

On The Clay Phase – Sensei Sylph Dominic Hawkins – Apr 2018

As we make our way through the 12-Phases of our study, the spectrum can be simply divided into two major components, the Contracting Phases and the Expanding Phases.

Water Phase is the most extreme point in the Contracting Phases, but Clay Phase is certainly the most “gritty” as we get down into the principals of deconstructing the base.

Clay Phase is interested in removing and destroying the foundations of posture, the base of the skeletal structure and the feet/legs.

Rather than using complicated locks and controls, Clay Phase is focused on striking and softening the body, using strikes to move the limbs and the trunk. Strikes whose force penetrate through the body and move the bones beneath the flesh instead of bludgeoning strikes just to the outer surface tissue and removing the other person's ability to push off against the ground.

When Clay Phase does use locks and joint controls, they are large whole-limb style controls such as arm-bars, O-gyakus and whole-arm-shoulder locks.

The feeling quality of Clay Phase is like wet sand. Take a clump of wet-sand or wet-clay and throw it at someone's legs, then you'll begin to get the feeling of heaviness that comes with the Clay. When practicing striking in training, especially when practicing with focus pads, the hands and the feet should feel heavy and the intended “hitting” point should be about 30cm “beyond” the focus pad itself, and the incredible increase in power is immediately apparent.

The Clay Phase qualities and characteristics can be described with keywords such as:

Heavy / Pounding / Solid / Deconstructing / Destroying / Stealing /
Compounding / Crushing / Suffocating

Its primary point of manipulation of the body is the Lower Legs / Feet.

Clay Quality can be constructive and destructive relative to the circumstance of application. It will either be solid, a heavy and stable foundation upon which to feel your connection with Earth (the Constructive Aspect) or lethargic and suffocating (the Destructive Aspect).