



# Sun Do News

**Fall 2026**

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## **An Unexpected Return**

**By Eleanor Kinsey**

Many months ago, I was looking through a photobook by Chanho Park called, "Return: Korean Rituals of Death, Spirits, and Ancestors," and was feeling acutely aware of how disconnected I felt from my Korean heritage. Sure, I could make my own *tteokguk* (rice cake soup) for the Lunar New Year and often brought *japchae* (glass noodle stir-fry) to potlucks, but aside from a good cry watching another k-drama, there wasn't much in my daily life that supported the deeper connection I had always longed for. My parents had recently moved from my childhood home in Nebraska to Wonju, South Korea, and I was on the hunt for ways to explore my "Korean half" even more. One idea that came to mind was to look for Korean Qigong practices. I have been a Qigong instructor for fourteen years, and I thought, "There have to be Korean practices out there." So, I literally plugged "Korean Qigong practices" into Google and SunDo was at the top of the list. Within minutes, I was staring at SunDo's

## **Dear Sundians,**

From sacred caves  
in the mountains of Korea,  
the Sundo tradition arose.  
For three decades,  
its ancient spirit rested and  
ripened  
among the quiet woods  
of the Sundo Retreat Center.  
Now, after a long season  
of silence and incubation,  
the eggs have hatched,  
and Clear Clouds Hermitage  
is born—  
a sacred refuge,  
a spiritual womb  
where the soul may awaken,  
be transformed,  
and be born anew.

--Master Hyunmoon Kim

website, jaw agape as I realized that the retreat center was only an hour away from my home. It felt serendipitous, and it wasn't long before I had purchased the instruction video on how to do the 5 Element Exercises (Ki Shin Boup) from the website.

Fast forward to this past spring, when I was having the very surreal experience of sitting on Master Kim's floor in Yesan with my husband, parents, aunt, and uncle. Part of me couldn't quite believe I was getting the honor and opportunity of the visit. Master Kim had never met me before, and I still hadn't practiced anything beyond the Ki Shin Boup video. Yet, there we were. Master Kim started talking about how we were all karmically connected,

and as he continued to talk about that connection, I had the rather mystical sense that I was being shown how SunDo was already woven into the fabric of my life. It felt so true that I didn't even question it. It felt like I was supposed to be there and the next steps were already laid out for me. That's how I signed up for my first five-day SunDo Retreat.



**Master Kim helps Eleanor refine her Ki Shin Boup form at the summer retreat**

I arrived at the retreat curious about the practice, but what surprised me first was how familiar and comfortable everything felt. Despite being unsure about what I was supposed to be doing and quickly realizing I should have packed my camping gear, I felt grounded and calm as I sat at a table with Master Kim, Mrs. Kim, and their daughter, Mina. The familiar smell of seaweed soup and the sight of bapsang (Korean tables) leaning up against the wall made me relax even deeper into my chair. I was slowly introduced to people, and each person was so present and welcoming.

I immediately felt at home, like I was at a family gathering from my childhood, and that feeling continued throughout the entire retreat.



**Making spring rolls at summer retreat**

The following morning, as we all sat in silence in the candlelit practice room, I felt a combination of curiosity and presence. Virginia had introduced me to the breathing postures the day before, so I felt at least a little prepared for what was to come. As we began, I oscillated between the process of learning the exercises and sinking into the experience of them. I was attentively observing how each exercise was performed while simultaneously enjoying the way they felt in my body and how they were affecting my mind and energy. As we twisted left and right, I relished the sensation of being wrung out like a wet towel. When we reached for our toes, one leg bent in a figure four position, I was suddenly reminded of watching my brother lead the rest of his Tang Soo Do class in stretches, yelling, "*hana, dul, set, net.*" My body was coming alive from its sleepy state, and I was already feeling good.

Then, the breathing postures began, and I fell into a trance of both body and mind.  
Move and Breathe.  
Move and Breathe.  
So simple.



**Meditating in a posture during a Sun Do practice**

I could feel the fascia of my lower abdomen adjusting to the expansion of my breath, and like bellows breathing life into a fire, the energy in my body steadily increased. By the end, I felt incredibly clear, steady, and restored. When we began moving our bodies again, I was amused by how giddy I felt moving in ways that reminded me of how I used to organically “roll around” as a child. It was altogether invigorating.

