

# American Feng Shui Institute

*presents*

## FS205 – Advanced Sitting and Facing



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# Introduction from Master Sang

陽宅以坐為主

陰宅以向為重

In yang house, the sitting is the majority;

In yin house, the facing is important.

Nowadays, in Feng Shui practice, regarding the sitting and facing, clear guidelines or instructions are lacking on what the standard is for determining the sitting and facing of a building. This creates confusion for the beginner and sometimes even with professional practitioners.

If this basic technique problem is not solved, all the cases analyzed, either auspicious or inauspicious, are rendered meaningless. With years of teaching and practical experience, I have put the sitting and facing guidelines into a standard method to offer in my classes to help students learn how to determine sitting and facing.

In order to teach sitting and facing, I have to analyze these concepts step-by-step. In fact, I cannot avoid speaking about methods that differ from that which is taught by other Masters. This does not mean that my methods are right and others' are wrong. I am only giving out my over-30-years of practical experience in analyzing various types of buildings from houses to high-rise buildings, international airports to memorial parks.

I do hope that you enjoy this class.



# Sitting and Facing

One of the most important techniques required for an accurate Feng Shui analysis is determining the sitting and facing directions. Essentially, it is the building's back and front. This sounds simple enough, but since buildings are not all alike, it can be challenging at times.

There are different kinds of Feng Shui books on the market. No matter if it is a classical or new-age writer, few of them really go deeply into the topic of sitting and facing. Some of the writers only slightly touch upon it or try to avoid mentioning this concept.

In the old days, buildings were very simple, houses built in early towns were always with the front door facing the street and the sitting was always to the back. That is why none of the old books do mention this concept much. However, sitting and facing becomes quite challenging today, with many differences in modern architectural styles, building layouts, and environmental features.

Today, building architectural design occurs in many varied styles. The designs are not as simple as in years past. No more is the door always at the front, facing to the street only. The determination of the building's sitting and facing completely depends upon the practical experience and knowledge of every different individual Feng Shui practitioner. Therefore, the same house will have different readings and will receive different feedback from different Feng Shui practitioners. One says it is auspicious and another says it is inauspicious. If this situation continues, the overall practice of Feng Shui is at risk. Another unhealthy influence is the beginning Feng Shui learner who tries to practice professionally before being ready; They will get lost and lose confidence in what they have studied. This will be a big obstacle to overcome as the practice of Feng Shui grows.

# Which is more important, sitting or facing?

陽宅以坐為主

陰宅以向為重

In yang house, the sitting is the majority;

In yin house, the facing is important.

The above two sentences were written in an old classical feng shui book. The saying means: “In reading a yang house, the sitting is the critical direction and in a yin house, the facing is the most important.

# The Concepts of Sitting and Facing

In order to learn how to determine the sitting and facing, first we have to acquire some essential concepts of sitting and facing.

People have a face and a back. In practicing Feng Shui, a house also has a face and a back. The back of a house, we call the sitting. The face of a house, we call the facing. Sitting and facing are always opposite each other in a direct line. Therefore, a house sitting west can only have an east facing. The house sitting south, must have a north facing, and so on... If you get the facing side direction, then you have the sitting side direction as well. They are always opposite.

When you use the luopan to take a reading, do not place it against the wall or a door. This is incorrect. Hold it parallel to the wall. This is the first thing that one should remember as a practitioner.

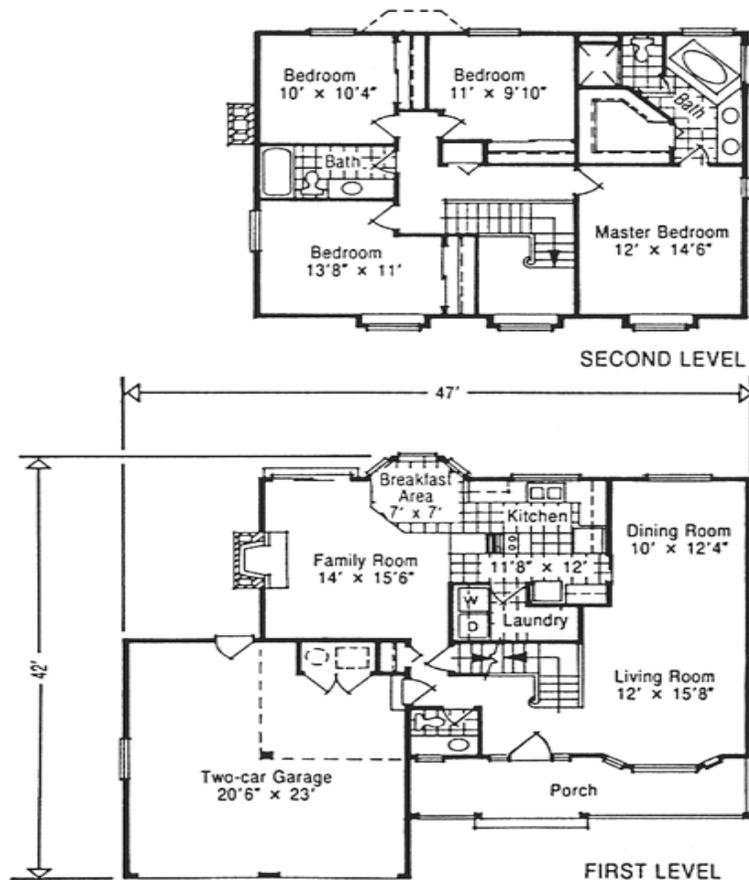
To understand the basics, we should discuss how the other Feng Shui practitioners currently determine the sitting and facing. Most practitioners use the following guidelines:

- The address number as the facing
- The entrance of the house as the facing
- the entrance of the unit as the facing
- The entrance of the high-rise building as the facing



This is a typically standard house. The facing is obviously on the same side as the front door. The facing is to the street and the sitting is to the back. This is a simple case and the usual way of looking at Feng Shui.

In the floor plan below, we can see that the entrance is at the front. The back is the kitchen and the family areas. Most Feng Shui practitioners will have no problem in determining the sitting and facing of this house. Don't forget that when you can determine the facing, then automatically the opposite is the sitting.



## Determining the Sitting and Facing

Consider the following when determining the Sitting and Facing. Each will be discussed below:

- The Ming Tang 明堂 (open space)
  - Exterior
  - Interior
- Yin and Yang
- Fullness and Emptiness
- Heavy and Light areas
- Closed and Open areas
- Private areas and areas of activity

# The Ming Tang

The Ming Tang is the flat open space in the facing. Often this area is a front yard, or in a commercial building, it is the plaza directly in front of the main entrance. Ming Tang means “bright space.” Once you determine the side with the Ming Tang, then you have the facing. The opposite side is the sitting. Sitting and facing are always opposite.

## The Exterior

Outside the building, there is the “Dai Ming Tang” or Big Ming Tang. When you are looking at the exterior, try to see where the Ming Tang is. Usually this is the flat open area just in front of the building.

There are clues for sitting and facing by observing the exterior of a building:

- How is the building decorated?
- Where is the facade?
- How is the building positioned among other buildings?
- Which sides are plain and which sides are ornate?

All of the above mentioned clues help to determine the sitting and facing. The facing is typically the more ornate side, and the sitting is the plain and uninteresting aspect of the building. Often, by simply thinking about which side would be the ideal subject for a photograph, you will realize the facing side.

## The Interior

The interior also can have a Ming Tang. This is known as the “Xiao Ming Tang” or Small Ming Tang. The interior Ming Tang is a “reception area,” a living or a public room. It is the active and welcoming area of the house.

The floor plan can provide clues such as where the living room, the small Ming Tong is. It may also show the “heavier” part of the building, such as the kitchen or utility rooms. These are often found in the sitting.

# Yin and Yang

A foundation concept in Feng Shui is yin yang theory. Yin is dark and yang is bright. Yin is quiet and yang is active. Based on these principles, you can discover the clues to the facing and sitting.

Sitting is Yin and Facing is Yang. Sitting is the quiet side. Facing is the active side. Areas that are bright or have windows tend to be on the facing. Areas that are dark and closed having walls without openings (doors and windows) tend to be on the sitting. These rules can apply to both the interior and exterior.

# Fullness and Emptiness

When examining the floor plan, we look for spaces that are “Full” and those that are “Empty.” A spacious living room is considered empty. Areas with rooms, kitchen and having heavy utilities are considered full. Walls of a floor plan can reveal areas that are spacious, and areas that are more crowded. The spacious side is empty, and the crowded side is full. Full is the sitting side and empty is the facing side.

# Heavy and Light

Similar to fullness and emptiness, heavy parts of the house are the sitting and the light part is the facing. Areas with more walls, rooms, kitchen, and heavy utilities are considered heavy. Areas with fewer walls, more space and open space are considered to be light. The heavy part is thus the sitting and the light part is facing.

# Closed and Open

Closed and Open is another clue. A closed area, which tends to be darker by nature, is the sitting side. An open area, usually brighter, is the facing. Being closed or open usually refers to the space and the amount of walls in an area. Essentially though, if in an area there are walls and it is closed up, then this tends to be the sitting. Areas with open space lets the qi move freely and so this type of area tends to be the facing.

We will go through a lot of examples and you will get the feeling for this shortly.

## **Private areas and areas of activity and space**

Private areas are usually on the sitting side. An area of activity is the facing side. A supermarket is an easy example for distinguishing this. At a supermarket, the activity is in the parking lot. Inside, there are cashiers and all the people paying for food in the front of the store. The back of the store is the warehouse area, the cold storage for meat and milk goods, and other closed areas. If you walk around the store, you would find that the front of the store has a lot of signs, traffic, and activity. The rear of the store is a loading dock and is relatively quiet; even when there is activity, it is much less than at the front. Many buildings are like the supermarket. However due to modern architectural variation, there are certain buildings that are not so easy to analyze.

