1. Introduction

1.1 Why the *Do's & Taboos* in Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra Architectural Traditions Should Be Compared

Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra are two of the most age-old and well-known architectural traditions of the world. Both are based on numerous ideas about how to locate, to orient, to organize and to establish the 'built spaces', such as cities, villages, palaces, temples, houses and altars, in a correct way, and about how to ensure a proper connection and a harmonious relationship between the built spaces and their external natural/built environment. Surprisingly, the two pre-modern traditions, rather than dying out over time, have survived well into the present and still exert great influence on today's architectural practice respectively in the Chinese and the Indian cultural spheres. It is important to note that the numerous ideas of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra usually find their expressions in a variety of 'architectural prescriptions' for people to follow when they are planning, designing and constructing their built spaces. In general, the various prescriptions can be divided into the ***do's*** and the ***taboos***; the former are about 'what should be done', whilst the latter refer to 'what should never be done'. This dissertation aims to analyze the function and the meaning of the *do's* and the *taboos*, both of which can be found in contemporary Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practice as well as in old Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra related texts.

Most of these *do's & taboos* are explicitly formulated. Take some Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* for example: '*the ground plan of the house should be square or rectangular, but should never be irregular*',[1] '*the temple should be oriented to the south*',[2] '*the house should have its back turned to the mountains*',[3] '*the toilet should be located on the right side of the house*',[4] '*the entrance should be set on the left side of the house*',[5] and '*the toilet should never be located in the center of the house*'.[6] The same goes for Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos*: '*the ground plan of the house should be square or rectangular, but should never be*

[1] See: 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.
[2] See: 3.2.4.
[3] See: 3.3.1.
[4] See: 4.3.2.
[5] See: 4.3.2.
[6] See: 4.2.7.

irregular',[7] '*the temple should have an east-west orientation*',[8] '*the Puja room should be located in the northeast of the house*',[9] '*the toilet should never be located in the center or the northeast of the house*',[10] '*the photos of the deceased family members should never be placed in the northeast of the house*',[11] and '*the staircase should be built to ascend in a clockwise direction*'.[12]

Besides, some Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* are formulated in a somewhat complicated way, and their details are usually determined by certain preconditions or principles. As we can find, some Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* stipulate that the orientation of the main entrance should be determined by the orientation of the whole building according to the principle of the 'Nine-Square & Eight-Trigram Diagram'. For instance, if the house is oriented to the south, its main entrance should be oriented to the southeast, the south or the east, but should never be oriented to the southwest, the west, the northwest or the northeast.[13] Comparably, some Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* suggest that the orientation of the main entrance of a house should be determined by the horoscope of the house owner. That is to say, the house of the people whose zodiac signs are Cancer, Scorpio or Pisces should be provided with an east-oriented entrance; the house of those whose signs are Taurus, Virgo or Capricorn should be provided with a south-oriented entrance; the house of those who are born under such signs as Gemini, Libra or Aquarius should be provided with a west-oriented entrance; the house of those who are born under Aries, Leo or Sagittarius should be provided with a north-oriented entrance.[14] Although it seems that some architectural *do's & taboos*, as found in today's Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practice, are formulated according to complicated and mystic theories of numerology and astrology, people seem to take less interest in these profound concepts and simply pay more heed to what should done and what should never be done in the practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra.

These Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos*, having little to do with aesthetics and functionality, usually revolve around such notions as the 'auspicious' and the 'inauspicious'. One popular belief is that the observance of these *do's & taboos* can bring good fortune to people and guarantee them an auspicious built space. On the contrary, the contravention of these *do's & taboos* is likely to lead to an inauspicious built space, of which the occupants and users

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7 See: 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.
8 See: 3.2.4.
9 See: 4.4.1.
10 See: 4.2.7.
11 See: 4.4.1.
12 See: 4.2.7.
13 See: 3.2.6.
14 See: 3.2.2.

will suffer misfortune. Therefore, home buyers these days tend to examine whether all the details of a house are in line with these *do's & taboos* so as to ensure an auspicious living space and good fortune. Accordingly, housing developers tend to ask their commissioned architects to carefully design houses that meet these *do's & taboos* as well as satisfy functional and aesthetic requirements at the same time; otherwise, these houses could very possibly be unacceptable and unmarketable.

Nowadays, the so-called Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* are not only followed by people living in China, but are also widely practiced in the areas influenced by Chinese culture or in those areas where many Chinese immigrants live, such as Taiwan, Singapore and many other countries in Southeast Asia. Likewise, the practice of these so-called Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* can be found in India as well as in Sri Lanka, Nepal and many other countries in South or Southeast countries. In these countries, we can find numerous publications dealing with the practice of Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra, generally in the form of Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra manuals or handbooks written by contemporary Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra specialists. These publications usually provide a great number of architectural *do's & taboos* that people have to follow when they are building, buying or renovating houses. Some rich people even hire Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra specialists as consultants for the design of their houses. Owing to these specialists and their publications, both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra still exist in this day and age as two living traditions that are constantly developed, theorized, propagated and renewed.

As these Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra specialists usually emphasize, the Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* mentioned in their publications are all formulated according to the systematic 'theories' mentioned in ancient texts of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, and most of the *do's & taboos* practiced nowadays can be found in these texts as well. Consequently, people who followed these *do's & taboos* are inclined to believe that Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra are two well-organized systems supported by a set of coherent and consistent theories, which form the basis of numerous architectural *do's & taboos* in Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions. In other words, a strong causal relationship between the ancient 'Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories' and the modern 'Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos*' is taken for granted, with the latter rooted in, or explained by, the former. Such a causal relationship, coupled with the extensive application of the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* to architectural practice, bestows upon these *do's & taboos* a timeless quality. Sp these *do's & taboos* have remained seemingly unchanged since the time when the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories were formulated. This post-factum constructed link between practice and theories even gains a foothold in

the academic field, where most scholars hold that it is impossible to understand the meaning of the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* without comprehending the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories, and that it is therefore more essential to conduct the research on the latter than on the former.

With that in mind, the following questions should be addressed: Are Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra really two well-organized systems of rules advocated by a set of coherent and consistent architectural theories? Is it true that all Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* are formulated on the basis of Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories as mentioned in ancient texts, and can the former always be explained by the latter in a coherent and consistent way? Have Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories and Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* remained unchanged since ancient times?

To better understand the relationship between the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* and the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories, we need to take a quick look at the history of the two architectural traditions.

The term 'Feng-Shui' is derived from the combination of two Chinese words, '*Feng*' (風, wind) and '*Shui*' (水, water). Most scholars who conduct research on Feng-Shui agree that this term was first introduced in the *Zangshu* (葬書), or Burial Book, written by Guo Pu (276-324 CE).[15] In this book, the author uses the concepts of wind, water and *Qi* (氣) (i.e. the cosmic breath, cosmic energy and the very essence of the whole cosmos) to formulate the theories about the location and construction of tombs. As time went by, the term Feng-Shui was gradually used to denote a variety of theories dealing with many different types of built spaces other than tombs, such as cities, temples, official buildings, dwellings and altars. By following these theories, people are able to locate, orient, organize and establish the built spaces in an auspicious way. However, contrary to popular beliefs, these theories are actually not systematic, and most, if not all, are just loose combinations of different principles. Based on these theories and principles, a myriad of architectural *do's & taboos* were developed and have been documented in Feng-Shui texts, and many of them are still frequently followed in today's Feng-Shui practice.

