

for beginning students

the dance 
of the eye

and 
the hand

fundamentals of Chinese brush painting by Bob Schmitt

lesson 2

- **basic brush movements**
- **basic Li Script strokes model with stroke order**

Assumptions behind the dance of the eye and the hand

As a teacher I begin with several assumptions.
Any student coming to me has 3 sets of skills to be nurtured.

First, the student has the skills of the eye - when they look at things, what do they see?

Second, the student has the set of skills of the hand - how are they able to connect what they see to the brush, the ink and the paper?

Third, the student has the set of skills of their heart/mind - how are their actions connected to the source of their energy, their spirit, the Qi?

It is from these assumptions that I now offer the dance of the eye and the hand.

These instructional videos with printable models are based on the concept that to learn Chinese brush painting one must train not only one's hand but one's eye as well.

The understanding is that continued learning is a tension between what the eye can see and what the hand can do.

And that the dance of the eye and the hand will always be in play.

That tension is always there.

Mastery is a process.

Not a destination.



Bob Schmitt

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About brush painter Bob Schmitt



I am a life long student and teacher of the traditions of Chinese brush painting.

I began my study of brush painting in 1962 watching what was then educational tv. I would sit in front of the tv after school with my brush and ink and learn basic forms. I practiced most of my life unschooled.

In the late 90s I was fortunate to begin to study with Lok Tok, Yitong Lok of Toronto and

Hong Zhang in Minneapolis—three incredibly gifted Chinese brush painters and teachers.

Since 1998 I have been a weekly student of Hong Zhang, a native of Shanghai, schooled there and now living in Bloomington, Minnesota.

I have also had a long distance relationship with Chinese master Lok Tok (now deceased) and his son Yitong Lok.

In 2001, all three of these teachers endorsed my beginning to teach Chinese painting to students here in Minneapolis.

Currently I have 40 students who before the COVID 19 pandemic came to my house for weekly instruction in Chinese calligraphy and paintings.

I also have a weekly painting practice.
To see more of my work, visit:

www/laughingwatersstudio.com

Basic Brush Movements

The term “use of brush” refers to the whole process of writing a stroke or writing a character. In Chinese calligraphy, every stroke has a beginning and an ending of the brush movement to create a line with “bone” structure. To write better Chinese calligraphy, it is important to acquire the skill of brush movement.

Beginning Stroke (*Qi Bi*)

The technique of beginning a stroke means that the tip of the brush moves in the opposite direction to the direction that the stroke will go. The result is that the stroke will have power gained from the embedding of the tip of the brush within the stroke itself. The stroke does not show a sharp beginning point.

Ending Stroke (*Shou Bi*)

As the stroke moves toward the ending place, gradually the brush is lifted to its tip. The tip is then moved in reverse direction as the stroke was going. The result is that the end of the stroke is similar to the beginning. The stroke will not show a sharp ending point.

Moving Stroke (*Xing Bi*)

This is the brush movement that occurs between the beginning and the ending of each stroke. When first learning calligraphy, it is important to practice control of the brush movement. Remember to move the brush constantly so that the stroke maintains the same width. In addition, the moving stroke can change the width of the line from thick to thin, or from thin to thick. This change corresponds to the lifting up or the pressing down of the brush.

In Chinese calligraphy, every stroke has three brush movements: a beginning, moving, and an ending.

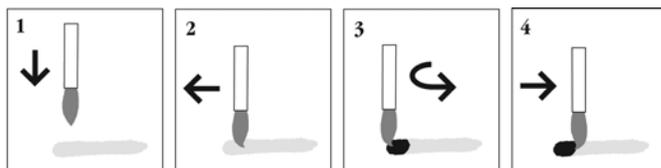
Beginning **Moving** **Ending**



It is important to think about each of these segments as you write each character.

Beginning Stroke

When the tip of the brush touches the paper, the brush begins by going in the opposite direction of the direction of the stroke.



