

Vermillion Brush

Seasonal Energetics

According to Daoist calendrics, spring begins on February 3rd 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 diet 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

An essential dimension of Daoist cultivation involves correct orientation (*fangxiang* 方向). This is a principle derived from geography, cartography, and orienteering. It is about what we are positioned and moving towards. Our primary compass-point as Daoists is the Dao, the sacred or ultimate reality. Correct orientation provides a root and focus for our practice. Such an orientation becomes strengthened by maintaining foundational Daoist values and commitments. Virtue (*dexing* 德行), including hidden virtue (*yinde* 隱德), helps to ensure that we do not become spiritually disoriented. Deviation by even a matter of degrees will lead to a different destination.

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 *Neiye* 內業 (Inward Training), a recently rediscovered Daoist text that we might refer to as the *Neixiu jing* 內修經 (Scripture on Inner Cultivation), encourages us to nurture contemplative silence and reverence for the Dao. This approach to Daoist practice enables us to return to original spirit, our innate connection with the larger matrix of being.

**"When you are inwardly still and
outwardly reverent,
You will be able to return to innate nature."
Inward Training, ch. 22**

News

- Daoist practice sessions are offered on the first and third Sunday of each month in San Diego's Balboa Park.
- We are planning a spring Daoist retreat through our Gallagher Cove Daoist Association (Olympia, Washington), with the date to be determined.
- Our Daoist community and work will be featured in *Dream Trippers: Global Daoism and the Predicament of Modern Spirituality* by David Palmer and Elijah Siegler (University of Chicago Press, forthcoming).
- Louis Komjathy's new book *Taming the Wild Horse*, which explores the Daoist Horse Taming Pictures, will be published by Columbia University Press in March.

Spring and Summer Nodes

Spring Begins - 2/3
Rain Water - 2/18
Excited Insects - 3/5

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

Summer Begins - 5/5
Slight Fullness - 5/21
Bearded Grain - 6/5

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