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## A Study on the Primary Color Value Setting of Yin and Yang Five Elements

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### Abstract

*The ancient ancestors of Korea believed that the five directions of east, west, south, and north were important, and that there was a god in charge of each of the five directions, and that he was in charge of the universe, nature, and life. In Korea, the traditional colors follow the Yin and Yang Five Ceremony. The five elements were placed in the bearings symbolized by wood, fire, earth, iron, and water, namely east, south, center, west, and north, and the symbolic colors were called blue, red, yellow, white, and black according to their connotations. These colors should be the five element colors. In studying the colors of the five elements, this researcher found that the five element colors were inconsistent in each of the existing studies. Therefore, the characteristics of the Yin and Yang Five Elements were carefully examined, and the Five Element Colors pursued by the ancestors were identified, and the Five Element Colors were defined to fit the present era. According to modern color standards, the three primary colors of color, cyan, magenta yellow, and the five colors of pure black and pure white, can be said to be the colors that most correspond to the Yin and Yang Five Symbols.*

**Keywords:** Traditional Colors of Korea, Yin and Yang Five Elements, tai chi, the five element principle of color

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The ancient ancestors of Korea believed that the five directions of east, west, south, and north were important, and that there was a god in charge of each of the five directions, and that he was in charge of the universe, nature, and life. This idea was developed in the East as the idea of the five elements of yin and yang, and in all areas, including righteousness, food, and lords, people tried to live according to the principles of the five principles of yin and yang.

Therefore, in Korea, the traditional colors follow the Yin and Yang Five Ceremony. The five element colors were placed in the directions symbolized by wood, fire, earth, iron, and water, namely east, south, center, west, and north, and the symbolic colors were called blue, red, yellow, white, and black according to their connotations. The five element colors have a relationship in which they either help each other or harm each other, and the color of the five element color changes between them, and all the colors in the middle become intermediate colors.

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In studying the five element colors, this researcher found that the colors are not uniform in each of the existing studies. I wondered what the cause was. I thought that perhaps I was making the most basic mistake in the study of traditional colors.

Korea has followed the path of modernization through Japan's colonial rule, and the concept of color has also developed an international color perception centered on the United States, and Korean color education has progressed accordingly. I think it came into conflict with the traditional notion of color.

Traditional Korean colors and Western colors have different beginnings. For example, in the case of the Munsell color system, Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Purple are added to make the five colors the basic color wheel, and Black and White are composed separately because they have different characteristics.

However, in traditional Korean colors, white and black, which are achromatic, have an equal place with the other three chromatic colors. Traditional colors exist by giving each color its own meaning, and the five element color is more than just a color.

In today's Korean color research, the method of determining the standard of traditional colors is to select meaningful cultural properties and measure them with cutting-edge instruments. However, many of the cultural properties that have been handed down have been destroyed through nearly 1,000 wars with neighboring countries and Japan's colonial rule in modern times due to the geographical characteristics of Korea, and the cultural properties that use natural colors, the composition of which is difficult to identify at present, have already faded after hundreds of years. Therefore, the study of the Five Element Colors through cultural assets has reached many limitations.

Traditions must be developed and inherited in accordance with the modern age. It is necessary to carefully examine the characteristics of the Yin and Yang Five Elements and to grasp the ideal of the Five Element Color pursued by our ancestors to define the color of the Five Element Color suitable for today's times. It is necessary to define the five element colors based on the essence of the Five Elements Thought and its philosophy, rather than only on the basis of the average value of the colors that have changed over time and the old literature.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

Scholars who have studied the literature commonly describe the color of the five element color as a pure color without any mixture of colors, and the five element color has the meaning of the color of the three primary colors of the color. The definition of primary color is a primary color that can produce a color that cannot be created through primary colors, but cannot be made through other colors.

The five element color must have the primary color meaning before the colors are mixed. This is in line with the idea of yin and yang. Through the study of old books that contain these ideas, I would like to establish the standard of the Five Element Color.

