

## **The Face: A Portrait of Qi**

*By Mary Elizabeth Wakefield, LAc, Dipl. Ac., MS, MM, Susan Russell, PhD, LAc, Dipl. Ac. and MichelAngelo, MFA, CTM*

"There is at work within all biological systems a path of interchangeability to standardize unique vibratory levels. Our galactic body of creation controls its renewing functions through meridian axiatonal lines which are the equivalent of acupuncture lines that can connect with resonating star systems."<sup>1</sup>

Like many medical paradigms with origins prior to the Western scientific revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, acupuncture views the human body as comprising a microcosm.

Acupuncture contains structures that find their parallels in the heavens. Similarly, quantum physics suggests the body might be regarded as a more contained space-time field existing within the confines of a larger energetic continuum. This consensus between Eastern esoteric and Western scientific philosophies postulates an astral architecture we might liken to a cosmological Russian "nesting" doll, encompassing bodies within bodies and fields within fields. This lends support for the further assertion of J.J. Hurltiak that "Acupuncture is one of the first empirical demonstrations of biological scaling within the universe."<sup>2</sup>

In the same way the human body presents a mirror of celestial harmony, the face is a somatic microsystem that provides the Oriental medicine practitioner with a means to gauge the changing dynamics of individual health. From an anatomical perspective, this most personal aspect of identity serves as a direct interface between the human organism and its environment. We can regard a person's face as presenting an authentic "portrait" of their *qi*, manifesting a corollary to the timeless axiom "as above, so below." We could also express this: "as within, so without."

### **The Abode of the Senses**

The face encompasses the neural receptors that engender four of the five senses - vision, hearing, smell and taste - that instantaneously transmit random stimuli around us to the cerebral cortex. It's here, and in other relevant regions of the brain, that they are translated into information necessary for our continued well-being and, at times, ultimate survival. These vital organs of perception must have direct contact with the external milieu in order to perform their necessary functions. The face, lacking any kind of armor or other protective integument, might be regarded as one of the most vulnerable parts of the body. For example, it experiences a perpetual onslaught of changing climatic conditions and other deleterious environmental factors such as: cold, damp, wind, sunlight, dust, pollution and toxins. According to the precepts of Oriental medicine, the skin is the 3<sup>rd</sup> lung.

### **A Life Map**

The face is one of the most potent and eloquent expressions of ancestral memory, encoded with particular idiosyncrasies that are multi-generational in their provenance. The facial features encapsulate patterns - physical, mental and emotional - relating to immunity, longevity, resilience and personal hardship.

Your face greets the world. It can radiate *shen* or be *shen*-deficient. According to a number of contemporary sources, the face has evolved to express, with a remarkable degree of subtlety, the

emotional undercurrents of ordinary discourse. It has been estimated that 90 percent of human communication depends upon our individual ability to discern those fleeting micro-expressions that lay bare the true nature of our innermost thoughts.

The face can reflect emotional tension resulting from our interactions with others. Unexpressed words become suppressed or somatized within the organ systems of the body, and remain thus, emotionally toxic "software" working to undermine the natural homeostatic balance of our inner functioning.

### **Feed your Face**

A significant aspect of the *qi*-portrait revealed by one's face relates to the importance of proper nourishment. Nurturing your *qi* with positive eating habits allows the face to glow with good health. One's *qi* might be disturbed by the consumption of food under less than optimal circumstances. Certain energetic patterns that characterize individual eating habits, such as bolting one's food, eating on the run, unconscious eating (i.e., while doing other things) or consuming food that is of little or no nutritive value or flavor, contribute "chaotic" *qi* to the organ systems. Negative emotional states, such as anger, rage, fear, depression or despair can further undermine the physical well-being.

### **Re-harmonizing and Protecting "The Body Electric"**

*Qi* is electrical in nature; it pulses in active and interactive currents. The Western biochemical model echoes this notion of ebb and flow in its recognition of the electrochemical signature of a living cell, characterized by the exchange of potassium and sodium ions across the cellular membrane. This protoplasmic boundary likewise delineates two zones of differing electrical charge, one positive (beyond the cellular membrane), and the other negative (within the membrane). The balance between these electrical and chemical gradients and the regulation of the passage of these ions back and forth is what distinguishes a living cell from an inert bag of ions.

Living, as we do, in the Age of the Information Superhighway, many of us are accustomed to spending inordinately large amounts of time gazing raptly at, or plugged into, any number of wonderful technological marvels.

