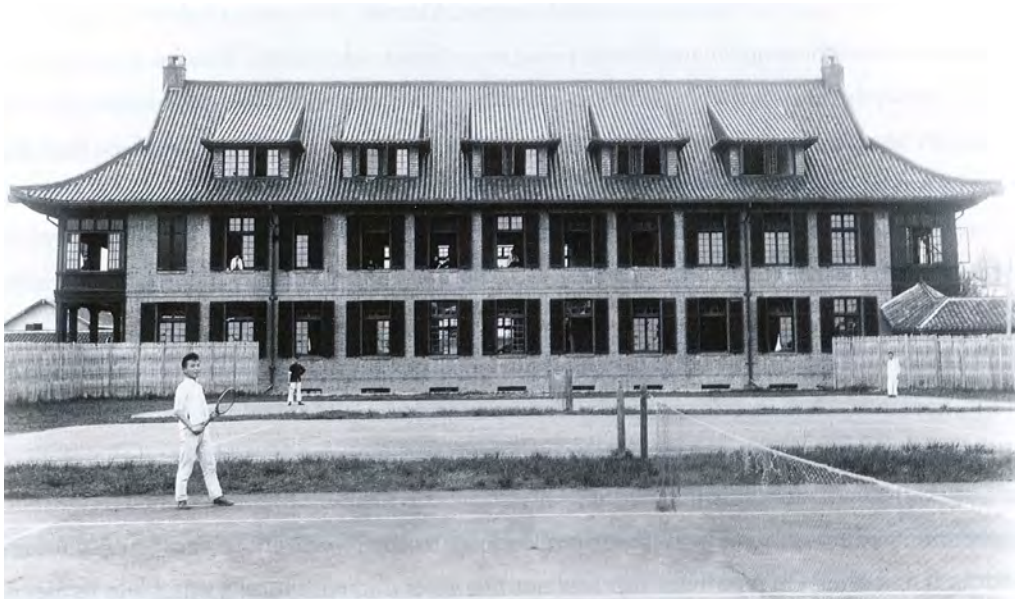
**Title: Peking Union Medical College: Proposal by Harry Hussey of Shattuck and Hussey for the Rockefeller Foundation**

**Source: [http://www.michellerenshaw.com/index.php?content=plate\\_16](http://www.michellerenshaw.com/index.php?content=plate_16)**



**Figure 22 View of front of “B” Building, Peking Union Medical College (1921)**

**Source: Cody (2001) p.84**



**Figure 23 Elevation, Yale in China classroom, Murphy & Dana Architects, Changsha (1914)**

**Source: Cody (2001) p.36**

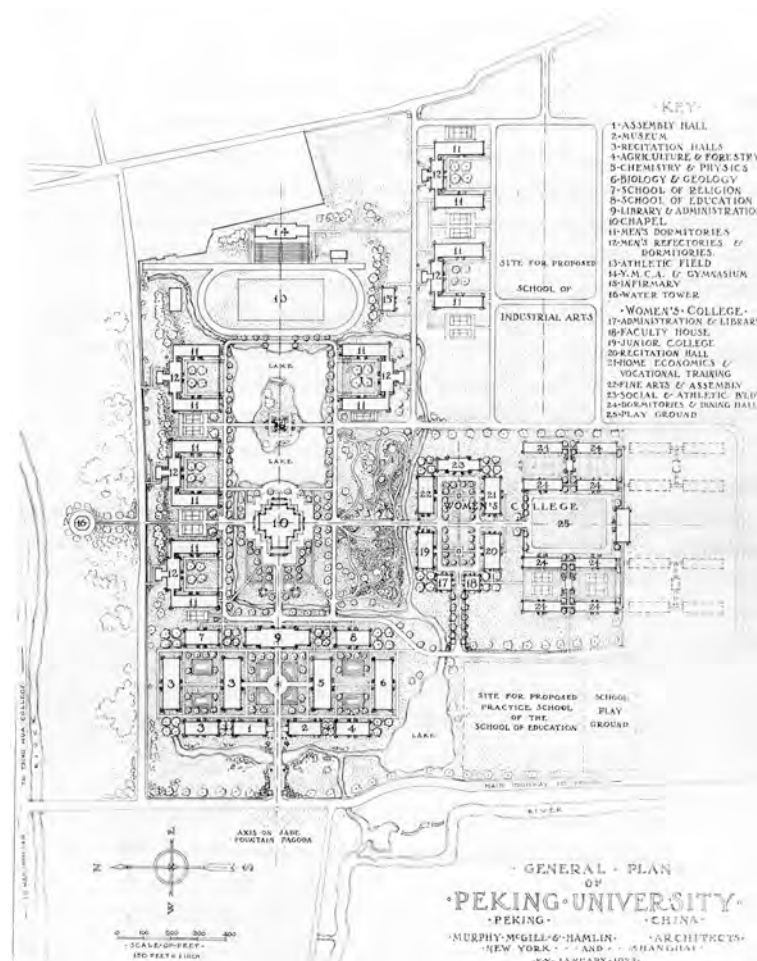
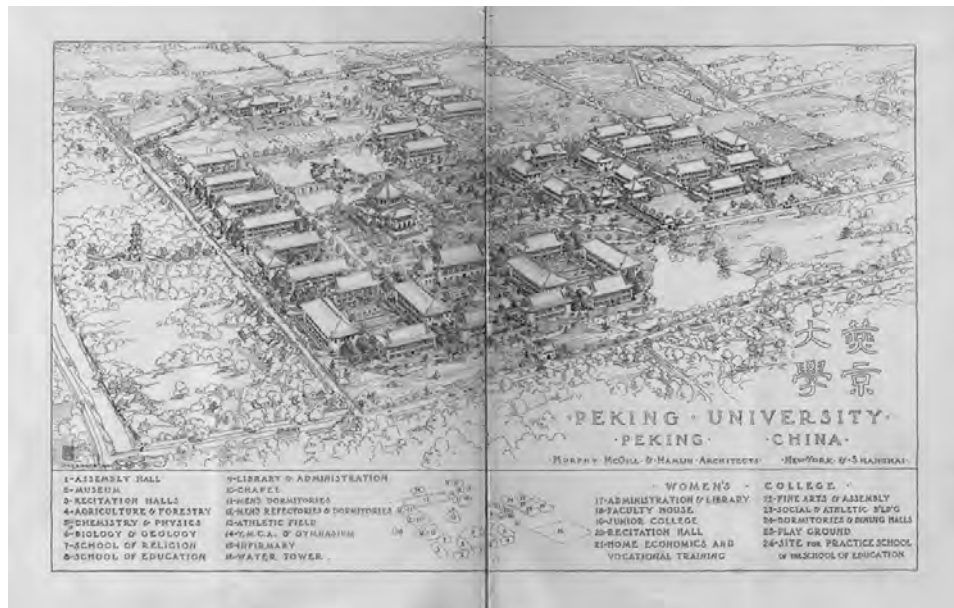


Figure 24 Plan of Peking University

Title: General Plan of Peking University, Murphy, McGill & Hamlin (1922)

Source: Cody (2001) p.122



**Figure 25. Yenching Campus, Beijing, designed by Henry K. Murphy (1921).**

Source: Peking University

[http://english.pku.edu.cn/News\\_Events/News/Campus/10219.htm](http://english.pku.edu.cn/News_Events/News/Campus/10219.htm)



**Figure 26. Ginling College, Recitation Building, Nanjing, designed by Henry K. Murphy.**

Photographer: Sidney D. Gamble (1920s)

Source: [http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/gamble\\_363-2073/](http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/gamble_363-2073/)



**Figure 27 Ginling College, Social and Athletic Building, Nanjing, designed by Murphy & Dana Architects (1919).**

**Source: Cody (2001) p.111**

Chinese architect William Chaund (1919) wrote, of this adaptive approach to architecture being crucial to Chinese identity in the modern period:

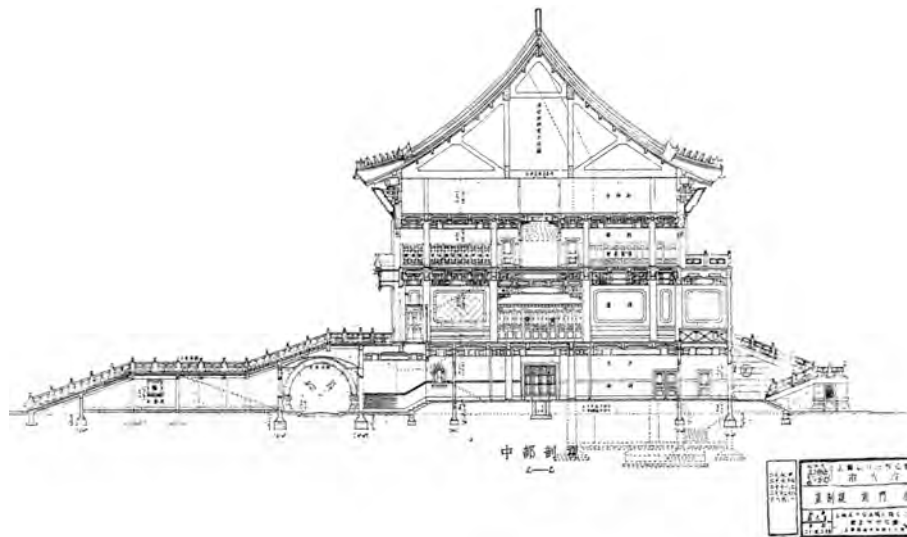
Hence while we admire the western achievements we should not imitate them slavishly ... Our native characteristic qualities and artistic accomplishments should be recognized and accentuated, not discarded — they should be conserved, developed and exalted in every possible way. Then, upon the existing forms as a base, and accepting our own tradition and ideal as a background, we will model a more vigorous style that responds adequately to the changes in thought and culture, and rise to the modern dignity. In this evolution, the ideal process will be one of drawing out from our minds — of developing originality of thought, inventiveness and adaptability: rather than merely absorbing — cramming and stuffing information from without ... The outstanding idea is this: the sum-total of our architectural development must be distinctly national in character and joyously Chinese in spirit. (Chaund, 1919)

American trained Chinese architects Lu Yanzhi and Dong Dayou also proposed this adaptive approach to western architecture using Chinese symbols such as the upturned roof, the massing or ordering in arrangement, the simple ordering of structural and construction methods, colloquial colours and a tripartite proportioning system to provide a symbolic Chinese character (Rowe & Kuan, 2002, pp. 61–69). Examples of these

include Lu's design for the Sun Yet-sen Memorial in Nanjing, and Dong's design for the Shanghai Town Hall (1933-1937) (Figure 28-29).



**Figure 28. The Town Hall of the special municipality of Shanghai completed 1937.**  
**Source: Raymond Vibien Family Album, Virtual Shanghai**  
[http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Asset/Preview/dbImage\\_ID-292\\_No-1.jpeg](http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Asset/Preview/dbImage_ID-292_No-1.jpeg)



**Figure 29 Section of Mayor's Building from *Zhongguo jianzhu* 1, no. 6 (June 1933)**  
**Source: Cody et.al. 2011 p.175**

The development of a coherent Chinese language as applied to contemporary architecture is an ongoing exploration. I. M. Pei's Xiangshan Hotel (Fragrant Hill) outside Beijing explores similar territory (refer to Figure 30). The Associate Dean of the Architectural Arts Institute at the China Art Academy, Wang Mingxian, writes of Pei's work at Xiangshan "The Xiangshan Hotel also triggers the search for a more nativized, traditional, or, more precisely, post subjectivist architectural thinking that emphasized the



harmonious relationship between humanity and its natural and social environment” (M. Wang, 1997, p. 170).

However, Pei’s work at Xiangshan was not without criticism. The exploration of Chinese symbols and motifs in the work was outside his modernist idiom and was deemed as resorting to a postmodern language of architecture and was labelled reactionary (Wiseman, 1990). Nevertheless Pei’s office describes this project as a strategy to consider a “third way:”

Underlying the design is a strategy to provide a “third way” wherein advanced Western technology is grafted onto the essence of Chinese vernacular architecture without literal imitation. ...Fragrant Hill thus draws from the living roots of tradition to sow the seed of a distinctly new, distinctly Chinese form of modern architecture that can be adapted, not merely adopted, for diverse building types. (Pei, Cobb, Freed & Partners, n.d.)



**Figure 30. Fragrant Hill Hotel, designed by I. M. Pei.**  
**Photographer: Dennis Wu (2011)**  
**Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cxbjsddw/6108451331/in/set-72157625331364414>**





**Figure 31. Suzhou Museum, designed by I. M. Pei.**

**Photographer: Kerun Ip (2006)**

**Source: <http://architecture.about.com/od/greatbuildings/ig/Museum-Architecture/Suzhou-Museum.htm>**

This language is further explored in later projects by Pei such as the Suzhou Museum as shown in Figure 31 (2002-2006). The imagery that Pei uses in both of these projects draws upon architectural motifs and elements typical of his birthplace of Suzhou. It is refined further in the work of 2012 Pritzker Prize winning Chinese architect and academic Wang Shu, such as in his design for the South Gate of Ningbo Museum, south of Shanghai. The building design adopts traditional building techniques and materials, often recycled bricks and salvaged timbers. This reflects Wang's respect for heritage and especially that of China, and puts his work at odds with globalised modernism.

However, the important point of variation here is its vernacular nature (the colours, tiles, materials, window shape and the use of the landscape) and scale of the work. While there is a sophistication of imagery by both these architects, it is applicable only at a particular scale of project. These motifs are not so easily transferred to corporate architecture in the global city, and in particular to the highrise and skyscraper types.

The ambition to localise what is otherwise a homogenous type of building can be achieved in many ways, such as through modification of traditional imagery as explored during the adaptive architecture of the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a method that is still in use in China. Further examples such as Terry Farrell's design for the Hong Kong Peak Tower (1995) (Refer to Figure 32) and Jean-Marie Charpentier's Shanghai Theatre

(1998) (Refer to Figure: 61) share a similar application of traditional images, and especially the upturned roof form.



**Figure 32. Hong Kong Peak Tower (1995), designed by Terry Farrell and Partners  
Source: Author 2014**

Like the previous projects, the articulation of time-honoured imagery and customary form is more easily applied to projects of a small scale, whereas the highrise and skyscraper buildings are limited by the nature of this particular genre, its height and function. In contemporary Chinese architecture there is an unresolved issue between the representation of China via symbols and narrative. Klingmann's brandscape theory may be a useful way of understanding and addressing the issue of localisation. Her theory suggests that the problem is not necessarily new, but its expression in contemporary practice has changed, just as economic conditions have changed.

### **Prelude to brandscape theory**

The manifestos that provide the background to brandscape theory are Le Corbusier's *Towards a New Architecture*, and Venturi, Scott, Brown, and Izenour's *Learning from Las Vegas*. According to Klingmann each of these manifestos is specific to a particular economy. Le Corbusier wrote late in the machine age, Venturi et al. wrote in the early service economy era, and Klingmann's theory of brandscape is specific to the late service economy era.

### **Modernism - the new Epoch.**

Le Corbusier's response to industrialisation was his manifesto titled *Towards a New Architecture* (1927), which was concerned with the benefits of standardisation and the opportunities brought about by industrialisation. . This was first published as notes in the periodical *L'Esprit Nouveau* (1920), as the book *Vers Une Architecture* (1923) and later translated into English as *Towards a New Architecture* (1927). This predated his manifesto *Guiding Principles of Town Planning* (1925) and his collaboration with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret *Five Points towards a new architecture* (1926) that develop further the concept of the house as a machine for living in.

The machine-for-living-in manifesto is a celebration of technology and a call to architects to embrace advancing civilisation (Le Corbusier, 1927, p. 128). In the section titled "Eyes which do not see" Le Corbusier looks at the early 20<sup>th</sup> century technology being used in engineering in contrast to the practice of architecture that was overwhelmed by tradition.

#### ***Liners.***

A great epoch has begun.

There exists a new spirit.

There exists a mass of work conceived in the new spirit; it is to be met with particularly in industrial production.

Architecture is stifled by custom.

The "styles" are a lie.

Style is a unity of principle animating all the work of an epoch, the result of a state of mind which has its own special character.

Our own epoch is determining, day by day, its own style.

Our eyes, unhappily, are unable yet to discern it. (Le Corbusier, 1927, p. 82)

The ocean liner was the main mode of long distance transportation in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The travel mode was designed to provide the most efficient movement from point A to point B. While there were different classes of travel, the experience was very different to the liner or cruise ship of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which has become a floating hotel. The earlier ships were the height of marine architecture and science, they offered an engineering of the fastest means of oceanic travel and safety prior to the age of aircraft travel.

Rereading Le Corbusier's arguments nearly a century later inevitably provides different conclusions, for while ships are still used for transport, the mass transport of people now is dominated by air travel, and as a consequence the harbour is no longer the gateway, and ports are no longer required in a central location. Their place has been overtaken by the modern airport, which is usually located as close to a city as possible, given the restrictions imposed by associated noise, size of land required, traffic and other logistics. The predominant means of transferring goods around the world is now container shipping which requires ports near transportation hubs, and not necessarily close to urban agglomerations. These changes in technology and economy have influenced the requirements of the city.

By reference to the contemporary floating hotel liners, such as those operated by Disney Cruise, Celebrity Cruise and The World, Klingmann outlines the marketing and branding strategies that are used to differentiate, market and brand these ventures. In contrast to Le Corbusier's representation of a liner as the height of technology, and a machine to travel fast in, the notion of travel in the contemporary era of great liners is now coupled with an expanded role as one of tourist experience, holiday packages, the ship as an entertainment and shopping centre, and associated means of on-board relaxation. The technology of these huge ships is largely insignificant to those who use them. Le Corbusier goes on to predict the future role of flight in his chapter on aeroplanes.

***Aeroplanes.***

The aeroplane is the product of close selection.

The lesson of the aeroplane lies in the logic which governed the statement of the problem and its realization.

The problem of the house has not yet been stated.

Nevertheless there do exist standards for the dwelling house.

Machinery contains in itself the factor of economy, which makes for selection

The house is a machine for living in (Le Corbusier, 1927, p. 100).

While Le Corbusier was optimistic in predicting in 1927 that within 10 years everyone would have the opportunity to fly, within 50 years flying had actually become the dominant mode of long and medium distance transport. As a result, the change in transport mode influenced the requirements for world cities. As technology developed,

functionality improved as expected, and choices of mode of travel became irrelevant because air transport dominated the travel sector. The choice to purchase a ticket and a mode of travel is based on best value cost, ease and safety, and as Klingmann argues, on brand and the differentiations made between brands.

### ***Automobiles.***

Le Corbusier also discussed the automobile as a machine for moving in, as another triumph of contemporary culture, adapting mechanical excellence, engineering achievement and modernisation. His optimistic salutation of the mode was made without the benefit of hindsight, and with no recognition of the dangers produced by clogged roads, exhaust emissions and associated environmental damage. This environmental oversight did not take into account the reality of diminishing fuel supplies and its attendant political and military complications, nor the annual carnage of lives lost on our roads which is estimated at 1.25 million people in 2010.

We must aim at the fixing of standards in order to face the problem of perfection. The Parthenon is a product of selection applied to a standard. Architecture operates in accordance with standards. Standards are a matter of logic, analysis, and minute study; they are based on a problem which has been well “stated.” A standard is definitely established by experiment. (Le Corbusier, 1927, p. 122)

Contemporaneous with the new industrial manifesto was the development of the Ford production line in 1913. The standardisation of materials and construction processes enabled faster assembly times, which reduced cost of the final product. Technological developments were being undertaken in areas of engineering such as bridges, tunnels, stations and factories, but in city planning and architecture (in particular at the suburban and vernacular level) the transfer of technology and the change in approach had not yet been demonstrated.<sup>18</sup>

Le Corbusier’s manifesto was to be read in the context of the development of technology (i.e. the liner, the aeroplane and the automobile), the particular economy (late

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<sup>18</sup> The Crystal Palace in London (1851) is the earlier and odd exception to this contradiction, along with the Eiffel Tower in Paris (1889). However, in the context of architectural history, these are anomalies and the methods of production used to construct the buildings were not taken up in mainstream architectural design for over half a century.

industrial) and a vastly changing socio-political environment. The key modernist calls for standardisation, universalisation, “form follows function,” and “less is more” originated in this period.

Klingmann’s analysis of the car in a 21<sup>st</sup> century context, like that of the liner and aeroplane before, is that the mode of production has become so sophisticated that customisation is enabled with the selection of a standardised product. That allows for individual variants which can be selected by purchasers, so the purchase of the vehicle/product contributes to the strength of the brand and creates perceptions of an improved value for that brand.

The principles of homogenisation, as discussed in the previous chapter and which is suggested by globalisation, defines the period in which Le Corbusier’s manifesto was written. His response to late industrialisation, such as the influence of Fordism, and the opportunities these prefabricated and mass-produced systems provided, was that they were not only to be used in manufacturing, but also provided a profound opportunity in the construction industry and therefore on architectural design.

### **Postmodernism.**

Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour confront the ideals of Le Corbusier’s *Towards a New Architecture* in their chapter, ‘Historical and other precedents: Towards an old architecture.’ Venturi et al. argue that with the second generation of modernists there was a reduction in the descriptive language of architecture. The focus was primarily on form and function which disregarded the significance of symbolism as a method of expression. In their 1972 theoretical text, *Learning from Las Vegas*, they stated:

... architecture depends in its perception and creation on past experience and emotional association and that these symbolic and representational elements may often be contradictory to the form, structure and program with which they combine in the same building. (Venturi, Scott Brown, & Izenour, 1977, p. 87)

*Learning from Las Vegas*, like Lynch’s *The Image of the City* (2011), relies on an experiential understanding of the city in which connotative images are derived from interaction with the physical place. The development of these design strategies produces a rich set of experiences and interpretations, even if the participant has not actually visited

the place. Klingmann explains that this is an experience lived vicariously through media, and not a memory created by an actual visit to the places.

Venturi et al. use the term “duck” to identify a building that is designed as a symbol. Their theory proposes that a nondescript shed could be “improved” by the addition of a symbolic or iconic façade. By contrast, a duck building is a duck form that looks like a duck, represents a duck and therefore, effectively is nothing more than ... a duck. For example, they cited hot dog stands in Los Angeles, where the stand was built in the shape of a hot dog, as a sign, to show what the building represented and its functions. Their argument was that systems, planning, structure and overall program should be subverted to preference an overall symbolic form. In its original form the duck is a sculptural layer (external) that is applied to a generic box (internal). The signifier takes precedence over the function. The form Klingmann identifies as the “inverted duck” is no longer limited by internal and external readings. Sculptural forms connect the interior with exterior in a way that forms fluid sequences of interrelated event spaces.

The idea of the “decorated shed” as defined by Venturi et al. in 1972, was a conventional building to which symbols were applied, that enabled the building to be changed quickly and efficiently, depending on circumstances. Due to the reliance on the symbol as the prime expression for the building, the monument *is* the sign and thus the bulk of the functional building is simply a container. This explicit demarcation of interior and exterior, public and private is also subverted in Klingmann’s inverted shed model. The building, or space, carries information that can be experienced not only by those who are in the building, but also by those external to the building, enabling multiple layers of perception. Klingmann argues that for contemporary architecture (and in Venturi et al.’s particular instance, the contemporary casino architecture of Las Vegas), the image has in fact become the architectural experience. This “stage set” is a development from the derivative styles of the inverted duck and the inverted shed that has become a transformation of material simulacra in the form of built environment; an architecture of the spectacle has arisen in which the shift away from consumption of goods, and towards the consumption of experiences and entertainment, becomes manifest in the urban landscape.

### **Brandscape.**

Klingmann uses Pine and Gilmore's 1999 *The Experience Economy* as a departure point for her theory of brandscape and how the experience economy applies to architecture.<sup>19</sup> The experience economy, Pine and Gilmore make the distinction between the different levels of value of the commodity. Using coffee as an example, the first level of consumption is the cost per cup of coffee at harvest, where the pricing is between 1-2 cents (first level). A manufacturer takes the coffee from this level, roasts, grinds and packages the coffee and the value of the commodity rises to between 5-25 cents per cup (second level). The added value when this coffee is served at a basic diner or corner coffee shop rises to 50 cents to \$1 (third level). When the coffee is served at a restaurant or espresso bar, the cost of the coffee rises to \$2.50 per cup (fourth level). While the coffee remains the same, the added value is increased at each step. The packaging, the environment or the theatre in which the consumption of the coffee is enacted adds to this perceived value.

Experiences are what drive this fourth level of economic offering: as distinct from services (and services from goods), but the notion has gone largely unrecognized. Experiences have always existed, but consumers, businesses, and economists lumped them into the service sector along with such uneventful activities as dry cleaning, auto repair, wholesale distribution, and telephone access. When a person buys a service, there is an expectation that the purchase provides a set of intangible activities which have been carried out on the buyer's behalf. But when they buy an experience, they pay to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that accompany that experience, as in a theatrical play, which will engage in a personal way (Pine & Gilmore, 2011, p. 3).

In modern architecture, the prime goal was to establish a common identity that was driven by three possible agendas: to perform, to appeal and to impress. But with branding there are a fourth and fifth agenda: to differentiate and to seduce. (Klingmann, 2007, p. 19)

At this fourth level, architecture contributes to the experience through theming and the design to create an impression or to reinforce a particular value. Design of an

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<sup>19</sup> The experience economy as described by Pine and Gilmore follows the service economy. The sequence of these economies thus far has been agrarian, industrial and service. While the concept of an experience economy has been researched by others including Toffler (1970) and Jensen (1999), Klingmann bases her brandscape theory on the work of Pine and Gilmore.



interior, a signature building or the development of the city skyline all contribute to the understanding of a brand and the perception of its value.

Architecture can either be the background to that experience (for example, as a theme or a symbol to an experience, such as a store chain like Starbucks, Nike, or McDonalds) or architecture can be the experience or destination itself, such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao (as discussed in the previous chapter). By extension, architectural design techniques using signs become marketing tools, so by using this contemporary analysis we can theorise how the branded environment utilises these signs and associated imagery.

### **The brandscape of the global city**

The economic system has a significant impact on the structure of the city. Philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1991), geographer David Harvey (1985) and sociologist Sharon Zukin (1993) describe in detail how capitalism shapes the spatial organisation of the city and how this continuously defines the urban condition. The post industrial city depends less on location and more on the availability of appropriate infrastructure (Marshall, 2001; Sassen, 2001). As discussed in the previous chapter, processes of globalisation have resulted in a homogenous set of activities that require space in which to operate for economic as well as symbolic reasons, where the high-rise and early skyscrapers become part of the language of urban civic identity. Like Le Corbusier's Fordist model, the archetype has developed to a point where more is demanded of the building than mere function. There is an expectation of identification and differentiation. This can be for marketing and branding, or as an expression of identity or power.

On the one hand the economic structure helps shape and define the form of the city. On the other, there is the perception of what a global city should look like (its symbolic form) that is based on previous models. The prime example for this is New York and its Manhattan skyline. On the other hand there is the symbolic representation of Manhattan skyline that is "by acceptance ... an increasingly global system of architectural signification produced by the logic of a private, profit driven system of capitalist land values" (King, 1996, p. 107). On the other hand there is the literal replication and construction of Manhattan in Yujiapu, Tianjin (Figures 33-34), scheduled for completion in 2019 (Wainwright, 2013).



**Figure 33. Yujiapu Manhattan development, Tianjin, under construction.**

**Photographer: Rob Schmitz (2013)**

<http://www.marketplace.org/topics/world/chinas-hangover/china-replica-manhattan-loses-its-luster>



**Figure 34. Investment billboard for Yujiapu Manhattan development.**

**Photographer: Rob Schmitz (2013)**

<http://www.marketplace.org/topics/world/chinas-hangover/china-replica-manhattan-loses-its-luster>

Applying Klingmann's model to the context of a city, the primary function is taken for granted (architecture as a functional object), however the secondary function is at a symbolic level. This secondary function is comprised of the imagery of the city and is open to multiple interpretations. These include an understanding of the accumulation of

signs as part of the symbology of a city, similar to Baudrillard's theory for consumption: "Accumulation is more than the sum of its products: the conspicuousness of surplus, the final and magical negation of scarcity, and the maternal and luxurious presumptions of the land of milk and honey" (Baudrillard, 2003, p. 94). The city works on a large and communal level to create a symbolic imagery that relies on its accumulated scale.

