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## The Earth Features and Traits

“How shall I celebrate the planet that, even now,  
carries me in its fruited womb?”

DIANE ACKERMAN, *THE PLANETS*<sup>1</sup>

Earth is our home. We live on a planet of great abundance and amazing natural resources. Our earth nurtures us and provides all we need to survive and flourish. It is no wonder that tribal people around the world call our planet “The Great Mother.” We are sheltered in her arms and fed by her bounty. Change is slow and constant on earth, except for occasional shows of power in the form of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Earth is our stability and the very foundation of our lives, so it is important to respect it.

In Chinese medicine, earth energy is also the base element. It has to do with living in our bodies and feeling the pleasures of being human. Earth is concerned with feeding and nurturing the body and the mind. Any problems of ingestion or digestion of either food or information is considered an earth condition or problem. The earth element wants to take everything in, assimilate it, and make it part of the whole. It harmonizes discordant energies and is warm and embracing.

The earth element is most closely tied to the spleen and stomach. The stomach takes in a variety of foods, absorbs the nutrients, and transforms them into the energy required to live. The spleen breaks down old red blood cells in a different kind of digestion and helps fight infection. The earth element also corresponds to the pancreas and the ability to regulate blood sugar, the abdomen, the midback, the large muscles of the body, the lymphatic system, and the diaphragm. The earth element maintains the flesh of the body and is responsible for the amount of fat that is stored. The primary emotion of the earth element is worry, which leads to upset stomachs and weight gain or confusion and a lack of clarity in thinking. Another major emotion of the earth element is sympathy. Earthy people feel great concern for those

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they love. They usually have a wide circle of friends and family members with whom they are involved. They enjoy being consolers and caretakers.

People with a large amount of earth energy have a soft plumpness to their bodies even when they are physically fit. It is especially noticeable in the belly, the upper arms, the breasts and the lower legs. You won't see their bones sticking out as there is a layer of flesh covering them. But, this extra flesh makes them cuddly! This was considered a very healthy body to the ancient Chinese. They believed that you should be able to pinch about one inch of flesh all over the body without pain. They actually measured according to the distance between the tip of the thumb and the knuckle when you pinched! This was a sign that you had enough flesh to withstand a famine. And famines are still likely because of natural disasters, but a famine condition is also present when you have chronic pain or a high fever of more than 2 days. Having this bit of extra flesh ensures that you will feel less pain and have the fat to live off of in case of an emergency.

Because the earth element controls the large muscles of the body, when earth people are athletic, their bodies create very large, rounded muscles in the calves and biceps. Earth people tend to be slower moving. They often have big feet. They value consistency and sameness. They like to touch, such as in giving and receiving affection and they smell good as they never lose that baby smell that can be like a faint hint of cookies or flowers. Their skin tends to be soft and smooth with a blush like a tearose on the cheeks.

On the face, earth's strength is in the power of the features that correspond to the spleen and stomach. The mouth is considered the vital feature and shows the most information about the functioning of the entire digestive tract. Other features that correlate are the size and shape of the lips, the upper lip area, the bridge of the nose, the upper eyelid, and the lower cheeks. The earth element can soften, round and smooth all the features of the face by putting an extra layer of fat around the bones. This creates cuteness and an ongoing resemblance to the faces of babies.

These earthy features show such traits as generosity, the desire for pleasure, the amount a person is able to give and receive, and the ability to accumulate. Earth people love their things and are great collectors. They are the gatherers and savers of the world. They like the old better than the new and they appreciate comfort in all things. The earth features can add extra flesh to any other part of the face and are, therefore, considered the warehouses of the face.