Moving Stroke

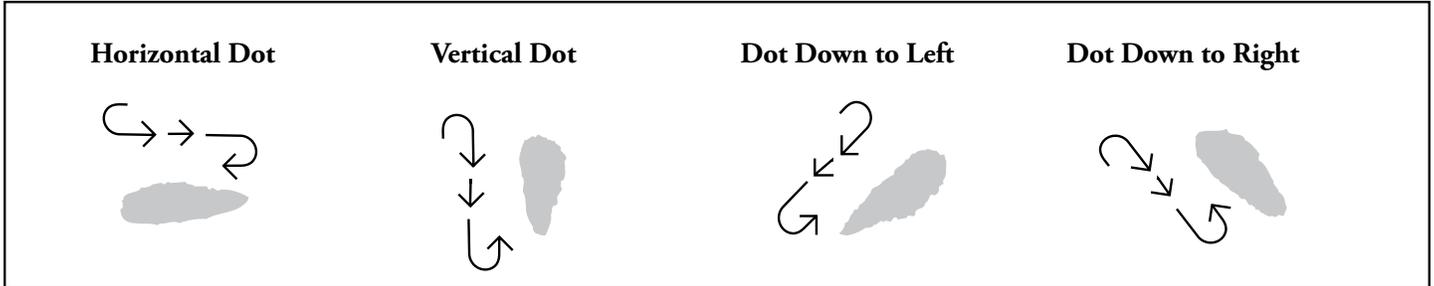
The brush is constantly moving between the beginning and the ending of the stroke.

Ending Stroke

The tip of the brush reverses direction to finish the stroke.



Basic Strokes



Dots

Dots are the most basic of strokes. There are horizontal dots, vertical dots, dots down to right, dots down to left. To ensure the strength and quality of each stroke, even the smallest of dots need to contain all three brush movements—beginning, moving and ending segments. Dots end with a lifting motion of the brush.

Since the structure of the other strokes are based on the corresponding movements of the dots, it is important to spend time practicing the dots. This will improve your brush movement technique.

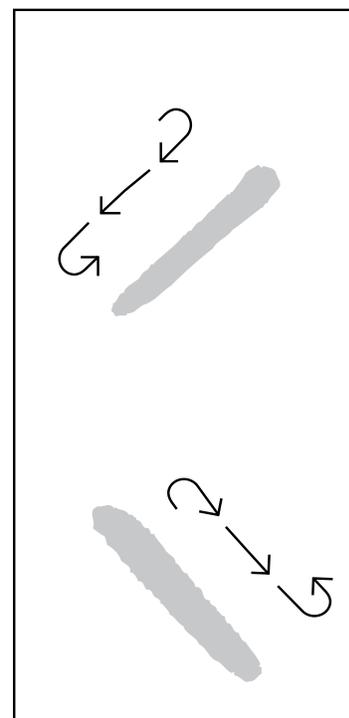
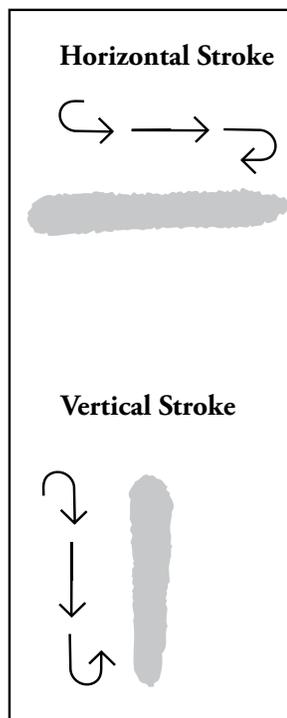
Horizontal Stroke

The horizontal stroke is similar to a horizontal dot. It has the same beginning, but the moving constantly is longer. The end of the horizontal stroke is more blunt in shape. Horizontal strokes can be long or short. The difference is in the length of the moving.

Vertical Stroke

The vertical stroke extends the vertical dot. It has the same beginning, but again the moving constantly is longer. Pay attention to keeping it vertical. The ending is similar to that of the horizontal stroke.

Stroke Down to Left



This stroke extends the dot down to left. It begins the same as dot down to left. Then it moves constantly to the desired length, and finishes with a blunt ending.

Stroke Down to Right

This stroke extends the dot down to right. It begins the same as dot down to right. Then it moves constantly to the desired length, and finishes with a blunt ending.

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Exercise 1: Model for Practicing Basic Li Script Strokes

