

CHAPTER XII.

FUNG-SHUI.

1. Introductory Notice.

We have several times had to refer in this work to a custom of the Chinese of placing the graves in such a situation as they think will bring the occupants thereof happiness and comfort, and at the same time secure the prosperity of their own selves, both in this world and in the world to come. In connection herewith we have mentioned certain theories, popularly styled Fung-shui¹ or Wind and Water. We will now consider this custom in detail, and try to answer the question: What is Fung-shui?

The answer is suggested by the word itself. Fung 風 means the wind, and shui 水 the water from the clouds which the wind distributes over the world; thus, the two words combined indicate the climate, regulated as it is in China, in the first instance, by the winds, which bring dry or rainy weather, according as they blow from the North in winter, or from the South or South-west in summer. Fung-shui consequently denotes the atmospherical influences, which bear absolute sway over the fate of man, as none of the principal requirements of life can be produced without favourable weather and rains. In a hyperbolic sense, however, Fung-shui means *a quasi-scientific system, supposed to teach men where and how to build graves, temples and dwellings, in order that the dead, the gods and the living may be located therein exclusively, or as far as possible, under the auspicious influences of Nature.*

This system is by no means a creation of modern times. It originated in ancient ages, from the then prevailing conceptions, easily traceable in the books, that the inhabitants of this world all live under the absolute sway of the influences of heaven and earth, and that every one desirous of insuring his own felicity

¹ 風水.

must live in perfect harmony with those influences. If — such was the reasoning — human acts disagree with the almighty Tao¹ or »Path”, the unalterable Course of Nature, conflicts will ensue, in which man, being the weaker party, must inevitably give way and become the sufferer. This reverential awe of the mysterious influences of Nature is the fundamental principle of an ancient religious system usually styled by foreigners Tao-ism. Popular opinion in China, as well as the expounders of the Fung-shui theories, are unanimous in considering Fung-shui to be almost as ancient as China itself.

It follows from the above that building graves, houses, villages and towns in accordance with the Fung-shui theories is looked upon by the nation as an absolute necessity, as indispensable because it is impossible to withdraw one's self from the sway of the powers of Nature. No wonder then that Fung-shui holds the nation in its grip and reigns supreme in the Empire, through its whole length and breadth. It derives prestige and sanctity from antiquity, which gave birth to the principal dogmas and conceptions upon which it is based. The leading ideas being the same as those of Chinese philosophy in general, it commands the sympathy of every one as a system which embraces whatever combined human wisdom and sagacity have, during a long series of ages, suggested as practically useful. It is considered in China the greatest benefactor of mankind, though in reality, as we shall see anon, it is one of their greatest scourges.

The hiao, the pious reverence which every Chinaman accords to his deceased parents and nearest relations, naturally constrains him to place their graves in such a situation that they may find themselves under the same good influences of Nature which he would desire to concentrate upon his own dwelling. In this way he not only insures their rest and comfort, but also renders them well disposed towards himself, arousing in them feelings of gratitude which must necessarily bear fruits in the shape of various blessings to be showered down upon the offspring. Besides, the heavens are Nature's great source of life, for it is they who distribute warmth, light and rain; and life and vigour are naturally imparted to those souls which dwell in graves placed under the full influence of the heavens: then they are enabled to work vigorously as protectors of their offspring, and to distribute among them liberally

¹ 道.

that vitality which they themselves borrow from the heavens, thus promoting the birth of sons, the most coveted of all blessings in China. This conviction is confirmed by the consideration that it is not only the living who profit hereby, but also the souls themselves, a numerous progeny of sons ensuring to the dead sacrifices and worship for many generations to come and, moreover, high rank in the world of spirits, where those surrounded by a large clan will be the bearers of power and influence, just as in this world.

Thus, as Dr. Edkins has judiciously remarked¹, » filial piety which, in obedience to the lessons of ancient and modern mentors of the nation, takes good care of the graves of parents and grandparents, has a material reward; on the other hand, the want of it invites a retribution involving poverty, sickness, loss of descendants, degradation in the social scale". By Fung-shui the graves are turned into mighty instruments of blessing or punishment, the spirits of the ancestors, dwelling therein, being the divinities of the nation, with whose protection and goodwill all social happiness is intimately bound up. But souls do not dwell in graves only. They also reside in tablets exposed for worship on the domestic altars, and in temples specially erected to shelter them. There, too, precisely for the same reasons, they ought to be made to live under the favourable influences of Nature. Consequently, Fung-shui is firmly entwined with house-building and the construction of ancestral temples. It plays an important part even in the erection of altars and sanctuaries dedicated to gods and saints of whatever kind or description.

Thus being an essential part of the Chinese Religion in its broadest sense, Fung-shui demands a place among the subjects to be treated of in this work. In the present volume we must, however, confine ourselves to noting the part it plays in grave-building, and reserve for an other volume most of what we have to say on its influence in other branches of the Religious System.

Nature having never been studied in China in a scientific manner, Fung-shui is not based on any sound ideas acquired by an experimental and critical survey of the heavens and the earth. Starting with the hazy notion that Nature is a living organism, the breath of which pervades everything and produces the varied conditions of heaven and earth, and with some dogmatic formulae to be found in the ancient works and confided in as verdicts of the most profound human wisdom, Fung-shui is a mere chaos

¹ The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal, vol. IV, p. 275

of childish absurdities and refined mysticism, cemented together, by sophistic reasonings, into a system, which is in reality a ridiculous caricature of science. But it is highly instructive from an ethnographical point of view. The aberrations into which the human mind may sink when, untutored by practical observation, it gropes after a reasoned knowledge of Nature, are more clearly expounded by it than by any other phenomenon in the life and history of nations. It fully shows the dense cloud of ignorance which hovers over the whole Chinese people; it exhibits in all its nakedness the low condition of their mental culture, the fact that natural philosophy in that part of the globe is a huge mound of learning without a single trace of true knowledge in it.

