



Sun Do News

Fall 2018 Edition

Volume 34, Issue 2

Coming Back to Sun Do

By Shirley Walesch

In my late twenties I began to seek an exercise/relaxation type of program and found Hatha Yoga. I found this to be very relaxing and would leave my class feeling very rested. At that time in my life I was working full time and was the mom of two very busy little girls. The relaxation benefit I received from this practice helped balance out the hectic business of my days. I continued this practice sporadically for approximately ten years.

Early in 1990 I was introduced to Sun Do by my then boyfriend, now husband, Ron, who had been practicing for a few months.

I found the practice very different from the yoga practice I had done in the past. I recall wondering why do we do all this slapping out and pressure point stuff. I also quickly learned that my arm strength was much weaker than I was aware of, which made push-ups and some of the warm-up exercises and postures challenging. And I could not bend and contort myself like a pretzel as some of the postures seemed to require.

The more I practiced, the more I became aware of the energy that I was gathering through the

Dear Members,

Rain pours down
like a river overflowing.

Spine straight while
striking the gong,
intending to
find the center.

Lights inside tents
begin to shine
through drops of water.

Across from the hill
a new building
stands in the night.
Resilient against the rain,
its spine is straight,
its center is strong.

-----Master Ron Catabia

pattern of breath and combination of postures and how I was benefiting from this energy well beyond the duration of the class. I became more flexible and my breath fuller, deeper, and more energizing. This positive cause-and-effect experience created a desire deep within that guided me to continue the program and actually increase the frequency of my practice. I found on cold, early winter mornings that my commute of 40 minutes to class was sometimes solo other than the snow plow, yet I was eager to attend. I attended a few retreats and found that when I got out of the way of my own doubts I could actually accomplish more with less effort. Even the cold-water training was a positive experience.

I still recall the time at retreat when Master Kim had us move large boulders from a stone wall onto a trailer bed and then move them again around the property. I could not figure out why we were doing this, and no one else seemed to have the answer, though I did notice that with the collective energy focused on the task at hand, I was able to assist Ron Catabia with moving a very large boulder onto the trailer bed. This is when I began to understand the unspoken experience of the collective energy and unity of working together for the greater good, though at times that greater good was not understood until I reflected on it later. I realized that without the practice and the collective energy, I would never have been able to lift that boulder.

At some point after having practiced for about four years, I began to lose my focus and allowed other life experiences to distract me to the point that I felt I had no further interest in continuing Sun Do. I was exploring a Christian walk of faith and could not see how the two practices could blend together. I recall mentally wrestling with these thoughts and coming to the conclusion that Sun Do felt more like it was controlling my life, and I decided to let go of my practice. About the same time Ron also left the practice, and life went on.

Several years passed and Ron once again began to practice, but I held out. Though I had not replaced the practice with another form of meditation or specific workout, I did not feel I wanted to return to practice even when Ron kept encouraging me to do so through all his positive comments of how he was benefiting from it.

More than three years went by watching Ron benefit from the practice before I finally decided to once again start to practice on a regular basis. I knew when I made the decision to go back that I would no longer struggle with the “why” of the practice.



Ron & Shirley Walesch (in blue uniforms and flanked by Dave, Betsy, and Master Kim)

I have now been practicing for more than three years again, and I feel as though I am just at the cusp of deepening my understanding of the practice and of all the benefits that come from committing myself to being open to change.

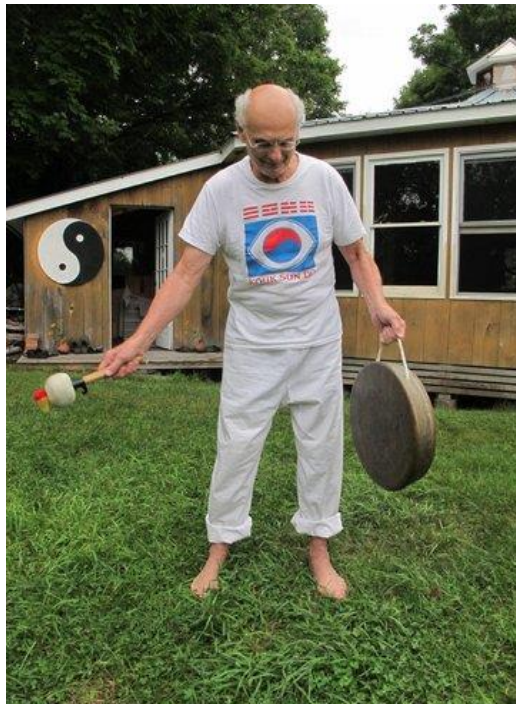
Yes, I have physically grown stronger, yet there is this inner energy through the breath that guides my practice. This energy guides me well beyond the practice sessions. It is a collective energy that is shared with the other practitioners who make up the whole. We are a collective unit, though we part and come back again and again, supporting each other as we

follow our breath and move energy through our blood and cells. It is not mine to own or label since it is forever this ebb and flow through me. Not mine to contain. Letting go allows for the flow to penetrate deeper, and if I allow my mind or physical limitations to conflict with the practice, I become like a shield trying to block the enemy where there is no enemy. Holding on only complicates and limits the benefits of the breath. The breath, full and strong and rhythmic in its flow, is there to bring strength and healing.

