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A Time of Beginning

A new year. A new term. You may be starting new classes; you may be beginning a new job. You may be setting out with the sincere intention to keep your New Year’s resolutions. It is a time of beginning.

Beginning times can be a little scary. We don’t know all of what’s to come in the year ahead, and sometimes not knowing is more difficult and unsettling than being aware of an imminent challenge.

But beginning times are also full of promise and possibility. Each opportunity we have to begin again is a wonderfully hopeful time. We hope for success, for happiness, for progress—whatever progress means for us individually. A friend from Nova shared with me this week a message about the hopefulness of beginning times. It is a quotation by Ming Dao-Deng from his book “365 Tao – Daily Meditations.” When he sent the message, my friend said, “I believe this message can be well applied to many religious or spiritual traditions.” I pass it along in the hopes that you’ll find it inspiring.

In the words of Ming Dao-Deng: “This is the moment of embarking. All auspicious signs are in place. In the beginning, all things are hopeful. We prepare ourselves to start anew. Though we may be intent on the magnificent journey ahead, all things are contained in this first moment: our optimism, our faith, our resolution, our innocence.”

“In order to start, we must make a decision. This decision is a commitment to daily self-cultivation. We must make a strong connection to our inner selves. Outside matters are superfluous. Alone and naked, we negotiate all of life’s travails. Therefore, we alone must make something of ourselves, transforming ourselves into the instruments for experiencing the deepest spiritual essence of life.”

“Once we make our decision, all things will come to us. Auspicious signs are not a superstition, but a confirmation. They are a response. It is said that if one chooses to pray to a rock with enough devotion, even that rock will come alive. In the same way, once we choose to commit ourselves to spiritual practice, even the mountains and valleys will reverberate to the sound of our purpose.”

Whatever our faith tradition or spiritual perspective, making the decision to commit to daily cultivation and to connecting with our inner selves is sure to lead to positive transformation. In the year ahead, in the term ahead, I encourage you to watch for auspicious signs. Those moments of wonderful, surprising coming-together of things are the confirmation that you are on the right track in fulfilling your unique purpose.

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