Embracing, as it does, the whole extent of Chinese natural philosophy, we have not space here to lay the Fung-shui system before our readers in detail. Such a work would require many years of painstaking study, and yet produce but meagre results; in fact, the cobwebs of absurd, puerile speculation, built up by the system, are hardly worthy of serious study. All we can give our readers here is a very brief outline, a rough sketch, chiefly drawn up from information received by us at Amoy from professional experts and supported by evidence gleaned from the native literature.

Besides, to thoroughly understand what Fung-shui is, it is quite unnecessary to scrutinize and unravel the farrago of absurdities which constitute its details. Some knowledge of the main principles upon which it is founded will suffice, if those principles be understood in the sense in which the people and the professors of the art understand and practically apply them. Fung-shui is, in point of fact, a practical art. Its theories, as expounded in the books, are seldom taken notice of, even by the most distinguished professors among the initiated. Being a quasi science, it is practised as a quasi science, that is to say, as charlatanism. Every member of the learned class considers himself an adept in it, on the sole ground of his having made some study of the Classics and of his understanding the leading principles of the national philosophy. The people even consider themselves morally obliged to possess some expertness in Fung-shui matters, and the current adage runs: »No son of man should be ignorant of matters relating to grounds and mountains, nor of medical art”¹. Indeed, how can a filial son properly observe

¹ 爲人子不可不知山、不可不知醫。

the tender care he owes to his parents, unless he be able to control the professors who assign to them their graves, thus holding in their hands the weal and woe of their souls, and the quack physicians, who may harm, nay kill, his parents by administering wrong medicines to them? It is no wonder then that even the least educated among the people show an astounding amount of knowledge of Fung-shui. Women and children may be heard chattering and talking about it with great authority; and when there is an altercation about imaginary injuries done to the Fung-shui of a grave or a house, old matrons are generally loudest in expressing a decided opinion.

Every Chinaman being more or less initiated in the secrets of the system, a practical intercourse with the people is sufficient for a foreigner to gain a tolerably clear idea of what it is and of the part it plays in the several branches of religious life. Our exposition will be found to deviate but little from that which was given, twenty-two years ago, by Dr. Eitel, in a treatise entitled: *Feng-shui, or the Rudiments of Natural Science in China*. Insignificant differences which our readers may observe between the conclusions of this distinguished Sinologist and our own, are to be ascribed chiefly to the circumstance that his investigations were made in Canton or Hongkong, and ours in the south-eastern part of the province of Fuhkien.

2. Fung-shui as regulated by High Grounds and Watercourses.

In China, the people are not bound, either by law or custom, to bury the dead in grave-yards. Every one has full liberty to inter his dead wherever he chooses, provided he possesses the ground, or holds it by some title acquired from the legal owner. The question whether a spot be suitable for a burial ground is decided by the Fung-shui theories.

Fung-shui, or *Hong-sui* according to the local pronunciation at Amoy and in the surrounding districts, is denoted by some other names. The principal amongst these is *Khan-yü*¹, pronounced *Kham-u* in the Amoy language, and specially used in literary style. *Khan* means the canopy of heaven, and *yü* a cart or chariot, or, metaphorically, the earth which contains and bears the human

¹ 堪輿.

race; the term *Khan-yü* may accordingly be translated by: »the system which occupies itself with heaven and earth". A third name is *Ti li* (Am. *Tē lí*)¹, »the natural influences that pervade the earth". The experts or professors of the art, who make a livelihood from searching out favourable spots for burying the dead and building houses and temples, are called *sien sheng*² (Am. *sien sing*) or *shi*³ (Am. *su*), with the prefix *Fung-shui*, *Khan-yü* or *Ti li*. *Sien sheng* signifies »an earlier born man", and may be rendered by »an elder, a master, a professor"; *shi* means »a leader, a master"; and both words are terms of respect denoting men of learning, including teachers, soothsayers, quack-doctors, etc. Foreigners are in the habit of calling the *Fung-shui* experts geomancers, which is correct, provided the earth be also considered as a depository of influences continuously poured down upon it by the celestial sphere. Besides the six terms above, the professors are often styled *Yin Yang sien sheng*⁴ (Am. *Im Ióng sien sing*) or *Yin Yang shi*⁵ (Am. *Im Ióng su*), »Masters of the Yin and Yang", which two supreme powers of the Universe are respectively identified with Earth and Heaven, as our readers know.

The word *Fung-shui* indicates that the first thing to be attended to in selecting a spot for a grave, house, temple, village or town, is wind or air, *fung*: Noxious winds must as far as possible be prevented from striking a tomb or building at the back or flank. Hence, a mountain slope flanked by two ridges forking out from it, and affording a rather wide view in front, is deemed to be good ground for burying and building, especially if those ridges form a double fence, both visible from the grave or building. Their utility is not in the least reduced by distance. Even when so far off that they are hardly discernible, professors take them into account as elements of the highest importance, for theoretically they screen off the winds, and, in *Fung-shui* matters, theory and speculation are everything.

Pernicious and life-destroying influences of the winds or the air are denoted in the special *Fung-shui* nomenclature by the term *fung shah*⁶ (Am. *hong soah*), »noxious effects of the winds". There exist various means to ward them off. Suppose it is feared they will burst forth from some break in the mountains, it is then

¹ 地理.

