

Vermillion Brush

Seasonal Energetics

According to Daoist calendrics, spring begins on February 4th this year. Spring corresponds to minor yang and the Wood phase, while summer corresponds to major yang and the Fire phase. With the arrival of spring, we move from the deep stillness of winter to a time of increasing activity, which culminates on the summer solstice. During this time, emphasis is placed on planting and growth. Following the cycles of the sun, our sleep patterns decrease as daylight increases. We also adjust our eating to add more cooling and moistening foods in order to balance the increasing yang. It is natural to place greater emphasis on movement practices, such as Yangsheng 養生 (Nourishing Life) to harmonize qi.

Inner Cultivation

Daoist practice is often referred to as “cultivating the Dao” (*xiudao* 修道). Cultivation inspires us to understand our lives in terms of an agricultural metaphor. Through a process of planting and tending, seeds will eventually grow and come to fruition; they will result in a particular harvest. For this harvest to be beneficial and plentiful, intentionality and attentiveness are centrally important. Ultimately, Daoist practice centers on inner cultivation with an orientation toward the Dao, the mysterious and numinous Way. This interiority is rooted in silence, receptivity, and connection. It involves “returning to the Source” (*guigen* 歸根).

Scripture Study

Scripture study (*jingxue* 經學) centers on deep engagement with Daoist sacred writings. “Scriptures” (*jing* 經), or “classics,” are one of the external Three Treasures of the Daoist tradition. The fourth-century BCE *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power), one of the most important Daoist scriptures, encourages us to cultivate clarity and stillness. The text tells us that embodying these qualities will lead to “the rectification of the world.” Here the world refers to our own bodies as well as the realm of social interaction.

**“Clarity and stillness are the
rectification of the world.”**
*Scripture on the Dao and Inner
Power, ch. 45*

News

- This publication marks our new bi-annual newsletter titled *Vermillion Brush*, which draws its inspiration from Daoist talismanic writing and cinnabar elixirs.
- We are planning a spring Daoist retreat through our Gallagher Cove Daoist Association (Olympia, Washington), which is tentatively scheduled for May 1st, 2016.
- We have recently established a new Daoist community through the Red Bird Lodge (Ravinia, Illinois).
- Louis Komjathy is completing a new book on Daoist contemplative practice titled *Taming the Wild Horse*, which explores the Daoist Horse Taming Pictures.

Spring and Summer Nodes

Spring Begins - 2/4
Rain Water - 2/19
Excited Insects - 3/5

Spring Equinox - 3/20
Clear Brightness - 4/4
Grain Rain - 4/19

Summer Begins - 5/5
Slight Fullness - 5/20
Bearded Grain - 6/5

Summer Solstice - 6/21
Slight Heat - 7/7
Major Heat - 7/22