

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

A key dimension of Daoist inner cultivation (*nèixiū* 內修) involves “establishing the foundation” (*zhújī* 築基), which involves taking care of our foundational wellness and attending to virtue. This relates to vitality, in the sense of life-destiny (*mìng* 命), vital essence (*jīng* 精), and aliveness/life (*shēng* 生). While the standard Chinese and Daoist view is that one’s allotment of vitality is finite and dissipates over time, eventually resulting in complete exhaustion (death), this concerns ordinary being. In fact, our vitality can be replenished and even increased through Daoist practice. For this, we must tend to the primary sources of post-natal qi: breath, food, place, relationship, sleep.

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. Many Daoist scriptures, including the texts of classical Daoism, contain oral teachings that became collected, preserved, and transmitted in written form. These sayings represent part of Daoist oral tradition and folklore, with Daoism also having a strong storytelling tradition. In the case of early Quánzhēn 全真 (Complete Perfection), many of these teachings are preserved as discourse records (*yǔlù* 語錄).

“Eat when hungry;
Sleep when tired.”
Daoist Oral Teaching

News

- Louis Komjathy and Kate Townsend are preparing to publish *Entering Stillness: A Guide to Daoist Practice*, with a tentative release date of April 18, 2022.
- Our newly-launched, collaborative Daoist Translation Committee 道教翻譯學會 has chosen the *Bàopǔzi nèipiān* 抱朴子內篇 (Inner Chapters of Master Embracing Simplicity) as its inaugural text.
- Louis Komjathy has uploaded many of his Daoist Studies publications as well as occasional writings on his alternate homepage: www.louiskomjathy.com/taoisme

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

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