



Official Newsletter of the National Qigong Association

My dear NQA family,

As September draws closer, I find myself thinking about something I always look forward to: gathering together.

So much of our qigong journey happens quietly. Many of us practice in our homes before the rest of the world wakes up. We teach classes in our local communities. We support patients, students, friends, and family. We spend countless hours learning, reflecting, and cultivating ourselves, often without anyone else ever seeing those small, meaningful moments. We unwind generations of emotional patterns, open into new beginnings, and embody paths of transformation that become the roads our communities can walk together.

Then, every so often, we have the opportunity to come together.

There is something profoundly nourishing about being in a space with people who share a common language of healing, curiosity, and growth. Even though each of our journeys is unique, there is something that feels immediately familiar when we gather. We recognize something in one another; not because our lives have all unfolded in the same way, but because we share a practice that continually invites us to become more present, more balanced, and more deeply ourselves.

I've been reflecting on how community isn't simply something we belong to. It's something we create.

It's created every time we warmly welcome someone attending their very first experience. Every conversation between sessions. Every question asked with genuine curiosity. Every meal shared. Every encouraging word offered to someone who's feeling uncertain. Every teacher who generously shares their experience, and every student who arrives with an open heart, ready to learn.

These moments may seem small, but I often think they're some of the most meaningful parts of our gatherings.

It's easy to think that transformation only happens during a lecture, a workshop, a session, or while learning a new technique. Yet some of the most lasting moments come unexpectedly. A conversation in a hallway. A shared laugh over lunch. Meeting someone who understands a challenge you've been carrying. Reconnecting with people who

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inspired and encouraged you. Sometimes a single interaction can stay with us long after we've returned home.

I love that our conference creates space for all of this.

This year's conference also feels especially meaningful because we're returning to Colorado, where the National Qigong Association first began. There's something beautiful about returning to a place that holds part of our shared history while continuing to grow into who we're becoming together. Like any living tradition, qigong honors what has come before while continuing to unfold through each person who practices, teaches, and shares it today. Every one of us contributes something unique to this community, and I think that's something worth celebrating.

I'll be there this September, and I'm genuinely looking forward to seeing many of you. Whether this will be your very first conference or you've been attending for years, I hope you'll introduce yourself to someone new, reconnect with familiar faces, and leave space for a little unexpected magic. You never know which conversation, class, or moment of connection might become the one that stays with you long after the conference has ended.

As you prepare for Denver, I invite you to reflect on what you'd like to bring with you. Not just in your suitcase, but in your heart. Is it curiosity? Gratitude? A willingness to learn? A desire to reconnect with your practice? Perhaps it's simply the openness to meet new people and discover something you weren't expecting.

Whatever it is, I hope you'll know that your presence matters. Communities aren't built by teachings or organizations alone. They're created by people choosing, again and again, to show up with kindness, generosity, and open hearts. Each of us becomes part of the atmosphere we create together.

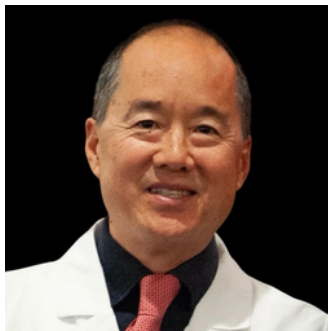
Thank you for being part of this beautiful community. I hope our shared practice continues to nourish you, wherever you are, and I hope to see many of you in Denver this September.

Until then, may your practice continue to bring you balance, radiance, and joy.

With love and gratitude,



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UPCOMING EVENTS

DATE	MEMBER	EVENT
7/24/26	Marianne Benforado	Qi Gong for Neck, Shoulders & Upper Back
7/25/26	Marianne Benforado	Qi Gong in Barbieri Park (Healdsburg)
8/26/26	Marketa Foley	Qigong Healing Sounds for Health of Our Organs (4-week class series)
8/28/26	Colorado Chinese Medicine University	2nd Colorado Acupuncture & Herbal Medicine Expo
8/30/26	Marketa Foley	Foundations of Qigong Practice (7-week course)
9/8/26	NQA	2026 Annual Conference
9/19/26	Tai Chi for Health and Wellness	Seasonal Qi Zoom *Metal Element
11/20/26	Frank Hanley	5 Day Breathing Challenge
2/23/27	Sophie Zambrano	Qigong & Nature Connection Retreat in Dominica

Professional members may submit upcoming events through the member portal for possible inclusion in future newsletters.



