I'm regularly in contact with my good friend in China, Matthew Hu Xinyu, who works with the Beiing Cultural Heritage Protection Center. His excellent "CHP" site can be seen at en.bjchp.org/english/indexen.asp . Matthew and his colleagues are working to see that the cultural relics of his country are properly preserved and valued, particularly in the old architectural areas, with their unique character and charm. The recent expansion and conversion of some areas of Beijing to accommodate the very successful Olympic Games, caused his people some apprehension, but things appear to be reasonably settled now, much to his relief.

Recently, Matthew sent me a note about a talk on feng shui that was to be given at his organization by an authority on that subject. I expressed some alarm at this, and Matthew informed me of something of which I was unaware, but might have discovered - that the traditional art of feng shui has been badly contorted by the myriad of "authorities" worldwide who've chosen to make it mystical and woo-woo - though that flavor persists, probably due to the cultural origins of the art. He assured me that the talk would be rational, and I responded to him:

Matthew: That is very satisfying, to know that the basic principle of feng shui - balance and proportion - will be emphasized by the professor. I hope you will congratulate him on presenting a practical, real, view of artistic and culturally-consistent theory and practice, regarding feng shui - which has become distorted and mysterious here in the USA, rather than being a cultural reflection of genuine Chinese taste and preference. I am happy to hear this, and I hope that you might communicate my delight to the professor for me, please.

[redacted]