

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 cosmological and mystical attunement with the Dao. This is the Dao as cosmos, world, place, and body/self. As our practice-realization deepens, we become more aware of the energetic reality of our lives, which is characterized by inter-relationality and interconnection. We become permeated with the all-pervading numinous presence of the Dao, infusing and connecting everything. This involves listening to innate nature (*xìng* 性), our original and inherent sacred connection. Rooted in inner power (*dé* 德), the Dao manifesting in/as/through embodied activity in the world, there is no way not to be virtuous.

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 *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), one of the most important Daoist scriptures, tells us that ordinary human beings primarily think about their lives in relation to other human beings, and so they can convince themselves of almost anything. In contrast, Daoists understand the cosmological and ecological context of existence, and so we align with the sonorous patterns of the Dao.

“It is easy to cheat when you work for humanity, but hard to cheat when you work for the heavens.”

Book of Master Zhuang, ch. 4

News

- We just completed our annual Daoist Contemplative Winter Retreat, which was held from January 8-12, 2024.
- Louis Komjathy's *Dàodé jīng* 道德經: A Daoist Contemplative Translation was recently released through Square Inch Press 方寸書社. This is an abridged, “pocket” version of the earlier book.
- The Daoist Foundation continues to develop our partnership with Stone Bowl Farm in Vermont. Inaugural onsite Daoist retreats will commence in late spring.

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