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Damaris Jarboux
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Voices of the NQA Founders

BY KAREN SUMARYONO

As the National Qigong Association (NQA) looks forward to honoring its roots at the 30th Annual NQA Conference in Denver September 8-10, two of the original founders reflect on the association's history and evolution. I interviewed Damaris Jarboux and Roger Jahnke, each of whom had their own memories and reflections on the NQA.

What do you love most about the NQA?

Damaris: I love the spirit of volunteerism in the organization. The work is done by volunteers who care. The greatest strength of the NQA is unity...through diversity. I really respect those who volunteer to serve on the board. They have to maintain their own discernment and independence and keep their heart and mind open to the bylaws and the mission. We wanted to build a different kind of long-term team, and today so much of the NQA is team work.

Roger: Community! I love that the NQA is a community of practitioners, a community inclusive across all populations. As a founder, the vision was that the community would come together on equal footing to share with and learn from each other. I would call it an invitation to the original roots of the cultivation of character, which is the highest level of self-observation that a person can possibly achieve. That is what qigong is.

How do you interpret "Honoring our Roots"?

Damaris: We honor our roots by building organically on our foundation. When I think back to the seven founders of the NQA, they were human and imperfect. There were intense personalities and, as you may know, birth is chaotic, and we honor the birth of the NQA, which was an intense process. It was the birth of an egalitarian organization.

Among the seven founders, five of the seven were licensed already, and we knew we didn't want to go in the direction of licensing for qigong. At the beginning, certification was called "Standards," which articulated the basic criteria that run through all kinds of qigong.

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DAMARIS JARBOUX



Today, the certification committee assesses an applicant's training and experience against established standards in order to grant NQA certification.

The seven founders were James MacRitchie, Roger Jahnke, Demaris Jarboux, Russell DesMarais, Richard Leirer, Gunther Weil, and Mark Johnson.

Roger: We honor our roots by reflecting on the original intention of the NQA: Community and Democratization. The original intention of the NQA was to create a community of citizens who empower themselves as a membership organization rather than a certifying entity. It was originally designed to be a community of practitioners not teachers. Inclusivity of various styles and forms of qigong has always been a priority of the NQA, a part of the democratization ideal from the beginning. Inclusivity of membership, however, should not be what I see as hierarchical but as bonafide, across-the-board inclusivity, in the spirit of true Daoist philosophy, casting the widest possible net for citizen membership.

Returning to the roots of Daoist idealism, we seek to empower people to a high level of self observation. It is also a method to interrupt one's habituated responses through cultivation of one's qigong practice. The NQA Advisory Council exists as a root and anchor not only of history but to the ideals of the Daoist Way, The Way.

Can you share a meaningful memory?

Damaris: In 1997 the old board and the newly elected board worked together to establish the bylaws. We battled it out until we all got on the same page. It was a beautiful moment; I'll always remember the concerns and fears on the faces of everyone sitting in that room. In the end, we came together and created the original bylaws that fit the mission, bringing the practice from East to West safely.

Those standards have become an important part of how the NQA benefits its members. If people want to go through the process of certification, then they apply through the Certification Committee, which goes through each one individually to see if their training and experience matches the set protocol and standards.

The memory of coming to consensus on the bylaws goes to the importance of teamwork in the NQA. Committees that do well, work as a team.

Roger: When Jim MacRitchie and I were at a large medical qigong conference in Beijing in 1992, we got into a deep conversation about the relationship between lineage and democracy.

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DAMARIS JARBOUX



democracy. We agreed that lineage was loaded with taboos and democracy was liberating. And the next part of that conversation was that somebody should institutionalize a community of qigong enthusiasts because, if not, some lineage organization would arise.

Over the following three years the two of us along with Demaris Jarboux, the founders, worked hundreds of hours crafting a vision. Then we invited other people into the conversation and organized these “signers” and officially created the NQA. The agreement was that those signers would support the process of creating the first conference in 1996, and during that conference those signers would resign, and we would have an election of a board. And that is what came to pass. There were the founders, the signers, and the first elected board. I was in the role of board chairperson for the first nine years. Now the chair has a three-year term.

Have there been controversial issues facing the organization?

Damaris: Yes, the NQA is a living organization of human beings, and there will always be controversy. That is why the volunteer teams work through diverse points of view and are united in support of a larger mission.

