

for beginning students

the dance



of the eye

and



the hand

fundamentals of Chinese brush painting by Bob Schmitt

lesson 6

- weight of strokes
- speed of strokes
- wave stroke
- 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

bob@laughingwatersstudio.com

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

Weight of Strokes

The concept of light and heavy strokes is closely related to the lifting up and pressing down of the brush. If the brush touches the paper lightly, there will be a thin stroke. If the brush touches the paper more heavily, there will be a thick stroke.

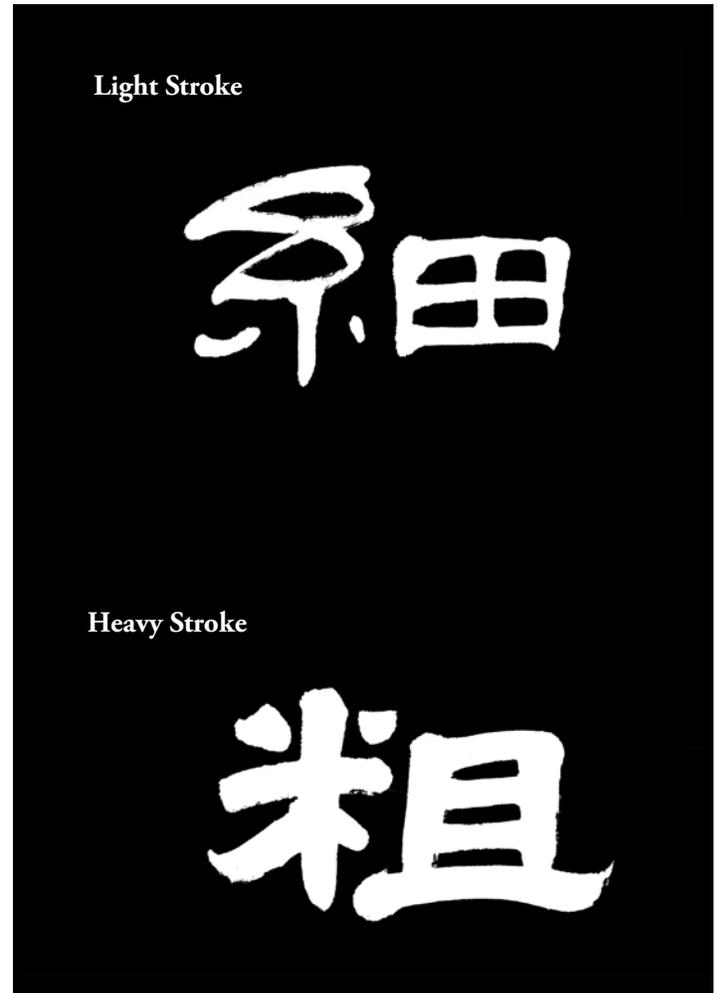
Light Stroke (*Qing*)

A stroke is generally understood to be light when less than one-third of the brush head is being used. If in one's calligraphy work, the majority of the strokes are written in this way, the work would be described as light style.

Heavy Stroke (*Zhòng*)

Otherwise, if a stroke is created using more than one-third but less than two-thirds of the brush head, it is considered to be a heavy stroke. If the majority of strokes in one's calligraphy are written in this way, the work would be considered heavy in style.

Light and heavy can also refer to a personal style. The use of light strokes can convey a feeling of elegance. The use of heavy strokes can display a feeling of strength and vigor. Both light and heavy can be used as positive attributes in creating calligraphy work.



Speed of Strokes

Swift and slow refer to the speed of the brush moving on the paper. The speed of moving the brush is a technique that relates closely to the use of ink.

Swift Movement (*Kuài*)

Moving the brush swiftly is important if the brush is loaded with a lot of ink, when the ink is not thick enough, or when the brush has a lot of water. In these conditions, to prevent the ink from spreading into shapeless strokes, one needs to move the brush swiftly.

Slow Movement (*Màn*)

If, on the other hand, the brush does not have enough ink, or the ink is very thick, one needs to slowly move the brush. Pressing down may also be required to avoid the appearance of dry stroke.

For the beginner, it is better to move the brush slowly to obtain better quality and to form the shape of the stroke well.