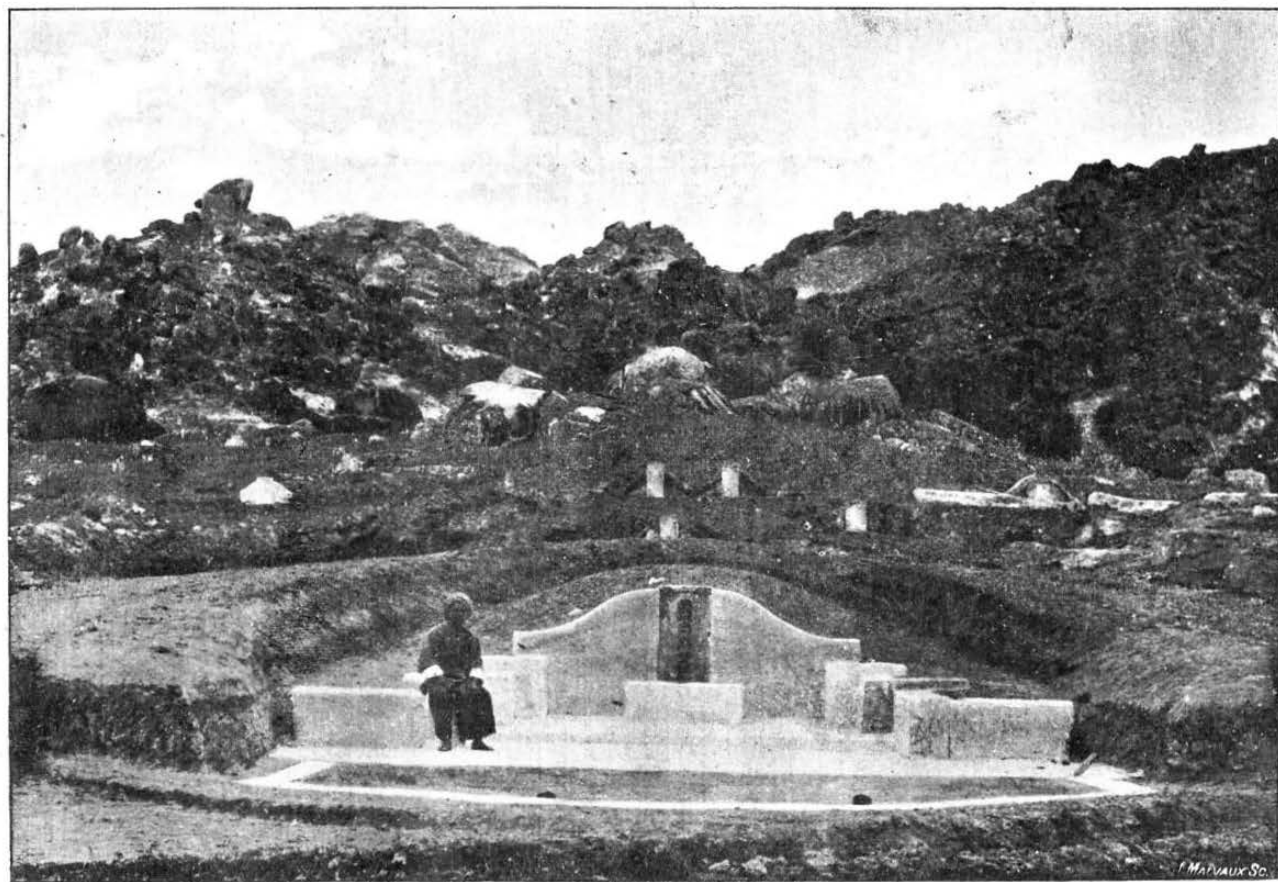
⁴ 陰陽先生.

² 先生.

⁵ 陰陽師.

³ 師.

⁶ 風煞.



Grave with a single Earthen Bank.

deemed necessary to build the grave in such a way that this opening cannot be seen from the spot where the corpse must lie, or so that it is hidden from view by some mountain boulder, house or other object. In many cases, the dangerous gap is artificially rendered invisible by means of stones piled up at a correct distance from the grave, in accordance with the indications given by Fung-shui professors. Such so-called Fung-shui t'ah¹ or »Fung-shui pagodas" are very numerous in the mountainous provinces of the South. As a rule they are so far from the spot they are supposed to protect, that in reality they do not screen it from the wind at all, thus proving the Fung-shui wisdom in evading dangers to be on a level with that of the ostrich.

Gaps or breaks in the mountains being harmless to a grave if they are invisible from the place where the corpse lies, it follows that the danger may be avoided by burying the corpse sufficiently deep. But this expedient is not very often resorted to, as, in most cases, it would cause the dead to lose the protecting ridges and brows of the mountains from view and thus annihilate their useful effects. For, as Fung-shui combines logic with wisdom, it cannot but conclude that, whereas unseen dangers are no dangers, unseen protection is no protection.

As a matter of course, a grave surrounded by mountains without either gaps or deficiencies is hardly obtainable. Nor is it easy to find a spot from which the person, who is buried there, can see a surrounding range of hills. These difficulties are ingeniously overcome by building around the tomb, at the back and the sides, a well finished artificial ridge. This is a low embankment of earth (see Plate XXIV), which at the same time serves to prevent the rain water, flowing down from the surrounding high ground, from washing away the tumulus. Our readers know that Chinese coffins are usually high, bulky, and, among the well-to-do, considerably broader at the head than at the foot (pp. 319 *sqq.*). When such a coffin is buried in the proper way, viz. with the head up against the slope, and in a shallow pit, lest the dead should lose the brow of the mountains out of sight, the tumulus thrown up over it naturally obtains an ellipsoidal shape, the broad side of which, like that of the coffin, lies highest. This tumulus again in its turn determines the shape of the embankment. The latter embracing the three larger sides, its form becomes necessarily that of a horse-shoe, or, oftener still, of

¹ 風水塔.

an Ω , the ends being bent outward, in order that the noxious influences of the winds, on striking against the embankment, may glide along it and be forced to roll away from the grave to the right and left. Many of these embankments are built of masonry, or of puddled clay mixed with lime, and plastered over with white mortar, forming low walls, one or two feet in height. Some few are of solid granite. Several graves have a double fence, the one of solid masonry or granite, and then a much broader one of earth, the latter being always on the outside of the first (see Plate XXV). Both are called at Amoy *bōng moa*¹, which may be rendered: »the piazza or side gallery of the grave», the term being an allusion to the verandahs on the right and left of mansions and temples.