Although the term Feng-Shui was first introduced in the 3rd or 4th century CE, according to many older texts, architectural theories and principles as well as architectural *do's & taboos* already existed before that. In the *Shuihudi Rishu Bamboo Texts* (3rd century BCE), the *Huainanzi Tianwenxun* (2nd century BCE) and the *Lunheng* (1st century CE), many descriptions of architectural theories and principles and of *do's & taboos* are similar or comparable to those recorded

[15] Han 2006, pp. 38-39; Luo and He 2004, p. 115; Wang 2004, p. 17.

in later Feng-Shui texts.[16] It is worthy to note that many philosophical and astrological ideas, such as *Qi*, *Yin & Yang* (陰陽),[17] *Bagua* (八卦),[18] *Sixiang* (四象)[19] and *Wuxing* (五行),[20] which provided the basis for the development of Feng-Shui theories in later times, have already been, to a certain degree, formulated and theorized in the philosophical schools of Confucianism and Yin-Yang School in the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE).[21] Moreover, in later periods, especially in Tang Dynasty (618-907 CE), a variety of religious ideas of Taoism and Buddhism were also absorbed and incorporated into the Feng-Shui theories.[22] Following that, in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 CE), the diverse Feng-Shui theories were further developed, renewed and systematized, and most importantly, the two most prominent schools of Feng-Shui, the Form School (形法派) and the Compass School (理氣派), were established.[23] It can be clearly seen that, over the course of history, more and more complex architectural theories of Feng-Shui were developed on the basis of ancient philosophical, astrological and religious ideas. And according to the Feng-Shui-related texts throughout history, a number of old theories and principles of architecture developed in an earlier time were possibly rejected in a later time. For instance, the theory of *Nayin-Wuxing* (納音五行)[24] that was highly influential from Han to Tang Dynasties have almost lost its significance in the Feng-Shui practice after the Ming Dynasty.[25]

It is also important to note that in earlier periods when the so-called Feng-Shui theories were yet to be developed, many architectural *do's & taboos* already existed, and they are usually just mentioned but not at all explained in ancient texts, such as the taboo that '*the toilet should never be placed in front of the house*'[26] as mentioned in the 3rd-century-BCE *Shuihudi Rishu Bamboo Texts*. Interestingly, many *do's & taboos*, though not substantiated by any well-organized theory, such as the one related to the toilet, have survived into later

16 Han 2006, pp. 19-20; Luo and He 2004, pp. 35-37; Shi 1995, pp. 14-17.

17 *Yin* and *Yang* are two binary-oppositional cosmic forces; *Yin* represents the negative force, whilst *Yang* represents the positive one.

18 *Bagua* is the symbolic system of the Eight Trigrams: *Li* (離: ☲), *Kun* (坤: ☷), *Dui* (兌: ☱), *Qian* (乾: ☰), *Kan* (坎: ☵), *Gen* (艮: ☶), *Zhen* (震: ☳) and *Xun* (巽: ☴).

19 *Sixiang* is the symbolic systems represented by four kinds of divine animals: Azure Dragon (青龍), White Tiger (白虎), Vermillion Bird (朱雀) and Black Tortoise (玄武).

20 *Wuxing* denotes the Five Elements of the cosmos: Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth.

21 Wang 2004, pp. 21-24; Yi, Yu and Hung 1999, pp. 35-43.

22 Luo and He 2004, pp. 123-125.

23 Han 2006, pp. 46-50.

24 The theory of *Nayin-Wuxing* is formulated on the basis of the connection between the *Wuxing* (i.e. Five Elements), the 'Five Musical Scales' (五音) and the 'Five Surnames' (五姓). See: 3.2.2.

25 Ibid., pp. 33-39.

26 See: 4.3.1.

times and are documented in a lot of Feng-Shui texts compiled in different historical periods. Even in today's Feng-Shui practice, this taboo is still extensively observed by people. It cannot be denied that by far not all Feng-Shui *do's & taboos*, found in old texts or practiced nowadays, are formulated on the basis of Feng-Shui theories. These *do's & taboos* are likely to have already existed before the development of Feng-Shui theories.

What is more, given the fact that many of the Feng-Shui theories merely loosely incorporate certain architectural principles, some of which even contradict others, Feng-Shui should not be seen as a well-organized system. Besides, many a particular do or taboo is given different explanations according to different theories and principles. For example, in old texts as well as in today's Feng-Shui practice, the prescription that '*the main entrance door should be set on the left side of the house*' can be explained by either the symbolic system of *Sixiang* or that of *Bagua*.[27] Therefore, it is very likely that both explanations are just post-factum ones, as this prescription probably has already been followed by people for a long time before. Hence we can also assume that some Feng-Shui theories were intentionally formulated or adjusted to explain existing architectural *do's & taboos*. Thus, the causal relationship between the Feng-Shui theories and the Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* is much weaker than people may think.

Now we turn to the history of Indian Vāstu-Shāstra. Unlike most old Feng-Shui texts that can be accurately or at least generally dated, most old Vāstu-Shāstra texts cannot. Although there is a debate over when some well-known Vāstu-Shāstra-related treatises were written, most scholars agree that these treatises were compiled intermittently between the Gupta Period (c. 4th-6th centuries CE) and the 15th century before the era of Mughal Empire, such as the *Mayamatam*, the *Mānasāra* and the *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra*.[28] The Sanskrit word '*Vastu*', as frequently mentioned in these texts, is said to be derived from the verb '*Vas*' that means 'to dwell',[29] and thus the word Vastu is used to denote the dwelling site or the places where immortals and mortals reside.[30] Therefore, Vāstu-Shāstra is generally understood as the science of architecture.[31] In these Vāstu-Shāstra texts, we can find numerous systematic or unsystematic theories and principles regarding different types of built spaces, such as cities, palaces, temples, dwellings and altars. Surely, these old Vāstu-Shāstra texts also record

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27 See: 4.3.2.

28 Acharya 1994, p. lvii; Bhattacharyya 1963, pp. 2, 29, 87, 103; Dagens 1994, pp. xlii-xlv; Shukla 1960, p. 25.

29 Sastri 1958, p. i.

30 Dagens 1994, p. 7; Shukla 1960, pp. 42-43.

31 Sharma 2007, *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra of Bhojadeva 1*, p. 2.

a considerable number of architectural *do's & taboos*, of which some are formulated on the basis of the aforesaid theories and principles, whilst others are not. Just like those in old Feng-Shui texts, many of the architectural *do's & taboos* in old Vāstu-Shāstra texts are not sustained by any theory or principle. It is also important to note that numerous ancient astrological ideas as well as religious and philosophical beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism have paved the way for the development of Vāstu-Shāstra tradition.[32] Many scholars tend to treat the Vāstu-Shāstra texts as Hindu religious scriptures.

Although the so-called Vāstu-Shāstra tradition was first developed during the Gupta Period, in the epics and religious texts compiled earlier, a lot of descriptions of ancient Indian building customs can be found, many of which are similar or comparable to the descriptions in the Vāstu-Shāstra texts. For example, the *Rigveda* (c. 1700-1100 BCE) documents the custom of making the site slope towards the east,[33] which can also be found in many later Vāstu-Shāstra texts.[34] Besides, the *Grhya Sutras* (c. 500 BCE), a category of Sanskrit texts prescribing Vedic rituals, refer to the principles concerning the selection and examination of the site, the measurement of the building, and the location of the door of a house, and many of these principles are later codified and refined in most Vāstu-Shāstra texts.[35] Moreover, in the famous Sanskrit epic *Ramayana* (c. 1000-500 BCE), there are some passages suggesting the 'proper proportion' of a building's length to its width,[36] and such ideas formed the basis of many architectural theories, principles and *do's & taboos*, which are frequently mentioned in later compiled Vāstu-Shāstra texts. It is very clear that, as well as those of Chinese Feng-Shui, the architectural theories and principles of Indian Vāstu-Shāstra can be traced back to some older building customs connected to various religious beliefs. And it was not until the Gupta Period that these building customs began to be more systematically organized, theorized and documented in the so-called Vāstu-Shāstra texts.

