

EAST ASIAN LESSON PLANS

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CHINA

SONG DYNASTY TRADITIONAL LANDSCAPE PAINTINGS

A TWO-WEEK LESSON PLAN UNIT (BASED ON A 55 MIN CLASS PERIOD)

Purpose: To expose High School Painting Students (10 –12), to Chinese Culture and Chinese traditional landscape painting

1. How cultural differences affect painting processes?
2. What tools and techniques?
3. How is the painting created and laid out?

Rationale: Teach new ideas and art concepts, while reinforcing others, through a Chinese cultural tradition.

Materials:

1. Copy of the book, *The Way of Chinese Painting: Its Ideas and Techniques*.
- 2.

Sze, Mai-Mai. *The Way of Chinese Painting: Its Ideas and Techniques*. New York, New York. Vintage Books a Division of Random House. 1959. Second Publishing. With selections from the Seventeenth-Century *Mustard Seed Garden Manual*.

3. Copy of the book *Principals of Chinese Painting*.

Rowley, George. *Principals of Chinese Painting*. Revised Edition. Princeton, New Jersey. Princeton University Press. 1970. First Paperback Printing.

(A more up to date resource could be, how to painting guide book like “Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape: *The Power of Illusion in Chinese Painting*”, Brill Academic Publishers, Incorporated; or “*Poetry and Painting in Song China: The Subtle Art of Dissent*”, Harvard University Press. Many more could found on booksellers websites.)

4. A guest speaker who is knowledgeable on contemporary Chinese Culture. (I am fortunate to have a colleague, the school librarian, Karen Wallis, who has had two extensive working trips to China setting up a library.)

5. “KWL” Worksheet-

- K -representing what students already know about China and Chinese landscape painting
- W- representing what they would like to learn
- L- representing what they learned (note taking)

1. Worksheet with a blank “Venn Diagram”

2. Traditional style Chinese lettering/painting bamboo brushes

3. Ink (dispensers/ink wells) and or Watercolors

4. Water-cups and paper toweling

5. Large flat surface to work on

6. Large and small sheets of watercolor paper in a scroll style format. Scraps or 8 ½” x 11” watercolor paper.
7. Handouts with traditional Chinese painting terms. Excerpted from the *Way of Chinese Painting: Its Ideas and Techniques*. Pages 134 –135)
8. Handouts with examples of traditional shapes, lines, and techniques used to paint landscapes (Excerpted from the “*Way of Chinese Painting: Its Ideas and Techniques*”. Pages 156,160-165,174,188,198-201, 222, 223)
9. Lecture notes to go with Power Point. (Slide show)
10. Grading Rubric for Paintings
11. Power point presentation (or slides if more readily available) of the following Slides:

Slide 1:

Traditional Chinese Painting
Bringing Heaven down to Earth
hoping harmony and dignity will prevail

Slide 2:

- China land of tradition*
- The ancient tradition of Chinese painting grew from the older tradition of written Chinese language.
 - The written forms in Chinese language have remained unchanged for more than three thousand years.
 - The art of calligraphy (brush lettering) is regarded as the highest of all art forms.

Slide 3:

Calligraphy meets painting
“Bamboo.” Wen Tong, Northern Song dynasty; hanging scroll.
<http://www.albany.edu/faculty/hartman/eac280/39.html>

Slide 4:

- Height of ancient Chinese painting*
- **Beginning with the Han Dynasty in 206 B.C. the human figure dominated in Chinese Painting, (just as it did in the West.)**
 - **But in the ninth century the subject matter/ focus in Chinese painting began to change, and concentrated on landscapes.**
 - **Several landscapes paintings dating from the early part of the 12th century, (era of South Sung court), are regarded as the finest examples of traditional Chinese painting.**

Slide 5: “*The Admonitions of the Court Instructress*”, Detail, Attributed to Gu Kaizhi, Six Dynasties period.
<http://vandyck.anu.edu.au/introduction/china/1.24-03b.jpg>

Slide 6:

“*Early Spring*”, Guo Xi, dated 1072, Northern Song Dynasty.
<http://www.chineseliterature.com.cn/artsalon/image/guoxi.jpg>

Slide 7:

“*Travelers Amid Streams and Mountains*”, Detail: Fan Kuan, Northern Song Dynasty; hanging scroll
<http://artyzm.com/world/k/kuan/travelers.htm>

Slide 8:

One corner composition

•Later an Academy of 13th century painters adopted a one corner composition style, shifting the balance in the picture.

•The brush stroke, at this time in Chinese painting is the ultimate focus.

Slide 9:

“Walking on a Path in Spring”, Ma Yuan, Southern Song dynasty.

http://www.moifa.bravehost.com/content/history/history_southern_song.htm

Slide 10:

The spirit of painting

•Eastern and tribal peoples DO NOT separate the act of worshipping from art making. Making art is a form of worship!

