

Vermillion Brush

Seasonal Energetics

According to Daoist calendrics, spring begins on February 4th 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) often involves working through difficulties. Anything, including apparent obstacles and disappointments, can become an opportunity for deeper practice-realization. Various analogies may help us with understanding, accepting, and transforming such challenges. We may think of them in terms of the creation of pearls, incubation of eggs, and formation of elixirs. Oysters wear away annoyances and imperfections to create lustrous spheres. Hens brood over their eggs to bring forth new life. Ingredients are combined and refined to make extraordinary substances and transformed states. So too for those of us committed to authentic training, training that results in a new form of being.

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- to second-century BCE *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters), one of the most important Daoist scriptures, tells us that ordinary personhood, our limited ego and social self, is a source of suffering. This relates to attachment to personal identity and reputation. As one potential resolution, we may embrace “namelessness” (*wuming* 無名), a transpersonal state rooted in sacred connection and numinous presence.

**“If I did not have a self,
What calamities would I have?”
*Book of Venerable Masters, ch. 13***

News

- Louis Komjathy left his academic position in order to be an independent scholar-translator and full-time contemplative.
- Louis Komjathy will be on personal retreat for the next period of time. We anticipate recommencing our complete practice offerings and retreat schedule in the near future.
- Daoist women’s practice continues to be offered through Root Medicine in Evanston, Illinois.
- Divine energy and light shine forth continuously.

Spring and Summer Nodes

Spring Begins - 2/4
Rain Water - 2/19
Excited Insects - 3/5

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

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

Summer Solstice - 6/20
Slight Heat - 7/6
Major Heat - 7/22