



Sun Do News

Summer 2023

Volume 39, Issue 2

Dear Sundian,

The 3 Hs:

Hopeful outlook

Helpful hands

Warm heart

Sound mind

----Master Tora Strawderman

Pilgrimage Home to Sun Do

By Wendy Larman

I'd been doing the practice for about 35 years, and then ran into a roadblock. I had to look after my husband, who was home with dementia for quite some time while he was waiting for a bed in a care home. To cope with this nightmare, I took tranquilizers (also called Benzodiazepines, as prescribed). I've asked myself why, as an experienced Sun Doer, I felt a need to do that. No answer comes to mind. It turns out this drug is to be taken for only 2-4 weeks, but my doctor didn't know that. So one develops tolerance withdrawal and keeps needing a higher dose.

When my husband finally got into care, I learned how difficult it is to get off this drug, even having to taper down and off over a couple of years. Instead, I was sent to detox where I was cut off in one day, being given a drug to prevent seizures. About 10-15 percent of people coming off this drug have long-term withdrawal symptoms. I guess because I have such a sensitive nervous system, I'm one of those. Unfortunately, it's unusual to find a doctor who knows much about this.

Now I've been free of the drug for over six years, yet still have some withdrawal symptoms on and off. Probably because of Sun Do, pain isn't one of them, as it is with many. My main symptoms: too revved up, hard time focusing, repetitious, intrusive thoughts, tense gut. Fear. Of never getting better. Of something else being wrong. The title for this situation: Benzodiazepine Induced Neurological Dysfunction (BIND).

The Sun Do group kept meeting right up until the pandemic, when we lost our room to practice in. Doing the practice with the group made my symptoms tolerable, but I seemed to lack motivation to do it at home by myself much. Instead, I explored other ways to feel better: Feldenkrais and Somatics brain/body work; body unwinding; being very careful about food sensitivities and foods high in histamine; sitting meditation; different ways of

breathing...humming.....lots of ideas out there and I kept exploring.

I've learned that quite often there's a surge of symptoms soon before the healing from BIND. I recently had an experience of a surge--couldn't sleep, just shook--and finally prayed for help--to whom or what I'm not clear. The notion came to me VERY insistently that I should go back to doing Sun Do every day.

So today is day one back to my tan tien, and I feel such IMMENSE relief. I've never done the practice in the morning before, except at retreats, because I've been a night person, but this is day one of doing it before breakfast--at the beginner's level. Though we're stiffer in the morning, and because I haven't kept the practice up, I sure felt my age (82)! But it felt so right! And later in the day, when I have the fearful thoughts and feelings in my head, I'll put my focus back on my tan tien. I remember years ago when speaking of my tan tien to a Sun Do pal, saying that I practically lived down there. So now I look forward to spending more time there. My craniosacral teacher spoke of our "inner physician." A good term for our tan tien. It's been with us all along.

My other unanswerable question is why it took me so long to get to this point. Maybe to explore very deeply into myself why I've often relied on things outside myself – medicines.... food.....other peoples' systems and ideas.....other peopledon't know. I note in a newsletter, on the subject of labyrinth, I wrote:

“Destination, the Center. Sometimes the Path Moves Away from the Center, on our Way”

Buddhist Proverb: “The Obstacle is the Path.”

But here I am, back home in Sun Do, so thankfully! Here to stay! And as if to celebrate, a book I ordered many months ago arrived today. The title: *Pilgrim*.

Wendy practices in Lillooet.



International Sun Do Association

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Hyunmoon Kim

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Instructors

Teresa Dunning	Barbara McCandless
Lucy Young	Heidemarie Holmes

My Summer Retreat Experience

By Soren Hedegaard

Simply put, kids usually aren't very interested in their parents' endeavors. Growing up, my mom (Associate Master Kim Hedegaard) would do SunDo every morning, and I'd sometimes join her for the warmups and then get on with my day. Now that I'm a bit older, I am beginning to really see how much SunDo has positively impacted and transformed my mom, so I've developed a genuine curiosity of the practice.

This year, I decided to attend the summer retreat in Vermont, and for the first time, make a self-willed effort to learn about the practice. I attended the full 9-day retreat and had a fantastic experience. During the mountain retreat, I was in awe of how much energy I had consistently throughout the day, despite waking up at 3:30 in the morning. I was a powerhouse-- full of energy and motivation! My body felt powerful and supple, and my mind was peaceful. It was truly a gift. These feelings extended into the rest of the week. Though the 500 morning big bows were a bit of a chore, I did miss them, because they showed me my strength, while also showing me my own fearful and nagging inner dialogue that could use some quieting. Essentially, to me, the bows presented a microcosm of embodied discipline and surrender. For that, I am very grateful.



Under the Lim Hyun Hee Meeting House sign, decorated by Soren with Jaffrey and Nicole (from Korea)

The week was full of activity. Special guest Seon Jeong, a talented Korean artist and dancer, also attended the retreat and hosted an exhibition. She blessed us with her beautiful dancing, and her paintings and drawings decorated the meditation hall. There were many interesting workshops, ranging from Patrick's mind-blowing mathematical Magic Square Taoism synthesis, to a group Galaxy Dance Therapy session with Seo Yujeong.



