

CYCLES, CIRCLES AND PHASES

May 1, 2011

By Michael Erlewine (Michael@Erlewine.net)

The Phases in Cycles and What They Mean

Your response to the notes on the dark days of the solunar cycle pointed out to me that at least some of you are interested in cycles and their phases, so at the risk of boring the rest of you, I want to share some information about the phases in cycles.

It is pretty much axiomatic that astrology is about cycles and circles, things that go round and return. If you think about it those things that do not return or cycle are singletons and we never hear from or see them again. They are just here once and then gone. The things we know are those things that return again and again making themselves known to us by restating or positing themselves endlessly. They endure and exist.

When we reach the point of no return in anything we by definition no longer have anything coming back. It is no different from investing money and earning interest. Any investment for which we get no return means we lose any interest we might have. Get the point? It is only those things that endlessly return or cycle that make up our attention and the world we know. All else is the unknown and unknowable.

We can safely say that astrology is about cycles, circles, and their circulation. And if it is pretty much all cycles then it is very worthwhile to understand how the phases that occur in any cycle work, how cycles are made up, so let's be clear on what cycles are and how cycles work.

Everything (as mentioned above) is cycles, like the cycle of the breath, the cycle of the heartbeat, the cycle of the rotation of the earth, Earth orbiting the Sun, the Moon cycle, the synodic cycle of Mars and Jupiter, and ad infinitum. And every cycle has phases and what is most important, what makes learning about cycles so much easier, is that the phases of any and all cycles are identical. Learn something about the phases of one cycle and you automatically know about the phases of all cycles.

And cycles have no beginning or end. You can start anywhere in a cycle and go around to return to where you started. Every point or degree in a cycle or circle is both a starting point and an ending point. This explains why the Buddhists don't believe (or care) about beginnings or endings because everything is beginning-less and endless. This is no absolute point of origin, no beginning to the universe except as a materialist imagines. Let's take the breath or a heartbeat as an example.

The breath (or heartbeat) can be seen to start at the outbreath, the point when the lungs are as compressed as possible, proceed to inhale to the fullest expansion, and then breathe back out to the full exhaustion of the breath, and so on as long as we live. When we breathe out and don't inhale again, we stop living. Same with the heartbeat.

Planetary synodic cycles are no different, like the solunar synodic cycle each month -- the phases of the Moon. The Moon and Sun start with a perfect conjunction at the New Moon, gradually separate or expand their angular separation until the point of greatest expansion or

separation at the Full Moon, and then continue on around back to the next New Moon. And again. Astrology is the study of cycles and their phases.

And we can analyze or break down the phases in a cycle as fine as we have the interest. Here in the west most of us break the monthly solunar cycle into the four quarters, the Full and the New Moon, and First and Last Quarter moons. Some even divide the cycle into eight parts or sections. In India and Tibet they divide the solunar cycle into thirty parts, each of which constitutes a separate lunar day and carries its own meaning. It is the meaning of the phases that can be helpful to learn.

What is wonderful is that those of you who have studied astrology already have done most of the work in understanding cycle phases. All you need to do is to link up what you now know about the Zodiac Signs and astrological Houses with the corresponding phases within cycles – any cycle.

That's right, the twelve Signs of the Zodiac and the Twelve Astrological Houses are also just phases, the zodiac signs reflecting the orbit of Earth each year around the Sun and the houses reflecting the daily 360-degree rotation of the earth on its axis. I will postpone a discussion of the fact that all circles are really spirals, although this needs to be understood at some point. Here we will just consider cycles as circles. For example:

We have to line up the cycle of the zodiac with the cycle of our breath or heartbeat (any cycle). And before you send me a flock of emails telling me that I have lined these two cycles up wrong, please remember that in cycles there really are no absolute starting or ending points and that it can make some kind of sense (perhaps to you) to line Aries up with this or that part of the breath cycle and so on, so be my guest.

