

CHI CHI WU WU

A FRANK CONVERSATION ABOUT INTERNAL POWER *(And why it's a blur to many martial artists)*

by Hayashi Tomio, Shifu

Internal power training merits every martial artist's attention because it is seldom presented in the current traditional understanding of Karate, Kung fu or Tae Kwon Do technique, yet speaks to the heart of true martial art practice.

So allow me to jump into the dialog about internal power and offer my observation on what it is, isn't, and that oft-winding path to develop it.

As a lifelong, career martial artist, I've gnawed on the concept of chi, internal power, and its relevancy to the martial arts community, until my teeth ached, and then some.

My conclusion: Internal power art is a *real* phenomenon with duplicable affect. It dramatically amplifies power across the complete action spectrum for all martial strikes, locks, grip escapes, pushing, pulling, rooting, and uprooting actions. If likened to a mountain, it's a prodigious one. And there are *many* methods to ascend. No one holds the exclusive rights. But I must give sound warning. Without a clear grasp on the subject, pirating portions from one methodology to attach to another, partial path will only hamper your ability to cover significant ground and confuse you further.



Who is clearly outlining and embracing the foundational principles that support demonstrations of extra-ordinary physical skill or strength beyond the obvious biomechanical skill sets for the martial community today? If you are, you are in an exciting minority.

My take on the subject has been keenly influenced by my forty-seven years of Okinawan karatedo kata study. The essential Okinawan forms reveal a hidden, art-within-an-art, power matrix overlooked by mainstream, form-oriented practitioners, despite their many years of training. To maintain my own objectivity and relevancy, I engaged the subject with a sophisticated group of seasoned *yudansha* in multiple disciplines covering a twenty-five year long testing period.

Sadly, mainstream American Karate and Tae Kwon Do practitioners lead the world's community of being mostly in the dark about internal power concepts. Nevertheless, it's important that we professionals awaken others to this richly stimulating subject to keep its principles alive, and to teach students how to duplicate our skills, whether in strength, clarity of mind, or simply in capturing the vitality and full meaning of our lives. (Yes, the martial arts offer *this* potential).

Here's my brief overview on cultivating internal power, with some commentary on those who can't wrap their heads around this subject.

My platform for developing internal power arose on Western soil. I use a functional concept of chi based upon the existence of what I label, the *Energy Body*. This Energy Body emerges from a critical, scientifically-validated fact, that the human body produces and projects an energy field both inside and outside of its skin, comprised of a confluence of electro-magnetic, protonic, gravitational, photonic and acoustical wave forces. The older Asian martial and healing sub-cultures placed these forces/energies under the umbrella term, *chi (qi)*.

In human interaction, these known energies, with their lesser-understood behaviors, are not solely events that happen to us, as in, '*we are helplessly subjected to such forces beyond our control.*' It is true, we *are* subjected to similar outside forces, but we also *happen* these forces, those we do control, on people and objects around us.

So, I find it convenient to label the existence of these energies collectively as one's Energy Body. (In the scientific

community this phenomenon has recently been called the *Biofield*. In alternative disciplines it is referred to as *Human Subtle Energy*).

We are, in our most elemental state, vortices of complex carbon molecular structures existing as both particles and waves. Being of such fluid constitution we therefore exert and receive exertions through our actions on both the gross physical and immaterial or Subtle Energy planes.

A career Chi Kung, Tai Chi teacher shared with me a popular presenter's perspective on internal power, which points out one of the common difficulties people have in grasping the internal power paradigm. This presenter attributed his especially strong technique to his correct *mind intent* in harnessing the Heavenly and Earthly powers.

Unfortunately, vague statements like this do not help *anyone* to get a sure foothold on the subject. Such ambiguity only makes the skeptic's day. Perhaps, if we dug deeper into this presenter's comment we might find a more concrete explanation of the underlying principles behind his unique powers.

