

DRAGONS, TIGERS AND KOOKABURRAS

Feng Shui From A Unique Perspective

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Editorial

As a rough guide to when I should release each newsletter, I now try and aim for the solstices and equinoxes. So: welcome to the summer solstice edition! In truth, I came close to abandoning the newsletter as I began to doubt anyone was actually reading it. It's only because I happened to come across many clients recently who assured me that, on the contrary, they were all reading it, that I felt encouraged enough to continue. So it looks like you're stuck with me for at least a bit longer!

The book is selling quietly and consistently. Thank you for all your comments and for buying it. (At least I know you've been reading that!) If you bought the book from Amazon or even if you didn't but you have been an Amazon customer, you would do me a great favour by writing a review. Simply go to www.amazon.co.uk, search for 'Poisoned Dragon' and submit a review. It doesn't take long and the more people who do it, the more information web surfers get when they find the book.

This issue has no consistent theme but instead a variety of subjects. The '**Small Steps**' boxes are focusing on environmental tips, as is their wont. In '**Lung Mei**' I concentrate on an uneasy balance of power in the landscape around a town in Bavaria. '**Hidden Realms**' looks at mostly western astrology. What hopefully may be evident in the latter article is that the division between astrology - the study of horoscopes etc. - and astronomy, the more 'scientific', outer discipline, does not exist for me. I have had a passion for both for many years now. The separation between astrology and astronomy is in fact a recent one. Isaac Newton, when berated for believing in astrology, famously retorted, 'Sir, I have studied it. You have not.' In my Feng Shui work I attempt to incorporate my knowledge mostly into aspects of gardening, as I mention in the article. This may well develop much further. Watch this space!

In the '**NuLook**' section we're taking an alternative glance at noise pollution, something which has become a major problem especially for those living in urban areas.

Finally, our tour of the directions in the Hindu **Vaastu** system begins inevitably in the North-East, the main source of *prana* on a site.

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Enjoy this issue. I trust you'll be able to sit outside, sipping your beverage of choice, whilst you read it!

See you for the autumn equinox.

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Anu

ANuLookAt: Noise

*'Turn up the TV. No-one listening will suspect...
They think that I've got no respect
But everything means less than zero.'*

- 'Less Than Zero', Elvis Costello

We will begin this article by looking at practical ways of dealing with noise pollution, but by the end the emphasis will be on its implications. For, as hinted in the lyrics above, the harder you try to shut something uncomfortable out the more hardened you tend to become.

Noise pollution is everywhere that's built up now, which includes most of Europe. The usual suspects are transport, neighbours and animals. Ray Bradbury wrote a story called 'The Murderer' about a man destroying machines everywhere he went with ice cream, in his one-man war against the proliferation of noise. The machines Bradbury imagined all those years ago are now with us in actuality, so before any of us get arrested for murdering mobile phones and digital TV watches, let's look at some of the practical ways of dealing with what's around us.

Problem	Solution
Barking dogs	Cinni electric fans apparently have a consoling rattle when on high speed which is especially good at masking noise from dogs
Traffic	Plenty of vegetation outside the house is good of course; climbers work particularly well as does anything that breaks up the even surface of walls. A hidden ditch (a ha-ha) is also effective.
Noisy neighbours	On the assumption you've tried negotiating already, try good ear plugs. Most are only slightly effective, but Quies earplugs available from independent chemists are reputedly the best.
General	Find some 'white noise' that you are okay with when inbetween radio stations. This is supposed to be soothing - honest! Interestingly, white noise is background radiation from the big bang: You'll be listening to the universal afterglow! Generally, houses that are well-furnished avoid the 'sound-box' effect of minimalist decor. Thick carpets and curtains work particularly well.

These suggestions are in addition to the more obvious, such as getting double-glazing or using a water-feature, particularly to mask traffic noise. (Note: UK sufferers may wish to contact the Noise Abatement Society at 0800 389 1380 if they're subjected to unreasonable noise.)

The method of using flowing water takes us neatly to the trick of translating the noise into something more acceptable to your ears. There is a story of a spiritual master who was sharing a room with a man who couldn't sleep because of dogs barking through the night. "The trouble is," said the Master, "not the dogs, it is your attitude to them. You view them as a disturbance. Think of them as part of the beautiful noises of the night, enticing you to sleep, and you'll be fine." The man

slept very well after that.

In the same way, when I hear traffic during the night I tell myself it is the sound of waves on a beach - actually not that different, as you'll find if you try it yourself. Hence, a water-feature is particularly effective around traffic noise.