I wish to continue to be an open vessel as I continue to practice and allow the energy to guide me in my practice.

I am thankful for those dedicated teachers who have walked in my shoes before me and are there to guide me in this process. I am humbled by their willingness to give of themselves for the benefit of others.

Shirley practices in Montpelier.



Ron Catabia rings the gong at summer retreat—Photo by Lucie Lambert

International Sun Do Association

Grand Master

Hyunmoon Kim

Masters

Ron Catabia

Tora Strawderman

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Virginia Platt

Betsy Forrest

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Al Passacantando

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Ginger Hobbs

Betsy Barstow

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Maria Kim

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Instructors

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Kwong Lip Pang

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Bob Felekey

Stephen Holmes

Barbara McCandless

Heidemarie Holmes

Kim Hedegaard

Roy Bushman

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My Experience of the Mountain Taoist Sun Do Practice

By Ron Walesch

I am currently at level 20 of the Blue/Red belt. It seems timeless sometimes when I think back to when I started practicing at white belt until now. It seemed then that the practice was one that was meant to be a form of discipline, something that called one to perform in difficult ways; in order to engage fully one had to make an extra effort for there to be any sort of physical gain. I now have a different understanding. It does not feel that I have to make an extra concerted effort to engage fully. It comes more naturally and therefore seems less of a discipline (physically, mentally) and more of a desire because I have recognized more maturely what the benefits and virtues are. This doesn't mean that there isn't any motive or intent to move toward a higher and deeper endeavor. The more one practices, the more one is able to stay focused and engaged more fully. I sometimes amaze myself by how deep I can bring my breath, and how the breath totally supports whatever posture I am in.

There were times when the temperature outside was 0 degrees, and my vehicle was all covered in snow, and I had to make the hard decision to wake up at 4:45 am and drive 15 miles to get to practice. Not so anymore--It is automatic. I wake without any mental debate. I dress and exit my house for practice. Then: JUN, Attention: I am present; JUNG SHIM, JUNG SHI, JUNG GAHK, JUNG DO, JUNG HENG. I know I belong here. It has become a way of life for me, regardless of any need to try and demonstrate it to others. Sun Do provides for me a pathway to better health and a calmness of mind.

I was recently infected with Lyme disease, which resulted in many complications. It was

difficult for me to practice because I was having painful headaches and cervical pain. I decided to take a leave for about two months until things calmed down. When I returned to the practice, I realized how much ground I had lost, and that challenged me to get back my center and the depth of breath I had once achieved. So, I began the white belt healing postures again and then a practice review of yellow belt postures. I believe I am at the point now when I can return to level 20 red/blue postures and graduate to blue belt. But again, I feel that the Sun Do practice is so valuable to the healing process of body and mind. Always there is a return on my efforts for each daily practice. It feels more like a way of life that is essential to my waking hours. Therefore, a love and desire rather than an arduous and conflicting mental task.



Master Kim promotes Ron Walesch—Photo by Shirley Walesch

Well, enough of this self-loathing, I would rather talk about the real importance of the Sun Do practice, which is primarily about centering oneself in the mind, the posture, the breath, and the universe. This place can be a place of non-thought, where the three centers come together as one. Not necessarily a mindful directive, but rather a purely natural experience of discovering the simple letting go of everything. Then there is no conflict among the body, mind, and spirit. To quote the *Tao Te Ching*, "Less and less do you have to force things, until you finally arrive at non-action. When nothing is done, nothing is left undone." I am fully engaged in the posture, with full depth of breath and energy freely circulating. When one arrives at this place of centered-ness, one can feel a sense of satisfaction, or better yet, a blissful, fulfilling, single-ness and completeness.

The *Tao Te Ching* says, "If you open yourself to the Tao, you are at one with the Tao, and you can embody it completely." The Bible says, "In Him all things literally live, move, and have their very being." These statements are the supreme virtue of letting go and allowing, learning that there is no resistance when you are truly centered.

