

Vermillion Brush

Seasonal Energetics

According to Daoist calendrics, fall begins on August 7th this year. Fall corresponds to minor yin and the Metal phase, while winter corresponds to major yin and the Water phase. With the arrival of fall, we move from the high activity of summer to a time of deepening stillness, which culminates on the winter solstice. During this time, emphasis is placed on harvesting and storing. Following the cycles of the sun, our sleep patterns increase as daylight decreases. We also adjust our eating to add more cooked and warming foods in order to balance the increasing yin. It is natural to place greater emphasis on stillness practices, such as standing and seated meditation to harmonize spirit.

Inner Cultivation

An important dimension of Daoist practice-realization (*xiuzheng* 修證) centers on “establishing the foundations” (*zhuji* 築基). On the most basic level, this involves investigating and cultivating what is essential, including “true earth” (*zhentu* 真土). “True earth,” or foundational stability, refers to both honesty and stillness. On a more technical level, “establishing the foundations” designates the cultivation of virtue, which relates to thought, speech, and action. We live in a manner that exerts a beneficial and transformational influence. This also involves “hidden virtue” (*yinde* 隱德), or following the path of virtue without recognition or reward. Such is an expression of our innate nature (*xing* 性).

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 (*sanbao* 三寶) of the Daoist tradition. The fourth-century BCE *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), one of the most important Daoist scriptures, encourages us to recognize and accept things as they are. The text tells us that our life is the alternation of “fate” and opportunity, an oscillation between possibility and limitation. At times, our aspirations are apparently obstructed by external factors. This is an occasion to recommit to deep practice and attunement with the Dao.

**“It is time and circumstance that
make it so.”**

Book of Master Zhuang, ch. 17

News

- Louis Komjathy's *Taming the Wild Horse: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Daoist Horse Taming Pictures* was just published by Columbia University Press.
- We are now offering Daoist classes at Root Medicine in Evanston, Illinois.
- Bi-weekly Daoist practice sessions in San Diego's Balboa Park will recommence in September.
- We are planning a fall/winter Daoist retreat through our Gallagher Cove Daoist Association (Olympia, Washington), with the dates to be determined.

Fall and Winter Nodes

Autumn Begins - 8/7
Limit of Heat - 8/23
Pure Dew - 9/7

Autumn Equinox - 9/22
Cold Dew - 10/8
Frost Descends - 10/23

Winter Begins - 11/11
Light Snow - 11/22
Heavy Snow - 12/7

Winter Solstice - 12/22
Slight Cold - 1/5/18
Major Cold - 1/20/18