

Controversy rages over Port's Plans for Harbour

The Ports of Auckland's controversial plans for further wharf extensions into the Waitemata Harbour have Aucklanders and the port authority at logger heads. At issue is the proposed extension of yet more wharves and public's concerns over any associated narrowing of the harbour. Well known yachting identity Chris Dickson has been quoted by the New Zealand Herald as saying, "*The harbour used to be 2000m wide. Now it was less than 1000m.... The same amount of water goes in and out as it always has but it is squeezed through half the space. That means the current has doubled. It's a rip. There are whirlpools. There are overfalls. It's dangerous*". (NZ Herald, 23rd March 2015)



Auckland's Jade Belt enraps the city from Waterview and Avondale in the west to Hobson Bay in the east.
Imagery © GoogleEarth

Leaving aside the politics and insinuations of misappropriation of the democratic processes, there are; surprising though it may seem to some, implications for the long term feng shui of Auckland City, which is after all, the country's largest and most dynamic. Whilst from a feng shui perspective, I am certainly not totally opposed in principle, to further development of the Port, that development must be managed carefully, aesthetically and geographically sensitively in order to maintain the harbour's current positive feng shui; by, quite frankly, putting more than just immediate, short term economic interests at centre. Of course, one can argue why should they include feng shui in that mix? This after all is New Zealand.; but with our growing closeness to the rest of Asia, a plea of ignorance on that score rings ever more hollow; especially when it comes to something as vital as the city's greatest asset, her harbour. Perhaps a little background on the feng shui of Auckland will help; for feng shui is at work, even here in far off New Zealand, whether the planners and port authorities are aware or not.

The proper feng shui description given to locations like Auckland City is that of a *Jade Belt Wrapped Around a Rich Man's Belly*. This is of course specialised, encoded, feng shui speak. Much of classical Chinese feng shui is hidden from the uninitiated in such floral terms; in language that needs intensive training to decipher if it is to be properly understood and its techniques correctly applied. The *jade belt* indicates the green, jade-like waters

of the inner harbour. The inference being that since only a rich man has both a belly and the money to buy a whole belt made of green jade; the best colour for jade, it indicates the wealth that can be accrued by such a harbour setting. As can be seen in the image above, the water of the inner Waitemata Harbour enraps the city exactly like a jade belt from the western reaches of Waterview across the CBD and the navel or belt buckle of the city, to Hobson Bay in the east. So long as this jade belt is not interfered with, and continues to enwrap the city, its fortunes will go on prospering. However, that is only part of the story. Auckland's feng shui is not limited to just this one feature, albeit a vital one, for its capacity to trade profitably. Perhaps looking at the feng shui of another, even greater trading port will throw some light on the situation?

Apt precedents exist in Hong Kong, the feng shui capital of the world. In that dynamic, never-say-sleep city, I personally have observed how over the last 30yrs, the once wide and commodious harbour has been gradually filled-in more and more by land reclamations. Where once discreet grumblings of concern could be heard over the filling-in of the harbour on both Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula by local feng shui experts, such worries are now being voiced far more frequently and openly. Especially concerning to them is the degree to which not only the harbour has been filled-in but also the positioning of yet more and more skyscrapers all along the shores of both Hong Kong and Kowloon. These now block the older, smaller buildings behind from having direct access to the water. In feng shui terms both factors are strangling the goose that lays the golden egg. This is just as applicable here in Auckland as Hong Kong.



The famous 9 Dragon Screen in the Forbidden City Beijing

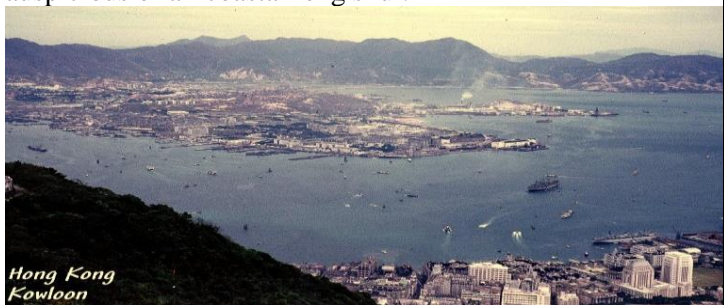
Much of the auspiciousness of the feng shui of Hong Kong comes from the symbolism of the 9 dragons that are said to come to play in the waters of its 'fragrant harbour'. Since the number 9 has strong associations with dragons any way, the allegorical use of these auspicious creatures in Hong Kong to refer to its hidden landform energies is especially significant. There are said to be 9 different kinds of dragons and, mythologically at least, all have 117 scales; 81 yang and 36 yin. One will note all 3 sets of numbers are divisible by 9. The number 9 has special