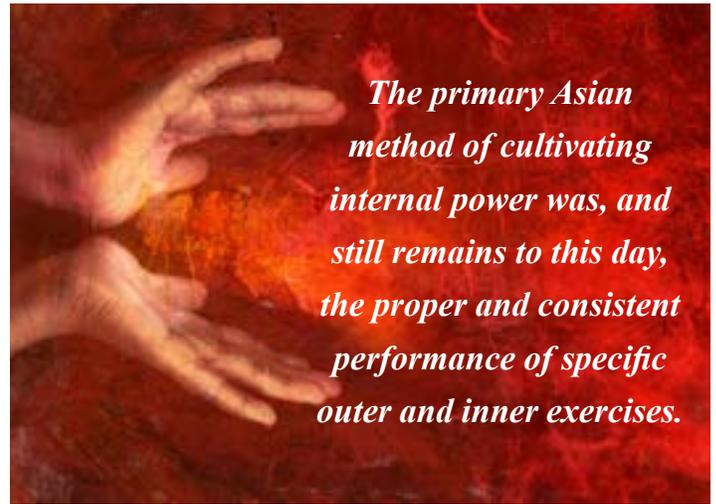
Ambiguity rarely paves a path worth walking. Ambiguity is for the overly faithful. Pioneer work is for the over-the-top courageous. The former is the plight of today's American mainstream martial student, the latter, for the rare, highly self-motivated. Everyone else doesn't seem to have a clue.

The Energy Body is to our physical body what the wave is to the particle of a molecule on the quantum level of life.

Nor can we rely on the saying, *If there is the will, there is the way*. Will power only gives you the gas. You still need a map. So, if it's not hit or miss for the initiated, where is the manual?

I have observed that some very skillful people do not clearly understand how to convey, in a linear or sequential fashion, their special martial talents. Their attempt to offer a rationale generally pales to their superb demonstrations. This is rendered as the popular teaching style called, *by example*. The problem however, is that no two people share the same inherent physical, intellectual, intuitive, emotional or energetic characteristics. Although certain talents and levels of understanding are evident in some martial artists, they can be completely lacking in others, making one's entrance into the practice of internal power completely, and sometimes utterly, frustrating. For not only do they not understand what is being said or demonstrated, they don't know what questions to ask to gain further foothold. And frankly, they may not even possess the essential characteristics themselves to make it work without great difficulty and expert guidance. Internal energy cultivation can initially feel like learning a foreign language.

Mainstream martial artists sorely lack the *inner* manual. Each inner system claims to possess a correct formula, but the bar varies greatly in height. Its teachers hope you will eventually make a vital connection, given enough practice (and intuitive strokes of insight), or make them a lot of money trying. *Good luck!* Looking at the martial art community's effort in this regard, it's clear that far more have failed to breach the inner sanctum than have been given entry. The majority of martial artists worldwide actually don't even know there is an *inner sanctum*. Funny thing though, the principles of internal martial arts are embedded in *everyone's* discipline, even in the so-called *Hard* arts. If anyone is to achieve extra-ordinary skill from inner martial practice, they will have the most success following a well-



The primary Asian method of cultivating internal power was, and still remains to this day, the proper and consistent performance of specific outer and inner exercises.

marked trail with a competent teacher.

If your guide is ambiguous, though possesses unusual skill, he/she may be a messenger, but not the authentic teacher. We see many messengers appearing in teacher's garb throughout history. But don't be mistaken. They may not be the guides. Guides historically follow messengers as rain follows the wind in a storm. I'm simply pointing out that master demonstrators are not always master teachers, though everyone will be inspired to chase their mysterious displays of power.

