

Application of Taoist Principles and Feng Shui in Urban Spaces (Landscaping and Garden Design)

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The Taoist school emphasizes concepts such as "Yin and Yang" and "Tehya." Taoism has had a profound influence on architecture, painting, landscaping, home decoration, and lifestyle, extending beyond the borders of China to impact the entire modern world. The application of Far Eastern worldviews based on Taoist thought and its arrangement techniques, such as Feng Shui and its unique interior decoration in homes, urban spaces, garden design, and landscaping, deeply enhances and elevates the quality of life. Relying on ancient knowledge and experience, it can be stated that Tao is a spiritual way of life that enables humans to channel the positive energies of nature into themselves. The present study poses the question of how Taoist philosophical concepts influence urban space design. Taoism, one of the oldest philosophical schools in China, has significantly impacted the art of that region, with its ultimate goal being the harmony and consonance of humans with the natural order in life. Given that the practical art of Feng Shui is a derivative of this philosophy, the aim of this research is to identify and apply the fundamental elements of this mystical philosophy in urban planning and landscaping, and to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the philosophy and art of interior and exterior design. In this study, which presents its findings in an analytical-descriptive manner, we first analyze and examine Feng Shui's influence on the mystical and ontological foundations of Taoism and the manifestation of this approach in design and landscaping principles. It is then demonstrated that the application of these elements in urban spaces can bring not only visual beauty but also peace, balance, and harmony to the modern urban dweller.

Keywords: Taoism, "Yin and Yang," Tehya, Feng Shui, Landscaping.

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1. Introduction

Chinese tradition dates back to 2700 BCE. The period from the 6th to the 3rd century BCE marks the flourishing of ancient Chinese philosophy and the emergence of the schools known as the "Hundred Schools of Thought," among which Confucianism and Taoism are the most prominent. The Taoist school is influenced by the teachings of three great sages: Laozi, Zhuangzi, and Liezi. The concept of Tao, which predates

Laozi—the founder of the Taoist school—was initially used in Chinese culture to refer to the way of heaven and the way of human affairs and had a completely tangible aspect. In the Tao Te Ching, the metaphysical meaning of Tao deepened, becoming a source of various interpretations and understandings. Taoism emphasizes principles such as harmony and peace with the dynamic and infinite quality of nature, balance between the inner and outer worlds, non-action, non-attachment, and fundamental opposing pairs, all aimed at achieving



tranquility and contentment in life. It encompasses concepts such as emptiness, harmony, Feng Shui, and symbolism (Rahimi Abkenari & Panahi, 2014). In Taoist aesthetics, similar to other traditional aesthetics, but not exclusively, the focus is often on the personal spirit and inner qualities of the artist, striving to describe and explain the state that the artist enters to achieve true creativity. Thus, what is valuable to the Taoist artist is attaining this state and aligning with the Tao (Bramble, 2013; Schwartz, 2004).

In Far Eastern culture, a fundamental principle prevails: the relationship with nature, which has a symbolic connection with Taoist teachings, as unspoiled and spontaneous nature is a fundamental principle of Taoist thought. Ancient Chinese architecture, with its millennia-old history, has always emphasized harmony, which is also seen in its relationship with nature, with the ultimate goal of integrating humanity with heaven and earth to achieve "harmony between humanity and nature." The ancient Chinese always sought harmony with nature in the construction of their cities, villages, buildings, and gardens. In fact, they discovered the beauty inherent in natural forms (Tuo, 2005).

The Taoist school has had a profound impact on architecture, painting, landscaping, home decoration, and lifestyle, extending beyond the borders of China and influencing the entire modern world. The application of the Far Eastern worldview based on Taoist thought and its arrangement techniques, such as Feng Shui and its unique interior decoration in homes, urban spaces, garden design, and landscaping, deeply enhances and elevates the quality of life. Relying on ancient knowledge and experience, it can be stated that Tao is a spiritual way of life that enables humans to channel the positive energies of nature into themselves (Ghahramani, 2013).