A careful study will show that traditionally the sign Aries best fits with the point of the First Quarter Moon, which fits with the First House, which fits with the halfway point in inhaling, and so on. This places the zodiac sign Cancer (in tarot, the 'Chariot') with the fullest or most dense part of the cycle, the point of greatest inhalation, and Capricorn with the most inward part of the cycle, corresponding to complete exhalation.

You are free to match these circles as you wish of course, as mentioned earlier. What you do in the privacy of your own mind is up to you. But if you examine the theory of correspondences, the best fit is the one pointed out above where Cancer is fullness (a summer sign) and Capricorn is emptiness or exhalation (a winter sign), and so on around. That is the tradition at least in the northern hemisphere where most of that tradition seems to have been originally documented.

And all cycles match up, so the zodiac sign Aries and the First House have the same phase and therefore the same essential meaning. Do the math and you will see they correspond. Here are two articles on the meaning of signs and houses that may be helpful. If you don't understand how one sign generates the next, you will appreciate this explained in the following article:

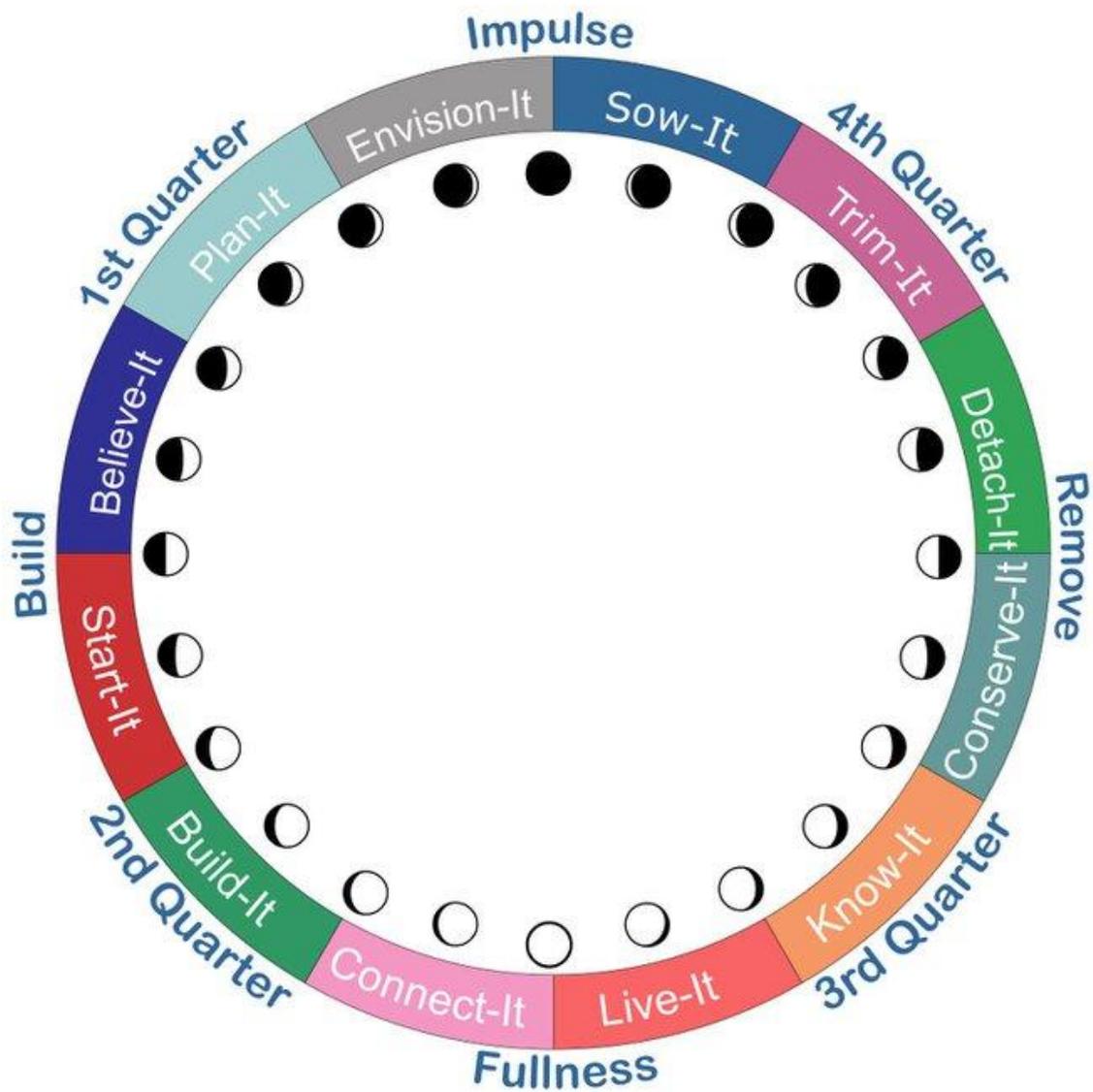
<http://michaelerlewine.com/viewtopic.php?f=146&t=1366&sid=6884c334beccd0dfc6528a7b31ff63ad>