Around twenty years ago there was a push to have a large corporation take over the certification of qigong teachers. There was lots of pressure, but we stood together, and in the end we resisted it as a team. It was a big moment because we could see that if this entity were to take over, we would no longer be in charge of ourselves. Today other organizations look to the NQA because we have set the highest, but not unreachable, standards.

Another controversy is that some in the organization believe that an in-person community is a qualitatively different experience than one that is online. The qi field is not the same online. Wuji only comes into the field that is created live. We have to develop the heart, not just the head.

Roger: Yes, the NQA was originally a membership organization creating a community of citizen practitioners rather than a certifying institution, which it has incongruously evolved into. This has been controversial. There are those that believe that fulfilling the original vision of creating a community of citizen practitioners is more clearly fulfilled by the monthly conversations and practices of Qi Talks and Syner-qi than in creating different levels of membership. The original intent was to empower citizen practitioners to empower themselves and accumulate the information necessary to practice the cultivation of the elixirs of the body, heart-mind, and spirit.

Another controversial idea is whether one can learn to teach qigong without being in the living presence of a “teacher.” If you are certified by a curriculum that was delivered to you live online, is that valid? Before the pandemic, we would have said no, we would never do that. And then by necessity everything was online, and afterwards it turned out that many people preferred the live

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online model.

Can you offer advice for those who are still developing their practice, business, and community?

Damaris: Yes. Community is exactly what everyone needs today. That's the reason I teach personal practice in person and open to the public. I build a community and always have because the people in a circle are live—not in an online community. This is an in-person community; people are really starving for it, and they need it because it is very different from online. I'm not knocking online because there are lots of things we can do that way, but in-person is a very different experience for building community.

For people who are just developing their work, it's all based on personal practice. You have to embody it. You have to do the practice regularly. When we say cultivate, we mean the whole circle, like a gardener. You have to do it and you embody the practice. Then it's easy to teach. Until 2020, qigong was always given through the qi field from teacher to student. That is not the qi field of online practice.

Roger: My advice for people still developing their practice, the most important thing is to actually have a practice. Typically people who are teachers default to the idea that their class is their practice. A personal practice means to have the ability to be by yourself doing the practice and noticing how distracted you are. Taking a class or teaching a class is like a kind of entertainment, but when you go to your practice spot alone and notice distractions, that's cultivation.

In terms of starting your business, do free classes everywhere—online if you're inclined to, the YMCA, senior centers, schools, hospitals, just everywhere and give away your services so that people know what you're talking about and they know you. If you feel like you lack self-esteem to be able to accomplish that, it's not because you don't know enough of the practice, and it's not because you're doing the practice wrong. It's just because you don't trust yourself. You know way more than an average citizen about these things, so if you go forward even with some missteps in the beginning, you will be successful.



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We Are No Longer Apologizing: What I Saw at Harvard Changed Everything

BY DIEGO SANMIQUEL

A letter to the global Tai Chi, Qigong, and Chinese medicine community

Last week I stood in a room at Harvard Medical School alongside researchers, physicians, and practitioners from around the world. I presented on behalf of the field I have dedicated my life to. And for the first time in a long time, I left a conference feeling something I did not expect.

Hope.

I have been in these conversations before. In 2023, the room was different, full of uncertainty; each word was carefully picked, and there was an overall guarded feeling. People avoided saying "Qi." Nobody wanted to say "energetics" in front of a room full of skeptical people. The language of our medicine felt like something to apologize for. Some of the researchers quietly joked that they might be fired on Monday for sharing freely.

This time was different.

People said Qi, discussed energetics, and talked about Qigong and Tai Chi without flinching. In three years, the conversation had matured enough that we could finally sit in the same room and speak honestly.

Here is what I want every practitioner, patient, and student to understand.

We are not in a bubble.

We are not alone.

We are not on the outside of something important.

We are part of a global conversation that is moving faster than most of us can see from inside our individual practices.

Chinese medicine, Tai Chi, Qigong. These are no longer fringe ideas seeking approval from modern science; we are now working together to build new tools for future generations.

The knowledge gap is closing because we are finally willing to have an honest conversation, and the language to have it is catching up.

What struck me most in that room was not who was right or who was wrong. It was not about proving that we have been doing

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DIEGO
SANMIQUEL



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DIEGO SANMIQUEL



this for thousands of years. It was something simpler and more powerful.

It was about finding a common vocabulary.

A shared language where Eastern and Western practitioners can meet in their similarities, learn from their differences, and advance this medicine together for the benefit of everyone. Honoring collaboration in a way we have not seen yet in this field.