A *bōng moa* never extends along the front. For, according to theory, there is no necessity whatever to ward off any *fung shah* from that side, as graves and buildings of every kind, though they may in fact face any point of the compass, are supposed to be turned towards the mild and blessed south, the cradle of warmth, light, life and productive summer rains. There are, furthermore, stringent reasons forbidding the presence of sight-obstructing objects in front of graves, which we shall pass in review on pp. 945 *seq.*

No attempt to attract the good influences of the winds unto graves, houses or temples is, as far as we know, ever made. Perhaps no expedients to effect this have been invented, as they are totally superfluous, because of the prevailing notion that good and beneficial influences naturally obtain their full scope wherever counteracting or neutralizing evil influences are sufficiently warded off.

The attempts of the Chinese to control the winds which strike the graves of the dead, the temples of the gods and the habitations of living men, are by no means simply intended as a protection of those beings from the inclemencies of the climate and its immediate consequences, such as sickness and indisposition of all kinds. The scope of the Fung-shui system extends much farther. The climate being ruled by the winds, the winds become the cause of all things, good or evil, which Nature showers down upon this earth. Hence, the grand art of controlling their influences is the art of regulating the fortunes and happiness of mankind. Winds blowing from the North and North East, as they generally do in

¹ 墓庀 或 墓廡.

China from October till February or March, freeze up the northern provinces, and in the South scarcely send down a single drop of rain, thus destroying the vegetable kingdom and putting a stop to agricultural pursuits. The southern or south-western winds which prevail during the other half of the year, on the contrary, produce warmth and growth, blessing the Empire with copious rains and abundant crops. But, should these monsoons deviate from their regular course, or become disturbed, calamities are sure to ensue. Dry winds in summer entail poor crops and dearth, dooming the people to starvation. When typhoons rage, whole provinces in the South are deluged by rains, which cause the streams and rivers to overflow and destroy the crops in innumerable fields. No wonder, therefore, that the Chinese people are deeply conscious of their dependence on the winds, and feel the greatest reverence and sympathy for a system which promises everybody protection against their baneful influences, ever holding up before their eyes the irrefutable device: »When the winds (fung) blow harmoniously and the rains (shui) come down regularly, the Realm shall flourish and the people live in peace and comfort”¹. This tenet occurs in a very old book, viz. the Historical Records, in the following words: »If the course (Tao) of the Universe »be such that cold and heat do not come in due season, diseases »will prevail; and if it be such that winds and rains do not come »at the proper time, there will be famine”².

Winds in the very first instance commanding the influences of Nature upon earth, Fung-shui professors are perfectly correct in considering them as the first and principal element of their system. They do not, however, go so far as to attribute constant beneficial influences to certain points of the compass, and pernicious influences to others. Even the cold and rigorous blasts from the North may be salutary, the mildest southern zephyrs extremely dangerous, according as they have been in contact with certain celestial or terrestrial influences. Every geomancer entertains private views on this subject, which it is scarcely possible, and certainly quite useless, to endeavour to unravel.

Nor do geomancers devote less of their attention to the chief results of the favourable operation of the winds, viz. to rains and water, indicated by the second syllable of the word Fung-shui. Water

¹ 風調雨順國泰民安.

² 天地之道寒暑不時則疾、風雨不節則饑. *Shi ki*, ch. 24, l. 17.

being an element indispensable to life, and especially necessary for an agricultural people like the Chinese, neither living men in their dwellings, nor disembodied souls in their graves and temples, nor divinities in their sanctuaries, can ever be at ease or enjoy prosperity, unless its blessed influences be concentrated upon those spots. These influences are called *shui shen*¹ (Am. *tsui sîn*): »aquatic spiritual agencies”.

Rivers and rivulets, brooks and gulleys, lakes, tanks, ponds and seas, being the bearers of the waters showered down from the heavens, are all bearers of these *shui shen*. Even when perfectly dry, they are still regarded as such, Fung-shui philosophy contenting itself with theories. The sources of the water-courses which cross inhabited glens and valleys, and the mountains and mountain ranges in which they take their rise, are specially held to control human destiny, because they send down the precious fluid on which agriculture depends. Their position is carefully considered whenever a site for a grave, house or temple has to be selected.

Neither a wet nor a dry watercourse is allowed to run straight onwards to a grave, a human dwelling or a sanctuary. Otherwise, this building would become an obstacle in the way of the descending aquatic influences, nay, a rude declaration on the part of the living that they do not desire to have anything to do with these influences. Without a doubt the insulted element would avenge itself by accumulating evil on the spot, or, in any case, by flowing away to the right and left without benefiting the place in the least. A good Fung-shui may be obtained when the water flows down from the right or left, either in front of the spot in question or at the back of it, and then, passing along the front, finds its outlet in a lateral direction. It is all-important, however, that the water, in flowing away, should be invisible from the place where the corpse lies, or from the tabernacle in which the soul or the god is seated, as, otherwise, the soul or god would be able to see the beneficial aquatic influences flowing away and thus derive no advantage from them.

As no water may flow down straight in front, it follows that it is always dangerous if the prospect in front is screened by a mountain slope which may send down water in that direction. Besides, such a slope may obstruct in their free natural course the aquatic influences coming down from the opposite side and consequently, in the case of a grave, obstruct the free expansion

¹ 水神.

and development of the prosperity of the family to whom it belongs, not only rendering them poor and miserable, but even causing them to die out. Hence it is an established principle of geomancy that »Fung-shui which is cramped up too much" — *hong-súi khah pik*¹, as the Amoy Chinese say —, is bad Fung-shui. This does not mean that mountains in front are always harmful. They may even exercise a salutary influence, if they are located at a sufficient distance or answer to certain conditions; and it is the professors who decide this by their wise calculations.