## THE MOUTH AND LIPS

The mouth is the place to take in nourishment. It is also the most sensual part of the face as the lips are very sensitive and they have many nerve endings. The size of the mouth shows the appetite. The bigger the mouth, the more a person wants to ingest; this relates not only to food, but to affection and information as well. The mouth is a feature that expresses emotions easily, with a smile or a kiss and in



**FIGURE 7-1** Large Mouth. This man has a large mouth with full lips especially compared to a refined nose. This mouth indicates a generous nature and strong earth energy because of the fullness of his lips. He is a warm person and gives easily.

forming the shapes to speak words. It is the second most changeable feature on the face, after the eyes. Most major expressions require movement of the mouth. The mobility of the muscles around the mouth and the softness and thinness of the skin of the lips allows people to change its shape and mark it. Unfortunately, most people press down on their lips and make them smaller. However, it has been shown in many studies that women are considered more attractive when they have full lips as this is seen as a sign of sexuality, whereas men are considered more masculine if their lips are not too full.

The mouth shows generosity and the ability to give. Larger, wider mouths (Figure 7-1) belong to people who have lots of earth energy. Mouth size is measured in relation to the nose. Create a triangle starting at the center point in the bridge of the nose and follow the sides of the nose down to the mouth area. The average mouth is the same length as the width at the base of this imaginary triangle. Any mouth that goes beyond this measurement is considered wide. A smaller mouth occurs when the corners of the mouth do not meet this distance. Try this measurement again when someone is smiling and you will see that the mouth increases in size. This means that everyone gets more generous when they are happy. To the ancient Chinese, a wide mouth was considered a fortunate feature. Men with large mouths were supposedly more capable of getting a good wife—meaning she would give to him a lot!

People with large mouths usually buy many presents for people they love as well as for business associates. They can be known to spontaneously give things even to strangers or new acquaintances.



**FIGURE 7-2** Small Mouth. This woman has a small mouth, so she doesn't give quite as easily because she has less earth energy to give from. However, the fullness of her lower lip means she likes to give and receive pleasurable experiences.

People with average-sized mouths still have generosity but are more particular about to whom and how much they give. People with small mouths (Figure 7-2) find it difficult to give unless there is a good reason, as they are more conditional about their giving. They give because someone deserves it or because they are supposed to give something and do so based on practicality more than emotion. But don't misunderstand—they do give but more selectively.

The size of the lips is also a factor. Fullness of the lips is evaluated based on the fleshiness of the rest of the face. Someone whose face is earthier, with plump cheeks and a puffy nose, will have bigger lips. Someone whose skin is taut with aquiline features will have thinner lips. Exceptions to this are considered magnified traits. In general, fuller lips belong to people who are more expressive emotionally. They are more romantic and sensual. These lips indicate a desire for pleasure. People with thinner lips are more reserved emotionally, especially if they hold them compressed together (Figure 7-3). This indicates a desire to hold their feelings in. They are proper and logical. They usually consider public expression of emotion to be unseemly. This does not mean that they are not romantic; they just save their emotional expression and romanticism for private occasions.

In the Western world, large lips are appreciated and valued on women. Because of this, many women spend lots of money buying lipstick to make their lips look bigger and lip gloss to make their lips look shinier and thus more prominent. Some get injections in their lips to enhance their size. In men, however, thin lips are considered acceptable. Western men are expected to withhold expression of their emotions until it is appropriate. Thus men have learned to hold



**FIGURE 7-3** Compressed Lips. The woman in this photo is holding her lips together in a slightly compressed way. This is a sign of a reserved person who holds her feelings in.

their lips tightly together. Many men have their lips compressed into a thin line. Westerners see this as a sign of a strong man who is in control of himself and his emotions. In actuality, it is a sign of repression and can lead to an inability to express. Men are expected to have a “stiff upper lip.” This usually means that they don’t have much of one at all!

People with full lips (Figure 7-4) express themselves easily in public and give easily to almost anyone, especially if the mouth is also wide—then they can even give things easily to people they barely know. They are spontaneous about giving and can be seen giving things away just because someone admired the objects. They get great pleasure from giving.

People with wide mouths and thin lips (Figure 7-5) are much more private about their feelings and don’t express them easily. However, they do have an impulse for generosity and are most likely to give presents that are appropriate for the situation. They give to people deserving of a reward, or they give when it is the correct thing to do. They are the thoughtful business people who send out gifts to their customers at Christmas time and remember to send thank-you cards.

