

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

The Daoist approach to self-cultivation (*xiushen* 修身) emphasizes “alignment” (*zheng* 正), which may also mean “uprightness” and “rectification.” In terms of embodied dimensions of practice, *zheng* refers to correct postural alignment. This establishes the foundation for energetic connection and circulation. Such alignment also includes a cosmological element and expression. Our bodies become arranged in concert with the heavens and earth, which correspond to the head and navel/perineum/feet on a microcosmic level. Daoists refer to this as “attunement” (*ganying* 感應), a subtle responsiveness to the cosmos as mutually resonant system.

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 eighth-century CE *Neiguan jing* 內觀經 (Scripture on Inner Observation) encourages us to trust in the Dao, in the larger sacred context and support of our lives. This approach to Daoist practice enables us to realize that something larger is always occurring, something beyond our own limited viewpoint. Things could not be different. With trust as the foundation, all is well.

**“Knowing the Dao is easy;
trusting the Dao is difficult.”**
Scripture on Inner Observation, 6a

News

- Bi-weekly Daoist practice sessions in San Diego’s Balboa Park will recommence on Sunday, February 18.

-We are planning a spring Daoist retreat through our Gallagher Cove Daoist Association (Olympia, Washington), with the date to be determined.

-*Dream Trippers: Global Daoism and the Predicament of Modern Spirituality* by David Palmer and Elijah Siegler, which features our Daoist community and work, was recently released by the University of Chicago Press.

-Louis Komjathy’s new book *Introducing Contemplative Studies*, which is the first book-length discussion of this emerging field, was just published by Wiley-Blackwell.

Spring and Summer Nodes

Spring Begins - 2/3
Rain Water - 2/18
Excited Insects - 3/4

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

Summer Begins - 5/4
Slight Fullness - 5/20
Bearded Grain - 6/5

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