This research attempts to identify how Taoist thought can be utilized in urban space design and interior architecture, exploring how the mystical and philosophical elements of this ancient thought have practically influenced modern urban architecture and landscaping. In this regard, it can be said that homes and gardens, influenced by Feng Shui (wind and water), are in harmony with forces rooted in Taoist philosophy. This ancient Eastern art aims to promote health, happiness, and tranquility. According to it, every space has energy, and by using and maintaining a balance between objects and space, health and happiness can be achieved. The

balance of the home and garden is established by the natural forces of "Yin and Yang" and by aligning with the flow of Qi in nature. The influence of the five elements and proper orientation of each element and object in accordance with Feng Shui principles, whether in buildings or in gardens and landscapes, generates positive energy, making the place visually and psychologically pleasing.

2. Interior Space (Interior Architecture)

In his book *The Tao of Architecture*, I. Chang considers the help of Tao as the solution to modern architectural problems. He writes, "That which is imperceptibly felt beyond human power is the eternal reserve from which the potentials of life arise. Our time is an era of rapid material progress and swift changes. It seems that two things are valuable in the field of architecture: the quality of the artificial environment and the harmony and unity in human-made structures" (Tiao Chang, 1981).

Interior design in the Chinese style, like its art, is vast and diverse. The Chinese follow three principles in interior design: simplicity, energy, and nature; the most important of which is finding the right place for each object. Feng Shui is a Chinese aesthetic style that seeks to balance energies, with its most important principle being the avoidance of disorder, and another principle being attention to the color of the surrounding environment. Feng Shui suggests that the arrangement of objects in decoration should effectively contribute to the dissemination of beneficial energies in the environment. In spatial analysis, Yin refers to the quiet and inactive parts of the room, which lack doors, entrances, windows, or any type of opening to the surroundings. Yang represents the active parts of the room, where movement is possible, i.e., areas near doors, entrances, openings, and windows (Lao, 2012).

It seems that Taoist thought's emphasis on balance between inner and outer matters, or between Yang and Yin, has paved the way for the concept of space. The quality (liveliness of space) can be tranquility in one place and tumult in another; in one person, it manifests as orderliness, and in another, as carelessness; in one house, it is light, and in another, darkness; in one room, it is gentle and calm, and in another, it is yellow (Alexander, 2011). This quality is a subtle form of release from internal conflicts. Any system that maintains internal unity possesses this quality, and whenever it

becomes fragmented, it loses it. Alexander, in one instance, refers to the word "comfort" as one of the aspects of quality. He means a personal quality.

In his book *Feng Shui: The Living Art of Asian Life*, Skinner describes the flow of Qi in the house as follows: "The flow of Qi enters the house through the entrance from the river or road. It is better if the flow and its movement occur in curved lines; straight and broken lines impede the flow of Qi because this flow becomes harmful in straight lines. The entrance to the front of the house from the road to the door should not be designed with straight lines but deliberately with a curve. Inside the building, it is very important to ensure that this flow is not blocked. Except for toilets, each of which is a source of Sha Qi and should be kept closed" (Skinner, 2004).

3. Space Division According to the Five Elements

Qi energy is constantly generated and destroyed through each of the five elements:

1. **Fire (South):** The energy of the fire element stimulates the spirit and psyche, dynamism, social activity, enthusiasm, and creative power, but at the same time, it hinders tranquility and leads to a decrease in concentration and objective thinking, causing emotional imbalance.
2. **Metal (West/Northwest):** The Qi energy of metals enhances behavior and organizational skills and supports financial plans. This element prevents the emergence of emotional aspects, movement, dynamism, and vitality.
3. **Wood (East/Southeast):** The Qi energy of the wood element positively influences character, activity, seriousness, concentration, and creativity.
4. **Earth (Southwest/Center/Northeast):** The Qi energy of the earth element signifies security, precision, attention, family harmony, housekeeping, and domestic affairs. This element hinders ambition and dynamism, and its increase may lead to lethargy and boredom.
5. **Water (North):** The Qi energy of the water element ensures inner tranquility, sexual activity, sleep, objective thinking, and kindness. Excessive energy inhibits activity (Schwartz, 2004).

4. Space Division According to the Eight Directions

Just as the energies of "Yin and Yang" and the five elements can have appropriate or inappropriate effects, the energies of the eight directions can also have positive or negative impacts on individuals and their surroundings.