Very few of us take proper precautions against the surfeit of electromagnetic energy (and radiation) generated by these devices; moreover, the vast majority of these digital/electronic communication "facilitators" impact us directly (and detrimentally) through the tissues of the face. We can counteract the negative effect of these disharmonious electromagnetic vibrations by regulating, stimulating and harmonizing vital life force *qi* movement in the meridians that flow through the face and head.

### **The Importance of Facial Acupuncture**

Acupuncture enhances electromagnetic energy, improves neural signaling, moderates neuro-immunomodulatory responses, and ameliorates neurochemical-hormonal influences within the body and brain. Facial acupuncture is a powerful treatment modality that addresses the face as the point of entry into the hidden recesses of our being. The brain is located immediately behind the face and every one of the meridians traverses the facial terrain, communicating directly with the body.

Whatever the reason for a treatment of this nature, a constitutional approach has the potential to actuate the most profound level of healing. The body, emotions and psyche are not separate, and we have observed time and again that facial acupuncture can propel the patient onto a path of greater consciousness, enhance their overall vitality and foster increased longevity.

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

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## **The Face: A Portrait of Qi, Part 2**

### ***Addressing the Archetypal Facial Landscape***

*By Mary Elizabeth Wakefield, LAc, Dipl. Ac., MS, MM, Susan Russell, PhD, LAc, Dipl. Ac. and MichelAngelo, MFA, CTM*

All experiences of emotional disharmony that impact the body are the result of a discordant resonant charge or vibration. Embedded within the organs, meridians, glandular system, bodily fluids and cells linger the traumatic byproducts of that original injury.<sup>1</sup> Once an external disharmonious resonance penetrates the *wei qi* "fields," it severely impacts the body, mind, emotions and spiritual essence.

Disharmonies of this magnitude can be induced by environmental, physical, emotional, psychospiritual or behavioral circumstances that trigger existing conscious or unconscious emotional responses. These are archetypal/ancestral in nature and siphon vital energy away from the body and divert it to past "original time spaces." This process contributes to *qi* stagnation in one area while creating a deficiency elsewhere.

### **Impact Upon the Face**

These memory patterns are captured within the face as microtensions, which, if unresolved, eventually appear in its terrain as wrinkles, scars, furrows, lines, bags, sagging and swelling. Facial acupuncture stimulates and increased blood flow, supporting, balancing and releasing toxic emotional, psychological, chemical and electromagnetic energy. In liberating *qi*, the meridians can express their pre-imprinted virtue. Thus unhindered, our true, original creative nature can evolve.

In order for there to exist a healthy, balanced expression, there needs to be a harmonious blend between the archetypes, which is classically reflected in the face. Physiognomy, the Chinese art of face reading, provides insight into the particulars of *yin/yang* balance and reveals the less obvious details of facial asymmetry. It examines the differences between the two halves of the face, right and left. Manifest disparities mirror outwardly a more primal discontinuity between the twin hemispheres of the brain - the left (cognitive, rational, linear and organized) and the right (intuitive, spatial, integrative and inchoate). Ideally, the balanced nature of the brain is regulated by the corpus callosum.

In considering facial structure, any markings, discolorations or asymmetries between the right and left (e.g., a turned-down mouth on one side, a raised eyebrow on the other) reflect imbalances between *yang* and *yin*. A third distinct region, the central corridor, transects the facial terrain. This area is considered to present a chronology of individual life events, in particular, key transformative episodes.

By needling facial marks, scars, lines and wrinkles, these "time capsules" of hidden, unprocessed trauma can be opened, liberating "frozen" *qi*, transforming old emotional stagnation and permitting the individual to more fully inhabit present time.

## Relevant Archetypal Patterns

Neurophysiological research supports the theory that we are "hard wired" through our nervous system to express archetypal patterns, specific concepts that drive our thoughts and actions by residing in the unconscious.<sup>2</sup> We participate more fully in life when we consciously access the positive attributes of these energies that are held internally in reserve.

Chinese medicine and acupuncture highlight the importance of understanding the patient as a "body of *qi* within fields of *qi*."<sup>3</sup> The influence of archetypes as they manifest in the various stages of individual transformation is best understood if we consider the constituent influences informing each - the poetico-energetic profile of the specific acupuncture point, the Five Elements, the Twelve Officials and the flows of the six divisions. A particular meridian channel pathway corresponds to an "official"; a nexus of readily identified archetypal thrust, such as might be seen to correlate with other recognizable Jungian archetypal structures such as the persona, the shadow, etc.