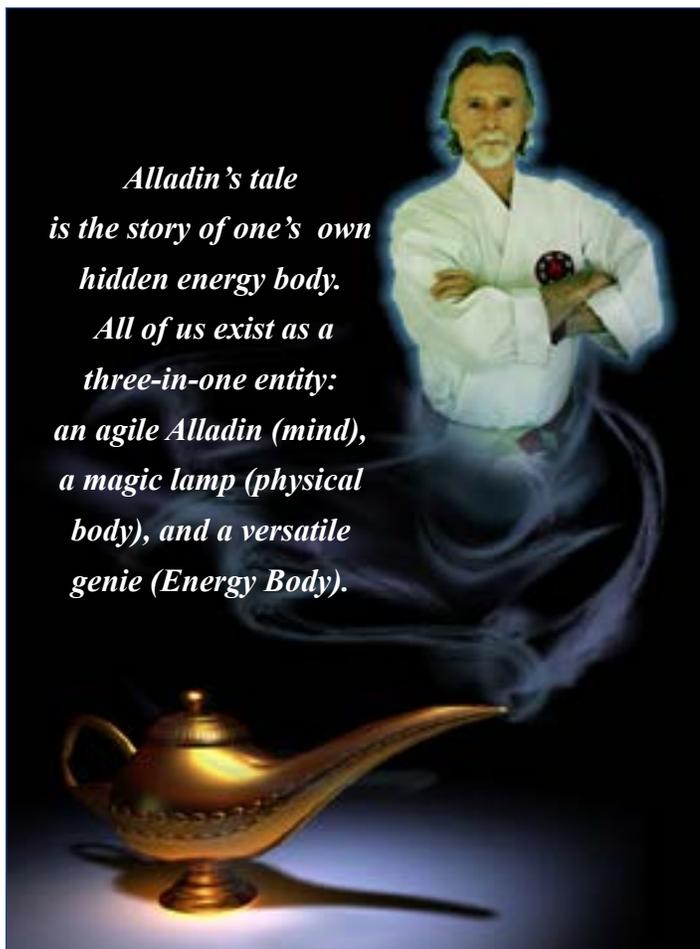
I have stalked internal power and cataloged my experiences with the express purpose of marking the trail for those searching for it.

To wit, you have an *Energy Body* in addition to your flesh, bone and blood (which itself is energy in denser form). What most martial artists see of their art is not all there is to it. Some, in arrogance or self-importance, insist that nothing secretive remains to be discovered. These perspectives in no way alter the richness and value of real internal work.

No one has any trouble grasping that we have a mental body; a psyche that's capable of intuiting, cogitating,



A lot of martial artists worldwide wanted to duplicate Bruce Lee's one-inch punch. Has it become a common, in-house martial technique yet? Not even close.



Alladin's tale is the story of one's own hidden energy body. All of us exist as a three-in-one entity: an agile Alladin (mind), a magic lamp (physical body), and a versatile genie (Energy Body).

commentary on one of the oldest Indian spiritual classics, *The Bhagavad Gita*. The chapter on *Freedom and Renunciation* offers this ancient warning, which could equally be applied to developing your internal power:

"The relationship between teacher and student is given a parting word, partially of warning. Krishna does not want these profound truths told to anyone who is not ready. Anyone lacking devotion or self-control, who does not want to hear spiritual instruction or who scoffs at it, should not be accepted as a student. The sacred act of giving spiritual instruction cannot be undertaken lightly. It is the highest work, and the man or woman who does it is most dear to Krishna."



conceptualizing, remembering, dreaming, imagining, psyching up or psyching yourself out. Yet, even in the face of clear scientific proof that we are more than physical and mental attributes, many martial artists will still knit their brows over the fact that we all have an auric/etheric/chakric/pranic/subtle energy body with extraordinary and compelling power—*directly under our control*.