Bad effects may likewise be exercised upon a grave by walls, houses or boulders obstructing the prospect in front. For this reason, the walls surrounding the gardens and grounds of European houses in some of the Treaty Ports have not seldom a spot of open-worked masonry, or a few small holes, made therein at the request of the owner of some grave behind, for the purpose of preserving both his prosperity and posterity from destruction. For the same reason, in the province of Fuhkien trees or shrubs are hardly ever allowed to grow in front of a grave. Every thing that happens to strike root there is ruthlessly destroyed, and geomancers, with the remarkable acuteness and wit which distinguish them, are constantly pointing out herbs and shrubs which are injurious. Trees growing at the back or the sides of a grave are, however, generally considered as beneficial, they having the same effect as a *bōng moa*. Yet, as grounds deemed suitable for burying are usually studded with graves, such trees are rare, owing to the fact that they might exert bad influences upon the graves of others. As a consequence, grave grounds in the mountainous South are generally dreary wastes, sparsely covered with grass and weeds and looking but little adapted to serve the dead as an agreeable resting place, especially in summer, when they are burnt and scorched by the tropical heat. But such considerations do not seem to occur to the minds of the Chinese when the question is asked: where shall we bury our dead.

This fact is also to be ascribed to the doctrine that Fung-shui may not be cramped in front of a grave, viz. that stone images of men and animals have seldom, if ever, been erected there in recent times. We have called attention to this point already on page 822. It proves that objects nowadays considered harmful to a grave, were not so regarded in former times, and it illustrates the powerful hold Fung-shui has upon the nation, since the highest classes have now given up

¹ 風水復逼.

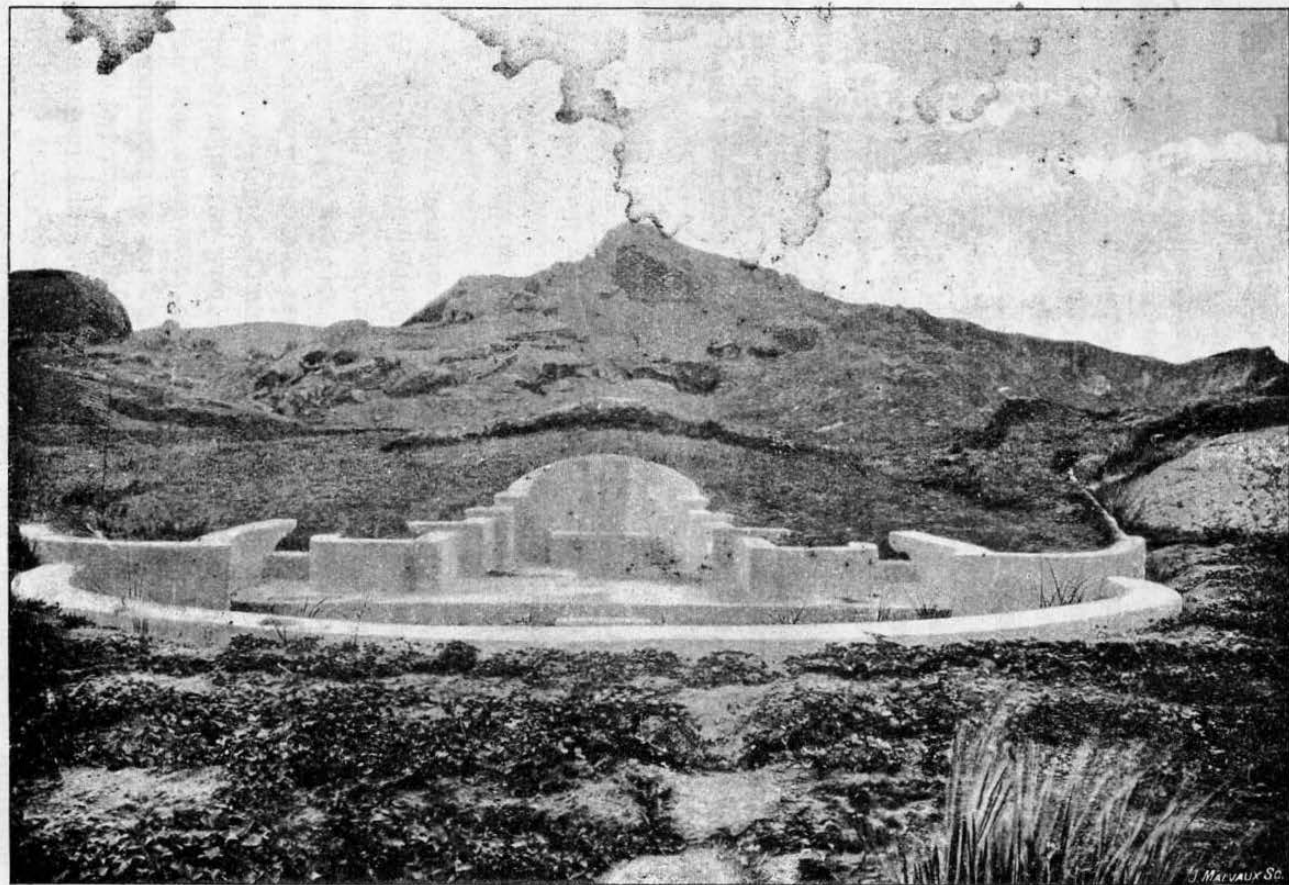
in obedience thereto a time-hallowed privilege which, being conferred by the Sons of Heaven, shed the greatest lustre and distinction on the memory of their dead.

Just as the æolian influences, so those of the watery element can be artificially controlled.¹ Should no natural water-course run past a grave, house or temple, this deficiency is often remedied by constructing a tank in front of it, to receive the water which flows down from all sides when it rains; this tank becomes a receptacle for aquatic influences, whence they extend themselves beneficially over the immediate surroundings. In the case of large mansions, palaces and temples, the tank is situated in the centre of the court-yard which was anciently painted partly or entirely red, and hence such tanks are generally styled *tan ch'î*¹, »vermilion court-yards". As a rule, they are curved on one side; the opposite straight side runs parallel with the front line of the grave or building, and the curved side is turned away therefrom. Great temples and palaces have the largest and deepest, which are generally paved at the bottom, and lined on all sides with square blocks of granite, marble or dolomite. Those in front of graves are small, hardly ever deeper than one or two feet, and of plastered masonry, or of earth mixed with lime (comp. Pl. XXIV and XXV); in some few cases they are square, sometimes circular.

