

Thai Medical Astrology: The Knowledge of "Body Elements" (Tatu Chao Reun) in Health Care



According to Thai traditional medicine theory, the relationship between humans and nature begins at birth. This concept is referenced in the ancient Thai medical text, the "Phra Khamphi Pathom Chinda," which describes the formation of the human body within the mother's womb. It states that the body initially forms as a tiny entity, comparable in size to a sesame oil droplet on a yak hair. After being agitated seven times, the fire element first manifests, followed by the emergence of the other three elements—earth, water, and wind—completing the four essential elements (form = the body). This process is then followed by the development of sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness (mind = the mental faculties), collectively known as the "Five Aggregates." These components become fully developed around the fifth month of pregnancy, signifying the emergence of human life.

The natural forces, including seasonal heat and cold, influence the balance of these four elements in each individual, beginning in the womb and continuing until birth. Celestial energies, such as those from stars, also impact the human body, contributing to the unique elemental composition of each individual at birth. This dominant element, known as the "Body Element" (Tatu Chao Reun), represents the combination of all four elements, with one element being more prominent than the others. This dominant element shapes the personality and characteristics that accompany an individual from birth, often referred to as the "birth element." However, this element may change over time due to environmental factors and lifestyle habits.^[3]

The "Body Element" or "Birth Element" is crucial information that Thai traditional medicine practitioners use to analyze the balance of elements within the body. This knowledge is applied in diagnosing, treating, preventing diseases, and promoting and restoring health.^[4,5]

"Body Elements" in Thai Traditional Medicine Texts

In the **Thai Traditional Medicine and Pharmacy Dictionary**,^[6] the term "birth element" is defined as the element that accompanies an individual from birth. This element is classified according to the lunar month in which conception occurred, divided into four categories:

- Those conceived in months 5, 6, and 7 have fire as their birth element.
- Those conceived in months 8, 9, and 10 have wind as their birth element.
- Those conceived in months 11, 12, and 1 have water as their birth element.
- Those conceived in months 2, 3, and 4 have earth as their birth element, also known as the **Body Element**. (This information is referenced from the **Phra Khamphi Pathom Chinda** in the **Phaet Sastra Songkhro** text.)

In the **Phra Khamphi Chanthasat**,^[7] the birth elements of boys and girls are associated with the day of their birth. This can be interpreted as follows: each person's day of birth determines the characteristics of the element that may predispose them to illness more easily. The classification is as follows:

- Those born on Sunday and Saturday have fire as their birth element.
- Those born on Monday and Thursday have earth as their birth element.
- Those born on Tuesday have wind as their birth element.
- Those born on Wednesday and Friday have water as their birth element.

In the **Phra Khamphi Samutthana Vinichai**,^[7,8] Thai traditional medicine explains the significance of the sun in diagnosing health issues related to the imbalance of the four elements—earth, water, wind, and fire. The imbalances are categorized as aggravated, deficient, or impaired, depending on the position of the sun in the zodiac. The text specifies that individuals born under a particular zodiac sign have a dominant body element and are predisposed to certain health conditions based on that element.

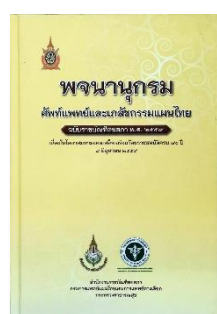


Image: Thai Traditional Medicine Reference Texts

Application of Thai Medical Knowledge in Public Health Care Using "Body Elements"

"Body Elements" have two types: the natal body element, which is determined by the date of birth, and the current body element, which is assessed based on personality traits, habits, and health conditions. When the four elements in the body are balanced, a person remains healthy and free from illness. However, if there is an imbalance, it often leads to illnesses caused by weaknesses in the individual's health according to the imbalanced body elements. Therefore, to prevent potential health issues, it is advisable to adjust dietary habits by using the flavors of medicinal foods to balance the body and prevent illness.^[9]

The knowledge from the Samudthani Diagnosis scripture suggests that abnormalities in the four elements are related to the position of the sun in the zodiac. When this conclusion is considered alongside the hypothesis that individuals born under a particular zodiac sign have a dominant element associated with that sign and are prone to illnesses related to that element, it becomes practical to develop an innovation for self-analysis of body elements. This led to the development of the "Body Element Analysis Circle" (developed by Dr. Pennapa Supcharoen).^[10]