When walking down a disturbed stretch of road between Kentish Town and Archway recently, for the first time I had a music player; it totally transformed the experience into something beautiful. But there is a danger here of creating more noise - even if you are the only one hearing it - in order to cover up the noise you don't want to hear. Turning up your TV to disguise your neighbours' TV, for example, is avoiding the root of the problem. Then I discovered something interesting when walking elsewhere around London.

A friend of mine had given me some 'quality hip hop' (as she put it) to listen to. This wasn't my usual taste but to my surprise I found that in the really noisy parts of the city - such as on public transport - the music absorbed the noises, whereas previous attempts using classical had failed miserably. Good rap being driven by a social conscience, it wasn't making pretty sounds to mask the unpretty ones, but was attempting to deal with the discord around, to make sense of it. Thus, I now adjust my musical tastes to 'confer' with the environment I find myself in. Here, in the Somerset countryside as I write this, African music works very well for some strange reason.

William Blake wrote about walking in London:

'In every cry of every Man/In every Infants cry of fear/In every voice.../The mind-forg'd manacles I hear...'

But then they didn't have TV in the 18th Century - or MP3 players. Blake could hear what was going on around him.

In summation, we all find it necessary to mask or to transform the noises assaulting our ears when we can't find a way to stop them, but ultimately we have to ask ourselves what those noises are telling us.

Small Steps for a Big World

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It's summer time in the northern hemisphere and back to the gardens for many of us. In addition to the eco-friendly gardening tips given last issue, here are some more:

Grass requires a lot of water and attention from air-polluting lawnmowers. Go more for other habitats such as [rockeries](#), [Zen rock gardens](#), [flowerbeds](#), [wild uncultivated areas](#) and [vegetable patches](#). Weed out the grass!

The vast majority of pesticides come not from farming, but our gardens. About 80% in fact. Seek out alternatives. Phone Henry Doubleday Assoc. at 01932 253 666 and ask for their catalogue of organic alternatives. To get rid of flies, cleanliness is the main key, esp. with rubbish bins. [Lemon](#), [cloves](#), [pine](#) and [cedar oils](#) are natural fly deterrents.

Encourage natural predators. [Hedgehogs](#) love piles of leaves in ditches, saucers of water (**not** milk) and some dog or cat food. For [bats and birds](#), build some nesting boxes; make sure cats can't reach them and that they don't face direct sunlight. Visit the websites www.bats.org.uk and www.wildlifetrusts.org.uk for more information.



Lung Mei: War of the Sexes

The balance of yin and yang in any environment will determine its individuality to such an extent that you can, if you wish, understand all you need to simply from examining that balance. I've mentioned before in newsletters and in the book that a house usually requires a balance of 2/3 yang to 1/3 yin. That is for optimum living conditions. In contrast, a graveyard requires a dominance of yin ch'i. To make this more obvious, a house needs to be predominantly light, dry and as spacious as is reasonable; whereas a burial site needs to tend more to the dark and moist, otherwise the ch'i of the departed will not be absorbed into the earth and consequently transformed.

I have also in the past commented on the Dragon Heart, usually a prominent hill or landmark, that feeds the surrounding area with ch'i by means of the lung mei, the dragon veins. To mirror the predominantly yang ch'i of the Dragon Heart, I often find a Tiger Heart nearby, most of the lines from which being yin. The balance of these two Hearts is therefore crucial. When the Dragon reigns unchecked we tend to have male values imposed over the landscape, whereas an unchecked Tiger Heart tends to grant women a lot of power. In short terms this may sound great, depending which sex and where you are; but ultimately both sexes suffer, feeling something missing.

A good example of this is in the landscape surrounding Schöngau, a town in Bavaria, Southern Germany. On the surface this is a beautiful, tranquil area - but its



tranquillity comes at a price. Here you see the bridge over the river where several roads and a railway cross. This is a typical Tiger Heart: low, in a valley, where many influences meet, and a particularly powerful one, so much so that you would expect yin ch'i to reign triumphant for miles around.

But it doesn't and the reason is in the history. Schöngau was one of the main witch-burning towns centuries ago and today there are annual re-enactments of burnings in the town centre by the church, actually on the Dragon Heart a few hundred metres away from the Tiger. Historical re-enactments tend to reinforce patterns of discord, such as with the civil war battles recreated each year in England; and witch-burning performances will effectively emphasise an imbalance of male power. Whether the paranoia about witches was the male medical establishment trying to wipe out the competition, or a male priesthood wishing to establish beyond question their dogma and their dogma only, it's quite clear that one thing remained at the root of it: men being afraid of women.

