Allow the Chi to "Do The Work"

Ramana Maharshi was traveling across India when he observed another passenger carrying his bag on the train. He said to the man, "You can carry your bag yourself, or you can put it down, and let the train carry it for you." It is the same in our T'ai Chi Chih practice. There are many opportunities to let go and allow the Chi to "do the work".

...using a lot of upper arms and shoulders in the T'ai Chi Chih practice is extra effort which is not only unnecessary, but creates tension, wastes energy, and causes the Chi to rise, which can lead to ill effects. These people are thinking of T'ai Chi Chih as exercise.

When the T'ai Chi Chih movements are done properly, the practice is effortless. The upper body is very light and understated. We emphasize shifting the weight completely onto a bent knee while remaining at one level. It is not the motion of the arms, but the shifting of the weight which causes the Chi to separate and circulate independently through the body. Just as a wind chime blows freely in the breeze, we simply let go, and allow the upper body to respond to the flow of the Chi during the T'ai Chi Chih movements. The waist twist and adjustments of the spine, shoulders and arms follow the lead of the weight shift.

When we shift the weight completely, and ground the Chi during our practice, it is easy to forget the self. It naturally falls away, and we readily sink into the essence of T'ai Chi Chih. Nothing more needs to be done, so who is needed? T'ai Chi Chih is doing T'ai Chi Chih, and the practice is observed from the soles of the feet.

Ed Altman

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