

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. Following the cycles of the sun, 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 “nourish the yang.”

Inner Cultivation

Daoist inner cultivation (*neixiu* 內修) involves refining and stabilizing emotionality, so that we have appropriate responsiveness. Like other psychological capacities and conditions, “emotions” (*qing* 情) are associated with the heart-mind (*xin* 心), which is the psychospiritual center of human personhood. As we purify (*jing* 淨) ourselves of agitation and contention (*zheng* 爭), our vital essence (*jing* 精), our foundational vitality, becomes stabilized (*ding* 定). Then the heart-mind becomes guided by spirit (*shen* 神). As vital essence and emotionality settle, we enter a deeper state of clarity and stillness (*qingjing* 清靜).

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 *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), one of the most important Daoist scriptures, begins with the great Peng bird as a model for Daoist practice-realization. Like this mythic being, we may fly above mundane concerns and entanglements. We may cultivate a state of “being carefree” (*xiaoyao* 逍遙), a phrase suggesting unrestricted movement and spiritual freedom.

“The great Peng bird beats the whirlwind, leaps into the air, and rises up 90,000 miles.”
Book of Master Zhuang, ch. 2

News

- Bi-weekly Daoist practice sessions (every other Sunday morning) in San Diego’s Presidio Park will recommence in early February.
- We are planning spring/summer Daoist retreats in Olympia, Washington and San Diego, California, with the dates to be determined.
- Louis Komjathy’s *Taming the Wild Horse: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Daoist Horse Taming Pictures* was just released in paperback.

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 - 4/19

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

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