

## **Constitutional Facial Acupuncture: Changing the Face of Aging, Part Two**

### **Herbal Therapies**

By Sunanda Harrell-Stokes

In our last article, we introduced aspects of "healthy aging" and the idea of "renewal" as a process of transformative change. In this process, which originates from within and manifests itself outward in our *shen*, a vital opportunity exists for the client to experience compassion, joy, beauty and peaceful balance.

One of the most important modalities encompassed in this process is the employment of herbal poultices, creams and essential oils. The first step in the flow of treatment is to have the patient cleanse his/her face with a natural blend of white French clay; finely ground organic almonds; lavender and rose flowers; flaxseeds; and rolled oats. This cleanser gently exfoliates and is safe for all skin types. To this powdered cleanser, kelp; essential oils; honey; flower remedies; heavy cream, etc., can be added and custom-blended for each patient. It is easy and inexpensive to make, and when kept in powdered form, has a long shelf life.

The next herbal step, usually performed before needling the face, involves a poultice based upon the ancient tradition of the Chinese "herbal soup" *si wu tang*, which contains *bai shao* (radix paeoniae lactiflorae); *dang gui* (radix angelicae sinensis); *shu di huang* (radix rehmanniae glutinosae conquitae); and *chuan xiong* (radix ligustici chuanxiong). It combines the efficacy of a classical formula with the power of individual Chinese and Western herbs designed to counteract the effects of poor nutrition, pollution and stress. This formula nourishes the *qi*; tonifies blood; and adds needed moisture and circulation to dry, dehydrated cells and tissues.

A reusable cotton mask is dipped into the warm herbal decoction and topped with a warm gel mask. This poultice is usually left on the face for 10 minutes. Additional herbs are added to clear heat, dampness and

toxins associated with acne, brown spots, eczema and rosacea.

After the facial acupuncture, we whip an egg white "renewal" mask, containing MSM (organic sulfur); snow flowers; white peach lotus and rose flowers; and other ingredients. To this mask is added three drops of essential nourishing oil, which oxygenates and regenerates tissue. This complex blend of seven essential and natural carrier oils offers an integration of fragrances that improve the complexion by stimulating circulation; clearing congestion; soothing wrinkles; and invigorating and astringing to lift and add tone, elasticity and suppleness to the skin. It contains geranium; rose; apricot kernel; macadamia; borage; sunflower; and other oils. We then hydrate the face with a thick, creamy (yet not greasy) moisturizer containing Chinese herbs, vitamins, natural oils and soothing botanicals to improve the texture of the skin, reduce dryness, and help make the skin feel soft and elastic.

Finally, we "call forth the yin" to the face, which involves rolling cool jade face- and eye-rollers up the neck and face. This helps the moisturizer penetrate more deeply and, as the ancient Chinese believed, affords magical protection. We then spritz the face with a scent of rose or lavender essential oil water, and *voila!* - our journey to empower beauty and renew the spirit continues.

We look forward to our continuing journey with you in this exciting new field of healthy aging.

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The Facial Acupuncture column is a collaborative effort of several acupuncturists who are pioneers in the field of "healthy living." Sunanda Harrell-Stokes is one of those pioneers, having co-created the Marisandaú constitutional facial protocol. Since 1973, she has offered a unique combination of scientific and humanistic skills gained from a background in microbiology, psychotherapy, wholistic health and Oriental medicine.

Sunanda is licensed as an acupuncturist in four states and is certified by the NCCAOM. She is a graduate of Syracuse University and the Academy of Chinese Culture and Health Sciences, and has completed advance work in traditional Chinese medicine at Nanjing College in the People's Republic of China. She has studied facial diagnosis, acupressure and acupuncture for facial rejuvenation with Lillian Garnier, Shogo Mochizuki, Alex Tiberi and Mary Elizabeth Wakefield. Sunanda's practice focuses on biological individuality applied to conditions related to aging; stress; PMS; menopause; sinusitis; headaches; and musculoskeletal pain.



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