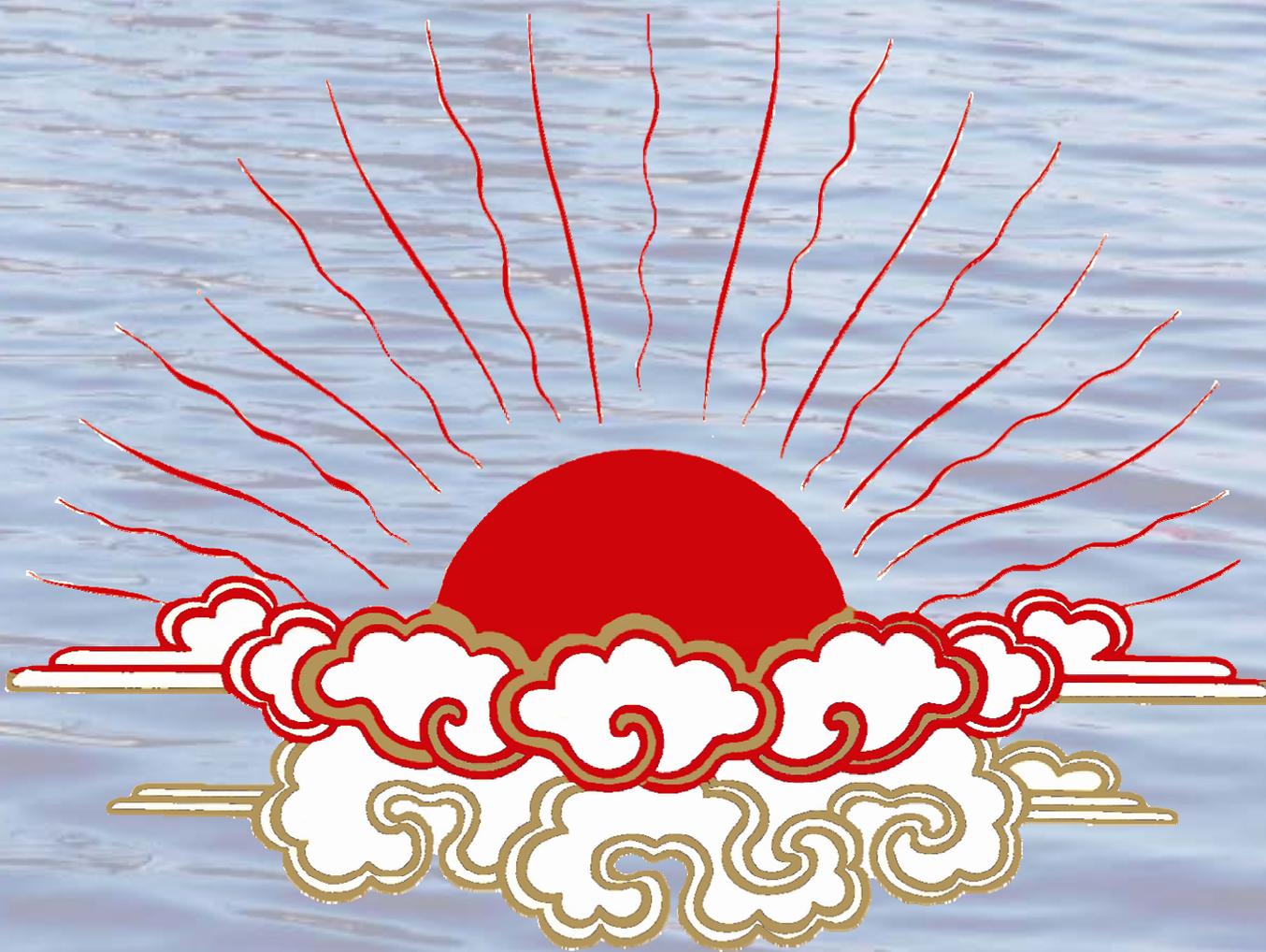


e Kum Nye



Level I - Lesson 1

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Step One: Relaxation

The three pillars of any spiritual practice, which appear in Kum Nye, are:

Relaxation, Meditation, and Concentration (*The Joy of Being*, p. 40)

Each of them contains skillful methods for transforming the qualities of our lives, energizing body & mind, dissolving obstacles to understanding, and awakening the full capabilities of human being. In this lesson we will be focusing on **Kum Nye Relaxation**.

