

Nip, Lift and Tuck

Want to look 10 years younger? Plastic surgery may be the answer

BY JOYCE NISHIOKA
Staff Writer

Do Asians really age slower than people of other races? Nora Honda*, a 37-year-old Japanese American, doesn't think so. For the past year or so, she's noticed her face looking older, but she can't quite pinpoint the changes. She has no major wrinkles or bags and her skin is still dewy, but often people tell her she appears tired and drawn.

Nora goes to Dr. Carolyn Chang for answers.

Chang's Pacific Heights office is as welcoming as a beauty salon. Women stroll in, toting their Burberry and Kate Spade handbags. They relax on a cushiony, floral-patterned couch, reading fashion magazines while waiting for their appointments.

Chang — along with her partners, Drs. Loren Eskenazi and Katherine Young — owns one of the few female-operated plastic surgery centers in California. She specializes in the SMAS-Platysma facelift, a technique which lifts underlying connective tissues in the face and creates smooth and natural contours along the chin, jaw and neckline.

A Stanford Medical School graduate and protégé of Dr. John Owsley, who pioneered the SMAS lift, Chang has earned a solid reputation among the A-list. Unsurprisingly, *San Francisco Magazine* named her one of the city's top doctors.

"Nowadays, people are interested in preventing deterioration. They are getting smaller procedures, done earlier," she says.

Honda immediately feels com-

fortable talking to Chang about her concerns. The doctor hands her a mirror and explains that as people age their eyebrows and eyelids begin to droop. The mid-face muscles along the cheekbones sag toward the nasolabial fold, which runs from the nose to the corners of the mouth, and muscles along the jaw tend to fall toward the neck.

The face also tends to lose fat, causing it to appear hollow.

Commonly, clients in their 20s are interested in skincare and botox, she says, while those in their mid-to late-30s are getting browlifts. Women in their early 40s who show obvious signs of aging, meanwhile, often opt for the works: browlift, eyelid lift and facelift.

That's what Jane Macy*, 44, decided to do. She had gone to about five other doctors for consultations but she didn't like their approach. "Some doctors talked about the movie stars they had worked on instead of focusing on me," she says. "Another pulled up my forehead so tight that my face looked as stretched out as a balloon."

Originally, Macy was considering just a browlift, but says, "Dr. Chang showed me all the things that could be done to improve my appearance and accomplish what I wanted."

Now, she says people tell her she looks great, but they never guess she has had a facelift. "They ask me if I've gotten a tan or a new haircut. That's perfect. I didn't want a drastic change. I didn't want to be freaky looking."

Honda doesn't want that either. After studying her face for a few minutes, Dr. Chang says, "I wouldn't recommend you get anything done. A mid-face lift will make you look unnatural."

She explains that in general, Asians have more fat in their face to start with, so that as they lose the fat it's not so noticeable.

"Asians age slower because their skin tone tends to be better," she adds.

Honda looks in the mirror, feeling suddenly youthful.

*Names have been changed.



PHOTOS BY CAROLYN CHANG
Left: Dr. Carolyn Chang.
Top: Before-and-after eyelid surgery by Dr. Chang.

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