My body had already decided that it liked SunDo. Later that night, my analytical mind wanted to understand why. So, I couldn’t help but think about it through the lens of what I have learned and practiced over the years. In my work, I have had the pleasure of practicing

and teaching multiple modalities that honor the synergy of body and mind, science and spirituality, East and West. As I lay in my tent listening to the crickets, I found myself ticking through the benefits I was already noticing in SunDo. The variety of positions and movements supported the creation and reinforcement of neural pathways while also promoting the flow of energy through the meridian channels and strengthening and opening the body. I thought about what 80 minutes of coherent, balanced, continuous breathing was doing to my nervous system, my heart, my energy, and my mind. I even wondered about the coherence we were creating as a group, and how practicing together might contribute to such a strong, connected community. The more I thought about it, the more SunDo seemed to bring together so many things I had already come to value through other practices. So, that first night, as I was falling asleep, I knew I was falling in love with SunDo.

As the days moved on and I sank deeper into the practice, I noticed a couple of other things. The first was that sometime around the final five postures of Joong Ki Don Boup, I was unintentionally dropping into an altered state of consciousness. I was experiencing what I can only describe as “remote viewing.” This state wasn’t new to me, but I was fascinated to note that it was happening consistently. The second thing I noticed was a steadiness in my emotional and mental state. I felt so clear, grounded, and present. On one afternoon, I remembered some of the intense feelings I had been experiencing weeks prior, and I thought, “What the heck was I so upset about?” It felt like the SunDo practice had cleaned the remnants out of me so well that I honestly couldn’t recall the old thoughts and feelings. I thought of *The Body Keeps the Score* by Bessel van der Kolk and wondered if the SunDo practice had somehow catalyzed a system-wide letting go of the “score.” Whatever was happening, I felt good, and more at home within myself than I had felt in a while.

The in-depth clinics throughout the retreat helped me understand that SunDo was about much more than what happened during those hours of practice. Master Kim helped us refine the movements and postures, but he also continually related the practice back to life. I began to understand SunDo as Taoism in practice: a way of learning to meet life's challenges with grace and strength rather than resistance. I was especially struck by his invitation to discover what might happen if we truly devoted ourselves to one practice long enough to see what fruit it could bear, rather than continually reaching for the next practice or philosophy. The clinics led by the other Korean teachers were equally inspiring, giving us glimpses into more advanced practices and creative ways SunDo could continue to grow and be shared. I came away not only wanting to practice SunDo, but curious about what it might teach me if I stayed with it.



**Teacher Kim Jongsook leads a martial arts workshop**

More than anything, the most “at home” feeling I experienced came from being with the other “Sundians,” as I recalled Master Kim calling everyone in an email before the retreat. Every day, as we practiced together, ate together, and worked together, I couldn’t help falling in love with everyone. I was a newbie within a long-standing community, and I always felt welcome, accepted, and appreciated. I was also deeply inspired to be surrounded by so many people who had devoted themselves to SunDo for twenty or thirty years. Their dedication seemed to speak for itself; there was something powerful about seeing the fruits of the practice not only in what people said about SunDo, but also in the lives and community they had built

around it. I have never felt so comfortable so quickly, or had so much fun trying to figure out how to install a new floor in a circular building with not so much as a carpenter square! Somewhere in those five days, this group of strangers and the entire SunDo practice had stopped feeling like something I had found and started feeling like something I had returned to.

When I first typed “Korean Qigong practices” into Google all those months ago, I thought I was simply looking for another way to connect with my Korean heritage. I didn't know that search would lead me to Master Kim's floor in Yesan, or to five days of breathing, moving, eating, working, laughing, and practicing alongside a community of people who would so quickly feel like family. I had gone looking for something Korean that I could bring into my life. Instead, I found myself reconnecting with something that felt strangely familiar.

By the end of those five days, “home” seemed to mean something a little different to me. It was the familiarity of seaweed soup and *bapsang*. It was my brother's voice counting *hana, dul, set, net* somewhere in my memory. It was the steadiness I felt in my body after hours of breathing and movement. It was Korea and Vermont, something ancient and something new, my own history and a community I had only just met. Somehow, SunDo brought all of those things into the same place.

Maybe Master Kim was right about that karmic connection. Maybe SunDo had already been woven into the fabric of my life long before I knew what to call it. All I know is that I went to my first SunDo retreat hoping to deepen my practice and my connection to my Korean heritage, and I came away with something I hadn't known I was looking for: another place to call home.

*Eleanor practices in South Albany, VT, and has recently joined the Montpelier Center.*

## Just an Old Style Red Belt

By Roberta Franzl

Did the 1994 Korean Day Parade on October 1<sup>st</sup> really take place in NYC? And was the Zen Center Retreat in Providence, RI, completed in that same year? Isn't it still the summer retreat of 2006 or just maybe a few years later in 2009? When the new tool shed was fixed up with all the tools hanging in their proper places? And where a tall wooden face stood near the front road with the freshly minted, black and white Sun Do mailbox?