We are not here to fight Western medicine. We are here to extend our hand and step together into the era of integration.

We can practice and learn from the best of both worlds. We do not have to choose between ancient wisdom and modern science, and to be fair, we never did.

I flew home thinking about every practitioner I know who has ever felt invisible. Who has ever wondered if what they do matters in a world that does not always understand it.

It matters. You matter. Your patients and students matter.

Deep down, I knew this all along. I didn't need the room at Harvard to tell me, but it was a wonderful confirmation for many practitioners to have.

The researchers in that room are asking the same questions you ask in your clinic every day. They are just using different tools to find the answers. And for the first time, they are asking those questions out loud, in public, without apology.

It is an opportunity to show up as we are, with all our training and knowledge, speak clearly, and take our place at the table that has always needed our voice.

The world is finally catching up to what we already know.



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Reinforcements

BY MARK R REINHART

From the moment we wake up in the morning, and realize that we're awake, we begin the process of reinforcing who we are. Every decision we make throughout our morning ritual is based on some kind of image that we have constructed about ourselves. Do you make your bed as soon as you wake? Why? What would happen if you didn't? Who is making those judgments regarding what you do or don't do? How about the reinforcing you do every morning during your personal preparation routine? Think of the steps involved in crafting, or should I say maintaining the image you may have spent days, months, weeks or even years designing? Hair style, clothing, makeup (if applicable), facial hair (if applicable)? Who are you doing all this preparation for, and why? Be honest.

There is pretty much no escaping all the reinforcing that we do throughout our daily lives. And this is not necessarily a bad thing. Although good and bad can be rather relative terms depending on perspective, intent, execution and outcomes.

Observe the things you go about reinforcing in your life. Your image is a good place to start. I'm sure you have a certain 'look' you've become comfortable with. Even those who say they allegedly have 'no look' often spend a lot of time crafting that 'no look.'

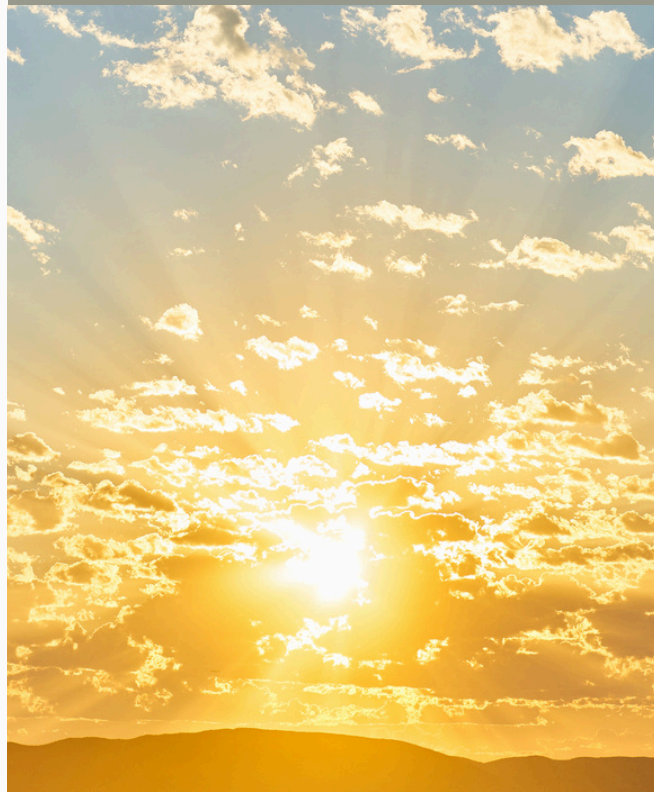
Now examine why you are comfortable with that 'look.' Some options may include strictly comfort, minimal effort or expenditure, the perception and judgment/opinions of others. You may have different images. You may take a 'one size fits all' approach. What is the reasoning/intent of the image you are trying to convey if it is focused outwardly. How does the expression of your outward image manifest your internal landscape? Is it a true and honest reflection? Can we ever objectively assess the intent behind anything we do? This line of thinking can easily lead us into the proverbial can of worms.

Since all judgments can be traced back to our egos, understanding that our choices as to what we opt to, or not to reinforce are based on the accumulated data files we (our egos) have been compiling throughout our entire lives. And that is quite a bit of information!