And here....

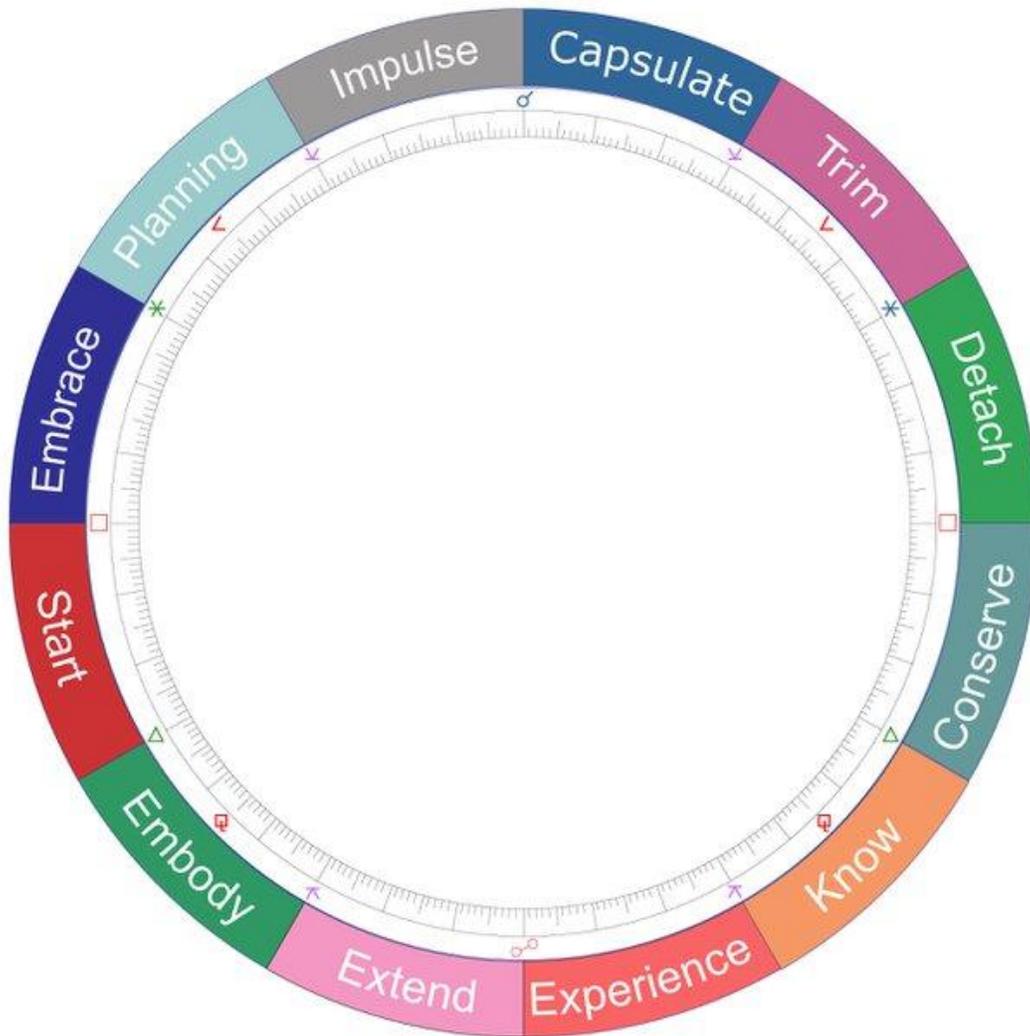
<http://michaelerlewine.com/viewtopic.php?f=146&t=132&sid=cf30bdf246dfadbd46a0470abce5a98f>