significance in Chinese culture and was reserved almost exclusively as the Emperor's personal number. For example, in Beijing's Forbidden City; winter home to the Emperors, the number 9 and its multiples can be seen again and again as a leitmotif of the Son of Heaven. Perhaps the three most often quoted examples are the fabled 9,999 rooms said to make up the Forbidden Palace complex, the world's largest. The exquisite porcelain tiled nine dragon screen, is another. Furthermore, all major gates in the palace have nine rows of nine ornamental studs as their own particular imperial ornamentation; another artifice restricted alone to the Emperor's residences.



The 9 Sets of 9 ornamental studs found on all major gates in the Forbidden City and yet more signifiers of the Emperor.
Image from Authors own collection. ©FSCNZ

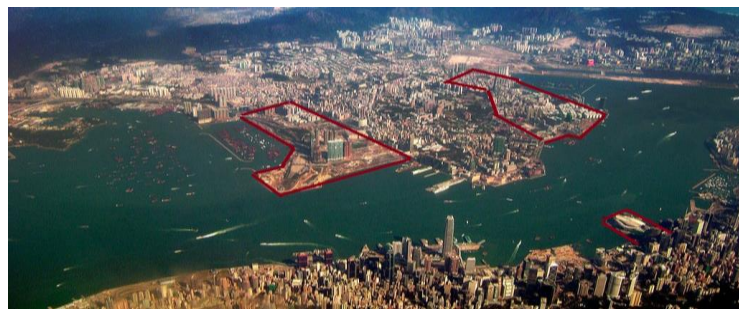
A further implication of the significance of Hong Kong's dragons is that the 9th and youngest of them, turns its head back in the direction of the mainland, in order to pay its respects to the other 8, its ancestors. This is taken as a sign of particularly great auspiciousness. Such filial piety underpins all aspects of traditional Chinese society and was the mainstay tenet of Confucianism. The presence of 9 such dragons therefore, is taken as a sign of the most auspicious of all coastal feng shui.



1950s Kowloon from the Peak Hong Kong Side. (J Brixey)

It must be kept in mind that *shui* or water in the term *feng shui* can here be taken as a direct reference to coastal regions with access to deep navigable water and the trade that inherently goes with such locations. Begin to change the flow of that water, and one must at least consider, the implications for the natural asset such major trading localities provide. So where *shui* is Chinese geomantic code for trade and the accumulation of wealth, *dragons* on

the other hand, are classical feng shui speak for a different form of energy altogether; one which when meeting with water in a sheltered spot such as Hong Kong, portends the amassing of very great wealth indeed. In this case, the most fortuitous of all because of there being 9 of them!



A similar view of Kowloon circa 2005, showing the approximate extent even then of land reclamation and the narrowing of the harbour. Hong Kong Island too has land reclamations.
(Image believed to be in the Public Domain)



1950's Hong Kong Island Foreshore. (J Brixey)
The Bank of China and HSBC then the only two notable buildings.



The same Hong Kong Island foreshore today with the tallest, most modern buildings now blocking the flow of qi. It's this 'blocking' that most concerns Hong Kong's feng shui masters.
(Author's own image ©FSCNZ)

Today however, what has feng shui masters in Hong Kong voicing their concerns is the veritable wall of waterside skyscrapers that now block many older buildings behind them. Indeed in the case of Kowloon; which incidentally translates as 9 Dragons, an open space has been decreed in law, to be kept in perpetuity, across the waterfront tip of the peninsula in Tsim Sha Tsui, so as to prevent any blocking of the dragons there from reaching and gambolling in the waters of the Harbour. Indeed so seriously do developers and hoteliers alike in Hong Kong take these dragons that when the Regent Hotel, (now the InterContinental) was built at the tip of the Kowloon Peninsula in 1980, extraordinary lengths were taken to maintain the presence of these dragons. Among other things a singular, and very extravagant waterfall was especially constructed in its lobby to attract the dragons to come play in its waters before going on to the harbour. (The hotel is listed, even now, as one of the

15 most expensive hotels in the world.) In fact many of the most modern buildings across the territory are being constructed nowadays with large *dragon holes* in them to accommodate the passage of the city's feng shui dragons.