Small mouths with full lips (Figure 7-6) belong to people who express their emotions readily to those they trust and give generously to those they love. They reward loyalty and can use gifts to barter for favoritism. They are the people who look for exactly the right thing that their loved ones really want or need. This is “Cupid’s Bow” mouth when there is a strong refined curve to the upper lip (Figure 7-7). These people give for the pleasure of showing love and being loved in return for their gifts.

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**FIGURE 7-4** Full Lips. This woman has a generous mouth with full lips. These traits show maximum generosity and the ability to express emotions easily.



**FIGURE 7-5** Thin Lips. This woman with a wide mouth and thin lips doesn't express her emotions that easily but is generous, especially to those she loves. She is likely to give money or gift certificates.



**FIGURE 7-6** Small Mouth with Full Lips. The small mouth with full lips on this woman indicates that she has strong emotions and the ability to express them to intimates. Her generosity is reserved for those who are close to her, and she is particular about what she gives.



**FIGURE 7-7** Cupid's Bow Mouth. The curved upper rim of this man's mouth indicates that he loves giving presents to show his love.



**FIGURE 7-8** Refined Mouth. This woman has a mouth that is very refined, indicating that she has very good taste and picks presents that are beautiful and individual for people close to her.

People whose lips are refined have very good taste and tend to be more specific about giving (Figure 7-8). They like to give gifts that have aesthetic value and appropriate to the person. If the mouth is small and the lips are thin, these people have a little more trouble giving or expressing. They are more conditional about their gifts and feel that people should earn their gifts, or they give because they know that they have to. If the lips are held tight, it is a sign that these people have great self-control. They do not express easily or well and can appear to be lacking in warmth. Of course they do feel, but all feelings are kept hidden and out of view. They have great abilities to suppress emotions and hold onto money. If the lips are pinched, the bearer is a tightwad, both financially and emotionally.

When the lips are held tight in a pucker with lines above and below (Figure 7-9), you have found someone who is holding on to disapproval and resentment. You can bet that these people have followed the rules and done all the right things but somehow were not rewarded. Like a drawstring purse, they are capable of holding on to past hurts and resentment. Yet rather than being disillusioned by their lack of success, they usually believe that they were just unlucky. They can be judgmental because they still expect everyone else to follow the same rules even if those rules didn't work for them (see also Chapter 2—Overnurturing and Bitterness).

Sensuality and sexuality are also indicated by the size of the lips. Fuller, puffier lips belong to more sensual people. They enjoy experiencing life through their senses of touch, taste, and smell. They luxuriate in the pleasures of life and need to experience life this way. Although sensuality is often associated with sex, it does not have to





**FIGURE 7-9** Pursued Mouth. The woman in this photo has lines around her entire mouth indicating that she has followed the rules and probably doesn't feel rewarded for having always done the right things.

be. People with full lips do not usually have a stronger sex drive. Their need for sensuality can be met in many ways. They love the feel of a creamy pudding or the softness of silk against their skin. They can usually find many ways to experience their sensuality, of which sex is only one aspect.

In contrast, people with thin lips usually have a stronger need for sexuality. They do not allow themselves much self-expression. Of course they still have sensual needs and during sex is one of the few times they allow themselves to feel and express their sensuality. These kinds of people can be sensual lovers, but may not touch much unless they are making love. They limit their intake of pleasure and put brakes on their expression of emotions. If the lips are held very tight, these people may have repressed their ability to be sensual at all and you won't find them hugging a lot.