How we choose to process that information will determine how that information will be used in our present time decisions. How can dwelling on a traumatic situation from the past, unless it is being used as some form of

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developmental purpose or to assist others, be of any constructive use? Remember that the body cannot tell the difference between an actual experience and a remembered one. Any experience can be reframed, especially those resulting in a less than desirable affect on you or others in present time.

Pleasurable or harmonious situations from the past tend to engender a more harmonious and pleasurable present. Just from the perspective of their impact on health, wellbeing and balance in present time, I usually opt for reinforcing those types of bytes of recalled data. The choice as to how you use any information accessed from the past is totally yours. Assessing past experiences from the Eternal Present perspective can assist you in making a better decision on how exactly you want to reinforce that information and incorporate it into your life.

You are what you think you are and will reinforce all the details and images associated with those thoughts. To some people that is a rather foreboding prospect. To others, it is uplifting and liberating. Yep, you guessed it... the choice is yours!

Practice what you love
Accept graciously, let go easily
Share/pass on what you know
inspire others to learn
Be Grateful
Be of Service
Do no Harm
Be the peace you want to see in the world

Blessings - be well, study deeply and widely, practice, keep in touch and above all - Carry On!



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Reflections on Training with Dr. Jerry Alan Johnson

BY DR. ELIZA MEEKER, DCEM

Like many qigong students, I am always glad and grateful to get to share some of the benefits and applications of my lineage! In our doctoral program, Dr. Jerry Alan Johnson chose to teach us a daily qigong practice consisting of three parts:

1. Clearing
2. Creating a sacred space to train, and
3. Tonifying the 5 yin organs and quiescence.

This daily practice also serves to bring us the energy and insight we need to apply this beautiful practice as a healing art. Chinese Energetic Medicine is the applied use of qigong for healing. It has been described as “applied meditation,” and “acupuncture without needles.”

My name is Eliza Meeker, and I have a private practice as a Doctor of Chinese Energetic Medicine. In the last newsletter of the National Qigong Association, I was fortunate to get to share some of my journey of healing, of qigong, as well as how I came to work with women in perimenopause as well as menopause.

Chinese Energetic Medicine is one of the five branches of Chinese Medicine. The other four branches are: acupuncture, herbs, diet and lifestyle, and Tuina massage. Herbs are often given to people who have had acupuncture to support the client and extend the benefit of the treatment. Similarly, in Chinese Energetic Medicine after we give an energetic treatment, we usually send the client home qigong exercises as homework.

Dr. Jerry Alan Johnson began practicing martial arts as a young man and attained mastery, as well as teaching for many years. During this time, he also studied acupuncture and herbs. After a martial arts accident to his knee, he heeded a teacher’s advice to focus on healing, as he had been a “healer hiding out as a martial artist.” Healing led to mysticism, in which he gained an extremely high level of mastery.

After such an illustrious career of martial arts, healing, teaching, and publishing, Dr. Johnson retired. He could have remained retired, relaxing and enjoying even more time with his wonderful wife, Dr. Erika Johnson, also a mystic and extremely advanced energetic practitioner. By an immense stroke of luck for us, Dr. Johnson came out of retirement in 2019 to teach a doctoral program in Chinese Energetic Medicine. I did not know all of what this might

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entail, but I did not hesitate to sign up.

During the first two years of our doctoral program, we learned a lot of the theory of Chinese Medicine, qigong, personal work and clearing. The personal work and clearing that we learned focused heavily on clearing the three bodies: the physical body, the energetic body, and the spiritual body.

After the clearing, we brought in light to support the three bodies. We also did a lot of personal work such as "soul retrieval" and forgiveness work. We then did partner work, moving the energy under our partner's feet, or along their center line, for example. All of this work was difficult, but very rewarding. (On more than one occasion I threw up after having engaged in robust clearing of my spiritual and energetic bodies... it took a little while for my physical body to adjust to all this intense work!)

Pursuing this doctoral program, once we were able to clear and feel into our own energy, we were ready to train to treat others. And the qigong that Dr. Johnson taught us, the Standard Daily Practice, gives us the "energy," literally, to be able to carry out this work.

Whether your path is Chinese Energetic Medicine or another Qigong tradition, the lesson I continue to return to is the importance of personal cultivation. A skilled teacher can guide the way, but it is our daily practice that develops the clarity, balance, and compassion needed to support both our own well-being and the well-being of others.

To learn more about courses and other offerings, feel free to check out TwoBranchesQigong.com and californiaqigong.com.



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