What I am doing here is to show you a number of cycles in the form of chart wheels and let you just look at them or read the notes that accompany them. If you have questions I will do my best. And comments are also welcome.

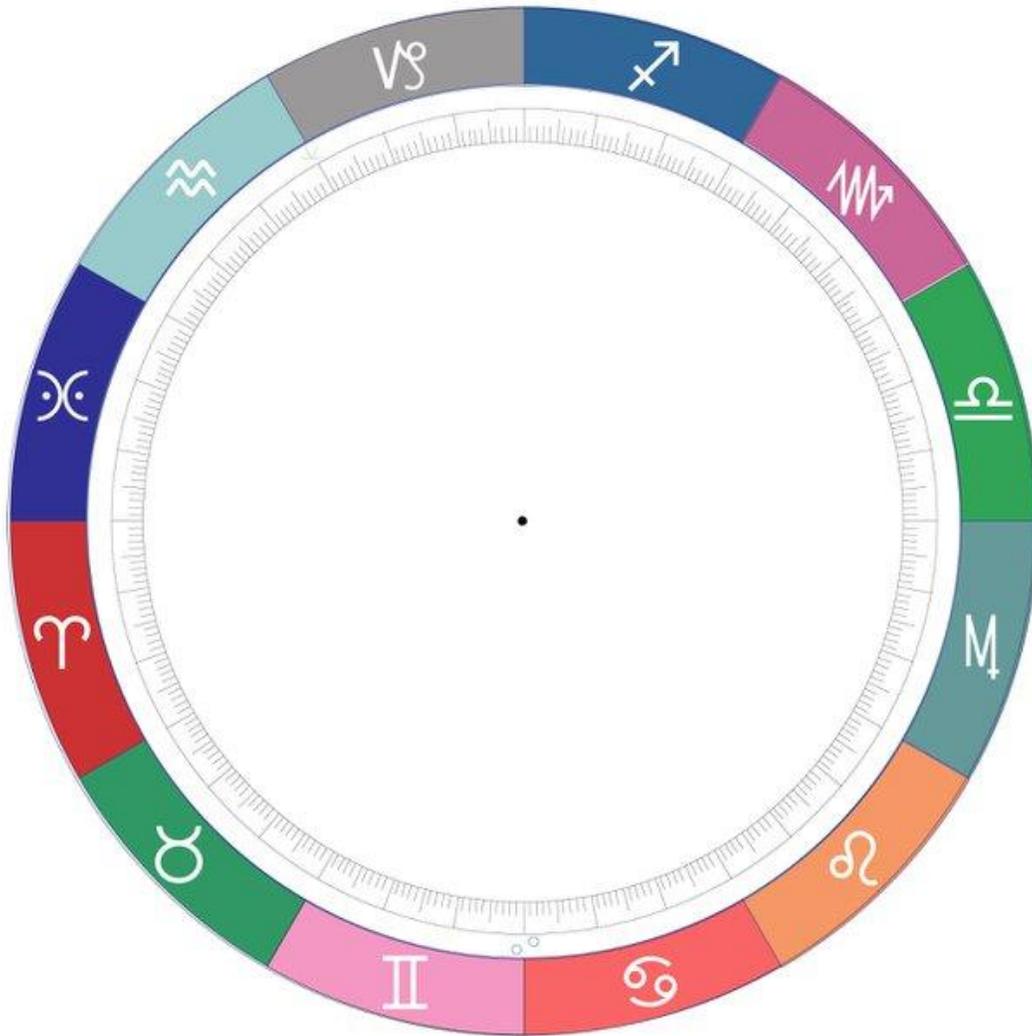




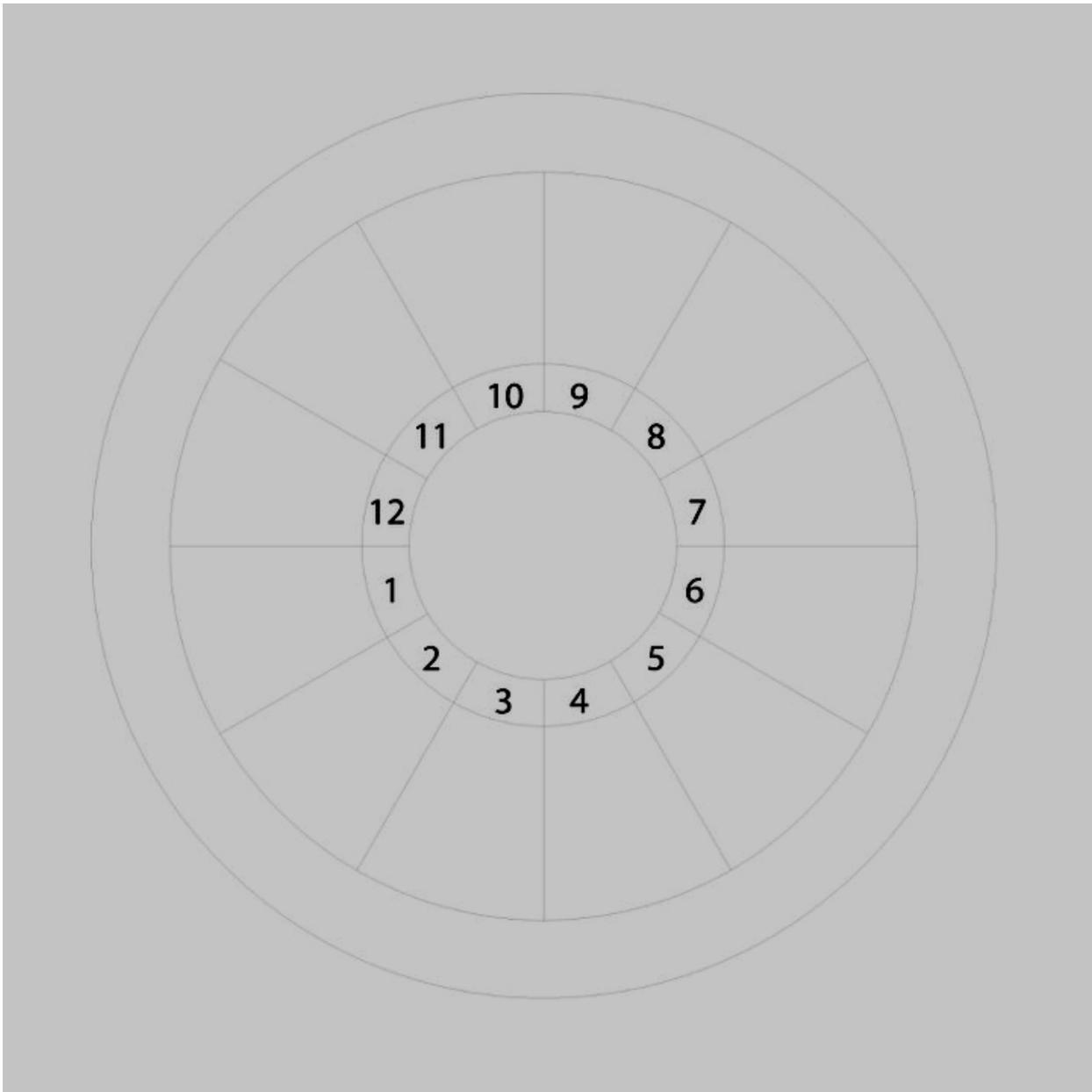
Here are the familiar phases of the moon showing the Four Quarters and the Full and New Moons PLUS the 30 phases used by the Hindus and Tibetans.