Unlike the Chinese Feng-Shui tradition that has seen steady development from ancient times to this day, the Indian Vāstu-Shāstra tradition made little progress from the 15th century to the 19th century, probably because of the invasion by Muslims and the following Islamic Mughal imperial rule. Under the Muslim rule, the traditional Vāstu-Shāstra doctrines based on Hindu ideas could no longer be appreciated by the upper-class in Indian society, although these doctrines were still followed by the lower-class. Consequently, it became

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32 Bhattacharyya 1963, p. 110; Dagens 1994, p. xlii.
33 Bhattacharyya 1963, p. 12.
34 See: 3.2.4.
35 Bhattacharyya 1963, pp. 11-23.
36 Ibid., p. 42.

problematic for Hindu priests and intellectuals to keep refining and systematizing traditional Vāstu-Shāstra theories and principles. That is why the compilation of most Vāstu-Shāstra texts grounded to a halt in the 15th century. It was not until the 19th century that the Vāstu-Shāstra texts drew the attention again of some scholars, such as Ram Raz, who wrote his *Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* based on a few chapters of ancient Vāstu-Shāstra texts in 1838.[37] Since the early 20th century, more and more Sanskrit and Hindu scholars have devoted their attention to research on ancient Vāstu-Shāstra treatises. Thanks to these scholars, the practice of Vāstu-Shāstra has seen a remarkable revival in the past decades. A variety of ancient Vāstu-Shāstra theories, principles and *do's & taboos* are 'rediscovered', 'reformulated' by contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra specialists, and are extensively applied to architectural practice nowadays.

As we have seen, neither Feng-Shui nor Vāstu-Shāstra is a well-organized system of architectural theories, because these theories are not necessarily coherent and consistent. It is safe to say that the two traditions are still in the process of theorization, systematization and fine tuning. According to old texts, the architectural theories, as well as architectural *do's & taboos*, have gone through a process of 'birth', 'transformation', 'dormancy' and 're-awakening' throughout time. Besides, not all the Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* observed nowadays are "old"; some of them actually came into being in the past few decades.

Although it is undeniable that a great deal of the Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* in old texts are formulated on the basis of the so-called Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theories, numerous *do's & taboos* can be traced back to some much older building customs which already existed before the development and formulation of these theories. For that reason, most contemporary Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners attempt to explain the architectural *do's & taboos* according to the so-called Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theories in a consistent and coherent way. However, they usually prove unsuccessful, as we can find many discrepancies in their explanations. Needless to say, in the old texts of both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions, numerous architectural *do's & taboos* are just mentioned without elaboration on what theory or principle they are based. It goes to follow that the role of the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra theories as the agent of the development and formulation of the Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* is overestimated. Therefore, does it still make sense to say that an understanding of the *do's & taboos* in Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions require prior

[37] Acharya 1927, p. 134.

knowledge of all the so-called Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theories? For most people, to practice Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra is just to practice their *do's & taboos* rather than to interpret their intricate and complex theories.

We should bear in mind that, even though Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra are two architectural traditions developed in different cultures and regions and consolidated by a variety of religious and philosophical ideas, several common themes in the *do's & taboos* of the two traditions can be identified. Three themes are especially worth noting: the 'configuration of built spaces', the 'orientation of built spaces' and the 'spatial hierarchy within built spaces'. No matter how the so-called Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theories have been changing over time, the Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* always center on the three themes, whether they are found in old texts or in today's practice. Owing to the three dominant themes of *do's & taboos*, the focus of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, both the past and the present, is on looking for an auspicious building site which enables builders to create an architecture object in a suitable configuration oriented to a favorable direction, and within it there is a proper spatial hierarchy.

The three themes of *do's & taboos*, as observed in Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra traditions, can also be exemplified by many other cultures. For example, in the ancient Jewish, ancient Roman, medieval Christian and Islamic cultures, we can find a multitude of architectural *do's & taboos* related to the three themes, which certainly can be detected in a variety of building customs, rules and codes for designing cities, temples, churches and dwellings. Again, these are not necessarily validated, if at all, by certain architectural theories, which are as complex and elaborate as those of Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra. Apparently, people's concerns about the configuration, the orientation and the spatial hierarchy of built spaces are not confined by cultural, religious and geographical boundaries.

Given the fact that the practice of the architectural *do's & taboos* can be found in other architectural traditions, it is surprising that few studies have attempted to explain why the *do's & taboos* of the same themes exist or have existed in different cultural and religious spheres, why people want to follow them, why many of them, developed in ancient times, can survive well into the present, and what roles they play in affirming the various cosmic and social meanings of architecture. To answer these questions, we should look at the analysis of the architectural *do's & taboos* from a broader perspective, beginning with the comparison between the architectural *do's & taboos* of Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra. First, Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra are the two best-preserved old architectural traditions of the world, both encompassing various comparable theories and principles as recorded in

numerous classical texts throughout history; second, the *do's & taboos* of both traditions are exerting great influence on today's architectural practice. The comparative analysis conducted in this book will go beyond cultural, religious, and philosophical differences, and dwell on shared socio-cosmic schemes of global architectural traditions.

1.2 Status Quaestionis

Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra, being two profound architectural traditions for ages, have attracted the interest of many architectural historians as well as of sinologists and indologists, and thus studies abound on Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra. However, most scholars hold that Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra are two well-organized systems based on a multitude of consistent and coherent theories of architecture. Therefore, they usually pay more attention to the study of the 'Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theories' than to that of the 'architectural *do's & taboos* practiced in Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions'. By doing so, they usually only explain the latter in light of the former.

These scholars fail to notice that, as we already know, while many *do's & taboos* are formulated in proto-theoretical times, others are actually formulated in today's practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra. Very few attempts have been made to explain why and how these *do's & taboos* were developed to become part of the Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions. Moreover, scholars are usually unaware that Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra are two quite comparable architectural traditions, providing a lot of architectural *do's & taboos* in which certain common themes can be identified. Such ignorance has aborted any attempt to gain insight into the shared cosmic and social meanings of the *do's & taboos* that are or have been extensively followed in the two architectural traditions.

As regards the research on Chinese Feng-Shui, the works of Bao-De Han,[38] Zheng-Sheng Du,[39] Shang-Jia Qiu[40] and Ronald G. Knapp[41] are of particular significance.

Bao-De Han

In his *Feng-Shui and the Environment*, Bao-De Han points out that the

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38 Han, Bao-De (2006). *Feng-Shui and the Environment*. Taipei: Locus Publishers, 2006.

39 Du, Zheng-Sheng (1995). "The Inside-Outside and the Eight Directions: A Study on the Traditional Chinese Housing Space from Ethical and Cosmological Perspectives." In: Ying-Gui Huang (ed.), *Space, Power and Society*. Taipei: Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, pp. 213-268.

40 Qiu, Shang-Jia (2003). "A study on the Ideas of Body upon the Taiwanese Vernacular Dwellings." In: Shang-Jia Qiu (ed.), *On Culture and Preservation of Taiwanese Traditional Architecture*. Tainan: Taiwan Architecture & Cultural Property Press, pp.107-137.

41 Knapp, Ronald G. (2005). "Siting and Situating a Dwelling: Fengshui, House-Building Rituals, and Amulets." In: Ronald G. Knapp and Kai-Yin Lo (eds.), *House Home Family: Living and Being Chinese*. Honolulu: University of Hawai's Press, pp. 99-137.

practice of Feng-Shui is usually just the practice of a variety of architectural *do's & taboos*, and therefore, the research on Feng-Shui can begin with the analysis of the architectural *do's & taboos* followed in this tradition.[42] Besides, he also indicates that the practice of Feng-Shui has little to do with aesthetics and functionality, but usually has more to do with the ideas of the 'auspicious' and the 'inauspicious', which serve as guidelines for building and dwelling.[43] In this book, the author analyzes a multitude of Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* collected from classical Feng-Shui texts. Nevertheless, just like many other scholars, Bao-De Han believes that all Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* should be explained according to the so-called Feng-Shui theories. As indicated by him, the *do's & taboos* after the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) began to emphasize the relationship between the entrance door and the external environment, and this could be explained by the development of *Qi*-related theories as done by the Neo-Confucianists from the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) and then applied to the Feng-Shui practice from the Ming Dynasty.[44] However, according to some ancient texts compiled before Sung and Ming Dynasties, we can find that many *do's & taboos* concerning the same topics had already been practiced before the *Qi*-related theories were systematically developed and applied in the Feng-Shui tradition.