### The Five Elements: The "Star Chamber"

Fire (*huo*) is the Magician, the paired partner-organs that represent fire, whose value is transformation. These organs are heart/small intestine and triple heater/pericardium. Archetypal expressions of fire include compassion, communication, pleasure-driven, seeking novelty and excitement. This individual thrives on the ecstatic nature of new love and will do just about anything to avoid routine or boredom.

Earth (*tu*) is the Diplomat, who communicates with everyone and everything. Earth is the benevolent mother, offering universal abundance without restraint or limitations. The stomach/spleen needs to flow with earth energy. Archetypal expressions of earth energy are moderation, loyalty and harmony. This individual likes to belong, pays attention to detail, needs to be needed and can be stubborn.

Metal (*chin*) expresses its archetypal energy as the Catalyst. The lungs and large intestine represent an alliance of metal, as the lungs catalyze essence into breath while the large intestine metabolizes substances that are of no further use to the body, converting them into waste products. Archetypal expressions of metal are organization, control, precision, discrimination. This archetype needs to be right, likes order and cleanliness, and appreciates quality.

Water (*shui*) is the Philosopher, with a will aligned to higher spiritual purpose. This energy is found within the kidney and bladder. The archetypal expressions of water are imagination, honesty, cleverness, a thirst for knowledge, originality, tough-mindedness and independence. This individual can be secretive but, conversely, needs to be protected.

Wood (*mu*) is the archetype of the Pioneer. Growth, creativity and the capacity to make decisions to support growth are the fundamental expressions of the liver/gall bladder. There stands within a warrior focused in perception, with an ability to carry out decisions to support this focus. Archetypal expressions of wood energy are experienced as expansiveness, purpose, practicality and an active nature. This individual likes to be busy, and can be domineering.

The following is a list of specific treatment points used in the treatment protocols of facial acupuncture, with a partial analysis of their archetypal resonances:

SI 18, Cheek Bone-Hole (*Quan Liao*): *quan* = cheekbone; *liao* = bone hole. This is the meeting point of the Small Intestine and *San Jiao* channels, combining the archetypes of discernment and alchemy, with the ability to enjoy the full banquet of life.

BL 2, Bamboo Gathering (*Zan Zhu*): *zan* = save, accumulate; *zhu* = bamboo. This point relates to the proper management of resources.

UB 10, Celestial Pillar (*Tian Zhu*): *tian* = celestial, of the heavens, sky, nature, heaven; *zhu* = pillar, spiritual pivot. This point regulates *qi* and pacifies wind, benefits the head and sensory orifices, calms the spirit, activates the channel and alleviates pain.

TH 23, Silk Bamboo Hole (*Si Zhu Kong*): *si* = silk, *zhu* = bamboo; *kong* = hole, empty space.

GB 7, Temporal Hairline Curve (*Qu Bin*): *qu* = curve, bend; *bin* = the hair of the temples. This point eliminates wind and benefits both the mouth and jaw. It can be viewed as the synergy of decision and resource management; at a bend in the road, the precise details of the journey ahead are not always clear.

GB 14, Yang White (*Yang Bai*): *yang* = yang, the complement of *yin*; *bai* = white, pure, clear. This point eliminates wind, benefits the head and alleviates pain; it helps the eyes and reinforces the ability to make appropriate decisions.

GB 20, Wind Pool: meeting point of the Gall Bladder and *San Jiao* channels with the *yang* motility (*yang qiao mai*) and *yang* linking vessels (*yang wei mai*), unchecked *yang* flows, decision alchemy.

LI 19, Grain Bone-Hole (*He Liao*): *he* = grain, rice, corn; *liao* = bone-hole. This point eliminates wind and opens the nasal passages.

LI 20, Welcome Fragrance (*Ying Xiang*): *ying* = to welcome, to receive; *xiang* = fragrance. The meeting point of the Large Intestine and Stomach channels, it expels wind and clears heat.

St 4, Earth Granary (*Di Cang*): *di* = earth; *cang* = granary, storehouse. What are the ghosts, words and emotions that remain and haunt us?

St 2, Four Whites (*Si Bai*): *si* = four; *bai* = white. Gates provide access points to new experiences.

St 3, Bone-Hole (*Ju Liao*): *ju* = great, big, giant; *liao* = bone-hole. Holes represent the capacity for storage. What are the holes in a person's life?

St 5, Great Reception (*Da Ying*): *da* = great; *ying* = to receive, to welcome. Tonifying this point increases the ability to receive.

St 9, Man's Prognosis (*Ren Ying*): *ren* = man, person; *ying* = to predict, calculate; welcome, receive; face. This is the meeting point of the Eight Extraordinary and the 12 regular meridians.

