

About *jin*-power

Written by Ma Hailong, translated by Dr. Lukas Kasenda

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*, *l*, *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*, *l*, *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)