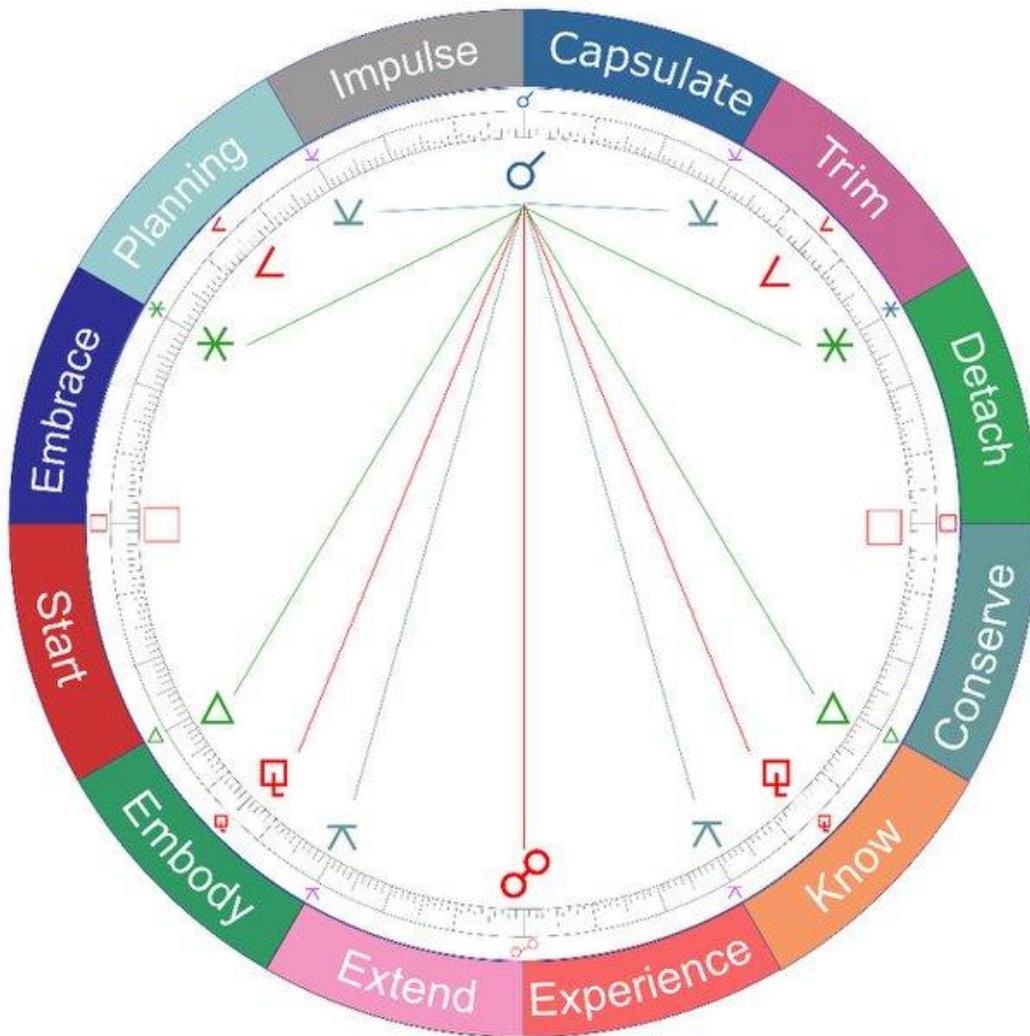
Here is a phase graph as a wheel showing twelve different phases and keywords. It could be the twelve zodiac signs, the twelve houses, or just twelve phases of any cycle.