One case in San Diego is a school with the main door and address on a side street. The door is actually on the side of the building. The sitting side is against another building. The facing side has a lot of windows and is on a very active street. In fact, there was a trolley running in front of the building. Many students were confused by the fact that the main entrance was on the side street. They were misled because they based their assessment on the main entrance.

One thing you should keep in mind is that the door does not determine the facing! The door is the qi mouth and it is where the qi enters the building. However, it is only a part of the determination of the orientation of the building.

Other clues to this building were that all the offices were against the back wall (the one that was a solid wall backed by another building) and all of the offices looked out towards the street where the trolley ran.

There are sometimes features of a building which conflict with the guidelines mentioned above. Each building has a unique orientation and architecture. There are occasionally cases that do not fit any of the guidelines. Therefore, determining the sitting and facing is one of the most challenging things in practicing Feng Shui. If done incorrectly, it results in a completely incorrect analysis. Therefore, the prescribed remedies can result in problems and mishaps.

If you encounter a confusing case, our advice is to be honest with yourself and be humble enough to ask the owner. They often know the history of the building. Then try to find out which type of house it belongs to; Wang Shan, Wang Shui, Double Facing, Double Sitting, or Reversed. If you are not sure, you can post the floor plan on the graduate bulletin board and ask for the help of the AFSI instructors.

Finally, practice and more practice will bring experience. With experience, you will be able to properly judge the sitting and facing.

## Examples and Practice Exercises

To assist you in understanding the concepts, here are a series of floor plans that you can practice on. On one page will be a floor plan. On the next will be a discussion of the sitting and facing issues for that floor plan. We recommend that you attempt to determine the sitting and facing first, and read the discussion afterwards. Practice makes perfect.

Please do not forget the guidelines with each case you analyze. They are the key that determines the accuracy of your reading.

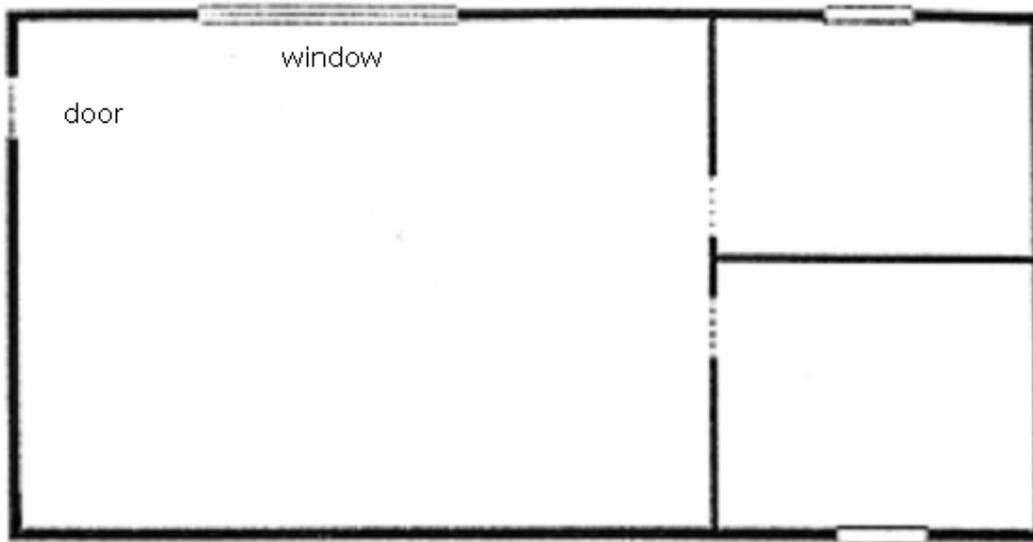


### Sitting and Facing Guidelines

- **The Ming Tong**
  - Exterior
  - Interior
- **Yin and Yang**
- **Fullness and Emptiness**
- **Heavy and Light areas**
- **Closed and Open**
- **Private areas, and areas of activity and spaciousness**

Here are the examples for you to determine the sitting and facing and the discussion. Note that in some cases, the diagram in the answer has been simplified a little to facilitate understanding.

## Case 1

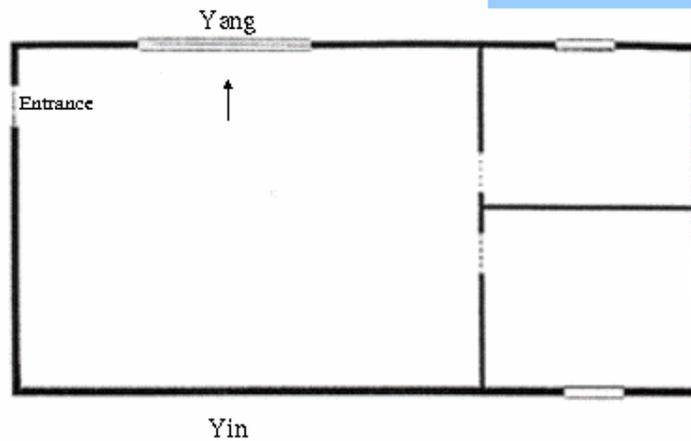
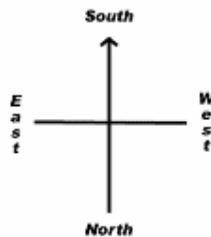


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 1

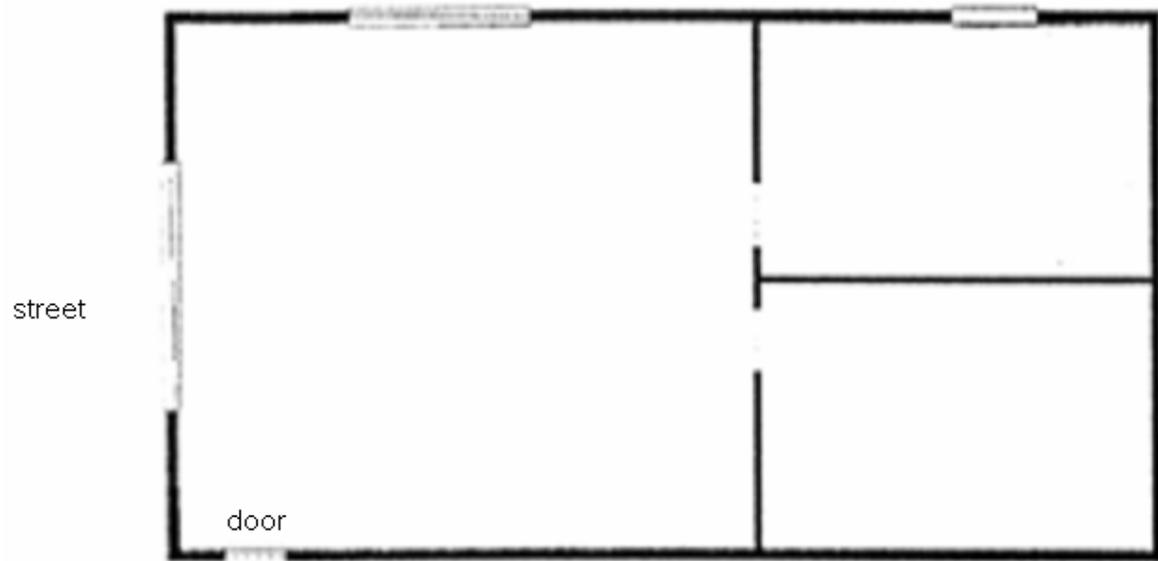
Determine the facing by Yin and Yang



**Notes:** In this example, the window determines the facing. If you know the facing, then you know the sitting. The largest window is to the South. The space with the window is open and there will be lots of activity. The window most likely overlooks the yard.

The yard is the active or yang area. This unit could be facing the East, but that side is more closed with less yang. Notice how small the door is compared to the window. Do you see more openings on the South wall? In this and the following pictures, the arrow will point you towards the facing. Remember that the sitting is always opposite the facing.

## Case 2

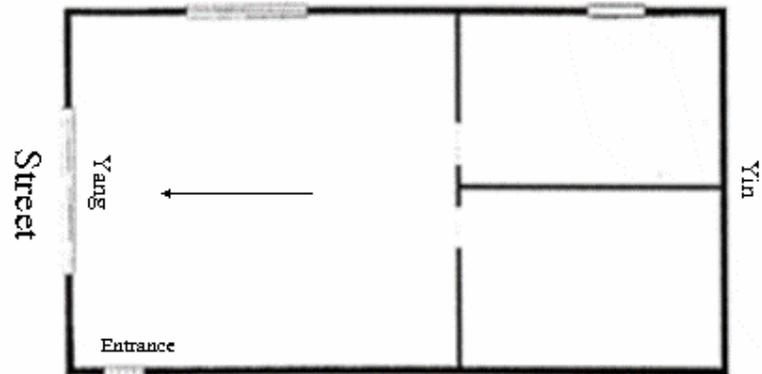
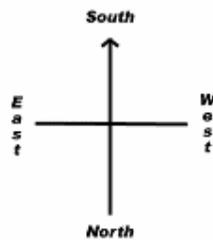


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 2

Big window on the street site facing yang and the empty space with activity



**Notes:** This house has a big window on the east or street side. The facing is yang and in the empty space is where there is activity. While the South has numerically more windows, the openness of the Eastern part of the home is more prevalent. Do you see how fullness of the design is to the West?

