

for beginning students

the dance



of the eye

and



the hand

fundamentals of Chinese brush painting by Bob Schmitt

lesson 4

- **use of brush: lifting up and pressing down**
 - **connected Li Script strokes**
- **model with stroke order: basic Li Script**

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/laughingwatertsstudio.com

Lifting Up and Pressing Down

Proper use of lifting up and pressing down can give a stroke more dynamic power. The process of writing a calligraphic stroke is the movement of lifting up the brush or pressing it down. When the brush is moving on the paper, it has three positions. The position could be changed from lifting up to

pressing down, from pressing down to lifting up, or move constantly without any changes. To write better calligraphic strokes, one needs to learn and understand the method of lifting the brush up and pressing it down.

Lifting Up (*Ti*)

Lifting the brush up is the action of lifting the brush so that the brush touches the paper with less brush hair, while the brush tip is still on the paper. This differs from lifting the brush at the end of the stroke, when the brush is lifted fully away from the paper. The action of lifting the brush while writing a calligraphic stroke will result in a thinner line.

Pressing Down (*An*)

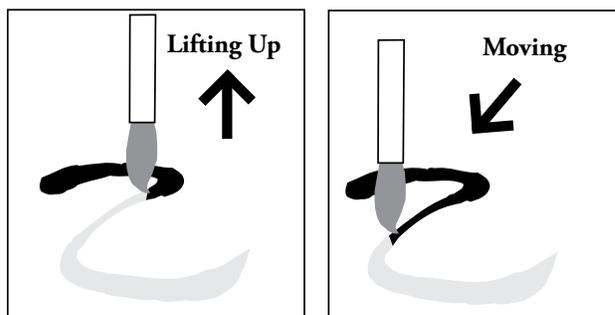
Pressing down with the brush is just the opposite of lifting up the brush. Pressing down results in a thicker line. When one presses down with the brush and at the same time stops moving the brush, and lifting it up, the tip of the brush will be able to be changed.

The results of lifting up and pressing down in a stroke will be thick and thin lines. The change in these lines will create a rhythm. This rhythm will add to the lyrical beauty of the calligraphy.

During the process of writing strokes, the change from lifting up to pressing down a brush, or vice versa, is extremely subtle and quick. These changes are reflected in the brush tip and controlled by the finger and wrist movement.

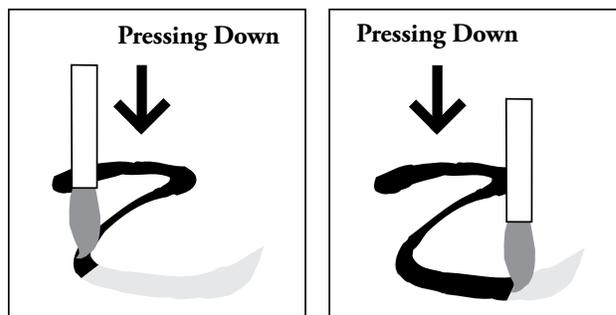
Lifting Up with the Brush

Lifting up with the brush is the technique used when the brush is moving. The tip of the brush is gradually moved away from the paper, but is still touching the paper. Lifting up will make a thinner stroke.



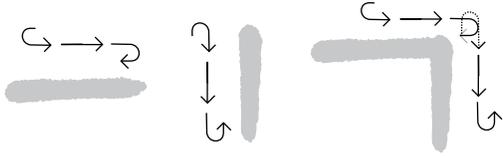
Pressing Down with the Brush

Pressing down with the brush is the technique used when the brush is moving. The tip of the brush is pressed down so more of its hair touches the paper. Pressing down will make a thicker stroke.



Connected Li Script Strokes

Strokes that are connected to each other in one movement of the brush are called connected strokes.