Moreover, Bao-De Han maintains that the *do's & taboos* before the Sung Dynasty never stressed that the houses should be built on a quadrangular plan, and the idea about the auspicious square and round plan had not taken shape before the Ming Dynasty.[45] Such assertion is unfounded. According to many old texts compiled before the two dynasties, the idea about the auspicious square and round plan already existed in ancient times, and many architectural *do's & taboos* developed before the two dynasties had supported the idea that the house plan in a quadrangular shape is more auspicious than those in other shapes. Besides, Bao-De Han does not explain why the square and round shapes are considered auspicious in Feng-Shui tradition. In his book, Bao-De Han also attempts to explain the various *do's & taboos* concerning the architectural orientation. However, he only factors in climate and topography but fails to conduct an in-depth analysis of their cosmic and social meanings.[46] What is more, the author tends to analyze the *do's & taboos* recorded in old texts but refuses to discuss those found in the practice nowadays, because he claims that many of them are often the "inventions" of modern Feng-Shui specialists or

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42 Han 2006, p. 106.
43 Ibid., p. 109.
44 Ibid., p. 119.
45 Ibid., pp. 123, 141.
46 Ibid., p. 147.

consultants and thus should not be seen as part of the "orthodox" Feng-Shui tradition.[47] Obviously, Bao-De Han is unable to recognize that Feng-Shui is an ongoing and living tradition, and that the *do's & taboos* formulated in today's Feng-Shui practice should be seen as meaningful as those found in old texts.

Zheng-Sheng Du

In the article 'The Inside-Outside and the Eight Directions: A Study on the Traditional Chinese Housing Space from Ethical and Cosmological Perspectives', the author, Zheng-Sheng Du, conducts an analysis of a variety of Feng-Shui *do's & taboos*, and indicates that, according to some ancient texts as well as archeological evidence, many of them can be traced back to ancient times when the so-called Feng-Shui theories were yet to be systematically developed.[48] For example, the author points out that the Feng-Shui taboo that '*the toilet should not be set in front of the house'* can also be found in *the Shuihudi Rishu Bamboo Texts* (c. 3rd century BCE), which are compiled much earlier than any Feng-Shui theory.[49] He also mentions that the Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* regarding the doctrine of '*the front section for the men and the back section for the women*' can be traced back to some ancient Confucian doctrine.[50] However, it is a pity that the author does not try to analyze these *do's & taboos* concerning toilets and gender differences together in terms of the spatial hierarchy. And although Zheng-Sheng Du emphasizes that the *do's & taboos* concerning the orientation must convey some important cosmic meanings, and asserts that the idea of the predominant south-orientation followed in Feng-Shui tradition can be evidenced by some ancient houses found in archeological sites,[51] he does not take a step further to find out why the south-orientation is considered to be the most favorable and auspicious in Feng-Shui architectural tradition, and what cosmic meaning it should represent.

Shang-Jia Qiu

The article 'A study on the Ideas of Body upon the Taiwanese Vernacular Dwellings' written by Shang-Jia Qiu is also noteworthy, as the author adopts an *Anthropomorphic* approach to analyze the spatial structure of traditional Taiwanese houses and certain traditional architectural *do's & taboos* of Feng-

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47 Ibid., p. 111.
48 Du, 1995, pp. 213-214, 264-265.
49 Ibid., p. 242.
50 Ibid., p. 224-235.
51 Ibid., pp. 213-224.

Shui practiced in Taiwan. He indicates that many Feng-Shui theories as well as Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* should be understood and discussed by analogy between the building and the human body, according to numerous descriptions found in old Feng-Shui texts.[52] And based on the predominant south-orientation in Chinese architectural tradition, the body-related directions of front, back, left and right should coincide with the sun-related directions of south, north, east and west.[53] He also mentions that the spatial manifestation of social hierarchy can be observed in traditional Taiwanese houses.[54] However, in analyzing the spatial hierarchy of traditional Taiwanese houses, he does not discuss whether the dominant principle of '*the superiority of the left over the right*' can be linked to the idea of '*the superiority of the east over the west*'. Unfortunately, many possible sun-focused cosmic meanings of the *do's & taboos* based on this principle remain unexplained in this article. Moreover, although Qiu points out that the traditional housing space is usually thought to be a microcosm,[55] he does not clarify the way in which people mentally construct the connection between such a microcosm and the macrocosm.

Ronald G. Knapp

The significance of Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* is also highlighted in the article 'Siting and Situating a Dwelling: Fengshui, House-Building Rituals, and Amulets' by Ronald G. Knapp, who points out that the various *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui are rooted in the action of siting and situating a building, and that the essence of Feng-Shui is a universe animated by the interaction of *Yin* and *Yang*, in which an ethereal property known as *Qi* gives character and meaning to a place.[56] Besides, he also explores many important symbolic systems, such as *Bagua*, *Wuxing, Sixiang* and *Yin & Yang*, emphasizing that these systems, based on the notion of *Qi*, have formed the cradle of numerous architectural *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui.[57] Unfortunately, Knapp sees Feng-Shui as a coherent whole backed up by many systematic theories based on the above-mentioned symbolic systems, and overestimates the causal relationship between the Feng-Shui theories and the Feng-Shui *do's & taboos*. As mentioned before, these symbolic systems as well as the notion of *Qi* were formulated and theorized in the philosophical Schools of Confucianism and Yin-Yang during the Han

[52] Qiu 2003, pp. 113-114.
[53] Ibid., p. 119
[54] Ibid., pp. 130-132.
[55] Ibid., pp. 119-121.
[56] Knapp 2005, pp. 99, 101-102.
[57] Ibid., pp. 103-104.

Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), and were gradually absorbed into a variety of Feng-Shui theories in later times. We have also learned that many important architectural *do's & taboos* already existed even before these symbolic systems merged with the Feng-Shui tradition and before the Feng-Shui theories saw systematic development. Overemphasizing the causality between the Feng-Shui theories and the Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* inevitably leads to a misunderstanding of the meanings of these *do's & taboos*.

In his article, Ronald G. Knapp uses the *Qi*-related theories to explain why an auspicious site should be embraced by mountains, as mountains are thought to be the manifestations of the beneficial *Qi*.[58] However, he fails to use the same theory to elaborate on why why Chinese people usually only pay attention to the mountains located in front of and directly behind the building rather than those located in other directions; that is to say, in practicing Feng-Shui, people tend to determine the orientation of buildings according to the location of mountains. As we will see in Chapter 3, mountains also play a crucial role in the *do's & taboos* concerning the architectural orientation in the Vāstu-Shāstra tradition, even though their role is not sustained by the notion of *Qi*. If Ronald G. Knapp had known about these Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos*, he may not have been satisfied with his explanation based on the *Qi*-related theories. Moreover, the author also notices that, according to the auspicious south-orientation in Chinese Feng-Shui tradition, the body-related directions of left and right can be associated with the sun-based directions of east and west, as well as the directions represented by the Dragon and the Tiger of the *Sixiang* symbolic system. However, he does not discuss the sun-focused cosmic meanings of the *do's & taboos* concerning the spatial hierarchy based on the principle of '*the superiority of the left over the right*', which often finds expression in '*the superiority of the Dragon over the Tiger'*.

In addition, many Chinese architectural historians are very reluctant to discuss the role of Feng-Shui in the history of Chinese architecture, because they share the opinion that Feng-Shui is just "superstition". Heavily influenced by "Western" traditions, they are concerned with the technological and functional aspects of architecture, and insist that the research on the traditional Chinese architecture should be conducted in a "scientific manner". This can be exemplified by the works of a famous Chinese architectural historian Dun-Zhen Liu (1897-1986). In *An Introduction to Traditional Chinese Houses*, although Liu mentions a lot of interesting and important Feng-Shui *do's & taboos* practiced in different areas of China, he emphasizes that Feng-Shui, along with its various theories as well as *do's & taboos*, is just superstition, and thus is not

[58] Ibid., pp. 107-108.

worth serious consideration.[59] Such misguided "Western" attitude has frustrated the attempt to shed light on the cosmic and social meanings of the topology of traditional Chinese architecture as well as ideas developed in Chinese Feng-Shui tradition.

