

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 Yǎngshēng 養生 (Nourishing Life) to “nourish the yang.”

Inner Cultivation

Daoist inner cultivation (*nèixiū* 內修) involves actualizing inner power (*dé* 德), also translated as “virtue” in the sense of one’s overall character. The character *dé* 德 consists of *chì* 彳 (“step”) and *dé* 德, with the latter including *zhí* 直 (“direct”) over *xīn* 心 (“heart”). Inner power is an aligned heart-mind manifesting as beneficial and transformational activity in the world. It is the way in which the Dao becomes embodied by human beings. Inner power further connects to innate nature (*xìng* 性) and unhewn simplicity (*pǔ* 樸). It may be thought of as the human side of the “hidden talisman” that (re)unites us with the Dao, especially through apophatic and quietistic practice.

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 fourth-to-second-century BCE *Lǎozǐ* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters), one of the most important Daoist scriptures, tells us that Daoist inner power and virtue, also referred to as “mysterious virtue” (*xuándé* 玄德), is *wúwéi* 無為 (“non-action”), or effortlessness. This is a simple “letting be” that allows and enables all beings to realize their own aspirations and to actualize their own potential. To flourish in suchness (*zìrán* 自然).

“The highest virtue is non-action.”
Book of Venerable Masters, ch. 38

News

- We just completed our Daoist Contemplative Winter Retreat, which was held from January 9-13, 2023.
- The three-volume Twentieth Anniversary Edition (TAE) of Louis Komjathy’s *Handbooks for Daoist Practice* 修道手冊 is forthcoming from Square Inch Press 方寸書社.
- Beginning in 2023, the Daoist Foundation will follow a new remote monthly meeting schedule. This will include quarterly *Lùndào* 論道 Daoist talks with two Scripture Study (*jīngxué* 經學) meetings in between.

Spring and Summer Nodes

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

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

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

Summer Solstice - 6/21
Slight Heat - 7/7
Major Heat - 7/23