There never has been a better time than now for a way to escape the rapid invasion of the mind by secular totalitarianism. I for one am retired and able to live my life in a way that is distanced from all the commercialism and need for material self-gratification. It is the time now for everyone to assess their lives and decide what is really important to the growth and satisfaction of our souls. The self-realization and the inner life are so important to having a well-balanced personality matrix of body, mind, soul, and spirit. The Sun Do practice gives me just that.

I feel blessed for having a Sun Do center in which to practice with my teachers and mentors Betsy Forrest and Dave Delbrook.

Thank you so much for maintaining a center for those so inclined to practice and be so well rewarded.

Ron practices in Montpelier



Brian Quirk contemplates the universe—photo by Lucie Lambert

"The basic rules for guarding life," said the Old Master, "are:

Can you embrace unity?
 Can you keep from losing it?
 Can you know what is auspicious and inauspicious?
 Without oracle bones and divining stalks?
 Can you stop when it's time to stop?
 Can you give up looking for it in others and find it in yourself?
 Can you be casual?
 Can you be naïve?
 Can you be like a child?"

----*Chuang Tzu*, 4th century B.C.E.

Progress on the New Building

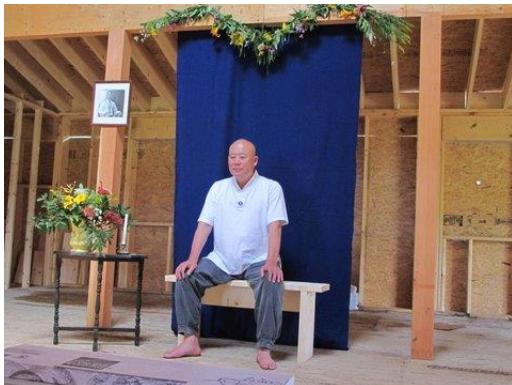
We are hiring a new contractor who will finish the exterior of the building this fall, including doors and windows. Next step: finishing the interior. We don't have a timeline for that yet, and we'll probably need to raise more money to complete the work. In the meantime, though, things are moving along!



Virginia added art work to the new building, which will unfortunately be covered up when construction work resumes this fall—*photos by Lucie Lambert*



Master Kim leads a meditation in the unfinished interior of the new building



Master Kim in the new building



... And after the meditation

Summer Retreat 2018



Master Kim and Sage Dunning (Son of Teresa and Joel)—photo by Teresa Dunning



Lucie's new art book, which she displayed at the retreat



**Kim Hedegaard walks the microcosmic orbit—
photos by Lucie Lambert (unless otherwise marked)**



Rebecca Newhouse takes a break



**Maria Kim prepares spring onions for another of
her delicious Korean meals**



**Christine, Paul, and Rich play Jerry's sculpture
drums**



Don Zickefoose enjoys his lunch



Circle dancing (Teresa Lenzen's big smile)—photo by Teresa Dunning



Group shot—photo by Shirley Walesch

Promotions

Won Ki Dan Boup Level III (Blue belt)

Ron Walesch, Montpelier

Joel Dunning, Nebraska

Won Ki Dan Boup Level I (Red Belt)

Shirley Walesch, Montpelier

Rebecca Newhouse, Montpelier

Keon Kon Dan Boup (Yellow belt)

Monica Erickson, Nebraska

Jung Ki Dan Boup II (White/yellow belt)

Michelle Keller, Nebraska

Retreat Schedule

Fall Retreat 2018

October 5-8

Barnet, VT

January Retreat 2019

January 3-6, 2019

White Memorial Conservation Center

Litchfield, CT

Spring Retreat

May 24-27

Barnet, VT

Summer Retreat 2019

9-day retreat: July 26-August 4

5-day retreat: July 30-August 4

3-day retreat: August 1-4

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/>.



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:

www.sundo.org

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

Sign up to receive Sun Do News via email at www.sundo.org.

You may also e-mail questions to us through the website.

Find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Sundo.Healing/>

Editor and producer:
Betsy Forrest

Thank you!

Last summer we printed a list of donors to the new building fund, so this newsletter is listing people who have donated since last summer. We thank all of our donors, who have made the new building possible. Here is the list in order by date of donation:

Brian Quirk
Stanley Szczabrowski
Stan Baker
Sharon Meigs
Lucie Lambert
Kim Family
William Crossman
William Martin
Nina Sakun
Rich Kramer
Diana Dunning
Linda Ingram-Jasa
Michelle Keller
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Dana Grisham
Tora Strawderman
Roy Bushman
Joel&Teresa Dunning
Don Zickefoose
Nebraska Center
Alina Viele
Betsy&Rick Barstow

And a special thanks to our ongoing donors:

Ginger Hobbs
Diane Matta
Teresa Lenzen
Andreea&Florin Serbanescu