When the upper lip is larger than the lower lip (Figure 7-10), you have found a person who desires intense emotional experiences. Otherwise known as a "Drama Seeker," this kind of person takes all emotions to extremes. This is even more seen when the upper lip has a little extra flesh in the middle that comes down over the lower lip. This kind of lip can also be found on men, and such men make the worst patients when they are sick or injured. People with this kind of upper lip are sure they need stitches when they are cut, are convinced they are dying until they are diagnosed with the flu, and are positive they have broken something when it is just a sprain. They are prone to exaggeration and emotional flourishes. When down, they believe that life will always be this way and never get better. They can be very entertaining or very exhausting. The saying in



**FIGURE 7-10** Larger Upper Lip. The woman in this photo has an upper lip slightly bigger than the lower. She can be dramatic about her feelings and enjoys expressing her emotions.

Chinese is that these people would rather fight than be bored. This trait is exaggerated when the lip is very puffy.

If the upper lip is flaccid and remains open when the mouth should be closed, the bearer has poor boundaries, especially sexually. One of the corollary signs is gums that show easily. This is a trait more often associated with women who are easy prey both emotionally and sexually. Often a sign of previous sexual abuse, a woman with this trait is vulnerable to predatory people and lacks distinction between herself and others. Interestingly, many actresses and models try to emulate this look in photographs, thinking that it makes them look sexy. In reality, it makes them look needy and vulnerable to mistreatment.

Some people have very big teeth that keep their lips from closing completely. Their lips are not large enough to close over the teeth, and they are usually very self-conscious about it. These are talkative people who make their lips thinner by trying too hard to hold their mouths shut and it makes their mouth protrude slightly (Figure 7-11). They need to relax and just be their outgoing selves. They are trying too hard to control their natural impulses to communicate. This kind of mouth belongs to people who are open emotionally and are likely to talk to strangers about personal things and feelings.

If the lower lip is fuller than the upper lip (Figure 7-12), the bearer desires physical pleasure. These people need to eat good food, drink fine wine, and sleep in comfortable beds. They do not tolerate discomfort and demand the best they can get. The fuller the lower lip, the more comfort and luxury this person needs (Figure 7-13). If the



**FIGURE 7-11** Protruding Lips. This woman's lips are close over teeth that protrude making her lips protrude as well. This is a sign of a talkative person and she needs to let herself communicate more.



**FIGURE 7-12** Bigger Lower Lip. The man in this photo has a bigger lower lip, which indicates his desire for physical pleasure and comfort.



**FIGURE 7-13** Very Full Lower Lip. This man's very full lower lip indicates that he is a gourmand and no doubt loves good food, good company, and beautiful surroundings.

upper lip is also very puffy, it is a sign of hedonism. People who have a protruding lower lip pout well when they don't get their way and this can be a sign of self-indulgence.

When the lower lip is considered lax and lacks tightness in muscle tone, you have found a person who has poor self-control and is prone to lasciviousness, especially if you can see the inside of their moist lower lip. These individuals have an inability to curtail the hedonistic impulses, which can get them into trouble in many ways. Problems with overindulging in both food and sex are correlated. This trait is more often found in men than in women. In the ancient texts, men with this kind of lower lip were admonished to be careful not to have too many mistresses or they would die in financial ruin. The ancients believed that a man with this trait would not be able to control his sexual desires. Therefore one woman, especially if she was his wife, was obviously not going to be enough. Considering how expensive mistresses were financially and energetically, these men were obviously doomed. Of course there are other traits that may curb these desires like cautious ears, but this trait is still considered a sign of poor impulse control and possible gluttony or addictive tendencies.

Individuals with lips that show firmness and strong muscle tone not only have good muscle tone in the digestive organs, especially the diaphragm and intestines but also have great discipline. This is often considered a sign of the ability to sing, as the diaphragm is important for breath control (Figure 7-14). If the lips are held too tight, they could also be called anal-retentive. When the lips are flaccid and loose, the digestive tract is also likely to have poor muscle tone, and the person has difficulty with retention. When the lips are



**FIGURE 7-14** Singer's Mouth. The lips on this woman show good muscle tone indicating she has good control of the diaphragm, which gives her the ability to use her breath to sing.

puffy and dark, you have signs of digestive stagnation and most likely, constipation.