While in this case Baudrillard is making reference to commodities in supermarkets, the same interpretation could be applied to the vision of the city. Global cities require a depth of signage and their accumulation which provide a symbolic theme for a city, so the more buildings there are in the skyline the greater and more convincing is the image of the global city in relative/world terms:

... *brand names* here play an essential role in imposing a coherent and collective vision, like an almost inseparable totality ... We can observe that objects are never offered for consumption in absolute disarray. In certain cases they can *mimic* disorder to better seduce, but they are always arranged to trace out directive paths. The arrangement directs the purchasing impulse toward *networks* ... [which produce] a maximal investment, reaching the limits of economic potential. (Baudrillard, 2003, pp. 95–96)

Using these principals of an accumulated symbolism, Shanghai is promoted by the powers of Chinese politics, and also by commerce, industry and broad culture, as the world's window to China, which has been devised, designed and made to function as an attraction. Greenspan argues that while Shanghai is not quite a Potemkin village (an illusory stage set), the intent is not to deceive. Lujiazui is used to signify modernity and development and to attract international investment (Greenspan, 2012).

### **Brand terminology.**

Place branding refers to branding and building brand equity in relation to national, regional and local (or city) identity (Govers, 2009). Place branding can be used to mobilize value-adding partnerships and networks in order to build a coherent product offering. This may include tourism, trade, temporary employment and investment opportunities. Communicated in the right way, it creates the emotion-laden place experience that consumers are seeking, by bridging together an identity with an image associated with experiential gaps. Cultural theorist Guy Julier summarises the role of

place branding as “folding the function and symbolic together” (2009, p. 40). In other words, a place brand is a representation of identity, building a favourable internal image (with those who deliver the experience) and external image (with visitors) that leads to brand satisfaction and loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, and other favourable brand associations.

### **How has architecture become a commodity?**

In the process of establishing a place through its particular contextual identity and brand, architecture becomes a commodity. A commodity is a marketable item; the term is normally applied to goods, but can also apply to services. There is a general perception that nothing qualitatively differentiates commodities apart from the brand. The name of the architect can contribute to the brand equity, as does the starchitect system mentioned in the previous chapter. In the provision of the service called “architecture,” and given the large number of architects who have the skills and capabilities to produce competent buildings, architects differentiate themselves through strategies that highlight their skills, style, experience, and then they market those attributes in competition for work. Differentiation is also achieved in the way the building design is used: emblematic, iconic or signature buildings. Analogous with the different types of economies (agrarian, industrial, service) the requirements of architecture have changed. As Klingmann outlines, the expectation of a building is not so much about form and function, which are explicit; her concern is the building as an experiential exercise and a marketing tool, where in addition to function, architecture is used to symbolise. While architecture has long been used to symbolise power and wealth, there has developed a change in the patron who commissions architecture. No longer does patronage come from the historic bases of power, that is, the state or the church; now commercial organisations and political lords govern the ideology that will be represented in a building:

The commodification of architecture, like urban boosterism, did not spring new-born into the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, nevertheless, there is a general consensus that as capitalist globalization began to be the dominant mode of production, distribution and exchange from about the 1950s, architectural practice also began to change. (L. Sklair, 2010, p. 38)

In the framework of global city competition, when there are numerous homogenising factors, the last two points become crucial: to differentiate (to make distinct from others) and seduce (to be more desirable than others). While the Bilbao Effect is widely argued to be unsustainable, the process is still repeated, because the competition in which global cities are engaged demands it.

If architecture is a business produced under economic conditions the same as those governing much of mass culture, the principles of branding, when applied to architecture, entail the expansion of architecture's potential as a strategic tool in today's competitive marketplace (Klingmann, 2007, pp. 7–8). To add to this point, Moor explains that the branding of cities is:

... orientated towards the reworking, repackaging and re-presentation of both historical and existing 'cultural qualities.' Alongside a design programme that provides object-ive cues as to how the city should be narrated, both to and by internal as well as external 'audiences.' (Moor, 2007, p. 75)

### **Themed environments.**

The purpose of the themed environment is to create a theatre set for the purpose of consumption. Such environments are analogous to the theatre: there is the front of house that the audience inhabits; and the back of stage, an area that they never see. While the distinction in design between service (back of house) and served (front of house) spaces has long existed, theming extends this concept beyond its articulation in planning to include the whole environment. However, the communication of an integrated environment relies on a series of symbols to quickly identify and theme a space:

In sum, the themed milieu, with its pervasive use of overarching symbolic motifs that define an entire built space, increasingly characterizes not only cities but also suburban areas, shopping places, airports and recreational spaces such as baseball stadia, museum, restaurants and amusement parks. Progressively then, our daily life occurs within a material environment that is dependent on and organized around overarching motifs. (Gottdiener, 2001, p. 3)

The commonality of the themed experience has made consumers of these spaces adept in reading and understanding these symbols, and possibly contributes to an expectation that these symbols be provided. They are naturalised as a component of contemporary life.

Similar to Klingmann's system of brandscape, sociologist George Ritzer's system of "McDonaldization" (Ritzer, 2011) and sociologist Alan Bryman's system of "Disneyization" (Bryman, 2004) are essentially about the distribution and delivery of goods and services within a branded environment. McDonaldization articulates the production of standardized goods and services, while Disneyization expresses the method of consumption of the standardized goods and services within a global brand.

Both brandscape and Disneyization have developed as part of the condition of globality, but as Bryman points out, "there is a risk of a simplistic globalizing or Americanization thesis that depicts symbols of American culture spreading by design across the globe and riding roughshod over local conditions and practices, creating an homogenized world in its wake" (2004, p. 161). The condition contributes to a set of processes in which the global city and the global company have reduced our perception of existing borders and boundaries (Steger, 2003, p. 8). The new focus is that of a themed environment that represents a city in its global place with its own recognisable theme which sets it apart in the world pantheon and locates it apart from and (hopefully) as better than other modern cities.

The city has changed in what it represents, and how it operates in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and with that, our experience of the constructed environment has changed. Cultural theorist Steven Miles summarizes this point by stating that the city is no longer simply an expression of who or what we are, but is a venue for consumption experiences; experiences that tie us to the capitalist priorities that underpin our social norms (2010, p. 7).

There is a design process that is specific to the Disney model. Disneyfication is a design method that contributes to, and identifies the Disney brand. The process works on rendering the material being operated on (a fairy tale, a novel, a historical event) into a standardized format that is almost instantly recognizable as being a product of Disney (Bryman, 2004, p. 5). Disneyfication has methods that originate from film and animation production, which influence not only the media output of the company, but provide

guidelines for the design and operation of the theme parks, and the business management of the entire organization.

Ritzer first wrote about McDonaldization in 1993 (Ritzer, 2011). The precursors to this theory are concepts of scientific, industrial and commercial management, such as Fordism and bureaucracy. For Ritzer, McDonaldization is the process by which the principles of the fast food restaurant are coming to dominate an increasing number of sectors, first in the USA, and more recently on a global scale. The main themes are efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. This theory is older and more extensive than “Disneyization” originally proposed by Bryman in 1998. These are parallel notions, and both have overlapping concerns, but they are forged by inherently different processes. For example, Disneyization is the process by which Disney theme parks are coming to dominate an increasing number of sectors such as shopping centres, restaurants, and cultural institutions in the USA and now globally. The key concepts behind such environments are theming, hybrid consumption, merchandising, and emotional labour (where Disney actors are part of the experience) and all focus on consumption. McDonaldization, by contrast, is focused on production.

### **Disneyfication**

The purpose of Disneyfication is to ensure quick legibility of the artefact. An example of this is how Disney has very specific animation design rules to ensure that a character or scene is correctly interpreted within seconds. The principles of this method are adapted for use in their architecture and planning. Marty Sklar, the International Ambassador for Walt Disney Imagineering (2006-2009) describes this process relative to the design of animated characters:

You only have a few seconds to say something about a figure through your art. So we exaggerate their features, especially the facial features, so they can be quickly and easily understood from a distance ... we try to provide the illusion of life. (cited in Klingmann, 2007)

This approach is also applied to the planning and architecture of Disneyland and will be discussed in more detail in the case study on Hong Kong Disneyland, where the creation of a themed environment has developed beyond earlier banal examples such as fun parks

or themed restaurants, into an all embracing themed world. Sociologist and cultural theorist Mark Gottdiener explains:

In sum, the themed milieu, with its pervasive use of overarching symbolic motifs that define an entire built space, increasingly characterizes not only cities but also suburban areas, shopping places, airports and recreational spaces such as baseball stadia, museum, restaurants and amusement parks. Progressively then, our daily life occurs within a material environment that is dependent on and organized around overarching motifs. (Gottdiener, 2001, p. 3)

### **Marketing architecture.**

Julier suggests a framework which outlines four historical trends in design-led regeneration of cities. It comprises an overlapping of architecture, town planning and landscape architecture, within the framework of waterfront development, city boosterism, culture led regeneration and urban design.

#### ***1. Waterfront redevelopment.***

The regeneration of post-industrial areas to include new housing developments and high-end cultural infrastructure is one significant area of regeneration. Examples include London's Canary Wharf, Melbourne's Docklands, and San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. In 2001 an international architecture design competition was held for the redevelopment of Hong Kong's main shipping and commercial port Victoria Harbour, to create the West Kowloon cultural district, which is located entirely on reclaimed land. Whilst the notion of reclaimed land does not necessarily follow the mould of post-industrial redevelopment, the key factor here is that Victoria Harbour was to be reconstructed from being the main trading and container port for Hong Kong (and one of the largest in the world), to a leisure and culture destination.

Architect Norman Foster won the competition, and the precinct is still a work in progress as the developers and governments navigate the various political and financial hurdles of the project. Part of the development incorporates the M+ Museum designed by Herzog & de Meuron announced in 2013.

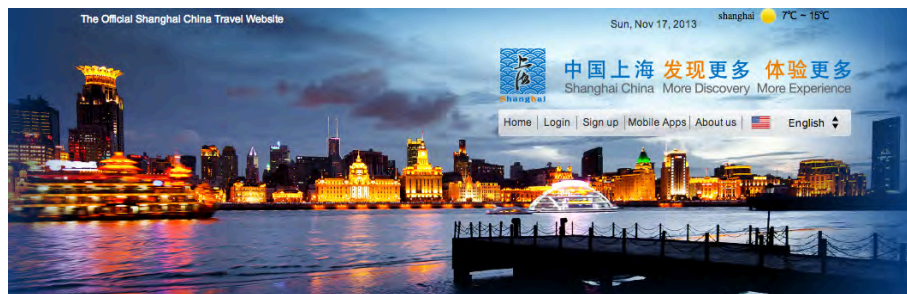


Shanghai's Pudong is also a waterfront redevelopment. Prior to development in the mid-1990s, the area was farmland with wharfs and warehouses along the shoreline (refer to more analysis of this project below).

## ***2. City Boosterism.***

The use of high profile public relations campaigns and the development of city slogans and logotypes have become a key and highly visible component of civic marketing. World cities compete to be seen as the “most liveable,” “most enjoyable,” or to have the “best financial centre.” Hong Kong's “Asia's World City” campaign started in the 1990s with a view to establishing its credentials using marketing opportunities (refer to Figure 1).

Shanghai's marketing campaign “Shanghai China, More Discovery, More Experience” uses the imagery of the waterfront. In this case the focus is on the Bund (Figure 35), but the marketing for Shanghai does not have the same vibrancy as Hong Kong's, probably because it is located on a river, not a seaboard. However the position of Shanghai is more assured than that of Hong Kong, because as the “head of the dragon,” Shanghai is sponsored by the Chinese central government in a way that Hong Kong is not.



**Figure 35. Shanghai marketing campaign**  
**Source: Shanghai Travel Website**  
<http://www.meet-in-shanghai.net/>

## ***3. Culture led regeneration.***

For successful marketing, there must exist a concentration of both cultural consumption and its production in creative quarters. In the case of Shanghai, the principles behind the projected images of the city are for the creation of an economic capacity and modernity coupled with a drive to ensure the nation's major city contains the

world's highest population. Shanghai was a world leading city prior to World War 2, and then suffered a diminution of its importance as Beijing's masters focussed on other centres for growth in China. However, in the past twenty years its sponsorship by government has been matched by commercial and economic expansion, to the point where it has become the major city of the region and therefore the prototype for a new China. Of the marketing of the city Steven Miles states:

... Shanghai offers a particularly graphic demonstration of ideological intent. Indeed, China as a whole will provide vivid illustration of how important outside perception is to economic aspirations of a rapidly urbanizing society ... the city of Shanghai can only be understood as a city intent on presenting its forward-looking face to the outside world. Shanghai is perhaps somewhat of an extreme example of how buildings provide an outward-looking face to be observed from beyond the city walls. (2010, pp. 78–79)

The design for the new Shanghai will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, by consideration of the city as stage set, and as a mediated city, leading to an enhanced interpretation of the new global city. Of key importance to the creation of this newly branded environment is the establishment of Shanghai as a particular place with its own global brandscape.

#### ***4. Urban Designs.***

Associated with these designed imperatives, there is an increased adoption of ideas in the production of street layout, including that of urban spaces with a concern for localised character and identity which distinguish the place. One of the ongoing concerns of local government with the urban planning of the Pudong in Shanghai was the monumentality that was expected of proposed designs. Details of the development of Pudong will be discussed in greater detail in the next case study. Monumentality, as an appropriate and iconic expression of Chinese and socialist values, underpins much of the new development in Shanghai.

Architectural critic Charles Jencks describes the “iconic” as a now identifiable genre of imagery in architecture, with its main characteristics incorporating fast changing and allusive imagery and the “wow” factor. In the particular context of cultural buildings,

funding is available only after the design has been tested for “brand image” and judgement is made by trial through media (2012, p. 283).

Designs by starchitects are influenced not only by a desire for their work to be better and more noticed in global cities, but also by the aspirations of those who commission them for a project. These variants, held by the world's leading architects, include the experiences of their education and how that is represented in their assumptions about design issues and the symbolism or beliefs that might be interpreted in any particular local environment. The purpose of these “starchitect” designed buildings is to distinguish a city as part of a global unit, to provide international recognition for a particular landmark, and for the city to become a tourist destination. Tourism helps build a heightened economy based on the new notoriety of the area, and enhances commercial activity.

While architecture critic Deyan Sudjic ridicules the idea of global city competition (determined by whether a city is included in a James Bond movie) that reality, as outlined by urban and cultural geographer Donald McNeill, — either through cinema or advertising - sustains the impact of a place and its positioning within a global culture (McNeill, 2009, p. 90).

The global city has a set of particular homogenising features that define its function as a serious world player. It has been established by embedding the city into global networks. The function of the city influences its design and its buildings, and their agglomerations contribute not only to the physical accommodation of services but also contribute to the image of it as a mediated city. As global cities compete with each other, architecture is used as a commodity to differentiate and identify a sense of place. In most cases, brand starchitects are used to provide readily understood signature buildings that contribute to the symbols used in a global city.

### **The brandscape of contemporary China**

Shanghai's Lujiazui was designed as a “symbol and image of the results of reform,” in contemporary China, according to Huang Fuxiang, who led the team at Shanghai Urban Planning and Design Institute (SUPDI) (Olds 1997, p. 116). When viewed from the historic Bund, the planning of the buildings creates a “wall” of modern architecture. At the centre are the super tall buildings: The Jin Mao Tower, the Shanghai

World Financial Centre and the Shanghai Tower. Greenspan describes this as an emblem of modernity:

The tall buildings in Lujiazui were built not just to satisfy the need for vertical expansion due to the lack of horizontal space ... but for the purpose of generating monumental symbolic value. In overshadowing the Bund, icon to a previous age, Pudong was designed as the emblem of a new Chinese modernity. (cited 2012, p. 85)

From the start, the importance of the international architectural cohort was not so much for the particular international and modern designs it offered, but rather as an advantage for Pudong's publicity campaign. Once the design competition was completed, the images, diagrams and models created by international architectural firms were used to further the reputation and promise of a new vision of Shanghai. Architects involved included Renzo Piano, Massimiliano Fuksas, Richard Rogers, Norman Foster, Toyo Ito, Kazuko Shinohara, Dominique Perrault, and Jean Nouvel. The competition shortlist included architects Fuksas (Italy), Ito (Japan), Perrault (France) and Rogers (United Kingdom) all working with SUPDI (Rowe, 2011, p. 50). The preferred design adapted the work of the shortlisted architects and included parts of previous proposals including Perrault's and Rogers' as well as earlier work going back to Chinese planner Huang Fuxiang's work in the early 1980s.

This design montage was replicated in brochures and websites and used as a marketing ploy to lure attention and investment to Shanghai. The development of Pudong, even at its planning phase, was undertaken as an exercise in the global branding of Shanghai, a method of attracting foreign investment and solidifying domestic support. The exercise was conceived as a showcase for the new China as it developed into a world power. Like Hong Kong before it, the imagery of the Shanghai skyline is paramount as a marketing vision; the clustering of buildings is designed to ensure that they could be captured in a single 35mm frame, which shows the future of Shanghai viewed from the Bund. Of the city, urban theorist Anna Greenspan writes:

Its glistening majestic super tall skyscrapers are the ultimate photogenic objects. They exist both to be gazed at and gazed through. Like all of Shanghai, they are best viewed at night, when the whole city is awash with lights and projection and

entire buildings are transformed into screen, further accentuating the flat surface of things. (2012, p. 85)

### **Rewriting fengshui.**

Just as Confucianism has been rewritten both by globalisation and by the Chinese state (to be understood as national learning) (Lai, 2008), *fengshui* can also be viewed within terms of a revitalisation and reworking sponsored by and useful to the state. In the previous chapter, conclusions were reached about the impact of globalisation on the practice of *fengshui* and that its application has been disembedded from its culture of origin. This is not a new concept, as *fengshui* has been adapted for practices over the Asian region, and is easily identified in Korea, Japan and Vietnam as well as in countries with large Chinese migrant populations. There are also a significant proportion of practitioners who practice, write about and reinterpret *fengshui* in non-Chinese nations. Black Hat Tantric Buddhist Sect in the USA is an example of this.

However, within China there is a rewriting of *fengshui*. While the practice and business of *fengshui* is illegal in the country, there is widespread evidence of its presence in contemporary China. While elements of its practice such as associated superstition, the hand over of money for advice, or the non-scientific/ feudal approach which is practiced especially in rural communities, are frowned upon, the use of *fengshui* as a symbol of Chinese culture is allowed.

While the case study buildings in Shanghai examined in Chapter 6 all demonstrate either explicit *fengshui* symbolism, such as the Jin Mao Tower, or an initial attempt to work within the principles of *fengshui*, such as in the case of the moon gate / circle and square symbolism of heaven and earth in the Shanghai World Financial Centre, these are not the only contemporary Chinese buildings which accommodate design principles of *fengshui*.

The use of the terms “essence” and “form” have been cited historically to explain ways of adapting eastern cultures to western technologies. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, technology and cultural adaption included military and economic reforms which were explored in some of the modern architecture of the early twentieth century. American architects Henry H. Hussey and Henry K. Murphy both worked with the adaption of

western buildings with Chinese detail. Chinese architects such as Dong Dayou used similar design techniques for the Nationalist buildings in *Wujiachang* (Warr, 2007, p. 266). This method of design was a literal application of traditional detail to a western framework.

Rowe and Kuan adopt the terms “essence” and “form” to express changes in Chinese architecture. With new technology, traditional forms apparently held no place, and in many cases the architecture built was entirely alien, designed by foreign architects and in unfamiliar styles. Some architects used an adaptive approach to their creative work in an attempt to develop an architectural language that would express some essence of Chineseness, in an attempt to provide a localised and more particular imagery to their otherwise modern western utilitarian designs.<sup>20</sup>

In a similar vein, branded environments are designed to provide not only accommodation but also imagery, which extend their architectural reach beyond the tenets of functional modernism. Of particular note is the development of Pudong in Shanghai and in particular the Lujiazui Financial district. It brings together the images of modernity — the ubiquitous skyscrapers — and adapts them using elements of traditional Chinese imagery which positions them as the three super-tall skyscraper crowns of that city region. This area of Shanghai was designed as “China’s image of growth, Shanghai is pure window display” (Greenspan, 2012, p. 82).

Brandscape architecture is specific to the late “service economy” (which is also referred to as the “experience economy”). Klingmann has referred to the mainstream manifesto of industrialisation (as expressed by Le Corbusier) and an early service economy (Venturi et al.), to describe the influence of the experience economy on the requirements of the city. There is a suggestion also of the way the city is designed as a reaction to, and in concert with that developed economy.

In the context of global cities, the developed means of imagery is used to identify and differentiate between global civic conglomerations and between individual city buildings. In the culture of brandscape, architecture has become a commodity. It is a tool

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<sup>20</sup> This thesis has not explored other influences such as buildings from the Sino-Soviet period. There are a number of Soviet inspired buildings including the Beijing Exhibition Centre (1954) group, and the Shanghai Exhibition Centre (1955), however examination of this work for adaption has not been undertaken.

in the marketing and branding of cities and is used to advertise and identify places as much as to function as a workable place. *Fengshui* has a role in this contemporary context, particularly in its populist form where it informs the placement of an entry for a building, how doors are arranged, the number and naming of floors, the perceived flow of energy through a building, and even the placement of furniture in a room. The role of *fengshui* has shifted beyond simple practice and part of Chinese cultural life. It is now symbolic of something Chinese and its inclusion in building projects is not necessarily due to the creation of a harmonious environment, but more as a representation of Chinese identity. In the following chapters the use of *fengshui* in the context of a cultural signifier will be explored in selected buildings in both Hong Kong and Shanghai.





## Chapter 5

### Case Study 1: Hong Kong – The Tale of Three Buildings

This chapter examines the relationship between the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building (1985) designed by Norman Foster, the Bank of China tower (1990) designed by I. M. Pei, and the Cheung Kong Centre (1999) designed by architects in association Leo A. Daly and César Pelli. While the majority of Hong Kong buildings adhere to *fengshui* principles at various levels, the three buildings under examination form a remarkable relationship due to their prominent location in the Central district, their function as corporate buildings, the economic, political and social context of their construction and the *fengshui* narratives that have evolved around them.

This chapter is the first of three case studies. The case studies on Shanghai Lujiazui Financial District (Chapter 6) and Hong Kong Disneyland (Chapter 7) examine the use of *fengshui* in alternative contexts to explain how it has been used and promoted and what this can tell us about its use for political, social, economic and cultural reasons. Using concepts outlined in the theoretical chapters on globalisation and brandscape, this Hong Kong case study will look at particular architectural projects with *fengshui* narratives, and will illustrate the development of the subject sites frames through these two concepts. This study also records examples of the range of *fengshui* narratives of other Hong Kong buildings to locate them as narratives of localisation.

This chapter analyses the individual *fengshui* narratives of the three buildings. As introduced in the discussion of broad *fengshui* principles in Chapter 3, there exists a divergence between the actual practice of *fengshui* and the popular narratives that are established around it, which are evidenced here. While the narrative may be based on a *fengshui* calculation or reading, the content of a *fengshui* narrative tends to be populist in its interpretation. Anthropologist Stephen Feuchtwang and sociologist Charles F. Emmons both found that the members of the general public they interviewed as part of their research could provide only vague generalisations about the practice and application of *fengshui* (Emmons, 1992, p. 39). However, the popular narratives attached to the prominent buildings are well known.

Drawing on the information and theories developed in the previous chapters on globalisation and brandscape, the contexts in which *fengshui* narratives are used can be mapped. This mapping provides the background of the *fengshui* story description for a building and how these characteristics might change over time.

## **Globalisation**

Hong Kong is situated in the Pearl River delta and this area has been an area of foreign trade since the Han Dynasty (202BC-220AD) (Turner, 1989, p. 82). Modern Hong Kong developed from a colony focused around the harbour and port facilities from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it became a British colonial outpost funded from the spoils of the Opium Wars. During the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, a ready supply of materials and cheap labour enabled the development of industry characterised by “Made In Hong Kong” products. There were supplied in large quantities at low prices that became readily available on the world market (Lee & Manzini, 2002, p. 140). Hong Kong has benefited from a strong industrial base since the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, which strengthened with the arrival of Shanghainese firms during the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century (Turner, 1989, p. 86).

The late 20<sup>th</sup> century transition from an industrial economy (Made in Hong Kong) to a service economy (Made by Hong Kong) required subsequent changes to the city’s development, leading to its position by the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a leading global metropolis, known for finance (25% of GDP) and the distribution of Chinese products to a global market (26.4% of GDP). It is currently the principal centre for finance in China.

Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms for China in 1978 had a significant impact on Hong Kong’s future. Special Economic Zones (SEZs) established in Shenzhen and in the Guangdong Region enabled, and it could be argued, forced Hong Kong, to take advantage of cheaper labour and lower infrastructure costs in these areas. This led the transition from an industrial and trade economic base to a service and trade economic base (Manzini, :2002, p. 60). This in turn had a direct impact on the requirements of Hong Kong both as a British Colony and as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the future shaping of planning and architecture:

The nature of the port may have changed, but Hong Kong has not changed as a port. In contrast to international cities like New York, London or Tokyo, which

are in relation to their respective regions central sites for the production of goods and culture, Hong Kong is primarily a space of facilitation. It is less a site than a para-site, in that its dominance in its region is due largely to its geographic proximity to China, together with its accessibility to the rest of the world. (Abbas, 1997, p. 74)

This dependence on world markets and Hong Kong's unique geographical position is reflected in its current development policy. Hong Kong's 2030 development scheme acknowledges its position as a regional transportation hub and a southern gateway to China (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, 2007, sec. 1.1.4). This 2030 document is part of a strategy to maintain its current position in light of mounting global and regional competition. Much of the competition appears to be coming from other centres in China itself. The continued establishment of further trade zones by the PRC ensures a constant pressure on Hong Kong to remain competitive.

### **From local identity to brandscape**

From the foundation of Hong Kong as a British colony until 1974, English was the official language of Hong Kong. The recognition of Cantonese as a co-official language was legislated at this time due to public pressure. Throughout the 1970s a strong Chinese middle class developed in Hong Kong. With increased wealth and power in business and governance, improved living standards fuelled the rise of a vibrant local culture. During the 1970s "a Hong Kong way of life was becoming visible" (Tsang, 2007, p. 192). This Hong Kong way of life was also understood in contrast to the experience of life in China under the Cultural Revolution. During the 1970s a generation of Hong Kong people emerged who had only lived in and only known Hong Kong as their home, as opposed to the strong regional mainland connections of previous generations.

With this developing Hong Kong culture, a distinction was being made about the difference of the Hong Kong people and Hong Kong culture in opposition to, and superior to mainland Chinese. Political historian Steve Tsang stresses the importance that "the recognition of this distinction was essential for the emergence of a Hong Kong identity, the existence of which become unmistakable by the beginning of the 1980s" (2007, p. 194).

Anthropologist Gordon Mathews refers to the distinction of the Hong Kong Chinese as “Chinese plus.” In essence this reflects the experience and development of Hong Kong’s people with western education and a cosmopolitan existence. Thus Chinese plus is Chinese plus internationalness and Chinese plus westernness (Mathews, 2000, p. 141). Cultural theorist Kimberly Choi reinforces this point:

Although Hong Kong people may see themselves as ethnic Chinese, many see themselves as different from or, again, superior to mainland Chinese and see Hong Kong city as different from, or again, superior to cities in China, culturally, economically, and politically. (Choi, 2010, p. 2)

To illustrate this sense of differentiation, Choi writes that the Hong Kong government has “networked with western symbols such as Disney, to demonstrate its ‘international’ semblance” (Choi, 2010, p. 3). This physical embedding of the city with symbols of globalisation and trade reinforces this attitude. The use of architecture as a means of differentiation is neither different to other global cities, nor unusual. However as Hong Kong is currently in competition not only with other Asian cities, but with other cities in China, there is a need to differentiate by its cosmopolitan lifestyle, “without which they [Hong Kong people] become just like the Chinese and Hong Kong becomes just another Chinese city” (Mathews, 2000, p. 159).

Aside from the functional aspects of buildings and infrastructure, there is a need for symbolism in the urban fabric of Hong Kong. This symbolism includes the layers of differentiation (from other parts of China) and cultural identity (Chinese plus). One aspect of the use of architecture as brandscape is as a method of differentiation: the use of branded environments typical of global cities is a successful strategy. However, as the PRC modernises and develops a consumer culture, this mode of differentiation will inevitably lead to competition. Choi’s research proposes that much of the rationale behind Hong Kong’s bid for Hong Kong Disneyland was as a means of differentiation by the accumulation of western brands (in this case Disney) in contrast to mainland China (Choi, 2010). The use of brands in this capacity is characteristic of brandscape theory.

Differentiation on the other hand can also be achieved through application of *fengshui* narratives attached to buildings. The branding in this case is of the global building type (differentiation from PRC), and this manner of narrative is used to identify

the building as Chinese. While many of the narratives might originate from the practice of *fengshui*, more often than not they utilise *fengshui* symbolism. This use of symbolism has historically been a means by which Chinese Hong Kong people could differentiate themselves from colonial governance, and has become ingrained in Hong Kong identity.