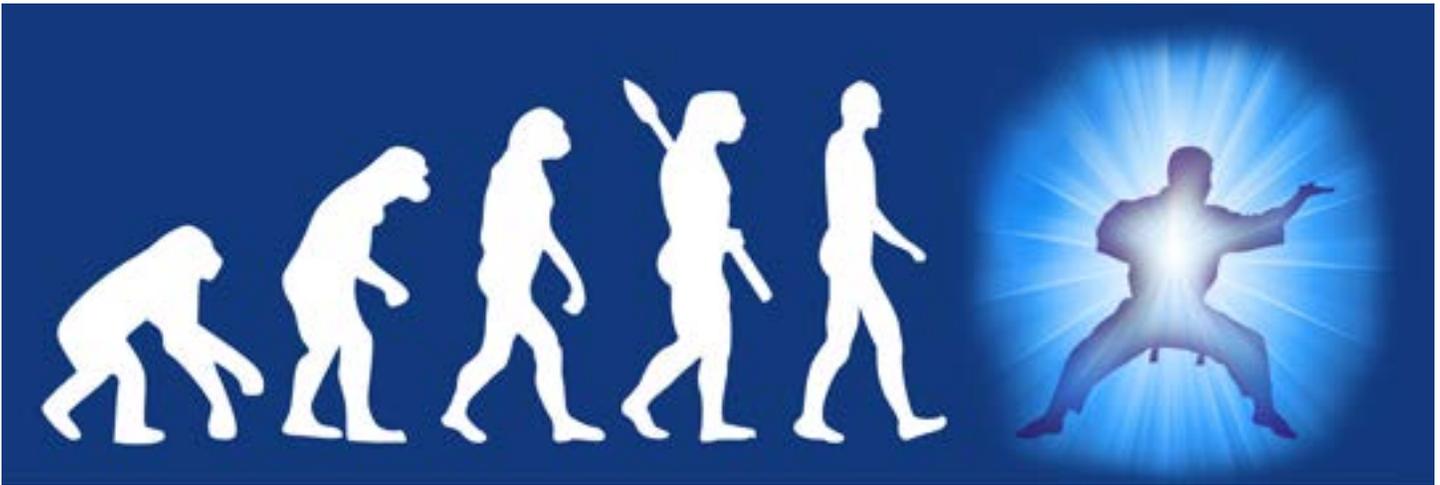
Civilization has mostly set aside our magic lamps for the splendors of the see-and-touch, material world. We cry, "We don't need no stinking *lamp* to advance!" Sadly, with such narrow thinking we will advance our body wisdom right off the cliff of consciousness. (Egos and Lemmings have this one trait in common. They will both race madly with a pack consciousness to their own demise).

The majority of our modern martial society has reached for the *visible* bottle, except, those who engage in authentic martial, yogic and spiritual practices. Within our martial subculture, the *Soft* arts, and a few unique, perhaps mislabeled *Hard* arts, have maintained a live connection to these interior body/mind powers. And, we have been quietly passing them along to select initiates.

If you find yourself amidst people who dismiss internal energy, chi, or spiritual work as some kind of "*chi chi wu wu*," a denigrating term one fitness blogger used to minimize certain martial practices, consider author, Dina Morrison's

I mention the above because the development of internal power can, and often, opens the corridor to spiritual insight. If you are one of those people who thinks this is a tale of smoke and mirrors, you are more likely positioned on main street, outside the courtyard of this study, no less standing at the door, or in its primary chamber. Having a healthy skepticism on the other hand is completely acceptable and even encouraged. You *should* challenge mysteries presented to you. Only then can you see them clearly. There are plenty of internal power groupies who don't have any better grasp on authentic power than those diehard skeptics who refuse to acknowledge chi's existence, or those lost in arrogance, fear or doubt, who can only offer demeaning comments. The willing, the able, the bitter and the blind, all need our helping hand here, even if they try to bite it when you extend it compassionately.

Your Energy Body is capable of manipulating both your physical strength, and another's, even *without* physical touch. But internal power cultivation is not just about harnessing, cultivating, and directing subtle forces to a desired *physical* strength outcome, but lifting your consciousness and that of others to a higher, clearer and rightful inheritance.



THINK ON THIS

If you want to assemble your internal energy puzzle, you will need to step out of your current thought box and empty yourself. Isn't that the message of *Kara-te*, the *empty* hand, or more appropriately, *Te wo karanisuru*, the *emptying* hand?

The essence of true rank transformation in the Karatedo *shodan* (*shodan* means new beginnings) is to be given a new set of eyes to see your arts *inner* value.

