

Bio-Medical Scientist Extraordinaire

She defies the stereotype image of scientists as technical, quiet and serious. The Petaling Jaya-born **Ms. Yap Hwee Boon**, is vibrant, interesting and humorous. She displays her intelligence and vitality in wide-ranging areas – from stem cells, to mountain climbing and *feng shui*.

Boon, as she likes to be called, reveals that her name has a very studious ring. In the *Hokkien* dialect, it means 'bright, intelligent scholar'. She confesses that she does enjoy studying challenging subjects.



Yap Hwee Boon

Age: 45, single

Occupation: Company Director,
Apac BioMed Solutions,
Managing Director, Feng Shui For Enriching Lives

Qualifications: Master of Science (Department of Medicine), University of Melbourne, Australia, Executive MBA, University of New South Wales, Australia

Favourite food: Malaysian fruits

Exercise: Meditation combined with Reiki and martial arts

Supplements: Gingko, multivitamins and more Vitamin C when travelling

Biological sciences were her favourite, from an early age. She has put her academic achievements to use in the bio-medical field and has contributed to several biotech breakthroughs. For instance, she developed a multi-million dollar business in new stem cell transplantation therapy and implemented a US\$150m biopharmaceutical facility for human blood products. She is sought after now not as a research scientist but one that has expertise in commercialising high-end biomedical innovations.

Boon's bio-medical consultancy is based in Melbourne, Australia, and she travels extensively in the Asia-Pacific region. "Understanding and managing the science, developing and implementing marketing strategies, dealing with different cultures, regulations and human egos" is how she explains her work. She knows the ins-and-outs of regulatory and clinical trial requirements and the intricacies of doing business in Japan, South Korea, China and Australia, visits the key opinion leaders and evaluates distributors in all these markets.

Having established a good reputation, Boon can pick and choose biotech projects to work on. In between projects, she delves into a totally different world of *feng shui*. Passing interest? Not really, considering that she is the daughter of renowned and highly respected *feng shui* **Grandmaster Yap Cheng Hai**. All her three brothers are fond of this subject and one of them is attached full-time to the Yap Cheng Hai Academy in Kuala Lumpur.

Boon reveals she was 'never pressurised' by her father to enter the world of *feng shui*. "My father liked to renovate and move things around in the house and he would explain to us the significance, but we children were not forced to study *feng shui*" she recalls. Boon was busy with her career in bio sciences and only seriously studied under her father in 1999. She carries out *feng shui* consultancy and teaches *feng shui* under her company **Feng Shui For Enriching Lives**.

Which is her passion? Bio medicine or *feng shui*? Boon admits that she is 'torn between two loves'. "It is a decision I have yet to resolve", she acknowledges. On one hand, she is excited about playing a role in breakthroughs in bio medicine that can benefit patients. On the other, she finds more satisfaction with *feng shui* because of the legacy she can leave – "I can pass on the knowledge to people who can use it to help themselves and others".

While not immersed in the world of bio medicine or *feng shui*, Boon finds pleasure in outdoor activities. She travels, walks the mountains and scuba dives. Boon is also a qualified martial arts instructor. This, she reveals, is attributed to her father's strict tutoring from childhood. "We were more or less forced to take up martial arts from the age of four," Boon recalls. She has mastered the various levels of the arts – right up to using fighting swords, and even taught *kung-fu* during her varsity days. She now sees the benefits of the gruelling early morning practices for they have helped her to develop both a healthy body and mind.