### **The history of fengshui in Hong Kong**

The Reverend E. J. Eitel's book *Feng-shui: The science of sacred landscape in old China* was originally published in 1873. He records some *fengshui* narratives of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century:

When, thirty years ago, the leading merchants of the colony of Hong Kong endeavoured to place the business part of the town in the so-called Happy Valley, and to make that part of the island the centre of the whole town, they ignominiously failed on account of Feng-shui. When the Hong Kong Government cut a road, now known as the Gap, to go to the Happy Valley, the Chinese community was thrown into a state of abject terror and fright, on account of the disturbance which this amputation of the dragon's limbs would cause to the Feng-shui of Hong Kong; and when many of the engineers, employed at the cutting died of Hong Kong fever, and the foreign houses already built in the Happy Valley had to be deserted on account of malaria, the Chinese triumphantly declared, it was an act of retributory justice on the part of Feng-shui. (Eitel & Michell, 1985, pp. 1–2)

Eitel's assessment and descriptions of *fengshui* are from the perspective of a missionary. Perhaps surprisingly, British governance of Hong Kong encouraged the development of symbolism of a Chinese culture in the colony, by acceptance of the practice of *fengshui*. It was encouraged by the British as part of local or native religion, even though the Chinese may have adopted the practice as a benign form of protest to their colonial masters. Bruun outlines this:

Particular anti-foreign resistance around the areas of foreign influence gave a boost to *fengshui* as a means of expressing nationalistic sentiments. Its capacity for accumulating odd pieces of philosophy and in practice everything that matters for a good Chinese life ... *Fengshui* was continuously nourished and developed as a separate idiom and an art of cultural performance in for instance, Hong Kong

– presumably further stimulated by the continued presence of foreigners and the willingness of the British government to take it seriously. (Bruun, 2003, pp. 64–65)

As discussed earlier, Bruun (2008) proposes that the British response to *fengshui* could possibly be one of the reasons behind the popularity and general acceptance of the custom in Hong Kong. Monetary compensation for the disruption of local *fengshui* by government work was commonly granted until the return to China in 1997 (Bruun, 2008, p. 138). However, there are still accounts of local residents appealing against government projects on the basis of *fengshui*. An example of this was in 2012, when a village in Tuen Mun (New Territories) made a legal challenge against the Hong Kong Observatory's plan to build a weather station on a site of good *fengshui*. The government offered a monetary settlement to conduct fengshui ceremonies to compensate for the loss of an auspicious site. The villagers rejected this offer. They claimed the tower would bring them bad luck (A. Chiu, 2012).

The narratives of buildings are not necessarily created as a result of architectural intention. Many narratives are created as part of popular culture and have taken on the status of urban legend, such as the angling of windows in the Murray Building (1969) on Cotton Tree Road in the Central district, designed by the Hong Kong Public Works Department (Figure 36). The windows were designed to filter direct sunlight and enable the building to be energy efficient. However the popular *fengshui* narrative about the angling of the windows was to ensure that the view was directed away from the graveyard in the grounds of St John's Cathedral opposite.



**Figure 36. Murray Building (1969) designed by the Hong Kong Public Works Department**  
**Source: Author 2014**

Another example is the AIA Building (1967) at 1 Stubbs Road, Happy Valley. The building was designed by Palmer and Turner (now the P+T Group) and won the HKIA Silver medal in 1969 (Figure 37). Author on metaphysics V. K. Saxena has described the building as “ominous” due to the coffin shape of the windows and the location next to graveyards (Saxena, n.d., p. 166). One urban legend attached to this building is that there is a coffin window for each of the people who died in a landslide in the area at some unspecified time. However the P+T Group’s website describes the design as:

Located outside the main business centres, the 21-storey AIA Building asserts itself like a modernist white sculpture against the lush green hills of Hong Kong Island. Column-free prestige office space is provided by using an innovative post-tensioned concrete slab, supported by a perimeter “exoskeleton” of columns ... The bronze tinted windows are recessed from the outside for sunshading, revealing sensitivity to the local climate. (P+T Group, 2011a)

The website suggests no connection to graveyards, memorials for the dead or landslides.



**Figure 37. A.I.A. Building, Stubbs Road (1967) designed by architects Palmer and Turner.  
Photographer: Author 2014**

The *fengshui* narratives of buildings do not necessarily have to reference *fengshui* per se. There is a culture of using visual description to create a narrative, such as in Palmer and Turner’s Jardine House (1973) at 1 Connaught Place, Central district. The circular windows were a design innovation enabling more structurally efficient openings thus reducing internal columns (Yeoh & Cheung, 1998, p. 74). A more poetic interpretation, and one which stretches belief, has described the design as “a familiar reminder of the nautical foundation from which Hong Kong’s history and economy emerged” (P+T Group, 2011b). The general populace however, ascribe to the building the title of “the house of a thousand arseholes” (Bailey & Witt, 2009, p. 55) (Refer to Figure 38). While this interpretation has little to do with *fengshui*, it is part of a descriptive story, the developing narrative that interprets buildings in a particular way, not just via the intention of the designers, but also through common interpretation and vernacular parlance.





**Figure 38 Jardine House, Connaught Place (1973) designed by architects Palmer and Turner  
Photographer: Author 2014**

There is an established use of *fengshui* narratives to describe buildings and localise them to Hong Kong. These narratives have links to popular culture, superstition and local religion. However, the narratives of the three case study buildings also reflect the social, economic, political and corporate authority that existed around the time of design and construction:

The remark that Hong Kong reinvents itself every few years becomes quite credible when we look at the changing skyline of the Central district ... The combination of rising land prices, property speculation, and the presence of large corporations vying for prime space results in a constant rebuilding that makes the city subtly unrecognizable. (Abbas, 1997, p. 63)

In light of the current rampant development, the constant change and an environment that is becoming increasingly indicative of a homogenous global city rather than an indigenous space, possibly the only thing that can localise Hong Kong within a global context *and* within a Hong Kong Chinese context are the *fengshui* narratives that are told about the environment.

### Three buildings in Hong Kong

The HSBC headquarters (HSBC), the Bank of China tower (BOC) and the Cheung Kong Centre (CKC) are located in the Central district, on Hong Kong Island. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Headquarters (completed 1988), was designed by Norman Foster, the Bank of China Tower (completed in 1990) designed by American Chinese architect I. M. Pei and the Chueng Kong Centre (completed in 1999) designed by architects in association César Pelli and Leo A Daly. Figure 39 shows the three buildings viewed from Chater Garden, showing the BOC to the left, CKC in the centre and HSBC to the far right. The Palmer and Turner designed former Bank of China Building (1935) is between the CKC and the HSBC.



**Figure 39. Bank of China, Chung Kong and HSBC towers**  
**Source: Author 2014**

In the introduction of this thesis, reference was made to the competition expressed in the architecture of the building of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation headquarters and that of the Bank of China. The competition was essentially an assertion of power made during the lead up to passing back control of Hong Kong as a

colony, a struggle conducted between the colonial masters (Britain) and natural inhabitants (Hong Kong Chinese).

Numerous generations of HSBC buildings have been located on the same site since the mid 1800s. The original building was Wardley House (1865-1882). The second generation building was designed by architects Palmer and Turner (now the P+T Group). It was in a Victorian style contemporaneous with other buildings in Central at that time. Palmer and Turner also designed the 1935 neoclassical version of the bank (Figure 40), HSBC Building in Statue Square. At this time the site was expanded with the purchase of the former City Hall. At the time of completion the Palmer and Turner building was the tallest building in Asia. Figure 41 shows the buildings in context: to the left hand side of the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank (top central) is the Bank of China building, also designed by Palmer and Turner. This building draws strongly on the design of the 1937 Bank of China in Shanghai designed by Lu Qiansho who operated in Hong Kong post 1950 as Luke Him Sau (Denison & Guang, 2014) with Palmer and Turner. The building to the left of the Bank of China building is the Hilton Hotel. The Hilton was demolished to make way for the Bank of China tower, and the Palmer and Turner version of the HSBC building was demolished in 1981 to make for the Norman Foster building. Foster's design has been described by anthropologist Christina Cheng as symbolic of the "last parade of British power" (Cheng, 1997, p. 107). Of note, in 1985 the Foster building was the most expensive building in the world constructed.



**Figure 40. HSBC Building, 1935**

Source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vandeleur\\_Molyneux\\_Grayburn#mediaviewer/File:HSBC\\_1936.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vandeleur_Molyneux_Grayburn#mediaviewer/File:HSBC_1936.jpg)



**Figure 41. HSBC Building, 1936.**  
**Source: Hong Kong Public Library**  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ngkungyee/3255122622>  
**Rear L-R: Hilton Hotel, Bank of China, HSBC Building, Standard Charter building (1964-65).**

### **The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building (1985).**

The HSBC buildings in Hong Kong represented not simply a bank; until the establishment of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, the HSBC was the official Government money clearing house. There have been three iterations of the bank on the same site. There was a saying in Hong Kong about money and power that “Hong Kong is ruled by the Bank, the Jockey Club and the Governor — in that order” (S. Williams, 1989, p. 15). The bank is considered to be in an auspicious location in Hong Kong, protected by the mountain behind, and the open area of Statue Square in front of the building. Despite the numerous land reclamation projects in and around the area, planning regulations protect the “view” in front of the bank, but, while the view above ground is protected, the area in front of the bank at ground level is not. In 1880 the site was a waterfront property as shown in Figure 42, and by 1911 land reclamation and ownership of the land in front of the bank as part of Statue Square protected the harbor vista (Figure 43). Subsequent land reclamation schemes have narrowed the harbour significantly from both sides, and constructions such as the Star Ferry terminal and multi-storey car parks have interrupted former clear land views. Under construction (2013) is the Central

Reclamation Phase III that will increase the land in front of the bank by a further 500 metres.



Figure 42. 1880 Map of Central (City Hall to top left hand corner)  
Source: (Empson, 1992, p. 164) .



Figure 43. Map of Central in 1911 (City Hall located mid- left of centre)  
Source: (Empson, 1992, p. 165)





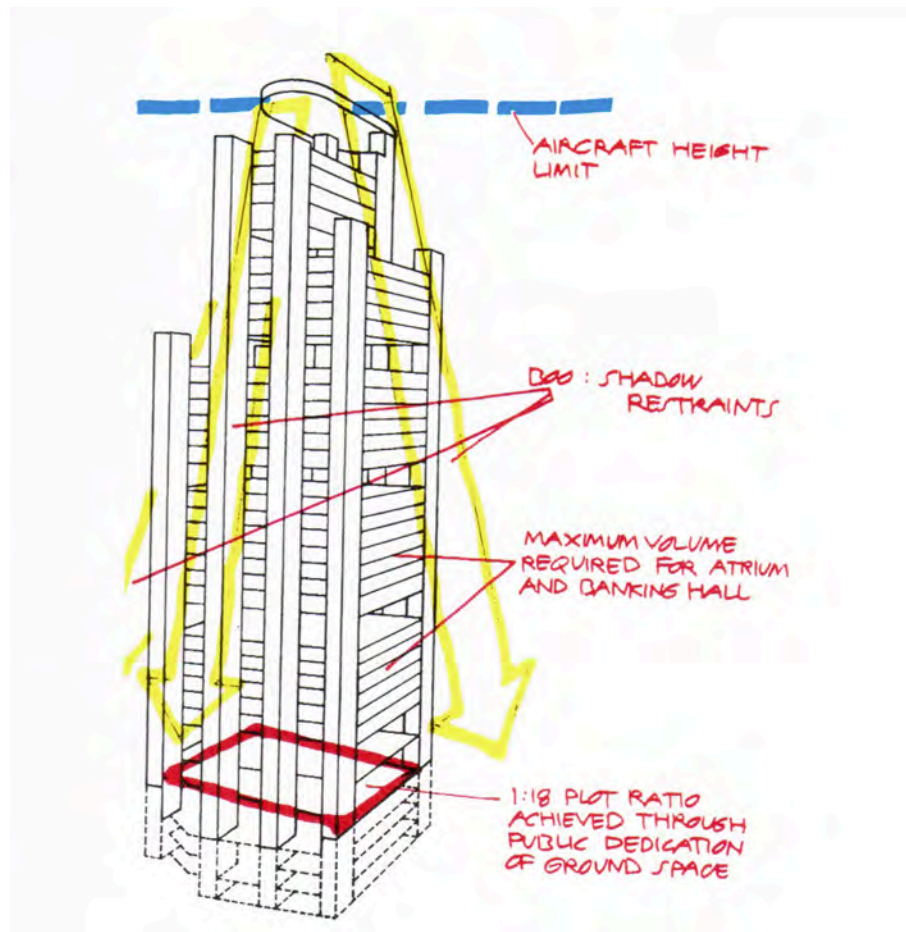
**Figure 44. Chevron Scheme For the HSBC Building**  
Source: Williams (1989) p.174

The design that was ultimately built was one of many. Foster's office had completed design development on what was called the "Chevron Scheme" (Refer to Figure 44). While the chairman had signed off on the design three weeks prior to the presentation to the board in 1980, the scheme was ultimately rejected. The red, downward diagonals of the structural bracing were considered inauspicious by the Chinese board members (S. Williams, 1989, p. 108). It became apparent that the chairman did not have the same convictions regarding *fengshui* (D. Bennett & Steinkamp, 1995, p. 89). Another modification to the design was the angle of the escalators as calculated by the *fengshui* master for the project Koo Pak Ling. As *fengshui* master for the project Koo Pak Ling also organised the timing of the relocation of the two lions Stephen (roaring lion on the left) and Stitt (lion on the right) that have become symbols of the bank.

Lions have been used as protective symbols since the third century in China. The lion is not native to China and originates in Buddhist symbolism. Thus the lions are more symbolic in appearance than a realistic interpretation of a lion. The lions are usually located outside official buildings or temples, originally for the purpose of scaring away demons (C. A. S. Williams, 1988; Z. Li, 1994). Traditionally the lion to the right is male

and has a ball, or a pearl under his paw. The lion to the left is female and has a cub under her paw. In the case of the HSBC lions, they do not follow the traditional symbolic representations of protective lions. However, they are considered by the public as part of a *fengshui* narrative about the bank and locals rub the lions' paws for good luck.

The open plaza beneath the building is worthy of note. Williams points out that Foster was concerned with the site being cut off from the pedestrian network and the inclusion of the open plaza assisted in rectifying this problem "If this reading of the building regulations could be used to persuade the authorities to raise the Bank's plot ration from 15:1 to 18:1, this could give it 20 percent more floor space" (S. Williams, 1989, p. 104) (Refer to Figure 45).



**Figure 45 Constraints on the building form, illustrating the significance of the plaza in plot ration terms, prepared for board presentation 1982**

Source: Williams (1989) p.174

By lifting the building and creating additional public space, the plot ratio calculation was increased thus supporting negotiations to increase the height of the building with the local planning authorities. The *fengshui* narrative was that the building

was raised to enable the flow of good *qi* from the mountain behind through to Statue Square. While this relationship with Victoria Harbour and Victoria Peak access did not exist in any of the previous generation of HSBC building, it is a *fengshui* narrative that persists:

As a consequence, the *fengshui* narrative was that the building was raised with a huge open “belly” to enable the flow of good *qi* from Victoria Mountain behind through to Statue Square and out into the harbour.

According to fengshui principles the flow of energy from the peak to the harbour is critical to the financial well-being of the city. According to geomancers, by raising the tower off the ground and creating a continuous public space at the ground level, the flow of auspicious energy is maintained and channelled into the bank along carefully positioned escalators. (Höweler, 2003, p. 36)

The square itself is built on land which was reclaimed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Fengshui* Master Raymond Lo describes the *fengshui* flow as that of a “Horse head dragon’s den.” (Uhrmeister, 2001). The flow is described as such because the mountain looks like the shape of a horse’s head drinking from the water in the square and the harbour beyond. While this relationship with the harbour (allowing the movement of energy beneath the Bank) did not exist in any of the previous generation of HSBC buildings, it is a *fengshui* parable that supports a positive view for the contemporary Bank.

In making the comparison between the BOC tower and the HSBC building and the relationship between a Hong Kong public’s consciousness it is noted that one was built on a haunted site, the other on an auspicious one. One building allows for the flow of *qi* under the building to benefit Hong Kong, the other sends bad *qi* around Hong Kong. This is reflected in the ongoing competition between the two banks. Of this rivalry, architectural critic Deyan Sudjic writes:

One of *Mao Tse Tung’s* first acts as the ruler of China after his victory over the Nationalists in 1948 was to authorize the addition of an attic story to the roof of the Bank of China building in Hong Kong. It was a gesture designed to make Mao’s bank fractionally taller than its capitalist neighbour, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, and amounted to a deliberate and costly assertion of China’s claims to eventual sovereignty over the colony. (Sudjic, 1986, p. 148)



This rivalry is also expressed in the *fengshui* narratives of their respective buildings, whether in interpreting the angle on the BOC tower or the shape of the window cleaning mechanisms on the HSBC building (as cannons facing the BOC tower) as shown in Figure 39 (Wong, 2001, p. 18). While Foster could not have foreseen the competition from Pei's building, their respective designs have been inextricably linked by the creation of *fengshui* narratives, opinions and analysis. To this mix was added the political instability and mistrust of Beijing's intentions prior to the handover of British colonial Hong Kong to the PRC in 1997, and not forgetting the memories of Tiananmen Square in 1989 and other political characteristics associated with Communist rule in China.



Figure 46. Window cleaning mechanisms on the HSBC building.

Source: Author 2014

Foster's design did not escape the "urban legends" that were reflective of the uncertainty of what might happen to Hong Kong after the handover in 1997. It has been described as a kit of parts (which refers to the bolted steel construction system of the building), which reinforces the delusional paranoia about the handover, and that reinterpretation became an urban legend from the early 1990s. The kit of parts was interpreted as meaning that the building could be dismantled and extensions of this story conveyed the possibility of it being shipped as parts out of Hong Kong in the weeks leading up to the handover in 1997. Tunnels underneath the building were designed to bring water from the harbour to assist in the cooling of the air conditioning system, but they were interpreted as escape tunnels to allow for carting money from the bank vaults to submarines waiting in the harbor. The basis of this legend is traced back to the

experience of many people, both Chinese and foreign, as they escaped Shanghai either as part of the Japanese invasion (1937-1945) or the Communist victory in China (1949), or of deprivation of people living in Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation (1941-1945) when money and property were seized if it had not previously been expatriated.

The building however, has taken on iconic status and has been used on most issues of bank notes from the HSBC since its construction (with the exception of the 2003 issue). The note issue released in 2010 had both the lion and the building as symbols (Figure 47). The bank building is thus used as a symbol of the identity, marketing, and branding of Hong Kong.



Figure 47 HSBC issued HK\$10 (1992)

Source: <http://coinnurrencycollection.blogspot.com.au/2012/10/banknotes-from-hong-kong.html>

### **The Bank of China Tower (1990).**

The BOC is one of the major state-owned banks in the PRC. As such, the actions and views of the bank need to reflect the actions and views of the CCP. The building is a representation of political values; essentially the CCP is atheistic and as such, expressions of belief, such as *fengshui*, are not tolerated. While it may be practiced in private, the open use of *fengshui* is not officially sanctioned. As with many practices in China, things operate on two levels: one official and endorsed, the other practical and unauthorized.

Document 19 of the *Chinese Constitution* outlines the status of religions (Chinese Communist Party, 1982). Geomancy (and by extension *fengshui*) is defined as a feudal superstition and is illegal. Skinner makes a note regarding the practice of *fengshui* in the PRC:

It is illegal in the People's Republic of China today to register feng shui consultation as a business, and similarly advertising feng shui practice is banned. There have been frequent crackdowns on feng shui practitioners on the grounds they were "promoting feudalistic superstitions." Some Communist officials who had previously consulted feng shui practitioners apparently lost their jobs and were expelled from the party. (Skinner, 2012, p. 133)

At the time leading up to Hong Kong being returned to the PRC by Great Britain in 1997, there was great uncertainty about what this change in governance might mean. Design historian Daniel Huppatz points out several of these fears:

Firstly, the Hong Kong population's fear of possible changes under Chinese rule, especially to rights they had become accustomed to under British colonial rule, secondly, many Hong Kongers (or their parents) had fled Communism for the colony's relative freedom: and thirdly, the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 was seen in Hong Kong as a warning of what might lie in store for Hong Kong residents post-1997. (Huppatz, 2009)

The BOC tower was designed and built within this context. Wiseman notes that the bank was "eager to have a building in Hong Kong that would stand as a monument both to the unification of the former colony with the mainland and China's re-emergence as a full participant in international financial affairs" (Wiseman, 1990, p. 286). The famed Chinese-American architect I.M. Pei was approached to design the building. Pei is a Pritzker prize winning architect and renowned modernist, and had previously designed buildings including The National Gallery of Art, Washington (opened in 1978), the John F Kennedy Library and Museum in Boston (opened 1979), and the Grand Louvre, the renovation and additions to the Musée du Louvre in Paris (opened 1988). Pei's conceptual design processes had been preoccupied with geometric form and structure, and his approach to the design of the BOC tower was no different. The building was also to be a symbolic gesture in part from the BOC as notice of a fresh future in Hong Kong, but also as a representation of modernity and interaction with western markets on the part of the PRC. The use of Pei was significant not only as an internationally renowned architect, but as a Chinese American. This building would be the second that Pei designed for Hong Kong (Refer to Figure 48).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The first building was Sunning Plaza in Causeway Bay in 1982.



**Figure 48 Bank of China Tower, designed by I. M. Pei (1990)**

**Photographer: Author 2005**

At the time of construction the tower was the tallest building in Hong Kong (again topping HSBC's building). Pei worked with the structural engineer Leslie Robertson to design a tower that was capable of withstanding the annual typhoon season, but that also demonstrated Pei's deft hand at the manipulation of geometric shape and form. There is a story about Pei developing his structure for the building using a bundle of sticks, which Jordy describes as legendary (2005). The building is significant in the rethinking of the idea of tower construction, in terms of its structural system. It integrated what had been more commonly designed as separate systems for wind and gravity by loading those components into a single building system.

The site for the tower was 1 Garden Road, Central, where Murray House stood. This building had been part of the British military barracks that had been housed there and the Japanese Military police had used the building during the occupation of Hong Kong (December 1941 - August 1945). During this time, a number of executions took place there. In 1963, the Rates and Valuations Department used the building until it was dismantled in 1982 to make way for the new Pei designed tower.<sup>22</sup> A series of Buddhist exorcisms were held to purge the building of what people believed were the ghosts of the people tortured there. One of the exorcisms was held in 1963 and broadcast on Hong Kong television (*Buddhist Priests Exorcise the Spirits. Clip ID: 73137, 1963*).

Not long after the building was under construction, unsolicited and informal *fengshui* advice became a lively and public debate. Pei stated “Fengshui masters are like lawyers here, they’re everywhere. I knew I’d have trouble, but I didn’t know what kind of trouble to expect” (Rubalcaba, 2011, pp. 62–63). There were many interpretations of the building form. The X or crosses that are part of the structural system of the building have been interpreted as markers of a negative *fengshui*, or at least the mark that is hung around the neck of a condemned man to signify he was finished (Rubalcaba & Pei, 2011; Wiseman, 1990). Pei apparently consulted with a *fengshui* master (unidentified in the literature) to post-justify the narrative into something more positive. In his new narrative, the crosses became diamonds and the angles and form of the building became growing bamboo (Bank of China, 2013). I have not been able to identify any symbolism for diamonds or crystal in either Chinese art symbolism or records of auspicious patterns. Bamboo is a symbol for longevity (C. A. S. Williams, 1988; Eberhard, 1986). It is associated with characteristics of strength, idealism, modesty, nobility and greatness (Z. Li, 1994, pp. 24–25). This adapted narrative is presented on the bank’s website:

His [I. M. Pei’s] inspiration for the building's construction was the elegant stature of bamboo, its sectioned trunk reaching higher and higher with each new growth. The Tower is symbolic of strength, vitality, growth and enterprise, representing Bank of China (Hong Kong)'s rapid development. The building is characterised by a harmonious blend of modern architecture with traditional Chinese design. Its four prism-shaped shafts reflect the sun's rays like a glittering crystal. (Bank of China, 2013)

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<sup>22</sup> To make way for the construction of the BOC tower, the building was disassembled and stored off site until it was relocated and rebuilt in Stanley in 2003.

Architect and architectural scholar Evelyn Lip concedes that the BOC has received a lot of negative criticism, but her own *fengshui* analysis concludes that the building has good *fengshui* features. “Its foundations are laid on a square plan (earth element) and its elevation geometry is mainly composed of triangles (fire element). Fire produces Earth and so the elements are in harmony” (Lip, 1990, p. 36).

A contrast reading of the tower is that the masts of the tower have been interpreted as incense sticks which are used to memorialise the dead (Wiseman, 1990; Rubalcaba, 2011; Bruun, 2008). To mimic death rituals such as a pair of upright chopsticks in a bowl of rice is to invite bad luck. Alternative readings are that the masts are symbolic of poverty (Rubalcaba, 2011; Wiseman, 1990), or as menacing needles (Cheng, 1997), or “as a praying mantis, with two aerials at the apex resembling the antennae of the insect and the horizontal slot in the skin below them emphasising the likeness to a sinister mask” (Davey, 1990). Summarised in Figure 49, these narratives reflected a fear that the PRC was to lay waste to Hong Kong, that Hong Kong would die as a vibrant city and so on.

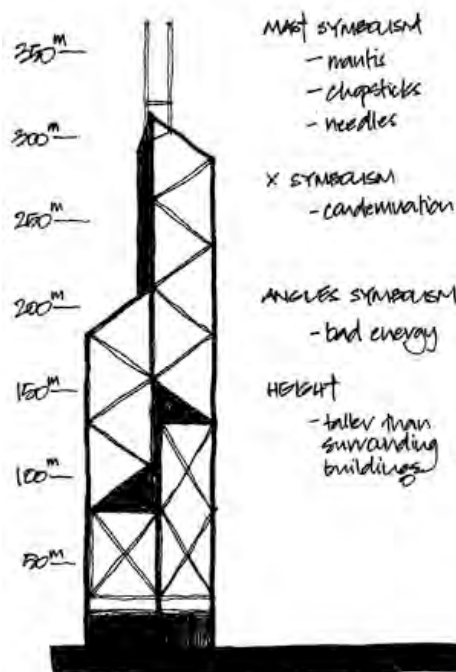


Figure 49. Interpreted symbolism of Pei's Bank of China tower.  
Image: Author 2014

The angles of the building have been interpreted as knife blades or cleavers. There are two explanations for this: The first comes from *wuxing* (five phases) theory. Each element has a correlative shape, and in this case the angle is associated with the element fire. In the context of Hong Kong at the time of construction most buildings were rectangular in shape (with the notable exception of the Hopewell Centre which is circular). The extruded rectangular form is associated with the element wood. Thus, putting a fire building in a wood environment is considered as a dominating and aggressive act. Walters writes of the building “Hong Kong residents gleefully console themselves that the architects acting on behalf of the mainland China clients got their *fengshui* all wrong.” He writes:

In my opinion, the Chinese architects knew exactly what they were doing. It stands among a forest of other skyscrapers, all of which, being tall and narrow, like the trunks of trees themselves, suggest the element of wood. But the triangles of the Bank of China’s building represent the element fire; wood feeds fire, so the Bank of China is set to grow rich at the expense of the companies that surround it (Walters, 1995, p. 185).

The second interpretation is using the principle of *qi*. The flow of *qi* is most auspicious when it moves gently. Angles are considered to generate *sha qi*, or negative energy. They are also referred to as “secret arrows.” A building made up of a series of angles such as the BOC tower would be considered an aggressive building in the environment. In the broadcast *Fengshui – Living in Harmony*, *fengshui* master Raymond Lo says of these angles, “while the offices in the bank have generally good *fengshui*, the offices that is facing the angles require curtains so that the angles do not face them” (Uhrmeister, 2001).

The angles of the building face a number of locations in Hong Kong including the (now former) governor’s residence. These angles, in addition to the height of the tower, give the impression of knife blades angled toward the back of the governor’s residence. *Fengshui* Master Huang Chao suggests that the resignation of Governor David Wilson in 1992 may be connected with these blades (Huang, n.d.). Bruun adds to this that willow trees were planted to deflect the secret arrows (2008, p. 139).