## UPPER LIP AREA

The area above the upper lip is one of the best areas for determining the functioning of the stomach, which is discussed in detail in Chapter 10. This area above the lip is also the place to look for issues about nurturing. Because the earth element is so involved with the ability to give and receive, the upper lip area shows how well someone manages these desires. People with a strong earth element have a lot of extra nurturing to give, and this area is full. If the earth element is deficient or if someone gives away too much nurturing, the upper lip area is sunken and marked. Lines in this area indicate overnurturing of others at the expense of oneself. Deep or numerous lines are a sign of other-directedness (see Chapter 2—Emotional Map). These traits show overuse and a deficiency of the earth energy. People with these lines have worried too much about others and given too much of themselves away. Although these lines are associated with smoking, there is still an underlying need for self-nurturing that smoking seems to fulfill. These individuals smoke to help clear the mind of worry and, therefore, have the illusion of nurturing themselves. In reality, because smoking is fiery, it sends smokers backward on the five-element cycle and can therefore be destructive. The prescription for these lines is true self-nurturing, specifically luxury and pampering. This gets people going in the right direction on the five-element cycle,

from earth to metal and stops the wood element from overacting on the earth element. These kinds of self nurturing behaviors also increase self-esteem and self-worth.

## BRIDGE OF THE NOSE

The area on the nose directly between the two eyes is a minor earth area. It is an area that correlates with the spleen on the top side and the pancreas between the eyes and on the sides of the nose. When the lines from the liver are longer and move into the area below the eyebrows, it means that this person has been overthinking, which involves the spleen. It usually means excessive concentration or worrying (Figure 7-16). Color in this area also indicates blood sugar regulation and is discussed in detail in Chapter 10.

## UPPER EYELIDS

In Chinese medicine, puffy upper eyelids are a sign of earth excess. This trait is also associated with spleen dampness, where the dam of earth keeps the water contained and stagnant. This contributes to weight gain and obesity. The emotional correlate is that these kinds of people do not suffer for love and never lose their appetite. People with puffy upper eyelids (Figure 7-15) are also supposed to be very good at saving money and investing it, especially in real estate. When the upper eyelid is sunken, hollow, or deeply lidded (Figure 7-16),



**FIGURE 7-15** Full Upper Eyelids. The man in this photo has slightly puffy upper eyelids, indicating that he has slight spleen dampness at present but he also has the ability to save money and invest in real estate.



**FIGURE 7-16** Deep Eyelids. The woman in this picture has a large upper eyelid that goes back deeply indicating that she has suffered in the past and while suffering, probably couldn't eat much. This is a sign of a slight earth deficiency and metal strength.

the bearer suffers easily and often. When they are upset, they do not eat or sleep and lose weight and money easily. This is a sign of earth deficiency because they have trouble holding onto things, including their energy, when they are suffering and often belongs to metallic people (see Chapter 8).

## LOWER CHEEKS

The last area of earth energy on the face is the area of the lower cheeks, also known as “moneybags” (Figure 7-17). This area is the fleshy part of the face above the jaws, often called jowls, that allows people to accumulate. To the ancient Chinese, this was one of the most important areas of the face and was very lucky to have. It was considered best when it looked like a peach—soft, plump, pink and fuzzy (Figure 7-18). The ancient Chinese considered moneybags to be the primary warehouse of the face and it showed whether someone could accumulate reserves of energy or money. It was important to have moneybags before you even got the money. And if you got rich or had extra energy, the moneybags were sure to show up. It was also cautioned that this area should not look “like mutton fat jade,” which meant cold, hard, and white. That was a sign of grasping materialism and would lead to severe health problems caused by excess earth. They also cautioned against “floating flesh” or fleshiness not tied to the bone as this could mean getting money in unethical ways.



**FIGURE 7-17** Full Moneybags. The large moneybags on this man's face show that he knows how to save money, invest and accumulate things of long-term value.



