



Sun Do News

Fall 2017 Edition

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Essay for Promotion to Red/Blue Belt

By Teresa Lenzen

I do not find language and words to be sufficient to talk about my Sun Do experiences or to express what Sun Do means to me. One of the appealing benefits of Sun Do, to me, is that it is an experiential and non-conceptual practice; one does not need intellectual ideas or theories to practice and benefit. In fact, for me, this has been a very relieving counterpoint to all the intellectual activity that was required in my life from age 12 or so to the present.

I began Level 4, Red Belt, at the end of October 2013. Now, almost four years later, I finish this level and prepare for the next. This feels like finishing a chapter in my life and beginning another – I don't know if my Sun Do practice is helping demarcate these chapters, or if the chapters are there on their own, and Sun Do is a companion along the way. Certainly, it is true that my Sun Do practice has helped me move through each chapter more efficiently, more confidently, and with less distress.

Dear Members,

Retreat center changing,
New building rising.
Life continues on,
Taking us along.

On the hilltop,
revered faces watch
our journey deepening,
guiding us home.

-----*Master Ron Catabia*

International Sun Do Association

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Hyunmoon Kim

Masters

Ron Catabia

Tora Strawderman

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I feel very fortunate to have this practice in my life. There are so many people in the world who struggle their entire lives with trying to meet their survival needs, and who never have the time or energy to devote to considering who they are, how they might like their life to be, and to learn healthy ways to support themselves as they go through the different seasons and challenges of life. It is not clear to me to what I owe this tremendous blessing of having Sun Do practice. Karma? God's blessing? Wisdom of the Tao? My taking advantage of opportunities?

Some of what Sun Do continues to give me, since the beginning, is the ability to move through life's challenges and stressors with greater ease and accomplish more of my purpose than I would have without this practice. Perhaps even more importantly, I have been able to soften my drive to achieve and accomplish.

While it is normal for people to feel a need to accomplish and do things, it seems too common that our intellectual thinking capacity is overemphasized, and what we experience in our body is often deemphasized or ignored. Therefore, at least in US society today, achieving goals and doing things is rewarded, while being in our bodies and noticing our experience is devalued and not often taught, even though being in harmony with both is what ultimately brings more satisfaction, joy, and the capacity for spiritual advancement in our lives. I should note that more and more people today are becoming aware of this imbalance and are searching for ways to remedy it through yoga, qi gong, tai chi, the cultivation of mindfulness, and other practices.



Teresa

I grew up in this culture, and I was not immune to the problems that can develop with too much energy centered in our thinking mind, and not enough in our breath and body awareness. Prior to Sun Do, I had fatigue, digestive issues, and feelings of stress, worry, anger, and resentment. I often did things from obligation and less often from a sense of joyfulness or from expressing my true nature. This was not a surprise, because I did not have a clear enough sense of my true nature.

Sun Do has helped me find more balance. In the almost four years of Level 4, Red Belt practice, I have worked through a very difficult past issue that I know would have taken many more years to process and resolve if I not had a Sun Do practice.

This reminds me of something in Ron Catabia's article, "Gut Feelings: Lower Dan-tien Psychotherapy": "... saturating the body with *qi* leads to an encountering process whereby painful events from the past stored in the unconscious mind are activated by *qi* and brought into conscious awareness. This can be a painful experience. However, the centering and grounding effect produced by the lower dan-tien helps one go through the experience without being overwhelmed. The lower dan-tien provides the strength and flexibility needed to face the pain and grief associated with past

problems while simultaneously recycling and releasing *qi* patterns associated with them." This description is very accurate for what I have experienced.

Now I am finding myself living from joy more often and trying to consider my true nature before I commit to obligations that others or society might ask of me. Again, something in the previously mentioned article is relevant for me. "Cultivating the lower dan-tien makes us aware of our higher nature. This results in being able to use our full capacity to help ourselves and those around us to live an authentic, balanced, and harmonious life."

Picnic at Home

*The path turns, the moon moves,
but I am not lost.*

*From east to west, north to south,
I have not budged.*

Welcome, and goodbye!

It didn't have to be this way but it was.