1. **North:** Represents the flow of energy essential for obtaining health and wealth. On one hand, it ensures independence, creative power, and inner maturity, while on the other, it leads to introversion.
2. **Northeast:** Supports self-centeredness and self-discipline but leads to anger, insomnia, and disturbed dreams.
3. **East:** Encourages activity, self-confidence, and attention to detail, but may also lead to carelessness, impatience, and excessive ambition.
4. **Southeast:** Promotes creative power, communication, influence, and the risk of stubbornness and sensitivity.
5. **South:** Excitement, activity, and social recognition are positive aspects of this direction, while stress, instability, and aggression are its negative aspects.
6. **Southwest:** The dominant energy in this direction fosters family harmony, contentment, and friendship intimacy. On the other hand, it may lead to excessive caution, a sense of dependency, and a halt in creative power.
7. **West:** Financial efficiency, romanticism, pleasure, and entertainment are signs of Qi energy dominant in the West (Helm, 2002).

Exterior Space (Landscaping and Garden Design)

The Taoist Garden and Its Elements

The Taoist garden is a type of Chinese garden with many remnants. Yuan Ming Yuan Garden, the imperial family garden located in the Guochang Temple on Qingcheng Mountain in Sichuan Province, is an example of a Taoist garden.

From the Taoist perspective, humans are intermediaries between heaven and earth, and their role is to create a balance of "Yin and Yang" in the world. Nature, at a higher level, controls cosmic forces, but the garden helps humans sustain this harmony, and this act inherently carries a moral meaning. The garden manifests the

submission of humans to their sensual and carnal forces (Roupp & Reilly, 1997). Balance is the most fundamental aspect of nature. Understanding this balance raises awareness of life and compels humans to organize their surroundings according to this awareness, using natural methods and order as a model for life, reaching Tao, and attaining human growth (Palmer & Victoria, 2003).

5. Geometry in the Taoist Garden

Like its larger counterpart, nature, the garden avoids geometric lines because the irregularity of lines signifies movement and life. Anything regimented or symmetrical is contrary to the free nature and, consequently, contrary to Tao. The Taoist garden is full of unexpected landscapes, avoiding the creation of straight and regular lines, which subject the observer's perception and imagination to discovery and insight. This method stems from an awareness of the earthly symbols of "Yin and Yang." Specific rules govern the layout of a Taoist garden, but this does not lead to the similarity of two gardens or the evocation of the same panorama at two points (Yap & Xotterell, 2003).

6. Paths and Accessways in the Taoist Garden

The access paths to the structure within the garden are often covered paths or feature sudden openings along the way to view a particular landscape. These openings take the form of lattice windows, gates, or decorative openings in the walls adjacent to the paths.

Sometimes, these openings are closed by structures, artificial rocks, or other natural visual obstacles to increase perceptual insight and adhere to the law of visual contrast. These openings and views, in fact, determine the plan of the garden's pedestrian paths. For example, lattice windows slightly delay visitors in front of the landscapes. The closed walls and visual obstacles prompt them to walk, while the presence of openings known as moon gates at the ends or beginnings of paths also encourages movement (Vasigh, 2008).

In the Taoist school, patience, silence, and contemplation are all symbolized by the path. Paths divide space to create mystery and surprise the viewer; the shape of gates and connecting elements and porous spaces are actually designed to create imaginary and symbolic spaces. The form and shape of the circle may symbolize

eternity. The texture of the paths is the third dimension in the design of a garden (Khalilian Boroujeni, 2004).

Symbolic representations of nature and religious imaginations are also seen in the paths and accessways. These accessways are generally undulating and indirect. Feng Shui principles state that evil spirits can only move in a straight line, so the undulating paths prevent these spirits and negative forces from approaching the garden. Moreover, the form and type of path also manifest the concept of "Yin and Yang." In this image, the curved lines of the path exhibit soft Yin characteristics, while the wall has a Yang force. The walls' material, as space renewers, and the rigidity of the curved path, which is solid and unchangeable, are the Yang qualities of the path, creating this pleasant view through the balance between "Yin and Yang" forces.

