

## Issues & Answers

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE NEWS AND THE NEWSMAKERS

# Living in harmony

*Feng shui is being taken seriously in the real-estate business*

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STAFF WRITER

It's more than simple superstition. For many, it's a way of life.

Feng shui, the ancient Chinese art of arranging your living environment to maximize harmony and balance with nature and cosmic forces, is increasingly impacting local neighbourhoods, real estate agents, even the community in general.

For example, the Town of Markham has introduced a one-day feng shui workshop, through its recreation and culture department, where residents can learn "how the flow of positive energy can be improved to create a more harmonious environment."

Last year, U.S. author Sheida Hodge published *Feng Shui — A Guide for Increased Real Estate Sales to Asians*.

It's the third edition, new and expanded, and is used by agents throughout North America,

including Markham. And local real estate agents say the more they know about feng shui, the better they can serve their Asian clients.

"It's an entire philosophy, where everything is symmetrical, everything flows smoothly. Things like no trees blocking the front door and no stairs facing the front door are important to some clients," said Sutton Group real estate agent John Hawco. "Some people are just more superstitious than others, in any culture."

**Some potential buyers hire feng shui consultants to check out their homes before they write the cheque**

The feng shui principle most local residents would be familiar with is the belief that the number four is very unlucky because the word for four sounds like death.

"Some people actually refuse to even look at a house starting with

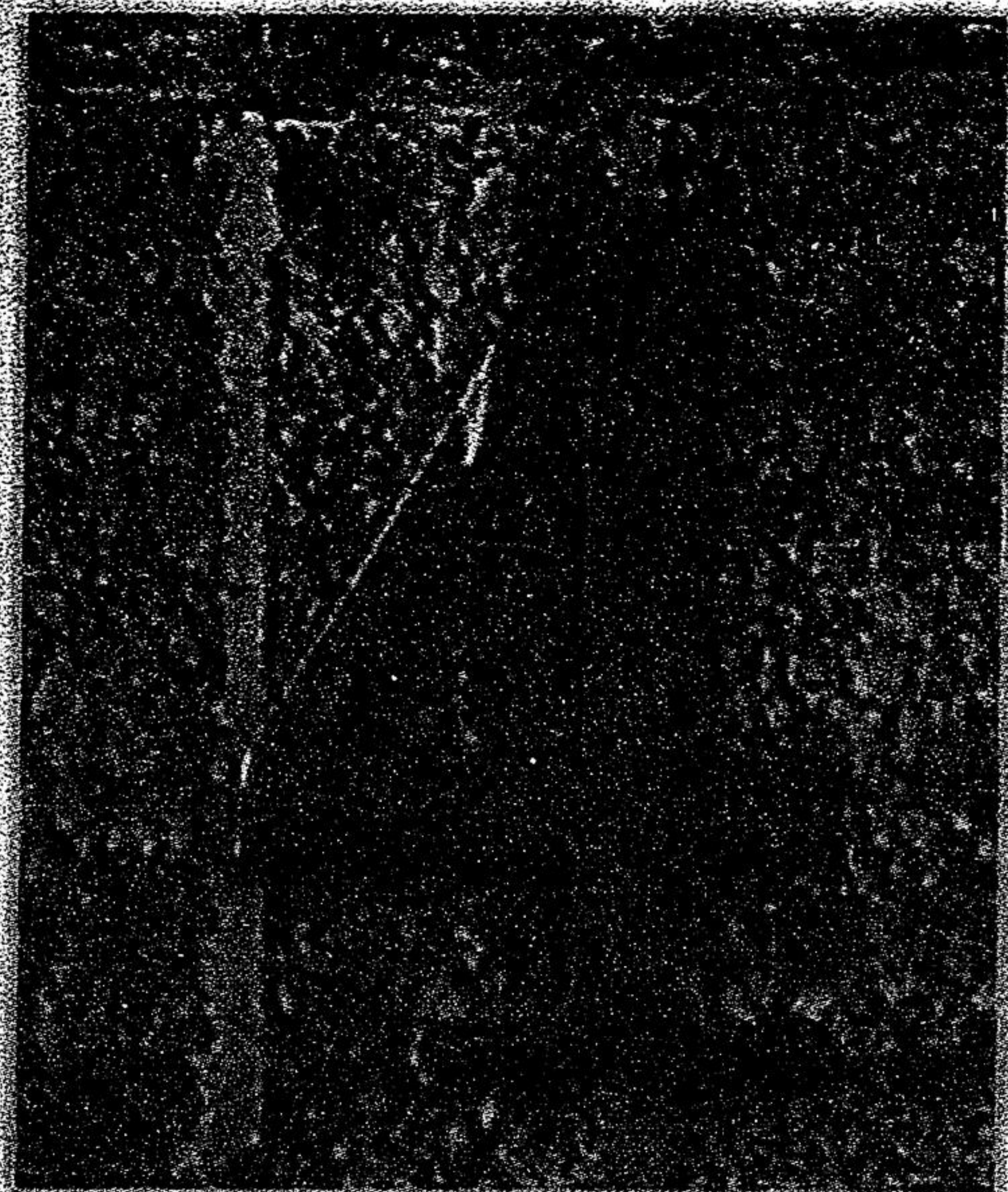
the number four — even non-Chinese," said real estate agent James Kan of Living Realty. "More and more people are aware of this now than ever before."