It's been a very quiet lunch.

-----By Joel Dunning

I have always been interested and actively engaged in trying to better myself and support those around me. At times, however, I would end up frustrated and tired, in part because I was giving too much or giving reflexively and putting others' needs ahead of my own. Now I am better at being aware of my own needs as

well as those of others, and as a result, I am taking better care of myself and am less likely to get out of balance from unhealthy choices. I have more trust in the process. I do not need to be in control or fully understand the process to be connected and engaged with myself and others and support positive connections and endeavors.

In Level 4, Red Belt, I had times of feeling significant *qi* blockages that were quite parallel to what I was experiencing in my day-to-day life. Because of the experience in Sun Do practice of being able to trust in the breathing process despite the discomfort in the body, I was also able to trust in the psychological/emotional process as I worked through the blockages or issues from the past. My breathing is stronger and steadier; my awareness of my body is more consistent; and my emotional life is steadier and calmer. Sun Do practice has given me more confidence in myself and my capacity to move through difficult stages or challenges in my life.

Compared to when I first began Sun Do practice in 2008, my life has changed in many positive ways. Today, I am a partner and owner in a successful business, which I enjoy and find quite rewarding. I have significant autonomy in my work life. My knowledge and work as a psychotherapist has continued to mature, and I am blessed to be able to support others in their healing journeys and in their growth processes. I have a satisfying and enjoyable marriage, a peaceful relationship with stepchildren, and I support my 85-year-old mother as her caregiver.

My mother has lived with me for the past 11 years, and at times, I still have a hard time balancing the caregiver role. I care deeply for my mother and want to take very good care of

Hand, Wood and Spirit

My saw goes jhup jhup

I'm making a hand-made shelf

Yet, my hand cannot really cut wood

(Maybe If you gave me a few hours)

My tools are extensions of my hand

My hand an extension of my mind

I envision a shelf in my mind

...or does the spirit of the shelf come looking for a good carpenter?

-----By Rich Kramer

her, but sometimes I give too much and then don't have enough time to nourish myself. I am learning to do better with this. I am learning how to keep my heart open while someone I love deeply is declining physically, and I know their transition is approaching. That is a challenging process, but I like to think of it as a challenging Sun Do posture, and I am comforted that if I continue breathing while I practice, in time it will feel more natural, and I will be able to maintain ease in that place. In summary, I am deeply grateful for the Sun Do practice, for the myriad ways it has benefitted my life.

I wish to say thank you to the hermit masters of the past who developed and preserved the Sun Do tradition in the mountains. Thank you to Master Chung San for bringing Sun Do down from the mountains of Korea. Thank you to Master Hyunmoon Kim for bringing Sun Do to the West and supporting the US and International Sun Do practice centers and

students. Thank you to Ron Catabia and Tora Strawderman for the time and effort to support the US and International Sun Do students. Thank you to Joel Dunning for bringing Sun Do to Omaha, Nebraska, where I have had the precious opportunity to learn this system. Thanks also to Teresa Dunning for her support of the Omaha Sun Do community.

Teresa Lenzen practices in Omaha, Nebraska.



Joel and Teresa Dunning-Photo by Lucie Lambert

Progress on the New Building

It just looks better and better!



Photos by Virginia Platt

My Sun Do Practice

By Dana Grisham

Sun Do breath work has helped me find a place of calmness and allows me to feel an energy that prior to Sun Do was unknown to me.

Perfectionism stopped me from trying new things throughout most of my life. I was always fearful that I would not succeed or be as good as others at any given task or endeavor. I always wanted to reach some external goal or destination and sought the affirmation of others that I had succeeded. I had not given much thought to finding a path true to myself or one congruent with the life force of the universe. I mainly just thought about what other people wanted or did not want for me or about what they considered to be important. I learned from my Sun Do practice that other people are not the grantors of my wellbeing, achievement, or OK-ness. I can now look internally and have a sense of what to do in most circumstances. This framework has allowed me to approach my practice and my life in a differently motivated way.