**FIGURE 7-18** Moneybags—Peaches. The lovely moneybags on this woman's face are soft and pink. This shows that she knows how to live well, enjoy life and probably saves energy and money well too.

Instead, this area should look like the skin of a peach, with a rosy blush, firm but soft and full. If the skin sags here, it is a sign of depleted earth energy.

Moneybags were a signal that a person could withstand a famine because they had just enough extra weight to live off for a while with



enough extra energy to find more food. Too much extra weight meant that someone was too sedentary and would be unable to mobilize to find food and would be too slow to seize future opportunities. Too little weight on the body would mean that a person could starve to death too easily and had nothing left in reserve for recovery.

The ancient Chinese also considered any long-term disease that caused great pain or illnesses, like influenza, a famine condition. When people have a disease that causes wasting or chronic pain, they lose energy and strength to fight for their survival. They are also incapable of keeping on weight that buffers them from pain. Illnesses such as the flu with a high fever eliminate the desire to eat and keep the body from recovering as quickly. Food was and is one of the best sources of energy replenishment. The ancient Chinese believed that people with moneybags would be able to survive the critical first days or weeks of a famine and then still have enough energy left to regroup and recover. They recommended that healthy people keep about an additional 10 pounds of surplus fat on their bodies.

Moneybags and the extra 5 to 10 pounds they imply are no longer considered as attractive in the Western world because we value a thin vision of beauty over optimal health. However, moneybags are also a sign of people who are living life slowly enough to feel, enjoy, and relate to others and the pleasures of being human. These are people who know what gives them pleasure, and they also know how to receive it. They have the ability to accumulate enough things or money or friends to feel rich. As in the old saying, “It takes money to make money,” people with moneybags attract more because they have something extra already.

## WAREHOUSES

The minor warehouses of the face include plump earlobes (Figure 7-19). Earlobes belong to the water element, but it is the earth element that adds the ability to hold onto investments that ensure financial security in old age and luck in acquiring and keeping real estate. It also means that you will be taken care of by your children when you are old. This is like an earthen dam that helps to hold the water energy in and encourages accumulation. Another variation of this old age luck that is more applicable for modern day old age, is the long and thin earlobe. The length still conveys luck in old age, but the lack of plumpness of the earlobe shows that these people will maintain their independence and function when they are old (See Chapter 4).

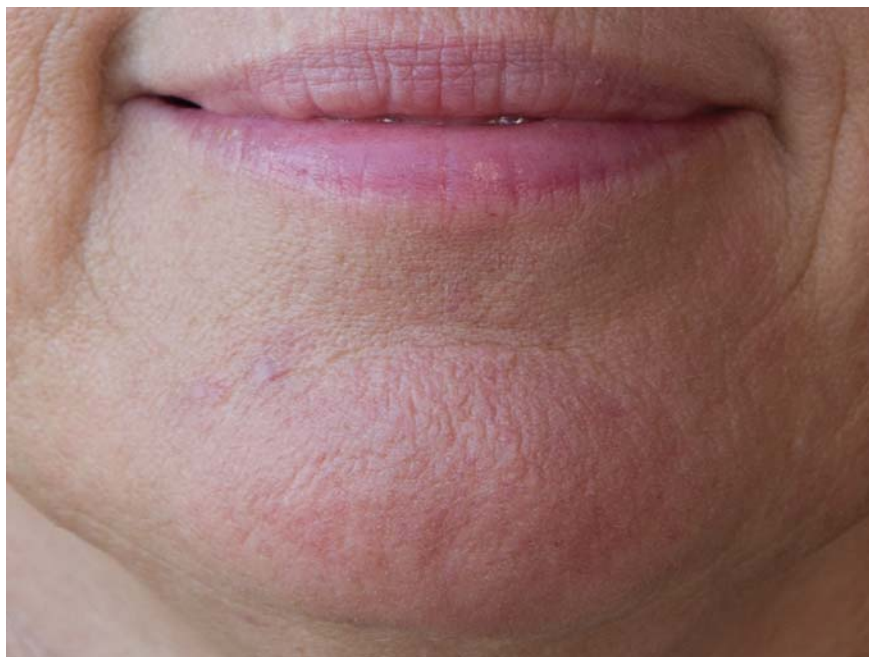
A plump chin (Figure 7-20) is a sign of stubbornness. This is the equivalent of digging one’s feet into the ground. Although the chin is part of the water element, the extra earth here blocks “going with the flow.” A plump chin is also a sign of possible future weight gain, otherwise known as “spleen dampness.”

