



# Sun Do News

**Fall 2025**

Volume 41, Issue 3

## Book Review

**On the Fundamental Taoist Theory and Discipline of an Ancient Practice**

**By Jeonghwan Choi**

Taoist Master Hyunmoon Kim's *Sundo: An Ancient Taoist Breathing Meditation — Journey toward Enlightenment* (Poil Publishing, 2025) reads like the careful work of a teacher who refuses easy answers. Kim is both a lineage holder—sanctioned by the hermit Chung San—and a scholar who holds a Ph.D. (Psychology in Philosophy) from Saybrook University. That dual authority allows him to preserve the transmission's integrity while translating practice into clear, teachable, evidence-informed steps.

## A Poem for Sundo

A poem for Sundo?  
How about the one we write  
Everyday with our bodies?

You can look inside  
And read the phrases  
That aren't here.

You know the meters  
The rhythm,  
You can sense  
Exactly where it rhymes.

Just circle in.  
Sink and  
Soften.

Just resonate.

A poem for Sundo?

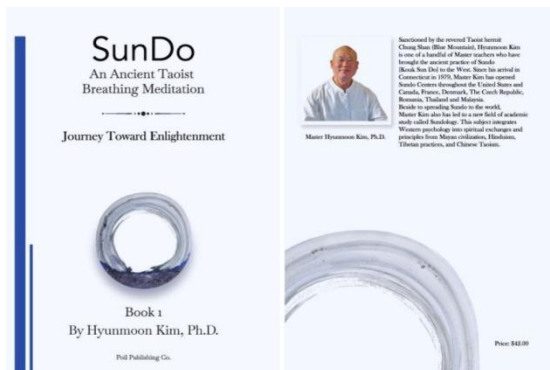
How about the one we write  
With our energy-  
Every single moment?

--Associate Master Virginia Platt

The work is presented in two complementary volumes. The first situates Sundo within Taoist cosmology—outlining yin–yang, five-element theory, and the internal-alchemy frame that underpins practice—while the second turns decisively to method: progressive exercises, breathing forms, and the basic, mid, and advanced stages of Sundo practice. Dr. Kim's instruction is exacting yet compassionate; he details what to do with body and breath and, equally important, why those actions support attention, emotion regulation, and sustained transformation. Safety-minded notes and clear explanations of movement principles recur throughout, making the book suitable for independent study without sacrificing responsible guidance.

This is neither lightweight spiritualism nor arid scholarship; it is humane pedagogy. The book's orderly progression, explicit safety cues, and dialogue between tradition and modern psychology make it useful for therapists, researchers, and committed practitioners alike. Rendering difficult classical terminology into accessible contemporary language is an added strength: instructors and recommenders can now point to concrete theoretical and practical reasons to try the practice.

As someone who has practiced and researched Sundo for nearly 25 years and who teaches human resource management and talent development at a U.S. business school, I can say this book has had a substantive impact on both my practice and my scholarship. In particular, the clear exposition of the principles behind the Tong Ki Beop (통기법) advanced stages, the practical cautions for safe practice, and the delineation of core changes and aims make it far easier to systematize training and to recommend the practice to others with confidence. Translating dense, classical phrasing into modern language also enables me—and other teachers—to present Sundo with solid theoretical and practical grounding.



*To order Master Kim's books, please use the links below:*

**In North America:**

<https://www.sundointernational.com/sundo-books.html>

**In Korea and Asia:** <https://sundo.org/>

**In Europe:** <https://sundo.ro/>



Master Kim signs Jeonghwhan's copies of his books

Overall, this book honors its lineage while uniting modern reflection with practical guidance. For newcomers to Sundo, Dr. Kim's clear, step-by-step instructions and explicit safety cues make a careful, reliable entry point; for experienced practitioners, the text deepens theoretical understanding and offers a useful framework for reviewing and refining one's practice. Reading it naturally evokes the curiosity to "try it for myself," yet always from a stance of precaution and seriousness rather than novelty. Generous in scope and measured in tone, the book will appeal beyond the Sundo community—to those engaged in meditation, yoga, or other mind-body practices, as well as to philosophers, psychologists, and educators—anyone seeking an authentic, well-grounded presentation of traditional practice adapted to contemporary needs. I confidently recommend it as a thoughtful, practicable guide to the core of authentic Sundo.