7. Chinese Garden Decorations

The decorations of the buildings derive from popular beliefs, practicality (shade and ventilation), and elegance. In Chinese pavilions, walls and eaves are often adorned, but the most elaborate parts of the buildings are actually the windows and doors, as these points were the centers through which good and evil spirits entered. Many windows were covered with wooden latticework designed in various shapes to guide the movement of wind for optimal ventilation. The lattice windows on the pavilion's body were meant to regulate the climate and comfort of the residents and to showcase a specific view. The Chinese highly valued longevity and immortality, and they expressed these concepts in their buildings through inscriptions or symbols related to this concept, such as animal and plant motifs. For example, sacred characters like the term "Fu" were inscribed on the walls to bless the building. This word means luck, blessing, well-being, and happiness. Similarly, "Shou," with a meaning similar to "Fu," was inscribed on doors, and the phrase "Wan," shaped like a swastika and meaning ten thousand, indicating longevity, was engraved on windows (Vasigh, 2008).

The carvings on the doors of these pavilions depict turtles, deer, herons, and evergreen trees to symbolize longevity, health, durability, and happiness, respectively. Two swimming fish, two ducks, or two herons are visible in these motifs to symbolize balance in life, while the lotus flower symbolizes the desire for many offspring. The image of the tiger, which was hung above the door,

was intended to ward off evil spirits. The pronunciation of the word "tiger" (pronounced as *fojian* in northern and southern China) is very similar to "Fu," and it was placed in the Taoist octagon to become an impregnable talisman.

8. Water and Its Manifestations in the Taoist Garden

In Taoism, water holds a profound existential philosophy. Rivers, whether turbulent or calm, symbolize the flow of life, with the flowing water representing the essence of life (a reference to the spirit of life). Tao is embodied in the world and is likened to a stream that flows through valleys and merges with rivers and seas. A moving river is Yang, while the shore that absorbs its moisture is Yin, and the tree that grows between them is the result of these two forces, shaped by both (Shariati, 2005). Additionally, the most potent symbols of the harmonious union between "Yin and Yang" in the Taoist garden are waterfalls and fountains, which embody the active nature of Yang in conjunction with the Yin nature of water in a specific conceptual and formal manifestation (Burckhardt, 2000).

The significance of water in the Taoist garden is not only due to its dual "Yin and Yang" properties but also because of its proximity to the greatest Taoist symbol, the dragon. Water possesses strength in its weakness, fluidity, adaptability, cool impartiality, and lack of desire. Mountains and rocks are the bones and flesh of this body, while rivers and streams are its blood vessels, nourishing it. Flowing and stagnant water each represent its movement and rest, while the rocks, worn smooth by stagnant water, symbolize the interaction between the dragon's harsh and soft temperaments. Stagnant water itself is a general symbol of mirrors and mirror-like objects. Water channels were often designed in shapes like the swastika, cross, lotus flower, or Chinese symbols derived from the number ten. Water sometimes appears as a fountain or as flowing water cascading over small waterfalls and rocks (Vasigh, 2008).

Stone and Inanimate Nature in the Taoist Garden

Mountains in Chinese paintings are depicted with rocks. Mountain rocks, eroded by the elements, are imagined as roaring seas or petrified trees. These rocks are distinguished by color, texture, granularity, and shape; some are upright, while others, larger at the top and tapering below, rest on the ground, symbolizing mountain peaks amidst the clouds. Some are shaped like

animals, while others symbolize the Yangtze River mountains and valleys or the northern and western regions of China. "Strive to make your mountains look like real mountains; follow the design of nature, but do not forget that what is achieved is a creation made by humans" (Yu & Abolghasemi, 1990).

In Eastern culture, mountains symbolize the axis and pole of the world, but in the Chinese garden, the mountain represents the power of Yang in nature and the sky. Mountains are usually placed in the middle of a lake or pond, with rocks symbolizing stability and eternity, while water symbolizes fluidity and transience. Mountains and water are often seen together in landscape paintings. Mountains and their shadows symbolize "Yang and Yin," respectively. Mountains, like monks, are silent, immovable, and withdrawn from the world. Their elevation and ruggedness refer to the ups and downs and dangers of life. In larger gardens, the mountains were tall enough to form small valleys and bays, reached by winding streams leading to lakes where boats could move. Bridges spanned these lakes, sometimes connecting several islands or rocks. A single rock could embody all the symbols and references associated with a mountain. Therefore, the more porous and complex the rocks and stones, the more valuable they were considered. Shen Fu says, "In designing a rockery or arranging flowering trees, the principle of showing and hiding alternately should be followed; show some things and hide others" (McDonald, 2004).