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## The Face: A Portrait of *Qi*, Part 3

### The Emperor's Court and Palace Gardens

By Mary Elizabeth Wakefield, LAc, Dipl. Ac., MS, MM and Susan Russell, PhD, LAc, Dipl. Ac.

In our previous column, we addressed the archetypal facial landscape and how memory patterns exhibited outwardly as facial microtensions (i.e., wrinkles, lines and sagging) can cause emotional disharmony in body/mind and spiritual essence. In contrast to Western archetypal symbolism, which represents characters, situations and symbols that influence our daily lives via the unconscious mind, the Chinese interpretation embraces the ideology of *qi* manifestation. The idea that our thoughts and actions are motivated by the harmony or disharmony of *qi* flow throughout the body is the basis of Eastern philosophy.

The body/mind/spirit is inseparable, and communication between these three states of being is facilitated by the vitalizing flow of energy contained in the meridians, which transport precious ancestral information in the form of cellular memory. Additionally, each *zang/fu* organ whose Five-Element function is a mirror of its position within an Imperial "hierarchy," houses a virtue, a particular archetypal persona (i.e., one of the 12 Officials) and a balanced or imbalanced expression, which can support the harmony, growth and evolution of each individual or group.

### "Watering" the Palace Gardens

The six levels, *taiyang/shaoyin*, *yangming/taiyin* and *shaoyang/jueyin*, represent another aspect of the archetypal balance/imbalance of *qi* flow. Imbalance manifests in emotions that disturb, compromise or impair, while virtues of wisdom, benevolence and integrity flow abundantly in a balanced individual. Cultivation of *qi* as a gateway to longevity, beauty and conscious development of virtuous qualities has long been a tradition of Chinese medicine. Acupuncture is an important tool to unblock *qi* and also liberate the free flow of *shen* and *jing* in the Three Treasures and the virtues of the organs.

An examination of the state of the facial landscape provides the practitioner with insight into the overall health and well-being of the body. Acupuncture then provides an avenue of communication between the *yin/yang* pairs and primary archetypal circuitry represented in the meridians and the cutaneous energy pathways of the six divisions.

*Taiyang/Shaoyin*. *Taiyang* represents heaven expressing *shen* through the union of the *yang* aspects of fire and water - the archetypal expressions of discernment and containment. Its *yin* counterpart is the union of *shaoyin*, the *yin* aspects of fire and water. Heart and kidney clear inner sight and encourage harmonious alignment. *Taiyang* and *shaoyin* manifest as another archetypal strength, that of propriety and wisdom.

Emotions that disturb the relevant organ systems include the following:

- Small intestine: abandoned; lost; neglected; deprived of love, intimacy, nourishment and warmth; unable to receive.
- Urinary bladder: shame; paralyzed; shyness; hurt; helpless; unfulfilled yearning; self-pity; resignation.

- Heart: acute grief; shock; self-protection; broken trust; feeling used; betrayal; trapped; hurt; hard-hearted; deep yearning; boredom; remorse; uncreative; not lovable; bureaucratic; withholding; rigid; disappointment; greed; coldness.
- Kidney: fear; guilt; powerless; broken will; disappointment; demoralized; fright; exhaustion; survival issues; brutal experiences.

*Yangming/Taiyin.* *Yangming* represents earth expressing *jing* essence through the alliance of the *yang* aspects of earth and metal; the archetypal expression of integration being a centered and effortless release. Its *yin* counterpart is the union of *taiyin*, the *yin* aspects of earth and metal, with spleen and lungs expressed as the archetypal energies of transformation and receptivity. *Yangming* and *taiyin* manifest archetypally a deeper expression of integrity and righteousness.

Emotions that compromise the relevant organ systems include:

- Stomach: obsession; recurring thoughts and worry; energy loss from preoccupation; anxiety; powerlessness, excessive hatred; stressed; devastation, excessive demands; inability to process.
- Large intestine: critical; controlling; narrow-minded; perfectionism; dogmatism; compulsive; cynical; emotional outbursts.
- Spleen/pancreas: feeling inadequate; self-punishment; dependent; lack of boundaries; overly sensitive; overly worried; low self-worth; smothered.
- Lung: chronic grief; sadness; unfulfilled longing; feeling trapped; isolated; despair; disappointed; hopeless; lost zest for life.