Controversially Dr. Baolin Wu, a *fengshui* master in the USA, claims to have

advised both the BOC and Pei on the design of the new tower. He claims that he assisted in the site selection and the appearance of the building. Eckstein writes of Wu's involvement:

Some local fengshui practitioners complained that the Feng Shui was all wrong. It was; all wrong for the departing government that is. Dr. Wu designed the building like a blade of a knife and had it positioned facing the old Government Hall. This was intentionally done to cut through and overpower any factions that might remain to cause havoc. (2000, p. 13)

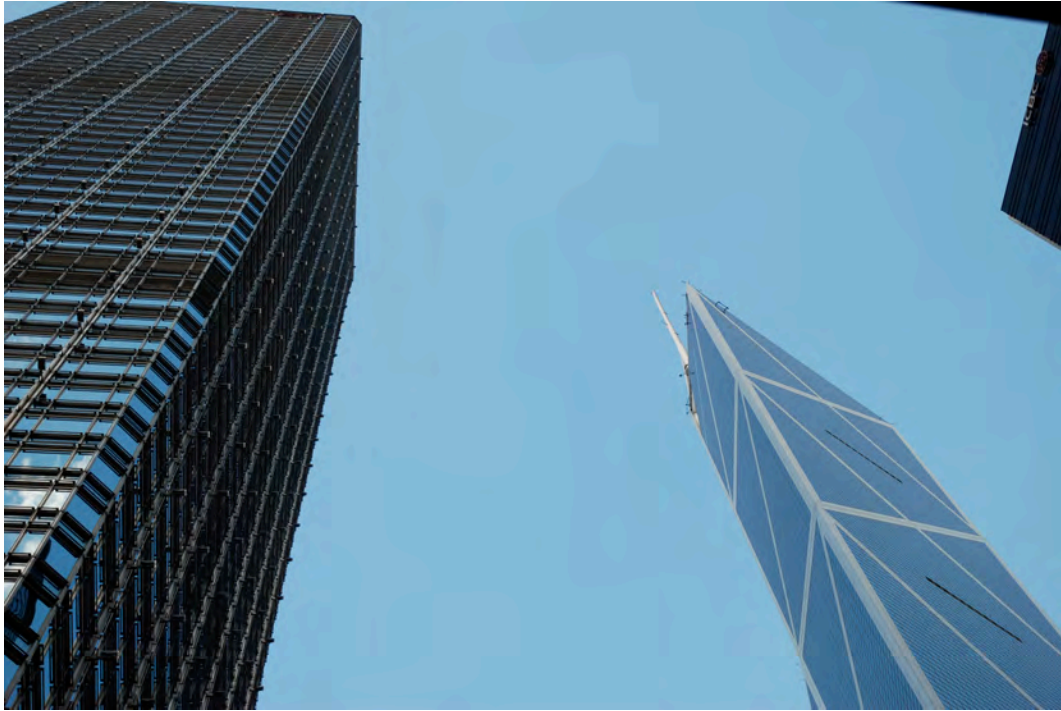
While my research has not found further evidence to verify Dr Wu's involvement with the project, the narrative that this building is essentially sinister, due to its political association, is representative of the majority of stories about the BOC tower. While Pei's building required a post justified narrative, Foster's earlier project considered *fengshui* from the outset. This however, did not reduce complexity with the use and interpretation of *fengshui* in the project.

Christina Cheng (1997) makes an interesting point suggesting that location is a key factor in the interpretation or reading of architecture via a *fengshui* narrative:

The Bank building thus has been considered a kind of demonic architecture which arouses great anxiety among its neighbours and the general public concerning the imminent reunification with China. In this spirit, the Bank buildings best illustrate that the creation and interpretation of metaphor is not a one-to-one relationship but there may exist a gap in perception. The mode of reception by the general populace in relation to the interpretation of architectural semantics is more dependent on local codes and vernacular characteristics than on the architect's conception and intention. (Cheng, 1997, p. 111)

Knowing the historical political, economic, and social context of the BOC and the *fengshui* narratives surrounding the building's site and design raises the question, if the same building was designed at a later date, and if the client was not mainland Chinese, would the response be the same?





**Figure 50 Cheung Kong Centre (L) next to Bank of China Tower (R)**

**Photographer: Author 2014**

### **The Chueng Kong Centre (1999).**

The Cheung Kong Centre (CKC), designed by architects in association, Leo A Daly and César Pelli (1999) has been described as the “superman building” (Cheung Kong Centre, 2012). Architectural academics, Michael Y. Mak and Albert T So, outline the *fengshui* principles of the CKC as written by *fengshui* master Lo Leung. The building was to be a perfect square in plan and angled to a specific orientation (Mak & So, 2011).

The CKC building houses the headquarters of Cheung Kong Holdings Ltd., which is one of the largest real estate developers in Hong Kong (Refer to Figure 51). The company chairman is Mr Li Ka-shing, who has been referred to as “superman” for his ability to negotiate the perfect real estate deal (Schuman, 2010). This individual title has been projected onto the CKC building itself as one part of its narrative, which reflects Mr Li’s role as a superhero dealer and company chairman.



**Figure 51 Cheung Kong Centre**  
**Photographer: Author 2014**

However, the popular *fengshui* narrative for CKC was that of a superhero in its own right, brought about by the building being conceived to absorb the *sha qi* from the neighbouring Bank Of China Tower, and thereby protecting the adjacent HSBC Bank building. This *fengshui* reading of the CKC building was achieved by imagining a line drawn between the height of the BOC tower and the HSBC building (Refer to Figure 52), which shows the protective nature of the CKC. Pelli Clarke Pelli's website refutes this claim:

The design of this 62-story headquarters for Cheung Kong Holdings responds to two major project requirements: adherence to local regulations and the use of feng shui principles to determine some aspects of the design. The local planning authority established height and massing parameters for the site relative to two neighboring buildings, the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank to the west and the Bank of China to the east. (Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, 2013)

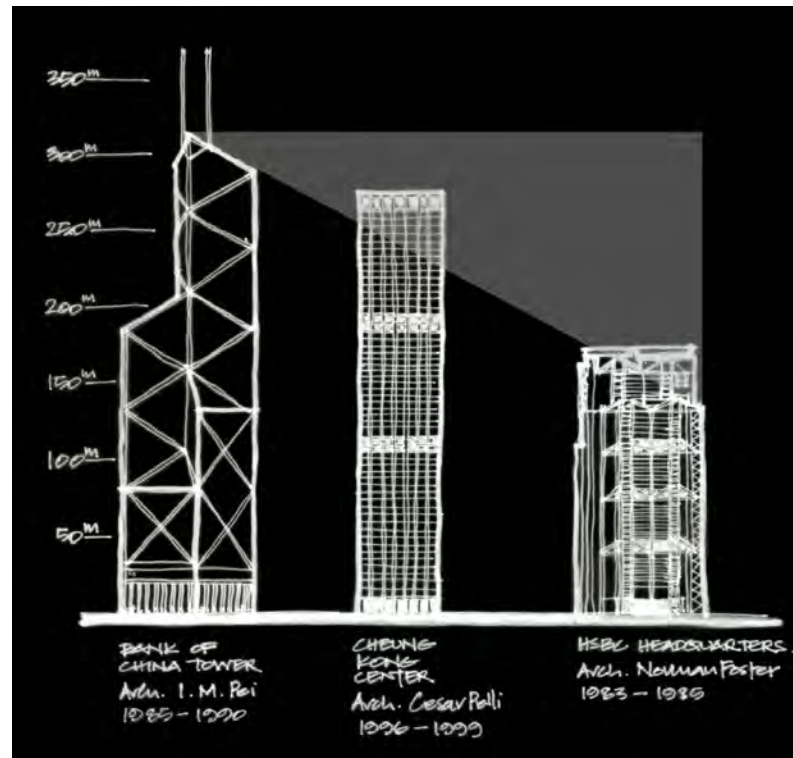


Figure 52. The relationship between the heights of the three buildings. The triangle reflecting the protection provided to the HSBC building by the CKC from the BOC tower

Source: Author 2013

However they do confirm that the planning, orientation surface treatment was influenced by *fengshui*:

A feng shui master suggested the building's orientation, square plan configuration and the need for highly reflective cladding materials. Designed with these factors, the building takes the form of a tall, elegant and well-proportioned square prism. The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank and the Bank of China are both highly sculptured idiosyncratic forms, giving character to the skyline of Hong Kong. The form of the Cheung Kong Centre does not attempt to compete with its neighbors. Rather, it establishes its presence through its simplicity and elegance (Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, 2013)

Mak and So cite *fengshui* master Lo Leung and his description of the plan, “Perfectly square in shape, it stands for stability, endurance and long-lasting prosperity and is the perfect foundation for any business” (2011). Further, according to *fengshui* calculations the orientation of the site was to be auspicious from 2004-2023.

Whether or not this is based on a specific *fengshui* narrative, or as a product of the strict planning guidelines on Hong Kong Island, the established *fengshui* narrative is that CKC is the superman. This reference has developed from two parallel readings — one by direct position of the building in the city, sitting between the two major banks, and the other by a reference to the legendary nick name of its powerful company Chairman, Mr Li. Either way, the *fengshui* evaluation is that CKC is understood to provide stability for Hong Kong by protecting the HSBC building and the rest of the city from the perceived evil BOC tower.

The building contributes to the Hong Kong skyline as part of the branding of the city. The façade includes layers of lighting for the building. The first defines the form of the building and the second includes the fibre optics that plays part of the choreography of Hong Kong's Symphony of Lights.

### **Fengshui narrative in popular culture**

A comparative analysis of the plans and elevations according to *fengshui* principles reveals an uneven reading of the *fengshui* narratives attached to these buildings. Both the floor plans of the BOC tower and the CKC tower are square, which is a shape that correlates with the symbol of earth, while the floor plan of the HSBC building is rectangular and that correlates with the element wood. The elevations of the buildings vary; for the BOC tower it is fire, while the HSBC and the CKC towers are both wood.

The practice of *fengshui* and the science of *fengshui* often get confused, mistranslated, and combined with superstition, folk stories and folk religion. Many *fengshui* stories have little to do with *fengshui* practice, except as a symbolic representation. From my own experience as a newly arrived *gweimui* (variously translated as ‘foreigner’ (younger female – then), ghost or devil girl) in Hong Kong in 1990, part of my introduction to the city was the *fengshui* tour provided by locals and expatriates, designed to explain the “tall tales and true” of Hong Kong buildings. In the era prior to the 1997 handover of governance to the PRC, the general rule of thumb was that all PRC buildings were bad, and by corollary, all international buildings were good. Therefore anything to do with myths of death and ghosts was to be avoided at all costs – yet discussed in great detail.

One of the outcomes of the Treaty of Nanjing was the cession of Hong Kong to Great Britain from that date up until 1997. Many Hong Kong Chinese had strong family links with other areas in southern China, however over time these ties have weakened and more recent generations of Hong Kong people experience limited exposure to the people and places of their ancestry who are located in regions now part of the People’s Republic of China. The closure of borders by the communist government in the 1970-80s was instrumental in this division. This ideological separation of Hong Kong both politically and culturally from the mainland, has enabled Hong Kong Chinese to develop their own set of cultural values. This distinction has taken on new importance in the differentiation of Hong Kong from other large Chinese cities, in part with political representation and governance. These important discussions are outside the scope of this thesis.

Within this context *fengshui* has existed as part of folk religion, burial practices and building practices. While this tradition was suppressed in mainland China during the

Cultural Revolution by the communist regime, its practice continued unabated in Hong Kong. Further, the colonial government recognised *fengshui* as an important part of Chinese culture and compensation was provided to locals when government projects interfered with the *fengshui* of village environments. While more research is required to fully understand *fengshui*'s development as part of this arrangement, Bruun's suggestion is that *fengshui* became a more dominant method of subversive action aimed at resisting British development of Chinese land, and that *fengshui* (as a native religion) was considered a reasonable excuse to limit further expansion, thereby establishing a set of contradictions in the manner of practicing *fengshui* in Hong Kong at that time.

The three buildings which represent this dichotomy have been studied as separate entities and are examples of contemporary corporate architecture that could be located in any global city in the world. They are all award winning designs created by renowned international architects, but they are located in Hong Kong, and positioned in direct association to each other which is designed to specifically establish a narrative between their relationship and that of the city and its urban design.

There is little about the buildings to obviously physically signify their architectural design as specific to Hong Kong or China; they do not possess retro-fitted historical markings or referenced roof forms nor traditional forms and materials. The significant method of localisation in these buildings is the *fengshui* narratives that have been created around them, which may have been in part intentional at design phase, but nevertheless have become part of Hong Kong folklore.

From the perspective of Hong Kong, these buildings contribute to the skyline, and assist in the signification of a global city. They are branded with the characteristics of a Modernist architectural expression which places them and the city as world's best practice, competing on the global stage, just as their commercial activities represent an aggressive world presence. In local terms they establish Hong Kong as a true world player, but also as a defining part of a new China (after shedding their colonial masters), where they must compete also with mainland Chinese cities, and especially Shanghai.

As a result, these three buildings represent a localised example of the practice of *fengshui* and its particular narratives, based on time-worn cultural practices and belief systems, and not the least a communal sense of symbolism and superstition that is as

relevant today as it ever was, despite the legal interpretation of *fengshui* as superstitious, feudal and a banned practice.





## Chapter 6

### Case Study 2: Shanghai's Lujiazui Financial District – Landmark Architecture

Located at the northwest tip of the Pudong district in Shanghai, the Lujiazui Financial District (LFD) lies directly opposite the Bund (the colonial centre of trade) on the Huangpo River. Shanghai was another territory ceded to foreign powers as part of the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). The Bund housed the major trading houses and banks that enabled the foreign settlements based in the opium trade to become the major city of trade in South East Asia. This dominance remained in place until the events of the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945), the intervening post war power struggle between the Nationalists and the Communists, and the subsequent Communist victory in 1949. During this time many prominent businesses moved their activity from Shanghai to Hong Kong.

Using international architects for the planning and urban design of Pudong and to create their individual building designs, is intended to showcase Shanghai as a world city. The Bund's collection of historic buildings remains intact while the "new Shanghai" is located on the opposite riverbank in the Pudong. The planning for the Pudong was to bring focus on Shanghai as the premier financial centre for mainland China thus placing pressure on the reputation and functions of Hong Kong.

In the past 20 years, Shanghai has been reconstructed with massive funding provided by the central government, which is situation made possible within the nation where decisions of largely national implications are possible within the single party Communist system of government. The planning of the Pudong was intended by China's political leaders to embody characteristics of capability, modernity and world leadership, which they exhibited, and also by the sheer scale of development and operation of this leading 21st century Chinese city.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> From 1985-2007, Shanghai has been represented at the highest levels in of Chinese leadership. From 1985-1987 Jiang Zemin was the Mayor of Shanghai. From 1989-2002 he was General Secretary for the Communist Party of China and President of the People's Republic of China (PRC) 1993-2002.

Zhu Rongji was Mayor of Shanghai 1988-1991. He later became Premier of the PRC 1998-2003.

Huang Ju was Mayor of Shanghai 1991-1995, and later vice Premier of the PRC 2003-2007.

The emphasis in this case study is the three buildings that signpost the new Shanghai, located in the Lujiazui Financial District of the Pudong. These buildings are the Jin Mao Building (1999) designed by American architects Skidmore Owning Merrill; the Shanghai World Financial Centre (2008) designed by American architects Kohn Pedersen Fox; and the Shanghai Tower, currently under construction and due for completion in 2014, designed by American architectural firm Gensler (Refer to Figure 53).



**Figure 53 Landmark buildings of Lujiazui, (L) Shanghai World Financial Centre, (C) Shanghai Tower – under construction, (R) Jin Mao Tower**

**Photographer: Author 2014**

Unlike the buildings discussed in the Hong Kong case study, the architects for these buildings have instigated the popular *fengshui* narratives as a means of expressing sensitivity toward a Chinese culture, rather than as a cultural expectation. Most major projects in China today are designed by foreign architects. Rowe suggests that part of the reason for this is the symbolic projection of the appearance of contemporary culture in China, which is seeking to establish itself as a world leader. Chinese developers therefore select leading world professionals to manage the country's ascendancy. The "emphasis is on modernity and Chinese, rather than Chinese and modern" (Rowe, 2005, p. 200).

The structure of this chapter comprises two main areas of investigation. The first addresses the economic and socio-political background of Shanghai. It gives a brief examination of the history of Shanghai to identify the impact of economics, social conditions, and politics that shaped the planning and development of Shanghai from a medium sized Chinese city to a 21<sup>st</sup> century megacity with a municipal population of nearly 24 million people. Shanghai went through a period of stagnation until the mid 1980s as wealth generated from the city was directed to other cities in China. This diversion of funds put a hold on any serious development of infrastructure or large scale building programs.

The second area of investigation is the influence of globalisation on the development of Pudong. The main focus is the economic development of 21<sup>st</sup> century China and the developments that have influenced the shape of this new area of the city. A further focus is the building types and urban spaces that reflect Shanghai's positioning on the international stage so that it is embedded in the global city network. In contrast to other global cities that have developed slowly over many decades, Pudong has developed in two. Considering the particular economic, social and political circumstances in which Shanghai exists, and the development and subsequent implications of the Pudong, and the redevelopment of Puxi, the redevelopment is remarkable. This encompasses hundreds of new highrise towers and in particular those of the Landmark zone of LFD.

### **Architecture: Globalisation**

Sinologist and historian Marie-Claire Bergère makes the point that in the observation and self-perception of Shanghai, a number of imaginary elements, including readings of the past, became significant factors governing the urban development of the city, dating from the second half of the twentieth century until today:

As a treaty port, Shanghai was considered by its European residents (the original Shanghailanders,<sup>24</sup> in the narrower definition of the term) as belonging to their own history ... Today, this colonial experience is explicitly and positively identified with Shanghai's past. (Bergère, 2004, p. 36)

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<sup>24</sup> The terms Shanghaileander was used to denote a Western Resident in Shanghai, while the term Shanghainese denoted a Chinese resident of Shanghai.

This apparent paradox confronts us with some crucial questions about Shanghai's past and its meaning for contemporary and future development. It calls for a reassessment of the colonial or semi-colonial nature of post treaty Shanghai. Was the city merely the territorial translation of Western dominance, as is generally understood by Chinese and Western writers? Does the label "colonial" overshadow other characteristic features such as cosmopolitanism, economic symbiosis and cultural interactions, from which present-day Shanghainese are drawing a genuine pride and inspiration in their city's drive towards 21st century globalisation?

Prior to European influence Shanghai operated as a leading centre for trade, administration and commerce. "Like other great Asian port cities, European activities in Shanghai were grafted upon pre-existing networks of seaborne and inland commercial and financial exchanges" (Bergère, 2010, pp. 37–38). Balfour (2002) makes the point that part of the rationale for the selection of Shanghai as one of the treaty ports as part of the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing was that, in addition to Chinese shipping vessels, sea trade to Shanghai came from "Singapore, Malacca, Penang, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and cities surrounding the Persian and Indian Seas and from as far as the isles of Polynesia" (Balfour, 2002, p. 51). Trade was initially based on tea and spices. The British ran the trade at a deficit because the Chinese did not want or need British textiles and goods. The discovery and manufacture of opium from India brought the balance of trade back into British favour as they profited from opium distribution in China. China's attempts to curtail the drug trade led to the Opium Wars, the capture of Chinese ports by English fleets, and the 1842 Treaty of Nanjing. As discussed earlier, this treaty ceded Hong Kong to Britain and put trade zones under British jurisdiction in the other ports, the most important of which was Shanghai.

In the process of colonial settlement, Shanghai was divided into three regional areas: the Chinese city, the International Settlement (British and American), and the French Concession.<sup>25</sup> The British settlement became the dominant influence with the commercial centre focussed along the Bund, where the banks, trading houses and hotels were built on the back of opium trade. Balfour makes an interest point about the maps of Shanghai as recorded by Westerners:

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<sup>25</sup> The British settlement was first in 1843. It merged with the American settlement 20 years later to become the International settlement.

Though the maps show the line of the wall that once enclosed old Shanghai, they leave the Chinese city as blank as the interest the Westerners had in the culture they had invaded. The suburbs of the Chinese city are either omitted, or defined only by the roads that would be needed by the traders. (Balfour, 2002, p. 57)



**Figure 54. 'Shang-hai and environs' (1912)**  
Madrolle's Guide Books: Northern China, The Valley of the Blue River, Korea  
<http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Maps/Collection?ID=194>

The distinction between what was Western and what was Chinese culture as expressed economically, socially and politically, was articulated both in the planning of the city and in the architecture. The colonial Bund in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century was designed invariably replicated styles which were current in Europe or the USA. The Chinese town remained quarantined from these influences until the demolition of their city walls as part of the process of urbanisation in the early 1900s (Lu & Li, 2008, p. 335).

### **Socio-economic influences on the shape of Shanghai**

Shanghai, like many other international port cities like London and Hong Kong, transformed as the city became more industrialised. For Shanghai in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the main local industry was textiles. This, in addition to trade, saw the transformation of Shanghai to an international metropolis by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Early city development, beginning in the 1840s, was located on the west side of the Huangpu River, but subsequent development and circumstance enabled rapid economic growth and Shanghai

developed as a metropolis. The old boundaries that separated the concessions from the original walled city were no longer marked by the stretches of unpopulated land. As the city population increased, along with the development of light industries, the areas of land between city regions were rapidly populated. The ditches and canals were once “used as landmarks when foreign areas had been first delimited. Finally in 1912, the walls of the Old City were brought down” (Bergère, 2004, p. 39). Subsequently a Bund skyline:

... exemplified the prevailing condition of Shanghai's identity which was not made up of the original inhabitants, but by outsiders, who asserted their superiority. The “key” to modern China, Shanghai accommodated city dwellers that were proud of calling themselves “Shanghai” regardless of their original birthplaces. (Arkarapraserkul, 2007, p. 49)

The Bund was a platform for the expression of wealth and power. Pridmore documents the instruction given to the architect George Wilson of Palmer and Turner for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank: “Spare no expense, but dominate the Bund” (2008, p. 39). During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, HSBC was the leading financial institution and their presence on the Bund was to be in keeping with this image (Figure 44). The then recently established Bank of China (1928) moved its headquarters from Beijing to Shanghai. Palmer and Turner designed both the HSBC buildings in Shanghai (completed in 1923), and in Hong Kong (completed in 1935) as well as the Bank of China buildings, in Shanghai with Lu Qianshou (completed in 1941), and in Hong Kong, completed in 1953.



**Figure 55. View of the Bund, 1937.**

**Image source: Virtual Shanghai**

**<http://www.virtualshanghai.net/Photos/Images?ID=32728>**

After the 1911 revolution the textile industry thrived. This light industry rapidly expanded during the 1920s and 1930s. With this growth, Shanghai transformed from treaty port to thriving metropolis. However, development remained concentrated on the western side of the river while the Pudong accommodated warehouses and dock facilities until the early 1990s. It is not unusual for cities to limit growth to one side of a river, and this pattern is evident in many places, such as London on the Thames (Southbank, Canary Wharf) and Melbourne on the Yarra (the Southbank development of the early 1980s). Similarly, in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), Vietnam, a new bridge on the Saigon River was recently built to link the new Thu Thiem District with the old District 1. In HCMC, new infrastructure is transforming the green fields on the east bank of the Saigon River into part of the urban sprawl of HCMC; this side of the river had remained underdeveloped until growth and improvement in the efficiency of city transportation enabled the expansion of HCMC onto this land.

There had been numerous plans for the expansion of Shanghai from Puxi on the east side of the Huangpu River to the Pudong. All of these had been established in opposition to or as rivals to the foreign concessions, as an assertion of Chinese sovereignty. To distinguish the new Republic from the imperial past, the capitol of the was moved from Beijing to Nanjing. The “new Shanghai” was to be the financial centre of the new China. One of the ideas for a modern Shanghai was the vision of the Great Port of the Orient:

There was a clear intention to surpass the foreign settlements in both location and amenities. In fact the newly arrived Nationalists were highly critical of the inadequacies of the foreign settlements, in these and other regards for holding back the city's development. (Rowe, 2011, p. 44)

The location of this administrative area was north of the existing city in Wujiaochang. A design competition was held in 1927 for the precinct. In July 1927 Shanghai was established as a municipality and design competitions were held to propose a new vision for the city (Bergère, 2010, p. 214). The architecture of republican China was influenced by Henry K. Murphy's adaptive approach to architecture. Examples of this approach are his designs for Yenching Campus in Beijing and Ginling College in Nanjing. Murphy was appointed as advisor to the planning of Nanjing and his former employee Dong Dayou was his counterpart in Shanghai. Architect Anne Warr points out that while this

adaptive approach had many critics, it was the stipulated design style of the republican period (2007, p. 266).

Shanghai became the financial capital of China, whereas Nanjing had been the capital under Chiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-Shek). The significance of the new Shanghai municipality was that a single authority had control over the development of the city. Further, western trained Chinese performed the administrative functions.

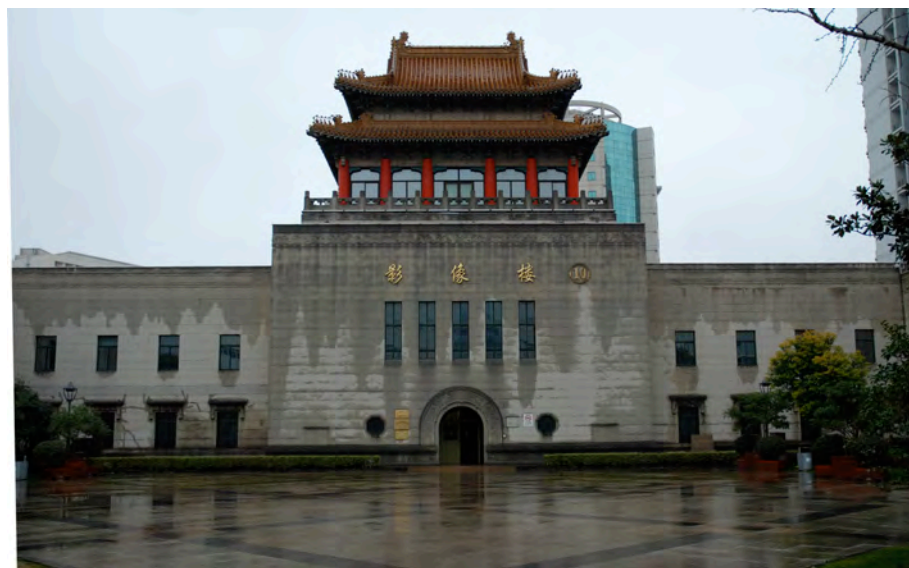
The new area slated for development was north of the existing concessions (now Wujiaochang). Henry K. Murphy was appointed as the advisor to the planning of the capital in Nanjing. His counterpart in Shanghai was Dong Dayou. Warr makes the important connection that Murphy and Dong were colleagues, with Dong previously employed in Murphy's architectural practice. The plan for the new Shanghai City Centre was designed by Dong (1929-1931). There is a discrepancy in authorship for the design of the Shanghai City Centre. Both Rowe (2011) and Pridmore (2008) nominate Dong Dayou as the designer, however Balfour (2002) nominates Chao Chien as the designer. Architectural academic Eduard Kögel clarifies this issue, stating that Chao won the initial competition, was and his design was later developed by Dong (2008).

Balfour comments on the strong references drawn from Pierre Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington DC (1791) and from the then contemporary Edwin Lutyens' plan for New Delhi (1912-1929). He also points out that the siting, location and design of the city centre satisfies the laws of *fengshui* (2002, p. 75). The buildings that were to establish this new centre included the Town Hall (1931) (Figure 58), the Municipal Library (1936) (refer to Figure 56), and Municipal Museum (1936) (refer to Figure 57). However, the 1937 Japanese invasion postponed the planned further urban development. The subsequent Chinese Civil war (1927-1950), including the Communist retribution (after 1949), put a final halt to further development of Shanghai. During the Communist rule, "Old Shanghai (*lao shanghai*) was denounced as a bastion of imperialism and of bureaucratic and compradorial bourgeoisie, a reminder of colonial humiliation, a decadent Babylonian city where luxury was an insult to extreme poverty" (Bergère, 2004, p. 44).





**Figure 56. Shanghai Municipal Library, designed by architect Dong Dayou (1936).  
Source: Author (2014)**



**Figure 57. Shanghai Municipal Museum, designed by architect Dong Dayou (1936)  
Source: Author (2014)**

For decades, Shanghai operated on minimal funding as money generated by the city was redistributed elsewhere around the country. No new formal plans for Shanghai were considered until after the 1978 market socialist economy reforms in China. President Deng Xiaoping's reform policy was later adopted in 1979, leading to the perception of the city's past as more positive for its future growth, particularly after Deng's endorsement of Shanghai growth in 1992. This was in reaction to the perception of

“Colonial humiliation and bourgeois decadence [which] became the economic performance, the entrepreneurial spirit, the cosmopolitanism of Old Shanghai” (Bergère, 2010, p. 44).

In 1986, the Shanghai Urban Planning Design Institute (SUPDI) established a new masterplan for the Shanghai municipality. The rhetoric that accompanied the plan included design guidelines to promote the Pudong as a “Socialist Modern city,” which would be designated as a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and utilise the advantages of that designation.<sup>26</sup> The Pudong was scheduled to be the focus for China’s export-orientated, multifunctional new zones, in keeping with international standards. The purpose of future development in Shanghai was to “act as a display case for domestic products and services as well as an attraction for international economic resources” (Rowe, 2011, p. 47).