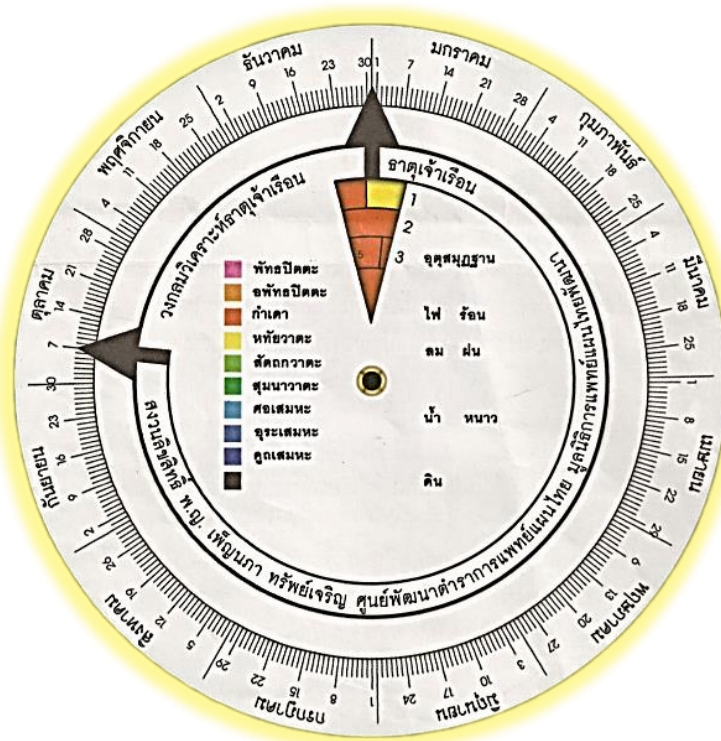


Image: Body Element Analysis Circle According to Thai Traditional Medicine Theory

Health Analysis Circle According to Body Elements

Description of the Use of the Health Analysis Circle According to Thai Traditional Medicine Principles ^[10]

This rotating circle was developed and researched by Dr. Pennapa Supcharoen while serving as a public health physician in Prachinburi Province, Ministry of Public Health. Based on her experience studying Thai traditional medicine theory, this development aims to advance the theory of Thai traditional medicine for analyzing body elements and identifying health weaknesses.

The rotating circle consists of three different-sized discs:

Disc 1 (Large Disc)

- Front Side: Displays the dates and months for one year.
- Back Side: Provides information for selecting the date according to the solar calendar for each year's zodiac sign. For convenience and speed in analysis, this information is compared with the Gregorian calendar corresponding to the birth year (This data is derived from the theory of Thai traditional medicine in the Samudthani Diagnosis scripture compared with a 100-year calendar).

Disc 2 (Medium Disc)

- Displays information according to the theory of Thai traditional medicine using color codes, which indicate the primary body element, secondary body elements, and seasonal influences.

Disc 3 (Small Disc)

- Slot Number 1: Shows the primary body element.
- Slots Number 2 and 3: Display the secondary body elements and the health conditions according to different body elements. Slot 3 is numbered from 1 to 18. The innermost slot (without a number) shows the seasonal influences.

Disc 3 (Small Disc)

- Contains two arrows: The left arrow is used to indicate the person's birth date, while the right arrow aligns with the blank space to indicate the person's conception date. The blank space allows visibility through to Disc 2, where different color bands and sections are visible, numbered 1, 2, 3, with details provided on Disc 3. The labels on Disc 3 explain that the different color codes represent specific meanings.



Fire Element

1. Pink: Represents Patthapitta—indicating diseases related to the bile system within the gallbladder and liver, such as hepatitis, cholecystitis, or gallstones.
2. Orange: Represents Apatthapitta—indicating diseases related to bile within the body, such as bile dysfunction in the digestive system, indigestion, or jaundice.
3. Red: Represents Kamdao—indicating internal heat, fever, and warmth within the body. Red is used to symbolize the fire element, which corresponds to the summer season.

Wind Element

1. Yellow: Represents Hathayavata—indicating the wind related to heart function, emotions, and mood fluctuations. Yellow symbolizes the wind element, which corresponds to the rainy season.
2. Light Green: Represents Sattakvata—indicating sharp, penetrating wind related to the nervous system and capillaries. Diseases related to capillary rupture, obstruction, or paralysis are associated with this color.
3. Dark Green: Represents Sumanavata—indicating wind from the heart and major blood vessels, such as the aorta. It relates to blood pressure and heart diseases.

Water Element

1. Light Blue: Represents Sosema—indicating diseases related to the upper respiratory tract, mucus in the throat, and the upper bronchi, such as phlegm, sinusitis, or the common cold. Light blue symbolizes the water element, which corresponds to the winter season.
2. Blue: Represents Urasaema—indicating diseases related to the chest and lungs, digestive juices in the stomach, and mid-body area, such as asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, or gastritis.
3. Purple: Represents Kuthaema—indicating diseases related to the lower gastrointestinal tract, mucus in the intestines, and urinary bladder, such as diarrhea, dysentery, hemorrhoids, cystitis, or abnormal urination.

