

Thai Traditional Medicine Theory in Relation to Seasons

Part 1

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Thai Traditional Medicine (TTM) recognizes the existence of the physique and the spiritual components of human being like other ancient wisdoms (Greek or Chinese or Ayurveda). It also accepts that both components must be maintained in conformity to live a long life, therefore, the basis of treatment is holistic approach. There are many principles for diagnosis and disease development such as described below.

The four principles for diagnosis :

1. ***Dhatu Samuthan*** or Elemenatry principle
2. ***Aryu Samuthan*** or Age principle
3. ***Ritu Samuthan*** or Seasonal principle
4. ***Kala Samuthan*** or Time principle

1. Dhatu Samuthan

TTM classified body composition into four elements i.e. the Pathavi dhatu (earth element), the Apo dhatu (water element), the Vayo dhatu (wind element), and the Techo dhatu (fire element). Each element has sub-components as follow.

The Pathavi dhatu comprises 20 components i.e. hair, body hair, nail, teeth, skin, tendon, muscle, bone, bone tissue, liver, lung, kidney, fascia, heart, spleen, big intestine (stomach and large intestine) , small intestine, utariyan (the new food or the incompletely digested food in the stomach and duodenum), grisan (the old food or the completely digested food in the large intestine) and brain.

The Apo dhatu comprises 12 components i.e. blood, lymph, solid fat, liquid fat, joint lubricative liquid, bile (within gall bladder, outside gall bladder), saliva, sweat, nasal liquid, phlegm, tear, and urine.

The Vayo dhatu comprises 6 types i.e. athokamavata which moves up from toes to head, uthankamavata which moves down from head to toes, gothasayavata which is in the stomach, small intestine and large intestine, guchisayavata which is outside the gastrointestinal tract, unkamankanusarivata, which is in the heart and circulatory system, assasa-passasavata which is the act of inhale and exhale.

The Techo dhatu comprises 4 components i.e. Santappachi the fire which keeps our body warm, Parutaiachi which governs human response in relation to the temperature, Shiranachi which causes aging, and parinamachi which digests the food.

2. Aryu Samuthan

TTM divides human life into 3 stages i.e. **the first stage** is from 0-15 years old, their ailments are under semha basis, therefore the herbs for their ailments are sweet and bitter-sour in nature. The examples of sweet herbs are *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, *Asparagus racemosus* root, *Abrus precatorius* leaf, *Saccharum officinarum*, honey etc. The examples of bitter-sour herbs are *Terminalia bellerica* fruit, *Terminalia chebula* fruit, *Phyllanthus emblica* fruit, *Mangifera indica* leaf, *Acalipha indica* leaf etc. **The second stage** is from 16-30 years old, the ailments of people in this stage are under pitta basis, therefore the herbs for their ailments are puckery-sour and salty-sour in nature. Examples of puckery-sour herbs are *Tribulus terrestris*, *Phyllanthus acidus* leaf, *Spondias pinnata* leaf, *Ziziphus mauritiana* bark, *Anacardium occidentale* leaf, *Bauhinia variegata* bark, *Embelia ribes* leaf. Examples of salty-sour herbs are *Citrus hystrix* leaf, *Tamarindus indicus* seed, *Solanum stramonifolium* fruit, *Phyllanthus acidus* root, *Psidium guajava* root, *Citrus hystrix* leaf, *Spondias pinnata* root, *Bouea macrophylla* root, *Atalantia monophylla* root etc. The third stage is from 30 years old onwards, their ailments are under vata basis, the herbs for their ailments are fatty-bitter and puckery-salty. Examples of fatty-bitter herbs are *Zingiber cassumunar* rhizome, *Plumbago indica* root, *Cinnamomum porrectum* heartwood, *Curcuma aromatica* rhizome, *Bridelia ovata* leaf etc. Examples of puckery-salty herbs are *Acorus calamus*, *Crateva religiosa* bark, *Echinochloa stagnina*, *Leersia hexandra*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Digitaria violascens*, *Hygrophilla erecta* seed, *Connarus chochinchinesis* vine etc.

3. Ritu Samuthan

Thailand has 3 Ritus or seasons i.e. summer, rainy season, and winter. The numbering of months in a year is different from calendar months i.e. it follows Lunar months. December is considered as the first month and November is considered as the last month of the year. The beginning of seasons also depend on the moon position.

Kimhanta ritu or Summer begins from the first waning moon of the fourth month (March) until 15th waxing moon of the eighth month (July). During this period the weather is hot and damp, people will be suffered from Mahabhutarupa in techo dhatu.

Wasanta ritu or Rainny season from the first waning moon of the eighth month (July) until 15th waxing moon of the twelfth month (November). During this period the weather is cool and damp, people will be suffered from Mahabhutarupa in vayo dhatu.

Hemanta ritu or Winter from the first waning moon of the twelfth month (November), until 15th waxing moon of the fourth month (March). During this period the weather is cold and dry, people will be suffered from Mahabhutarupa in apo dhatu.

4. Kalasamuthan

The 24 hours of a day are divided into 12 hours by day and 12 hours by night. During the day and night there are 4 hours per period, a total of 3 periods. This principle is used with patients in critical conditions and are related to the Tridosha principle (vata, pitta, semha or kapha). The first period of the day (6-10 a.m.) and night (18-22 p.m.) needs attention on semha (kapha) system, the second period of day (10 a.m.-14 p.m.) and night (23 p.m.- 2 a.m.) needs attention on pitta system, the third period of day (14 -18 p.m.) and night (2 - 6 a.m.) needs attention on vata system.

Bibliography

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