In 1990, Shanghai Premier Li Peng officially endorsed the development of the new Pudong area. Pudong would be built as a sign of the nation’s re-emergence, “a symbolic commercial centre that would over-shadow the colonial legacy of the Bund” and transform the city into a global economic centre (Greenspan, 2012, p. 84). This decision also turned Shanghai into one of the most important new sites for architectural production, as demonstrated by numerous buildings and projects (Gandelsonas, 2002, p. 28).

One of the most distinctive signifiers of modernisation in Shanghai is the speed at which changes have occurred in the city since 1990, following the significant involvement of the national government. This state intervention has modified the traditional global city pathway because it is not the processes of globalisation alone that have changed the city. The Chinese state has also staked its claim by adapting urban designs and architecture from other global cities and reinterpreting them with Chinese characteristics.

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<sup>26</sup> A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has exemptions from certain taxes, quota and some laws that apply to areas not within this designated area.

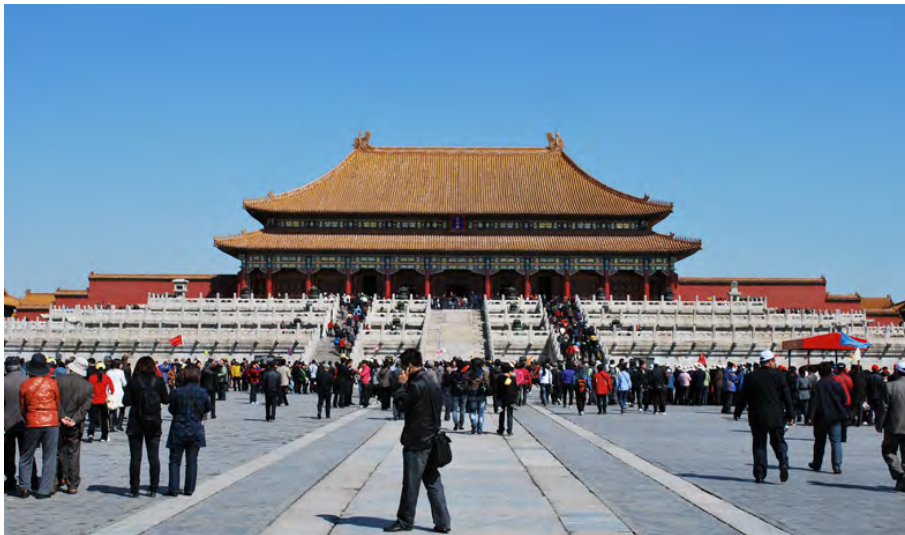
### **Architecture: Brandscape**

The Chinese nationalist government used architecture to brand and express cultural identity during their period of influence between 1911 and 1949. In 1927 the Municipal Government of Greater Shanghai was established. This authority controlled development in all sectors of Shanghai including the settlements and concession. As noted previously, the administrative functions were performed by western trained Chinese, thus making it clear that the Chinese were able to look after themselves and Westerners were no longer needed to run Shanghai (Bergère, 2004, p. 43).

The new Shanghai Town Hall was designed by the architect Dong, who went on to plan the city. Dong trained at the University of Minnesota, and for the purposes of the Nationalist government of the time, it was important that the building represented and demonstrated a sense of Chineseness, in opposition to the architecture of the international settlement and concession. The language Dong used for the Town Hall had strong references to imperial models, including a raised stone base, a “spirit way” built into the central stairs in front of the building, and an upturned tiled roof. A spirit way is a central carved marble ramp with stone steps flanking each side; iconic examples are the imperial or royal ramps used in the Forbidden City in Beijing (refer to Figure 59). The only person who could travel in a true axial line through the city, and then only on ceremonial occasions, was the emperor. He would be borne over the spirit way by porters carrying him in a sedan chair. Further, the massing of the building is based on a tripartite model commonly used in Chinese imperial architecture (Rowe & Kuan, 2002, p. 72). The architectural language used for the Town Hall drew on stylistic references from older imperial models including the Hall of Supreme Harmony (1420), Beijing. Dong's use of the spirit way is both anti-contextual and modern in its application to a local government structure. The architect's statement about the Town Hall design includes a description that “the exterior is an adaptation of the traditional Peking palace style” (Kögel, 2008, p. 462).



**Figure 58. Shanghai Town Hall (1931), Architect: Dong Dayou**  
**Source: Author (2014)**



**Figure 59. Taihedian (Hall of Supreme Harmony), Forbidden City, Beijing**  
**Source: Author (2010)**

### **Contemporary Shanghai**

During the development of Shanghai in the late 20<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> century, numerous buildings explore what Pei referred to as a “third way,” in other words a means of articulating a Chinese language in contemporary architecture distinct from alternative modernity. These buildings use a formal connection with Chinese imagery rather than a *fengshui* narrative. While Dong’s example represented an early version, more contemporary versions include the Shanghai Museum (1995) designed by the Shanghai Municipal Institute of Architectural Design, the Grand Theatre (1994) designed by Arte

Charpentier, and the Shanghai Museum of Planning (1998). The Shanghai Museum's form is based on the shape of a traditional Chinese bronze mirror as shown in Figure 60. Sinologist Charles Williams describes the symbolism of the mirror thus: "Ancient mirrors are supposed to have magic power to protect their owners from evil ... They are believed to make hidden spirits visible and to reveal the secrets of futurity" (C. A. S. Williams, 1988, p. 276) .



**Figure 60. Shanghai Museum (1995)**  
**Architect: Xing Tonghe (SMIAD)**  
**Source: Author (2014)**

Similarly symbolic form was used for the Grand Theatre (1998) designed by French architect Jean-Marie Charpentier (Figure 61). His architectural practice, Arte Charpentier, designed many projects in the development of Shanghai including masterplans for Nanjing Road and Century Avenue. The design for the Grand Theatre was conceived using the circle and the square as a metaphor of the circular heaven over the earth (Balfour, 2002). The focus on the roof form conforms to a trend in contemporary architecture in China when there was a spotlight on the cap, or roof structure, as the main means of expression.





**Figure 61. Shanghai Theatre (1998), Architect: Jean-Marie Charpentier  
Source: Author (2014)**

The design for the Shanghai Museum of Planning (1998) repeats the motif of the square and circle; these are articulated in the roof structure. These geometric shapes create a magnolia (*mulan*) as part of the roof structure; the magnolia is the city flower of Shanghai (Balfour, 2002, p. 186).<sup>27</sup> The symbolism of the magnolia according to Williams is as “an emblem of feminine sweetness and beauty” (C. A. S. Williams, 1988, p. 261). Li adds that the flower is traditionally used as a decorative pattern and is well known for its “purity and faultlessness” (Z. Li, 1994, p. 35).

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<sup>27</sup> Of interest is the folk story of Hua Mulan, the warrior maiden who shares the Magnolia as a namesake. This tale was made into a Disney animation *Mulan* (1998) that became part of negotiations for the construction of Hong Kong Disneyland. This will be discussed further in Chapter 7.



**Figure 62. Shanghai Museum of Planning (1998), Architect: Shanghai Modern Architectural Design Company  
Source: Author 2014**

Bergère discusses how the fast pace of construction of new infrastructure in the Pudong shares the shift from industrial to post industrial would work with cities such as Bilbao. In this case, the iconic architecture is the new skyline: “Pudong’s skyline is dominated by the skyscrapers of its financial district, Lujiazui, that are a telling indicator of the city’s thriving economy, and have often been compared to Manhattan” (Bergère, 2010, p. 48). However, geographer Larry Ford argues that the existing urban fabric of Shanghai is so dense that there was little choice but to cross the river and develop a new urban core (Ford, 2001, p. 134): “The Lujiazui Central Business district and sub centres like Xu-jia-Hui are being built from almost nothing to cater strategically for the needs of a large, international metropolitan information society” (Zheng, 2002, p. 119).

This abundance of high-rise buildings improves the city’s status both nationally and globally, and signals the enthusiasm of the Shanghainese to embrace liberal globalisation. The Pudong is perceived as a marker, a symbol of the successful modernisation. Sociologist Ren Xuefei says of these markers, “for Beijing and Shanghai to become truly global cities, policy makers believe that these cities have to first adopt a ‘global city look’ by constructing state of the art infrastructure and flagship architectural projects” (Ren, 2011).

However, this “global city look” brings an international homogeneity to the urban landscape. Shanghai is becoming no different from other successful Asian or American metropolises. Its historic heart did not get the same consideration as was given to old European capitals such as London, Paris, Amsterdam or Lisbon, where official clearance for the erection of every new tower lead to debate and controversies. As its architectural past is fast disappearing from the city skyline in Shanghai, economic activities are moving to new districts.

In the development of a new Shanghai, an idealized past is adapted along with an uncertain future. This celebration of the past may be used for commercial purposes as it revives the fascination that attracted so many foreign visitors and entrepreneurs to pre-war Shanghai in the 1920s. Tourism is a major economic resource for Shanghai. Every year the city receives more than 1 million visitors, and Shanghai capitalises on the tourist appeal of its history. That particular quality sets it apart from so many other Asian internationalised and modern cities.

### *Xintiandi*

The *Xintiandai* (literally New Heaven and Earth) development is the work of American architect Benjamin Wood and the Shui On Group from Hong Kong. *Xintiandai* is historically significant because it was the location of the First Congress of the Communist Party in 1921. The plan was the preservation of *shikumen* houses in Shanghai. The French built these houses to accommodate Chinese workers in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are considered to be a western interpretation of the traditional courtyard house and therefore the layout and orientation of these dwellings had no concern for *fengshui*.

There are contrasting views as to whether the development of *Xiantiandi* is on the one hand sensitive and appreciative of traditional Chinese architecture (Liu, n.d., p. 44) or on the other a selective nostalgia of a colonial past, with any undesirable references to its use as slum dwellings omitted. The area is popular with wealthy Chinese, expats and tourists. (Shen & Wu, 2012, pp. 264–265). Comparisons with a Disneyfied version of history must be made. The development is not a careful conservation, but more an exploration of the “possibilities of historic preservation” in China (Pridmore, 2008, p. 119). The north block retained most of the existing house styles, while the south block was designed as “East meets West” (Shui On Group, 2014). In this development any buildings were torn down to allow for wider streets, existing structures were modified to



July 1998, Ben  
Concept Plan  
Lori 10/11/2  
TRIPINGTao

Commerce and Culture  
in Shanghai's HISTORY: FRESH CONCESSION

North Block.

South Block.

What is Chinese?

What is Chinese? - this question demands a new answer every day.

**Image: Author (2014)**

The reality of making architecture in China is that *fengshui* forms a significant component of the design approach for a building, as does the reading of a metaphor. Pridmore points out that the concept of the metaphor as it might be interpreted by others, and even represented as a design imperative, is outside the control of the designer (2008). We know from experience with a building such as Sydney's Opera House, for example, that it has been described with metaphors such as a "scrum of nuns," a "flotilla of yachts," "upside down rowboats," and even "sharks' teeth," none of which the author, Jørn Utzon, ascribed. Pridmore illustrates this point with the example of Brian Andrew from Canadian architects Webb Zerafa Menkes Housden, who designed the Shanghai Stock Exchange (1997). The design metaphor used in selling the design was that of a gateway that connected the future and the past, yet "Andrew was surprised during a visit to the stock exchange to overhear a guide explaining to a group of tourists that its architect was inspired above all by the form of ancient Chinese coins, typically round with a square hole in the middle" (Pridmore, 2008, p. 59).

### **“Big Roof” and “Big Hat” buildings**

As an interesting adaptation of the traditional big roof buildings (discussed in *Chapter 4: Brandscape*), a number of buildings recently constructed in Shanghai have replaced the focus on the big roof with the new imagery of big hats. The big roof is the traditional Chinese gable with upturned curved edges and a high ridgeline, often decorated with finials, gargoyles and built using the rounded terra cotta tiles common in Chinese architecture. The big hat refers to an emphasis of the roof as a cap, but not in terms of traditional forms and materials; it simply underscores the visual bulk of the building cap, and is constructed often-using modern technology and contemporary expression. Buildings adopting the big hat roof include the China Merchants Tower (1995) designed by Hong Kong architect Simon Kwan and Associates (refer to Figure 64). It is essentially a green glass and metal skyscraper, built using a four corners square plan that encloses a circular drum, and is capped by a silver metal cone over which open web steel frames support a highrise antenna-like structure. It could be a global building located anywhere in any world city, without a specific Chinese reference.

The Bund Centre (2002) designed by architect John Portman and Associates (refer to Figure 65) is a post-modern creation, configured as a series of elements for the tower which are glued together, but capped using a huge flower-shaped steel structure that opens into the sky over Shanghai like a giant poppy crown decorated with multiple petals. It could be found anywhere across the globe but the imagery suggests Chinese metaphors of delicate vegetation.

Tomorrow Square (2003), also designed by John Portman, is a basic Modern skyscraper of metal and glass, with little to suggest its particular place in the Shanghai skyline, but capped using a massive hat shaped like four folding fingers that join at the apex enclosing a singular spherical roof form within. It is a protective, harmonious, even comforting image that completes the top of the building (refer to Figure 66).



**Figure 64. The China Merchants Tower (1995). Architect: Simon Kwan**  
**Image: Author (2014)**



**Figure 65. Bund Centre (2002). Architect: John Portman.**  
**Image: Author (2014)**



**Figure 66. Tomorrow Square (2003). Architect: John Portman  
Image: Author (2014)**

### **Three buildings**

There have been many iterations of masterplans for the expansion of Shanghai under both Nationalist and Communist rule. However, until Shanghai was re-sanctioned as the primary financial centre, the *Pudong* remained in a dilapidated condition. In 1992, internationally renowned architects were invited to develop key areas such as *Lujiazui* Financial District (LFD). As mentioned earlier these included Foster, Fuksas, Ito, Nouvel, Perrault, Piano, Rogers and Shinohara. However, academics Gerald Wigmans and Yawei Chen point out that while these architects may have had “a firm understanding of what a futuristic 21<sup>st</sup> century international centre should look like — [they] had little real input because their role was largely promotional” (Wigmans & Chen, 2004). This new Shanghai was envisaged as a showcase “symbolising China’s emergence as a global economic superpower” (Höweler, 2003, p. 75). Arte Charpentier planned Century Avenue with symbolic references to the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.



Figure 67. Map of Lujiazui and the Pudong

Source: <http://www.chinatouristmaps.com/assets/images/travelmapst/pudong-map-shanghai.jpg>

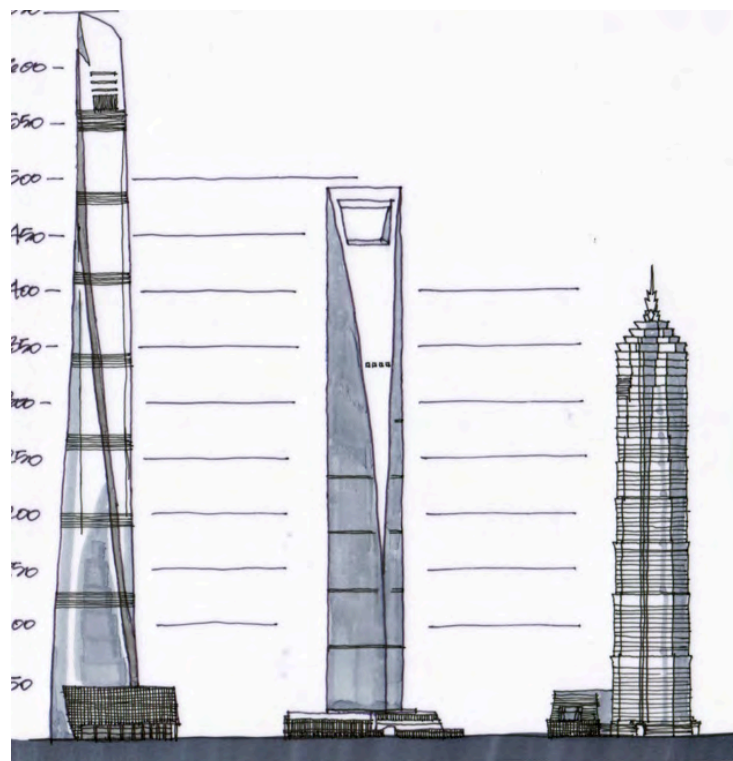


Figure 68. Super tall skyscrapers of the Lujiazui.

Left: Shanghai Tower, centre: Shanghai World Financial Centre and right: Jin Mao Tower  
Source: Author 2014



### **Jin Mao Building (1999).**

The name “Jin Mao Tower” *jin mao dasha* is translated as Golden Prosperity Building. The architect for this project was the Chicago office of Skidmore Owings and Merrill, and the project architect was Adrian Smith, now with Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architects, Chicago. It was the first of the three landmark buildings for the LFD and was intended to be “a landmark that represented the prosperity and wealth of Shanghai’s future but also embraced the most advanced design concept and technological innovation” (Wigmans & Chen, 2004). However the tower’s design has been described as a reflection on China’s past. There are layers of *fengshui* or cosmological or superstitious symbolism in the design of this building, although whether they are intentionally based on the practice of *fengshui* is debatable. However, it is this symbolism that provides a sense of localisation to the architecture of what would otherwise be homogenous global architecture. The number eight is inherent through this project. It is located at 88 Century Avenue and the building is 88 stories tall. Eight has been used as part of the structural grid, and in the articulation of the three dimensional form. “Smith based his octagonal floor plate design on the belief in eight as a lucky number in Chinese culture, further reflected in the decision to have 88 floors in the building” (McNeill, 2009, p. 130).

Likewise Adrian Smith has appropriated the image of the pagoda form for a skyscraper. According to Blair Kamin:

Smith had not visited Shanghai when he identified the form that his projected building would take. Instead he visited the firm’s in-house library to familiarise himself with Chinese design history, and became fascinated with the pagoda form, which he set about reinterpreting for a skyscraper. (McNeill, 2009, p. 130)

Rowe points out the similarities between the Jin Mao building and the Kaifeng Pagoda (Rowe & Kuan, 2002, p. 169). The Kaifeng Pagoda (1041) located at the Youguo Temple in Kaifeng is also known as the Iron Pagoda. It is a Buddhist pagoda, octagonal in form, which is normal for a multi-storeyed pagoda of this type. It is called the Iron Pagoda because of the brown glazing of the bricks which resembles oxidised iron (Liang, 2005, pp. 148–149).

From the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, there have been western interpretations of Chinese design described as Chinoiserie. An example of this is Sir William Chambers' pagoda at Kew Gardens (1762). Claiming historical support from a visit to China, Chambers' adaption of the pagoda and his garden design became a "pretext for expounding his own ideas" (Kruft, 1994, p. 263). The pagoda was Chambers' interpretation of pagodas that he had seen on his travels in China. Like Smith's interpretation, his has an even number of floors (10) and contradicts traditional symbolism.

Architectural academics Gerald Wigmans and Chan Yawei describe the modern design of the Jin Mao Tower as an "object of Chinese pride because it respects traditional values" (2004, p. 60). However, architect Eric Höweler views the combination of the language of traditional China with the representation of modernity as confusing:

The Orientalist architectural vocabulary of the Jin Mao Tower raises difficult questions about the design of tall buildings in an Asian context, where references to traditional architecture on contemporary building types result in contradictory cultural iconography on a monumental scale. (Höweler, 2003, p. 24)

As the first of the landmark towers in the Pudong, it is understandable that the first level of representation is of modern architecture. This building was part of a plan to signify that Shanghai and China were "open for business." The paradox is that on one hand there are these associations with building a super tall skyscraper, yet on the other there is the symbolism of Chinese culture in the shape of the pagoda and the use of the number eight as a repeated motif. Smith's design decision was possibly given confidence in this design paradox with the Petronas Towers (1998) designed by César Pelli in Kuala Lumpur. Pelli's towers were not only the tallest building in the world in 1998-2004, but also included Islamic motifs repeated in the planning and design, and Chinese superstition with 88 floors.



**Figure 69 Tower Elevation Jin Mao Tower, designed by Skidmore Owings Merrill  
Photographer: Author 2014**

The Jin Mao tower is the first of three landmark buildings in Shanghai that symbolises the city's modernisation, its entry into the globalised world and exemplifies branding strategies to signify the building is located in China (Refer to Figure 69). It achieves those goals by referencing traditional Chinese pagoda buildings, using a golden sheath of fine metal grille frames that climb the 88 levels into the sky and fold out every ten or so floors, contracting as they rise to fold every two or three levels in the way nature forms a flower, but these folds suggest also the curved forms of traditional Chinese big roofs. The apex of the building is capped using a gleaming metal structure that approaches the role of a huge finial with the customary antenna stick on top, as shown in Figure 58. In many ways it is not so different to the collection of hats used on many Shanghai towers.





**Figure 70. Jin Mao Tower "hat."**  
**Photographer: Author 2014**



**Figure 71 Base of Jin Mao Tower**  
**Photographer: Author 2014**



**Figure 72 (L) Jin Mao Tower with (R) Shanghai World Financial Centre**  
**Photographer: Author 2014**

### **Shanghai World Financial Centre (2008).**

Designed by American architects Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates, the Shanghai World Financial Centre opened in 2008. The developer for this project was the Japanese Mori group, which brought about some problems in the narrative that would be applied to the building design. Relations between Japan and China have developed tensions many times over hundreds of years, and memories of the Japanese invasion and occupation in the 1930s inform the contemporary relationship between the two nations.

The original design had a circular opening at the cap of the building. This symbolised the round heaven and the square earth. The aperture not only provided *fengshui* or cosmological symbolism but also assisted with controlling relative wind pressures on the structure.

The design architects argued that the circular opening was symbolic of heaven and earth, design director of Kohn Pedersen Fox, William Pedersen, described the original design as addressing 'the complexities of the building's context through a gesture of 'heightened simplicity' responding through geometry in its purest form (Höweler, 2003).

However, the original design gathered controversy to the point where it required a fundamental change. One populist narrative was that the building overshadowed the intended association of heaven and earth, and the roof aperture resembled the Japanese Rising Sun flag. This, when read in combination with the Japanese developer, provided negative symbolic associations for this particular landmark building. Criticism of its domination in the skyline of Shanghai was more than a populist backlash by members of the public; it included opponents such as the then Mayor of Shanghai, Chen Lingyu, who took exception to the unintended imagery that had raised memories of past sour Sino-Japanese relations (Refer to Figure 73).

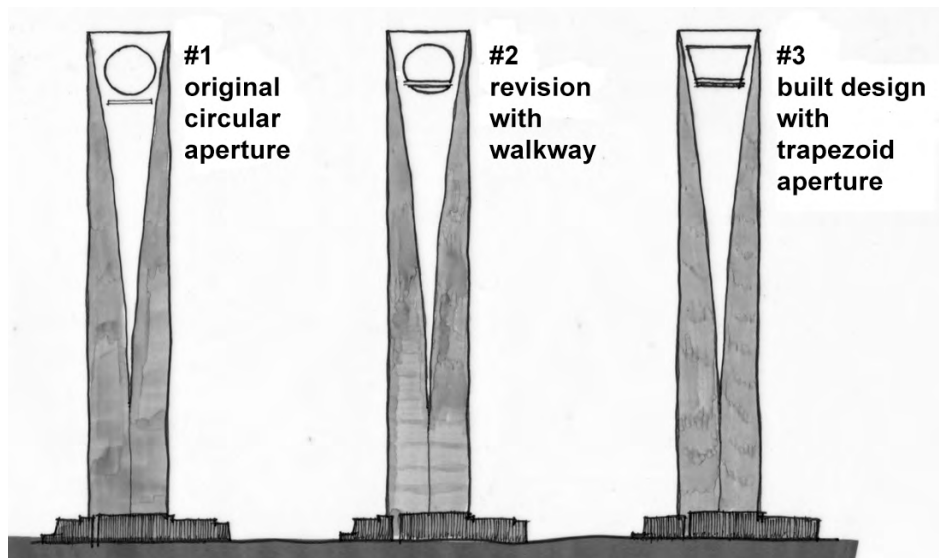


Figure 73. Evolution of the SWFC.

**Building 1 is the original design; building 2 is the modified proposal, and building 3 is the built form.**  
Source: Author (2014)

Despite the fact that the aperture at the cap of the building is trapezoidal, not square as stated, the architect's amended design statement read:

A square prism — the symbol used by the ancient Chinese to represent the earth—is intersected by two cosmic arcs, representing the heavens, as the tower ascends in gesture to the sky. The interaction between these two realms gives rise to the building's form, carving a square sky portal at the top of the tower that lends balance to the structure and links the two opposing elements — the heavens and the earth. Soaring above the city skyline, the Shanghai World Financial Center stands as a symbol of commerce and culture that speaks to the city's emergence as a global capital ... The elemental forms of the heavens and the earth are used again in the design of the building's podium where an angled wall representing the horizon cuts through the overlapping circle and square shapes (Kohn Pedersen Fox, 2013).

Some commentators have interpreted this symbol as a moon gate, and for others the symbolism of the circle and the square is representative of the imagery used to describe the relationship between heaven and earth in Chinese cosmology:

... earth is given the square as symbol, while heaven is symbolised by the circle. According to early cosmologies the world resembles a chariot with its canopy. This canopy is round and symbolised heaven; the rectangular box in which the travellers are seated — or rather its floor — corresponds with the earth (Eberhard, 1986, pp. 89–90).

The symbolism of the rising sun is unrelated to the practice of *fengshui*, however it does have implications, intentional or not, for a culture that reads symbols into the built environment. The architect has addressed this in his design statement issued after the design was submitted. It should be noted that the Shanghai World Financial Centre is not the only building in Shanghai to use the combination of the square earth and round heaven symbolism.. The building is now referred to as the “bottle opener,” and while architect William Pedersen does not see the humour in this appropriation of the design intent, the owners do see the humour and even sell SWFC bottle openers at the observation deck shop (Peters, 2011) (Refer to Figure 74).



**Figure 74. Shanghai World Financial Centre souvenir bottle opener.**  
**Source: Author (2014)**

### **Shanghai Tower (2014)**

The Shanghai Tower (*Shanghai Zhongin Dasha*) is the third of the three landmark buildings of the LFD. Designed by American based architectural practice Gensler, the building was constructed to roof level on 2 August 2013, with an expected total building completion date in late 2014. It is the tallest of the three buildings and the tallest building in China. It is a commercial building with offices, conference centre, hotel, and entertainment areas. A note on authorship should be included; there has been a series of lawsuits issued to establish who was the designer of the Shanghai Tower. Architect Marshall Stabala claims to have been the original designer and did the bulk of the work on the initial conceptual, however, Gensler claim that their Peter Weingarten was the project's design director. On the design of the tower, Gensler states:

The district [LFD] is poised to become China's first super-tall district, as Shanghai Tower rises to complete a trio of towers including the adjacent Jin Mao Tower and Shanghai World Financial Centre (WFC). Together these three will form a new icon on Shanghai's skyline. While the design of the Jin Mao Tower pays homage to China's past, and the WFC's design signified China's recent economic growth, Shanghai Tower's design is a beacon of China's future (Gensler, 2008b, p. 1).

In the original press releases for the building, the design statement is that the building's form is a metaphor for the spirit and Chinese philosophy. Referencing the spiral as a symbol of cosmos in Chinese culture, the tower's form symbolises "China's connection with the world, space and time. Additionally, the tower's triangular plan relates to the site's harmonious trio of buildings" (Gensler, 2008a, p. 2). However, Gensler's assertion about the spiral is incorrect. The spiral is not a symbol of the cosmos in Chinese culture. That symbolic reading is the circle and the square, which, when placed together, represent heaven (circle) and earth (square). While the spiral is used as a decorative device, particularly in funerary objects, it has no symbolic relationship with the world, time, or space. Further, the triangle, as discussed in previous chapters, and particularly the triangle as a design problem for I. M. Pei in Hong Kong, is symbolic of many things, including fire and yang.

In the context of traditional Chinese philosophy, a harmonious relationship needs to be established in terms of a dual relationship between two parts, one to another, so the two parts of a relationship form a single harmony. A commercial decision to include reference to this harmonious relationship may have been made to the point where a perceived cultural sensitivity is based on a token gesture, and that may be condescending, but in doing so there is a misrepresentation of millennia of culture and history. Subsequent press releases have slightly modified the design justification. The latest press release states that the spiralling form now symbolises "the emergence of modern China as a global financial power," rather than the original cosmos reference (Gensler Publications, 2013).



**Figure 75. The three landmark buildings of LFD. Left SWFC, central Jin Mao Tower, and right Shanghai Tower**

**Source: Gensler**

**[http://www.gensler.com/uploads/documents/Shanghai\\_Tower\\_12\\_22\\_2010.pdf](http://www.gensler.com/uploads/documents/Shanghai_Tower_12_22_2010.pdf)**

The reference to space and time remains a suspect notion in this case, because the specific reference to space and time, and application of its methods have differing meanings within Chinese culture. Within *fengshui*, for example, the technique called Flying Stars is used to calculate the movement of *qi* through the environment over cycles of time. of the stated relationship with the cosmos, time and space might make impressive copy, when these terms are a credible part of Chinese culture and have very specific references within *fengshui* traditions, the cavalier treatment of these is inaccurate and potentially offensive to those with such knowledge.