## **3. RESULTS**

The main things that define the colors of The Five Element Color are:

(1). *According to one of the Pentateuchs of Sacred Studies, the Okjo of Ye Qi, "True color is pure color." Park*

Yeon-seon, a renowned Korean color researcher, also wrote in the *Glossary of Color Terms*, "The basic color that is pure and unmixed is called the five element color." Therefore, the five element color, which expresses the vitality of Taeguk, is the same color as the color expressed in the Taeguk symbol and the Sam Taeguk symbol, and the primary color of the Taeguk symbol and the five element color mean the pure state before the energy of each other mixes and changes. Therefore, The Five Element Color colors, such as blue, red, yellow, white, and black, are pure colors that do not contain any other colors. In Jongmyo Shrine or palaces commemorating deceased kings in Korea, you can often see the pattern of Samtaeguk as shown in Figure 1.

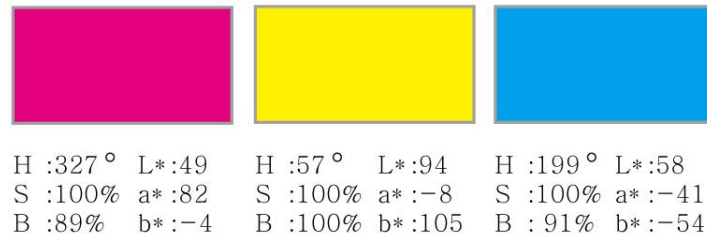


**Figure 1. Samtaeguk at Jongmyo (rebuilt in 1608) and Changdeokgung (rebuilt in 1647) in Korea**

(2). The Taeguk pattern is the energy of yin and yang melting into each other and changing. The pattern is a structure in which the opposing energies of yin and yang come together with the energy of harmony to form the changes of the three poles. In ancient times, the symbol of Tai Chi was used to refer to the Three Tai Chi until the Tang Dynasty in China. [1] "Taeguk includes three and becomes one." [2] He said. Meng Gang, a commentator of the Later Han Dynasty, interpreted this sentence to mean that red, blue, and yellow come out of black and return to black when they are changed to colors, which is consistent with the modern concept of three primary colors, as expressed in Figure 2. This is also the case in Sagijeongjeong[3], Hoenam[4], etc., and relics of the symbol of Samtaeguk have remained everywhere from the Three Kingdoms period to the Joseon Dynasty in Korea, such as palaces and city gates, shrines and temples in various places, and Seowon and Hyanggyo, the home of Confucian education. A modern interpretation of the figures of this color is most consistent with the won colors of the three primary colors of Cyan, Magenta, and Yellow, as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 2 The process of change of the Three Taeguk**



**Figure 3 The process of change of the Three Taeguk**

(3). *The Great Significance of the Five Elements Written in the Yang Dynasty Chapter 6 shows that the primary colors of the Five Elements are pure colors that are not mixed with other colors, which is shown through the life and death of the colors represented by the 12 gods of the sacred temple.[5]*



**Figure 4 The process of the creation and disappearance of the Five Element color**

*The timing of the creation and death of the misdeeds has implications. The point at which blue is formed begins in the north, which symbolizes black, and disappears in the south, which symbolizes red. The point at which water, which symbolizes black, begins in the west, which symbolizes white, and disappears in the east, which symbolizes blue. Red comes from the east. From this, it can be seen that pure blue is the east, where black dies and red comes into being. The brief moment just before the death of black and the appearance of red is the meaning of pure blue, where the energy of black and red does not mix, and after that moment, the colors blend according to their orientation. A visual representation of this is shown in Figure 4*

**Conclusion:**

*Yin and Yang is the oldest thought in Northeast Asia and has influenced a wide range of fields. The color of the five elements has the same won as the modern concept of color, and it means mixing and changing colors according to the change of direction. However, unlike in the West, this system includes black and white. According to modern color standards, the five primary colors—cyan and magenta yellow, pure black and pure*

*white—can be said to be the five colors that are in line with the most philosophical ideas. It is hoped that this study will implement the long-established oriental color system in the modern age, and that future research will proceed in a developed direction suitable for the digital age.*

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