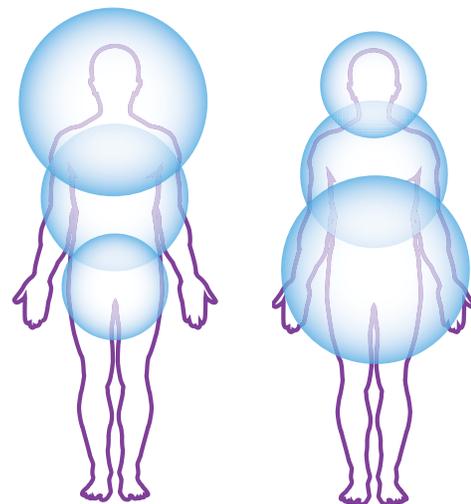
Humans go through a physical developmental sequence gaining control of their gross musculature first, then working toward fine motor control over a period of many years before gaining maturity of movement. Internal power development follows a similar arc. Internal power display represents an advanced stage of mind/body control for an evolving human. In truth, we *never* stop growing. But modern culture suggests, in so many words, "No need to develop further. Let's all stop at the *material* world!" The world of material desire that we have created for ourselves no longer requires that we evolve to this advanced tier of inner strength—but—we are at the earliest dawn of a new era of thinking. A great paradigm shift is taking place. Some of you may be slowly waking up to the next stage of your own evolution. This is why we are seeing the emergence of the 'inner' messengers in seminars around the world, demonstrating internal energy potential.

Intend all you want for your genie to appear. Mind/intent is only *one* piece of the internal energy puzzle. For if your energy channels remain clogged, shut off from lack of practice, disbelief or doubt, your intention will get shunted. Your genie will slumber and you will lack *punch*. If you



don't know the 'magic words' (proper training methods with their accompanying explanations) you won't be able to get past the gross physical level, and the deeper power source available will remain untapped.

Anyone can make their physical body move forcefully, but few get their Energy Body behind it. When they do, it is a rare and special power. Pure physical effort to the Chinese is *li* or gross muscular strength, not *chi*. To activate *chi* you need to understand the relationship between your *Yi* (mind), and your *Chi* (subtle energy) as it manifests, as it rises and falls, in your body. A broad discussion of Heaven and Earth is too abstract to gain a foothold in the subject if you don't first understand the relationship between your head (upper dantien), heart (middle dantien), and physical center of gravity (lower dantien) or, in other words, between your will/intent, your emotions/beliefs, and how your body expresses authentic power.



**Western Culture's
Energy Orientation**

The Martial Ideal

Reprinted from the book *Internal Karate*.



The Challenge: Resist a simple wrist twist

Using basic energy principles I can usually take any student down with a basic wrist twist. They can do whatever they want to resist, except change their arm position. It doesn't matter how hard they psyche themselves up, everyone goes down.

But anyone can resist easily with a proper shift in thinking.

The average person cannot see that their mind pushes more than gross muscle and bone. Most students are blocked by the belief that their mind only pushes physical matter.

The mind also pushes Subtle Energy. To resist your wrist from twisting, you need to activate your Energy field. But people don't know how to get their minds to stir this invisible field with enough force to make a difference.

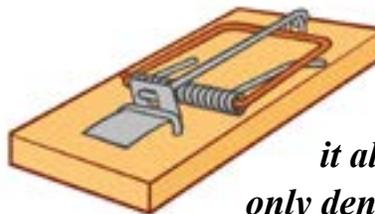
Why doesn't this come naturally? Why can't everyone activate this energy at will?

The answer—the majority of martial artists remain anchored to an earlier developmental cycle. They have only trained to activate the proper external switches, not the proper internal ones.

**This author is well aware that there are numerous biomechanical manipulations that will cause a wrist to collapse. In this test these tricks and/or techniques are not used.*

This essay may fuel your motivation to delve deeper into the subject or help you to push a few more miles ahead. But that's it. To go any further, you will need clear steppingstones, followed by patience, practice, curiosity, sensitivity, time, and a guide who has gone up and back. You need to engage with a teacher who has retraced his or her own steps and clearly marked them, not someone who stumbled into the field a little ahead of you.

Messengers are coming down from the mountain with intriguing and compelling powers. It appears however, that even they are having some difficulty clearly transmitting the esoteric teachings to others. They know it. Most are trying to figure it out as well.



Don't fall into the all too common trap that you've seen it all. This thinking will only deny your advance.

Unfortunately, no short essay can instantly dispel your confusion about what internal power is or how to claim it unless you are born an energy savant. This is a huge mountain of information and you must properly prepare for the journey.

There is also no single statement that can transform someone from a hard style karate novice to a skilled master. Instant knowledge to make oneself immediately adept at power is an illusion. There are no short cuts. You must make deeper connections and open your mind to bring this subject home.