### **Fengshui narrative in popular culture**

Architect and theorist Professor Zheng Shiling writes of the symbolism in Chinese architecture as it applied to contemporary architectural form:

Symbolism in Chinese architecture is very different from that of Western architecture, often expressed in abstract ways, and it is difficult to find a new model that combines these traditional symbols with contemporary forms. Some



architects are therefore attempting to recover the symbolic meanings of Chinese architecture, adopting symbols in relation to the four notions (Zheng, 2002, pp. 128–129).

The four notions that Zheng goes on to detail are first, that Chinese architectural symbolism should be respected and considered as an expression of the ideal in architectural forms. The second describes sense of space as respectful and appropriate in the representation of Chinese architecture and culture. The third is to approach the representation of Chinese culture from a philosophical perspective. Zheng refers to the use of truth, the spirit of the architecture, and substance, the material form. When these elements complement each other the “spirit of Chinese architecture” is achieved. The final form is to achieve this respect between modern and traditional architecture. Rowe and Kuan make similar links in their exploration of essence and form (2002).

*Fengshui* narratives in Shanghai are complicated because many alternative positions can be taken concerning the city buildings and urban environment. Like in Hong Kong, the practice of classical *fengshui* has very little to do with the narrative that is described as *fengshui*. Much of what passes as *fengshui* is an incorporation of commonly held beliefs and superstitions, along with an adaption of popular religion and public hearsay. When we compare the buildings selected for case study in Hong Kong with the Shanghai buildings there is variation in the interpretation of *fengshui*, however there are areas of common ground.

Shanghai has been promoted by the central Chinese government as the showcase for a new China, focusing on its natural assets, history as a financial, commercial and trading port, and cultural strengths. It is intended to be the leading global city of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, just as China ascends other nations as the world's preeminent political force and economic power.

International focus is again on Shanghai, as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and in the 1930s, despite its declining period immediately after World War II under the original communist regime. It is by direct policy of the central government that the city has grown so rapidly, and this chapter has shown how that policy has been implemented, and



specifically the direction for a mediated modernity for the city that creates a global leading brand for Shanghai.

In the process of reinventing the city, there has been a conscious interpretation of traditional values by developers, government and designers, and many of those values are related to *fengshui* practice. The outcome has produced a level of Chineseness for new developments and urban designs. The application of this approach which is embedded in the new designs for Chinese cities, has created a vision of China and Shanghai as two diverse but unified worlds, one with a particular concept (*fengshui*) and the other of global significance.

As with many things in China, there is a celebration of the two halves of one whole. In this case it is the placement of Shanghai on the world stage using the international signifiers of modernism, internationalism and contemporary expression in its new buildings. Alongside that an adaption of traditional Chinese values and expression of underlying cultural mores such as *fengshui* informs the new civic urban design and architecture.

In the case of Shanghai, this dichotomy is more obvious than, for example, in Hong Kong. In the latter city the remnants of a recent colonial master have muddied the waters, although *fengshui* narratives still play a vital role in development in the old colony. It is in Shanghai's remarkable growth spurt, however, that we can see how contemporary Chinese empire building is employed to provide for this new vision of China.



## Chapter 7

### Case Study 3: Hong Kong Disneyland

In September 2005, Disney opened its first theme park in China. In addition to the traditional Chinese ceremonies, there was a very public promotion of Disney's integration of Chinese culture, and use of *fengshui* throughout the theme park. The park was of benefit not only to Disney as a foothold into the Chinese market, but also to Hong Kong. As mentioned in previous chapters, the use of Disney as a brand and the Disney theme park was a means by which Hong Kong was able to differentiate itself from other Chinese cities.

This drive for differentiation is in keeping with locating the city as a means of expression for commercial, political and cultural competition with other mainland Chinese cities and other global cities. Likewise, it can be argued that the Disney Corporation would invest in Hong Kong as a testing ground for future expansion of its operations in the huge China market, with an eye to opening the much larger Shanghai Disney Resort due to be completed in 2016.

This chapter is the last of the three case studies examining how *fengshui* and its associated symbolism is used and appropriated in the design of contemporary architecture in Hong Kong and Shanghai. Disney promotes their respect for *fengshui* as part of their publicity for the Hong Kong theme park. While the provision of context and a sense of localisation is common in the architecture of the urban environment, the domination of Disney's themed environment, the development of two different theories of Disneyization (design and style) and Disneyfication (business and management methods), in addition to the litigious nature of the company regarding copyright, and make for an interesting "tale" as to why it would modify their designs using *fengshui* practices.

It appears that Disney has learnt from I. M. Pei's Bank of China Tower experience of ignoring *fengshui* as a significant cultural practice and the subsequent uncontrolled popular narrative that circulated. The Disney Corporation demonstrates a fair amount ofchutzpah by spreading the word that it is a good corporate citizen (albeit in

a limited way) and by limiting debate and access to information of its operations in the expectation that people will not question the validity of the Disney *fengshui* claims.

Hong Kong Disneyland is the third Disney International theme park after Paris and Tokyo. It is the first of these parks to veer from the standard replication of the Anaheim theme park (1955) paradigm (the original of which is located in Los Angeles), which is a direct representation of American popular culture as re-imagined by Disney. While the more literal American-Disney exemplar was successful at the Japanese theme park Tokyo Disneyland (1983), it did not translate as an appropriate experience at Euro Disney (1992), later rebranded Paris Disneyland.

The vocal criticisms of Euro Disney, especially in France, resulted in a requirement that future international versions of Disneyland would be more culturally sensitive. In 2004, The Disneyland Report blog (now archived) published a section called *Hong Kong Disneyland Feng Shui secrets and facts* (The Disneyland Report, 2004). The purpose of this document is to serve as a vehicle for supporting the idea that Disney had adapted *fengshui* principles in the park's design, thus demonstrating their sympathetic approach to local culture and customs.

The report is an unofficial and unacknowledged source of information for many journals and articles about the theme park, including one in the *New York Times* (Holson, 2005). Further, the so-called facts republished were not verified for accuracy, resulting in misinformation as to how *fengshui* is actually practiced in the design of the theme park. The blog does not credit a specific author, and numerous attempts to contact the organisation have not been successful.

The Walt Disney Company (WDC) is a publicly listed media conglomerate. Its brand umbrella includes ABC broadcast television network, cable television networks (Disney Channel, ESPN, ABC Family), theme parks, publishing and merchandising and theatre divisions. It has operated theme parks in America since 1955 and internationally since 1983. During this time, there have been changes in leadership; particularly notable are the mythologised Walt Disney (who controlled the company until his death in 1966) and the entertainment mogul, Michael Eisner (CEO 1984-2005). In the 1980s under the direction of Eisner and Frank Wells, Disney's name became synonymous with business initiative, global expansion, high profits, and good stock market performance (Zukin,

1993, p. 50). Robert Iger succeeded Michael Eisner as CEO in 2005. This new management appears to represent an era characterised by a reduction of the previous “swaggering global corporations” (Klein, 2010, p. 116) that characterised Eisner’s tenure. There is an admission that economic diversity posed a challenge that required adaptation by Disney, a novel recognition for the habitually conservative corporation. The implication is that such commercial diversity is a resource that can be immensely lucrative when well researched, managed, and relentlessly commodified (Giroux, 2010, p. 182).

Under the current president and CEO, Robert Iger, Disney has pursued new international markets specifically in the East Asian region, including Hong Kong and Shanghai. Bryman discusses the difficult balancing act that global companies face when exporting goods and services outside of their place of origin:

In many ways, the designers of the two foreign Disney theme parks have been caught in a pincer movement between, on the one hand recognising that visitors are likely to be attracted to a piece of Americana in their own countries and therefore not want to adapt too much, and on the other hand realising that the American parks cannot be transplanted wholesale and without consideration of overseas customs and feelings (Bryman, 2008, p. 143).

Both the Hong Kong Disneyland and the proposed Shanghai Disneyland have been significantly adapted to suit the Chinese market. The website promoting Shanghai’s version promises:

Shanghai Disneyland will include signature Disney experiences that guests around the world know and love, but will also feature exciting new elements that will be unique to the Shanghai Disney Resort. Shanghai Disneyland will be both authentically Disney and distinctly Chinese (Disney, 2013a).

No details of how the theme park will be distinctly Chinese have yet been published. Any discussion has been limited to descriptions such as “Chinese style” or “Chinese elements.” For example this quote from Dai Haibo, Deputy Director of the Pudong New government area was reported the, *Shanghai Daily* newspaper:

During our preliminary survey, we found some Disneyland parks overseas did

have some Chinese-styled attractions but they were not original enough. We will have the future local park featuring authentic Chinese elements well blended into Disneyland's signature style, Dai said (Dong, 2012).

Plans and images of the park have been unofficially published. The only suggestion of a concession to fengshui symbolism is speculation by Disney blogger Bao Xiao that one of the hotels is shaped as an “eight” (Bao, 2012). The eight is “8” in plan rather than 八 (ba) (Refer to Figure 76). Bao also posts that the two gardens of the hotel are based on the concept of yin and yang. It will be interesting to see what further *fengshui* narratives are used to provide Chinese identity in Shanghai.



**Figure 76. Shanghai Disneyland Hotel 2**  
**Image: Bao Xiao 2012**  
<http://lukeandthetempleoffun.blogspot.sg/>

## Globalisation

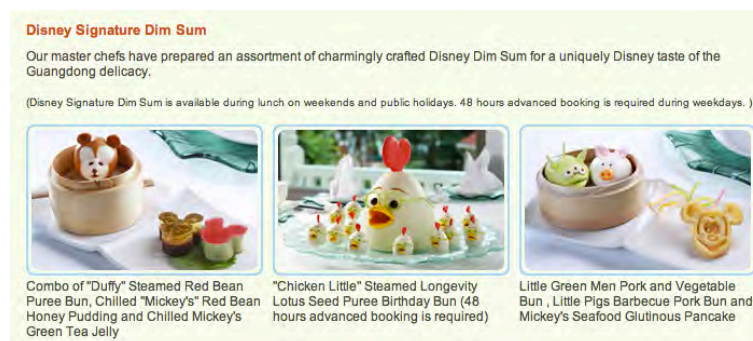
Disney is one of the leading global brands; its association matches that of US corporate giants Coca-Cola, Starbucks, Wal-Mart and McDonalds, along with Ford, GMH, Boeing and Microsoft. Much of the literature about Disney, for example is presented in terms of Klein's swaggering American cowboy image (Klein, 2000). While this was an apt description up to the opening of Euro Disney in Paris in 1992, the one-way process of spreading the Disney brand has evolved into a two way process. Disney has acknowledged that the presentation of local culture is essential to the way they do business. In the case of Disneyland in Hong Kong, it is easy to discount this as a cynical gesture to establish the Disney product for a Chinese market, — which may be true, however there are elements of localisation at Hong Kong Disneyland that provide

evidence of such a two way process of localised globalisation, as outlined by Eriksen (2007b) in Chapter 3.

Choi proposes that Hong Kong Disneyland is used as a means of differentiation by, and for, Hong Kong, marking it as a capitalist and western city by comparison with other mainland Chinese cities. The disproportionate number of global businesses in comparison with local businesses defines Hong Kong's status as a global city. The skyscrapers housing international banks, financial services and businesses, their advertising and the global retail brands (including Disney and Disneyland) contribute to the cosmopolitan and global sense of the city and set it apart as Hong Kong Chinese, distinct from mainland Chinese cities:

Chinese consumers wanted to connect with the global popular culture and distance themselves from their previous collective poverty and communist dictate. Kevin Wong, a tourism economist at the Hong Kong Polytechnic, remarked that the Chinese "Want to come to Disney because it is American. The foreignness is part of the appeal." (Young & Lui, 2007, p. 5)

Yet Hong Kong Disneyland is a hybrid version of Americana and Asia. Chinese food is available in the theme park: yum cha at the Plaza Inn and Hong Kong egg tarts at the Market House Bakery. At the Tahitian Terrace, Asian food is served, including Halal and Indian vegetarian options. In the hotel restaurant Crystal Lotus, Disney themed dim sum is available (refer to Figure 77). The languages used in the park are English, Cantonese and Putonghua. Even basic amenities are modified to include traditional squat toilets that are preferred by mainland Chinese.



**Figure 77. Screen shot of Disney Dim Sum.**  
Image source: Hong Kong Disney Resort

[http://park.hongkongdisneyland.com/hkdl/en\\_US/hotels/latestOverview?name=HotelDiningPage#crystalallotus](http://park.hongkongdisneyland.com/hkdl/en_US/hotels/latestOverview?name=HotelDiningPage#crystalallotus)

## Brandscape

Klingmann argues that Disney's scripted environments is the prototype for all branded environments (2007, pp. 69–70). The strength of the branding is expressed not only in terms of Disneyfication (design style, and the experience of place), but also Disneyization (marketing, management and service delivery strategies). Klingmann describes what happens to architecture when it is used as part of the brandscape "Architecture is no longer viewed as artistic but as an integral part of a larger system — economic developments, technological advancements and social change" (Klingmann, 2007, p. 4).

Geographer and Disney scholar Stacey Warren comments on the impact of Disney not only in relation to its own theme parks and retail outlets, but on the influence it has on other projects including the redevelopment of Times Square, New York in the mid 1990s:

What happens when the Imagineering logic of Walt Disney World becomes the logic of the real world? ... As Disney sensibilities seep more frequently and visibly into the real world, Disney's critics seem to be getting more testy. And with good reason. Disney's impact is global, and following Disney's involvement with the "rehabilitation" of its complete antithesis, Times Square in the mid-1990s, it becomes clear that no space is immune from the Disney effect. Additionally, it is not just the Disney Company involved in this type of development; numerous other developers emulate the apparent success of the Disney method. (Warren, 2005, p. 231)

The sensibilities that Warren describes are applauded by business strategists B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore (2011). The creation of "experience" as part of a strategy to sell products is fundamental to their book *The Experience Economy*.

## Disneyfication: Design, style, and experience of space.

The Disney experience is created by a group of in-house technicians including architects, interior designers, and engineers, known as Imagineers. There is a strong set of



design principles applied by the Disney team of Imagineers who contribute to the specific Disney look or Disney style. This is called Disneyfication. Art theorist Dick Hebdige provides a definition of Disneyfication as:

N1. Neologism combining **Disney** (surname of Walt, founder of Disney Studios, etc.etc.) + - **fica'tion** (from Fr — *fiction*; L — *ficatio* from unstreud form of *facere*, to make, to do) a suffix meaning a making, creating as in, eg. Calcification, mortification, mystification. See also **Imagineering**; **theming** (esp. of built environments); **hyper-realism** (also **hyper retailism**; **hyper-conformism**); **privitization** (or public spaces, services); **californication** (formerly “**americanization**”; repression (esp. libidinal); **mono-logism** (also **mono-theism**, **mono-gamism**; **mono-railism**); **infantilization**; **bowdlerization** (of history, myth, existence, etc.) **homogenization** (of cultures, differences); **casualization** (of labor). (2000, p. 40)

However, the technique with which animations are produced in a distinctive house style that makes them immediately recognisable as Disney products, as sociologist Alan Bryman suggests (2004, p. 5). This is also discussed in Chapter 4: Brandscape.

Disneyfication is an emblematic design strategy that is applied by Disney to all its media outputs, theme parks and other operations, so the visitor to this invented world is immersed in the Disney way of doing things, encompassed by the Disney brand. This raises the question of why they would to dilute the strength of their design identity by incorporating a foreign process such as *fengshui*.

### **Disneyization: Marketing, management, and service delivery.**

Sociologist George Ritzer first wrote about McDonaldization in 1993 (Ritzer, 2011). For Ritzer, McDonaldization is the process by which the principles of the fast food restaurant would develop to dominate an increasing number of consumption sectors, first in the USA, and more recently on a global scale. The main themes are efficiency, calculability, predictability, pricing, and control. This theory is an earlier, and more extensive theory than that of Disneyization which was proposed by Bryman in 1998, but these are parallel notions. While both have issues that overlap, Bryman notes the distinction between the two processes and further defines Disneyization as:

...a set of principles that address a consumerist world in which McDonaldization has wrought homogeneity and in its place projects an ambience of choice, difference, and frequently the spectacular. Both Disneyization and McDonaldization are concerned with consumption, but whereas McDonaldization is rooted in rationalization and its associations with Fordism, scientific management and bureaucracy, Disneyization's affinities are with a post-Fordist world of variety and consumer choice. (2004, p. 13)

Disneyization is the process with which Disney's design processes are used as a template to dominate an increasing number of sectors such as shopping centres, restaurants, and cultural institutions in the USA and now globally. Bryman also adds that "It is crucial to remember that Disneyization is not about the influence of Disney but about the spread of the principles that its theme parks exemplify" (Bryman, 2004, p. 11). The key concepts are theming, hybrid, entertainment, pricing, merchandising, and emotional labour, and all focus on consumption. By contrast, McDonaldization is focused on production.

### **Site and Development Body**

Hong Kong Disneyland (HKD) is built on what was Penny's Bay on Lantau Island. Hong Kong International Theme Park Limited (HKITP), the joint venture formed between Disney and the Hong Kong Government in December 1999, oversaw the construction and management of the theme park and resort. While the government developed the infrastructure, Disney provided master planning, real estate development, attractions and show design, engineering support, production support, project management, and other development services. Disney also set up a wholly owned subsidiary called Hong Kong Disneyland Management Limited to manage HKD on behalf of the joint venture.



**Figure 78. Google earth site image (2013).**

### **Cultural context**

The Disney Corporation was concerned about cultural implications for this park. Disney's management had been severely criticised in the media for exemplifying cultural imperialism at Euro Disney in 1992 in Paris. This was no great surprise given the French level of protectiveness regarding their culture, language, traditions and sense of national pride and importance. Michael Eisner defended Disney's misreading of the French cultural context when he stated:

As Americans, we had believed that the word "Euro" in front of Disney was glamorous and exciting. For Europeans, it turned out to be a term they associated with business, currency and commerce. Renaming the park "Disneyland Paris" was a way of identifying it not just with Walt's original creation but with one of the most romantic and exciting cities in the world (Eisner, 1999, p. 292).

Critics of the park included the French Minister for Culture, Jack Lang; theatre director Araine Mnouchkine, who famously compared the park to a "cultural Chernobyl" (Chu, 2002); writer Max Gallo, who described Disney creations in relation to culture as "what fast food is to gastronomy" (ref), and writer Alain Finkelkraut who referred to Disney in Paris as a terrifying giant step toward world homogenisation (ref). In response, Eisner

attempted to appease the critics by stating that Disney culture was “European folklore with a Kansas twist” (Riding, 2011). While the negative implications of Eisner’s statement were clearly lost on him (Giroux, 2010, p. 183), Europeans seemed well aware that “crafty revision of the literature, history, and religion of particular cultures [is] not only one of the realities of colonial expansion but a Disney trademark” (Hines & Ayres, 2003, p. 9).

Disney operates at many levels to achieve its ends, using property, film, music, merchandising and its theme parks. To achieve this in China was complex. Management found business in China was jeopardised by Disney’s funding and distribution of the Martin Scorsese film *Kundun* (1997) that told the story of the early life of the Dalai Lama. The political manoeuvrings between WDC CEO Michael Eisner and WDC President Michael Ovitz, who was fired as part of the fallout, would make a spectacular screenplay. Eisner employed the former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to be involved in “mending fences” with China. Stewart writes that assurances were made by Disney that it would not “promote the movie aggressively and that it would be a box-office failure” (Stewart, 2005, pp. 271–272). The aspects of negotiation were film distribution (two thirds of film screen time in China must be local content), copyright agreements, and the future theme park in Hong Kong.

Some of the ways that Disney worked through this included releasing product that was more China friendly - including the establishment Disney schools to teach English, and joint venture film production to get around the restriction on foreign film distribution. In 2012, there was an increase of 14 American films per year in which Disney were directly involved in negotiations (Creemers, 2012). The company finally managed to get the Chinese government to lift its ban on Disney films with the release of *Mulan* (1998), a feel-good animated tale based on a 1,300-year-old legend from the Sui Dynasty (581-618), described by Artz:

In the story, Mulan disguises herself as a man to replace her father in the military draft — temporarily violating the law against female fighting. She performs courageously, and through wit, physical skill, and the assistance of some barely competent assistants, Mulan overcomes the invading Huns and saves China. Of course, she returns to her “proper place” at her father’s side in the family garden to be courted by some handsome nobleman she met during her adventure.

Ultimately, traditional romance and Chinese feudalism survive. (Artz, 2005, p. 86)

*The South China Morning Post* described Disney's depiction of Chinese heroism and patriotism as an "olive branch," and "the most China-friendly movie Hollywood has made in years" (Foo, 1999). The film served its purpose: while *Mulan* flopped at the box office in the USA, it nevertheless opened the door to discussions between Disney and Beijing for a planned \$2 billion Disney theme park in Hong Kong (Klein, 2000, p. 173). Discussing the success of the Hong Kong version of Disneyland, Young and Lui note in the context of a business analysis of the theme park that the "... outcome depended in part on how well Disney would be able to translate its strategic assets, such as its products, practices and ideologies, to the Chinese context" (Young & Lui, 2007, p. 2).

The Disney Corporation was under pressure to achieve a number of things. In order to develop future markets for its films and merchandise in China the company needed to demonstrate a respectful and sympathetic attitude to Chinese culture. In addition to the films and schools, another method was the use of *fengshui* in the design of the Hong Kong Disneyland theme park and resort. The narratives of *fengshui* were quickly circulated in the press both official (press releases and via the company website) and unofficial (fan blogs, secondary media sources).

### **Disney and its international theme parks**

Walt Disney Parks and Resorts operates as a subsidiary company of WDC. There are five Disneyland resorts across the globe, including the theme park and associated facilities such as hotels and shopping centres.



**Figure 79. Disneyland aerial view, 1956**

**Source: Museum Syndicate**

**<http://www.museumsyndicate.com/item.php?item=49725>**

As a global corporation, WDC is responsible to its shareholders. It is imperative that it expands its spread of influence and sells its product into new environments. In the construction of its entry into the Chinese market in Hong Kong, and in the new Shanghai Disneyland resort under construction in the Pudong district, Disney is creating new centrepieces for its large and invasive media empire, including language schools, cable television and film distribution. Of this Michael Eisner said:

Introducing the magic of Disney to the world's most populated nation is a truly thrilling and historic undertaking ... While this is an incredible opportunity for our company and our shareholders, it is also an important cultural milestone for the Chinese people, as we open the doors to entirely new worlds of fantasy, imagination and adventure (cited in Disney Press Release, 2004).<sup>28</sup>

The world's largest market is China (population in 2013-1.361 billion), and it sits alongside the hugely populated countries of Asia including India with the world's second largest population (1.236 billion). Disney has a strong market foothold in the USA, with the world's third largest population (317 million). So merely by moving successfully into the region the WDC is ensuring huge commercial growth, as long as the Chinese appreciate the Disney vision of homogenised fantasy, controlled imagination and safe

<sup>28</sup> This press release was announcing the NBA games to be played in Shanghai. These were televised on the WDC cable channel ESPN. The release also discusses cross promotion with HKDL.

adventure.

In his seminal 1983 essay *The Globalisation of Markets*, Economist Theodore Levitt describes the difference between multinational corporations that adapt business product and practice to suit local conditions, and global companies that have a standardised product that might allow for operational differences such as voltage or language, but for whom the product remains standard globally. The action of WDC through the tenure of Eisner and Wells epitomised the behaviour of a typical global corporation, however, as globalisation has become more sophisticated and more complex, companies such as Disney have needed to evolve by adjusting to local expectations and markets.

#### **Tokyo Disneyland, Urayasu, Chiba, Japan (1983).**

The first Disneyland international park opened in Tokyo in 1983. The approximate size of this park is 0.47 km<sup>2</sup> and the entire resort is comprised of Tokyo Disneyland and Tokyo Disney Sea (2001). The site for Tokyo Disneyland is 72% of the size of the original 1956 Anaheim version. The park is entirely owned and controlled by Oriental Land Company (a land-reclamation company in partnership with Mitsui Real Estate and the Keisei Railway Company). The only income Disney earns from Tokyo Disneyland is 10% from royalties on park admissions (and 5% on the merchandise, food and beverages sold within the park (M. Ho, 2000a, p. 2). WDC took a minimal financial risk and has no direct ownership of the park. Thus it had a limited return on what turned out to be one of the most popular theme parks in the world (M. Ho, 2000a, p. 3). Tokyo was the first Asian Disneyland, and it has been acknowledged as the most financially successful (Stein, 2011, p. 120). Its success may be due to the synthesis of Disney characters with Japan's own traditions of animated humanoids and its appetite for all things cute (Yoshimi, 2005, pp. 176–177).



Figure 80. Tokyo Disneyland map 2014

Source: <https://folinotes.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/disney-land-map.jpg>

Tokyo Disneyland's operation differs from the Anaheim model in several ways. Film and cinema academic Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto outlines several of these differences and attributes these to the success of Tokyo Disneyland. He noted some of the changes made to the theme park including the renaming of buildings (such as Main Street USA to World Bazaar) to erase traces of American nationalism that might not be "palatable to the Japanese masses" (Yoshimoto, 1994, p. 193). Sociologist Aavid E. Raz documented the script changes from English to Japanese ensuring the operators banter in rides such as The Jungle Cruise and the Mystery tour in Cinderella's Castle were not offensive to Japanese people (Raz, 1999, pp. 35–44). Significantly, the changes to localise Tokyo Disneyland were not physical amendments to the architecture and planning.

### **Euro Disney (Disneyland Paris), Marne-la-Vallée, France (1992).**

Disneyland Paris opened as Euro Disney on 12 April 1992. The approximate size of this theme park is 0.6 km<sup>2</sup>. The theme parks that make up the resort are Disneyland Park Walt Disney Studios Park and Golf Disneyland. The park was rebranded Disneyland Paris in an attempt to provide a better connection between the local culture and that of the



global brand. In 2002, Walt Disney Studios (WDS) opened as part of the park. WDS was modelled after Hollywood studios in Disney World Florida. The financial structure for this park was a 49% ownership by Disney (mindful of their misjudgement of Tokyo Disneyland). However early losses included a US\$4 billion debt to build the park and a significant underestimation of interest rates. The recession in Europe at the time resulted in lower than expected tourist numbers, the expected revenue for real estate developments collapsed with a weak property market, and finally the French Franc was stronger against other currencies, making the theme park more expensive for non French visitors. These losses resulted in Disney selling 10% of its share to Alwaleed bin Talal, a Saudi Arabian prince, for \$300 million, to assist in remarketing the park for the European audience.



Figure 81. Disneyland Paris map (1999)

Source: <http://www.martynhicks.co.uk/personal/html/disney99/disneymap.html>

Former Disney Employee Andrew Lainsbury writes of the changes in design of Euro Disney from the Anaheim model. He quotes Tony Baxter, Senior Vice President of Creative Development at Walt Disney Imagineering, of the need for a different level of design required for the European context, “the French demanded more depth and sophistication ... they regarded America as on the shallow side.” Lainsbury continues, “for this reason, Imagineers stuffed empty spaces with props, decorated blank walls with

paintings and shelves, and accented walkways with elaborate tile work” (Lainsbury, 2000, p. 51). While there might have been additional detail, there was no significant change to the architecture and planning of the park.

**Hong Kong Disneyland Resort, Lantau Island, Hong Kong (SAR), People’s Republic of China (2005).**

Hong Kong Disneyland Resort opened in 2005. The approximate size of this park is 0.3 km<sup>2</sup>. It is by far the smallest of all the Disney parks, and is 30.7% of the size of the original Anaheim Disneyland. Stein writes:

... with a well established presence in Japan and a consistent if somewhat unsure footing in Europe, Disney set to conquer a tourism market poised on the brink of explosion: China. With an eye on the burgeoning mainland China tourism market, the Disney Company tested the waters of possibilities by opening its first park in Hong Kong. (Stein, 2011, p. 125)

Given that there is an underlying culture in the East Asian region of describing buildings in terms of *fengshui*, it make sense that a company such as WDC would want to control any *fengshui* narrative than might be created for the park, particularly if it is a negative one. As discussed in Chapter 5 in relation to the narratives that emerged around the design for the Bank of China tower in Hong Kong, these narratives are difficult to control.



