

CHAPTER I
THE SLEEP PHASE

“Sleep is not the absence of life; it is life lived without awareness.”

“The sole purpose of human existence is to
kindle a light in the darkness of mere being.”
— Carl G. Jung



Introduction

The Illusion of Sleep

Sleep is often the first stage of the journey.

Most people never realize they are asleep, because sleep feels like ordinary life.

Not the restful sleep of the body, but the heavy sleep of the soul.

In this phase, life unfolds almost entirely by itself. Without reflection. Without presence. Without seeing. People move through routines, silently carried by habits, expectations, and conditioning.

At this stage, there is no conscious path. No deliberate practice. Life is lived as it has been formed, not yet seen clearly enough to be questioned.

Days begin to feel like copies of one another. They are alive, but not fully awake to life, to existence.

In this state, we forget the greater story of who we are. We are disconnected from our essence. We trade presence for distraction. Depth for surface. Essence for performance.

The heart may ache with the faint whisper that something more is possible. But the noise of daily living drowns it out.

We live on autopilot. Moving, but not arriving. Busy, but not fulfilled.

Almost unnoticed, another process is unfolding. A psychological self begins taking shape through accumulated thoughts, beliefs, memories, emotional reactions, and repeated patterns. Over time, ***this constructed identity*** *becomes the lens through which life itself is experienced.*

And yet, sleep is not a failure. It is part of the path.

Just as night precedes dawn, the soul's slumber prepares the way for awakening.

To see that we are asleep is the first stirring of real life within us.

The illusion of sleep is powerful. So is the call to rise from it.

And beneath that call, something remains, quietly present, unchanged, waiting to be seen.

The Jewel Within

An ancient Buddhist parable tells of a poor man who unknowingly carries a precious jewel sewn into the lining of his robe. The jewel had been placed there by a friend, but the man never discovered it. Believing himself poor, he continued living in hardship and eventually died, carrying with him all along the treasure he never knew he possessed.

The story offers a powerful metaphor for the human condition.

We can spend an entire life searching outside ourselves for what we do not yet realize we carry within.

We seek worth through approval. Fulfillment through achievement. Security through possession. Identity through the roles we play. We continue searching because we have not yet recognized what lies beneath the layers of conditioning, thought, fear, desire, and identity through which we experience ourselves.

The tragedy of the story is not that the man lacked the jewel.

It is that he never knew it was there.

Perhaps something similar happens within us. What we seek may not always need to be acquired. Some of it may need to be uncovered, remembered, or finally seen.

This does not mean that we already understand what lies beneath the constructed self. At this stage of the journey, we do not. We are still asleep.

But the possibility is already there.

The journey may begin with searching for something more. Eventually, it may reveal that the deeper treasure was never somewhere else.

The Sleep Phase in Martial Arts

Form Without Awareness

In this phase, training is approached primarily through imitation and repetition.

The practitioner learns by copying movement, following instruction, and repeating drills. Techniques are performed, but not yet fully experienced. The body moves, but awareness has not yet fully entered the movement.

From the outside, progress appears to be taking place. But inwardly, something remains incomplete.

Psychologically and spiritually, this reflects automatic learning. Attention is directed outward, toward form, correction, and performance. Internal experience remains largely unnoticed. Movements are shaped through habit before they are understood through awareness.

Training becomes disciplined. But it has not yet become deeply conscious.

At this stage, progress is measured almost entirely by external improvement. Better technique. Greater speed. More power. Higher rank. Success is evaluated by what can be seen from the outside. The possibility that training might also reveal the inner movements of the practitioner has not yet fully appeared.

With time, the training space begins to reveal something deeper. It becomes a mirror. Not only of movement, but of the one who moves.

What is seen is not only technique, but the quality of attention, the presence or absence of awareness, the patterns carried into every action.

Yet this mirror does not reveal itself automatically.

Two students may perform the same technique for years while walking very different paths. One may become increasingly skilled without ever questioning themselves. The other may gradually begin to recognize how fear, pride, impatience, comparison, frustration, and ego express themselves through every movement.

The training is the same. What differs is the willingness to observe what it reveals.

This is the nature of training within the Sleep Phase. Training is taking place. But the one who trains is not yet fully seen.

Until the practitioner begins to see themselves within the training, martial arts remains primarily the development of technique. *The deeper path begins only when the refinement of movement also becomes the refinement of the human being.*

From this moment forward, the place of training is no longer merely a place to learn techniques. It becomes one of the many places where a human being can begin to awaken.

Yet this possibility does not unfold simply because someone practices martial arts. Many practitioners devote decades to training while remaining focused primarily on technique, competition, rank, or recognition.

Whether the training hall becomes a place of genuine inner transformation depends less on the number of years practiced than on the sincerity of the practitioner, the depth of their self-observation, and the wisdom of those who help guide the path.