

Earth and Sky

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I am reading **Light on Life**, by B.K.S. Iyengar. I was so surprised to find feng shui teachings - but I should not be surprised because it confirms what I know, that feng shui is ancient and universal.

As a teacher of feng shui my goal has always been to find the explanations and words which capture true meaning. The words *feng shui* are now so overused that the underlying depth and beauty is missed. So here I offer some new thoughts and insights for you to explore.

When I read Mr. Iyengar's passages about earth and sky I saw another way to express the feng shui concept of wind and water (which are what the words feng shui mean in English). I would like to share a few passages from **Light on Life**.

Earth:

Mr Iyengar writes:

As I have said, we human beings live between the two realities of earth and sky. The earth stands for all that is practical, material, tangible, and incarnate. It is the knowable world, objectively knowable through voyages of discovery and observation.

In feng shui this is expressed as water. It is a physical reality you can see, touch, and taste. This can also be thought of as simply nature and everything in it, in other words the earth! Our physical bodies are also part of nature.

Sky:

Sky is an analogy for the non-physical, what I could call the vibrational world. Other names could be the energetic world or the spirit world, but they all mean the same thing, which is a non-physical reality. In feng shui this concept is called wind, because the wind is intangible. Mr Iyengar explains sky this way:

Many languages do not have two separate words for sky and heaven as English does. The word heaven is useful as it suggests something that is not physical. This opens up possibilities: a) that it is perfect, as nothing physical can be perfect since all phenomena are unstable; b) that it is Universal—i.e. One, whereas Nature is many as we can see from its diversity; c) that it is Everywhere, Omnipresent since, not being physical, it is not limited or defined by location; d) that it is supremely Real or Eternal.

Interaction between earth and sky.

Feng shui is about the balance between the physical and non-physical world, but Mr. Iyengar offers another perspective:

Anything physical is always changing, therefore its reality is not constant, not Eternal. Nature is in this sense like an actor who has only different roles. It never takes off its costume and makeup and goes home, but just changes from one role to another, for ever and ever. So, with Nature, we never quite know where we are, especially as we too are part of it.

The non-physical Reality, however difficult to grasp, must have the advantage of being eternal, always the same. This has a consequence; Whatever is real and unchanging must offer us a fixed point, an orientation, like a perfect north on a compass. And how does a compass work? By an attraction between magnetic north and a magnet in our compass. The compass is ourselves. So we are able to infer that there is a Universal Reality in ourselves that aligns with the Universal Reality that is everywhere else.

This sentence “there is a Universal Reality in ourselves that aligns with the Universal Reality that is everywhere else” can be interpreted in different ways. Here is one way of looking at it:

Your body, like nature itself, is a physical reality, but that is not all a body is. It also holds the inner dimension - the energetic, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual activities that go on inside it. If you just make your body ‘pretty’ there is little opportunity for growth. Our homes are obviously a physical reality as well. They are after all, structures that hold and contain furniture and household goods.

It is actually the the non-physical aspects of a dwelling that transform an accumulation of objects into a home, otherwise it is like a beautiful showroom display, an empty shell. I believe that many of us - at least in the western world - primarily experience the Universal Reality Mr. Iyengar speaks of in the homes we create. This is because of how we feel about home. If you ask people to write words to express what home means to them they often say it is their sanctuary, retreat, a place to renew and rejuvenate. I believe it is the ‘fixed point’ where we can experience the Universal Reality in ourselves.

Through a combination of what we put into our homes (the objects) and the meaning they have for us, as well as the overall feeling or vibration each home has, we balance the changeable physical world with what is real and unchanging — in other words balance earth and sky.

Balance and Feng Shui

How of us can truly say our homes give us the feeling of sanctuary all of the time? Homes are governed by the laws

of nature: they are changeable and unstable. Homes get cluttered, need cleaning or repairs, or simply no longer reflect who we are. So at least some of the time, things are out of balance.

For many people there is never that sense of balance in the home - but still it is a goal they aspire towards and want to bring into their lives. I have observed that as the outer world outside becomes more unstable and chaotic, the stronger this drive it to find solace in the home.

In the simplest terms, feng shui helps us to align those aspects of earth and sky into our lives through using a variety of tools. Some of these tools are 'earth-bound': practical and down to earth measures, while other tools are 'sky-based': non physical and not limited or defined by location. In my experience they work together and there is no definite separation. For example after physically cleaning and clearing up clutter, people feel differently about themselves on the emotional and spiritual level. It is as if an invisible layer has been lifted away. And, working on the energetic level - as in doing Space Clearing in a home, people often feel physically more grounded and stable.

Working with a feng shui coach can also help you explore what sanctuary means to you and how you can bring that feeling into your home. It is exciting and rewarding and what I love to do most in my work as a feng shui coach and teacher.

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