The earth element also adds plumpness to big, bossy cheekbones and pads them (Figure 7-21), which makes authoritative people kinder when they are being bossy, because earth is much warmer and more people oriented than the metal element that controls the

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**FIGURE 7-19** Plump Earlobes. Although these earlobes are not that long, they are wide and plump indicating luck in old age from the water element and from the earth element that stops the water from flowing away like a dam in the river.



**FIGURE 7-20** Plump Chin. The woman in this photo has a plump chin that is also turned up. This doubles the trait of stubbornness. You can be sure she can dig her heels if necessary.



**FIGURE 7-21** Padded Cheekbones. The woman in this photo has plumpness covering up strong cheekbones that are a metal trait. But the lovely earth here shows that she can be bossy in such a nice way that people may not even realize that they are being bossed around.

cheekbones. Earth energy helps round the nose tip (see Chapter 8), which shows an increased desire for material things and the ability to get them. This is another metal feature that gets softened by the earth element and helps people experience pleasure and comfort.

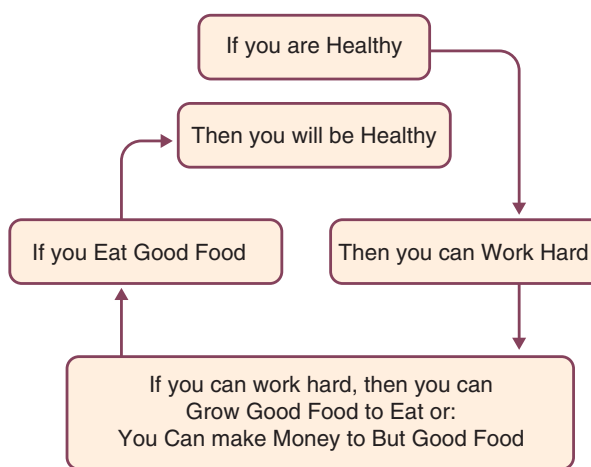
When someone has the bottom of their face padded with a little extra flesh, it makes them look happy and warm (Figure 7-22). The ancient Chinese considered this a valuable type of face for a merchant. A friendly face can get other people to like them. However, it can also be a face that can hide sorrow or grief behind their need to make other people comfortable. If the padding is very full and looks disconnected from the bone in front of the ear or by the jaw, it is called “floating flesh” and means that they have a false front acting like they are friendlier and warmer than they feel. My student from Sweden named this a “donut” face, where the nose and mouth look like they are sticking out of the hole in the middle.

The original meaning of wealth was food, having enough grain (rice, wheat, barley, or millet) for your own family and enough left over so you could trade it for other food or things that made life more pleasurable and comfortable. The original Chinese Wealth Cycle was this: If you were healthy, then you could work hard. If you could work hard, then you could grow good food to eat. Or, you could buy good food. If you ate good food; you would be healthy (Figure 7.23). This was the epitome of a good, earthy life. Eventually, as societies became bigger and more complicated, barter was taken over by the

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**FIGURE 7-22** Happy Face. The woman in this photo has padding across the lower part of her face indicating that she has the extra earth energy to act friendly and present a happy face, even when she is not feeling that happy.



**FIGURE 7-23** Chinese Wealth Cycle.

use of money, created in the original form of metal coins. The metal element takes raw materials from the earth to create things of even more value, such as coins, jewelry, cutlery, and machinery. It creates treasures from the primitive and unformed. The metal element also creates the refined, aquiline features of the face.

## Reference

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