Studying the Tiger Heart I began to get a sense of its power and I realised that there was a lot to be afraid of, for if it were unchecked then certain negative yin qualities could run riot - secrecy, deception, manipulation, laziness, even

supernatural powers. Looking at it from a purely energetic perspective, one could see the yang of the landscape reacting in desperation with its own negative qualities such as brutality and dogma.

At this point it is quite clear that this is not so much to do with men or women but certain qualities that both own. This is about people finding an imbalance in their surroundings mirroring something within them, then polarising the situation. The duality becomes a battle. In this case it is obvious what won. And overlooking the witch-burning area, at the crest of the Dragon Heart, is the church, shown here on the right. I don't think I need to comment on the Freudian implications! Also, just outside the picture, is a bronze eagle grasping the Earth in its talons. The symbolism is *kristall klar*.

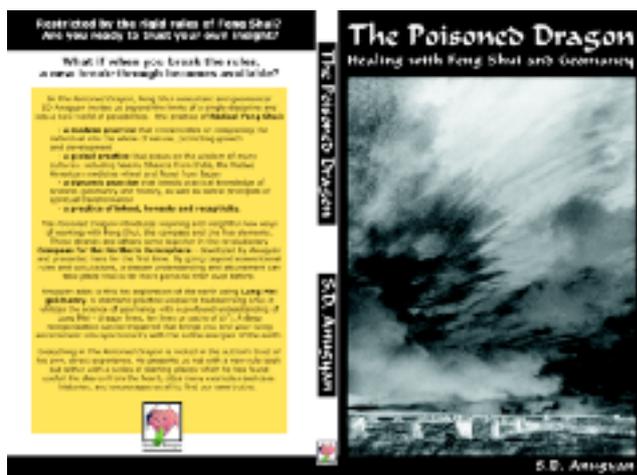


The aftermath of the battle is a landscape that is so serene it is almost dead. For most this is not a problem: you can do shopping, drive your car, watch TV, have families, go for a bike ride, all the usual stuff. But for those who look beyond the veil there is an uncomfortable tension in the peace, like stalemate between two nuclear powers. Nothing's happening but that's not to say it won't.

The first and biggest step is to acknowledge there is a problem. Once that is accomplished, the second step, involving opening up a dialogue between the Tiger and the Dragon, should prove easy.

Meanwhile, I am sure there are a few hidden witches and wizards doing just that - healing the landscape, making a difference, with few people even knowing they exist.

STILL AVAILABLE



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Hidden Realms: Astrology

When teaching I have found the Chinese astrological years very useful, for when faced with a classroom of, say, Roosters or Sheep, the characteristics of the relevant animal are quite obvious, as most of the students will be born in one Chinese year. Strangely though, I haven't found the traditional Feng Shui approaches to astrology very effective, heretical as that may seem.

An exception is the association of planets with different elements: Earth is Saturn, Metal Venus, Water Mercury, Wood Jupiter and Fire Mars. This is particularly useful when studying a landscape. For example, a landscape of round - therefore Metal - hills often gives a sense of warmth and beneficence, of love. These are obvious Venusian attributes and show an aspect of Metal that is easier for people to relate to than some of its other aspects. When in difficulty explaining the qualities of elements I can use the 'language of the stars' instead.

With gardens especially I pay attention to the views granted in different areas. Whereas a temple such as a stone circle may demonstrate very precise alignments with stars and planets, I utilise a more approximate approach in gardens more suited for day-to-day living - or night-to-night rather as the emphasis will be more on what is visible once the sun has gone down. In classical Chinese gardens you will often find the 'moon-viewing house', basically a well-placed gazebo. I often consider what plants will reflect the moonlight best, usually silver-leaved ones, if a particular area seems likely to respond well to the full moon. In contrast, a West-facing view such as from a bench would be better working with the setting sun and I'm likely to recommend certain statues to complement that particular energy.

On an individual level the sun/moon cycle is important too. I learnt astrology over twenty years ago but abandoned it soon after in favour of a more scientific approach. The purchase of increasingly expensive telescopes took over my life for years. Still, knowing I could read charts, people kept approaching me, asking me to interpret them even if I no longer 'believed in it'. I would then explain the symbolism so they could make up their own minds as to its veracity, but noticed over time an interesting pattern: Those born during the waning moon cycle were usually in a relationship, those born when the moon was waxing were often single. I had read about lunar cycles before but this seemed unusually specific.

Further research revealed that it wasn't as simple as at first sight. For instance, someone born when the moon is young, that is just after New Moon, might not necessarily be single, they could even be married - but their instincts would be to think of themselves first. In contrast, somebody born a few days before New Moon, when the moon is waning and at its oldest, would tend to put themselves second. The latter tended to find parenting more easy while the New Moon crowd would have to work at it more. A New Moon mother I knew, for example, tended to relate to a daughter more as an older sister than a traditional mother. New Moon fathers have a tendency to disappear quite a lot.

