

Vermillion Brush

Seasonal Energetics

According to Daoist calendrics, fall begins on August 6th 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

Daoist inner cultivation (*neixiu* 內修) involves “entering the mountains” (*rushan* 入山). From a Daoist perspective, mountains refer to actual mountains, physical seclusion, interior stillness, and sacred space. “To enter the mountains” thus refers to mountain residence, contemplative practice, and ritual activity. The mountains are discovered in wilderness travel, meditation, and other reverential activities. We aspire to encounter the stillness that is our innate nature (*xing* 性) and the Dao as such. Exploring internal and external landscapes, we find the empty space that provides sacred connection. The mountains contain hidden presences that beckon us.

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 twelfth-century CE *Lijiao shiwu lun* 立教十五論 (Fifteen Discourses to Establish the Teachings) by Wang Zhe 王嘉 (1113-1170), the founder of Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) Daoism, encourages care in selecting Companions of the Way (*daoyou* 道友), or spiritual friends. Integrity, correct orientation, and shared affinities are essential.

“You must first choose the right person and only then join with that person as a companion.”
Fifteen Discourses, ch. 6

News

- Bi-monthly Daoist practice sessions in San Diego’s Balboa Park will recommence on Sunday, September 2nd.
- We are planning a fall Daoist retreat through our Gallagher Cove Daoist Association (Olympia, Washington), with the date to be determined.
- Women’s cultivation practices are now being offered through Root Medicine in Evanston, Illinois.
- Louis Komjathy’s *Taming the Wild Horse: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Daoist Horse Taming Pictures* is about to be released in paperback through Columbia University Press.

Fall and Winter Nodes

Autumn Begins - 8/6
Limit of Heat - 8/22
Pure Dew - 9/7

Autumn Equinox - 9/22
Cold Dew - 10/7
Frost Descends - 10/22

Winter Begins - 11/6
Light Snow - 11/21
Heavy Snow - 12/6

Winter Solstice - 12/21
Slight Cold - 1/4/19
Major Cold - 1/20/19