Trees in the Taoist Garden

Mountains and trees both hold Yang and centrality, symbolizing endurance, while the balance of Yin is represented by the tree's connection to the earth, striving to reach heaven. The tree also symbolizes the line of communication between the sacred forces of "Yin and Yang" in nature. Grass, being a combination of the Yang sky and the Yin earth, possesses a dual aspect. Trees are placed in the garden according to their natural structures, with no uniform rules for planting them to maximize their natural appearance and to observe their growth patterns in the garden (Burckhardt, 2000). The beauty of trees and the overall form of a tree indicate feminine and Yin forces, while some trees possess Yin-Yang or purely Yang qualities. Pine and cypress trees, while exhibiting Yin beauty, also have Yang qualities like resilience and uprightness. The charm and flexibility of the willow indicate a balance between "Yin and Yang,"

and flowering trees like almond, cherry, and peach are often celebrated as lovers in Taoist literature. Almond, as the first tree to bloom in the year, is regarded in Taoist tradition as the awakener and guardian of the seasons. The cherry tree symbolizes power, longevity, and asceticism. Plum, pine, and bamboo are considered the three friends. Both almond and plum trees signify the renewal of life in spring, with the plum being likened to a sleeping dragon due to its gnarled trunk. Many believe that the peach is the immortal tree of Taoism, located in the midst of the Taoist paradise. Its seeds are used as amulets to protect against evil spirits and forces. This tree, besides being a symbol of spring, youth, marriage, health, and longevity, is also known for its humility, avoiding the pursuit of fame and display (Valader, 1999).

9. Flowers in the Taoist Garden

The Chinese believe that flowers and plants possess a life cycle (birth, life, and death), and for them, the type and shape of a plant hold great significance. The most revered Taoist flowers are the lotus, chrysanthemum, and peony, with the peony being the only flower entirely associated with Yang energy. Flowers with cup-shaped buds symbolize Yin in nature, but the peony, with its red color, represents fiery temperament, masculinity, wealth, honor, and nobility. On the other hand, the chrysanthemum is the flower of poets, philosophers, and hermits, symbolizing joy, pleasure, comfort, and ease. The lotus is considered a universal symbol with many references in Eastern cultures, holding a special place in the spiritual thoughts of Hinduism and Buddhism as a symbol of spiritual elevation. This concept originates from the lotus's growth, with its roots in mud, its stem in water, and its bloom in the open air and fresh atmosphere. This philosophical background places it above rivals like the rose or white lily among Asian peoples. From the Taoist perspective, the lotus is a flower where "Yin and Yang" achieve complete balance. The flower, blooming in sunlight, is Yang, while its roots, growing in the dark waters of primordial chaos, are Yin. The combination of this flower, with its roots in the water and its head in the open air, reminds one of the soul and essence. Its roots grow in moist soil, signifying stability, and its stem, the world's umbilical cord, connects humanity to its origin as the axis of the world, while its seeds represent the seeds of creation and formation (McIntosh, 2005).

The lotus is associated with the sun's cycle and thus possesses both Yin and Yang qualities, making it both male and female. This flower is the golden flower of Taoism, representing light, the symbol of the world, and the sage who fights against the world's impurities but does not become tainted by them (Vasigh, 2008).

10. Creating a Feng Shui Garden

Designing a garden using the ancient art of Feng Shui creates a peaceful, relaxing, and energizing place in nature. The use of Feng Shui elements, the arrangement of colors, and the placement of each object or plant play a significant role in achieving the balance and harmony you want to create. Curved areas and paths, varied rocky surfaces, all help the energy of Qi to flow through the garden. Using the five elements—wood, fire, earth, metal, and water—such as living plants, a barbecue or fire pit, or a group of red and yellow plants, clay pots, large stones, a water fountain, metal statues, or wind chimes, contributes to achieving balance. Avoiding the overuse of straight lines, sharp angles, narrow paths and stairways, dim lighting, disorder, and overly stimulating mismatched colors, as well as weak and spindly plants, creates a better presence in the garden.