Group photo after Galaxy Dance Therapy Session

Greg's workshop on his California-based rehab/recovery center, Embodied Recovery, was particularly inspiring for me. To hear about such a fantastic, well-rounded recovery framework in action, and not just in theory, gave me so much faith in the direction of mental health interventions. Later in the week we honored the life of Master Kim's sister with a memorial ceremony out on the hill.



Memorial Ceremony for Master Kim's sister, Sungja Kim

Maria Kim, as always, cooked the most delicious food, so the new building was decidedly named the Lim Hyun Hee [her Korean name] Meeting House. Overall, the retreat was a powerful and inspiring experience for me, so much so that I am now looking forward to instructing SunDo in my home village of Ambleside, England, this year! Back home after the retreat, I attended some yoga classes at a local studio, and I realized that while yoga can be very helpful and healing, it doesn't nearly open up and balance the body like SunDo does. Along with that, yoga can be a potentially injury-prone activity, which I've experienced quite a bit myself. SunDo is equal parts gentle and powerful, which is why it is so incredible for everyone. Thank you and blessings to everyone for making the retreat so much fun! See you again

Soren practices in Ambleside, England.



Group photo after promotion ceremony



Betsy Barstow demonstrates a posture

Changes in Life--Again?

By Roberta Franzl

Just a bit late into the Sun Do practice hall, and someone else had “my” spot next the exposed brick wall. Like a ton of bricks falling out of that wall, it’s change again. Nothing seems to stay familiar and permanent. I don’t mind change when initiating a move, but not when it comes from outside forces. How to accept things happening with grace and fortitude?

The town was building a new police station behind the Sun Do building. The landlord was informed that all the trees (pine, maple, and crab apple) in the back yard needed to be cut down due to “security” issues. If not done, fines would be issued.

I planted many of those trees. The maple was allowed to grow from its own seed, but the pine (established many years ago) reached over two stories high. The crab flowering tree was a small, three-foot sale tree from Lowes. It had spread itself into three trunks and expanded to over ten feet in height. I was particularly attached to the pine tree. During extreme sadness, the pine tree had an easy circumference to wrap arms around. It was this tree that accepted all emotions and allowed the draining of sad feelings down to Mother Earth.



Then, one day, all these trees were gone. A tree company completed the removal in a

matter of a few hours. Again, a change took place in the back yard garden.

It wasn’t the event itself, but the layers of emotions and meanings associated with the event. The cutting down of the trees made some feelings surface: being fragile, annoyed about unexpected gardening work, general environmental grief, and a sense of being powerless. It seems most of life changes uncover all sorts of layers of hidden feelings. Now, how to turn down the emotional dial and witness in a different manner?



Understanding the connected emotions does help to release some of pain and suffering. And with the passage of time comes the ability to release these old attachments (also named as your bubble of reality) and gain another perspective. According to author Pema Chödrön, this new inner perspective is called “emptiness.” Where everything is *just as it is*, and nothing more.

Back to the seating in the practice room. As a creature of habit, the same spot in the practice hall was such a comfort. It was close to the baseboard heating, joyful especially during winter. There was a comfortable feeling of being well rooted in the space. This reality bubble was complete. But this is life, and changes take place. So, too, this reality bubble dissolved. However, allowing the self to experience *just as it is* can bring an appreciation of emptiness and even a bit of inner peace.

Roberta practices in New Jersey.

Weddings!



Lucie and Zoltan were married in March.

“The picture session was all improvised. We had a 10-minute gap to take pictures in daylight before 6:00 pm. We found a plum tree in pink bloom to stand under while waiting outside the courthouse for the wife of the judge to invite us in. It was raining, the umbrella was picked by Zoltan at the last minute among two others, but this one was perfect.

James Fearn, Zoltan's best friend, came with a magnet sticker, a gift of words by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke:

*You are not too old
It is not too late.”*

Lucie



Kim and David were married in August.

“Our wedding was on August 19 in Duluth, Minnesota. It was great to have the retreat two weeks earlier to help ground us. Soren was the wedding planner, photographer, and musician, and Jaffrey was also a musician and the sound guy. Jaffrey and Soren attended the retreat with us, which helped make all of the last-minute wedding planning and the wedding itself go more smoothly for everyone. And it also helped make it super fun and a great day. We all had healthy Qi energy flowing through us thanks to lots of Sundo at the retreat and continuing back at home afterwards.

Kim

Retreat Schedule

Columbus Day Retreat

Vermont Sundo Retreat Center

Oct. 6-9

Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim

All morning programs are as usual.

In the afternoon,

1:30-5:00 PM, 4 options:

1. Build a 3' x 8' oak wood dining table with a bench

Coordinator: Patrick Studley

2. Repair the yurt behind the kitchen trailer

Coordinator: Stephen Child

3. Chop wood for the fire

Coordinator: Rick Barstow

4. Enjoy Vermont foliage and sightseeing in the town of St. Johnsbury, including the science museum, cafe, vintage store, and more.



Romania Retreat

Bron, Romania

November 16-19

Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim

Coordinator: Florin Serbanescu

New Year's Retreat

Vermont Sundo Retreat Center

January 2-7, 2024

Led by Master Hyunmoon Kim

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.

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

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