

# Vermillion Brush

## Seasonal Energetics

According to Daoist calendrics, spring begins on February 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Yǎngshēng 養生 (Nourishing Life) to “nourish the yang.”

## Inner Cultivation

Daoist inner cultivation (nèixiū 內修) involves movement practice (dònggōng 動功), with attentiveness to postural alignment, energetic connection, and spatial awareness. This relates first and foremost to Yangsheng, or health and longevity techniques. Changing the body changes consciousness, and changing consciousness changes the body. Such is a Daoist psychosomatic view. Observe how the quality of your hands and breath reflect psychological qualities and states. As we become more relaxed, our breathing naturally deepens, lengthens, and slows. We find awareness in/as/through movement. Body, breath, and gesture.

## Scripture Study

Scripture study (jīngxué 經學) centers on deep engagement with Daoist sacred writings. “Scriptures” (jīng 經), or “classics,” are one of the external Three Treasures of the Daoist tradition. The early sixth-century CE *Yǎngxìng yánmìng lù* 養性延命錄 (Record of Nourishing Innate Nature and Extending Life-destiny) by Táo Hóngjǐng 陶弘景 (456-536) encourages us to live in a constant state of movement, with attentiveness to opening the joints, relaxing the muscles and sinews, and circulating energy. Then our bodies will resemble flowing water and a well-oiled door hinge. Walking as daily practice.

“Flowing water doesn’t mold;  
a well-oiled door hinge doesn’t rot.”  
*Record of Nourishing Innate Nature  
and Extending Life-Destiny*, ch. 1

## News

- Louis Komjathy and Kate Townsend have finished the draft manuscript of *Entering Stillness: A Guide to Daoist Practice*, which is currently being prepared for submission.
- We continue to offer monthly remote Daoist classes, which include formal Lùndào 論道 Daoist talks. More information is available on the Daoist Foundation website.
- We have created a virtual Daoist Reading Room on the Daoist Foundation website (/readingroom), which includes previous issues of this newsletter and our new Blue Papers series.

## Spring and Summer Nodes

Spring Begins - 2/3  
Rain Water - 2/18  
Excited Insects - 3/5

Spring Equinox - 3/20  
Clear Brightness - 4/5  
Grain Rain - 4/20

Summer Begins - 5/5  
Slight Fullness - 5/21  
Bearded Grain - 6/5

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