11. Feng Shui Garden According to the Eight Directions

1. **North:** The dominant energy in this direction is related to life's path, career, and luck. The element of this direction is water. The color associated with this direction is black or blue, and it is suitable for the location of a garden stone.
2. **Northeast:** The energy of this direction is related to personal and spiritual growth, knowledge, and luck. The element of this direction is earth, and the colors yellow, brown, pink, and earth tones are associated with this section. This part of the garden can be a meditation area or include benches for study.
3. **East:** The energy of this direction aligns with family, health, and longevity. The element of this direction is wood, and its color is green, making it a suitable place for placing a decorative wooden statue.

4. **Southeast:** The energy of this direction is related to wealth, and the element of this direction is also wood. The colors associated with this direction are purple, green, gold, red, and blue. This part of the garden is suitable for placing a water fountain.
5. **South:** The energy of this direction is aligned with fame and success, with fire as its associated element. Red is the color symbolizing this direction, and this section of the garden is suitable for a barbecue or a fire pit.
6. **Southwest:** The energy of this direction is related to love, relationships, and peace. The element of this direction is earth, and the colors are brown, pink, red, white, and yellow. This part of the garden is suitable for placing furniture and dining areas.
7. **West:** The energy of this direction is associated with children and creativity. The element of this direction is metal, and the colors white, silver, gray, and copper are related to this direction. This part of the garden is suitable for children's play areas.
8. **Northwest:** The energy of this direction aligns with helpfulness, assistance, and travel. The element of this direction is metal, and the colors gray, white, black, and metallic colors are harmonious with this direction. This section is suitable for seating areas.

12. Application of the Five Elements in Feng Shui Garden and Landscape Design

Water: The water element brings spiritual quality to a garden. A waterfall, stream, or fountain is a part of the garden believed to enhance the flow of energy. The movement of water in a fountain activates stagnant Qi, which is effective in balancing and generating beneficial Yang energy. Additionally, using reflective surfaces like glass, crystal, mirrors, asymmetrical or free-form shapes, and black and white tones is also beneficial. Plants with blue, purple, and black colors represent the water element, such as grapes, irises, jasmine, and lotus flowers.

Wood: It is evident that most gardens are abundant with the wood element through plants, wooden furniture, or wicker. The representatives of this element in the garden, aside from plants and trees, include planter

boxes and wooden benches. Plants with thin, tall green stems, like Japanese bamboo, are excellent indicators of the wood element in a Feng Shui garden. Palm trees, pine trees, and other conifers effectively represent the wood element in the garden.

Earth: The earth element provides stability to the garden, found in bricks, tiles, various clay items like clay pots, rocks, and boulders, as well as square shapes and earth-toned colors. Plants with yellow flowers or similar shades, or those with square-shaped leaves, represent the earth element in Feng Shui gardens. There are a limited number of such plants, including sunflowers, Gold Storm, Japanese laurel, and peonies.

Fire: The fire element increases interactions and conversation. This element can be represented by lights, lanterns, barbecues, fire pits, triangular shapes, and the color red. Generally, plants with red bark and foliage or plants with triangular or conical leaves represent the fire element. One of the most beautiful and popular examples of these plants is the Japanese maple. Japanese cedar, red camellia, boxwood shrubs, and similar plants also represent the fire element.

Metal: The metal element clarifies the mind and spirit, represented by metal furniture and statues, stone, cement, wind chimes, archways, and circular and oval shapes. Plants that represent the metal element in a Feng Shui garden usually have rounded or oval leaves and white or golden brown flowers, such as white hydrangeas, peonies, jasmine, and others (Morrison, 2012).

13. Use of Color in Feng Shui Garden Design

Colors play a crucial role in Feng Shui garden design. They reflect joy and positive energy. Different colors have different energy levels and affect emotions and moods. For example, warm colors like reds and bright yellows increase energy levels. Both groups of colors have a remarkable impact on Feng Shui gardens, but they should never be mixed together.

14. Paths and Walkways in a Feng Shui Garden

In Feng Shui garden design, creating winding paths helps guide the flow of Qi energy. Positive Qi energy flows better in asymmetrical and winding paths. A Feng Shui garden is an imitation of nature, where straight lines are rarely found. Therefore, using smooth and calming

shapes for paths is essential for Feng Shui garden design (Wang, 2012, p. 36).

