



**Qigong Healing Centre**

**Gary W. Abersold**

**Short Modern History**

**of**

**Chinese Qigong Traditions**



## **The Birth of Qigong: History Lesson**

To many it might be surprising that the actual creation of modern Qigong began in the late 1940s and the 1950s, the mainland Chinese government tried to integrate different qigong approaches into one coherent system, with the intention of establishing a firm scientific basis for qigong practice. Chairman Mao Tse Tung propagated this by having party leaders, various people to distill centuries of Chinese village-based healing practices into a model for Mao Tse Tung's New China. The new classification deemphasized practices that were considered spiritual, superstitious and poisonous for the people. This included many of the organized Taoist, Buddhist and Shamanic spiritual practices that form the very foundation of Indigenous Traditions.



### **Dr. Liu Guizhen**

In 1949, Dr. Liu Guizhen established the name "Qigong" an “umbrella term”; to refer to the system of life preserving practices that he and his team developed based on indigenous traditions and other philosophical traditions. This attempt is considered by some researchers as the start of the modern or scientific interpretation of qigong.

During the Great Leap Forward (1958–1963) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), qigong, along with other traditional Chinese medicine, was under tight control with limited access among the general public, but was encouraged in state-run rehabilitation centers and spread to universities and hospitals. After the Cultural Revolution, qigong, along with Tai Chi Chuan, was popularized as daily morning exercise practiced by the masses throughout China. Kung Fu was also relabeled as “Wu Shu”, referring to a national sport and related national forms. Much more could be said but we will leave it at that.

Popularity of qigong grew rapidly during the Deng and Jiang eras after Mao Tse Tung death in 1976 through the 1990s, with estimates of between 60 and 200 million practitioners throughout China. Along with popularity and state sanction came

controversy and problems: claims of extraordinary abilities bordering on the supernatural, by certain Masters to build credibility, formation of cults, and exaggeration of claims by masters for personal benefit. In 1985, the state-run "National Qigong Science and Research Organization" was established to regulate the nation's qigong denominations. In 1999, in response to widespread revival of old traditions of spirituality, morality, and mysticism, and perceived challenges to State control, the Chinese government took measures to enforce control of public qigong practice, including shutting down qigong clinics and hospitals, and banning large faction groups.

Since the 1999 crackdown, qigong research and practice have only been officially supported in the context of health and traditional Chinese medicine. The Chinese Health Qigong Association, established in 2000, strictly regulates public qigong practice, with limitation of public gatherings, requirement of state approved training and certification of instructors, and restriction of practice to state-approved forms.

Through the forces of migration of the Chinese Traditions, and globalization, the practice of qigong has spread from the Chinese community to the world. Today, millions of people around the world practice qigong for the multi faceted benefits. Similar to its Indigenous historical origin, those interested in qigong come from diverse backgrounds and practice it for different reasons, including for recreation, exercise, relaxation, preventive medicine, self-healing, alternative medicine, self-cultivation, meditation, spirituality, and martial arts training.

As a final statements here through my own personal practice I can attest that there are many Chinese that fled Central China to bring their practices to the west and not be limited by the Cultural Revolution of China. So many Master teachers had kept their traditions under the Indigenous root where it came from primarily Taoist, Buddhist or

Shamanic categories. Many did not want to be tagged under Qigong, and presents the whole idea of “Body Cultivation”, Yang Sheng Fa Traditions, which also refers to Nourishing, Nurturing Life Traditions. I highly recommend anyone interested in understanding the complex Qigong background history to read “Qigong Fever: Body, Science and Utopia in China. It’s not the complete picture of what went on. It is although the only text to date that documents an objective view on Qigong. An important work for any library, top reference from as well.



Collective Qigong practice- "receiving energy" organized by qigong master Yan Xin. During the 1980s and 90s, gatherings like this were popular in China. Read Qigong Fever for more information!