Since 1990, our organization has been carefully observing, recording and documenting our advances toward understanding the behavior of Subtle Energy in individual martial art technique, traditional kata or formwork, two person, push hands style sensitivity drills, and overall physical strength performance. We have seen clearly why the earliest form practitioners could spend up to ten years cultivating a single kata. Unfortunately, many significant, even critical nuances of essential martial kata continue to this day to be omitted from traditional forms for lack of acknowledgement that such exists, or is inherent in the original forms.



Even seasoned martial veterans are surprised when we have invited them to a presentation of internal principles, how they could have missed something so profound right under their noses.

FOLLOWING THE LOGIC PATH TO INTERNAL POWER

Every human body is a living laboratory, a versatile, mobile workshop, for self-study.

As martial artists, our goal is to study power in all its manifestations. To do so we must keenly observe the nature of our engagements with others (both positive and negative). Conflict, which some martial artists study acutely, is simply things *coming together*, continuously interacting; attracting and repelling. If you can witness this dance with your ego disengaged from all its assumptions and counter-agendas you may get a glimpse how human power functions.

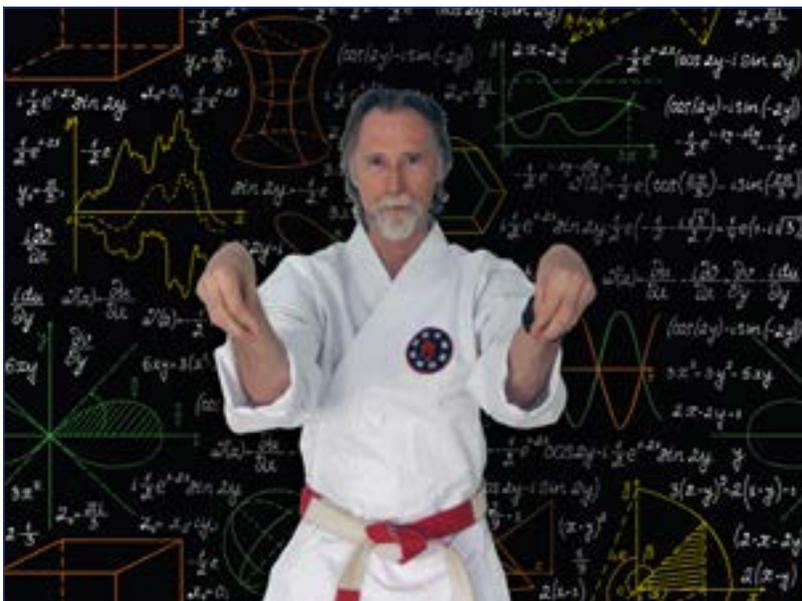
Authentic internal training will challenge everything you were previously taught about power or strength. It will carve a new path for you, a new template, that will take you outside the gross muscular paradigm as the sole engine of physical strength. The human ego often erroneously looks for dominance of a dynamic entity that it does not fully grasp. It tries to turn a complex subject into simple black and white pictures. You are far greater than that which you identify yourselves.

Along the high paths of the martial arts we recondition the body and mind. We reassess our mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, and environmental assets. Few capitalize on the full potential of their inherited human facets. Mind is a tool. Body is a tool. Emotions are tools. The Energy Body is a tool. Rethinking new ways to use these tools and understanding how they relate to one another will advance your potential.

You can't demonstrate internal power in a vacuum. You need a competent guide and alert training partners. The essence of the Karatedo's *kumite* (two person exchange) is to experience and experiment with other people. The spiritualized dojo is the perfect laboratory for this undertaking.

If the current trend is any evidence, trial and error will most likely result in far too much error, too much lost time, and general frustration. Avail yourself of ancient wisdom methodologies. There are some very good teachers out there willing to offer their guidance.

Imagination is your single-most critical tool for successfully generating and navigating the internal power



mindset, along with the *belief* that such skill can be accomplished. I've seen many students confused about the role of their imagination in internal power cultivation when they mistake imagination for fantasy. The imagination I am referring to is not a make-believe world of wishful conceptualizations that remain bottled in a playful mind, but rather an attribute of the mind that allows itself to extend its own energetic

influence into the body and out into the material world to manipulate the Subtle Energy fields.