Now we turn to the research on Indian Vāstu-Shāstra. Probably because it has not been long since the ancient Vāstu-Shāstra texts were "rediscovered" in the 19th century and because the revival of the Vāstu-Shāstra practice just occurred in the past decades, the amount of research on Vāstu-Shāstra pales in comparison with that on Chinese Feng-Shui. Nevertheless, some trailblazing works on Vāstu-Shāstra have been carried out by contemporary scholars, including Prasanna Kumar Acharya,[60] Govinda Krishna Pillai,[61] D. N. Shukla[62] and Vibhuti Chakrabarti.[63]

Prasanna Kumar Acharya

Prasanna Kumar Acharya's *Indian Architecture according to Manasara-Silpasastra*, which deals with Indian architecture according to the *Manasara*, is probably the earliest monograph on Vāstu-Shāstra. In this book, the author discusses such essential topics in the *Manasara* as the system of measurement, the examination of the soil, the selection of the site, the ground plan, the foundation, the different parts of buildings, the classification of cities and buildings, the ceremonies for building constructions, the iconography in temples, etc.[64] He also enumerates certain important principles, which form the basis of many architectural *do's & taboos* in Vāstu-Shāstra tradition, such as '*the superiority of the north and the east over the south and the west*',[65] the '*clockwise order*' applied to the arrangement of different castes, foundation deposits and building elements,[66] the '*proper proportions*' for buildings and their sites and ground plans,[67] etc.

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59 Liu 1983, pp. 30-32.

60 Acharya, Prasanna Kumar (1927). *Indian Architecture according to Manasara-Silpasastra*. London: Oxford University Press.

61 Pillai, Govinda Krishna (1948). *The Way of the Silpis or Hindu Approach to Art and Science*. Allahabad: The Indian Press, ltd.

62 Shukla, D. N. (1960). *Vastu-Śastra Vol. I: Hindu Science of Architecture (Engineering, Town-Planning, Civil-Architecture, Palace-Architecture, Temple-Architecture and an Anthology of Vastu-Laksanas)*. Chandigarh: Punjab University.

63 Chakrabarti, Vibhuti (1998). *Indian Architectural Theory: Contemporary Uses of Vastu Vidya*. London: Curzon Press.

64 Acharya 1927, pp. 34-88.

65 Ibid., p. 37.

66 Ibid., p. 43.

67 Ibid., pp. 55-56.

It should be noted that Prasanna Kumar Acharya demonstrates in his work some striking similarities between the *Manasara* and the *Ten Books of Architecture of Vitruvius*, and attempts compare the two architectural treatises.[68] However, this attempt is only made from a historical perspective, as what Acharya seems to be concerned about is the historical connection between the Indian and the Western architectural traditions in ancient times. He does not analyze the shared cosmic meanings represented in the ancient Indian and Roman architectures according to these similarities. Like most scholars in this field, Acharya fails to see that the similarities between the *Manasara* and the *Ten Books of Architecture of Vitruvius* can also be found in many Chinese Feng-Shui texts.

Govinda Krishna Pillai

In *The Way of the Silpis or Hindu Approach to Art and Science*, the author Govinda Krishna Pillai discussed a number of important principles which lay the foundation of the architectural *do's & taboos* in Vāstu-Shāstra tradition. He argues that the determination of the four cardinal points by means of the gnomon is of great importance for the construction on a site. As regards the two lines that connect the four cardinal points, the east-west line is more crucial, since it is the first line defined by the motion of the sun, and the east has always been associated with Surya, the Sun God.[69] This seems to imply that the roles of the four cardinal points and the veneration of the east are strongly related to the sun-focused cosmic meaning. However, the author does not explain why the sun-focused meaning should be represented in a built space. He also discusses the importance of a proper proportion and perimeter for the site or the ground plan in Vāstu-Shāstra tradition.[70] Likewise, there is a lack of an in-depth interest. He does not mention that different width-length ratios of the site or the ground plan should be applied to the houses of different castes, as suggested by old Vāstu-Shāstra texts. Therefore, again in his work, both cosmic and social meanings of the *do's & taboos* concerning the proportion of built spaces remain obscure.

When describing the principles of town-planning, Govinda Krishna Pillai finds some similarities between the ancient Indian architectural tradition and the architectural traditions in ancient Egypt, Greece and Medieval Europe; for instance, they all emphasize that an ideal city should have four sides oriented to

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[68] Ibid., pp. 134-159.
[69] Pillai 1948, pp. 35-37.
[70] Ibid., pp. 69-80.

the four cardinal points.[71] However, his attitude towards these similarities is almost as superficial as that of Prasanna Kumar Acharya, as he only depicts similarities between different architectural traditions in terms of their historical relationship but does not make an effort to explain whether these similarities found in different traditions convey some cosmic meanings in common.

D. N. Shukla

Unlike Prasanna Kumar Acharya and Govinda Krishna Pillai, D. N. Shukla lays great emphasis on the cosmic meaning behind the various principles and the *do's & taboos* of Vāstu-Shāstra architectural tradition. In his *Vastu-Śastra Vol. I: Hindu Science of Architecture*, based on the *Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra* and some other representative texts of Vāstu-Shāstra, he points out that, in many old Vāstu-Shāstra texts, creating a human space is often compared to creating the world, and therefore the various principles of Vāstu-Shāstra should be understood in terms of the cosmology.[72] From a cosmic point of view, Shukla discusses and compares some important principles as mentioned in different texts, including the *Dinnirnaya* (i.e. doctrine of orientation), the *Vastu-Pada-Vinyasa* (i.e. the site-planning), the *Mana* (i.e. the proportionate measurement of a structure), the *Ayadi-Sadvarga* (i.e. the six formulas to which the perimeter of a structure should conform), and the *Patakadi-Sat-Chandas* (i.e. the character of the building).[73]

According to D. N. Shukla, the reason why the square mandalas and many other polygonal ones are advocated in most Vāstu-Shāstra texts is that these mandalas all highlight the center and the four cardinal points that can be determined by the motion of the sun, and thus they all carry sun-focused meanings.[74] He also mentions that Vāstu-Shāstra architectural tradition favors the north, the east and the northeast, and that the auspicious east-orientation must have something to do with the positive meaning of the sun.[75] However, the fact that the north-orientation is also considered to be auspicious is not well explained from such a cosmic perspective. As regards the different width-length ratios of the site or the ground plan that are applied to the houses of different castes, Shukla notices that the site or the ground plan for a higher caste should be 'more ideal', that is to say, 'more resembling a square'.[76] This implies that

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[71] Ibid,. pp. 215-216.
[72] Shukla 1960, p. 35.
[73] Ibid., pp. 179-224.
[74] Ibid., pp. 186-187.
[75] Ibid., pp. 112, 182.
[76] Ibid., p. 322.

the *do's & taboos* concerning the proportion of built spaces might not only have cosmic meanings but also have social meanings as well. Moreover, Shukla also mentions the principle that, as shown in many old Vāstu-Shāstra texts, people of different castes should live in the quarters oriented to different cardinal directions. The Brahmin's quarter is located in the north, the Kshatriya's quarter in the east, the Vaishya's quarter in the south, and the Sudra's quarter in the west.[77] However, he does not explain why the spatial as well as the social hierarchy should be manifested in a 'clockwise order'.

Vibhuti Chakrabarti

The *Indian Architectural Theory: Contemporary Uses of Vastu Vidya* by Vibhuti Chakrabarti is one of the few academic works that pays attention to the modern practice of Vāstu-Shāstra. Unlike many other scholars, Vibhuti Chakrabarti conducts research on Vāstu-Shāstra and considers it as an ongoing and living tradition. In this book, Chakrabarti compares several important principles of *do's & taboos* described in old Vāstu-Shāstra texts and those found in today's Vāstu-Shāstra practice, including the measurement, the Vāstu-Shāstra Mandala, the orientation, the site, the building materials, etc. However, although discussing at length why many *do's & taboos* found in old texts no longer have a bearing on the contemporary practice, he fails to indicate why many *do's & taboos*, which are not mentioned in any old text, are formulated and observed in today's practice of Vāstu-Shāstra.[78]

[77] Ibid., p. 277.
[78] Chakrabarti 1998, pp. 57, 90-91, 123.