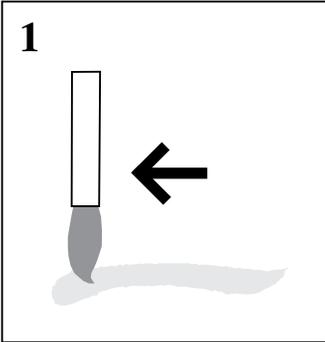
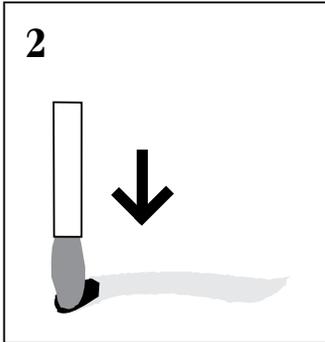
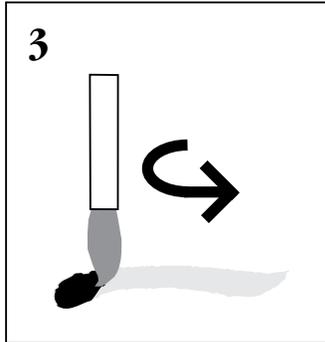
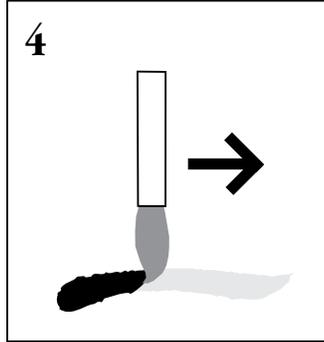
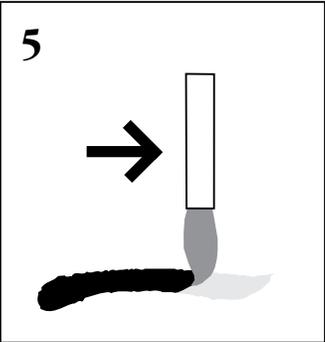
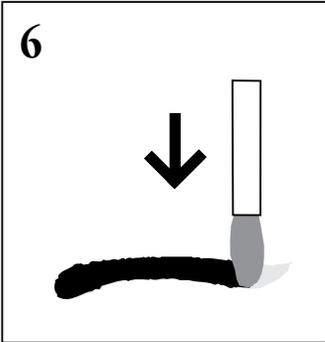
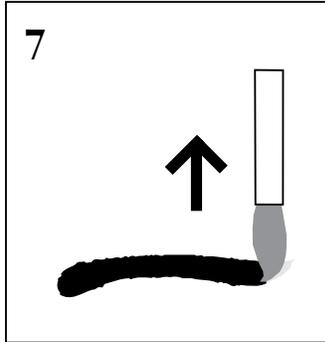
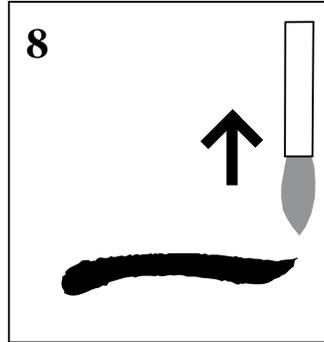
The proper use of swift and slow stroke will add to the dynamic effect and sense of rhythm of the calligraphic writing.

Wave Stroke (*Bō*)

The wave shaped stroke is the typical and representational horizontal stroke in the Li Style. It gets its name from its wavy appearance. To truly grasp the essence of Li Style, one must learn the wave stroke well. Being proficient with the wave stroke and the wave-related strokes will help you master the Li Style.

The phrase “one wavy stroke has three turns” is commonly used to praise good calligraphy work. This comes from the Li Style, most particularly the wave stroke.

The wave stroke is created with a specific technique of brush movement. It is a mistake to try to just mimic a wavy line. The movements within the stroke are important to correctly write it.

			
<p>1 Begin by gently touching the paper with the tip of the brush, going in the opposite direction. Press down and pause only</p>	<p>2 for a moment.</p>	<p>3 Then reverse direction and move to the right in a constant horizontal stroke.</p>	
			
<p>5 Continue to move to the right in a constant horizontal stroke.</p>	<p>6 Towards the end, press down, move slightly downward.</p>	<p>7 Then finish the stroke by gradually lifting the brush in the direction of the ending. This is an exposed end—so the brush does not reverse direction back into the stroke.</p>	

Exercise 3: Stroke Order/Direction

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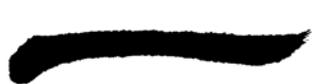
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Exercise 3: Model for Wave Stroke



At (*Yu*)



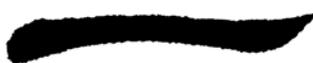
Twenty (*Er Shi*)



Sweet (*Gan*)



Harvest (*Feng*)



Ten (*Shi*)



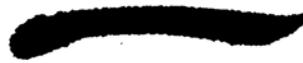
One thousand (*Qian*)



Do (*Gan*)



Cow (*Niu*)



Fourth (*Ding*)



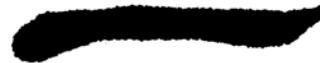
Hundred (*Bai*)



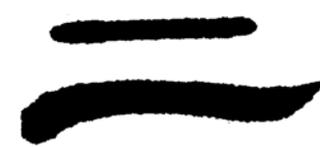
Rain (*Yu*)



Below (*Xia*)



Two (*Er*)



Three (*San*)



Work (*Gong*)



Above (*Shang*)