*Jeonghwan Choi practices in Maine and is an Associate Professor at the University of Maine.*

## What I Have Learned

By Murray Howe

When I typically look at "what I have learned" I would focus on the mental side of things. With Sundo the mental experiencing is important; however the physical learning is also very important. The other interesting aspect of "my learning" is the interrupted teaching from two different instructors, Master Sunim whom I met in 1991 and Master Kim whom I met in 2019. I will focus on Master Kim's instructions and the learnings since I began with him six years ago.

Six years ago I met Master Kim and told him about prior experiences, including a Kundalini opening (or partial opening) that had occurred many years prior. I had not spoken to many people about this for many, many years and when my words came out they were halting,

confusing, and apologetic-sounding to my ears. Master Kim somehow seemed like a safe person for me to speak to about his. When he suggested that I not hide this and speak to others about my experiences, I felt more than a little hesitant.



A day or two later Master Kim invited me to speak of my experiences to the group while we were in the practice room. I took a deep breath and told my story. I felt an unburdening when I told Master Kim, and now I felt a further unburdening as I told the other participants. I was on a bit of a high from this feeling of release until a few days later when Master Kim asked me what I wanted from Sundo (?). I felt an immediate crash to earth as I realized I had no good answer to this question. I felt like a fraud since I didn't seem to have any mental or physical reasons for my wanting to learn. After a few tears and conversations, I realized that although I didn't know why I was there...I was there. I didn't know why I wanted to continue learning, but I did want to continue. This was good enough for me.

Life and Covid happened. It was five years before I made it back to Vermont and the Sundo center. In those five years I sank into the breathing and cycled through the first three sets of postures. I was also doing meditation and Wim Hof breathing. What I learned from Sundo is difficult to say without mentioning Wim Hof and Meditation. Wim Hof breathing really directed me to focus on physical sensations and noticing more and more subtle sensations. My meditation/praying/letting go

allowed my mind to put things into ideas and beliefs. Where Wim Hof is, for me, an unstructured form of breathing in and letting go, Sundo for me has structure in the breathing and postures, as well as an almost indescribable sense of letting go and sinking into each and every moment.

In my daily life I would notice a desire to sink into physical sensations as I walked along, shifting away from thoughts and focusing on my body sensations. For a while my mind would again and again kick in with thoughts/comparisons of the sensory experiences I was noticing, and would form judgements and more thoughts about the meaning of each sensation I focused on. I soon noticed that although these thoughts were about sensations and not about finances or romances or any other thing I might focus on, they were still thoughts (no better or worse than any other thought). The more I practiced sensory awareness, the more I noticed that there is an "I" that has freedom and choice. This is not the egoical "I" that my mind holds as who I am; this "I" is a formless/undefined/something/ nothingness that is my true foundation.

The idea that formlessness is a foundation appears to be a conundrum. This confusion is compounded by the awareness that the proof/evidence that we judge our experiences with is within the physical and/or mental realms. For scientific proof we focus on physical reproducibility, and for the egoical "I" we have our own truths based on our thoughts and emotions. The "I" that I am referring to is aware of the scientific and egoical truths, but is not bound by them. Knowing that we are the awareness of any experience and not something that is formed by, and held hostage by, any experience is true liberation. This does not mean that thoughts and emotions don't appear; it means that thoughts, emotions, and physical experiences will rise and fall, but what I truly am is unharmed in any way. As I settle into this, my mind has a resting emptiness that continues to this day. This is not to imply that I

don't jump back into my stories (anger, fear, sadness...) when I engage with people or life; I do. I also get unhooked quickly since I remember who/what I really am. Then...back to emptiness.

Maybe two or three paragraphs back is where you could watch my friends eyes glaze over as they try to listen to my ramblings. I am speaking about unbelievable freedom, and yet to them I might as well be repeating the weather reports for the past six months. So, rather than drone on about the absolute freedom that we are, I will shift back to Sundo.



**Morning circle at summer retreat**

Over time I quit fighting the other sensations that arose when my focus drifted away from my chosen target. In my Sundo practice, my intention is focused on breathing in and out of my tantien. When I become aware of tension in my back, or perhaps energy in my arms or legs, I would not fight or judge or explain; I simply let the sensations arise and fall in their own time (treating them as not important) and allow myself to sink into my tantien. Not trying to imagine the tantien or make up stories about it, but rather sink into the feeling of it even when there seems to be nothing to feel. Realization came that what I am really sinking into is my intention and nothing physical at all. I realize that speaking about sinking into "intention" may be a very intangible concept, so I will also mention how I am breathing physically.

With my in breath I have the intention of breathing up from my feet into the area below my belly button. With the exhale I have slight tensing of muscles in my lower stomach and lower back. After the first round of inhale/exhale, I notice more fully the expansion of my lower stomach and lower back with my



inhale. My exhale has slight tensing of the muscles of both abdomen and back. The area of the back seems to be more of my focus since it has been a more neglected area over the past years of my breathing practice.