Earth Element

- Black: Represents the earth element, including organs such as muscles, uterus, heart, and bones.

How to Use

1. Determine the date according to the solar calendar for the zodiac sign of the person's birth year by referring to the back of Disc 1. Find the year in question and check the corresponding date and month. For example, if the person was born on December 10, 1957, this would correspond to March 16.
2. Rotate Disc 2 so that the arrow points to March 16. Keep Disc 1 and Disc 2 in place without moving them.
3. Rotate Disc 3 so that the left arrow points to the person's birth date. For instance, if the person was born on December 10, align the left arrow (the side without color bands) with December 10.
4. Read the result from the right arrow (the side with color bands). This will indicate the conception date of the person and show different color bands that reveal their body element. The results can be summarized as follows:
 - Slot Number 1 indicates the primary body element, corresponding to black, which is the earth element.
 - Slots Number 2 and 3 indicate secondary body elements, corresponding to purple, which is the water element.
 - The final slot (after Number 3) indicates seasonal influences, corresponding to light blue, which is related to diseases that occur during the rainy season. For further understanding, refer back to the color meanings mentioned earlier to identify weaknesses and potential health issues.

After identifying your primary body element, you should:

- Avoid behaviors that may trigger illness.
- Eat foods that align with your body element:
 - **Earth Element:** Focus on foods with sour, sweet, fatty, and salty flavors.
 - **Water Element:** Focus on foods with sour and bitter flavors.
 - **Wind Element:** Focus on foods with spicy and hot flavors.
 - **Fire Element:** Focus on foods with bitter, cool, and bland flavors.

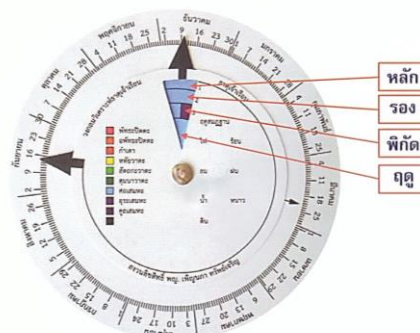


Image: Table Showing the Meaning of Color Bands on the Body Element Health Analysis Circle ^[10]

Summary of Knowledge on "Body Elements" in Health Care

The fundamental theory of Thai traditional medicine states that **the human body consists of various elements combined together, with four primary elements: earth, water, wind, and fire.** These elements form a normal anatomical and physiological system.^[11]

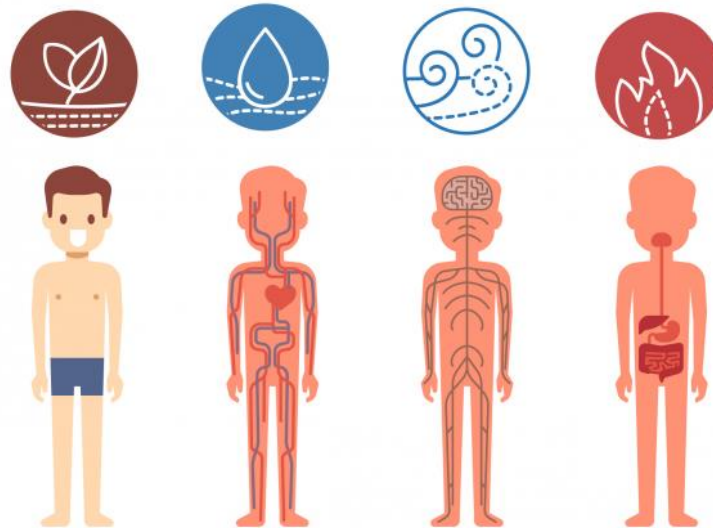


Image: Illustrating the Relationship of the Four Elements with the Functions of Various Body Systems^[12]

In addition, Thai traditional medicine theory posits that maintaining **the balance of the elements is crucial for ensuring overall health and well-being.** If any element becomes imbalanced or functions improperly—whether due to excess or deficiency (exacerbation, deficiency, or disability)—such as from aging, pollution, or unsanitary food, it can lead to health issues corresponding to the specific functions of that element.

The primary body element plays a significant role in determining an individual's physical characteristics, appearance, skin quality, behavior, and health, including:

- Earth Element: Related to the body's structure, such as bones, muscles, skin, and various organs.
- Water Element: Related to bodily fluids, such as blood, saliva, and lymph.
- Wind Element: Related to the body's movement systems, such as breathing and sensory functions.
- Fire Element: Related to energy metabolism, digestion, and body temperature.

Understanding the characteristics of each individual's primary body element helps Thai traditional medicine practitioners diagnose and recommend health care tailored to the unique attributes of each person.



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