### Case 3

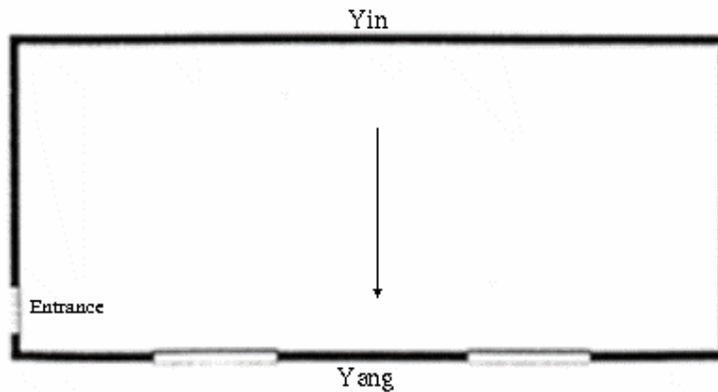
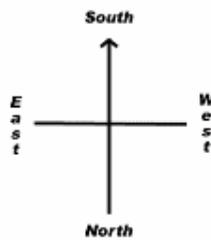


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



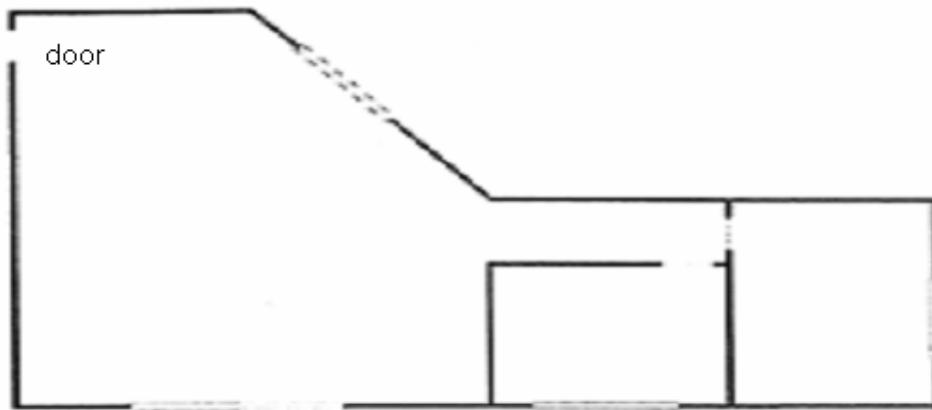
### Case 3

Determined by windows facing yang



**Notes:** Here we see a house where the facing is determined by windows. It is the yang side. Do you notice how the yin side is featureless and closed?

## Case 4

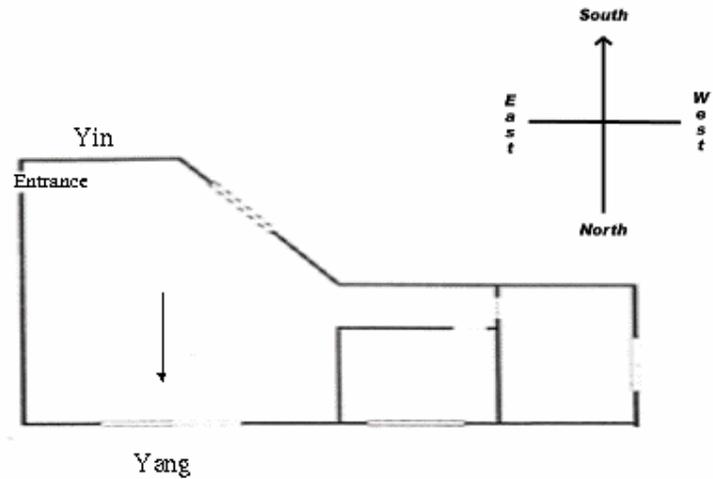


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



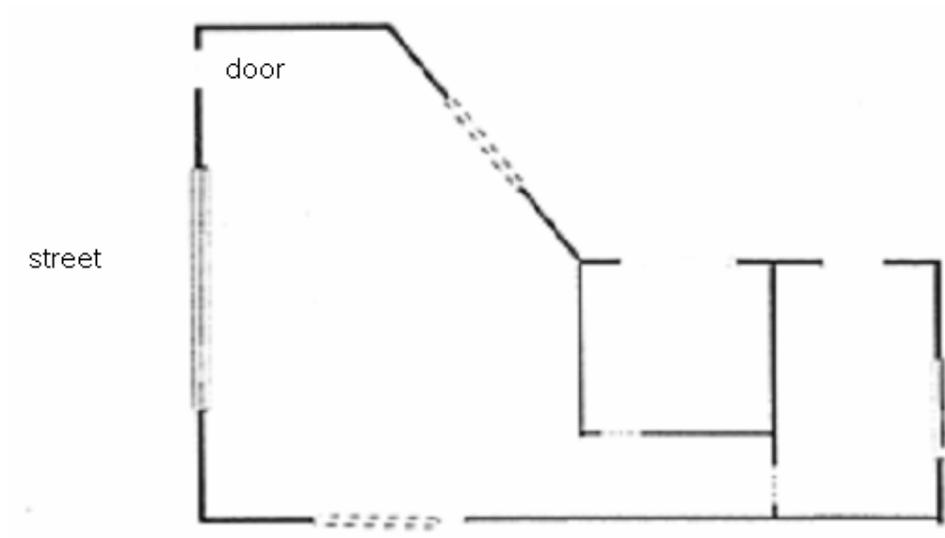
## Case 4

Activity space  
bigger in  
proportion. The  
bigger window  
is the facing



**Notes:** In this case, the active space is larger in proportion than the yin side, even though we see the doorway at the sitting side. The bigger window is the facing. Do you notice that the side with the doorway is quite closed? The bedroom area is very full.

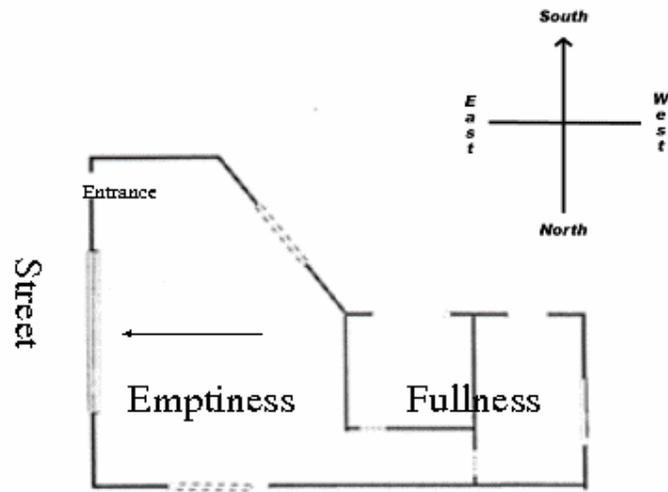
## Case 5



Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?

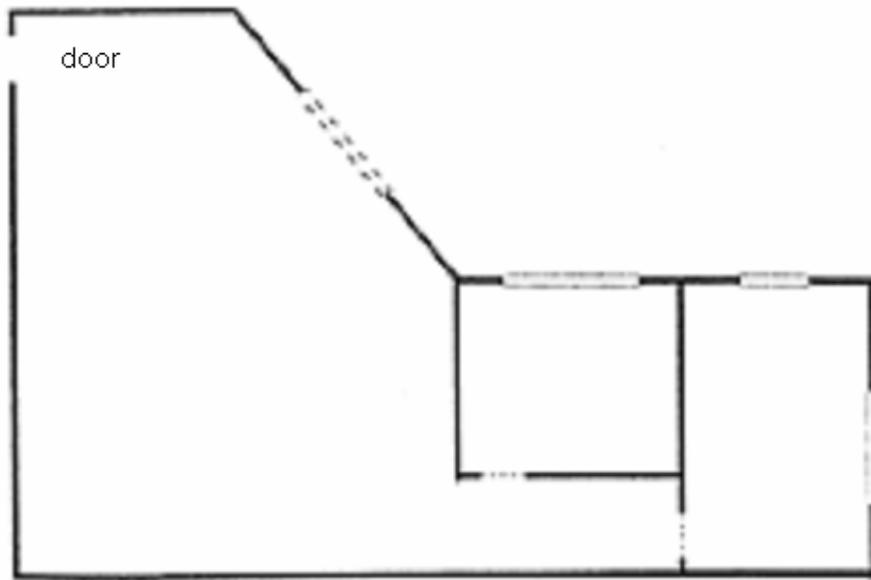


## Case 5



**Notes:** Similar to the previous image, the street, the active space, and the emptiness and fullness determine the facing.

## Case 6

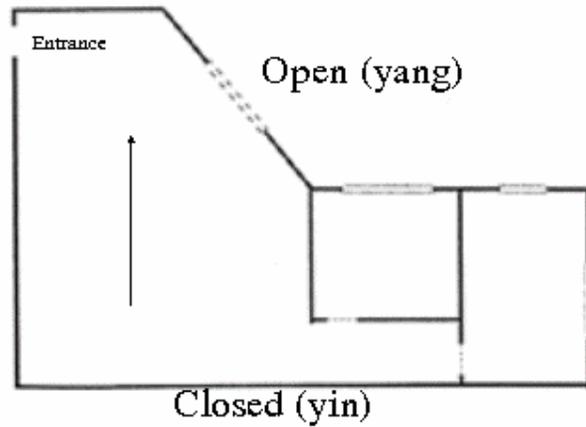
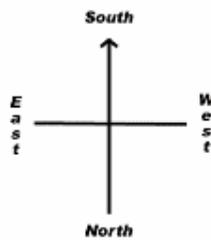


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



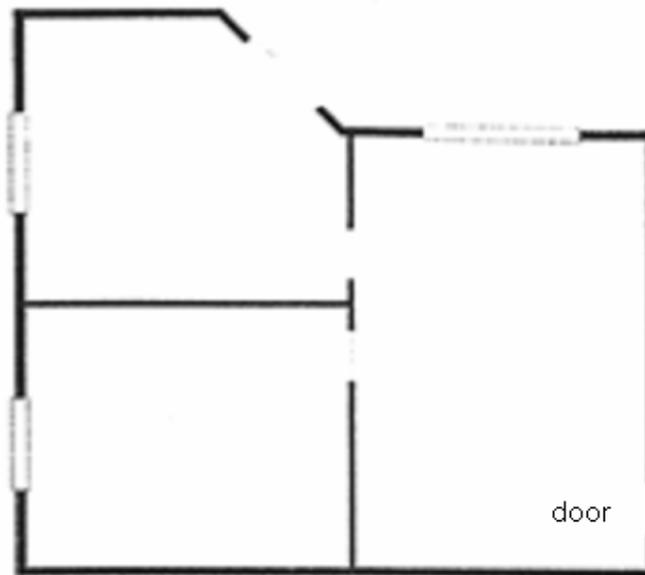
## Case 6

Yin (closed) and  
Yang (open)  
determines the  
facing



**Notes:** In this slide, we see a lot of openings on one side of the house. The opposite side is very closed, flat and plain.