A Kowloon side building with large Dragon hole.
Image from the authors own collection ©FSCNZ



Hong Kong Harbour-side apartment buildings and their Dragon Holes.
Image believed to be in the public domain.

Having understood something of the feng shui of Hong Kong, we can now return to some of the specifics of Auckland's feng shui; especially and most immediately, its Jade Belt. What I think must be kept in mind at this juncture is that Auckland already has quite large swathes of reclaimed land along its foreshores. Many people forget this and yet the city could not function as the port it does today without these modifications to its foreshore having been made in earlier times. Progress, requires it. For me, looking at the arguments to and fro and certainly not arguing the case for unbridled expansion of the wharves, I do however, feel that of equal concern at this point in the city's development is ensuring the council/port continues expanding free and easy public access to open spaces all along the waterfront. This is an essential factor if the city is to continue to grow and prosper. Any closing off from free flowing access of the population to the water, will not only see the goose's neck well and truly rung; to use the English vernacular, but in correct feng shui parlance, it stops the dragon drinking! Although it's a greater subject than for just this one issue of my regular newsletter, Aucklanders should be in no doubt that their city too has several feng shui dragons. Perhaps not nine but certainly several, at least one of which is to be found running towards the harbour and the juncture of the CBD. Neither should it come as any surprise that another well identified feng shui dragon was

the primary attraction for the large incoming Chinese population at the base of Howick's Music Point in the late 1980's and early 1990's; identified as '*a Dragon dipping its head to drink*', the same as for the Kowloon Peninsula.

Historically, in feng shui terms, a direct relationship can be drawn between the current revival of the CBD and the opening back up of Queen Street's final, lower section at Britomart. When the traffic was stopped from flowing freely from Queen Street to Quay Street in the 1970's, allowing only pedestrians on this vital last leg to reach water, the effect was the dramatic shutting down of the life's blood of the CBD. This too happened in Onehunga, also during the 1970's and 1980's, with the same closing to all but pedestrian traffic down Onehunga Mall. Both were dramatic and disastrous for local businesses. It was not until vehicular traffic was reintroduced that both precincts began to revive, like a switch miraculously thrown; the goose allowed to breathe, or the dragon allowed to drink again, whichever analogy you prefer! It is my conclusion that at the very least a mix of pedestrian and vehicular traffic moving freely to and from the water is permanently necessary, especially at the north/south bound nexus of the CBD and harbour. Some mix of trams/bus/pedestrian hub, if the former are in fact ever to be reintroduced. Certainly busy, open, public plazas are required as one finds in such cities as Amsterdam; another city with a thousand jade belts, Singapore, a city almost as famous for its feng shui as Hong Kong, even New York which too is a dragon dipping its head. As anyone familiar with Hong Kong will vouch, it's hard to beat the delights of an evening stroll along the Waterfront on the Kowloon side; whether on the bustling New Ocean Terminal side with its shopping plazas and fancy hotels or down the more leisurely, southern end from Star Ferry to Tsim Sha Tsui East. Here one is in direct contact with the very essence of the city and its maritime *raison d'être*. It is pure magic and such is the allure of an evening stroll along the waterfront here, it is always with regret one leaves. More importantly there, one is gambolling with dragons, unseen though they be, but there nevertheless; keeping the city as vibrant and alive as it is. Would that Auckland's guiding citizens, her councillors, planners and politicians be so insightful as to contemplate the age old benefits of classical feng shui, especially as it applies to its all important riparian boundaries. A positive start has been made by the introduction of the walking streets in Auckland's inner precincts. I just hope even more enlightened views will prevail and greatly expand public access to the City of Sail's beloved waterfront. Would that they considered the feng shui of our beautiful city!

Review of My Services:

- ☞ Land and Site Pre-Inspections / New Building Advice
- ☞ Audits on Existing Buildings - Domestic and Commercial
- ☞ Four Pillars of Destiny Charts (Chinese Astrology)
- ☞ Date Selection Services
- ☞ Public Speaking Engagements

Produced and Distributed by:

Feng Shui Consultants New Zealand

09- 6257-888

fsc@fengshui88.co.nz

www.fengshui88.co.nz

International Copyrights apply ©FSCNZ