The Fung-shui doctrines prescribe that the greatest attention should be bestowed upon the opening through which the water leaves such a tank, for, as our readers will easily understand, it commands entirely the influences of the shui shen accumulated in this latter. It may neither be too small, nor too large, or, in other words, the water must not flow away either too slowly or too quickly; the situation of the opening is also calculated with the utmost nicety and must, at all events, be invisible from the site where the corpse lies or, in the case of a temple, from the tabernacle occupied by the ancestral tablets or the images of the gods. It makes no difference if such tanks stand dry. They do not lose their efficacy thereby, any more than the brooks or gullets do. Those in front of graves are often made without any intention of their being filled with water, the grave being thereby kept drier and less exposed to the attacks of termites.

Grave tanks and grave brooks certainly do not date from recent

¹ 丹墀.



Grave with a Bank of Masonry and one of Earth.

times. As stated on pp. 436 and 437, they are mentioned in Chinese literature in connection with the mausolea of Hoh Lü and his daughter, who lived in the fifth century before Christ, and also in certain accounts of the burial of Shi Hwang and the imperial mausolea of the Han dynasty. It may be surmised that the custom of this family to place each of their sepulchres in an excavated plot of ground (see page 405), is to be ascribed to a desire that water might flow towards it from many sides and be collected in a tank or brook dug in its immediate vicinity. Ponds and moats were also constructed near the grave of the magnate Chang Pohnga, who lived under the Han dynasty (see page 446). It is a question whether their origin may not even be traced up to those misty ages of which we have spoken on page 376, when, as a consequence of the custom of burying the dead in the houses in which they had dwelled during their lifetime, burial grounds were actual villages occupied by the dead and, in imitation of real villages, were protected by walls and, on the chief or front side, by running water, — uncivilized man generally having chosen the banks of rivers for a dwelling place.

We may note here by the way that the curious custom, mentioned on page 101, of confining the dead at flood tide or while some pails of sea water, taken at high tide, are standing in the same apartment, likewise belongs to those practices which purport the concentrating of aquatic influences in the graves. Nobody doubts but this water, drawn at *high* tide, will *fully* work upon the corpse while it is being encoffined, and its influences are thus, so to say, enclosed in the coffin and afterwards deposited in the tomb.

Doubtlessly it is with the same object of imbuing corpses with aquatic influences, that the Chinese of Amoy place them, while they are being conveyed to their last abode, under a cover embroidered with clouds and dragons, dragons having been in China, since very ancient times, the emblems of fertilizing rains (see p. 181). We may, furthermore, again refer to our statement made on page 213, that it is considered a very auspicious omen when rain falls whilst a grave pit is being filled up: indeed, Nature itself then showers down its most beneficial influences, which cannot but yield precious fruits of felicity to the offspring of the deceased man.

The foregoing pages sufficiently prove that mountains and hills, or, more correctly speaking, the configurations of the earth, are an all-important element in the Fung-shui system. Indeed, controlling, as they do, the influences of the winds, they regulate the principal

benefits of Nature, especially rain and water; besides it is from the mountains that water-courses take their rise and carry the beneficial influences of the principal element of Nature far away on all sides, through valleys and districts, even through entire provinces, kingdoms and empires.

The configurations of the ground are important also in another respect. They are bearers, depositories of the influences of the heavens, and as such can work most beneficially upon the fate of man.

Our readers know already what these influences are, viz. the so-called *t'ien khi*¹ or »Celestial Breath", the energy of the Yang or highest power of the Universe, specially identified (comp. page 22) with Heaven, as it embraces Light and Warmth. It shares the supreme sway in Nature with the »Terrestrial Breath" *ti khi*², or the energy of the principle Yin which represents Darkness and Cold and is identified with Earth (page 22). By the co-operation of these two principles life is created; in other words: Yang and Yin alternately bearing sway in Nature and blending their influences together, are the causes of constant growth and decay, of life and death, of the annual rotation of production and destruction. Indeed, the *Li ki* (ch. 38, l. 11) explicitly states: »Everything which exists is engendered after Heaven and Earth »have joined together"³, and (ch. 20, l. 37) »when in the first »month of the vernal season the Celestial Breath descends and »the Terrestrial Breath ascends, Heaven and Earth unite harmoniously and the vegetable kingdom is disclosed and set in »motion"⁴. The *Yih king* also declares that: »When Heaven and »Earth exert their influences, all things are transformed and vivified"⁵. Lü Puh-wei in the third century before our era pronounced the same opinion: »The first causes of production", he wrote, »are Heaven and Earth"⁶. And Chu Hi, the authoritative philosopher

1 天氣.

2 地氣.

3 天地合而後萬物興焉. Sect. 郊特牲, III.

4 孟春之月天氣下降,地氣上騰、天地和同、草木萌動. Sect. 月令, I.

5 天地感而萬物化生. Ch. 10, or sect. 象下傳.

6 始生之者天地. *Lü-shi ch'un ts'iu*, chapter I, § 本生.

who lived in the twelfth century, formally subscribed to these ancient doctrines, declaring that »the Two Breaths by uniting and exciting each other produce and reproduce everything”¹.