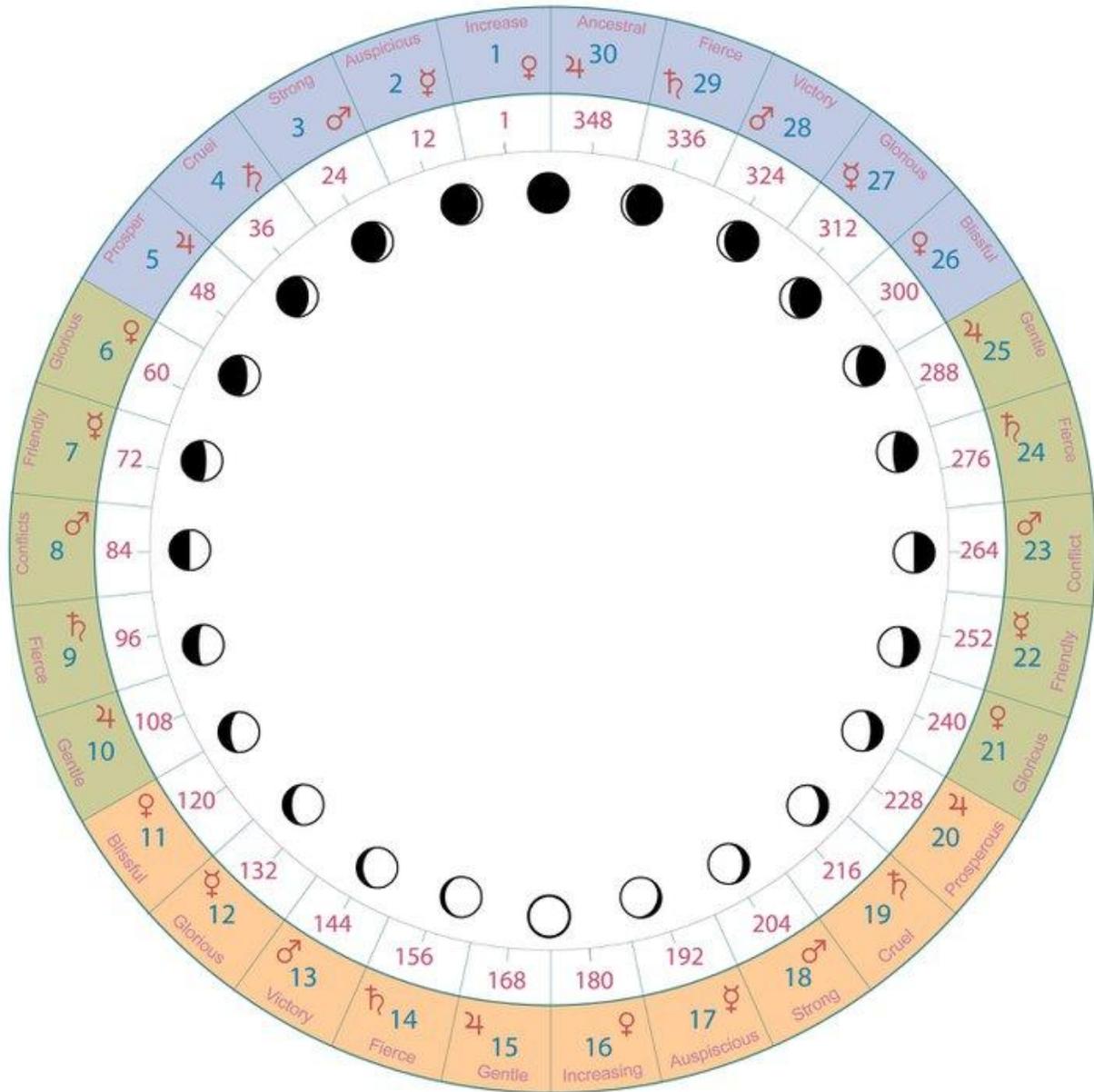
Here is the traditional twelve signs of the zodiac, also just phases in the yearly cycle of Earth orbiting the Sun.