## Case 7

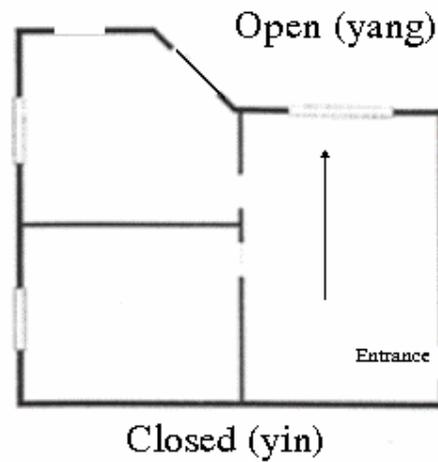
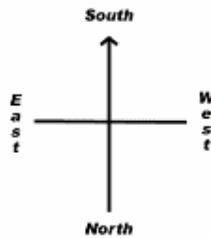


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



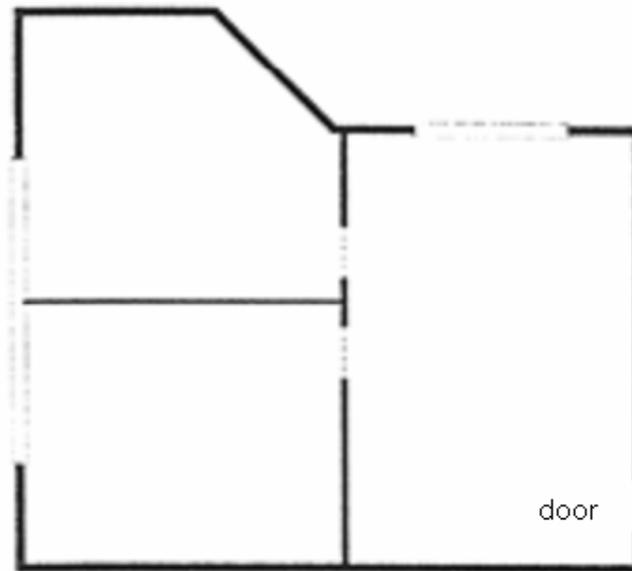
## Case 7

Determine the facing and sitting by the size of the windows and the closed side



**Notes:** Consider if this house could face West. If the large window were on the West wall, with the entrance, this might be the case. However, what we see here is a large window and a bedroom view window on the South side. The closed side is North and the open side is South. The features are on the South side also. The featureless side is the North. Because of this, the North must be the sitting. Often, you may not know which side to choose as the facing, but the sitting is clear. Or, it may be that the facing is easy to determine and the sitting is difficult.

## Case 8

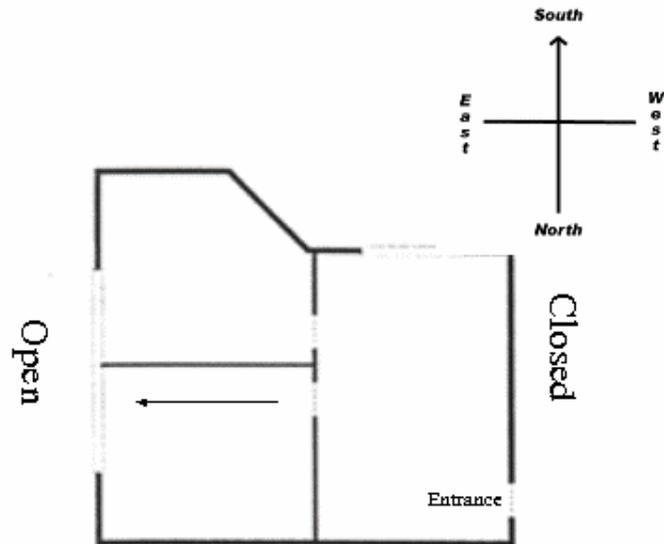


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 8

The big and the small size windows, and the window facing to the open external environment (park or view), determines the facing and sitting



**Notes:** This is more obvious. The open and closed sides have changed. The house has a floor plan that was probably meant to face West, but due to a big environmental feature, such as a golf course, a lake, or the ocean, they have added a large window to the East. This is common in beach front homes.

It should be noted that just adding a window does not always change the sitting and facing of the building. It is determined by the architect's intent to orient the building to the ocean or to a view. Also, many times the architect will design a track home (mass produced) that faces the street and is unaware the features of the bigger environment. So a track home on a mountainside with a great view to the back, may still be facing the street side

## Case 9

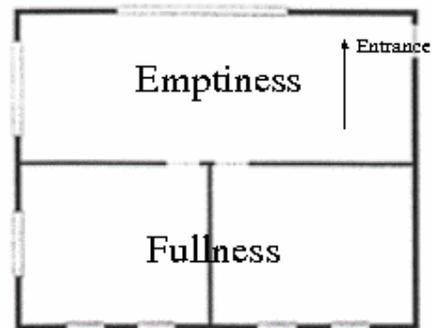
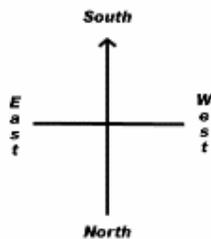


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



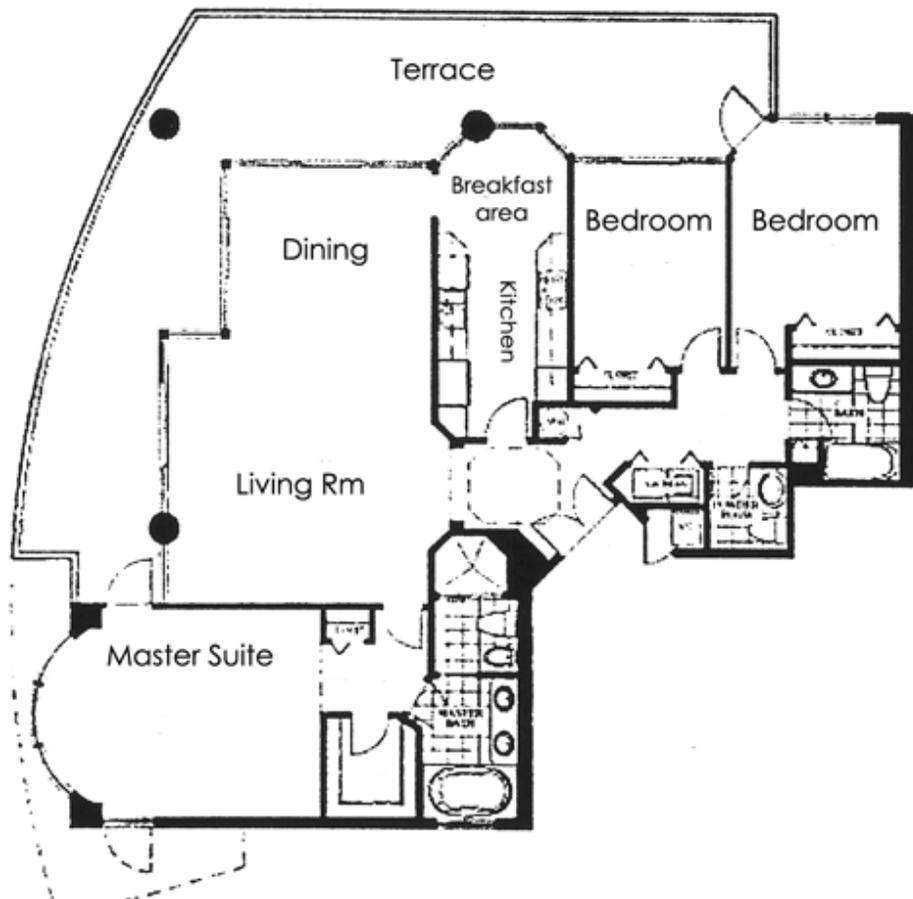
## Case 9

The proportional sizes of the windows for collecting the yang qi (sunshine), plus emptiness and fullness determines the sitting and facing.



**Notes:** In this case, there are a lot of windows on the North side, but proportionally, they do not provide as much yang influence as the large window on the South side. You should also notice that there is a large open space to the South. The full and more closed side is the North.

