

Sun Do Centers

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Sun Do NEWS

WORLD KOUK SUN DO SOCIETY • NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
WINTER 2010, VOL. 26, ISSUE 1

Dear Members,

I take a breath and bring it in
I take it deep and hold it in
And while I sit and while I wait
I find a gate and peer within
I find this peace wakens my fate
I take a breath and hold it in

—PHILIPPE LEWKOWICZ, BOUP SA BO

Sun Do Yellow Belt Essay

By Susannah Tedesco White

*To get there
you must first realize
you are there,
and everything you need,
want or desire
is moving towards you.*

—Lao Tzu

In stillness, in breath, I find calm assurance in the very momentary sense of being present... simply.

Entering my third year of Sun Do, there is serenity in the flow of practice that meets my sense of place in day-to-day life. While there is the practice of postures, breathing, and meditation, there is also the effectual flow of energy and resilience that we carry on and out into the world by way of practice. I experience this in my day-to-day interactions with other people and environment.

Breath is essential to all life. The cycles of transformation and creation are flowing always in the movement of Breath. The mountains, the wind, the water, all are breathing in the course of time.

My Practice in Sun Do at times feels distant from the essence of tancheon. My mind may wander to other times, places, daydreams, and some days experiencing anxiety, fear, or confusion, the spiral breath is not so strong inside me. The pace of modernity is fast; the day-to-day life is often complicated, rushed, and disjointed from the simple life-affirming breath.

For me, Sun Do is a way to step away from the age of modernity

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World Kouk Sun Do Society

Master Hyunmoon Kim
(Boup Sa Nim)

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(Boup Sa Bo)
Ron Catabia
Tora Strawderman
Wendy Larman
Philippe Lewkowicz

Teachers

(Sa Bum Nim)
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Glenn Magnussen
Lucie Lambert
Virginia Platt
Betsy Forrest

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(Sa Bum Nim) Pauline White
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Brian Quirk Kevin O'Hanlon
Song-Am Min Anne Lee

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Kwang Lip Pang Christine Ucich
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Martin Kemple Ginny LeRossignol
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Peter Pagliaro Nicolas Tacchi
Heidemarie Heiss Phalin Yoeurng
Holmes Sanne Briggs
Stephen Holmes

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Tae Won Kim Thierry Veil
Mina Kim Sheila Pfeifer
Young June Kim Nadine Bennett
Tony Petrosky Alexander Wolf
Patrick Studley Joel Dunning
John Antonucci
Erik Spears



Nora Downey at January retreat in Litchfield.
Photo courtesy of Virginia Platt.

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and simply be present in the moment. This continues to challenge my practice, but I do feel forward progress in finding this momentary place of calm; and, during the course of my day, I remind myself of spiral breathing to dissipate emotional heaviness or regain balance.

In the past several months I have been able to sense my tancheon in a deeper way, actually feeling the internal energy in my body. I have experienced the forward outward flow of tancheon energy from myself to another. The transfer of directed energy as communicated to an animal, flowing water, a shooting star, the wind. Perhaps this is a sort of language that we humans have largely forgotten, but can with some practice regain. It's a sort of primordial sense shared by all life. I often ask questions to the wind and she answers. I have full faith in this way of communication and actually believe it is key to gaining a true sense of balance, connection, and place in the times we are facing.

Harnessing the flow of energy, collective spirit, and power of unity

are to me the ultimate power of breathing meditation in a group. I have definitely felt this sense strong at our fall Sun Do retreat among the group, a beautiful thing to experience with everyone. This is especially true and present in the early morning practice. Our first communications of the day are through breath, not words, and the rhythm is in unison. Sun Do can be a sacred practice in this way. That we all could allow the space to be free from judgment, differences, or conflict, and unify our simple task of breathing, and in this way we are surely alive. Truly, there are few things more important than breath.

Sun Do is one path that embodies a practiced means of breathing. Our postures are still, yet changing. Our breath is carried out into the collective energy of the universal life beat. Perhaps this is the antidote to destructive forces at play.

I promise myself to carry this breath with me, and send it out into the world, a sort of dream and prayer for balance and healing for all life.

Susannah Tedesco White practices in Lillooet.



Master Kim checks Ruth Hermida's breath at the January East Coast retreat. Photo courtesy of Virginia Platt.