*Shaoyang/Jueyin.* *Shaoyang* represents the body of *qi* expressing humanity through the union of the *yang* aspects of fire and wood, the Triple Heater and gallbladder, and the archetypal energies of alchemy and judgment/decision-making. Its *yin* counterpart is the union of *jueyin*, the *yin* aspects of fire and wood, the Heart Protector, the pericardium and liver. This partnership combines intimacy with keen perception, and mobilizes positive action, manifesting as propriety and benevolence.

Emotions that impair the relevant organ systems include:

- Triple Heater: humiliation; indecisive; feeling left out; inhibited;
- choked; giving up; denial; no right to self-expression; conflict; dissatisfaction with life; unable to deal with others; resentful; overly critical; workaholic; addictions.
- Gallbladder: inability to see other viewpoints; resentment; recycling of past pain; feeling like a martyr/victim; indecision; blame, self-pity; feeling second-best; unable to forgive; bitter; manipulative; a sense of false pride.
- Pericardium: acute grief; shock; broken trust; betrayal; hurt; deep yearning; remorse; not lovable; disappointment.
- Liver: anger; frustration; unable to take action; withholding feelings; complaining; unyielding; self-sabotage; discontent; unacknowledged; toxic; incapable of standing up for oneself.

We have explored *qi* as an ever-changing image of human consciousness and growth, a template of ancestral memory and an evolving dynamic of individual health. The expressions of the face, being intimately linked with the brain, serve as a life map that manifests outwardly the archetypal energies of the Five Elements, the 12 Officials and the Six Divisions.

Whether your patient yearns for the renewal (inner and outer) of beauty, relief from Bell's palsy, the aftermath of a stroke or the pain of TMJ, facial acupuncture, rooted in the precepts of Oriental medicine, supports the evolution of their well-being by wisely embracing the perennial philosophy of relationship, flow, harmony and balance.

**TABLE 1: THE EMPEROR'S COURT, THE 12 OFFICIALS**

<b>Yin Organ</b>	<b>Archetypal Persona</b>	<b>Balanced Expression</b>	<b>Imbalanced Expression</b>
Heart	Emperor	Source of shen and clear sight	Confused; unclear thinking; propriety and order are lacking
Kidney	Minister of Health	Determines the strength of body; controls water and fluids; stores will and inherited constitution in form of yuan qi and jing	Fearful; disconnected; experiences separateness in life
Heart Protector; Pericardium	Celestial Empress; protects the Emperor (the heart)	Governs intimacy	Difficulties with relationships and experiences; emotionally distant; inappropriate behavior or lack of boundaries
Liver	General	Perception; planning protection through detoxification	Depression; frustration; anger; irritability; chronic indecision; impeded perception and focus
Lung	King's Minister	Receptivity: receives pure essence	Sadness, melancholy, low self-esteem; a need to conquer; unable to receive little gifts of life
Spleen	Official	In charge of granary, transformation & transportation, distribution of nourishment	Obsessive-compulsive; self-pity; confuses sympathy for empathy
<b>Yang Organ</b>	<b>Archetypal Persona</b>	<b>Balanced Expression</b>	<b>Imbalanced Expression</b>
Small Intestine	Receiving Official	Separates the pure from the impure; conducts essence to and from the heart	Overwhelmed; confused; foggy-headed; compromised thought, word and deeds
Bladder	Minor District Official	Stores reserves, manages and dispenses resources; controls storage of water & excretes fluids	Fearful; greedy; sour disposition; unable to hold onto anything of meaning in life
Triple Heater	Irrigation Official	Maintains homeostasis, body thermostat, supports social relations, networks and communications; water-channel balance & harmony	Disconnected; withdrawn; marginally engaged; very limited range of self-expression
Gallbladder	Judge/Arbitrator	Wise judgment; supports the perception of liver	Limited insight; irritable, frustrated; rage or violent behavior
Large Intestine	Official	Lets go of that which no longer serves	Insecurity; fearful of what future may hold (when large intestine is obstructed)
Stomach	Official	In charge of granary; nourishes through the integration of experiences acquired throughout life	Overloaded in all areas of life; inability to integrate past or present issues



**TABLE 2: THE PALACE GARDENS, THE SIX DIVISIONS**

<b>Yang Flows</b>	<b>Channel</b>	<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Endowment</b>	<b>Element</b>	<b>Virtue(s)</b>	<b>Channel</b>	<b>Yin Flows</b>
Taiyang	SI/Bl	Heaven	shen	fire/water	propriety/wisdom	Hi/Kid	shaoyin
Shaoyang	TH/GB	Humanity	qi	fire/wood	propriety/benevolence	PC/Liv	jueyin
Yangming	LI/St	Earth	jing	metal/earth	integrity/righteousness	Lu/Sp	taiyin