## Case 10

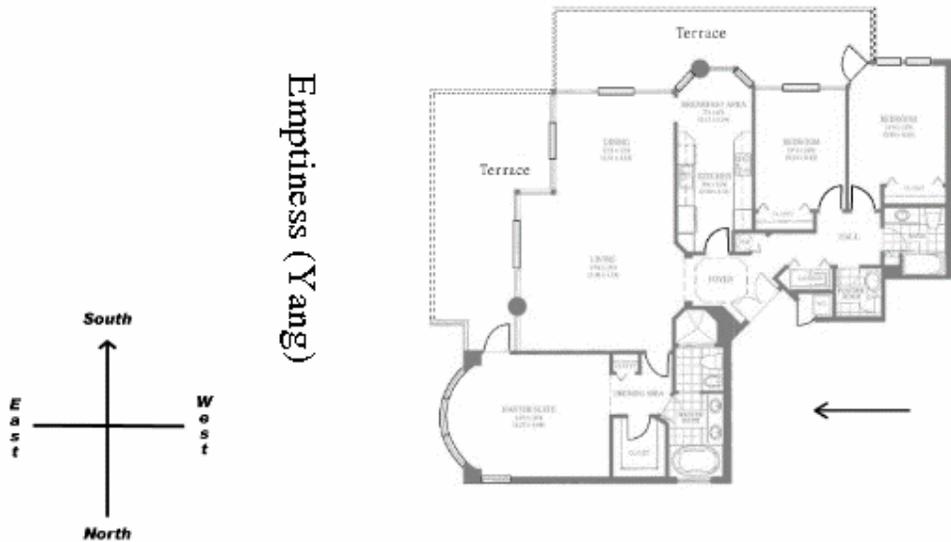


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 10 – Unit 101

### UNIT 101

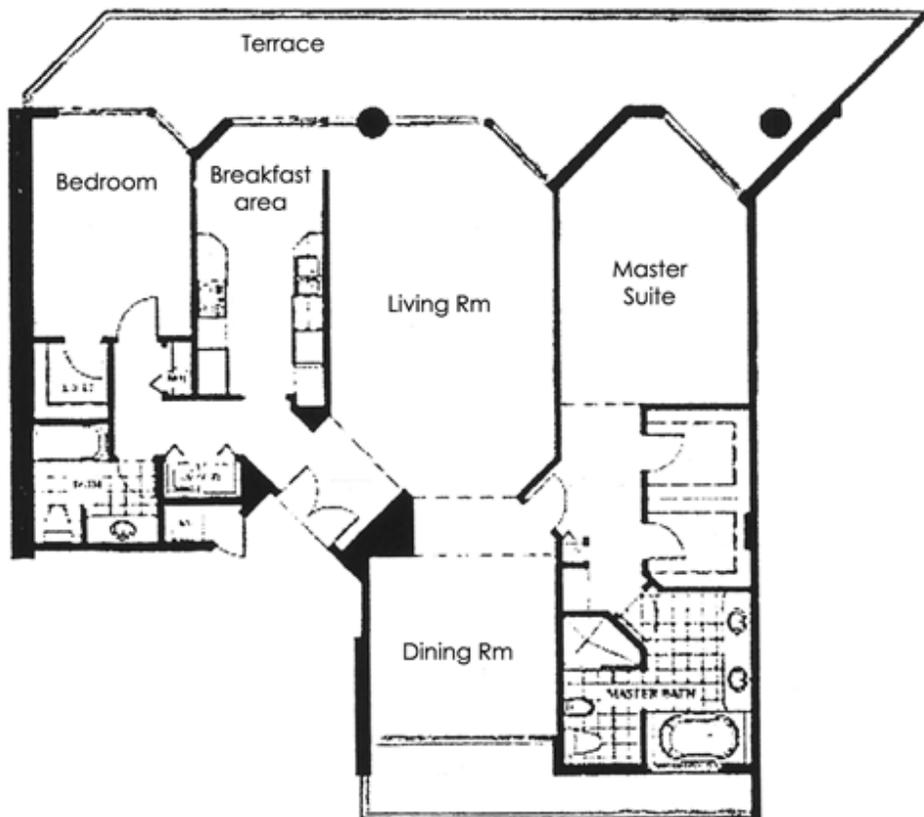


**Notes:** This and the following pictures illustrate various plans for a luxury condominium high-rise. The building will have its own sitting and facing, but the apartment can have a unique sitting and facing.

In the Unit 101 plan above, can you see the open and closed sides? Which sides are more full and which are more empty?

Often the terrace or patio gives a clue and may act as the Ming Tang. In this case, the unit sits to the West and faces East. Can you see the solid walls on the sitting and that the facing side has open windows? This unit might have been facing South, but the South is more closed than the East.

## Case 11

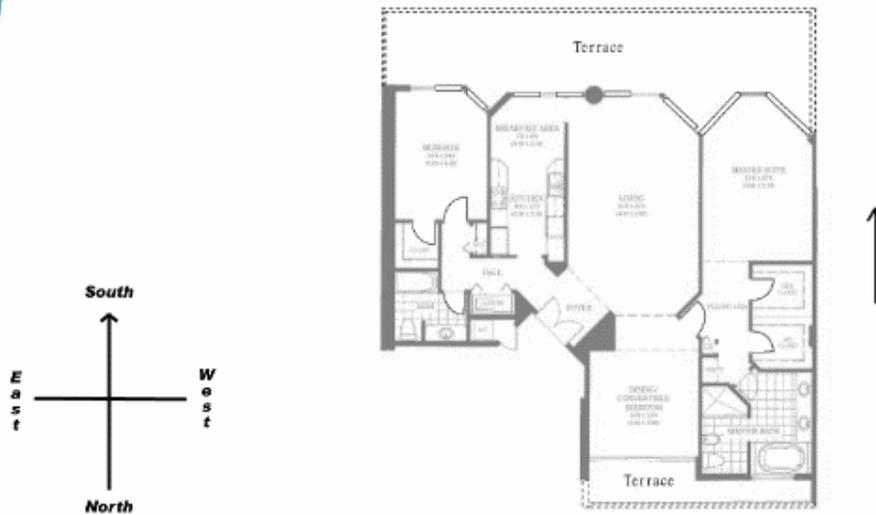


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



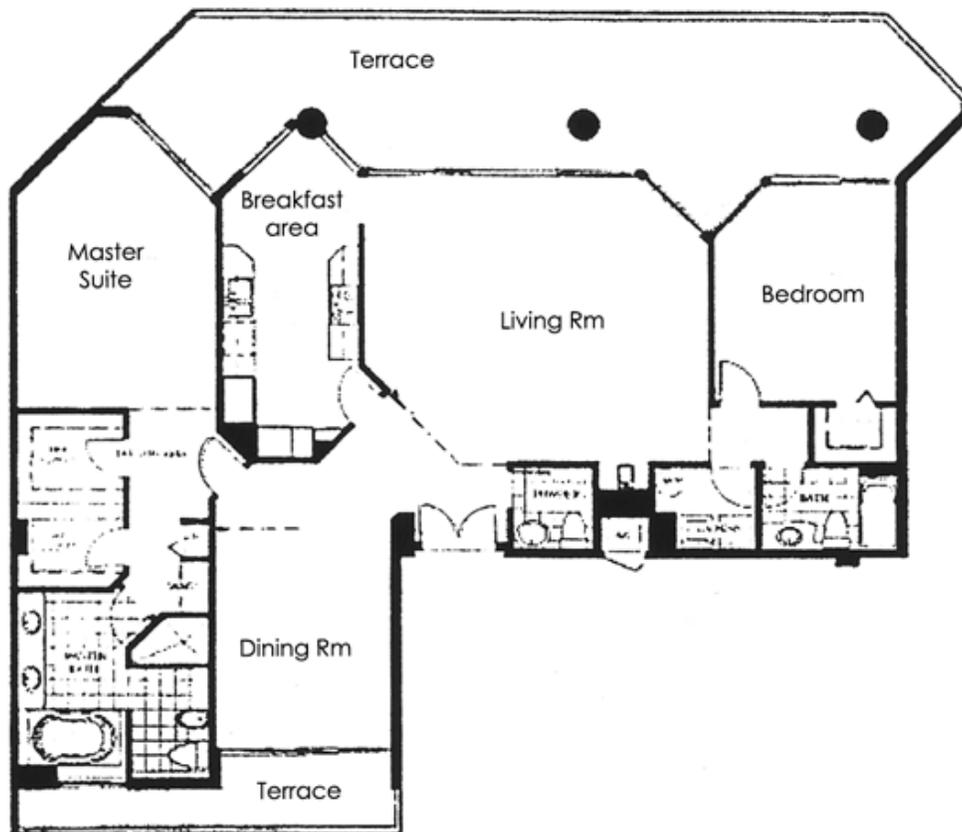
## Case 11 – Unit 102

### UNIT 102



**Notes:** The Unit 102 plan opens to the South. This should be readily clear to you. The North is more full and closed, even though the entrance is on the North, the sitting is North. This is often the case with apartments or condos, where the sitting side has the entrance.