1.3 Methodology

In order to conduct an effective comparative analysis of a variety of *do's & taboos* followed in the two distinct architectural traditions—Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra—and in the past and the present, a proper methodological approach is required to compare and contrast different architectural traditions comprehensively, further providing us with a set of tools and frameworks that are apt for inter-cultural and inter-regional architectural comparison. With that is mind, the paradigm of 'architecture as a representation of realities', developed by Aart Mekking, seems to be an appropriate means to such an end.

Mekking maintains that architecture and urbanism are expressions of non-material phenomena, and the built environment can be seen as the materialization of all kinds of realities.[79] Hence, a variety of built spaces with diverse functions, such as cities, temples, forts, palaces, dwellings, altars, etc., are all representations of realities. 'Reality', as a key term of this paradigm, should not be understood as the 'idea' shared by a small group of intellectuals, such as architects, urban planners and the so-called Feng-Shui/Vāstu-Shāstra specialists. In fact, its meaning is much broader in scope, encompassing things that are thinkable and tangible and can be experienced and mentally constructed by all human beings. Another key term is 'representation', the logic of which is based on the 'transversal thinking' instead of 'causal relationship' between phenomena. In other words, it is not based on any knowledge-theoretical a priori (e.g. laws and schemes of thought) but on the human faculty of 'subject-to-subject' contact by association or transversal thinking.[80]

As we have seen, the followers of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra are usually not interested in, or rarely conscious of, the ideas underlying the so-called Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theories developed by Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra theoreticians, but only care about the powerful effects of the practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* on the built space. Surely, the practice of these *do's & taboos* can only be effective when the built space is considered to be a structure associated with certain cosmic and social meanings. That is to say, built spaces should represent certain cosmic and social realities. Clearly, as compared with the theories of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, the *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra seem to be more directly confronting the realities, playing a vital and direct role in supporting the architectural representations of the cosmic and social realities that are

[79] Mekking 2009, p. 23.
[80] Mekking 2009, pp. 23-25; Roose 2009, p. 15.

experienced and mentally constructed by people in the built space. If the space is built in accordance with these *do's & taboos*, it will serve as a medium representing the cosmic and social realities in the right way, and then automatically become an auspicious built space in harmony with the cosmic and social order. Analyzing the architectural *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, we will have a better understanding of how the built space and its representation of various cosmic and social realities are mentally and materially constructed by Chinese and Indian people.

Mekking also argues that within the paradigm of architectural representation, there could only be a temporal rather than qualitative difference between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' architecture, since the Western positivist notion of the "evolution" of architecture from the "dark traditional" to the "enlightened modern" merely serves to glorify the superiority of certain contemporary design preferences. In this sense, a modern building should be analyzed in exactly the same way as a traditional building, and both should be studied as representations in their own right.[81] As is often the case, although a modern house and a traditional one are different in terms of their spatial arrangements and construction elements, their residents usually have the same concern, namely, how to build the house appropriately so that people can live in harmony with the cosmic and social order. It is because the cosmic and social realities experienced by people in the past and represented by traditional houses can still be entirely or partially experienced by people these days and represented by modern houses. Here goes, regardless of time and culture, that everything "modern" inevitably represents the "tradition". As Mekking argues, in the paradigm of architectural representation, nothing new is a *creatio ex nihilo*.[82]

This explains why many *do's & taboos* found in old Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra texts still hold sway in modern Chinese and Indian architectural practice. People who live in modern houses still need these old *do's & taboos*, which have been applied to traditional houses, so as to support the architectural representations of certain common or similar realities. In the mental construct based on the human faculty of transversal thinking, a modern house and a traditional house, no matter how much they may differ, are likely to have the same spatial structure and comprise corresponding spatial components. However, people nowadays, especially those who have never lived in traditional houses, are often unable to mentally construct such a connection or affinity between the traditional and the modern houses. Consequently, a wide range of

[81] Roose 2009, p. 17.
[82] Mekking 2009, p. 24.

"old" realities, which have been important for and represented in the traditional houses, lose their status in modern houses. That is why some old *do's & taboos* are nowhere to be found in the modern practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, as people do not need them to support the architectural representations of those "old" realities in their modern houses.

As mentioned previously, both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra are living and ongoing traditions, and many contemporary Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners dedicate themselves to the 'reinterpretation' of the old *do's & taboos*, the old realities and the modern housing space, endeavoring to bridge the gap between them. Such reinterpretation can help people mentally construct the modern housing space to become an effective representation of old realities, restoring the role of old *do's & taboos* in supporting this representation. This explains why many old *do's & taboos*, which seemed to remain 'dormant' for a long time, are again 'awakened' in the modern practice of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra. Besides, in order to make some old *do's & taboos* better suit people's mental construct of the modern housing space as a representation of old realities, contemporary practitioners often deliberately adjust or alter these old *do's & taboos*. Therefore, many *do's & taboos* followed nowadays are 'transformed' from old ones, and thus look like 'newly formulated' *do's & taboos*. No matter how the *do's & taboos* are modified or reformulated to serve certain purposes, they are still, to a large extent, based on the old *do's & taboos*.

Moreover, not only "old" realities but also certain "new" realities play important roles in today's architectural representations, and, by and large, these "new" realities are mentally constructed or perceived according to modern worldviews or natural science, such as the facts that '*the earth is round*', and that '*the earth has a magnetic field*'. Consequently, many old *do's & taboos* are modified, or in other words, many new ones are formulated, to reflect the architectural representation of these "new" realities. Of course, contemporary Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practitioners are eager to extract useful data from these new realties, on which their interpretations of old *do's & taboos* can be based. As we can imagine, such interpretation may also lay the groundwork for the further development of "new" architectural theories in the ongoing Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions.

So far we have clarified the role of architectural *do's & taboos* in the representational paradigm: Architectural *do's & taboos* can support, reinforce and ensure the architectural representations of realities. As long as a built space is established according to the architectural *do's & taboos*, it is deemed a representation of various realities, which mean a lot to its commissioners, designers, builders, owners and visitors. Once these realities are well represented, the built space is usually thought to be 'auspicious'.

In light of the representational paradigm, certain questions about the *do's & taboos* practiced in Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions await answers: What realities are represented by the various built spaces (e.g. cities, temples, palaces, dwellings, altars, etc.) in the two traditions? How do the *do's & taboos* of the two traditions help these various built spaces to represent realities? Do the *do's & taboos* shared by both traditions imply that the same or similar realities are/were experienced by, and do/did mean a lot to, both Chinese and Indian people? Does the process of appearance, transformation, disappearance and reappearance of certain *do's & taboos* of the two traditions result from the changing natural/built environment, the fluid mental construct of the built spaces, or the volatile mental construct of more abstract or other realities? To answer these questions, we should examine the *do's & taboos* of both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra in the analysis frameworks that are established to compare the worldwide built environment on the basis of the representational paradigm.

Long-cycle Traditions of Architectural Representations

Aart Mekking discriminates between the so-called 'long-cycle traditions' and 'shorter-cycle themes' of worldwide architectural representations of realities. They can be used as proper and effective analysis frameworks for the comparison of the architectural phenomena from different cultures, ages and regions. The long-cycle traditions of architectural representations comprise of three main clusters: the ***Anthropomorphic***, the ***Physiomorphic*** and the ***Sociomorphic***. Among the three clusters, the *Anthropomorphic* long-cycle traditions are the most important and frequently observed, as they are based on different parts of a human body, such as the head, the breasts and the limbs, and bodily coordinates, i.e. above, underneath, front, back, left and right. Measurements and proportions deduced from the so-called ideal body and often conceptualized in different world cultures are part of these traditions.[83] Furthermore, once a bodily self is projected onto the surrounding nature, there begins a meaningful representation of the surroundings. In doing so, the natural world itself becomes part of the dualist macro-micro cosmic representation, and, at the same time, the basis for the clustering of the *Physiomorphic* long-cycle tradition comes into being.[84] As we can easily find in various cultures, built spaces are often considered to be representations of principles of the universe, as well as intrinsic connections between humankind and the universe.