True imagination, mostly by way of visualization, is the extension of your psyche to a specific future outcome in the physical world. World renowned ninjitsu master, Masaaki Hatsumi, says it simply, "*Focus only on the outcome you desire.*"

Here is one example of how your Energy body works: Imagine you want a cup of tea. Your hand reaches out to grab the cup. This is the proper use of the mind to manipulate your physical world. Mind activates body. Body complies. Hand grasps cup. In terms of internal power, however, it's not simply '*where the mind goes that the chi flows.*' Where the mind goes, the chi (biofield) *precedes* the physical body.

Next, picture an ocean vessel plowing through water. Think of the captain as the mind/intent, the vessel as the



***At the highest expression of internal martial arts
you are not a physical entity controlling subtle energies.
You are subtle energy controlling the physical entity.***

physical body, and the ocean as your Energy Body. As the vessel propels itself through the sea, it leaves a wake of churning water. You might have missed the water pushed *ahead* of the vessel's bow that forms the wake. Ships, like the human body, create both a 'wake' and a 'way'. This is the hidden phenomenon that people do not recognize as part of the mind/body process. When you want a cup of tea, your subtle energies will extend invisibly down your arm giving the muscles the charge to contract the fingers to clasp the cup. In addition, your chi will reach past your arm and 'grab' that cup with invisible fingers, anchoring you to it by means of an energetic tether. Chi moves ahead of and outside of your physical body to embrace the teacup. Like the ship, your body pushes a charged energy ahead of its physical self. At that moment you become a 'human/cup/tea/drinker.'

We internal martial artists study this invisible piece of the mind/intent puzzle and its effect to rally subtle energies.



Energy *always* precedes a physical motion. To say it another way—all physical actions have an energy field projected in front of the intention. This energetic wave/touch generates an electro-magnetic *wallop*. It's a *soft* impact with a heavy footprint. Energy work, called *Kiko* in the Okinawan martial vernacular, is the underlying basis of pressure point strikes. The old world Asian masters saw that our intentions had a viable *physical* effect. Chi flow causes both measurable and sometimes visible affects. It projects or repels energy fields that can affect the physical body by strengthening or weakening them.

There's another critical observation I must share. When two human biofields are entangled, the most organized field will take charge. The body almost always abdicates to a higher field vibration. That is, your body can adopt the vibration of another's field only to a certain degree. Proximity to too high a vibration causes disruption because our bodies are not prepared to adjust to too great a level of energy inflow. Just as your stomach can handle only so much food or you suffer indigestion, or you mind can only handle too many thoughts,

or you get a headache, likewise, your body's energy system can only handle incremental shifts in field vibration until it has adapted to the new level. When you've trained your body to handle more energy, you can move or throw more energy.

Arakawa Tomio, a career Tennessee-based, Aikbudo expert adds, "*Consciousness and vibrational frequency interact hand-in-hand. When you are in a lower level of vibration your perception is limited. Your consciousness is decreased. At a high level frequency you are naturally in an increased state of consciousness with heightened perceptions.*"



Arakawa Tomio

Qi flows best through a relaxed, aligned, non-stressed frame. However, the average person confronts significant impediments to developing internal power in this frenetic-paced modern world. We are too often anxious, doubtful, skeptical, physically misaligned, over-stressed, distracted or stuck in limiting paradigms about what constitutes our reality. Blocked energy channels can be due to bad posture, flaccid muscles, body toxicity, overwork/underwork, or any out-of-balance issues. We also suffer a mind/body schism. Western culture has become so over-fascinated with cognition that it has rendered internal energy cultivation insignificant, or of minimal value.

You can choose to dance the *Chi Chi Wu Wu* at the base camp of an amazing mountain, or grab your trekking pole and gear up for the martial climb of your life because Internal power is the next stage of mind/body evolution for all maturing human beings.



***It's your life.
It's your choice.
I'm climbing with or without you.
I'll dance when I get to the top
And send you my regards.***

The Diamond Cutting Mandarin

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