The purpose of Kum Nye relaxation is to develop our body awareness. When we sit in stillness, we can cultivate mindfulness of our feelings and sensations, and eventually we can sense the flow of energy through our physical body.

When we recognize the flow of energy in the body, we learn that we are ongoing embodiments of energies. When we breathe in, we have energy to live. When we breathe out, all the residues leave the body. When we exhale for the last time, this life has come to an end. Meanwhile, the breath comes and goes, constantly changing us. We ARE change. This flowing energy is the nature of our being. Stress in the body and mind are signs that life's energy does not flow evenly throughout the body. Kum Nye yoga uproots these blockages and restores the smooth and even flow through our entire inner landscape.

Relaxation is the first step!

Feelings and Sensations

The key to both our internal integration and a balanced relationship with the world lies within our feelings and sensations.

Feelings and sensations are bodily experiences, like the wind in your hair, a hand on your shoulder, a trembling when you speak, a holding in your belly, pressure in your chest, a fluttering in your throat, the gasp you feel when the phone rings at night, the stillness before or after a storm. The content, however, is not the most important part. It is more important to notice that there are feelings and sensations, and to know that this is a way of talking about energy in the body.

Feelings and Sensations = Energy in the Body

Mindfulness of body and mindfulness of feelings are the foundation of this program.

All the exercises we will do are intended to *increase awareness of the body*, and to *stimulate feelings and sensations*.

So when you do the following exercises, focus on the body and the experience within, without judgment or evaluation. We want to learn to stop labeling and focusing on the content of our experience, but instead to use body awareness to experience the energies directly. Kum Nye gives us the tools to learn how to do this.

Daily Practice

The suggested practice time for this lesson will be 60 minutes. If you have more or less time to practice, you may perform the exercises for a longer or shorter duration (note the recommended durations in both the lesson and the books), or cut out an exercise if you must. Please try to devote enough time to the practice so that the focus of the lesson has time to come up in your experience
- certainly no less than 30 minutes.

The following slides will show you each of the exercises that are suggested for this lesson in the order to be practiced. Please read through each of them before you begin your practice. You may refer back to the book (*Kum Nye - A Tibetan Yoga*) to refresh your memory about each of the exercises before you perform them.

It is recommended that you write down the exercises and make notes for yourself so that you may perform your practice away from the computer after you have completed reading the lesson. This will be the best way for you to take in the exercises and the lesson material so that you can remain in the experience while you are practicing.

Please perform the practice once a day during the week if you can. Like any skill, your Kum Nye practice will improve with repetition. It is likely that your experience will be a little different each time, and you will learn something new. Make notes about your experience in a journal, recording any new thoughts, feelings, or insights that arise after each practice. If you can't practice every day, that's okay, but please try to do it as many times as possible.

Enjoy your practice, and remember:
relax and be aware of your body and your sensations, and do not label your experience.

1 - The Seven Gestures (10 min.)

Begin by taking on the seven gestures one by one. Always do them in order (refer to the book to refresh your memory). After you have paid attention to each gesture, *then* feel all the gestures as one posture. Even experienced Kum Nye practitioners should not skip that step; the Seven Gestures are our foundation.

In the beginning, stillness of the body is most important; encourage yourself to sit *through* the restlessness, without it becoming a physical strain. Always come back to the seven gestures.

Kum Nye – A Tibetan Yoga, pages 26-28.



2 - KN #15: Loosening Up (10 min.)

You can use the hand of the straight arm (the one resting on the knee) to pull your shoulder more forward, while your other hand slides up the thigh. Try to *feel* one shoulder being forward and the other shoulder being behind. Can you feel both shoulders at the same time? Hold the shoulders in this position for a while, before you move them back, in opposite directions. It should feel like you move around the spine as if it's an axel. The most important energy channels are located here.

The book suggests distributing any sensations you may experience to your whole body. However, let's try slowing things down: first, become aware of sensations, familiar with feelings. Next, try to feel them, not by observing them but by actually sensing them. The distribution will come later, once we enter the feelings. Remember, it is a practice: when your mind drifts off, kindly encourage yourself to return to performing (and feeling) the exercise. You can also do this exercise more casually; while working, for instance.