Didn't the main trailer have some type of running water system inside? Wasn't there a garden where vegetables were picked to be used that day? And after a meal, everyone had to lick their plates clean then add some water and drink it all down while finding a place to put a cup and utensils on a shelf?

And what about the outdoor shower that pumped out super cold water requiring condensed shower activities? So sure, there was a flat wooden tent platform close by and near the woods. Now where did it go?

What happened to the green waffle floor mats with first names written (with a black marker) at the bottom front of the mat? Weren't they brought into the practice hall for personal use? What became of the hopeful moment trying to find a partner to perform the duel back stretch after the cool-down session?

Didn't the back of a tee shirt have the expression: "One time practice better than a hundred times reading," or another style, the black one with a printed front of "Body by Sun Do"?

Lastly, where are the souls of the past practitioners? Did they *all make it* to the enlightenment stage before leaving? Are those still residing here proceeding fast forward (into the new millennium) making that same leap? Maybe, with a different format? Perhaps, this time calling it "finding spiritual infinity"?

At this 2026 summer retreat, there were many familiar faces and new ones too. Chung San's chant is still the recording of choice-unlike the "new" updated version which came out in 1999. There are the promotions and levels of certificates being distributed, all to attest that new blood is still circulating into the KSD system. The main practice hall maintains the founders' pictures. And they still look upon all in their timeless manner.

Yes, changes have taken place. Now, a new building is in place housing a full kitchen, dining room, and bathrooms. A movie night was part of the agenda. Cell phones with their long charging cords were connected to every available electrical wall outlet. There was even discussion about installing solar panels on buildings. When walking (for a night's event), the king of the road was the phone light. The hand-held flashlights had become obsolete, but still totally useful for those who still believe in a strong beam of light.



Roberta, Nicole, Virginia, and Eleanor

This retreat is a reminder that life had moved on, and only a backward glance is allowed. Maybe, after all these "short" years, it's a good sign to be able to show up to experience another retreat. However, getting out of the *new* three-season tent with its front lip plus two exit zippers can be a bit challenging at 4:30 am. Yet, it all comes with the seasoned statement, "I can do this."

*Roberta Franzl practices in New Jersey.*

## Summer Retreat 2026



Retreat group



Mina's art workshop



Jeonghwan's martial arts workshop



Working on the picnic tables



Meditation practice

### ***Reminder!***

*To be a Sun Do member, you must be paying dues to your local center or pay as a distance member.*

*Distance membership is \$200 per year, and you can pay here:*

[Membership](#)

*Thank you!*

**A special trip to Korea for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sundo in the city**

May 16 (Sun) – 27 (Mon), 2027

11 nights and 12 days

Trip fee \$1950 + airfare

Promotion and uniform fees apply

## **Promotions**

### **Qi Exercise Instructor**

Eleanor Kinsey (VT)

### **Jung Ki Don Boup II**

Grace Seo (Korea)

### **Keon Kon Don Boup**

Murray Howe (CA)

### **Won Ki Don Boup**

David Geise (MN)

### **Won Ki Don Boup II**

Sophie Glasser (MA)

## **Upcoming Retreats & Events**

### **Academic Conference**

Re-examining the Seven Martyrs of Hongiu  
Confucian School of 1884

Hanseu University, Seosan, Korea

October 2, 2026, 11:00-17:00

### **Fall Retreat**

Vermont Sundo Retreat Center

October 9-12, 2026

Led by Christine Ucich

### **23rd European Retreat**

Sundo Conference Center

Bran, Romania

[www.sundo.ro](http://www.sundo.ro)

November 19-22, 2026

### **Winter Retreat in Arizona:**

Moenkopi Legacy Inn & Suites

Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim

February 12-15 (Fri-Mon), 2027

**Donations to the Sundo organization are encouraged!**

**Donations will help keep our organization operating and will support our retreat center.  
All donations are tax deductible!**



**The Sundo Retreat Center is now open for solo retreats at the Meditation Hall or at the Hermitage Beginning Fall of 2026**

Stan Baker, acupuncturist and a Taoist practitioner for over 50 years, reserved the Hermitage for his solo mountain retreat from October 22-25, 2026.

Fee is by donation

For more information, please write to Master Hyunmoon Kim ([sundo219@hanmail.net](mailto:sundo219@hanmail.net)) for further guidance.



**Inside the meditation hall**



**Memorial walking meditation at the summer retreat**



**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/>

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