



# The Root of Desire

By Ed Altman

The body is a prison of ceaseless desires that cannot be fulfilled or dealt with by rational thought. Ever onward the senses drag the Mind here and there leading to unending restlessness. The eye, of all the senses, seems to have the greatest ability to inflame desire. Yet even after the senses have gone dim, the restless Mind still desires to have the identity continue.

In *The Sword of No-Sword*, Master Tesshu states "Unconcerned with the small self, charge toward the opponent." He is not advocating recklessness! The weight of the attachment to life was a great burden in battle, and samurai warriors

such as Tesshu worked exhaustively to release the Ego and attain the state of "the sword of no-sword". In this state the Mind flows freely in any direction, as needed, and without restriction or attachment.

To try and fight desires is a waste of time. Great teachers have repeatedly stated that one must cut off the root and the leaves and branches will wither. What is this root? Certainly, it cannot be found through words. After all, if words had the power to cause profound or lasting change then this world would be a very different place. It seems that words, however meaningful, are easily forgotten, and if they are remembered, they are rarely accompanied by the direct experience. These are what Zen calls "dead words" and are utterly unreliable.

When one emerges from deep meditation, or experiences the simplicity of T'ai Chi Chih doing

T'ai Chi Chih, there is no need for words. In fact, the feeling of contentment and completeness defies all description. In that timeless moment nothing more is needed; the desires of the Mind have been (temporarily) quieted. With repeated exposure to this state, the Mind is gradually transformed, yet even this is not cutting off the root permanently.

T'ai Chi Chih is a spiritual study of the absolute (Chi) found within

the body. The Chi is a limitless source of intelligent energy, and as we align ourselves to move with it, we ourselves become limitless. Once we recognize our proper relation to the Chi we begin to understand the role of the Mind in our T'ai Chi

Chih practice. When this happens, we find ourselves tending each thought and action as though our entire future depends on it. In fact, it does.

Is there a way to live one's life fully without leaving a stain upon this world? Not while consumed with serving and preserving the sense of an individual identity. It is only by releasing the self, and merging with the "Cosmic Rhythm" that it becomes possible to live in self-less harmony with the world. The essence of happiness is to see clearly into the way things are and wish for nothing to be different. To talk or write about these matters is one thing, but to live in this way is an entirely different matter.

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