**Promotion ceremony at summer retreat. Murray is the tall man in the white shirt and pants.**

Initially when I began Sundo breathing I would allow my stomach to swell with the in-breath and shrink on the out-breath. Six years ago Master Kim introduced the idea of noticing not only how the belly expanded on the inhale but also how the back did as well. This novel idea had me placing equal emphasis on the back expanding and then shrinking back on the exhale. The next shift in my breathing began last year when he had me pay attention to lightly tensing the abdomen on the exhale. Prior to this I was not trying to tense on the exhale. It made sense to me that if there was to be slight tightening of abs on the exhale, there should also be a slight tensing of the back muscles as well. As I worked with this unfamiliar sensation I realized (after several months of practice) that I could tense my back muscles not just at the area where I had focused on my abs tensing, but at a very low spot around the base of the spine. With this low back tension (on the exhale) I noticed a corresponding tightening on the low front part of my pelvis. Once I had achieved this low tensing while exhaling, I noticed the following inhale was automatically in my lower stomach with no effort. I am not suggesting this is the proper way to perform Sundo breathing, but it has helped immensely with my breathing. I am doing the second set of

postures, and previously difficult postures such as the plank and lifting upper body and legs while on my stomach are so much easier due to this ability to tense the very low back and abs (on exhale) and much lower breath on inhale.

After 34 years of practice I am happy to see how much I have changed in the last six years, and how at 64, I am currently in the best days of my life. In part this is due to Sundo. I am thankful to Master Kim for his ongoing guidance and to the rest of the community whom I have felt much supported by. Also Mrs. Kim for her tireless cooking and kitchen work.

Many thanks

*Murray Howe practices in Vancouver, Canada*

## Summer Retreat



**Group at the Rock Garden**



**Mrs. Kim's excellent food**



## Book Signing at Summer Retreat



Master Kim with his books



Master Kim signs Kim's copies

## Memorial Service for Sungja Kim (Master Kim's sister)



The procession to the top of the hill



Planting a tree in Sungja's memory



The young tree

## Workshops at the Summer Retreat



Mina Kim's art workshop



Stan Baker's tai chi workshop

## Promotions

**Joong Ki Don Boup II**  
Murray Howe (Canada)

**Keon Kon Don Boup**  
Ben Shanbrom (New Haven, CT)

**Won Ki Don Boup II**  
Liz Culligan (New Haven, CT)

## Upcoming Retreats & Events

### Fall Retreat

October 10-13, 2025  
Sundo Retreat Center  
Barnet, Vermont, US  
Led by Betsy Forrest & Local Teachers  
[www.sundointernational.com](http://www.sundointernational.com)

### Co-hosting Sundo Academic Conference

October 31, 2025  
Silaeal Cultural Center  
Kyungju City, South Korea

### 21st European Retreat

November 13-16, 2025  
Sundo Retreat Center  
Bran, Romania  
Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim  
[www.sundo.ro](http://www.sundo.ro)

### Sundo Fall Retreat in Korea

November 28-30, 2025  
Korea Traditional Cultural Center  
Gongju, South Korea  
Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim

### New Year's Day Retreat

January 8-11, 2026  
Moenkopi Legacy Inn & Suites  
Tuba City, Arizona, US  
Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim  
[www.sundointernational.com](http://www.sundointernational.com)

### 22nd European Retreat

April 16-19, 2026  
La colline de Sion: Historical landmark in  
Vaudemont  
Nancy, France  
Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim

### Korea Trip

(12 days, 13 nights)  
A Pilgrimage to Sundo Lineages  
May 5-18, 2026



## Donations are always welcome!

**Any donations received will help to finish the basement of the Meeting House. We hope to raise \$30,000.**

### **Ginger Hobbs 1939-2025**



Our friend and Sun Do member will be fondly remembered and missed.

*Ginger was such a great Sundo member and teacher! We always had great times heading down to CT for retreats, stopping at museums along the way! Her passion and work for the underprivileged and democracy was so strong and inspiring to see!—Jerry Geier*

*I've always treasured our trip together to Korea in 2001—Wendy Larman*

*Learn about Ginger's life:*

<https://www.sevendaysvt.com/life-lines/obituary-virginia-aileen-ginger-hobbs-1939-2025/>



**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](mailto:bforrest777@gmail.com).

**Website:** <https://sundo.org/>

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

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



**Teachers**