## Case 12



Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 12 – Unit 103

### UNIT 103

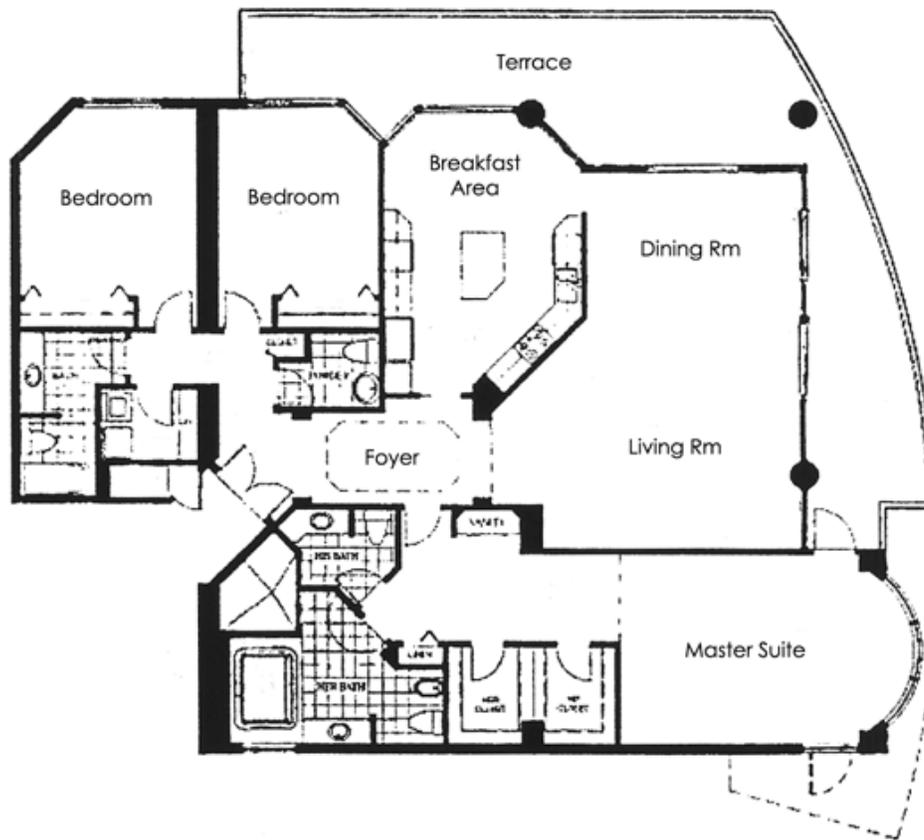


**Notes:** Is this Unit 103 case obvious to you now? On one side there is a large open terrace, a living room, and the bedroom areas. On the opposite side, can you see how full and closed the floor plan appears?

Notice that the main entrance is also on the sitting side. As we already mentioned, this is common in apartments, however, many practitioners use the front door as the facing. It should be obvious now why this is incorrect.

Since the Facing is Yang and the Sitting is Yin, then the entry is only one part of the consideration for the sitting and facing. It is not the only thing that determines the sitting and facing. The doorway is the "qi mouth" and is important in that the qi enters from this area, but again, it is not the determining factor to the sitting and facing. Rather, it is only one of the contributing factors.

## Case 13



Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 13 – Unit 104

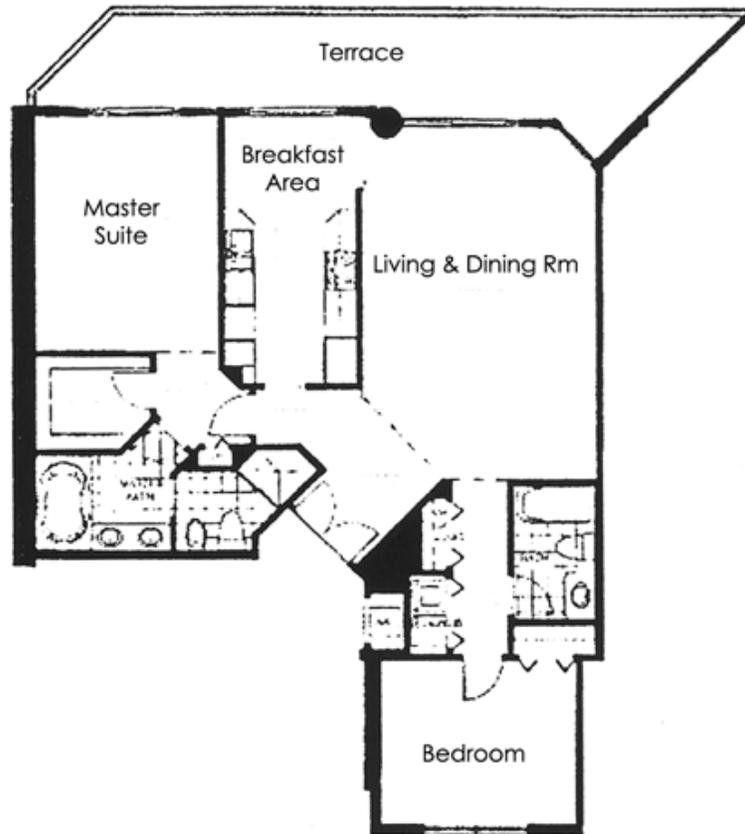
### UNIT 104



**Notes:** This is a more difficult case. It could face South or face West. But which area holds the Xiao Ming Tang (inside or little Ming Tang)?

This unit opens towards the West. The full or closed side is the East side, so East is the sitting.

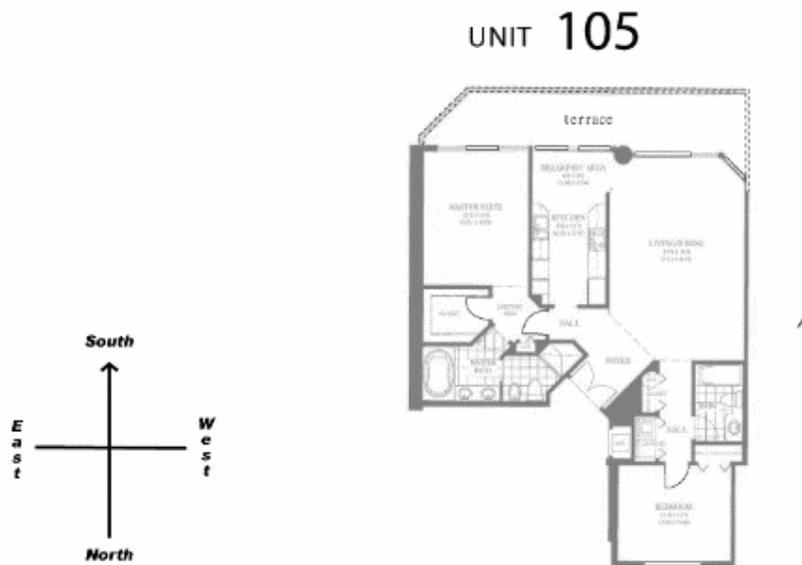
## Case 14



Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 14 – Unit 105



**Notes:** In this Unit 105 case, it should be easy to identify the sitting and facing.

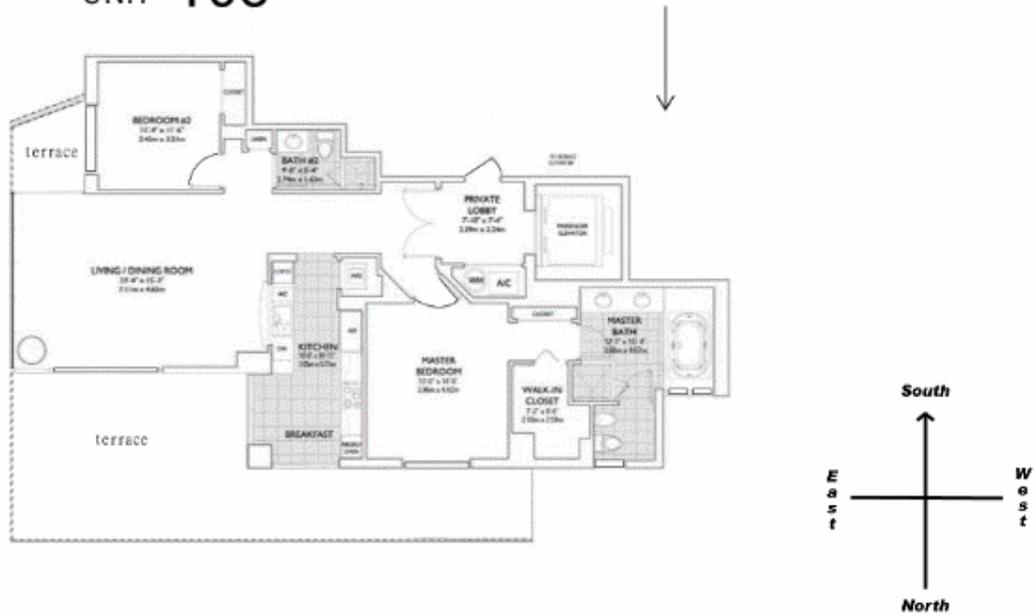
The terrace side (South) is the open side and the Entry side (North) would be the sitting.





## Case 15 – Residence 106

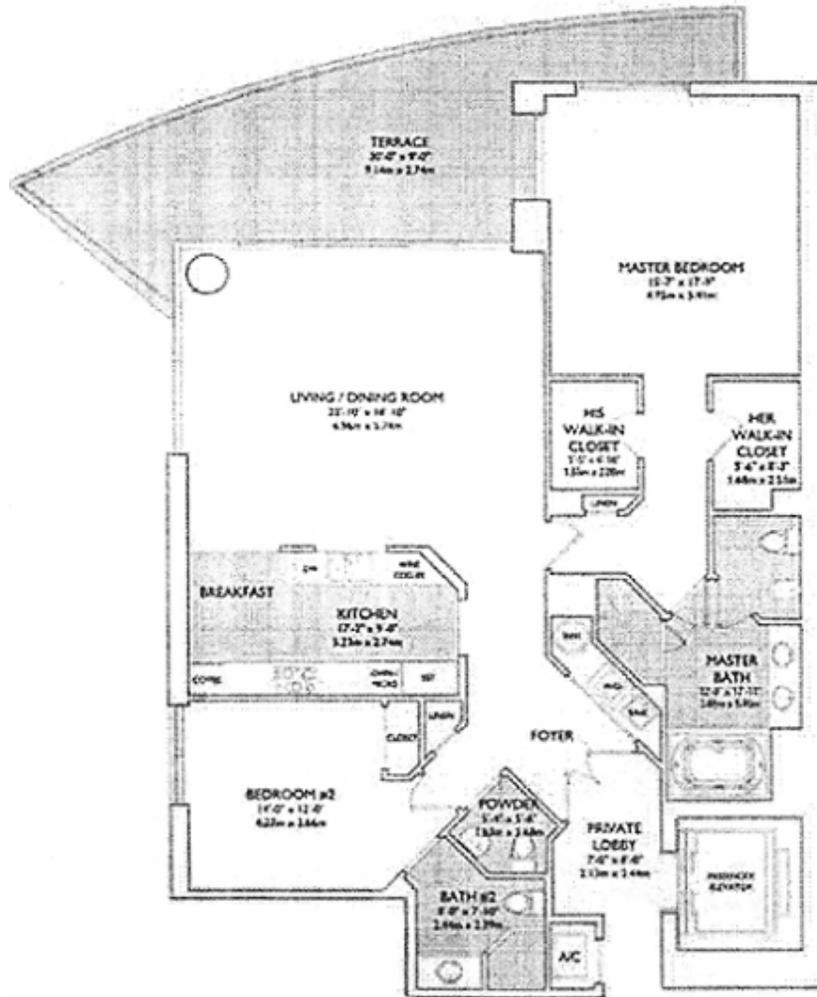
### UNIT 106



**Notes:** The following are some other upper class condominiums, in a similar high-rise building. Looking at the floor plan, at first glance, it is confusing.