15. Trees and Plants in a Feng Shui Garden

Trees and plants are highly beneficial as they generate abundant Qi. Evergreen trees symbolize wealth and abundance. In a Feng Shui garden, trees and plants should be regularly pruned. This practice prevents them from growing too densely, allowing the valuable Yang energy of the sun to penetrate. When trees and plants become too dense, they produce excessive Yin energy,

leading to disharmony in the energies. According to Feng Shui principles, the color, location, and symbolism of flowers influence the flow of Qi. It is recommended to plant blooming flowers around the garden, as they stimulate Qi energy and maintain the balance between "Yin and Yang." Additionally, fragrant flowers like jasmine should be planted near the garden entrance. Evergreen plants and trees are suitable for the eastern side of the garden. White flowers can be used in the western part, blue flowers in the northwest, and red flowers in the southern part of the garden (Collins, 2012).

Table 1

Taoist Symbols in Chinese Landscape Elements

Row	Element Name	Symbol Type	Yin	Yang	Dual Elements
1	Mountain (Rock)	Endurance, Power		Yes	
2	Water	Transience, Fluidity, Adaptation, Flexibility			Yes
3	River (Flowing Water)	Movement		Yes	
4	Pond (Still Water)	Rest, Mirror	Yes		
5	Riverbank	Reception	Yes		
6	Tree	Endurance			Yes
7	Bridge	Connection	Yes		
8	Waterfall	Balance			Yes
9	Pine, Cypress Tree			Yes	
10	Willow Tree	Natural Balance		Yes	
11	Bamboo	Humility		Yes	
12	Peach Tree	Immortality, Protection against Evil, Spring, Youth, Marriage, Health, Longevity	Yes		
13	Almond Tree	Awakening, Renewal	Yes		
14	Cherry Tree	Power, Longevity, Asceticism	Yes		
15	Plum Tree	Renewal	Yes		
16	Peony Flower	Masculinity, Wealth, Honor, Nobility, Fiery Temperament		Yes	
17	Chrysanthemum	Joy, Pleasure, Comfort, Ease	Yes		
18	Lotus Flower	Liberation and Perfection, Creation, Purity		Yes	

16. Discussion and Conclusion

An examination of the Taoist philosophy foundations in Feng Shui reveals that many of these principles, including "Yin and Yang," Qi, the Five Elements, and Tehya, are fundamentally integral to Feng Shui, whether in interior spaces (interior architecture) or exterior

spaces (landscaping). Adhering to these fundamental principles leads to the creation of a perfectly harmonious environment tailored to the spiritual and physical needs of those using the spaces designed according to these principles. Thus, all these foundations apply both to interior and exterior spaces, and neglecting any of these principles fails to establish a Feng Shui-compliant environment.

Table 2

Application of Taoist Principles in Interior and Exterior Spaces

Space	"Yin and Yang"	Qi	Five Elements	Tehya
Interior	Colors/Furniture/Lighting	Furniture arrangement/Mirrors/Plants/Doors and Windows/Colors	Spatial orientation based on correct positioning/Colors/Furniture/Placement of objects according to the destructive cycle	Avoiding clutter in spaces, using void spaces in home design, keeping the front and back of doors clear
Exterior	Flowers and Plants/Water/Rock/Colors	Walkways/Fountains	Spatial orientation based on correct positioning Furniture/Water/Rock/Plants/Clay pots/Wind creators/Fire pit/Colors	Archways and openings/Porous spaces in rocks/Moon gate/Lattice windows

Spiritual naturalism began when humans realized that their sustenance, blessings, and even calamities and death were tied to the forces of nature. Therefore, they believed that the superior and mysterious power of nature controlled all aspects of human life. Consequently, through contemplation of their inner selves, they recognized the immense power of nature and began exploring ways to connect with and harness this boundless force.

In the Taoist school, attention to nature in material life and methods for its improvement are of fundamental importance. Even Taoist leaders believe that understanding their spiritual teachings requires recognizing that connection and unity with nature is both inherent and essential. Thus, the ultimate goal of Taoist mystical practice is union with the force of nature, a force that continually manifests itself in various forms. In Taoism, by emphasizing the unity of Tao, various elements are introduced that can be connected with, and through them, one can receive special energy from Tao. Beyond the concept of Tao, another key idea in Taoist thought is that every natural object in the world is a combination of two forces, "Yin" and "Yang." In summary, the core teaching of ancient Taoism is that Tao is the unique origin of the universe and the determinant or cause of everything, and all things in the world are composed of two opposing parts, which constantly transform into each other. The ultimate goal of practice in this school is unity with Tao and becoming one with it. The doctrine of "Yin and Yang" is based on the concept that there are perpetual processes within Tao, and this principle governs nature. "Yin and Yang" have always been the foundation of Chinese thought and cosmology. According to the Taoist perspective, harmony in the

