

Feng Shui

The Five Elements of Feng Shui

By Michele Duffy



Fall colors as seen from Mulholland Ridge off Donald Drive. Autumn is the Metal Element in Feng Shui.

Photo Andy Scheck

Fall is here and along with it the shift away from the Fire Element of summer and movement towards the Metal Element that dominates autumn.

Let's review the Five Element Theory that dominates and is at the core of Feng Shui, Chinese Medicine and much of Asian culture.

The Five Elements Theory is a very vast and complicated subject and so what I will share will relate mostly to Feng Shui.

The Five Elements can be used to describe the movement and the relationship between different elements and phenomena in nature. This cycle is explained most easily by a simple metaphor. The relationship is the same as a mother and child relationship, where the child is dependent upon the mother for nourishment and therefore growth and well-being.

In Feng Shui, practitioners all base their art and system on the five phases, or the Five Elements (Wu Xing). All of these phases are represented within the trigrams of the Bagua, or map, used in Feng Shui. Associated with these phases are colors, seasons and shapes, all of which interact, change and flow with

each other.

Based on a particular directional energy flow from one phase to the next, the interaction can be expansive, destructive or exhaustive. A proper knowledge of each aspect of energy flow enables the Feng Shui practitioner to apply certain cures or rearrangement of energy in a beneficial way for the receiver of the Feng Shui recommendations.

How do the Five Elements integrate into our spaces to assist creating our desired results?

The Feng Shui Bagua contains all five of the Five Elements and so we begin by first asking: What do I want to create more of in my life? What do I want less of? How do the elements represent the change we wish to create in our environments? What Bagua areas must we analyze and adjust in our homes, master bedrooms and yards?

Creative Five Elements Cycles

The classical five Chinese elements are represented by wood, earth, metal, fire and water:

- Wood feeds fire (fire burns wood for fuel)
- Fire makes earth (fire makes ashes or earth)
- Earth creates metal (deposits in earth)

- Metal holds water (condensation on can)
- Water nurtures wood (plants drink water)

The wood element represents growth and progress. Wood encourages upward personal growth. The earth element helps to ground and stabilize. Earth is the most peaceful, calming and stable of all the five elements. The metal element is related to intelligence, mental power and sharpness and letting things go. The fire element represents transformation, expansion, passion and volatility. The water element is very useful for creating life force, deep renewal and restoration. Use this element for greater intuition and relaxation.

In Feng Shui we use the Five Elements qualities and Bagua areas to bring balance and the awesome life force of nature into our homes and offices; to replicate the life force, rejuvenation, calm and peace we feel standing in front of the ocean or hiking through someplace like Muir Woods. In Feng Shui, we recreate the Five Elements we find in nature using color, shapes and the actual element we wish to incorporate into our environments.

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