River Diagrams, Nine Palaces and the Hall of Light
- Ritual & Ceremonial Origins of Fengshui

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Classical Chinese View of Time

上 Shàng
Upper; higher; superior; first previous.

前 Qián
Front; forward; ahead; before; preceding; former.

下 Xià
Lower; down; underneath; below; inferior; next; latter; second.

后 Hòu
Back; behind; afterwards; later.

Xia 2010-1600 BCE
Shang 1600-1045 BCE
Zhou 1045-256 BCE
Qin 221-226 BCE
Han 206 BCE -220 CE
Jin 265-420 CE
Bei Nan 420-589 CE
Sui 581-618 CE
Tang 618-907 CE
Song 960-1279 CE
Yuan 1279-1368 CE
Ming 1368-1644 CE
Qing 1644-1911 CE

www.fengshuiclassics.com.au
The Master said, "Of the things bought about by the Rites, harmony is the most valuable"

- Confucian Analects, Book 1 verse 12
Li ‘Rites’

- 礼 Rituals & Ceremonies
- 儒家 Rújiā ‘Ritual School’ (Confucian)

Following a ‘natural’ hierarchical order –

1. The proper relationship to heaven and earth, created by humans organizing and domesticating a world of divinity
2. Done when appropriate this can bring harmonious unity, but can create the opposite if not proper and timely
3. Creating social balance through respect, humility, propriety and restoring primitive simplicity
4. A common sense habit of self control, expressing a mind sensitive to truth and the inner meaning of things
# The Three Rites Classics

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| 仪礼 *Yílǐ*  
‘Ceremony and Rites’ | 礼记 *Lìjì*  
‘Record of Rites’ | 周礼 *Zhōulǐ*  
‘3rd Dynasty Rites’ |
| 周公 *Zhōu Gōng*  
‘Duke of Zhou’ | 孔子 *Kǒng zǐ*  
‘Confucius’ | 刘歆 *Liú Xīn*  
(editor) |
| 1045–256 BC | 475-221 BCE | 46 BC – 23CE |
| 17 chapters | 49 chapters | 6 sections, 360 offices |
| The orthodox ritual ceremonies concerning scholars | Definitions, rules, use, explanations and discussions of ritual | Governmental and administrative structure of the state |
| Ancestor worship  
Funerals & mourning  
Burials  
Sacrifices | Cosmological theory  
Astronomy  
Geography  
The ‘Hall of Light’ | Site Divination  
City design  
Oneiromancy  
Geometry |

The Three Rites Classics are ancient Chinese texts that record the traditions and rituals of the Zhou Dynasty, with contributions from Duke of Zhou, Confucius, and editor Liú Xīn. The texts include definitions, rules, and discussions of ritual, as well as governmental and administrative structure of the state. Key topics covered include ancestor worship, funerals and mourning, burials, sacrifices, cosmological theory, astronomy, geography, site divination, city design, and oneiromancy.
The Master said, "The Phoenix does not appear nor does the river offer up its Chart."

- Confucian Analects, Book 9 verse 9
Ancestor Worship

考, 祖, 曾祖。

Kǎo, Zǔ, Zēngzhǔ

“[Deceased] Father, Grandfather, Great Grandfather.”

- Yīlì, chapter 16

- Spans three generations of patriarchs
- Seen as distant connection through prayer, sacrifice & spiritual influence

- 阴宅 Yīnzhái ‘Grave-sites’ and interment of bones
- 感应 Gǎnyìng ‘Mutual resonance’ – sympathetic vibrations, the primal persistent persistent affinity of attraction between similar things
Geographical Orientations

故死者北首, 生者南向。
Gù sǐ zhě běi shǒu, shēng zhě nán xiàng.
“Therefore the deceased have their heads [placed] to the north, the living look toward the south.”

- Liji Book 9, line 5

• Classical north-south burial alignment according to the Rites
• Traditional Fengshui sitting/facing directions -
  South – midday, summer, sun, warmth,
  Yang positive principle
  North – midnight, winter, dark, cold,
  Yin negative principle
仲春之月, 天子居青阳大庙。乘鸾路, 驾仓龙, 载青旗, 衣青衣, 服仓玉。Zhînhchûn zhîyuè, Tiānzì jū qîngyáng dàmiào. Shînglû, jiâcânglóng, zàiqîngqî, yîqîngyî, fûcângyû. “In the middle month of spring, the Son of Heaven occupies the Bright Blue-Green (eastern) [Hall] of the Great Temple. Rides in a carriage, drawn by dragon [horses], carrying a blue-green standard, wearing blue-green clothing with jade [pendants].”

- Liji Book 6, lines 10~12

- 明堂 Míngtáng ‘Bright hall’ sacred temple complex & astrological observatory
- Circle on 洛书 Luò Shū square, built in nines
- 月令 Yuèlîng ‘Monthly Ordinances’ clockwise circuit to harmonise seasons, reflects heaven
- 5 element concordances, in 8+1 directions
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Site Selection

國大遷、大師，則貞龜。

Guó dàqiān, Dàshī, zé zhēnguī.

“In State [sanctioned] major relocations [of the capital] the Grand Diviner, follows the auguries of the tortoise.”

- Zhouli book 2, chapter 24

- 占卜 Zhānbǔ ‘Site divination’ – Plastromancy, Scapulomancy, Milfoil
- 连山易 Liánshān yì ‘Linked Mountains Changes’
- 归藏易 Guīcáng yì ‘Return to the Contained Changes’
- 周易 Zhōuyì ‘Changes of the 3rd Dynasty’
Craftsmen construct the state capital. A square of nine li, each side has three gates. Within the capital are nine central (north-south) thoroughfares and nine transverse (east-west). The main thoroughfares are nine [chariot] tracks in width.

- Zhouli book 6, line 72

- Includes auspicious locations of central palace, ancestral halls, altars, markets, residences and storehouses
- Based on 九宫 Jiǔgōng ‘Nine palaces’
- Established by 井 Jǐng ‘Well’ field system and ancient 地理 Dìlǐ ‘Geography’
The Master said, “The wise find joy in water; the benevolent find joy in mountains. The wise are active; the benevolent are still. The wise are joyful; the benevolent are long lived.”

- Confucian Analects, Book 6 verse 23
How did this effect Fengshui?

一 Ancestor worship influences Yin zhai
二 Basic fengshui direction facing south is set
三 Bagua building correspondences developed
四 Auspicious siting of structures conceived
五 Nine palaces convention established
The Master said,

“Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals?”

- Confucian Analects, Book 1 verse 1
What is the practical significance?

- *Yinzhai* is not Ancestor Worship, it is universally equal.

- Location dependant, looking toward ‘yang’ is more important than facing due south.

- In built structures the *Bagua* was never applied to concepts such as ‘life aspirations’.

- *Mingtangs* weren’t always just outside the front door.

- Many ancient Chinese structure’s locations were not chosen according to *fengshui* (initially).

- Nine palaces is a mapping convention and should be treated as such.
Classical Translations

The I Li or Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial
John Steele

The Sacred Books of China: The Lî Kî, I-X
James Legge, Confucius

Le Tcheou-Li Ou Rites Des Tcheou, Tr. Par E. Biot [With] Table Analytique
Chou Li
Resources