**Figure 82. Hong Kong Disneyland Resort map 2010**  
Source: KDay collection

Hong Kong Disneyland is the third international park by Disney, and came about as a result of a bidding competition in 1999. Hong Kong won the bid over mainland Chinese cities Shanghai and Zhuhai, and Singapore. Ho comments that there were enormous barriers to entry into China during this initial bid. Compared to the mainland, Hong Kong, as a SAR, seemed to be more a flexible and attractive place for the third overseas theme park than the other options. To Disney management, the territory met the essential requirements for building a Disneyland, with its strong infrastructure, openness towards visitors and the government's commitment to developing tourism (M. Ho, 2000a, p. 4). She explains that with the initial investigations into Shanghai the disadvantages were:

1. Inferior infrastructure as compared to Hong Kong.
2. The investment climate was not as stable as in Hong Kong.
3. Lack of a western legal system.
4. Lack of an easily convertible currency.
5. Lower GDP and fewer middle class people who could afford entry fees for the park.
6. Lower accessibility to the rest of Asia.
7. Population was relatively decentralised as compared to Hong Kong

Published research on Hong Kong Disneyland has been limited to anthropology and economics. Kimberly Choi's PhD thesis "Remade in Hong Kong: How Hong Kong people use Hong Kong Disneyland" (2010) is grounded in cultural studies, sociology and anthropology. Articles from the Hong Kong School of Economics by Young and Liu (2007), and Ho (2000a, 2000b) have outlined negotiations between Disney and Hong Kong SAR government. In the research undertaken for this thesis, little has been found about the design and *fengshui* of Hong Kong Disneyland, and anything written about the use of *fengshui* has been sourced back to the document "The Disneyland Report" which is now archived.<sup>29</sup> Hong Kong Disneyland's public relations department includes in their press release a section on *fengshui*:

Feng Shui: Feng shui plays an integral role in the design of the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort. For example, cash registers are placed along walls or near corners to ensure prosperity; hotel kitchens have been designated 'no fire' zones, to ensure safety; and park walkways have been orientated with a bend near their entrances, to ensure that positive energy, or chi, does not flow into the waters of Penny's Bay. (Hong Kong Disneyland Media Relations, 2008)

These references to *fengshui* range from the feasible to the commercially smart. The *fengshui* attitude expressed by Disney in Hong Kong is more to do with ensuring that the product is represented in a way that will be welcomed by the Chinese customers, and where they will believe the narratives Disney has created just as they trust the entertainment they will enjoy while visiting the park. Commercial imperatives guide these decisions, just as political imperatives inform *fengshui* practices in other parts of the development of Hong Kong.

Disney is first and foremost a global corporation with a set of standardised products for its market. It is not in its interest to customise their brand to the detriment of its equity. However, there were many amendments made to the park to make it functional in Hong Kong, such as language, food and beverage, and the amenities provided. There is also the celebration of Chinese New Year, which is as much a part of the Hong Kong Disney calendar as Christmas or Halloween is in the USA.

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<sup>29</sup> The ownership of the domain name 'The Disneyland Report' is registered to Sam J Lin. No author is recorded on the website. I have sent numerous emails requesting further information regarding authorship to ensure correct accreditation, but I have received no reply yet.

***The Hong Kong Disneyland Report.***

There are many Disney blogs that are not officially affiliated with the Disney Corporation. These include *The Hong Kong Disneyland Report*, *Luke and the Temple of Fun* (Bao, 2013), *Disney and more* (Littaye, n.d.), and *Disney O Rama* (Wallace, n.d.). However, the information contained within is based on access to senior Disney staff, previews, plans and details or unofficial public relations of future rides, which suggests that these are sponsored blogs. At this stage this cannot be proven, given the corporate attitude towards information limits which is part of the Disney method of operation. In the *Hong Kong Disneyland Report*, seventeen *fengshui* points are outlined (The Disneyland Report, 2004). The report gathered together the *fengshui* narratives of the park. These were then repeated in the media:

1. Disney Imagineers consulted a *fengshui* master in planning and building Hong Kong Disneyland.
2. Various earthly elements such as wood, fire, earth, metal and water important in *Fengshui* have been carefully balanced throughout the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort according to the rules of *fengshui*. For example, a projection of a rolling fire in one restaurant bar enhances the fire element at that location, while fire is prohibited in other areas.
3. Hong Kong Disneyland's main gate and entrance was positioned in a north-south direction for good luck based on the ancient Chinese art of *fengshui*. Another landscaped area was designed east of the Disney theme park to ensure this north-south positioning, also enhanced by large entry portals to the area.
4. Hong Kong Disneyland was carefully positioned on Lantau Island in Penny's Bay among the surrounding hills and sea for the best luck. The lucky *fengshui* hill formations in the area include 'white tiger' and 'green dragon'.
5. The actual Hong Kong Disneyland Park entrance was modified to maximise energy and guest flow. This would help the park's success.
6. Individual attraction entrances inside the Disney Park have been positioned for good luck as well.
7. Large rocks are placed throughout Hong Kong Disneyland park because they represent stability in *fengshui*. Two boulders have been placed within the park, and each Disney hotel in the resort has a *fengshui* rock in its entrance and courtyard or pool areas. The boulders also prevent good fortune from flowing away from the theme park or hotels.

8. A bend was put in a walkway near the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort entrance so good ‘chi’ energy doesn't flow into the South China Sea.
9. According to Disney Imagineer Tom Morris, water features play an important role in the Hong Kong Disneyland landscaping because they are extremely beneficial in *fengshui*. Lakes, ponds, and streams are placed throughout Hong Kong Disneyland to encourage good luck, fortune, and wealth for the resort, and a large fountain featuring classic Disney characters welcomes guests at the entrance to the park to provide good luck.
10. The Hong Kong Disneyland Hotel and Disney's Hollywood Hotel were built in carefully selected locations with water nearby in a south-west direction to maximise prosperity from *fengshui*.
11. The Hong Kong Disneyland Resort hotels have views of the waterfront onto the ocean and South China Sea. This provides good *fengshui*.
12. 2,238 crystal lotuses decorate the Chinese restaurant at the Disneyland Hotel because the numbers sound like the phrase “easily generate wealth” in Cantonese.
13. The main ballroom at the Disneyland Hotel at the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort is 888 square meters, because 888 is a “wealthy” number.
14. The elevators at Hong Kong Disneyland Resort do not have the number four, and no building (including the Hong Kong Disneyland hotels) has a fourth floor.
15. Red is an extremely lucky colour in Chinese culture, so it is seen frequently throughout the park, especially on the buildings on Main Street, USA.
16. No clocks are sold at the stores in Hong Kong Disneyland because in Chinese the phrase “giving clock” sounds like “going to a funeral.”
17. No green hats are sold in Hong Kong Disneyland stores because it is said in Chinese culture that a man wearing a green hat is cheating on his wife.

Based on the discussion in *Chapter 2: Fengshui* and *Chapter 3: Brandscape*, this list can be viewed as a collection of classical *fengshui* references, superstitions and folkloric beliefs, and Chinese cultural idiosyncrasies. Interestingly, many of the items listed are incorrect when checked against the design and construction of Hong Kong Disneyland. They may be aspirational challenges selected by the Disney Corporation to show their good citizenship, but they do not stand up to inspection and analysis.

### ***Report analysis.***

*Claim 1: Disney Imagineers consulted a Feng Shui master in planning and building Hong Kong Disneyland.*



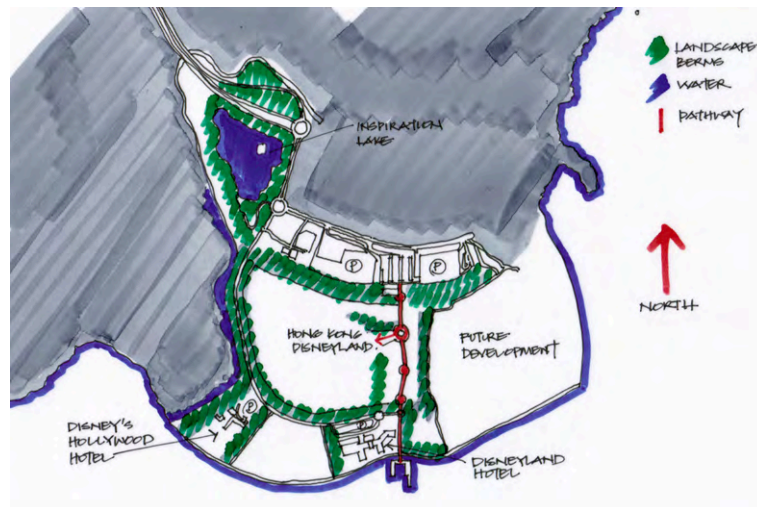
The contentious issue is the extent to which a *fengshui* master was actually involved in the planning of Hong Kong Disneyland. While the *fengshui* master is not an Imagineer or an architect, the influence they can have on a project is significant. In the first level of examination, the siting of a project is important, that is, how the project sits within the landscape and its impact on that landscape. The planning of the project includes issues of direction of significant elements such as the orientation of the building, the location of the entry point, and the approach to the entrance. On a project of this scale, the next level of *fengshui* analysis is to look at individual buildings within the complex. The *fengshui* master would also set the dates for ritual observances such as the ground-breaking and ridge-capping. A Castle Topping ceremony was held on September 23, 2004, to mark the completion of Cinderella's castle, however this type of ceremony was also held at the Paris theme park on 2 August 1991 (Fickley-Baker, 2011). While the *fengshui* master would have chosen this date and the date of the opening ceremony, both these celebrations are not unique to Hong Kong. There are obviously a number of tweaks in the replication of the original USA Anaheim model into Hong Kong, but just how these were managed should be due to *fengshui* guidance. There is also the issue of a significantly reduced size of the site that limits choices. The *fengshui* master for the project has not been identified and no detail has been provided about this procedure.

*Claim 2: Various earthly elements such as wood, fire, earth, metal, and water important in Feng Shui have been carefully balanced throughout the Hong Kong Disneyland resort according to the rules of Feng Shui. For example, projections of a rolling fire in one restaurant bar enhances the fire element at that location, while fire is prohibited in others*

The symbolic five elements of *fengshui* have particular relationships that are supportive or destructive, as discussed in Chapter 2. To determine where elements are to be located a set of calculations are made with the data derived from the *lo'pan* (the *fengshui* compass).

*Claim 3: Hong Kong Disneyland's main gate and entrance was positioned in a north-south direction for good luck based on the ancient Chinese art of Feng Shui. Another landscaped area was designed east of the Disney theme park to ensure this north-south positioning, also enhanced by large entry portals to the area.*

The main entrance that runs along the north-south axis is the pedestrian walkway from the car parks and the Disney MTR station. Originally this walkway was straight, linking to the ferry station in the south. Traditionally the most auspicious direction for entry is south facing. Figure 83 and Figure 84 show that the main entrance to the theme park is located centrally from this walkway. The actual entry to the theme park is located on an east-west axis (Figure 89).



**Figure 83. Orientation of park and gateways**  
Source: Author 2013



**Figure 84. North-south axis and entry sign to Hong Kong Disneyland.**  
Photo: Author 2010



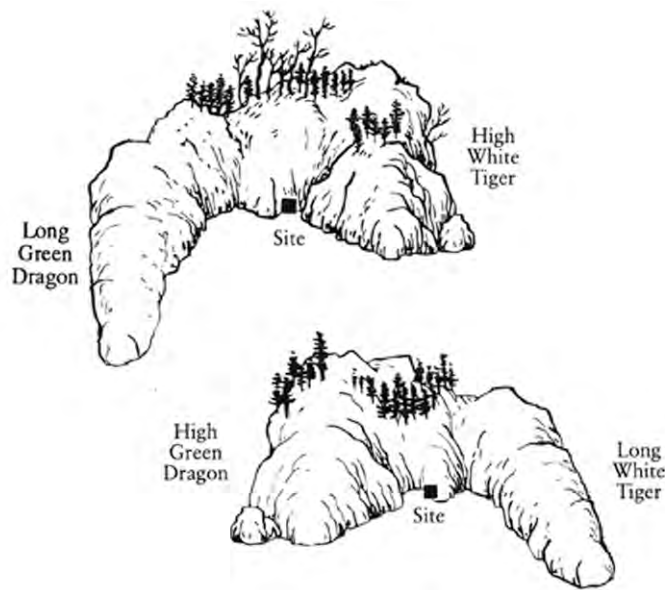
*Claim 4: Hong Kong Disneyland was carefully positioned on Lantau Island in Penny's Bay among the surrounding hills and sea for the best luck. The lucky Feng Shui hill formations in the area include "white tiger" and "green dragon".*

A 1990 Government plan had designated this site for a future container port, and it is within the industrial and shipping zone of Hong Kong. While there has been some arrangement of the plans to accommodate a significantly smaller site and a few token gestures towards *fengshui*, the overall composition of the park is that of a reproduction of the Anaheim USA paradigm. The solution to finding enough suitable land was by excising land from Penny's Bay. While the idea of creating an environment such as this is against the guidance of *fengshui* practices, it is not necessarily detrimental or uncommon to create a new landform. Using the Forbidden City in Beijing as prime example, the lakes, streams, parks and gardens are all constructed, and the city has been constantly rebuilt according to the dictates of time and the requirements of the emperors. It is not based on the natural landforms that existed on that site to begin with.

Traditionally, the impact of the constructed environment has been overshadowed by the natural. However, according to *fengshui*, the natural environment is perceived to be stronger in terms of the *qi* produced. Penny's Bay is located on the south-western coast of Lantau Island. There are hills to the north-west and north-east of the site (refer to Figure 85).



**Figure 85. Topographical map of Penny's Bay 1936**  
Source: (Empson, 1992, p. 144)



**Figure 86. Idealised formation of dragon and tiger land formations**  
**Source: (Wong, 1996, p. 105)**

An examination of a site is undertaken to identify auspicious shapes in the landscape. Based in the traditions of the Landform school, it is desirable to locate formations that resemble the shape of one or more celestial protectors. Generally these celestial animals protect their symbolic directions, for example the dragon is located to the east, the bird to the south, the tiger to the west and the tortoise to the north. The size and shape of the land formation determines the effectiveness of the protection.

In the case of Penny's Bay, the nomination of the dragon and tiger formations would suggest that these mountains cradle the site. The idealised forms of the dragon and tiger land formations that cradle and protect the site are shown in figure 86. The formation of the White Tiger and the Green Dragon is lucky indeed. The intention is that these celestial forces protect or cradle the site. Each of these animals has corresponding supplementary layers of symbolism. An examination of the Disneyland site reveals that the hills are to the north-north east and north west. To correspond with this type of symbolism, the dragon must be higher than the tiger, and this is not the case.

A *fengshui* master would then use the year to determine the overall fortune for the next cycle of years that any internal *fengshui* readings will be based on. Once the current cycle changes, the *fengshui* will need to be altered to ensure continuing

prosperity. A fengshui analysis of the Disneyland site locates first the necessary sitting direction of the building on its site, or in this case the overall park; second the facing direction of the park, which is east; third the facing direction of the main gate, which is east; and the year of construction. This claim can be seen as mischievous in that a secondary path has been given primary *fengshui* importance in order to fit an auspicious narrative.

*Claim 5: The actual Hong Kong Disneyland Park entrance was modified to maximise entry and guest flow. This would help with the parks success.*

There is no further information to explain how this entry modification is related to *fengshui*. The marketing advantage is that if you make a gate that allows for maximum entry and guest flow, you allow customers faster access to their consumer experience. There are other obvious examples of modifications that have been undertaken to make a building *fengshui* compliant, which are based on specific methods and calculations to determine the appropriate direction of entrance. Using the Flying Stars method, a *fengshui* master collects data using a *fengshui* compass and from this makes calculations to determine the most auspicious movement of *qi* during specific time periods. From this information modifications are proposed. Such an application of *fengshui* principles was used with the renovation of the Grand Hyatt on Scott's Road in Singapore, where the new entry doors are placed on a 45-degree angle to the road in accordance with *fengshui* demands, as shown in Figure 87.



**Figure 87. Entrance to the Grand Hyatt Singapore.  
Photo courtesy of Claire Seet 2010**

The symbolism of the entry is tenable but the second part of this claim has little to do with *fengshui* and more to do with the logistics of managing large crowds through a singular entry point.

*Claim 6: Individual attraction entrances inside the Disneyland Park have been positioned for good luck as well*

While this may have been the case, the similarity between the plans of the different theme parks suggests that Disney have used lucky positioning in their parks all along. To have an entry positioned for good luck can be done in either one of two ways. The orientation should face south (the traditional auspicious direction and symbolic of the red bird), or alternatively calculations are from the readings of the *lo'pan* (*fengshui* compass) determine the best position for the entrance.

The Imagineers narrative has been developed in part to control distances of the spaces between rides, so they become part of the experience of the park which is a design method based on storyboards and models. The movement through the park is devised, controlled and choreographed in a similar manner to the storytelling in a film or animation, such as those produced by Disney moviemakers. Janet Wasko described this control throughout all the theme park experiences:

The parks' layout as well as most rides and exhibits, are designed to control the visitors' activities and experiences — an observation that is nearly unanimous among theme park analysts. It begins with the obligatory stroll down Main Street USA — the only entrance to the Magic Kingdom. Carefully landscaped paths lead visitors to specific destinations and Kodak Memories spots. Appropriate sound effects, music and even aromas are carefully manipulated throughout the park. (Wasko, 2001, p. 166)

In order to retain the believability of the themed environment, the Disney narrative is controlled from the physical environment through to the performance of the cast members.<sup>30</sup> The question arises: does this include a *fengshui* master's narrative? There is no hard evidence to suggest that these entrances are differently conceived to cater for *fengshui* practice, or to demonstrate that *fengshui* has been incorporated into the Disney

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<sup>30</sup> Cast member is "Disney speak" for employee.

experience.

*Claim 7: Large rocks are placed throughout Hong Kong Disneyland Park because they represent stability in Feng Shui. Two boulders have been placed within the park, and each Disney hotel in the resort has a Feng Shui rock in its entrance and courtyard or pool areas. The boulders also prevent good fortune flowing away from the theme park or hotels.*

Rocks represent the element earth and according to the Classical practice of *fengshui* would be located after calculations based on readings from the *lo'pan*. After mapping the theme park site, no boulders appeared to be unusually located, in line with a *fengshui* placement. There are a number of rocks and boulders that are part of the Adventureland theme, but there was nothing inconsistent with any of the other theme parks and the Disneyland stage setting of the area (refer to Figure 88). The hotels were not examined.



**Figure 88. Adventureland boulders, Hong Kong Disneyland.  
Photo: Author 2012**

*Claim 8: A bend was put in a walkway near the Hong Kong Disneyland resort entrance so good “chi”<sup>31</sup> energy doesn’t flow into the South China Sea.*

If we look at the main north-south axis that links the car park and MTR station, it is not in a straight line. If we consider an understanding of *qi*, we need this to meander through a site slowly as discussed in *Chapter 2: Fengshui*, therefore this claim appears to be substantiated. However, it is also an effective design tool to slow down the movement of crowds and is used in other Disney parks and other planning contexts. In the article *Disney bows to feng shui*, the bend is to ensure “the flow of positive energy, or chi [sic], does not slip past the entrance and out to the China Sea” (Holson, 2005). This reflects the confusion between which of the multiple gates is considered the main or front entrance. Is it the north-south path from the MTR station to the South China Sea, or the east-west gate from the fountain to the ticketed entrance to the park? Holson describes Walt Disney executives shifting the angle of the gate by 12 degrees. This was also cited in *Disney’s successful adaption in Hong Kong: A glocalization perspective* (Matusitz, 2011). However, Rothrock has shifted the gate a few degrees to face north-east (2005).

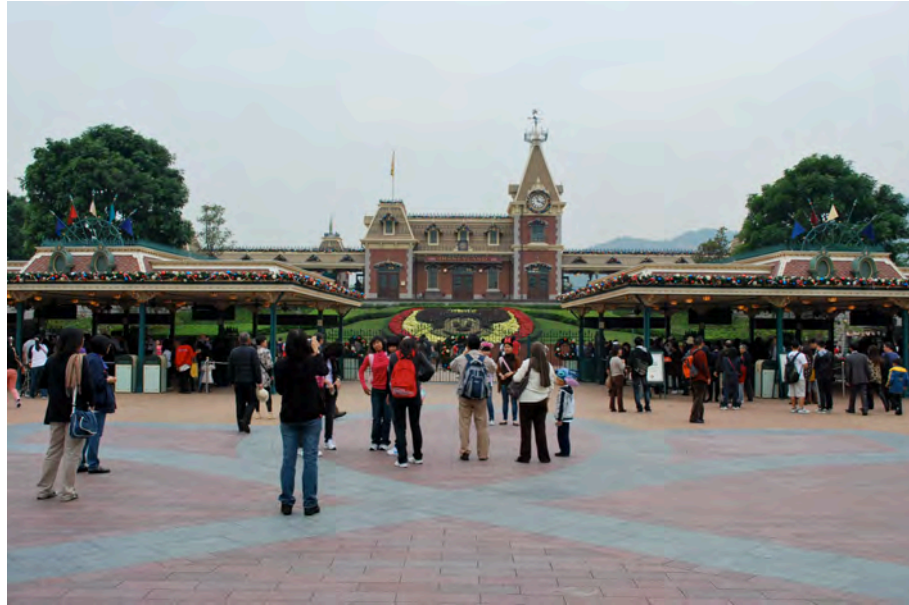
*Claim 9: According to Disney Imagineer Tom Morris, water features play an important role in the Hong Kong Disneyland landscaping because they are extremely beneficial in Feng Shui. Lakes, pond, and streams are places throughout Hong Kong Disneyland to encourage good luck, fortune and wealth for the resort, and a large fountain featuring classic Disney characters welcomes guests at the entrance to the park and to provide good luck* (Associated Press, 2005; Groves, 2011; Kweh & Cohen, n.d.).

The use of water in HKD is specific to the Adventureland Jungle Cruise and the moat at the front of Cinderella’s Castle. There are no additional lakes, ponds or streams in the park. There is a fountain in the front of the park. There are also fountains at Tokyo Disney Sea and the Disneyland Hotel in Paris. The significant use of water is reported by

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<sup>31</sup> Pinyin translation: *qi*





**Figure 89. East-west axis main entry to Hong Kong Disneyland**  
**Source: Author 2010**

*Claim 10: The Hong Kong Disneyland Hotel and the Disney Hollywood Hotel were built in carefully selected locations with water nearby in a south-west direction to maximize prosperity from Feng Shui.*

The experience of the Disneyland theme park is an internalized one, controlled so that the visitor is totally embraced within the Disney experience. This concept is similar to the design of shopping centres, for example, and is a mechanism unlike that applied at Hong Kong's other theme park, Ocean Park. At Ocean Park, on the south side of Hong Kong Island, there is an open landscape, where people are aware of the locale and its relationship with nearby places. By contrast, the Disney hotels are located to the south of the site facing towards the South China Sea, which means the experience at the hotels is very different to that had in the park. The direction of water flow for the hotels' location is designed to provide a beneficial *fengshui* experience from west to east, but commercial reality suggests that the carefully selected locations near the water are more likely to be motivated by standard hotel design and marketing strategies, where hotel rooms with an ocean view are charged at a greater daily tariff than those with no view.

*Claim 11: The Hong Kong Disneyland Resort hotels have views of the waterfront onto the ocean and the South China Sea. This provides good Feng Shui.*

As for above, this is likely due to the capacity this offers to charge more for a Sea View room.

*Claim 12: 2,238 crystal lotuses decorate the Chinese restaurant at the Disneyland Hotel because the numbers sound like the phrase “easily generate wealth” in Cantonese and the main ballroom at the Disneyland Hotel at the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort is 888 square meters, because 888 is a “wealthy” number.*

The homonym for the 2,238 *may* be specific to Cantonese dialect and culture. Usually these transfer across the main dialects even though the pronunciation is different. The pronunciation of 2,238 does not have this meaning in *Putonghua* (Mandarin Chinese). The number eight has positive connotations. It is pronounced “ba”, rhyming with the word “fa”, to prosper. The number “888” is particularly popular, essentially meaning, “prosper, prosper, prosper,” as discussed in Chapter 2. It is useful that the American Imagineers, who would traditionally use imperial units, were able to switch to metric units to ensure this prosperity.

*Claim 13: The elevators at Hong Kong Disneyland resort do not have the number four and no building (including the Hong Kong Disneyland hotels) has a fourth floor. The number is considered unlucky in Chinese culture.*

In Cantonese, *si*, the number “four”, and is also a homonym for “to die.” The absence of a fourth floor is not uncommon in Hong Kong or elsewhere in Asia. While this may be true for the hotels, it becomes irrelevant for the theme park because there are no multi levels in this park.

*Claim 14: Red is an extremely lucky colour in Chinese culture, so it is seen frequently throughout the park, especially on the buildings in Main Street USA (Groves, 2011; Kweh & Cohen, 2011; Rothrock, 2005).*

The colour red is regarded in China as a life-giving colour and is associated with life and luck (Eberhard p. 248). Symbolically in *fengshui* it represents fire. This Chinese Red (which might be termed Fire Engine Red and can be colour matched with Dulux™ colour swatch Hot Lips or Pantone 18-1663 TPX) is used on Main Street USA at Hong Kong Disneyland. On a site visit undertaken in December 2010 this type of red was



limited to a fire hydrant (refer to Figure 90) two fire alarm boxes, a window frame detail (refer to Figure 92) and a door detail (refer to Figure 93). At the time of the site visit the park was decorated for Christmas and the red was used to decorate half of the Christmas awnings, along with a gold trim. The other awnings were green and gold. Red is used in different locations around the park, but only in the context of the themed areas. The fire hydrants in HKD are coloured according to their themed environment. In Main Street USA they are red, in Adventureland they are beige, in Fantasyland they are pink and in Tomorrowland they are blue. In summary, there is very little Chinese Red in Main Street USA.



**Figure 90. Fire hydrant Main Street USA Hong Kong Disneyland.**  
Source: Author 2010



**Figure 91. Typical elevation at Christmas time. Main Street USA Hong Kong Disneyland**  
**Source: Author 2010**



**Figure 92. Window detail. Main Street USA Hong Kong Disneyland**  
**Source: Author 2010**



**Figure 93. Door detail. Main Street USA Hong Kong Disneyland**  
**Source: Author 2010**

*Claim 15: No clocks are sold in stores in Hong Kong Disneyland because in Chinese the phrase “giving clock” sounds like going to a funeral (Associated Press, 2005; Holson, 2005; Kweh & Cohen, 2011; Matusitz, 2011).*

This practice is part of local superstition and is based on homonyms. Clocks and watches are on sale at Disneyland (refer to Figure 94). This is clearly a failure by Disney to oversee its stated policy on cultural context at Hong Kong Disneyland. This has been reported by Even BBC travel advice laments the apparent inability to buy a Mickey Mouse watch at the park (Tang, 2012).



**Figure 94. Clock for sale in Main Street USA Hong Kong Disneyland.**

**Source: Author 2010**

*Claim 16: No green hats are sold in Hong Kong Disneyland because it is said in Chinese culture that a man wearing a green hat is cheating on his wife.*

Wearing a green hat is a homonym for a wife being unfaithful. In Cantonese this connotation applies to hats in general. While these items show some sense of cultural sensitivity, to lump these into a *fengshui* narrative for the Disney park design and management shows a lack of understanding of the particular cultural issue and creativity with the truth. Goofy, Bashful and Sleepy from the Seven Dwarfs and Peter Pan get to keep their green hats. In all site visits to the park, I was unable to find green hats for sale at Hong Kong Disneyland.



**Shanghai Disney Resort, Pudong, Shanghai, People's Republic of China,  
(scheduled 2016).**

The Shanghai Disney Resort is scheduled to open in 2016. The park is located in the Pudong and is part of the Pudong redevelopment strategy (Refer to Figure 95). The proposed size of this park is 4 km<sup>2</sup> and according to Disney's press release on April 8 2011 there will be an 11 acre green space at the centre of the resort. While the actual size of the theme park within the resort complex has not been released, it has been discussed as being 3 times larger than Hong Kong's theme park. This green space will differentiate Shanghai Disneyland from other Disneylands and reinforce the themes of sustainability and nature that will be integrated throughout the park.



**Figure 95. Site plan of Shanghai Disney Resort.**

Image source: <http://www.disneyorama.com/2010/10/shanghai-disneyland-project-ready-to-roll/>

Shanghai Shendai Group (SSG) is a 57% stakeholder in the park, with Disney holding the remaining 43%, and financing proportional to ownership. In addition there is a joint venture management company of which Disney has a 70% stake and SSG has a 30% stake. This company will be responsible for creating, developing and operating the resort. SSG is a 100% state-owned, joint venture investment holding company formed by three sponsors: Shanghai Lujiazui Group Co. Ltd., Shanghai Radio, Film and Television Development Co. Ltd., and Jin Jiang International Group Holding Company (Disney, 2013b).