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[83] Ibid., p. 36.
[84] Ibid.

The third cluster refers to the *Sociomorphic* long-cycle traditions, which represent the relations among individuals and between individuals and groups. It is important to note that this cluster mostly depends on the former two clusters, as the feature of the *Sociomorphic* representation is also based on the human body and its projection onto nature.[85] These three clusters of architectural long-cycle traditions, which constitute the very first stratum of meanings of any built environment, are the products of the human minds in an attempt to comprehend the existence of human beings in their surrounding world.

Shorter-cycle Themes of Architectural Representations

Mekking also indicates that the human mind, taking position in the ever-changing realities and conceiving and building the environment, resorts to not only these 'three long-cycle traditions' but also 'five shorter-cycle themes', which encompass a second stratum of more specific meanings. In contrast to the former, the latter are highly contextual, and are limited to shorter timeframes. Most importantly, the three revolving long-cycle traditions underlie the five recurrent shorter-cycle themes, and their connection is not causal but transversal.[86]

Three of the five shorter-cycle themes seem to be promising frames in which the architectural *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra can be compared and analyzed. They are the ***Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross***, the ***Including & Excluding Structures*** and the ***Holy & Unholy Zones***. The shorter-cycle theme of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, mostly based on the *Anthropomorphic* long-cycle traditions and sometimes based on the *Physiomorphic* ones, contains all natural and built body-related axial structures worldwide, representing the cosmos and its center.[87] The theme of the *Including & Excluding Structures* comprises all society-related topological structures, representing the incorporation or—its antonym—the exclusion of humans. Evidently, it is the *Sociomorphic* long-cycle tradition that serves as the basis of this theme.[88] The theme of the *Holy & Unholy Zones*, also mainly based on the *Anthropomorphic* tradition, incorporates all tripartite architectural structures, which finds expression in both the horizontal zoning of ground plans and the vertical zoning of the building and its façade. This theme represents the socio-cosmic spheres of the living, the dead and the divine beings. Many cultures

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85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid., pp. 37-38.
88 Ibid., pp. 42-42.

have their built spaces embracing one or more of the following three domains: the unholy, lethal and cosmic order-endangering underworld; the ambiguous terrestrial domain, striving for the re-establishment of cosmic order; the holy or celestial zone as the architectural projection of every mortal's dream of cosmic order.[89]

Owing to these long-cycle traditions and the shorter-cycle themes, the representational paradigm can be broadened from 'a mere representation of reality' to 'a representation of reality by revolving traditions'.[90] That is to say, the research on various built spaces and their representations of shifting realities can be conducted within the frames of these revolving long-cycle traditions and recurrent shorter-cycle themes of architectural representations worldwide. Thanks to these frames, the architectural *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra, be they 'old', 'reborn', 'transformed' or 'newly-formulated' ones, which encourage the built space to represent realities, can all be compared and analyzed properly.

[89] Ibid., pp. 42-44.
[90] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

1.4 Comparing Three Categories of *Do's & Taboos* in Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra Architectural Traditions

As mentioned earlier, at least three common themes can be identified among the *do's & taboos* of both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions: the 'configuration of built spaces', the 'orientation of built spaces' and the 'spatial hierarchy within built spaces'. According to the three common themes, we can sort these *do's & taboos* into three categories, which will be analyzed and compared in three separate chapters.

Chapter 2 centers on the *do's & taboos* belonging to the first category, which approves of the "right" configuration of a variety of built spaces, such as cities, palaces, temples and dwellings. The configuration of built spaces is manifested by the 'shape' and the 'proportion' of sites or ground plans. As we will see, the so-called auspicious site or ground plan of almost every type of built spaces in both traditions tends to be square or rectangular, and some of the so-called sacred buildings often have a ground plan similar to the combination of a square and a circle. As for the proportion, in both traditions, the width-length ratio of a square (i.e. 1:1) is usually considered to be the most ideal, and it is usually applied to the most sacred built spaces, such as temples. These *do's & taboos* will be comparatively analyzed in the frame of the shorter-cycle theme of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, which is mainly based on the *Anthropomorphic* long-cycle traditions. Later we will find that the *do's & taboos* concerning the configuration of built spaces in both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions favor the built space that represents the cosmic structure.

Chapter 3 discusses the *do's & taboos* of the second category, which is about the orientation of built spaces. They deal with the central question of how to differentiate between the auspicious and the inauspicious directions. In the architectural practice of both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions, such distinction is of great importance, and a built space should always be oriented to one of the auspicious directions. One group comprises the *do's & taboos* suggesting that the decision on the orientation should be made according to the 'cardinal points'. The other group includes those prescribing that the decision should be made according to the characteristics of the 'objects dominating the external environment'. In this chapter, the *do's & taboos* of both groups will be compared in the frame of the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross* shorter-cycle theme. In the analysis of these *do's & taboos*, we will find that both the *Anthropomorphic* and the *Physiomorphic* long-cycle traditions form the basis of this shorter-cycle theme, and that the *do's & taboos* of this category glorify the

built space that represents its connection to the structure of the cosmos.

Chapter 4 focuses on the *do's & taboos* of the third category, which concern the spatial hierarchy within built spaces. Such spatial hierarchy is established on the basis of the mental construct of the 'center' and the 'four main directions' (i.e. the body-based directions of front, back, left and right or the sun-based directions of south, north, east and west). As regards the center, in both Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra traditions, it is always considered to be the 'supreme position' of the built space. So far as the four directions are concerned, the *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui are usually formulated according to the principles of 'the superiority of the front over the back' and 'the superiority of the left over the right', whilst those of Vāstu-Shāstra are usually based on the principles of 'the north and east over the south and west' and 'the clockwise order'. In this chapter, the three shorter-cycle themes—the *Axis Mundi & Cosmic Cross*, the *Including & Excluding Structures*, and the *Holy & Unholy Zones*—will be used as the three most appropriate frames for the comparison of these *do's & taboos*. Afterwards, we will find that the *do's & taboos* concerning the spatial hierarchy of both traditions endorse the built space that represents the cosmic and social order.

The Sources

For an in-depth comparison of the *do's & taboos* in Chinese Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra as two age-old and ongoing architectural traditions, the *do's & taboos* practiced both in the present and in the past should be taken into consideration. As regards those followed in today's Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra practice, they can first of all be found in the manuals and handbooks written by the so-called Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra specialists and consultants. It is also necessary to conduct interviews with the people who are staunch followers of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra in contemporary architectural practice. Among them are architects, builders and occupants of houses. As for the *do's & taboos* practiced in old times, we need to consult a multitude of classical texts related to Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra throughout history, as well as those related to Chinese and Indian religious, astrological and philosophical ideas.

Table 1 and 2 respectively show the Chinese sources of old Feng-Shui-related texts (2nd century BCE – 18th century CE) and those of contemporary Feng-Shui manuals and handbooks (1980s – 2000s). Most of the *do's & taboos* of Feng-Shui to be discussed are found in these Chinese sources. All English quotations from these sources are translations by the author. Table 3 and 4 respectively list the Indian sources of old Vāstu-Shāstra-related texts (4th

century BCE – 13th century CE) and those of contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra manuals and handbooks (1990s – 2000s), which provide us with most of the Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* to be analyzed in this current book. As the author is not versed in any ancient Indian language, the selected old Indian sources, mostly in Sanskrit, are all English translation by other scholars, and the selected contemporary sources are all publications in English. Moreover, some of the Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* mentioned in this book are provided by Chinese and Indian informants during interviews.