2010 Retreat Schedule

Retreats @ Barnet Retreat Center 802-748-3667
(unless otherwise specified)

Spring Retreat

Friday, May 28 to
Monday, May 31

Summer Retreat

9 days: Friday, July 30 to
Sunday, August 8
5 days: Tuesday, August 3 to
Sunday, August 8
3 days: Thursday, August 5 to
Sunday, August 8

Fall Retreat

Friday, October 8
Sunday, October 11

Registration:

Regular Retreats: \$80/day
\$10/day discount if paid two weeks
in advance.

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



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 betsyforrest@myfairpoint.net. You can snail mail contributions to her address below:

Betsy Forrest
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Website

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

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

Editor
Betsy Forrest

NEWSLETTER DESIGN
In the Woods Design Studio
Lake Placid, NY

Promotions

Won Ki Dan Boup I
(Red Belt)
Ruth Hermida (St. Johnsbury)

Keon Kon Dan Boup
(Yellow Belt)
Teresa Dunning (Nebraska)

Jung Ki Dan Boup II
(White Belt with Yellow Stripe)
Donna Hanson (Nebraska)
Steven Benintendi (Ohio)

Southern California Retreat 2010: Mud & Soak!

By Ginny LeRossignol

The 2010 retreat was well-attended by many Sun Do community members, from Florida to the Northern seaboard to the Midwest to Canada. Due to inclement weather in various parts of the nation, some retreat attendees experienced travel challenges and late arrivals, and then were faced with the rainiest season Southern California has experienced in decades. There was even a trip made into town during free time to buy umbrellas.

The wet weather did not deter practitioners, who repeatedly slogged from the guest house to the practice hall, and participated in workshops with enthusiasm and enjoyed the fireplace lounge and meals in the adjacent homey dining hall in between. Once the weather cleared on Saturday, we were welcomed with a sweeping view of the snow-capped San Bernardino Mountain Range. Some retreat attendees borrowed swim-suits from the Glen Ivy Community Lost and Found to go over to the Mud Spa & Natural Hot Springs during free time. There was even a mini-"gala" Saturday night as Glen Ivy community members handed out lyrics for a sing-along. We also enjoyed a movie night, "The Yogi's of Tibet," with a follow-up discussion on Sunday.

Stanley from Hartford Center made it out for his first SoCal retreat, as did Pauline who flew out with Master Kim and entertained us with tales of living in Korea. Tora's new Florida student Ahmed also

attended his first official Sun Do retreat, and East Coast folks may meet him in Vermont this summer. We were grateful for the attendance of our mid-western hermit contingent: Kim, Roy, Joel, and Teresa. (Missing you, Brother Al!) Wendy Larman brought Sheila with her from Canada, and they wore their sandals, rain or shine. The Glen Ivy Community was well represented with Bill Crosman, who was joined by fellow Glen Ivy residents, former residents, and interns. The L.A. Sun Do practitioners rounded out the crew.

Many thanks to our beloved Glen Ivy liaisons Bill and Wendy Crosman for helping make the retreat possible. Great big thank you's to Tora and Wendy for leading informative workshops, and of course, to Master Kim for his teachings and practice support. One Saturday workshop attendee who practices in Torrance, CA said she learned a great deal in the Sun Do Clinic and was very grateful for that.

We will keep everyone posted about next year's dates. Join us in lovely Glen Ivy for a memorable winter Sun Do retreat, Southern California style!

Ginny LeRossignol practices in LA.



January 2010 California retreat, photo courtesy of Roy Bushman

Conscious Evolution Class Reflections July 16, 2009

By Amy Lafond

I walked away from Master Kim's Sun Do studio feeling reassured that I'm on the right path in seeking answers to life's Big Questions, yet humbled as I am reminded of how far I have to go. In the following paragraphs I have summarized my understanding of Sun Do Taoism and how its philosophy can lead to conscious evolution.

Master Kim described Sun Do as "Korean yoga," and defined yoga as "an Indian expression of Taoist practice." He outlined the nine stages a practitioner passes through to realize Enlightenment. These stages became clearer to me as he discussed Sun Do's Core Principle using the analogy of a

candle: our bodies are the wax, our minds are the wick and our spirit is the flame. The stages are as follows:

BODY – Jung gak Do

1. Centering (finding Ego)
2. Heaven and earth (looking up and down to gain perspective)
3. Original energy (source)

MIND – Mastering Ki-energy

4. True energy (unconscious self)
5. Heaven/earth/human being Union (redefine who we are)
6. Creation (understanding how I fit into creation)

SPIRIT – Union

7. Cleansing (reaching even deeper you will find...)
8. No attachment (which leads to...)
9. Emptiness

Master Kim emphasized that while a Sun Do practitioner cannot avoid passing through these stages, they are not linear; the stages are circular and can happen in any order or combination. The Core Principle allowed me to see that spirit is an outcome of body and mind, and that it is something we form in our daily life. Spirit is in constant creation! One must discipline the body to work with the mind, and

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Bill Downey and Cape Cod friends try their hand at acrobatics at the January retreat. Photo courtesy of Christine Ucich.