Apply the guidelines. Where is the Ming Tang, Where are the more open spaces? How was the unit meant to face? Which side is more closed?

# Case 16

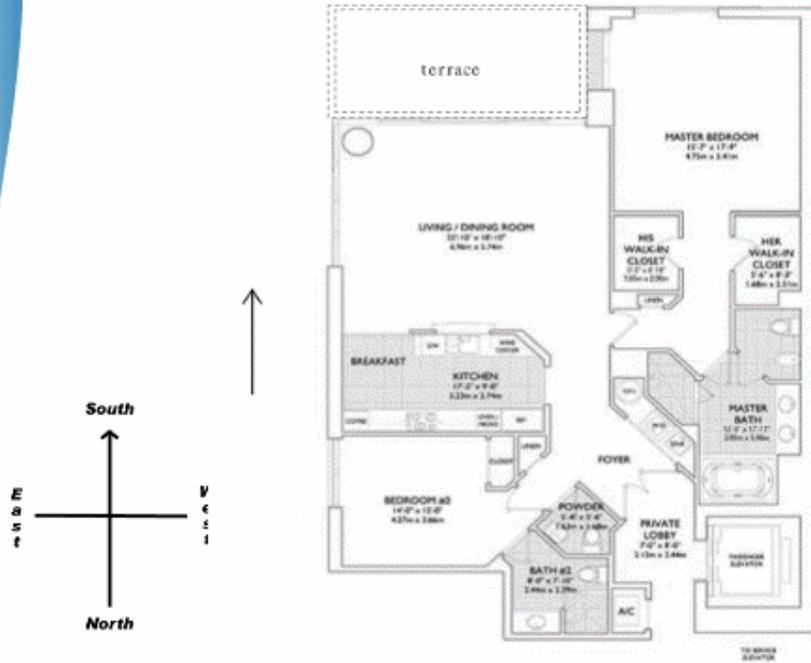


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



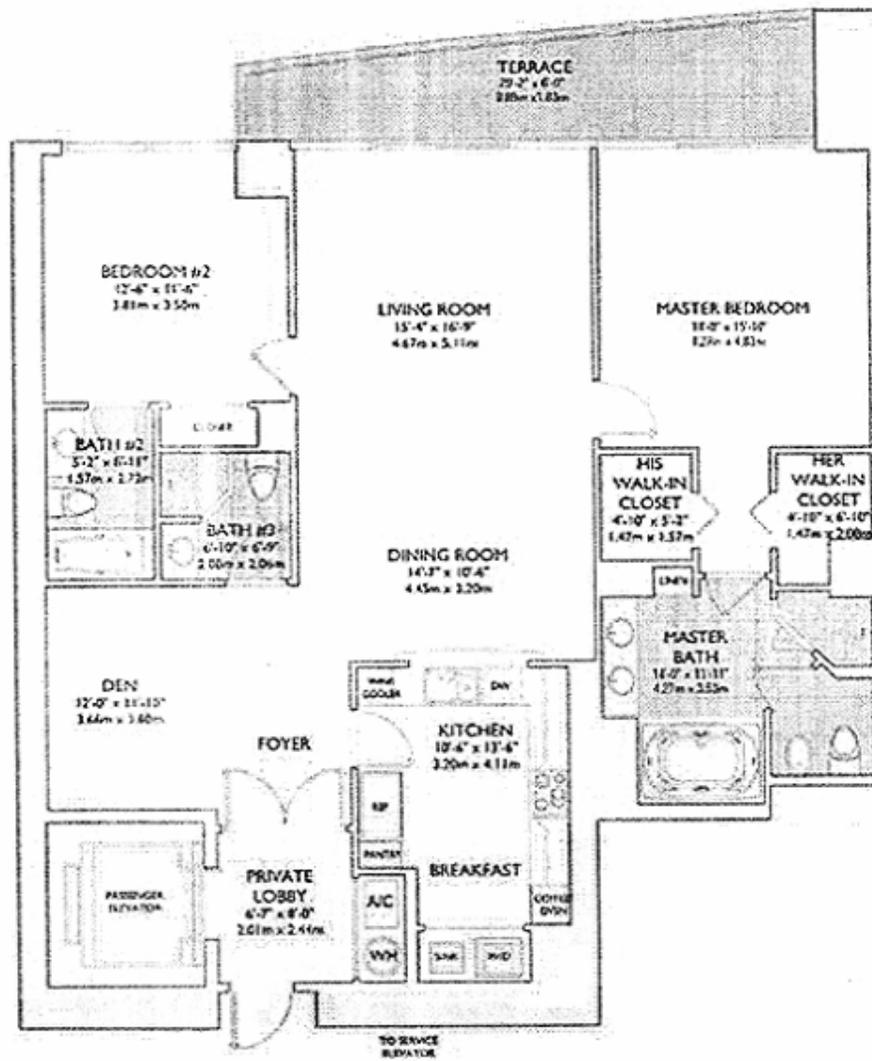
## Case 16 – Residence 107

### UNIT 107



**Notes:** This residence is simpler and it is easier to see the open and closed, empty and full spaces. Can you identify the sitting and facing more easily now?

# Case 17



Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



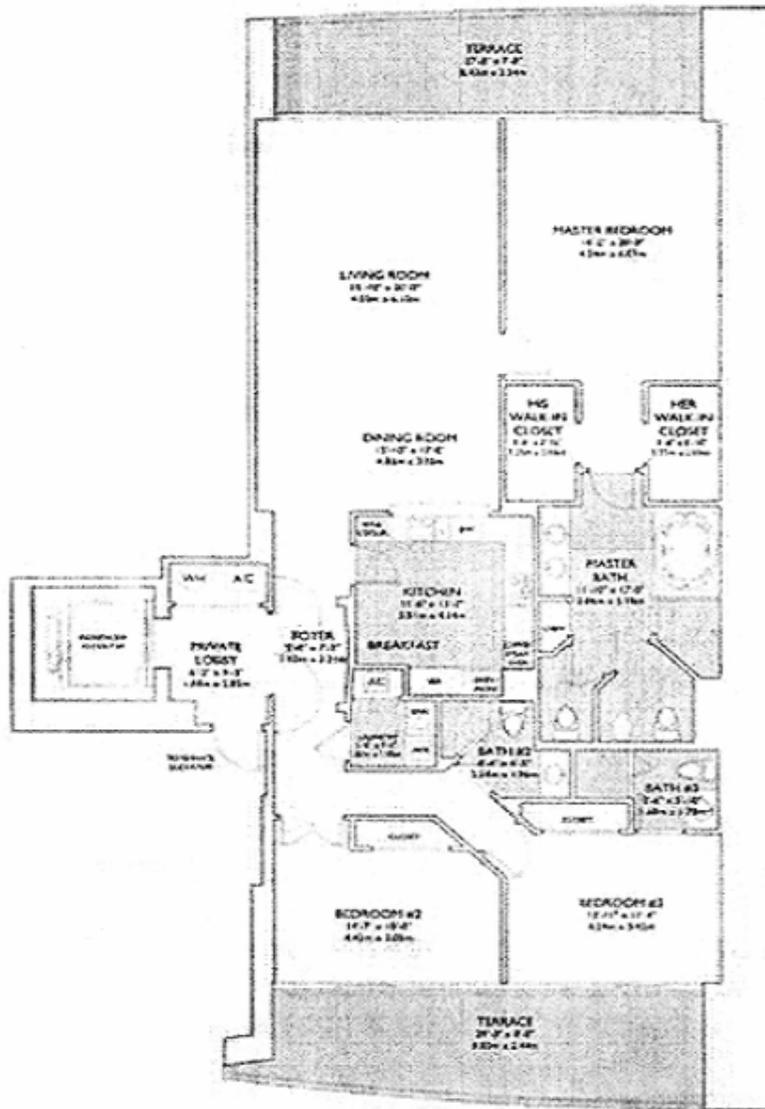
## Case 17 – Residence 108

### UNIT 108



**Notes:** What features identify the sitting and facing here? The terrace on the window side is an obvious clue. Do you see how the rooms look towards the terrace? Can you see how full, or heavy, the North side is?