There is a lot more to this, of course, but you may wish to consult your own birth chart to see how well my categories apply to you. **(More on a website for your chart later, if you don't have one.)** This is difficult to grasp if astronomy is totally new to you, but to summarise: New Moon is when the sun and moon are in the same region of the sky; Full Moon is when the sun and moon are directly opposite each other with the Earth in the middle; a waxing moon is when the visible

moon is growing after New and before Full; and a waning moon when it is lessening after Full and before New.

Moon Phase	'Positive' Attributes	'Negative' Attributes
Between New and First Quarter	Freshness, vitality, the 'eternal child'	Restlessness, insensitivity, immaturity
Between First Quarter and Full	As above but with a new sense of responsibility	As above but not so extreme
Between Full and Last Quarter	Maturity, wisdom, focus on relating	Seriousness, fear of being alone
Between Last Quarter and New	As above plus increased sense of compassion	As above, also can be overly self-sacrificing

This is just an introduction and to know more I highly recommend 'A Vision' by W.B. Yeats or 'Lunation Rhythms' by Dane Rudhyar. The relevance of this is that if I know what phase of the moon an individual is born under then I can comprehend their drives a lot better. For example, someone born before the First Quarter may find moving house a lot easier as it will appeal to their sense of adventure.

There are other aspects of the chart in western astrology I find useful but the



most fascinating aspect is not usually found in a chart. Known by some as Travel Lines or Astro Travel, these are lines circumnavigating the globe showing the influences an individual can expect in different areas of different countries. Some common sense is required too. For example, a Jupiter line on my chart sweeps across West India, effectively highlighting some of my best memories on that continent; but it also goes across Afghanistan and I have no intention of going there currently.

To check out your Travel Lines the easiest method by far - also to view your chart etc. - is to visit www.astro.com and click on AstroTravel. Who knows, this may lead to a further interest in astrology for you - and whatever means a person finds to put themselves more in touch with the cosmos, I salute it!

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<p>Small Steps for a Big World 2</p> <p>Recently the large blue and large tortoiseshell butterflies have become extinct. Encourage butterflies in your garden by growing appropriate plants. Buddleia is well-known for attracting butterflies but there are others too. Visit www.butterfly-conservation.org.uk for more information.</p> <p>Finally, all the tips this issue are from the excellent 'Go Mad! 365 Daily Ways to Save the Planet' published by The Ecologist. Buy it! Go - Make A Difference!</p>

VAASTU The North-East Sector

Regent: Soma, Lord of the Moon

Stone: Moonstone

It is appropriate that we begin this series looking at compass directions with the North-East, the chief source of *prana* or *ch'i* entering a site according to Vaastu. Unlike with Feng Shui, where this challenging direction is controlled by the Earth element, Vaastu seeks to allow as much of its influence as possible. This is not surprising when you know that it is referred to as 'the gateway of the gods', associated with the moon-god and with eternal life.

Paradoxically, although its regent is to do with the moon, its astrological ruler is Surya, the Sun. The sun's rays, eagerly sought in higher latitudes, are in India associated with famine and death, and seen as demonic rather than divine influences. Hence, the Hindu response to the sun is one of passivity and introspection, rather than fun and activity as it is in the West. The positive aspect of the sun is related to the heart and our immortal selves, *atman*, which is not affected by death and carries on from life to life.

The result is that the North-East, free from the sun's fiercer rays, is the place of meditation and wisdom. This is the perfect site for the important Area of Tranquillity, a necessary part of any house, and also of any room: the still point of the turning wheel. To establish this Area just make sure there is a 'quiet spot' in any house or room, by simply using a chair, a water feature, plants, a statue, anything that inspires a sense of inner calm.

An important thing with the North-East sector - of a room or site - is to keep it light. No heavy objects - they're more appropriate for the South-West.

Basically, treat the North-East sector as sacred. The North-East part of a house in India is often the Puja Room, a place of worship. This is a good area for meditation, altars etc. Water generally is good, so indoor fountains would fit perfectly. Bathrooms are also fine here as long as they don't have any heavy furniture.

The presiding element is *aether* in the ayurvedic system, therefore anything that produces pleasing sounds is appropriate: wind chimes, stereos, musical instruments, even bells.

Objects	Sacred statues, water, musical instruments, chimes
Colours	White, blue, gold, silver, some yellow
Material	Marble
Images	Sun, moon, deities
Key	Treat as sacred, be as minimalist as possible

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