When I began Sun Do I was at first concerned that I would not be able to physically do it because of the various injuries and insults my body had endured throughout my life. I decided to just take it one practice at a time and was surprised to discover that, through regular practice, I could do more than I thought I could. I did not pressure myself but kept showing up for our Omaha Sun Do group and started practicing Sun Do at home during the week. A most interesting development over this past year is an instinctual “knowing” of what my body needs and does not need to function well. I can sense better when I need to slow down, what foods should be avoided, and what

chemical additives to stay away from. I simply have a better ability to find what is right and true for me and have learned to listen and trust myself. I now have the presence to follow through with what is the right way/path for me. I believe Sun Do has been the catalyst for the personal growth I have experienced. I still have much to learn and am not fully sure how it all works, but I do know my life has changed since I began my practice 2.5 years ago. Little by little, changes started to occur.



Fall Retreat 2017—gazing at the fall foliage

The 2015 Vermont and 2016 Iowa retreats really helped my practice. I took what I learned and applied it to my daily life. I am more patient and gentle with myself while at the same time disciplined. Due to physical limitations as a result of life-long obesity and a herniated disk in my back, I never thought I would be able to do the warm-up exercises, a headstand, or sit-ups, but now I can do half of a headstand—one with my feet off the ground. I am not sure if I will ever be able to do a full headstand or a series of push-ups, but either way, I will just do my best and be fine with that.

As my Sun Do Practice progresses, I continue to see changes in myself mentally, spiritually, and physically. I have found a stillness within me that seems to be in sync with the nature around me. I notice and find joy in simple things such as

a flower seed that is starting to sprout and the movement of leaves responding to the slightest breeze. I have a “centeredness” now that allows me to see and appreciate things like this.

Sun Do has helped me find my breath and my center. It is difficult to explain to others about what it means to find this, but I know other Sun Do practitioners know what I am referring to. Finding my center has changed how I interact with life on a day-to-day basis. In short, I feel calmer, less distracted by the drama that surrounds us, less defensive, and more able to just go with the flow. Sun Do has helped me go with universal energy and not force. I still have a long way to go in this area but have started to see glimpses of the natural flow of the universe. In the past I had a need to control of circumstances, events, and even other people, but this is not as much of a problem for me as it used to be.

I am thankful for those that serve as my teachers and for this practice. Sun Do has changed my life, and I am dedicated to my practice and continual evolution.

Dana Grisham practices in Omaha.



The colors of Fall Retreat 2017

Christine has created a Sun Do blog. Check it out! <http://www.sundointernational.com/blog>

From Kwong Lip Pang-----

Meaning, power and value of breathing ~ one perspective

Each inhalation and each exhalation are separate yet interdependent of each other.

Each inhalation and each exhalation are opposite yet complementing each other.

They, together as a breath in breathing like body and mind together as spirit in us.

Holding one's breath is oneness of inhalation and exhalation

Circulating energy/qi 气 during microcosmic and macrocosmic practice while holding our breath is applying and circulating the moment of oneness throughout our body, within and beyond our body, the universe!!!

So, to all practitioners of danjeon 단전 (lower abdominal center/ tantien 丹田) breathing), thank you for all your hard work

수고하세요 [sugohasehyo]

辛苦了[xinkule]



Fall Retreat 2017: Master Kim, Stanley, Stan, Rich, and Virginia—Fall retreat photos by Virginia Platt

Retreat Schedule

Winter Retreat 2018 in Litchfield, CT
January 4-7

Spring Retreat 2018 in Barnet
May 25-28

Summer Retreat 2018 in Barnet
9-day retreat: July 27-August 5
5-day retreat: July 31-August 5
3-day retreat: August 2-5

All retreats begin at 4:00 PM on the first day and end at noon on the last day.

For more information see <http://www.SunDo.org/retreats/>.



Dave Porcello at summer retreat
-----Photo by Lucie Lambert



Full moon at summer retreat
-----Photo by Lucie Lambert



The Sun Do News welcomes stories, articles poems, photos, and announcements. Please send your contribution to Betsy Forrest as an email attachment, if possible, at bforrest777@gmail.com.

Website:

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Visit the Sun Do website for information on Sun Do history, retreat dates and registration, and much more.

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