Kum Nye – A Tibetan Yoga, pages 155-156

3 - KN #4: Following Sensations (5 min.)

Exercise #4 Following Sensations is one of the exercises in Kum Nye that makes it a unique discipline - if you read about this exercise in the text (and this is also true for exercises #3 and #5), you will see that it provides very specific instructions on how to identify and follow your feelings and sensations. It also emphasizes how to pay attention to experience, not just the physical postures themselves. These instructions are somewhat advanced, so don't worry if you aren't able to put them all into practice the first time. Eventually it will come to you - that is why we practice. To set your intention to do it is enough. Make an effort to go through all the instructions, and review the instructions again the next time you practice, and gradually they will start to take on new meaning. It may help to break the instructions into steps as follows:

Step 1- Locate - Where is there a sensation? Can you make contact with it?

Step 2- Follow - This is different than watching. It is physical. Go along for the ride.

Step 3- Attune your inner ear- Listen to the feeling tones within you. You are turning the sense of hearing inside.

Step 4- Trust your experience- Trust that the exercise brought up whatever is happening. If it comes up, and you experience without evaluation or judgment, the experience becomes pure again.

Step 5- Open- Don't just observe. Consciously open yourself.

Step 6- Allow it to continue as long as possible- Ultimately there is a constant continuity of awareness of the flowing changing experience.

Step 7- Be as relaxed as possible during the day- How? With a gentleness.

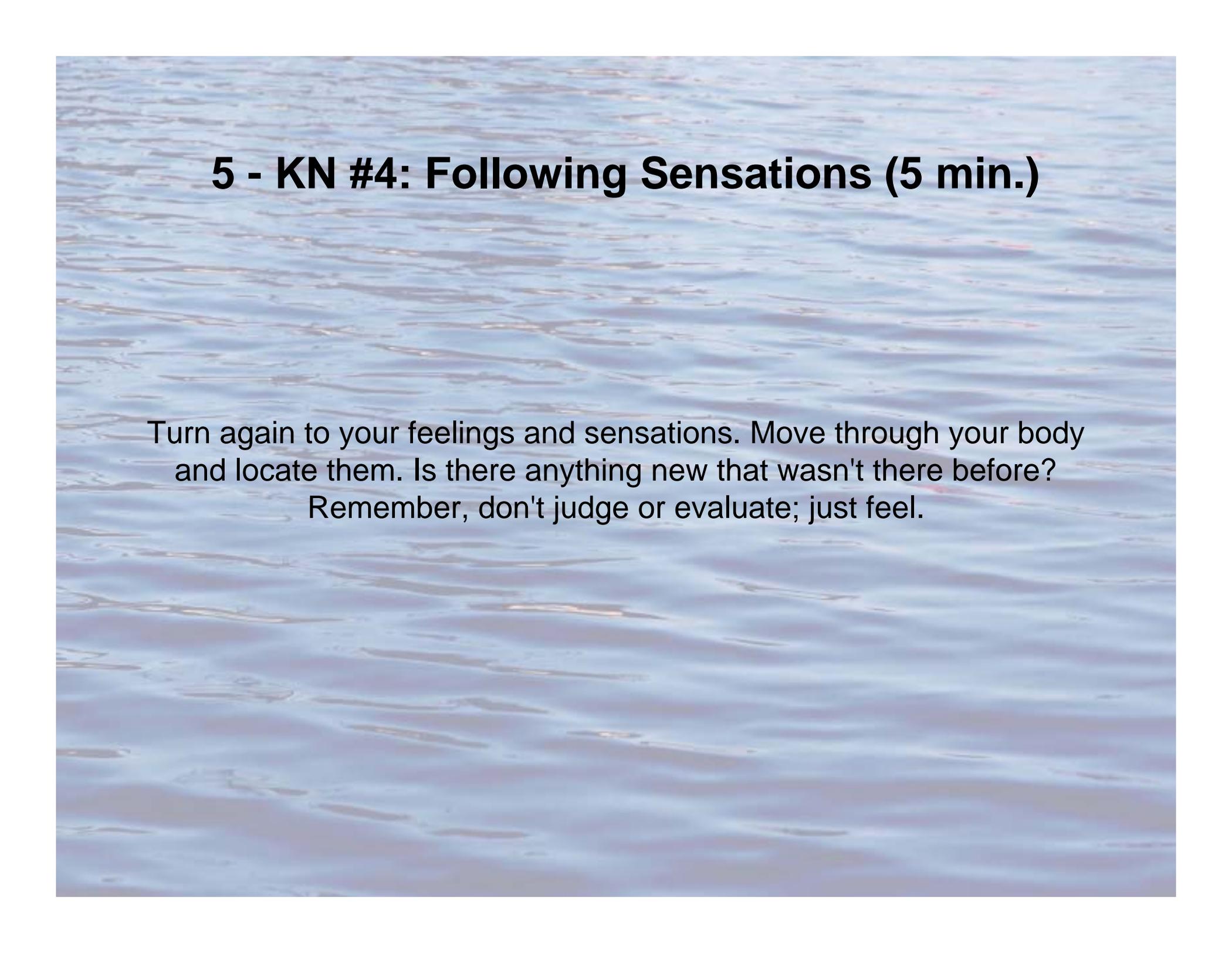
4 - KN #19: Revitalizing Energy (15 min.)