Coming back to the title of this introduction, we should be able to summarize that: Firstly, at first sight, the *do's & taboos* of Chinese Feng-Shui and Indian Vāstu-Shāstra architectural traditions have a lot of interesting parallels that facilitate an understanding of our life and ourselves. Second, comparing these parallels can clarify the roles of Feng-Shui and Vāstu-Shāstra *do's & taboos* in supporting the meanings of architecture. Third, through a comparison between the *do's & taboos* from different cultures, shared meanings of built environments in architectural traditions worldwide can be discovered. Fourth, the use of the paradigm and the tools to make the cross-cultural/regional comparison of the architectural *do's & taboos*, enables us to conduct the research in a systematic fashion. Fifth, it is hoped that this book will serve as a stepping stone for other scholars to work on similar research with regard to other times, cultures and regions.

Table 1: Sources of old Feng-Shui-related texts

Source	Dating Back To	Author
Shuihudi Rishu Bamboo Texts（*睡虎地日書秦簡*）	2nd-3rd c. BCE	unknown
Lunheng（*論衡*）	1st c. CE	Wang, Chong（王充）
Zangshu（*葬書*）	3rd-4th c. CE	Guo, Pu（郭璞）
Dili Xinshu（*地理新書*）	11th c. CE	Wang, Zhu（王洙）
Huitu Lubanjing（*繪圖魯班經*）	15th-16th c. CE	unknown
Yangzhai Shishu（*陽宅十書*）	16th c. CE	Wang, Jun-Rong（王君容）
Dili Renzi Xuzhi（*地理人子須知*）	16th c. CE	Xu, Shan-Ji（徐善繼）
Huangdi Zhaijing（*黃帝宅經*）	16th c. CE	Zhou, Lv-Jing（周屢靖）
Bazhai Zaofu Zhoushu（*八宅造福周書*）	17th c. CE	Huang, Yi-Feng（黃一鳳）
Bazhai Mingjing（*八宅明鏡*）	18th c. CE	Ruo-Guan, Dao-Ren（箬冠道人）
Zhaipu Dacheng（*宅譜大成*）	18th c. CE	Wei, Qing-Jiang（魏青江）
Yangzhai Jicheng（*陽宅集成*）	18th c. CE	Yao, Ting-Luan（姚廷鑾）, Zhan, Qi（瞻旂）
Yangzhai Sanyao（陽宅三要）	18th c. CE	Zhao, Yu-Cai（趙玉材）

Table 2: Sources of contemporary Feng-Shui manuals and handbooks

Source	Year	Author	Publisher
Feng Shui: Ancient Chinese Wisdom on Arranging a Harmonious Living Environment	1984	Rossbach, Sarah	Rider Books (London)
The Feng Shui Companion	1995	Birdsall, George	Destiny Books (Rochester)
Fengshui: A Guide for exterior Fengshui by Master Tan Khoon Yong（*風水知多少*）	1999	Tan, Khoon-Yong（陳軍榮）	Way Media Pte Ltd. (Singapore)
Classical Feng Shui for Today's Homes	2003	Pang, Adelina	Wind & Water Geomancy Centre (Singapore)
Feng-Shui for Ensuring the Prosperity of Families and Correcting the Defects of Houses（*風水旺宅化煞精要*）	2003	Qu, Zhong-De（區仲德）	Juxian Guan Ltd. (Hong Kong)
Sixty Questions on the House Feng-Shui（*陽宅風水60問*）	2004	Mai, Rong-Yao（麥榮耀）	Juxian Guan Ltd. (Hong Kong)
Ensuring the Prosperity of Human Beings and Homes: A Practical Manual of House Feng-Shui（*人居兩旺：家居風水實用手冊*）	2004	Ou-Yang, Yu-Feng（歐陽羽峰）	China Wenlian Publishers (Beijing)
Basic Feng Shui	2004	Too, Lillian	Konsep Books (Kuala Lumpur)
Illustrated Architectural Taboos and Solutions in Modern Dwellings（*圖解現代家居禁忌與破解*）	2004	Ou-Yang, Yu-Feng（歐陽羽峰）	China Wenlian Publishers (Beijing)

Twenty-Two Methods for Ensuring Prosperity and Correcting Defects of Houses（*旺宅化煞22法*）	2005	Bai, He-Ming（白鶴鳴）	Juxian Guan Ltd. (Hong Kong)
Feng Shui Dos and Taboos: Health & Well-being	2005	Wong, Angi Ma	Hay House Inc. (Carlsbad)
Basic Methods for the Practice of House Feng-Shui（*家宅風水基本法*）	2006	Su, Min-Feng（蘇民峰）	SCMP Publication (Hong Kong)
Personalised Feng Shui Tips	2006	Too, Lillian	Konsep Books (Kuala Lumpur)
A Guide to the House Feng-Shui in the 2007 Pig Year（*二〇〇七話豬年陽宅風水指南*）	2007	Hu, Zhao-Tai（胡肇台）	Ruicheng Books (Taichung)

Table 3: Sources of old Vāstu-Shāstra-related texts

Source	Dating Back To	Author
Arthashāstra	4th c. BCE – 1st c. CE	Kautilya (Chānakya)
Vishwakarma Vāstu-Shāstram	4th-6th c. CE	unknown
Brihat Samhitā	6th c. CE	Varāhamihira
Mānasāra	7th-12th c. CE	unknown
Agni Purāna	8th-11th c. CE	unknown
Samarāngana-Sūtradhāra	11th c. CE	Bhoja
Kāshyapashilpa	11th-12th c. CE	unknown
Mayamatam	9th-13th c. CE	unknown

Table 4: Sources of contemporary Vāstu-Shāstra manuals and handbooks

Source	Year	Author	Publisher
The Penguin Guide to Vaastu: The Classical Indian Science of Architecture and Design	1998	Ananth, Sashikala	Penguin Books (New Delhi)
Vaastu: The Indian Art of Placement	2000	Arya, Rohit	Destiny Books (Rochester)
The Vaastu Workbook: Using the Subtle Energies of the Indian Art of Placement to Enhance Health, Prosperity, and Happiness in Your Home	2001	Krishna, Talavane	Destiny Books (Rochester)
The Power of Vastu Living: Welcoming Your Soul into Your Home and Workplace	2002	Cox, Kathleen	Simon & Schuster (New York)
An Introduction to Vastu: The Hindu Tradition of Arranging Your Home to Improve Health and Wellbeing	2002	Dee, Jonathan	Silverdale Books (Leicester)
The Ancient Science of Indian Architecture: Vastu FAQS Answered	2003	Babu, Bangalore Niranjan	UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. (New Delhi)
Remedial Vaastushastra	2003	Dwivedi, Bhojraj	Diamond Packet Books (Pvt.) Ltd. (New Delhi)
The Pocket Book of Vaastu	2004	Chawla, Rakesh	Full Circle Publishing (New Delhi)
Vaastu Inquisitiveness and Solutions	2004	Dwivedi, Bhojraj	Diamond Packet Books (Pvt.) Ltd. (New Delhi)

The Spirit of Indian Architecture: Vedantic Wisdom of Architecture for Building Harmonious Spaces and Life	2005	Bubbar, D. K.	Rupa & Co. (New Delhi)
Vastu, Astrology and Architecture	2005	Vasudev, Gayatri Devi (ed.)	Motilal Banarsidass Publishers (Delhi)
Building Architecture of Sthapatya Veda	2005	Sthapati, V. Ganapati	Dakshinaa Publishing House (Chennai)
The Way of Vastu: Creating Prosperity through the Power of the Vedas	2006	Mastro, Michael & Robin Mastro	Balanced Books (Seattle)
Handbook of Vastu	2007	Babu, Bangalore Niranjan	UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. (New Delhi)
Vaastu for You and Your Family	2007	Bhambi, Pt. Ajai	Wisdom Tree (New Delhi)
Vaastu, Feng Shui: Marriage & Career	2007	Saluja, Kuldeep	RFusion Books (New Delhi)
Vastu: Relevance to Modern Times	2008	Babu, Bangalore Niranjan	UBS Publishers' Distributors Pvt. Ltd. (New Delhi)