

On The Metal Phase – Sensei Sylph Dominic Hawkins - July 2018

Looking at the qualities of propagation that we study in Hoshinden, they divide into two relative groups and we call these the Contractive and Expansive Phase groups. The Metal and Mist Phases sit right in the centre line that divides the two groups. The Phases can be seen to be a mixture of qualities that are both contractive and expansive and Metal Phase specifically sits on that line where Contracting Energy becomes Expanding Energy.

Metal is forward moving, driving through, penetrating instead of bludgeoning. It's positive applications can be described with keywords such as: straight / penetrating / sharp / cold / aggressive / matter-of-fact / determined / cutting / slicing / clarifying.

Like all qualities, it can also have it's negative application, the shadow aspects of the qualities. These are described with keywords such as:

Metal qualities are driven through the upper body through the legs, and it relies largely on structured shapes that the legs form which, when anchored to the solidity of the ground, can help to project weight and energy forward, through a target.

The receiver of the techniques should feel pierced and their balance and spinal structure should be altered and shaken up.

Metal suffers from the same risk of rigidity as Earth and Clay Phases, but keeps it moving somewhat because of its' forward momentum.

It usually aims its' strikes to the bones of the joints, especially the knees, hips and shoulders.

It uses Kyusho (pressure points) and Accupressure points (Tsubo) of soft tissue areas that sit over the joints, for example, points such as Lung 1 and 2, as well as Stomach 31.

By its' nature, Metal Phase tends to help things and situations become very clear. It doesn't spend time playing with others, it gets straight to the point, and this is reflected in the techniques that utilise the Metal Phase. They are direct, relatively simple and quick. They are usually designed to "get the job done" and are used as a last resort in the martial artists toolbox of tricks and techniques to escape a difficult situation such as when backed up against a wall, or in a scenario with multiple attackers.

I find it fascinating how studying the physical movements and principals of the Metal Phase help me emotionally and mentally with applying the same concepts and qualities, perhaps in my communication with others, dealing with difficult people or making changes to a circumstance with clarity about how you would prefer it to be.