

On The Earth Phase – Sensei Sylph Dominic Hawkins - May 2018

As we progress through the 12-Phases and their descriptors, following Clay Phase, still on the “Contracting” side of the 12-point wheel, we watch the heavy solidity of Clay dry out into the set and strong, but brittle and tense, Earth Phase.

Earth Phase brings our focus to our lower-back (the opposite body focus of Wind Phase, which has its focus on the lower-front of the body). The shape we are most interested in is the Triangle, especially the right-angled triangles that are formed between the feet, shoulder and hand when striking or receiving attacks.

Constructive Aspect keywords for the Earth Phase would be:
Strong / structured / focused / solid / foundation / core / in-penetrable / bludgeoning / defensive / un-movable.

Destructive Aspect keywords for the Earth Phase would be:
Rigid / stuck / stagnation / eroded / slow / tense / bludgeoning

The qualities of Earth rise from the connection between the feet + the Ground, creating a strong conduit between the impact of the strike or receiving and the feet and heel. In this way a great deal of force can be directed through the body and into the ground with little muscle strength needed to “hold” the position as it is mostly skeletal in its structure.

Understanding the 5-forms of the linear body structure is very useful in Earth Phase as it will help you to have clarity about how to place and align your skeleton to conduct the impact force of a strike or receiving in the most efficient way you can at the time.

By its' nature, Earth Phase is defensive and responsive, it does not leap forward to attack or to initiate contact, but it pushes back and responds if something else initiates a relationship.

Like a wave crashing into a cliff, Earth Phase simply “is there” without gaining its' strength from last-minute tension. Its' strikes are solid, mostly bludgeoning and less penetrative.

The compass direction that Earth Phase works on mostly is the East-West line (relative to the North line being that of the attack). It does a lot of side-stepping and presenting fists, elbows, knees and shoulders which the attacker simply “falls” onto rather than going out of its' way to “hit” anyone.

Earth Phase requires a deep natural breath that enters the body through the feet and extends and leaves the body through either the palms of the hands or soles of the feet. Your centre of gravity should feel low in the centre of your hips and the top of the body (the form) should be driven by the legs and feet.