

Traditional Chinese Festivals:

Zhongqiu Jie - Mid - Autumn Festival

This festival falls on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month and since the seventh, eighth and ninth months make up the autumn season, this falls in the middle (15th) of September. As the first day of each lunar month is co-ordinated to fall on the new moon, the 15th is then always a full moon. It is said that this full moon is the brightest in the year and so moon viewing parties were traditionally held throughout China. The full moon in Chinese culture is a reference to family reunions and so the day is also referred to as 'Day of Reunion'. There are many legends and stories about the moon, especially about the Lady Chang E who lives there. The moon is the quintessential Yin (feminine) in

Chinese lore and so it was always by tradition, a woman who presided over the various ceremonies once held on this festival.

New Features:

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Special sweet pastries known as Moon Cakes are prepared for the occasion and are often swapped with friends and family at this time of the year. Indeed it can be fun to try out different moon cakes from the various regions of China. Next time you are in your local Asian market, stop and ask an assistant for their recommendation of which moon cakes to try. Take them with a little Chinese tea. My own favourites come from the Beijing Hotel and have walnut and lotus nut paste in them. Yummy! Also check-out the designs of the Moon Palace and other such motifs on the pastry cases when you buy them.

Some moon cakes have hard boiled eggs inside, resembling of course the full moon. These can

provide a very different taste sensation for the uneducated western palate but are well worth the adventure! After the Mid Autumn Festival comes:

Qui Fen

This term refers to the Autumn Equinox. The name *Qui-Fen* is a reference to the equal distribution of Yin and Yang and is one of the twenty four solar divisions of the Chinese year. This means that during this period the sun is approximately directly overhead at the Equator and the length of the day is the same as night. In north China they reap the autumn harvest and sow the late autumn crops. This occasion falls in the middle of the eight month of the Lunar year and is usually marked around Sept 22- 24th.

TRIP TO NOUVELLE CALADONIE

In late July I visited Noumea, New Caledonia to perform a feng shui audit for some clients there. In spite of the buffeting by a passing cyclone on my arrival, the weather quickly calmed and with bright sunshine and balmy 25^{degree} days it proved to be a great mid-winter break. Noumea has interesting feng shui and with its extensive coastal reaches and double harbour, displays some of the classic aspects of positive Water feng shui. The city and Governor's mansion are built on the gentle slopes of a range of hills that come down to the coast in the classic, 'Dragon dips its head to drink'. This is quintessential form feng shui with the rising height to

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the rear of these two locations. (*Remember, mountains give strength to Human Harmony factors and are therefore, inextricably related to politics and the positioning of political edifices. Think of Premier House in Wellington, cosseted amongst the hills of Tinakori Rd or Government House nestled against Mt Eden in Mountain Rd. Auckland.*)

Conversely, the entrances to the cities two primary harbours are both protected from direct views back to the sea by the gentle curving of the land back into the harbour mouth. One from Baie de la moselle, the other from Nouville; these give protection to the country's main trading harbours and as the mouth to Baie de la Moselle is facing directly to the Southwest, augers particularly well for the city's tourist liner and yachting trade in Period 8. Another point worth

noting is that the main island of New Caledonia itself is shaped like a dragon with the eastern end, pointing towards the Isles de Pines the head. The western reaches, form the dragon's narrowing tail. I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to my wonderfully hospitable friends there, Marie-Anne and Andre and look forward to seeing you all again in March.



Above: Noumea's primary harbour. Note: City faces to the left of the picture; from that vantage point Harbour mouth remains hidden.



Above: Noumea's two harbours. Note the returning arms of the surrounding peninsulas for both and the Southwest mouth for Baie de la Moselle.

SOMETHING FOR SCEPTICS TO PONDER:

"It is based on the practical insights of highly developed Chinese minds which we do not have the slightest justification for undervaluing."

C.C. Jung in writing on Taoist Practices in the 'Secret of the Golden Flower' but this comment is just as relevant to the practice of Classical Feng Shui.

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QUOTE:

Solitude is the furnace of transformation. Without solitude we remain victims of our society and continue to be entangled in the illusions of the false self. --Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Out of Solitude*

READER'S QUESTION:

Stuart asks:

We have just had some nice pictures of the family framed and I was considering putting them in our master bedroom. My wife commented that she recollects reading somewhere that it might not be a good idea to hang family pictures in the master bedroom. Is she correct, or is this another one of those old wives tales?

Answer: Just another old wife's tale, I'm afraid Stuart. This is the sort of thing that arises out of cultural confusion. The only injunction that I am aware of is that of not putting pictures of the dead with the living. Clearly this is cultural rather than something based on any law of physics and so falls within the spectrum of Symbolic Chi. As such it has a strong cultural bias.

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VISIT TO NELSON WITH CATE BRAMBLE:

In late August I took my friend Cate Bramble to Nelson. Cate who was visiting New Zealand for her third time, co-spoke with me at an afternoon talk. The themes of our dual addresses were: '*Feng Shui, the science behind the myths*' whilst Cate spoke on the reasons why scientifically, no changes are necessary for the Southern hemisphere in the application of Classical Chinese feng shui. The talk was well attended with everyone who came expressing their interest in the detail of the information presented. A further series of talks will be held by me in Nelson in mid October when I return to speak on at the Home and Garden Expo at the invitation of the organizers. I would like especially to thank my students Rhiannon and Alison for their wonderful hospitality while in Marlborough: Rhiannon and family for the much appreciated use of the cottage and Ali for her meticulous planning of the logistics.

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