A member of the Shanghai People's Political Consultative Conference said: "We don't need to import an American theme park to Shanghai — if Disney wants to stay here, it needs to be creative in terms of including Chinese culture" (quoted in *Global Times*, 2011). The demand for Chinese sensitivity is reiterated by the Deputy director of the Pudong New Area government, Dai Haibo, who makes clear that the insertion of Disney into the Shanghai environment required a more sensitive and nuanced approach by the Disney Corporation than did Hong Kong. He states that lessons learnt in Hong Kong will be applied to Shanghai, especially the manner in which the global brand fits into its new Chinese context. Some examples include the renaming of the Castle to the Fantastic Fairytale Castle (*People's Daily Online*, 2011), as shown in Figure 82, and later amended to the Enchanted Storybook Castle (Disney Press Release, 2013). Disney Castles are usually named after one of the Disney princesses, Anaheim, Paris and Hong Kong have Sleeping Beauty Castles, and the Cinderella castles are in Florida and Tokyo). Another example is the naming of the garden in front of the Enchanted Storybook Castle. The Garden of the Twelve Friends sponsored by the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, is designed around and a celebration of the twelve Chinese zodiac animals using Disney characters (Donnan, 2013).



Figure 96. Concept image of Shanghai Disneyland's Enchanted Storybook Castle.

Image source:

[http://corporate.disney.go.com/news/parks\\_resorts/news\\_release/WaltDisneyParksandResorts/2008/040711\\_twdc\\_shanghai.html](http://corporate.disney.go.com/news/parks_resorts/news_release/WaltDisneyParksandResorts/2008/040711_twdc_shanghai.html)

The Disney Corporation goes to great lengths to protect its product, property, and brand. Information is controlled, plans are limited to pictograms, and publicity is highly censored, all in the name of presenting a cogent Disney story. However since the negative response to Euro Disney, the demand for greater localisation in their theme parks has altered the design approach. Disney cannot longer replicate the American experience, as both France and China have demanded greater localisation of the Disney product.

For Hong Kong Disneyland, one of the key cultural factors identified in their *Fact Sheet* and press releases, is the use of *fengshui* narrative and associated symbolism in the theme park (Corporate Disney, 2005; Hong Kong Disneyland Media Relations, 2008). This narrative is also being seen in the developing plans for Shanghai's theme park. The complexity of using a system such as *fengshui*, as discussed in previous chapters, is that even within China, *fengshui* means different things to different groups within China. Further, the practice of *fengshui* within the PRC is illegal and considered superstitious, anti-modern and unscientific. However the contradiction is that *fengshui* is used in architecture whether as a formal reading, or as a collection of symbols within a design. The use of *fengshui* is not necessarily out of concern for a harmonious environment but as a means of cultural identification. It is in this capacity that architects (and Disney) have embraced *fengshui*. In Hong Kong Disney has used *fengshui* as a cultural narrative to localise and most importantly as a commercial imperative for acceptance of its brand into the Chinese market. Most of the *fengshui* narratives evident

at Hong Kong Disneyland are shallow at best and even imagined. They are perhaps all that was required to counter the accusations of cultural imperialism at the opening of Disneyland in Paris. A level of adaptation is required for usability in a local environment which is particular rather than universal (such as language), however Disney's desire to be part of the Chinese market resulted in other significant allowances such as the inclusion of Chinese New Year and Autumn Festival celebrations.

Renowned Hong Kong entrepreneur and chairman of Ocean Park Disney's rival in Hong Kong Allen Zeman has criticised Disney for remaining too American with a superficial understanding of Chinese culture (Prasso, 2009). Zeman's criticism of superficiality is a reality when we consider actual *fengshui* narratives for the park. It is evident from this analysis that Disney ascribes a number of *fengshui* values that do not withstand rigorous scrutiny. It is clear that for the most part Disney's claim constitutes post justification. It is likely that the highly developed Disney team, including marketing and sales groups, have packaged a story for cultural and good citizenship consumption, like those they tell at the theme park for entertainment.

The popular practice of *fengshui* allows for many deviations from a central core of values; it is at best subjective and, as we have seen elsewhere, the subject of many translations, interpretations, opinions and rumours. It is a thoroughly Chinese system of approaching construction, siting, design and living. In that respect Hong Kong Disneyland may be as appropriate as its new Shanghai cousin.

If Disney had been advised by an expert of the practice, no doubt the corporation would have made more of its adoption of *fengshui* and shown how it changed their global brand specifically to suit a particular place. In the circumstances, it appears that the corporation has learnt from its failed Euro Disney venture and apparently they will apply a finer tuned set of *fengshui* design parameters to Shanghai Disneyland. After all, they are selling a product, providing a service and entertainment, and seeking to enhance their share of the Asian market in the world's most populous nation with a fast growing middle class



## Conclusion

The skylines of contemporary China are loaded with geomantic symbols. In some cases these fulfil a desire for a harmony sympathetic with the environment that is the concern of *fengshui* practice. In other cases *fengshui* is used as a localisation device to label a building or environment as “Chinese” or to fulfil a perceived or proscribed demand to demonstrate Chinese qualities or imbue “Chineseness” to a built project. It is the second use of *fengshui* as a localisation device that has driven this research. There are numerous ways to localise however *fengshui* has become the method of choice in the late twentieth and early 21<sup>st</sup> century

The exact date of origin for *fengshui* cannot be accurately determined. It has a shared language with a multitude of older Chinese traditions, which leads to an assumption that there is a connection between these older customs, thus suggesting evidence of *fengshui*'s practice as early as 1500BC. While it may have been used at that time, the first document explicitly referring to a recognisable form as *fengshui*, was the *Zang Shu* (Book of Burial) attributed to Guo Pu. The approximate date for this document is 276-374AD.

While the *Zhang Shu* focused on the geomantic location of graves (houses for the dead), it is assumed that the same practice was undertaken for the dwellings of the living. Siting and building a house according to *fengshui* principles was to create and maintain harmony in the built environment on earth. Siting and building a grave according to *fengshui* principles enabled the ancestors to influence or intervene with the gods concerning the fate of their descendents.

It is known that there are different schools within the practice of *fengshui*, and that these are used either in combination or exclusively – depending on the methods employed by the practitioner. It originated in China from the area of Loess Plains and has developed variations both within China and in the region. *Fengshui* has not a static practice; it has developed over time revealing a dialogue between its practitioners and their changing world. The change in application has incorporated technology, religious

and political ideologies and it is adapting to the processes of globalisation. *Fengshui*'s presence in the corporate architecture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is odd, as the principles of an ancient tradition appear to have little connection with the imagery of the global city.

There have been attempts to merge Chinese character with western functions in architecture. The adaptive architecture of the early twentieth century proposed by architects such as Murphy, Hussey, and Dayou used traditional Chinese architectural motifs applied to a western plan. This style was chosen by the Nationalists as the style that best represented a modern China. While this style of imperial ornamentation has been applied to buildings in the century since, it is difficult to successfully apply this to contemporary skyscraper architecture.

*Fengshui* is often adopted as a method to provide a sense of "Chineseness" to contemporary architecture. The narratives of *fengshui* are practised especially to offset the perceived international blandness, and perhaps another version of colonisation, that comes with modernisation and globalisation when it is applied by external cultures. That localised/Chinese adaption is encouraged by the Chinese leaders and sought for by architects, designers and global corporations as they move into the lucrative market of the world's most populated nation. The broader practical implication of this for designers working in the Chinese environment is whether *fengshui* is an appropriate method of connoting Chinese identity, or whether it is another homogenising layer in the interpretation and application of Chinese culture in the constructed environment. As has been noted, the practice of *fengshui* in the PRC is forbidden; it is formally against the law by *Document No. 19. The basic viewpoint and policy on the religions question during out country's Socialist period* (Chinese Communist Party, 1982). Nevertheless, as the case studies demonstrate, there is evidence that it is practised at all levels of development, and so *fengshui* operates, tolerated by the Communist Party of China, but not within its regulations.

However the interpretation of a broad *fengshui* narrative is not easily controlled. As per the Bank of China case study, this narrative can be used to vilify a building or the institution representing that building. Pei's design was based in a particular time in history (leading to the handover of the British colony to China), located in a particular place (nearby and up-hill from the HSBC building), and represented for many Hong Kong people an attack, albeit by urban design and architecture, on their environment.

It may be concluded that *fengshui* has two meanings. The first of these defines a traditional Chinese practice of siting that expresses concepts of siting to suit a specific environment. The second is focused on the notion Chinese origin. However these definitions are complicated. The first definition of the traditional practice is complex in that there are many variations of *fengshui*. These include different schools within China and regional variations found in Japan, Korea and Vietnam. Further, the process of globalisation has exacerbated this variation by removing the practice of *fengshui* from its cultural context. The development of Black Sect Tantric Buddhist Fengshui for an American market is a key example of this. While there is some remanent of traditional fengshui practice – the practice has been simplified by omitting key tools such as the lo'pan compass. As previously noted by Stephen Skinner, it is the use of the compass that marks the distinction between what is considered “classical” (Skinner, 2012, p. 176).

The second definition uses this cultural context as a semiotic device to provide a location device to architectural design. The use of *fengshui* in this case is not so much as “practice” but a tool for marketing and branding. It is used to connote “This is Chinese”. As described throughout the previous chapters, this notion of “Chinese” is more complicated than the perception of a homogenous China that may be apparent to a western perspective. The value placed on the practice is varied – to the point where in the People's Republic of China (PRC) it is considered a feudal superstition. The practice is considered anti-modern, reactionary and illegal. In contrast, *fengshui* thrives in Hong Kong, and in other countries such as Singapore and Taiwan. To use *fengshui* as a cultural indicator without a deep understanding of its history and meanings is naïve.

It is interesting to note that a practice that was and still is deemed reactionary in part of China may become one of the homogenising factors in contemporary Chinese architecture. While there is a desire to articulate a Chinese architectural language in a contemporary context – as a global design expression – *fengshui* is often selected to connote “Chineseness”. The very thing that the Red Guards vilified has become a symbol of China.

The use of archaic imagery in the design of contemporary architecture is universal. Remnants of older traditions in modern architecture still linger – even though these presence, if analysed, would be considered incongruous with its application. These

may be part of the design, or part of the ritual of building, including ground breaking, foundation stones, corner stones, inscriptions, and topping off celebrations. These exist and may share similar concerns with those established originally for the practice of *fengshui*. There are numerous examples of using belief or symbolic systems in the layout of cities, for example, Masonic symbols in L'Enfant's 1791 plan for Washington DC (Ovason, 2002; Wasserman, 2008). In architecture the use of the dragon in Gaudi's designs was a subversive method of expressing Catalan resistance. St George (and his dragon) is the patron saint of Catalonia (Hughes, 1992; Güell, 1992). This use of mysticism, myth or tradition is usually repressed in architectural criticism.

In terms of the use of *fengshui* to connote "Chineseness" it will be interesting, for example, to revisit Disney's realised designs for the Shanghai Disney resort when it opens in 2015/2016. The search will focus on what levels of design localisation (*fengshui* and superstition) have been employed there and promoted by the Disney team as part of their branding, and to what degree alternate devices may have been adopted.

That research may focus on specific theoretical and historical elements such as adaptive architecture use not only in Shanghai but the representative style adopted by the Nationalists during the Nanjing decade promoted by architects such as Murphy and Dayou. Further areas for research may include the development of I. M. Pei's "third way" in contemporary Chinese architecture – including his experiments in the development of a new language, and how others have developed the concept.

Further aspects of this thesis research that can be explored may include the use of other ancient traditions (such as freemasonry and, for example, more contemporary exercises in the buildings of the United Arab Emirates), and the adaption of principles that remain consciously or unconsciously in contemporary western architecture. Now that a background of research has been established, further work can be undertaken from this point.

The research on *fengshui* also addresses issues of a Chinese identity, which is represented by *fengshui*, and how the practice is an inclusive philosophy which crosses intellectual, superstitious, traditional and correlative thought. This chapter provides a description of the tools of *fengshui*, which are intended not as a guide to practice, but to show the complexity of the custom and how its subjectivity plays a role in its procedures,

while at the same time indicating how there may develop many parallel readings of a *fengshui* narrative for an individual project.

However, this is a significantly different interpretation of *fengshui* to the traditional Classical practice. Commonly held beliefs and geomantic analysis combine to create a story for buildings, their places and their relationships, which affects the city directly and which also reflects on its history and heritage in a spiritual way that is not practiced generally in the western world. Chinese culture has developed over thousands of years against a backdrop of war, revolution and invasion, with all the cultural changes that come with these occurrences. And who have effectively been the subjects/victims of globalised powers before. Yet their culture and traditions have survived, been adapted and prospered.

Like most studies of contemporary China, this present research has demanded an understanding of the multi-layered nature of Chinese culture, taking into account its complex beliefs, politics and commerce, which affect its architecture and the constructed environment. After all, this is a particular moment in history when the 1.39 billion people who comprise China (in 2012) have only recently crossed the threshold from being a majority rural agrarian population to becoming predominantly an urban population. In 2012, the People's Republic of China (PRC) had a total urban population of 52.6%; it had been just half that in 1990. It is predicted that nearly 70% of Chinese will be urbanized by 2035, and in the process they will build around 150 to 200 new cities with populations of 1 million and more people to cater for this growth (United Nations, 2013). It is a huge nation undergoing massive change.

As has been discussed in this work, Chinese culture is complex, having developed over 3000 years. It operates on a number of levels; some are manifest, others less obvious. These stratum of mores, habits, and communal practices are at once traditional and folkloric, spiritual and religious, but there are other political structures at work and they are implemented strictly via the centralised power of the Beijing government.

After analysing the history and development of *fengshui*, we can then see its contemporary uses. Chapter 3 on globalisation, modernity and the Chinese global city studies the adaption of *fengshui* as a measure to ensure that Chinese characteristics

remain as the Republic reinvents itself during this contemporary period of revolutionary changes and globalisation. There is a symbiotic reliance on *fengshui* values held by the general population, but also by business leaders, which is applied to the globalisation of the new and modernised Chinese cities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in an effort to retain a Chinese identity. Politically, *fengshui* is still avoided and there is still severe retribution for party members who publically use *fengshui* consultants or geomancers. However, the question remains as to whether *fengshui* was the reason for punishment, or the guise covering undisclosed circumstances.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century that is now commonly being referred to as the “Chinese century”, is already one of globalisation, where the economic, then political, then cultural focus of the globe is shifting from the western world to Asia in general, and to China in particular. As this occurs there is a homogenisation of Chinese culture as it absorbs outside influences, and that issue is discussed in the chapter on Brandscape.

The contemporary forces of globalisation, which operate at many levels including political, commercial, trade, economic, military, cultural and environmental, are best understood as a bilateral arrangement between China and the rest of the world. China has achieved such economic and political clout that it must maintain its relationships with other nations to survive. It will probably adapt dated policies and practices to ensure ongoing progress, to take the form of a relaxed internal governance, such as opening of markets and trading opportunities for Chinese businesses, relaxing financial and banking protection of its currency and opening its doors wider for the global community to participate. But it will do so as it always has, on Chinese terms.

In November 2013, President Xi Jinping announced sweeping changes for the nation under the guise of “The Decision on Major Issues Concerning Comprehensively Deepening Reforms”. This “Decision” details 60 policy objectives grouped into 16 categories encompassing ambitious financial and economic reforms which must be reached by 2020 (China Daily, 2013). The changes will deal with an ageing population, which has been caused in no small manner by the one child family policy, and in fact that policy has now been redrawn, allowing for greater population and economic growth within the country. While there has been change in terms of modernisation, it has been undertaken in a way to retain national and historic values. This has not extended however

to areas concerning folk religion and superstition (geomancy and the practice of *fengshui*) which have not been the subject of policy reform.

Brandscape shows the effects of seeking to adapt appropriate narratives for the construction of a new China and the perception held among global corporations that *fengshui* practice is also good business practice. On the one hand China, the world's most populous country, competes on the world stage by building the tallest skyscrapers and hundreds of new urban centres with all the infrastructure which goes with it as millions of people move from an agrarian life to a predominantly urban one. On the other hand, as it relocates itself with the outside world and finds itself a leading player, China uses the principles of Brandscape to commodify its new architecture and advertise its presence on the global stage while retaining its own expression of identity. In this way, China is marketing itself as a nation with historic characteristics as much as the multi-national corporations who seek to trade in the region using their global brands as symbols.

The case studies use this research to focus and illustrate the extension of *fengshui* practice to encompass the fast expanding new China of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, where global expansion into the country has brought with it reservations about the internationalisation of Chinese culture and a concern that local identity may be compromised by international homogenisation. This raises issues of localisation that embrace theories of the Brandscape. Case studies of three related buildings in Hong Kong, the “new” Shanghai, and other contemporary constructions, are evidence of the importance of a *fengshui* narrative in context. The case study of Hong Kong Disneyland (with references to the new Shanghai Disneyland), demonstrates how a multi-national global corporation deals with issues of localisation within its brand and with a steady eye on marketing and commercial success.

These particular places represent the dialogue of contemporary China, by contrasting its colonial past and an enduring cultural and economic reality with a vision for the nation which is sponsored and promoted by China's political, commercial and cultural leaders as the nation takes a leading role into the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Jacques, 2012). Even though interpretations of *fengshui* narratives vary, some are predetermined and others are applied after the event, the evidence suggests that *fengshui* is alive and functioning as an important ingredient of civic design in China.

As the world develops as a cultural milieu in which globalised multinational corporations are peddling their products and services, there is forged a symbiotic relationship between the Brandscape environment and the adaption of global institutions to a local context. The question for China is how does it retain its identity and hold together a disparate population which provides sustenance for the nation, in the face of this onslaught? It appears, at least for the built environment, that the narratives provided by *fengshui* practice go some way towards providing a cultural safety net.

The paradox is whether *fengshui* is an appropriate localisation device because of the contradiction in imagery, or whether the application of *fengshui* is in itself a homogenising device on Chinese culture. This aspect of fengshui symbolism is playing out in the planning of Shanghai Disneyland. The use of fengshui in the design of Hong Kong's Disneyland is entirely appropriate, the application to the design in the case of Shanghai is questionable. There is demand that this resort demonstrate Chinese characteristics – both from government investment and from the marketing and branding within the Disney Corporation to distinguish the experience from one theme park and resort to another. *Fengshui* is an easy tool to use. Its definitions are blurry; there are multiple interpretations, and the story attached outweighs the reality – as demonstrated with Disney's application of fengshui to Hong Kong Disneyland. Due to the ambiguity of the practice of *fengshui*, its application (or narrative of application) cannot be criticised. Therefore it is an easy tool for cultural identification – it can be “said” to be there having little if no impact on the actual design.

The positioning of *fengshui* in a strong academic framework is difficult. While there is robust academic research on tradition and practice – particularly in the disciplines of architecture and anthropology – this is outweighed by the number of publications on modern fengshui. After examining *fengshui* from a traditional background, it is perplexing how new age, popular psychology for cleaning, relationship advice, pet maintenance, dancing the tango or beauty regimes have anything to do with the selection of sites for buildings or graves. As such research in this area needs to overcome long held perceptions that it is not worthy of proper academic debate. This is reinforced by its anti-modern status not only by the Chinese Communist Party, but also by reformers in the early twentieth century such as Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), and by current restrictions in research in the PRC to the areas of architecture and anthropology (Skinner, 2012, pp. 132–135).



The active methods used in this research include secondary research and fieldwork. While interviews were prepared and invitations sent out, the response to the questionnaire invitations was unenthusiastic. In part, the two stage procedure of data collection, required by ethics conventions made this process convoluted and “too difficult” for support from appropriate participants. The process required that a company nominate a contact person to be interviewed regarding a particular project – even though an appropriate person had been identified within the organisation. The interviews did not get beyond the first invitation to companies to participate. Future data collection in this area will need to be reconsidered to meet the requirements from ethics approval of the university and ensure that the appropriate people are interviewed. However, the data collected has provided a strong base on which further research can take place – including revisiting these interviews for further research.

The information collected for this thesis has established a theoretical base from which further research on the subject can be initiated. Secondary research and fieldwork were used to establish this background of information and to determine what role *fengshui* and *fengshui* narratives play in the contemporary architecture of Hong Kong and Shanghai.

There is some literature on architectural practice in China that considers localisation approaches for design including Hassenpflug’s *The Urban Code of China* (2010). It is assumed that to work in China there is a requirement to understand, or at least acknowledge the practice of *fengshui*. However before assuming that *fengshui* is an appropriate application there are a number of political, cultural and historic considerations to be undertaken.

Credible literature concerning *fengshui*, accessible to western audiences is expanding. While the research undertaken for this thesis does not add to the history or practice of *fengshui*, it identifies that the use of *fengshui* in the contemporary architecture has skewed meaning. One meaning is there may be a genuine concern for the use of *fengshui*, such as the Cheung Kong Centre in Hong Kong. Another is that buildings will be localised whether the use of *fengshui* was part of the design or not, for example the Bank of China tower in Hong Kong and the Shanghai Stock Exchange Building. Further that these localisation narratives may be positive as in the case of the Stock Exchange, or

negative as in the Bank of China tower. In both cases the *fengshui* narrative was a surprise to the architect involved.

Another means by which *fengshui* is used in the architecture of the contemporary global city is as a localisation device in the architectural design. This separation in meaning from “practice” to “symbolic device” in essence changes the definition of *fengshui* to a larger audience. It is perceived not as a nuanced and complex practice but as “something Chinese”. In this manner it is applied to design using forms such as the circle and square (representing heaven and earth), pagoda imagery, geometries or numbers. Using *fengshui* as a localisation tool has advantages over using more overt methods such as using a big roof, or more traditional architectural elements that were used in the adaptive architecture of the early twentieth century. The imprecise definition of *fengshui* allows it to become all things to all people (both positive and negative). To say something is the way it is because of *fengshui* gives no recourse to an argument – unless you are in a room of experienced *fengshui* practitioners and are prepared to settle in for a long debate. On this basis *fengshui* becomes an ideal tool of localisation. It does not necessarily interfere with the design, but applying a *fengshui* narrative, or a collection of narratives as in the case of Hong Kong Disneyland, brands the design “Chinese”, expresses “Chineseness”, or demonstrates cultural sympathies. The question remains - how transferable is *fengshui* as a tool of localisation from one part of China to another part, considering the value and legality of the practice?

This view of *fengshui* as an applied tool is framed from a western perspective. This not only includes western architects but also architects trained within a western system. Further research from this thesis includes establishing a research structure to obtain a balanced view of *fengshui*’s utilisation in contemporary architecture.

This thesis adds to the research on *fengshui* by identifying how it is used in the global city and the motivations behind this use. While there are many who argue that *fengshui* is culturally specific, the global networks involved in the production of cities and architecture inevitably means that there will be numerous actors in this process who are removed from Chinese culture, but involved in cultural production. How successful this production is also dependant on the available information. On one hand it is understandable to protect culture, but on the other leaves it open to misinterpretation and adaption.

The research undertaken was limited to a handful of buildings in Hong Kong and Shanghai. There are *fengshui* narratives in both these cities that were not discussed, nor were examples in other cities discussed. Further the building types were limited to contemporary corporate buildings. Using a sample of domestic dwellings, or government buildings for example, may have resulted in a different reading of how *fengshui* narratives are used. The data collected was qualitative in nature and has not yet been verified with quantitative methods of analysis.

Three case studies were used to illustrate the application of *fengshui* in this thesis. Further case studies will provide a larger sample to provide greater insight to the information collected. The categorisation of cities may provide further insights to the way *fengshui* is used in contemporary architecture. An expanded sample base could be taken from the national central cities as outlined by the CCP including Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tianjin. Comparisons can be made between cities in the north of China with those in the south, rural to urban, or an examination of cities with close proximity to Hong Kong, such as Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Macau. Outside of the People's Republic of China, other countries that commonly exhibit the practice of *fengshui* include Singapore, Marina Bay Sands designed by Moshe Safdie and *fengshui* by Chong Swan Lek and Louisa Ong Lee; and Taiwan Taipei 101 Designed by C.Y. Lee, and *fengshui* by Zhang Hsu Chu for example.

*Fengshui* has also been shown to be adapted for base political and commercial motives, as in Hong Kong with the banks of China and HSBC. Political realities surrounding the transfer of Hong Kong as a British colony to the PRC caused a tangible reaction which was realised in the building of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank headquarters (1985), designed by architect Norman Foster and the Bank of China tower (BOC)(1990) designed by architect I. M. Pei, and a mediating building, the Cheung Kong Centre, designed by architects in association, César Pelli and Leo A. Daly, which was protectively located between them.

This case study emphasised the political and commercial nature of the application of *fengshui* and to appreciate its impact at a symbolic and global level, where two heavyweight banks were fighting for a perceived supremacy in the city, and two opposing but adjacent political systems were flexing their muscles. Both chose to employ the

talents of star international architects as designers, who then played out a virtual battle in the psyche of Hong Kong people in the skies of the city.

The case study of Shanghai refers to developments in the world's most populous metropolitan city, which was destined by political will to become the financial centre of China and hence assume the mantle as the major global city in the nation, with the purpose of defining it as the world's preeminent city. Shanghai had suffered from a lack of political will to expand for more than twenty years after World War II, but a shift in emphasis and a desire to diminish Hong Kong's position as leader in the region meant that it would dominate change and symbolically represent the new China.

It has done so by applying the principles of Brandscape, to represent an expanding global modernism with the development of the Pudong, the Lujiazui Financial District (LFD) set up in symbolic opposition to the colonial Bund on the opposite side of the Huangpu River. The landmark buildings of the LFD, the Jin Mao Tower (1995) designed by Skidmore Owing & Merrell, the Shanghai World Financial Centre (SWFC)(2004), designed by Kohn Pedersen Fox and the Shanghai Tower designed by Gensler (due for completion 2014) are replete with populist *fengshui* narratives. Similar political machinations have influenced the reception of the design of the SWFC and the BOC tower in Hong Kong. The SWFC was considered an interpretation of Japanese dominance in Chinese financial affairs, particularly in the strategic location of the LFD in the "new" Shanghai (the Pudong), and the BOC tower in Hong Kong was considered as an assertion of mainland Chinese, and therefore Communist, domination of Hong Kong in the years leading up to the handover from British sovereignty in 1997.

At Hong Kong Disneyland, Disney provided an effusive explanation of their intention to develop using *fengshui* practices, which is sensible business, aimed at encouraging the market to embrace what is in effect a foreign global brand. Disney is a paradigm for the global brand as it enters new territory; it has a benchmark image, a protected symbolism and an internationally recognisable and desired commercial cache. The extent of localisation is debated in this chapter, as there appears to be more "effusive explanation" than "actuality" in Hong Kong Disney.

On the one hand the Disney Corporation would want to employ that brand as if it were transposed direct from Anaheim, USA, so the experiences would be seamless. On

the other hand, like other global brands, Disney have found that a localisation is necessary to better suit local consumption and encourage greater acceptance, all of which transfers to more business and increased profits. At their latest park development in Shanghai, Disney appear to be bolder, not only in the increased scope of the development but also by referring to the park design as having, unspecified, “traditional Chinese characteristics” (Disney, 2013a). While plans and detail have not been released at this stage, it will be interesting to see how far Disney are prepared to modify their product to adapt to a larger Chinese market, or whether this is simply public relations rhetoric.

The case studies show how the recent practice of *fengshui* is used for political, financial, commercial and cultural purposes, where historically it was a more holistic tradition based on beliefs and long held local attitudes. For example the Jin Mao Tower was adapted from the imagery of the pagoda. The use of a religious icon and *fengshui* symbol as one of the landmark towers for the new financial centre of the PRC. The contradistinction in *fengshui* terms between the Bank of China and the HSBC Building in Hong Kong was essentially a political act at the time of the handover of Hong Kong to the PRC pre 1997.

The analysis of architecture is located in two competing cities, Hong Kong and Shanghai, and that shows a significant reliance on *fengshui* and its associated imagery as a tool of cultural intent. *Fengshui* has proven useful too for business and commerce, and in the process has been adapted by global corporations to acknowledge an appropriate attitude towards Chinese culture (and as a corollary to encourage market supremacy and financial profit). The use of *fengshui* in the design of contemporary skyscrapers is not uncommon in East Asia. The *fengshui* of the global Chinese city is recorded in popular media and becomes the stuff of urban legend. However, many instances of what is recorded as “*fengshui*” are the narratives that surround the urban environment. We can make assumptions that these stories reflect deep-seated concerns and beliefs, in particular about Chinese culture.

In the contemporary cities of Hong Kong and Shanghai it may be assumed that the spiritual relationship between gods and humans will have little to do with current day architecture, and there is little critical architectural analysis of contemporary *fengshui* practice. Within China the research on the subject of *fengshui* is limited to historic studies in architecture and anthropology, and as previously mentioned the practice is deemed a feudal superstition and illegal in the PRC. However, initial research shows that *fengshui*

has developed to become a method of localisation, and a way to architecturally provide the identification of “Chineseness” in China, and the greater Chinese diaspora.

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