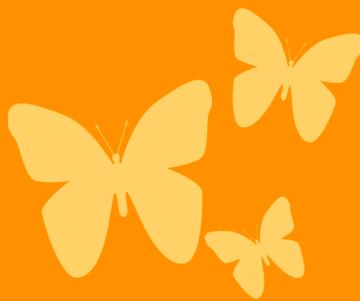


Popular symbols & their meaning



Chinese ancient coins

Ancient coins have strong association with wealth and abundance, and often used in many configurations



Maneki Neko The Lucky Cat

This is one of the most popular and universal symbol of attracting wealth



FENGSHUI AND SYMBOLISM



Wu Lou

This unique shape was used as medicine container in the past; therefore it is a symbol of preventing ill health



Qi Lin

Mystical animal, symbol of protection against bad energy

It seems like the two words are inseparable in modern day's practice. Undoubtedly, Feng Shui has gained more popularity due to the use of symbols and the retail merchandising associated with them. But what is it about symbolism, how did it come about, does it really work and can Feng Shui make do without it? For those of you who are wondering, let us explore...

Symbols and Chinese Culture

Since thousands of years ago, Chinese culture had been very strong on symbolism. Symbols are everywhere, from the pair oranges and other Chinese New Year hampers, eating certain symbolic food at certain times, to the colours one should wear at certain occasions and festivities. The origins of Chinese writing itself were sets symbols that evolved over time! Feng Shui originated from China and evolved with Chinese culture, therefore it is not surprising that symbolism also evolved heavily in its usage over the span of the centuries.

There are many debates whether symbols actually work. Some said that because of the repeat usage of certain symbols over the centuries in certain cultures, the understanding was passed down in our DNA at the subconscious level. Some said certain figures and symbols already have special power regardless of one's ignorance of the meaning associated with it, and therefore should be used to alleviate Feng Shui effectiveness. Some other practitioners reject the use of symbolism totally in the quest of making Feng Shui a logical deductive practice. Then there are those who practice Feng Shui mixed with certain religious beliefs such as Taoism, which takes symbolism to a whole different level.

How does it work?

Let us try to see the logic in symbolism. The easiest way to see how symbols work is through association with human psychology or feeling, because it is after all, a form of energy or human Qi. When I was in Japan, not knowing the language or where I was, feeling extremely hungry and lost, I was in desperate need for food. And suddenly, from one hundred meters away I saw a very familiar yellow double arch symbol: McDonald! At that point the symbol really worked for me, because it evoked a happy and relief feeling that at least I could eat something I recognized, without having to understand anything else. Other famous universal brands such as Nike, Coca Cola and Apple have built strong positive association with their logos. Generally, the more universally accepted a symbol is--passed any language and cultural barriers--the more effective it will be.

At the end of the day, symbolism will always have differing opinions. Just like no single medicine can work for everyone, symbols may work for some and not for others. There are those who enjoy buying an expensive form of symbols and figures, while others prefer more modest approaches. The most important thing is to use symbols that you like, even if you may not know what it means, as well as to be comfortable with the price tag. Nothing worse than having an expensive symbol that you dislike: most certainly it will not be effective. 'Feel good' factor undoubtedly promote Feng Shui efficacy, and if nothing else, symbols and figurines can certainly give you that.



Fish - Chinese word for fish (*yu*) translates for abundance. Popular ones include koi, carp fish and Luo Han



Cabbage - is another popular symbol signifying 100 times of abundance (白菜), and the shape also resemble an *ingot*/ ancient Chinese gold bar



Mystical knot - its never-ending continuous knot symbolizes longevity