

Application of the Silk Reeling Exercises to the Taiji Symbol

MOVEMENTS

Just like the external movements of the silk reeling exercises, the movement of internal power and energy is located on circular paths arranged around a sphere. The movement of energy that goes away from the dantian is called Yang energy. The quality of this type of energy cultivation is expanding, rising, penetrating, and spatially expansive (cp. left part of fig. 1).

All movement of energy flowing back to the dantian is counted as Yin energy. This type of energy is shrinking, dissolving, adhesive, and collecting (cp. right part of fig. 1).

Both kinds of energy are inseparably linked together. The silk reeling exercises help to develop a comprehension of the different kinds of energy. Once we are able to differentiate the two types of energy within our body, then further deeper levels of sensitivity follow. The two kinds of energy can be further divided into their phase of origination and completion respectively so that the 'Four-Stage Model' ensues from the teaching method of the individual silk reeling exercises (cp. fig. 2). The four stages can be further divided into eight segmented movements. Theoretically, it is possible to go even further here (from 2 to 4, from 4 to 8, from 8 to 16, and so forth), practically, however, this is of no utility. Once we are able to infer four from two, then we are also able to discover eight in four. However, at the latest at this point the movements will become so internal that a description via external movements is no longer possible. This is also the juncture at which the external movement ensues increasingly from internal movement. Now, the internal feeling comes more clearly to the fore. While at the beginning stage of silk reeling practice, energy flow is initiated through external movement, ultimately, the inner energy flow takes the lead and becomes visible through external movement.

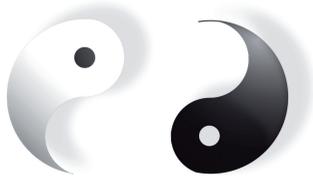


Figure 1: Yin and Yang segments of the Taiji symbol

INTERNAL TRANSITION

Internal transitions are the turning points between the two types of energy. This transition happens when the energy of the respective type has reached its maximum. Once we have reached the energetic level of full Yang, the energy is slowly transformed into its opposite; the Yin quality of the energy increases. Internal transitions are initiated in the body through rotations. When energy flows after a rotation to the extremities, then we call this Yang energy. Vice versa, the flow of energy back from the extremities to the dantian is called Yin energy (cp. fig. 3).

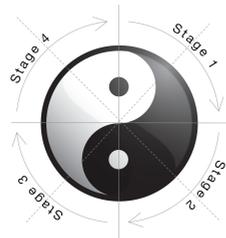


Figure 2: Application of the four stages to the Taiji symbol

EXTERNAL TRANSITION

External transitions occur at the halfway point of a type of energy. Growing Yang becomes full Yang full an external transition. The resulting energy type either spreads increasingly further out through the external transition or flows as its opposite back to the dantian.

The physical motor of the internal transition is rotation. The external transition is powered by weight transference. During an internal transition, the quality of the energy is subtle and budding. External transitions allow the respective energy type to fulfill their full quality. Yang energy becomes through an external transition powerful and strives outwards. Yin energy becomes completely collected in the dantian. The connection of internal and external transitions yields the four stages (cp. fig. 2) of the teaching method of the silk reeling exercises (cp. fig. 3).

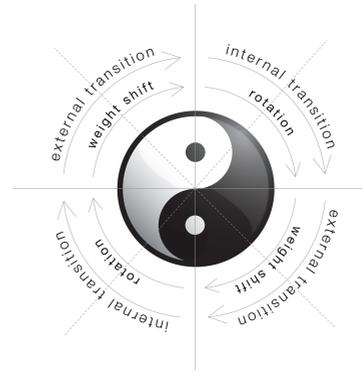


Figure 3: External and internal transitions in connection with rotation and weight transference in relationship to the four stages and their application to the Taiji symbol