As a matter of course, in every part of the ground, in every chain of mountains, in every bluff or rock, Nature has laid down a certain quantity of Yin or Terrestrial Breath. But, according to the above doctrines, it cannot exert any life-producing influences unless it be at the same time imbued with some Yang or Celestial Breath. Geomancers alone are capable of deciding whether this latter be represented in an adequate proportion, and whether the ground has any value for building purposes and grave making. They derive their conclusions from the outlines and forms of the surroundings. Starting from the fact that the celestial sphere has, since ancient times, been divided into four quarters, viz. the Azure Dragon, the Red Bird, the White Tiger and the Black Tortoise, identified respectively with the East, the South, the West and the North (comp. page 317), their wise predecessors have taught, during a long series of ages, that no part of the soil can be fully impregnated with the beneficial influences of Heaven unless those four quarters operate upon it conjointly, that is to say, unless it be surrounded by mountains, bluffs, boulders or buildings which can be identified with those symbolic animals. Graves and edifices being, in theory, turned to the South, they must have a Tiger on the right or theoretical western side, a Dragon on the left, a Tortoise at the back, and a Bird in front. All-important is the presence of a Tiger and a Dragon. For, these animals represent all that is expressed by the word Fung-shui, viz. both æolian and aquatic influences, Confucius being reputed to have said that »the winds follow the tiger”², and the Dragon having, since times immemorable, in Chinese cosmological mythology played the part of chief spirit of water and rain.

So, for instance, Amoy is unanimously declared by all the wise men of the town to be indebted for its prosperity to two knolls flanking the inner harbour, and vulgarly styled *Hô-t'ao soa*³ or »Tiger-head Hill” and *Ling-t'ao soa*⁴ or »Dragon-head Hill”.

1 二氣交感化生萬物. »Illustrated Dissertation on the Great Ultimate Principle” 太極圖說, quoted in the Khanghi Dictionary, *in verbo* 氣

2 風從虎. See the *Yih king*, chapt. 16, or' sect. 文言傳.

3 虎頭山.

4 龍頭山.

This latter, which is situated on the opposite shore, on the islet of Kulangsu, is crowned with huge boulders poised in a fantastic manner, upon which professors have had several blocks of granite arranged for the purpose of helping the imagination to discover the outlines of a dragon on the spot. The costs of these improvements were borne by some well-to-do citizens, anxious to promote their own prosperity and that of their fellow townsmen. Of the city of Canton » the favourable situation lies herein, that it is placed in » the very angle formed by two chains of hills running in gentle » curves towards the Bogue, where they almost meet, forming a » complete horse shoe. The chain of hills known as the White Clouds » represent the Dragon, whilst the undulating ground on the other » side of the river forms the White Tiger. The most favourable sites » in Canton are therefore on the ground near the North gates, » whence the Tiger and the Dragon run off to the right and left”¹.

Similarly, Peking is protected on the North-west by the Kin-shan² or Golden Hills, which represent the Tiger and ensure its prosperity, together with that of the whole Empire and the reigning dynasty. These hills contain the sources of a felicitous water-course called Yuh-ho³ or » Jade river”, which enters Peking on the North-west and flows through the grounds at the back of the Imperial Palace, then accumulates its beneficial influences in three large reservoirs or lakes dug on the west side, and finally flows past the entire front of the inner Palace, where it bears the name of The Golden Water (comp. page 635). Its course therefore perfectly accords with the principles which are valid for grave brooks and grave tanks (comp. page 944).

In thus making use of the configurations which render the relative position and extent of the influences of the four Celestial Animals favourable or unfavourable, there is room for countless combinations. Every mountain, rock, bluff, house or tower may form a good Animal, and at one spot serve for a Tiger and at the same time as a Dragon, Bird or Tortoise for another spot, the fancy and imaginative ingenuity of geomancers being allowed free scope in all cases. With endless manipulations of their compass, consisting of a small magnetic needle around which all the elements that enter in their calculations are inscribed in concentric circles, these men deliberately point out whether the Tiger

¹ Eitel, Feng-shui, page 23.

² 金山, more generally called Wan-sheu shan 萬壽山.

³ 玉河.

and Dragon unite harmoniously, or, as they call it, »lie in a bow-shaped line in mutual embrace”¹, or whether their forms are spoiled or done away with by other conjunctions, finally deciding with an air of profound wisdom and a flood of technical terms which overawe their clients, whether the site to be fixed upon for burial or building purposes forms »a perfect complex”, ch’ing küh². If so, the Fung-shui is good, provided it answers to certain other requirements which we must still pass in review. Every son of man who buries an ancestor in such a spot, or builds his house there, shall be rich, prosperous and blessed with a numerous offspring that shall not die out unto the last day. They shall rise high in the social scale and gain glorious positions in the civil and military service, for the Dragon symbolizes the Emperor and his beneficial civil government, and the Tiger martial power and intrepidity. Sad to say, however, the value of such predictions is generally somewhat detracted from by the diversity of opinions prevailing among geomancers, each of whom is imbued with professional jealousy and cherishes the rather arrogant conviction that his own wisdom is always necessary for the correction of the opinions pronounced by his colleagues.

Dragons and Tigers are by no means equally important in the Fung-shui system. Professors are wont to say: »Any spot is felicitous that has a Dragon and no Tiger; but a spot is not of a certainty unfelicitous if it has only a Tiger and no Dragon”³. This pre-eminence of the Dragon is due in the first place to its heading the list of the four Celestial Animals and to its being the emblem of spring (see p. 317), which is the first of the seasons, and further, to its identification with Water, the all-important element without which all Fung-shui is null and void. Practically, Fung-shui professors are accustomed to speak of a Dragon when referring in reality to a Dragon and Tiger; in short, the word Dragon comprises the high grounds in general, and the water-streams which have their sources therein or wind their way through them. Hence it is that books on Fung-shui commonly commence with a bulky set of dissertations, comprised under the heading: »Rules concerning the Dragon”⁴, in reality dealing with the doctrines about the

1 龍虎二山弓抱.

2 成局.

3 有龍無虎亦爲吉、有虎無龍未是凶.