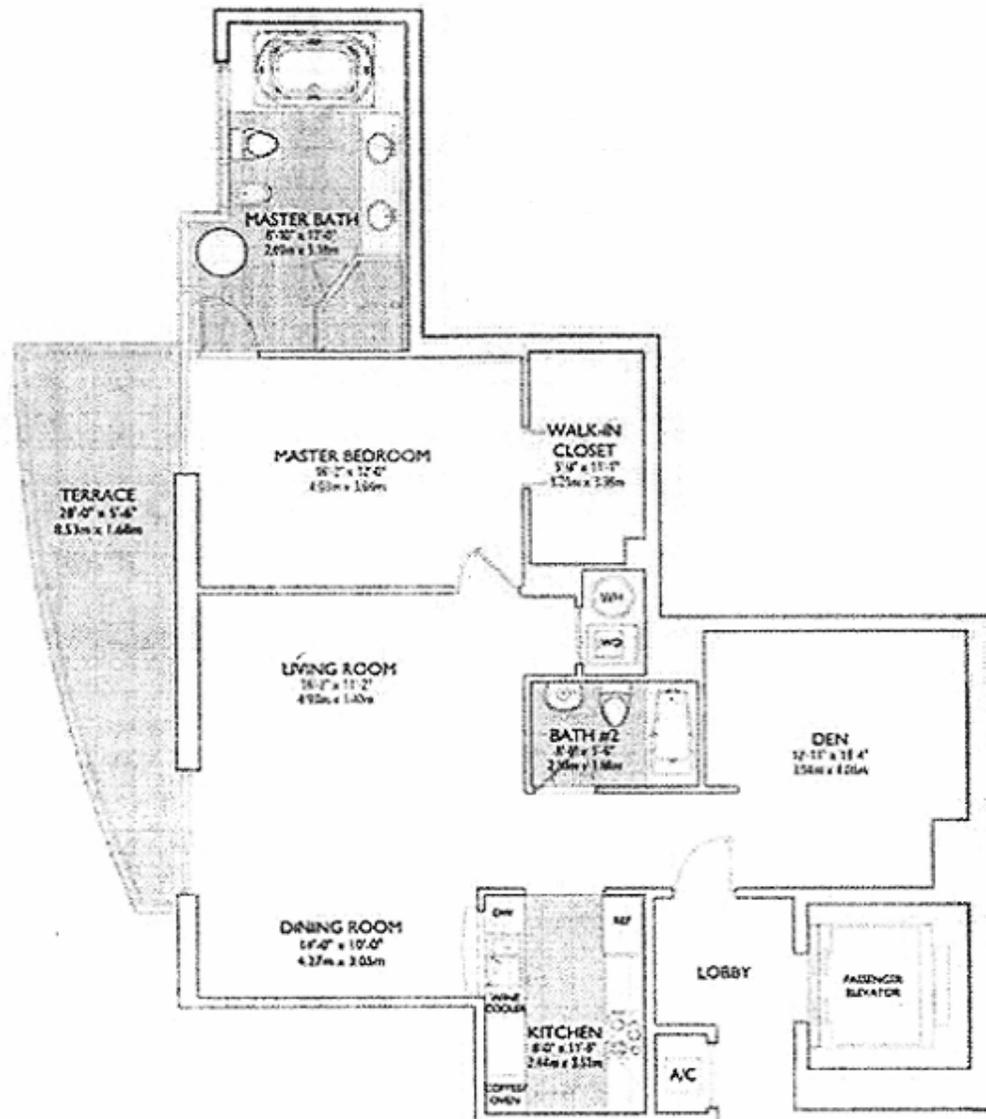
# Case 18



Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 19

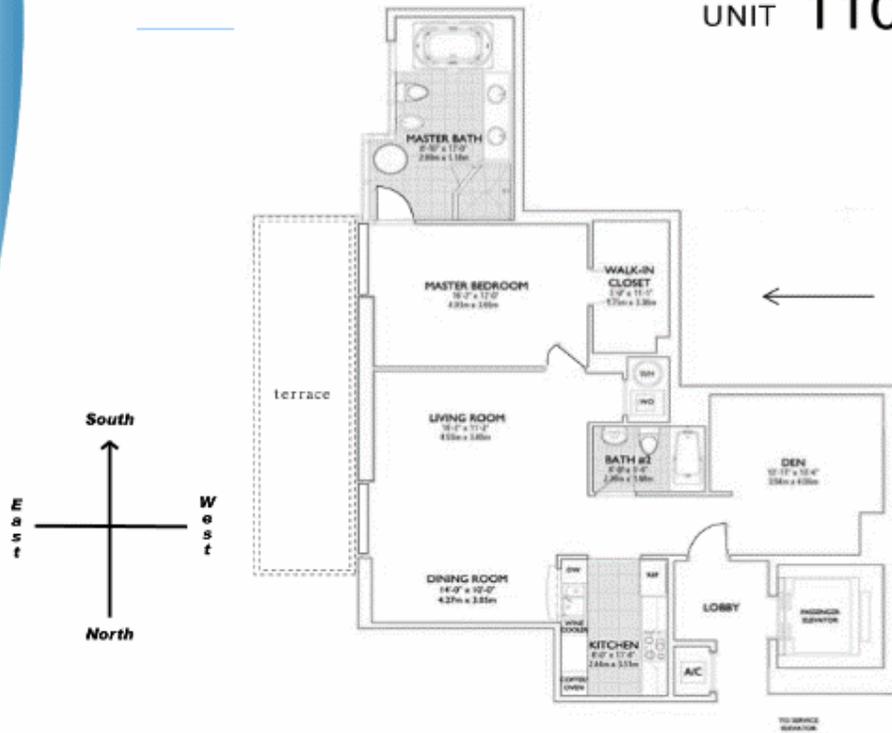


Which is the sitting side and which is the facing?



## Case 19 – Residence 110

# UNIT 110



**Notes:** Can you see in this residence, how the unit "opens up" to the East? Notice the solid walls along the West side. Often the sitting side will be completely closed with only an unbroken wall line. There will not be any doors. There could be the case where two buildings, or units, back up to each other. There is no space between them to take a reading. But they sitting should be obvious because it is so closed. The opposite side (facing side) will have the windows and open space. If this is the case, then you cannot take the compass reading from the sitting and have to make due taking it from the sides or the facing.

# Evaluating the External Environment

In Feng Shui, we must not overlook the quality of the surrounding area where the house or building is located. The external environment should include the lot size and shape, luxuriant or withered trees, the quality of the water, the good or bad shapes of the mountains, the rivers, bridges, overpasses, and architecture. All of these will have an effect on the people's health and character.

## Bright Mountain

1. With luxuriant vegetation, luster of bright greens, birds and animals enjoy living in the environment
2. Beautifully shaped mountain peaks, richness, fertile fine the soil
3. Surrounded by beautifully designed architecture, harmonious in color and with similar heights of buildings
4. Surrounded with winding turns of water in clear quality and moving slowly

The above external environment can be called the Ming Mountain (bright mountain), this is favorable. Living in a beautifully manicured external environment, one will enjoy the benefit of feeling light hearted, relaxed, and full of energy.

## Poor Mountain

1. With withered trees, burned grass, and few birds and animals. Ants and poisonous insects are present
2. Bad or ugly shaped mountains, poor and rough soil
3. Old and broken buildings, unharmonious in color and large variations in height
4. Rapid water running fast towards the building or passing by. Poor quality or smelly water

The above external environment can be called a Poor Mountain. This is unfavorable. Living in such kind of external environment, one will not feel peaceful in mind and physically will not be healthy.

# Evaluating the Internal Environment

The following are key factors in evaluating the Internal Environment:

- Front door
- Size of doors
- Lighting
- Master bedroom
- Bathroom

## **The front door**

The door needs to be in proportion to the building neither too big, nor too narrow. The entry lighting should be comfortable in feeling, not too bright and not too dark. The entrance should not have heavy pressure above, such as a heavy ceiling beam or an oversized ceiling lamp. There should not be oversized decorations or partitions blocking the walkway.

## **Master Bedroom**

The master bedroom should not be smaller than other bedrooms. The ceiling should not be too high or too low. If it is too high, it feels insecure and empty. If it is too low, it feels depressing.

A “Z” shaped bedroom or triangular shaped bedroom is not preferred. It can result in disharmony in relationships.

The bedroom door entrance leads inside to uneven levels, or split into two levels within a bedroom is not preferred. When you walk in, if the bedroom goes down a couple of steps or where you sleep is a couple of steps higher, it can create health problems due to the uneven or unstable energy floating in the sleeping area.

## **Bathroom**

The bathroom should not be larger than the space of the sleeping area. If it is, this will lead to willful misbehavior.

# Conclusion

To know how to determine the sitting and facing is one of the first things every Feng Shui practitioner should understand well. Yet, many practitioners with years of experience, still incorrectly determine the sitting and facing.

Now you have learned the guidelines of sitting and facing. Through practice it will become easier and easier. You should use the guidelines presented here to evaluate each case uniquely. Remember, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to Feng Shui. The doorway does not determine the nature of the house. Remember too, that there is no substitute for being on-site. It can be difficult to evaluate from only looking at a floor plan. You need to evaluate the larger environment as well.

# Closing words from Master Sang

Students often ask about the criteria and the length of time it takes to become a good Feng Shui practitioner. I usually offer the following advice:

There is no shortcut in Feng Shui. You must have persistence and patience. The study of Feng Shui is like any other study, in that once you have reached a certain level, you will encounter confusion and uncertainty and difficulties will arise. At this time, you must have patience in finding the answers. With each breakthrough, you will have raised your level of mastery.

The foundation for Feng Shui includes the study of the Stems and Branches, Day Selection, Astrology, and the Yi Jing Hexagrams. Most of this foundation knowledge is offered in our coursework. Feng Shui is not a spur of the moment fervor. Without continuous dedication and determination, you will have great difficulty gaining true mastery in this subject.

The AFSI supports you through our online forums and if you have questions you are welcome to post the questions there. Thank you for taking this class and we look forward to your further development in your Feng Shui studies.

Sincerely,

**Larry Sang**