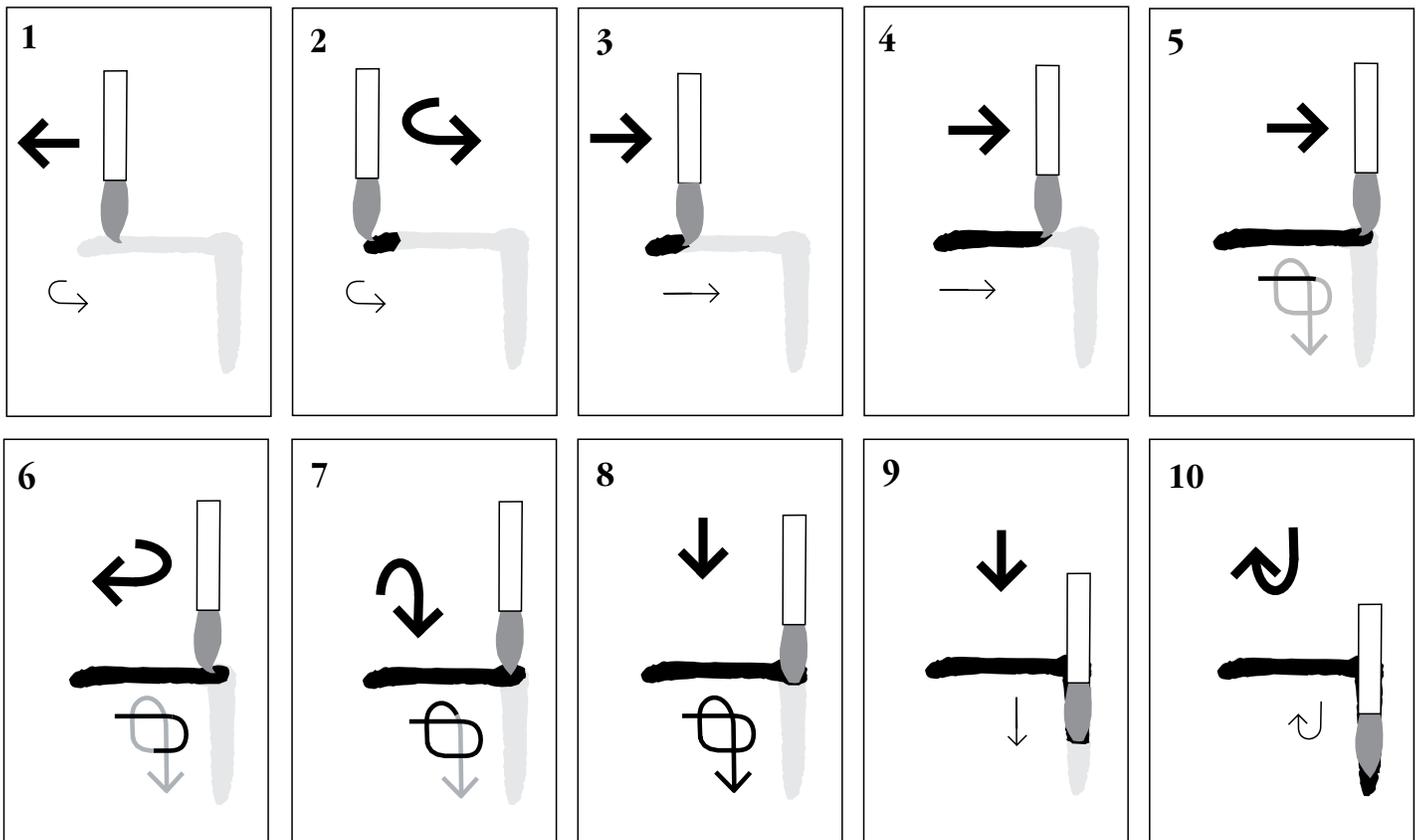


Remember each stroke has three movements.
Each connecting stroke has all three movements, but instead of lifting the brush from the paper at the end of the first stroke, the brush moves directly into the beginning of the next stroke.

Horizontal Stroke Connected to Vertical Stroke

Start with the beginning and moving segments of a horizontal stroke.

Complete the horizontal stroke with its ending segment.



But instead of lifting the brush away from the paper, immediately move into the beginning stroke of the vertical stroke, changing direction of the brush, from horizontal to vertical.

Then move vertically and complete it with an ending segment of a vertical stroke.