ROTATION AND WEIGHT TRANSFERENCE IN THE INDIVIDUAL STAGES OF THE SILK REELING EXERCISES

For each of the four stages of the silk reeling exercises a rotation and a weight transference phase can be distinguished. This finer examination of the body mechanics and the resulting deeper comprehension of the energetic relationships of the silk reeling exercises expand the four-stage model. Whereas in the four-stage model, we have one main action of rotation or weight transference in the respective stage, within the eight aspects of the exercise, this main action is complemented by a concurrent secondary action. If the main/ preliminary action is a rotation, then it is complemented by transference of weight, the body's weight flowing in this case downwards vertically. If the main or preliminary action is a transference of weight, then it is followed by a rotation turning the body back to a straight position facing forwards. This turning back of the body continually brings the body back into the start position of the exercise. From here, the internal transitions begin (cp. fig. 4).



Figure 4: A finer subdivision of rotation and weight transference in the individual stages of the silk reeling exercises

SUMMARY

All the theoretical and practical information on the frontal silk reeling exercises are summarized in figure 5. It provides the foundation for a comprehensive and deepened understanding of Taijiquan. The silk reeling exercises are a practical way to connect external structural work with a comprehension of internal power and energy relationships.

The harmonization of external and internal power movements in a model that can explain every phase both theoretically and practically is invaluable and a distinguishing feature of a holistic system of practice.

STAGEE 4

External transition

From growing Yang full Yang arises

Weight is transferred to the left leg. The body rotates realigning itself facing forward. Energy flows via shoulder/hip, elbow/knee into the left hand and left foot.



STAGEE 3:

Internal transition

From full Yin Yang arises

With a rotation of the body, energy flows from the hip to and then up the spine. The transference of weight happens vertically and enhances the sinking sensation in the right leg.



STAGE 1:

Internal transition

Out of full Yang Yin arises

With a slight or internal rotation energy sinks from the hand (the fingertips) to the elbow, and with the increasing transference of weight back to the hip. The transference of weight takes place vertically and flows more into the left foot.



STAGE 2

External transition

From growing Yin full Yin arises

Weight is transferred to the right leg. Energy starts to flow to the dantian. The slight rotation of stage 1 is compensated for by realigning the body facing forwards and energy is collected in the dantian.

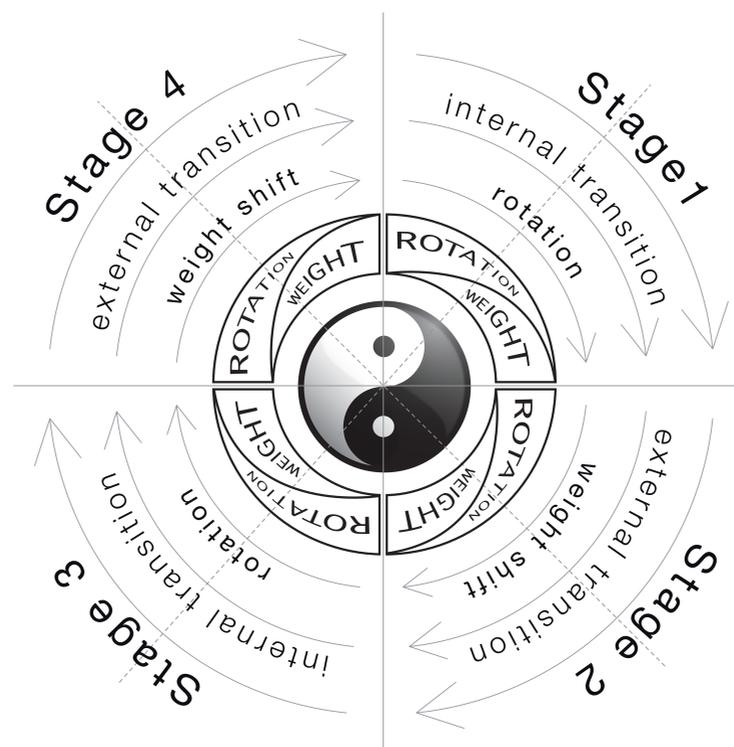


Figure 5: A summary of the application of the internal and external movements of the frontal silk reeling exercises and their relationship to the Taiji symbol