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in Sun Do there are different postures to bring about different states of mind. One must concentrate the mind to allow spirit to unveil itself, and a Sun Do practitioner uses visualization and imagery practices in order for spirit to emerge.

Master Kim asked, "What is conscious evolution? How can meditation play a role in evolution?" I have to admit I felt like the student in my own classroom who averts her eyes when she doesn't know the answer! What a tough question. The answer I like to the first question, for which I cannot take credit but don't know who said it,

is "bringing the unconscious into consciousness." Actually, it wasn't spoken in response to the question, but I found it to be a fitting definition. And as for the latter, I think meditation teaches us how to listen to spirit that is all around us all the time: meditation teaches us to detach from thinking of things as good or bad and accept things for what they are. Master Kim said, "Sun Do seeks to dim the light of the senses, to let the darkness come in to dim judgment."

I was really moved by the way Master Kim described breathing as life forming inside of you with every inhalation and giving birth with every exhalation, that "breath gives life." Conscious evolution is a

transformation in which enduring pain is part of the process. There are four manners in which we breathe, and Sun Do practice is all about breathing very low in the abdomen, from the earth. Much like a woman breathes when she is in labor, it is very primal. The four manners in which we breathe are:

- Throat/Nose breathing
- Chest breathing
- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Tancheon breathing (Sun Do practice)

The higher the breathing in the body, the healthier it is, as air

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Heidi helps prepare a meal at the January East Coast retreat. Photo courtesy of Virginia Platt.

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remains trapped, creating bad energy. The lower the breathing in the body, the more breath gives life and this creates good energy. I learned that every time we are frightened, scared, or worried we hold our breath, but we have to release it eventually. We hold it, and most of the time we don't know how to release it in a healthy way. Sun Do practice helps you to do this, to avoid chaos in your life and to better manage your life by releasing bad energy and breathing in good energy. Sun Do can lead to conscious evolution by creating less conflict and more peace in the world. Sun Do allows you "to understand human being better."

The presentation was concluded with a discussion of the Sun Do perspective of Enlightenment. It seems that this perspective has three main points:

1. No complaining
2. Take responsibility
3. Recognize your shadow and endure the pain.

As far as my understanding of the Sun Do perspective of Enlightenment allows me to see, what I have found is there is no short cut to Enlightenment, yet it is available to anyone who chooses to look inward to find it. Answers don't lie somewhere else; they lie within. We constantly pass the blame by assuming that other people take responsibility for us or that our fate lies in the hands of God, but responsibility lies solely within us. When this philosophy is embraced, one realizes that complaining about life's situations becomes moot. I think that understanding the Sun Do perspective of Enlightenment and knowing Enlightenment are incomparable. To know Enlightenment one has to dig through all of the ugliness and pain

to come through the other side; whatever Enlightenment is, it must be worth the work.

I, for one, see myself as being at stage two of the nine stages of Enlightenment, and since I have been with the CE class, perhaps I've hit upon stage three. To be honest, I am afraid to be honest with myself, and digging deep into my unconscious is perhaps the most frightening thing a person can do willingly. It was only after enduring the physical pain of two cesarean sections, and the reality of being responsible for two lives other than my own, that I realized I was stronger than I thought I was. I started to think, "If I don't learn to take responsibility for myself, how can I be responsible for my children?" I started to question things that I had always taken for granted and didn't like some of the answers I found. In the last four years I have done a lot of soul searching and found that even I have come to believe that the many masks I wear are real. Removing the masks is an uncomfortable, often shameful, task, but in time I hope to reach as far inward as possible and to evolve into the best possible version of myself so that I have everything to give. I am so appreciative of Master Kim for having us come to his studio and for giving a truly "enlightening" presentation of Sun Do practice.

Amy Lafond was a participant in Master Kim's Conscious Evolution class described by Christine Ucich in the last newsletter. Conscious Evolution is an accredited graduate program offered by the Graduate Institute in Bethany, CT. Chuck Silverstein, a W. Hartford Sun Do practitioner, is the Conscious Evolution Program Coordinator.