When you reach forward, first move the lower back forward, then the middle back, then upper back and shoulders, and finally the head. With each exhale you can move a little more forward, without straining. Even if you cannot physically move any further, continue to reach forward with your energy; stay in this position (while you continue to reach forward with your energy) for a couple of minutes.

When you come back up, move the head first, then the middle back, then the lower back, etc. Keep coming up and going back—do not support your lower back with the meditation pillow. Come back up, through the middle and back, to a position where the belly probably begins to tremble. Hold for a couple of minutes, and then come back up. Move the lower back forward first (then middle back, upper back, etc.) as you begin to reach forward again. Do it three times.

Kum Nye – A Tibetan Yoga, pages 167-168.





5 - KN #4: Following Sensations (5 min.)

Turn again to your feelings and sensations. Move through your body and locate them. Is there anything new that wasn't there before?
Remember, don't judge or evaluate; just feel.

6 - KN #21: Healing Body and Mind (10 min.)



The only additional suggestions for now are to stretch higher and higher when you reach up, to extend the holding of the breath at the end of the inhale (before the exhale), and to extend the time at the end of the exhale (before you inhale again).

Kum Nye – A Tibetan Yoga, pages 172-173.

7 - KN #4: Following Sensations (5 min.)

To complete the practice, once again relax your body and mind and feel. Locate the feelings and sensations and maintain a light awareness of them. You don't have to "do anything" with them other than simply feel and be aware. That is all!

To complete the practice, perform a closing gesture.

Now you are ready to begin your practice! When you have completed the practice, please read the Suggested Daily Practices and the reading assignment on the next slide. Please complete each reading assignment before beginning the next lesson.

Suggested Daily Practices

The following are suggested practices for you to perform during the day:

- a.** Try breathing through the nose and mouth (about 50/50) during the day.
- b.** Five minutes, three times a day: sit still and focus on the entire body.
- c.** Look up at the sky:
see the movement of the clouds against the grey or blue background.

Readings and Journal Assignment

Reading Assignment:

Kum Nye – A Tibetan Yoga (KN), p. 1-9, 19-28.

Journal Assignment:

This week's journal assignment will encourage you to focus on the direct experience of your feelings and sensations, rather than filtering your experience through your thoughts.

Write down any feelings or sensations you experienced during your Kum Nye practice and immediately after, but **do not write in complete sentences**, and use only **concrete, physical, primitive** words. You may like to think of it not as "writing about your feelings," but instead as **describing the quality of the energy in your body**. Do not use emotional terms such as *anger*, *frustration*, *comfort*, *calmness*, or *tension*; instead, use words like *hard*, *crash*, *flow*, *tingle*, *rush*, or *taut* -- words that have an unmistakable feeling tone to them, that are more directly connected to sensations than the abstract terms we are accustomed to using. Be creative, and don't be afraid to use words that might not "make sense" to others - this is about *your* experience. Of course, you will still be thinking about your feelings and sensations, but this exercise will open up new channels in your mind for being aware of your body experience.