4 龍法.

situation and contours of mountains and hills and the direction of water-courses. In these dissertations every imaginable combination of hills and peaks is amply discussed and illustrated by coarse woodcuts. Such combinations generally are indicated by special fancy names, mostly derived from objects they bear a likeness to. These names too are believed to exercise a mighty influence upon the destiny of those who live under the Fung-shui of such configurations, all of them being calculated to call up before the mind ideas associated with either felicity or mishap.

The doctrine that the configuration of the ground is a sure index to the presence of celestial influence, is better understood when we bear in mind that objects, such as soul tablets and images, which call up before the mind spirits or so-called shen, are generally believed by the Chinese to be inhabited by such spirits, and are consequently made for the dead and the gods in order that the latter may radiate their beneficial influences therefrom over mankind. Such shen being composed of Yang (comp. page 110) or Celestial Breath, the Chinese have every reason to believe that the shen of the four Animals or quarters of the sphere will settle in objects such as hills, mountains or other configurations, which by their shape and situation call them up before the mind.

The active operation produced in the earth by the Celestial and Terrestrial Breath properly intermixing, is denoted by the term shan ling¹, »effective operation of high grounds"; we might call it the living and active animus of a configuration. Each configuration is a complex of mere lifeless forms when the two Breaths, confined in it, are latent and inactive. Its Fung-shui in such cases is, as geomancers express it, dead.

Like a current of vital power, the shan ling flows in every direction through favourable sites, especially through ledges and edges of hills which geomancers cleverly identify with the limbs of Dragons, Tigers, Tortoises and Birds. Thanks to the wisdom and experience of these men, it is possible to learn which limbs are thoroughly imbued with shan ling and accordingly the most preferable for making graves or building houses on. Sloping ledges are generally considered to be favourable spots in this respect: indeed, even a child can understand that shan ling with a descending motion must develop great vigour and energy, particularly at the end of its downward course. Moreover, it accumulates wher-

¹ 山靈.

ever in its downward course it meets with some eminence sufficient to absorb and collect it, or to impede its course and prevent its flowing away. Such sites are called ling meh' or »(shan-) ling pulses'', where the animus lives and throbs as does the vital power in the pulses of man. The ledges in question geomancers denote by the term ling tsih²: »back-bones of the (shan-) ling''.

A body imbued with vitality is generally a breathing body. Geomancers, inverting this theorem, teach that formations of the ground possess no shan ling unless they contain what is styled ling khi³, »(shan-) ling breath''. Again it is the configuration which indicates the presence of the latter. It is found exclusively in undulating grounds; hollow, flat or straight-lined formations do not respire, and are therefore of little or no use for burying or building purposes. In making graves, attention should also be paid to the fact that hard, rocky soil is breathless; compact, reddish loam on the contrary is full of breath and life and consequently prevents a quick decay of the coffin and the corpse, rendering the bones hard, white, and suitable for binding the soul for a long time to the grave. Besides, white ants and other voracious insects do not harbour in such loamy soil, which fact geomancers ascribe to the influence of the breath. The breath can be active or latent, accumulated or expanded, powerful or weak, floating on the surface or hidden underneath, unalloyed or mixed with other substances, and the astuteness of the professors must detect all these qualities. By various circumstances, which they alone know how to trace, the breath may also partly or entirely vanish, which is a proof that the operation of the shan ling has been put a stop to and the Fung-shui of the spot is dying, or dead.

Even though a configuration be such as to leave no doubt as to the presence of an abundant quantity of Yang and Yin, it is not yet certain that these two Breaths produce shan ling and would thus co-operate beneficially on the grave. They may be inert and exercise no influence upon each other; however, this state of latency cannot last long. In the end they must awake from their torpor, as is the case in spring, when they fill the Universe with vital energy and re-vivify the vegetable kingdom. Not seldom, at burials, geomancers deem it necessary to arouse the two Breaths from their lethargy, in order that the family may forthwith begin to reap profit from the grave. To this end they proceed in the way

¹ 靈脉.

² 靈脊.

³ 靈氣.

described on page 209. It is plain enough to our readers that the object of the strange demeanour of the professor while standing on the *t'ien-tik hng* or »the spot in which the beneficial celestial influence or breath is concentrated", is to actuate it there; subsequently, when he rushes down in the direction of the grave, he rouses it also in the »pulse" which connects the *t'ien-tik hng* with the latter, thus bringing forth an energetic downward current and accumulating a large store of *shan ling* over and around the corpse.

Since time immemorial, the four heavenly quadrants or Animals have each been subdivided into seven constellations; called *siu*¹. These twenty-eight groups, about which we shall have more to say on pp. 971 *sqq.*, are irregularly distributed over the sphere as it is visible in China. Hills and mountain-ranges being the embodiment of the influences of the Four Animals, their several parts are deemed to stand each under the influence of a *siu*. In this manner, geomancy is ingeniously combined with astrology and the field of speculation greatly widened. The *siu* being important elements in astrological science, they contribute much to rendering Fung-shui a black art so mysterious that it can only be practised with success by the proficients who derive a livelihood from it.

Geomancers in their theories also give a place to other groups of stars which they believe to correspond with certain parts of the Earth and to determine the fate thereof. It is, in fact, constantly on their lips as an axiom of their system, that »the stars of the Heavens above, and the configurations of this Earth beneath correspond with each other"². This dogma directly arises from the great fundamental principle of both ancient and modern astrology, viz. that every human affair has a star or asterism controlling it. Practically, however, the combination of astrology with geomancy plays a very inferior part; so we need not dive into its vagaries.

Hills and mountains are also very powerful in their influence upon the destiny of man if their outlines are such as to allow the imagination to see in them felicitous or infelicitous omens. For instance, if a hill bears on its top a boulder of large dimensions, weighing heavily upon it, the fortunes of the people around may be crushed down and poverty and misfortune for ever prevail among them. If people, however, consider they recognize in its outlines some animal portending good luck or misfortune, those who dwell under the shade of its Fung-shui will enjoy that luck or suffer

¹ 宿.

² 天星地形上下相應.