He said in his experience, perhaps eight of 10 Chinese people are concerned with the feng shui of their new homes, while only about two of every 10 Caucasians are aware of it.

And some potential buyers hire feng shui consultants to check out their homes before they write the cheque, he added.

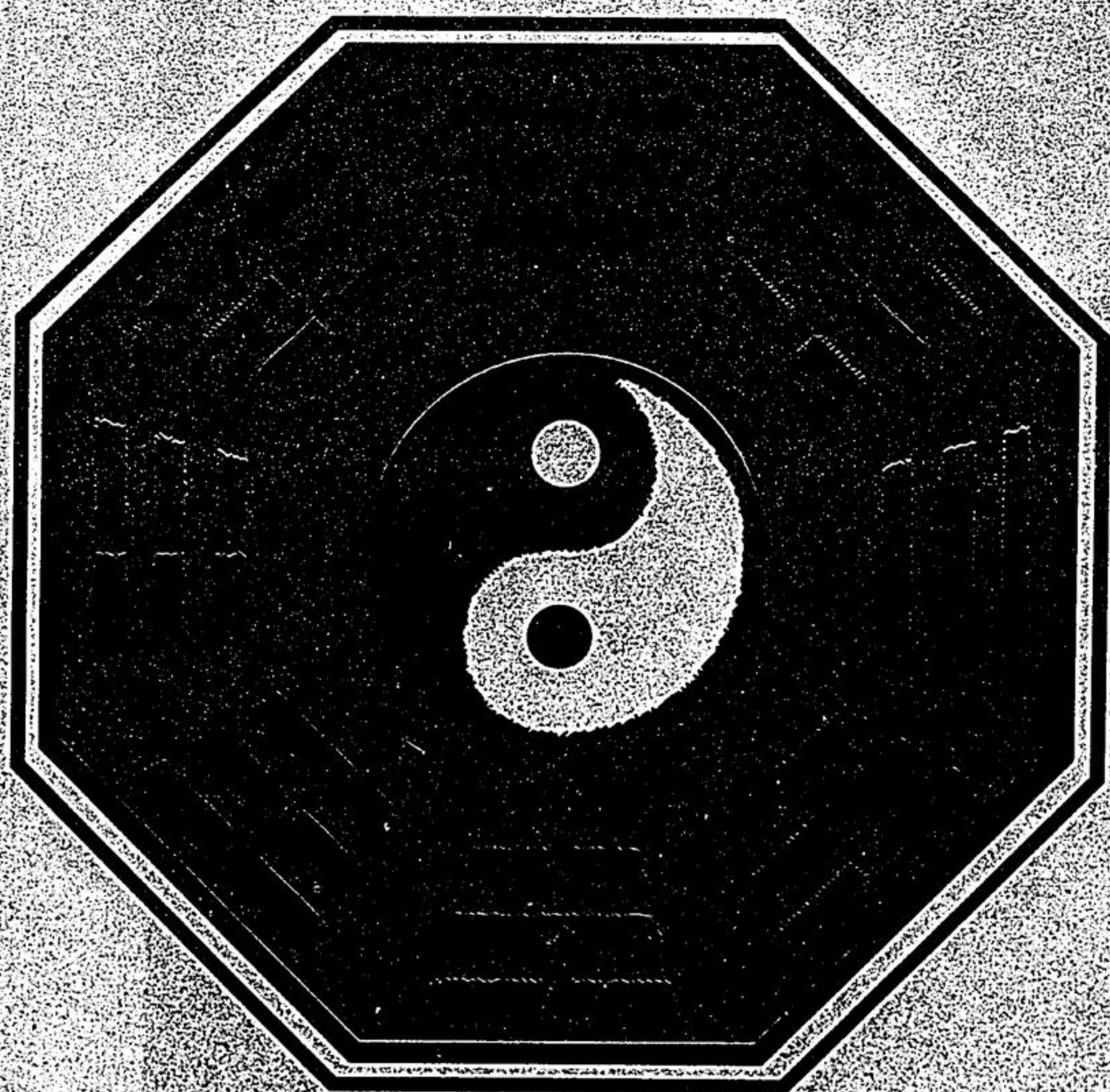
But not all Asians buy in to the ancient ways. Hodge's book cautions agents: "Not all Asians believe in feng shui and some may be insulted if you assume they do. In general it's best to wait until clients bring up the subject, though you can find subtle ways to let them know you are familiar with the tradition."

