

About jin-power

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In everyday spoken Chinese, jin is used as meaning power or strength. Used as a term in relation to the theory of Taijiquan it has two aspects: the understanding of internal training and power. These aspects are closely related and cannot be separated. In relation to the internal aspect, it is the understanding of jin (dongjin)" and the "collecting of jin (xujin)". In relation to the power aspect jin is peng, lü, ji, an, cai, lie, zhou and kao, the four sides and the four oblique angels of the bagua. The connection between these two aspects follow the concept of "foundation (ti)" and "application (yong)". The following are some types of jin-power.

1) Understanding jin-power (dongjin)

In the Taijiquan Classic (Taijiquan jing)" it is stated: "If one studies and trains regularly, one will gradually achieve understanding of jin-power. The understanding of jin-power is followed by degrees by enlightenment. Without consistent effort, however, one cannot suddenly understand". (Taijiquan-Lilun 2). The ability to understand jin-power is not restricted to the hands and arms, but is in the whole body. To attain this it is important that qi flows freely: "The mobilizing of qi is like passing through a zigzag hole of a pearl reaching any part of the body". The key to this lies in posture. Straight back, shoulders and neck relaxed, head like hanging from a thread, chin slightly in and sinking the breath to the dantian. In partner-exercises it is very important, not to resist the partner. Otherwise you will develop double-weighting (shuangzhong). This means stagnation, it is the opposite of flowing.

2) The collecting of jin-power (xujin)

Xu means collecting or saving. The meaning of xujin is understood as collected or hidden jin-power. In the "Mental Elucidation of the 13 Basic Movements" it is stated: "The storing up of jin-power is like a drawn bow. The release of jin-power (fajin) is like that of letting the arrow go." (Taijiquan-Lilun 4) Following the bending (diverting) comes the straight (attack). First absorb the power (of the opponent) and then strike back. Therefore xujin is fundamental to the application of the eight hand techniques peng, lü, ji, an, cai, lie zhou and kao.

3) Use of the jin-power (yunjin)

Yunjin means movement or use of the jin-power. Taken from Taijiquan-literature: "Yun jin ru bai lian gang" means that although the nature of jin-power is soft, through long training and correct use it will penetrate all hardness. For this you should use jin-power very precisely, like reeling silk from a cocoon. Yunjin can be divided into the following:

a) Neutralising jin-power (huajin)

Hua means neutralising. Huajin has the meaning of neutralising power. Huajin uses softness to neutralise the power of the opponent. This however is not only defensive, there is also the intent to destabilise the equilibrium of the opponent. This is the moment to attack. So while seeming to be yielding passively your intention is very active. In the classics it is explained as: "The other is hard - I am soft - this is going along with. I follow, he does the opposite, this is called adhering. If a movement is fast, you respond quickly. If a movement is slow, you respond slowly. Although the transformations are infinite, the principle remains the same". (Taijiquan-Lilun 2)

b) Exertion of jin-power (fajin)

The meaning of fa is of something coming out. Fajin is therefore the attacking jin-power. During attack softness and a stable centre of gravity is fundamental. As written above, you use attacking power, when the opponent has lost his centre of gravity. The amount of power used and its' direction is very important. Beside the straight attack there are circular powers from above, below, to the left and right. In the "Song of Striking Hands (Dashouge)" it is written: "Adhere, connect, stick follow, do not lose contact or resist." (Taijiquan-Lilun 1)