world results from the interaction of vital forces (Qi). "Yin and Yang" are both manifestations of Qi. Balance and harmony are the rules of order in Tao. Moreover, the union with Tao can permeate all aspects of human life, including architecture, environmental arrangement, and landscape design. By applying the intermediate components of Tao, one can create a life united with Tao. The art and architecture of Taoism, in general, respect and harmonize with nature, combining features such as Tehya, harmony, duality, and symbolism.

The philosophical foundations of Taoism have a practical aspect in Chinese life and have significantly influenced aesthetics and architecture. Feng Shui, an art with thousands of years of history in China, originates from Taoist teachings and principles. The goal of this art is to create a balanced and harmonious life or, more accurately, to achieve unity between humans and nature. The teachings of this art are based on the principles of Qi energy, "Yin and Yang," the Five Elements, Tehya, and the Eight Directions, all aimed at creating a place for the spiritual and physical well-being of humans. Qi, the embodiment of spirit and energy, produced by the cosmos, affects all things and should be allowed to flow unobstructed through all the pathways of interior and exterior spaces.

"Yin and Yang," as complementary opposites, must be in their highest state of balance. Achieving balance and harmony between these two forces is one of the goals of Taoist philosophy. In Taoist thought, the world is formed by the five elements of wood, water, metal, fire, and earth. Everything in a building or garden must be arranged and designed so that their elements neutralize each other's effects, resulting in balance and harmony in the space. In the spatial analysis conducted in this

research, the quiet and inactive parts of the environment without any openings are Yin, while the active parts with the possibility of movement, such as areas near openings, are Yang. Furthermore, the bright and dark areas of spaces are directly related to "Yin and Yang" forces, with bright areas corresponding to Yang and dark areas to Yin.

Additionally, in Feng Shui, spaces must be divided according to the Eight Directions, as these directions can have positive or negative effects on individuals and their environment. According to Feng Shui principles, entrances, openings, curved pathways, fountains, and water symbols set Qi energy in motion and contain the most positive Qi. Moreover, the use of items such as lamps, mirrors, statues, avoiding clutter in spaces, natural sunlight, and fresh plants and flowers play a major role in enhancing positive Qi energy. Avoiding sharp objects also greatly aids the smooth flow of Qi.

According to the results of this research, the concept of Tehya, a key element in Taoist philosophy, leads to simplicity, minimalism, and the use of empty spaces in interior design, as well as avoiding clutter.

In examining the flowers and plants in a Taoist garden and its Feng Shui, it is observed that all plants have a specific symbol according to Taoist philosophy, and each carries either Yin or Yang energy. Additionally, elements such as rocks, bridges, lakes, openings, and winding paths all visually represent "Yin and Yang" forces. Overall, an examination of the concept of tranquility in space shows that the form of the surrounding environment can be influenced by Feng Shui architecture. The environment and space around a person are imbued with environmental energy. A person gains most of their energy, which also determines their health, through auditory and visual means in the living environment and space they inhabit. In Feng Shui, humans seek harmony and balance of these energies. Feng Shui, inspired by nature and intuition, offers methods and solutions for creating harmony and balance in interior and exterior spaces, leading to comfort and tranquility for individuals. It is through the harmonization of the inner and outer worlds that a person will feel deep peace. By considering Feng Shui principles in designing interior and exterior spaces, one can create an environment that promotes goals such as vitality, peace, security, and success in daily life.

In conclusion, all elements impact the human spirit, emotions, and body. The absence of some of these elements in the living environment can lead to or exacerbate various behaviors in building inhabitants, some of which may be destructive and unhealthy. Therefore, when we arrange and decorate our living space based on our existential elements and personal characteristics, we can establish a deeper and more complete connection with the environment, leading to greater tranquility and a clearer mind. In other words, Feng Shui provides a framework through which we can better, more effectively, and more consciously utilize the energies present around us.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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