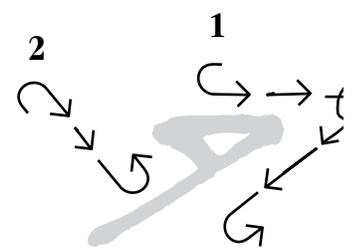
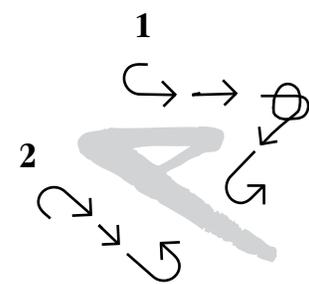
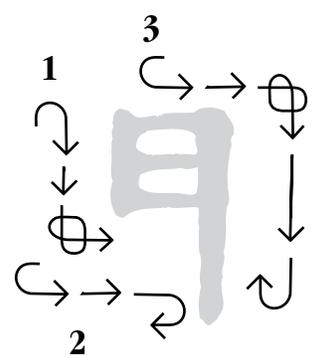
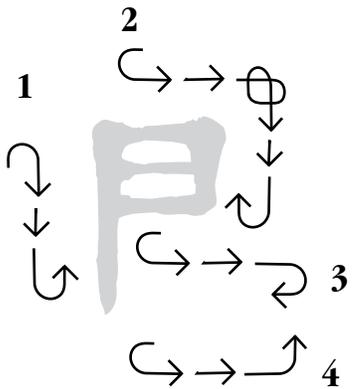
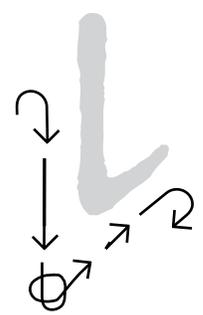
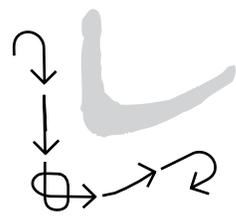
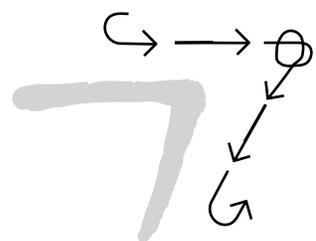
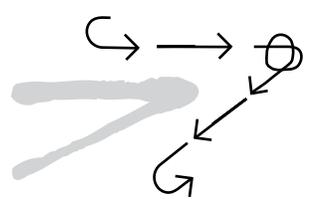
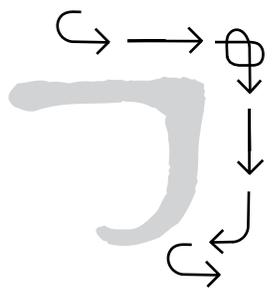
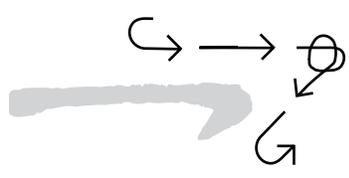
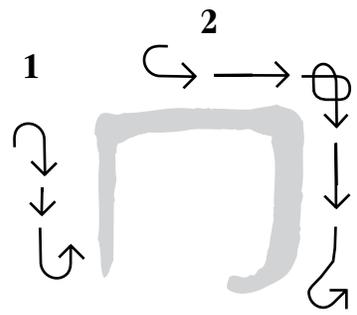
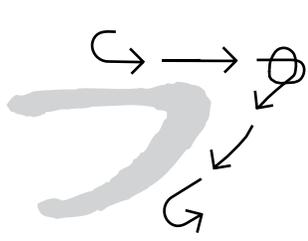
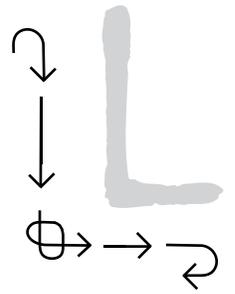
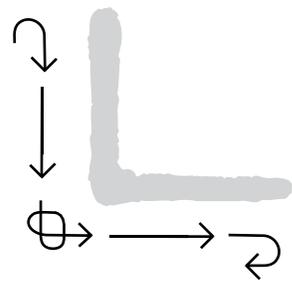
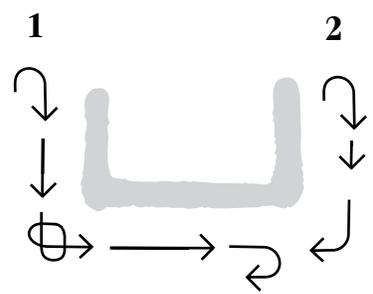
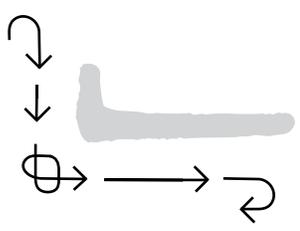
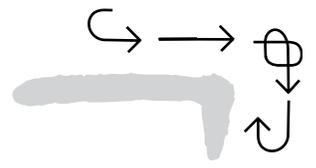
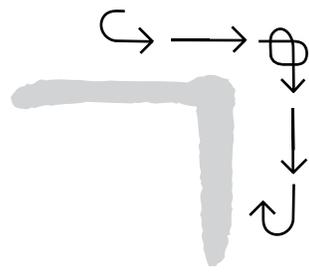
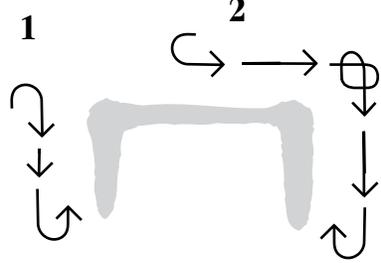
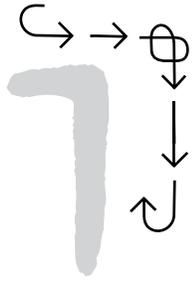
Exercise 2: Stroke Order/Direction

then column 4

then column 3

then column 2

Start with column 1
top to bottom



Exercise 2: Model for Practicing Connected Strokes