The traditional Wheel of Houses used by astrologers is also just a phase chart based on the rotation of the earth and the twelve sectors (houses) as they surround the birth place.



Here is a cycle graphed as a wheel. This is a synodic cycle like that of the phases of the moon, any two planets or bodies, any two moving points where one is faster and completes a circle/cycle to the other.



Here is a complex chart of the Hindu and Tibetan solunar cycle divided into their 30 days along with moons and some of the astrological indicators. This would require some additional notes that there is not room for here.

Below are some of the kinds of practice done every month on the various lunar days.

- 00|03|Yoga Tantra -- All Seeing
- 00|03|Dharmapala Tsiu Marpo
- 00|03|Five Dakinis Practice (afternoon)
- 00|03|White Tara Practice (morning)
- 00|05|Dakini Day (minor)
- 00|08|Guru Rinpoche Day (minor)

00|08|Medicine Buddha Day
 00|08|Tara Puja
 00|08|Shri Hevajra
 00|08|Gyalwa Gyatso - Red Chenrezig (morning)
 00|08|Milarepa Guru Yoga (afternoon)
 00|09|All Dharmapalas (dharma protectors) (minor)
 00|10|Daka/Heruka Day (Male Deities) Feast Day
 00|10|Heart Yoga Practice
 00|10|Vajrayogini
 00|10|Guru Rinpoche (afternoon)
 00|13|12 Guardian Deity Offerings
 00|13|Purification (minor) Prayer-Flag day
 00|13|Fire Puja - Purification
 00|14|Shri Hevajra
 00|14|The Thousand and Two Buddhas
 (Kshitagarbha Sutra)
 00|14|Dharmapala Magzor Gyalmo,
 Shri Devi, Rabtenma
 00|14|Sojung (confession practice) (3 a.m.)
 00|15|Amitabha Buddha Day/Full Moon Day
 00|15|Chakrasamvara Practice (morning)
 00|15|Full Moon Assembly
 00|15|All Peaceful Deities
 00|15|Amitabha Buddha
 00|15|Drikung Phowa Practice
 00|15|Chakrasmvara (morning)
 00|15|Thang Lha (local deity) Afternoon
 00|18|One of the Four Guardian Kings
 00|18|Mahakala
 00|19|Medicine Buddha
 00|19|All Dharmapalas (protectors) (minor)
 00|21|Chenresik
 00|23|Tara/Healing (major)
 00|23|Vajravahni Practice 46

 00|23|Shri Hevajra
 00|23|Vairochana Buddha
 00|23|Green Tara (long form) (morning)
 00|23|Vajrayogini (short form) (afternoon)
 00|24|Kshitagarbha Sutra
 00|25|Dakini Day (Female Deities) Feast Day
 00|25|Heart Yoga Practice
 00|25|Vajrayogini
 00|25|Guru Rinpoche (morning)
 00|25|Vajrayogini (long form) (afternoon)
 00|27|Purification
 00|28|Purification
 00|28|Amitabha Buddha
 00|29|Dharma Protector Day (major)
 00|29|Medicine Buddha
 00|29|Shri Hevajra

00|29|All Dharmapalas (protectors)
00|29|Sojung (confession practice)
00|29|Dharmapala Day
00|29|Mahakala (all day)
00|29|Kunrik (purification practice) (3 a.m.)
00|30|30th Lunar Day New Moon
00|30|Buddha Day, Reading of Sutras
00|30|Vairochana Practice
00|30|Shakyamuni Buddha (100-fold merit)
00|30|Sojung (confession practice)
00|30|Drikung Phowa Practice

— with Vesna Lalic.