"Many Chinese are certainly concerned about it, but it's not like



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

See IMPROVING, page 19. The number four represents death to people who follow feng shui.



## The principals of feng shui

### BUILDING SITES AND LOCATIONS

The ideal location of an entrance can be determined by the owner's date and time of birth, but generally speaking, apartments and houses facing south are preferred.

WEALTH & PROSPERITY	FAME & REPUTATION	LOVE & MARRIAGE
HEALTH & FAMILY	CENTER (EARTH)	CREATIVITY & CHILDREN
KNOWLEDGE & SELF CULTIVATION	CAREER	HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL

Entrance

This bagua map can determine negative ch'i in homes. For example, a cluttered front hallway may represent trouble in one's career.

ferred.

High ground is better than low-lying land or valleys, healthy trees, especially to the north west is good ch'i, symbolizing protection. The back yard should be slightly larger than the front yard; this helps accumulate wealth.

Square or rectangular lots are best, as are symmetrical buildings. Irregular shapes are unbalanced and should be avoided.

### STREETS

Streets and highways act as waterways which channel ch'i. Busy highways can overrun a home with negative ch'i or suck it out the front door.

Houses on one-way streets which flow away from the entrance draws power out of the house. Houses built at the intersection of a Y-junction bring bad luck.

If a road curves suggesting a

sword-like shape, a house on the sharp edge, or bladed edge, brings sickness and poverty.

Proximity to or view of a cemetery is a bad omen.

Secret arrows, like sharp edges of roofs pointing directly to the site, are unlucky. A mirror shaped like an octagon, mounted in a strategic spot, can ward off harmful ch'i.

A home with a street pointed directly at it, like at a T-junction for example, is unlucky. Likewise, a home's driveway should not point right at the front door.

Dagger-like roads facing a house lead to ill-fortune and death.

### ENTRANCES

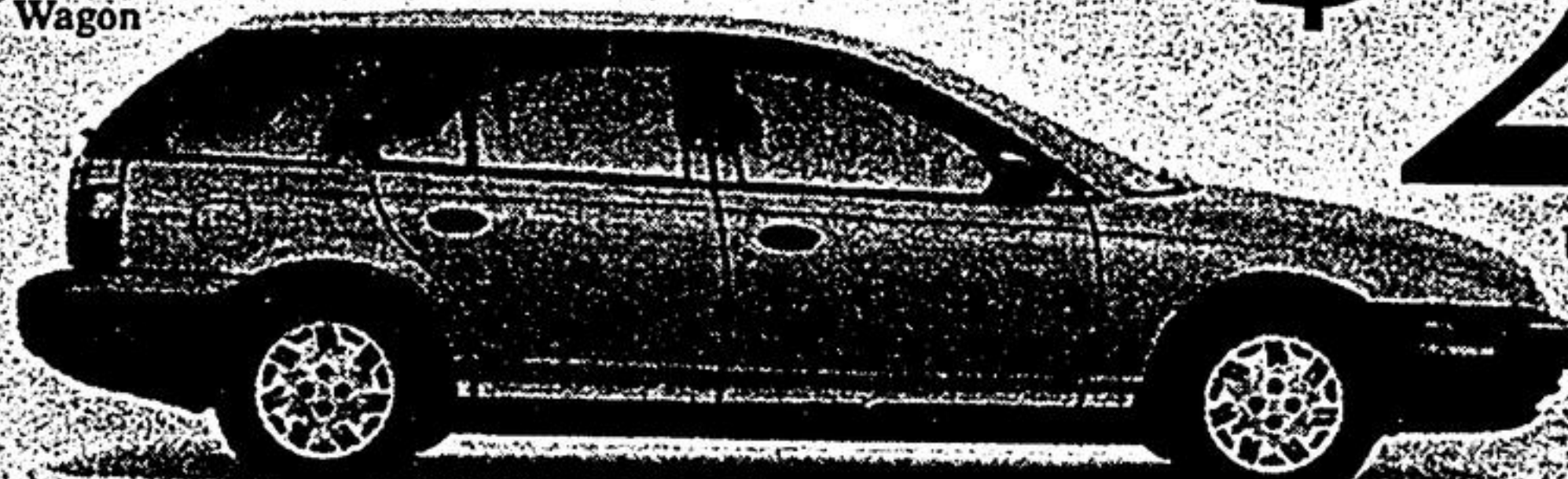
The front door should be wide enough to let ch'i in and should be proportional to the building's dimensions.

See NUMBERS, page 19.

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