•Traditional Chinese painting is influenced by and influences 3 distinct forms of Philosophies/Religions; Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

Slide 11:

Three Religions

•Daoism- It embraces spontaneity and nonconformity of nature. An effort to live in harmony in nature or the “The Indescribable Way”, balancing between the positive, Yang, forces and the negative, Yen, forces. Daoism is the corner stone of traditional Chinese landscapes.

•Confucianism- Focuses on duty of the individual, ridged hierarchal social order, and a clear defined code of moral behavior.

Slide 12:

Three Religions continued

•Buddhism- A Indian religion adapted by the Chinese; focuses on peaceful harmony and balance with every living thing on heaven and earth.

•Although the three beliefs systems seem to be contradictory, the Chinese people have learned to incorporate and interweave all three religions in a positive constructive way.

Slide 13:

West verses East

(Image comparison between the two following Images)

1. “A Solitary Temple Amid Clearing Peaks”, Attributed to Li Cheng, Five Dynasties period-Northern Song dynasty. <http://margotte.w.interia.pl/chiny/obrazy/licheng.jpg>

2. “78th Spring (Spring in Stockbridge), Norman Rockwell http://www.townofstockbridge.com/Public_Documents/0000FD29-80000001/000AAA99-000F8513-1/stockbridge_springs.jpg

Activities:

1. K and W of KWL
2. Speaker- L of KWL
3. Presentation of Power Point introducing Chinese Paintings’ origins, changes, meanings and significances. Continue to fill L on KWL.
4. Venn Diagram on Eastern and Western painting styles at the end of power point. Start individually then share with assigned partners and then whole class discussion. (Major concepts- Monochromatic vs. Realistic color schemes, Line dominance vs. dominance of Form, Elongated scroll format vs. rectangular landscape format, Negative unpainted areas vs. Painted all over, multiple equally dominate focal points vs. Major and minor focal points, painting approaches- complete one section fully before moving on vs. painting continuously across the whole format until finished, writing often incorporated vs. rarely incorporated, ink vs. paint, silk or paper vs. canvas or wood, Atmospheric perspective vs.

Linear perspective. Both subjugate people and buildings focus on nature as subject, both linear aspects for trees, both show distance using size and fewer details.)

5. Go over terms handout and start practicing painting traditional shapes, lines and technique from techniques packet. **Important- the paintbrush (as in Chinese calligraphy) is always held at a 90° angle to paint surface unless otherwise indicated or washing.**
6. Instructor demonstrates while student practice using watercolor. After mastering shape and technique they will add values with washes.
7. Go over Rubric to inform students how they will be assessed and what they need to accomplish.
8. Students will complete one or two small Chinese style paintings, scroll format, to practice putting together the individual techniques. At this point students may try ink instead of the watercolors. Instructor stresses using size to show distance, use of unpainted space to show mists, water, or highlights, monochromatic color scheme, proper brush position, line dominance, washes for depth, shadow, and detail, painting one section completely before moving to the next, and encourage student to research Chinese characters to add to paintings.
9. Students will complete a large scroll formatted painting utilizing the best concepts from the small painting(s).
10. Quiz over painting unit.
11. Displaying artworks with a brief description to educate others.

Assessments:

1. Discussion
2. Instructor observations
3. Quiz over lectures and major painting concepts
4. Complete a one corner style composition as one of the weekly watercolor sketch paintings (completed at home) using the Chinese traditional style
5. KWL
6. Venn Diagram
7. Completed Artworks
8. Student Self Assessment on rubric and self critique sheet

Grade Adaptation:

Lower- Middle school could focus on fewer aspects of the traditional Chinese painting. For example landscapes that are monochromatic, using lines and value washes, in a one corner compositional style.

Fourth and fifth grades could focus on landscapes that are monochromatic with lines and washes.

Third and fourth grades could focus on landscapes that are monochromatic with lines

Higher adaptations- At the college level:

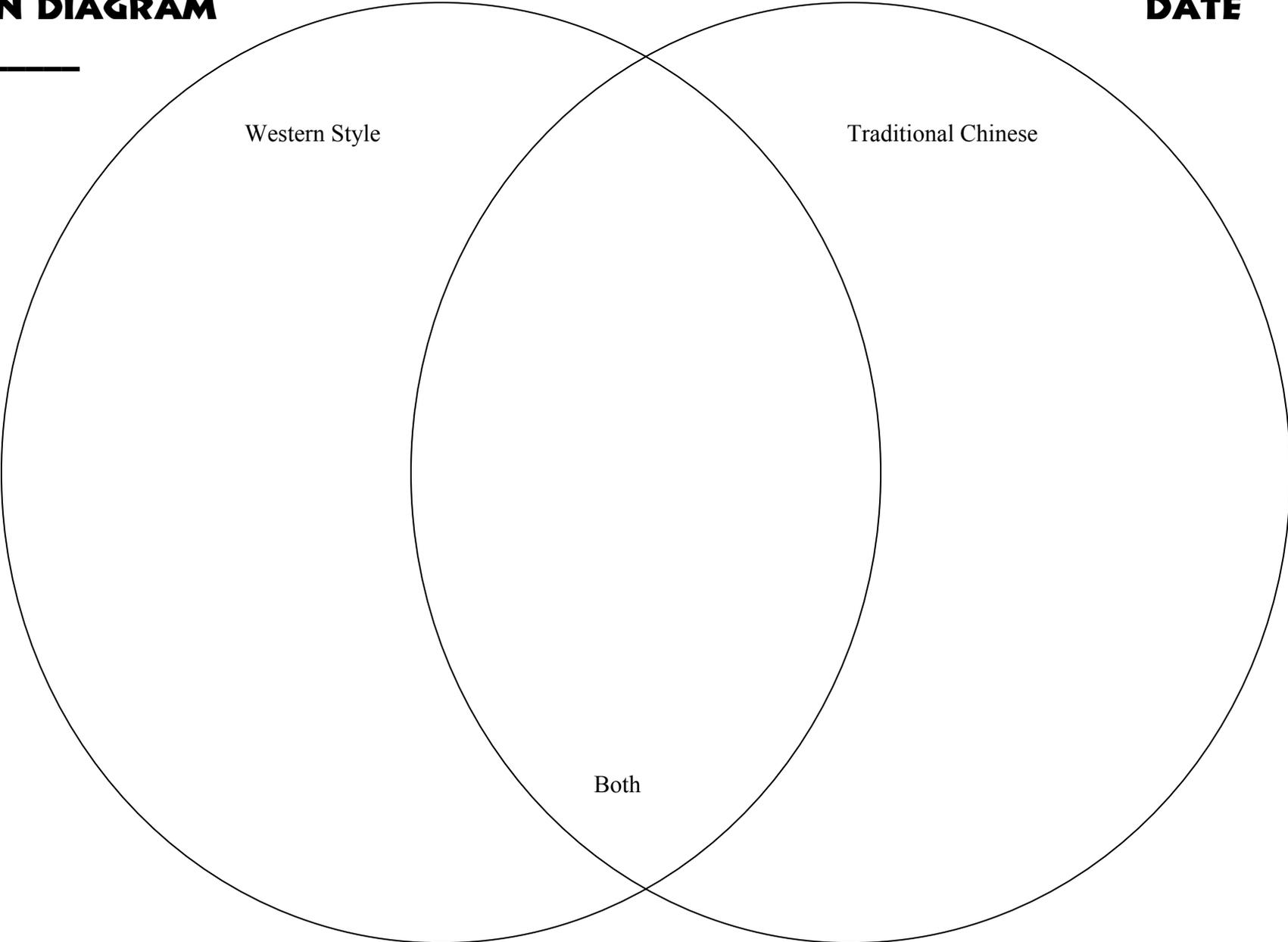
- Students could be required to complete a research paper on the Aesthetic concepts in traditional Chinese Landscapes while in an Art History course.
- In a studio course students could be required to complete large length silk scroll using ink, displaying the traditional Chinese landscapes styles.
- Students could create a large scale landscape triptych (3 part composition) in the traditional Chinese style

Standards:

- Exploring color relationships/ color theory
- Painting techniques
- Integration of modern culture and cultural history
- Incorporating Art history (DBAE -Discipline Based Art Education)
- Cross curriculum- writing notes and Quizing
- Incorporating Art Criticism while comparing and contrasting (DBAE)
- Incorporating Art Criticism and personal Aesthetics in self grading and critiquing (DBAE)

VENN DIAGRAM

DATE



NAME _____

PARTNER _____

KWL NAME _____

What you know (About this subject- list)

What you learned (Notes)

Continue notes on back

What you would like to learn (Write 3 questions – during lecture/presentation write answers to question down.)

1.

2.

3.

Name _____

Date _____

Open Note Test on Traditional Chinese Painting (12 points + 2 bonus points)

Circle and label the focal point(s). On the attached copy of the reproduction of "*Early Springs*". (2 points)

Briefly explain why Traditional Chinese Paintings have unpainted areas on the ground/format/paper. (2 points)

List the **three** religions/ spiritual beliefs that influence Traditional Chinese Painting. (3 points)

This Chinese landscape "*Early Spring*," painted in ink is basically making use of what color scheme? (1 point)

In your opinion, why was the painting named "*Early Spring*"? Write your answer describing elements in the painting that support your opinion. (2 points)

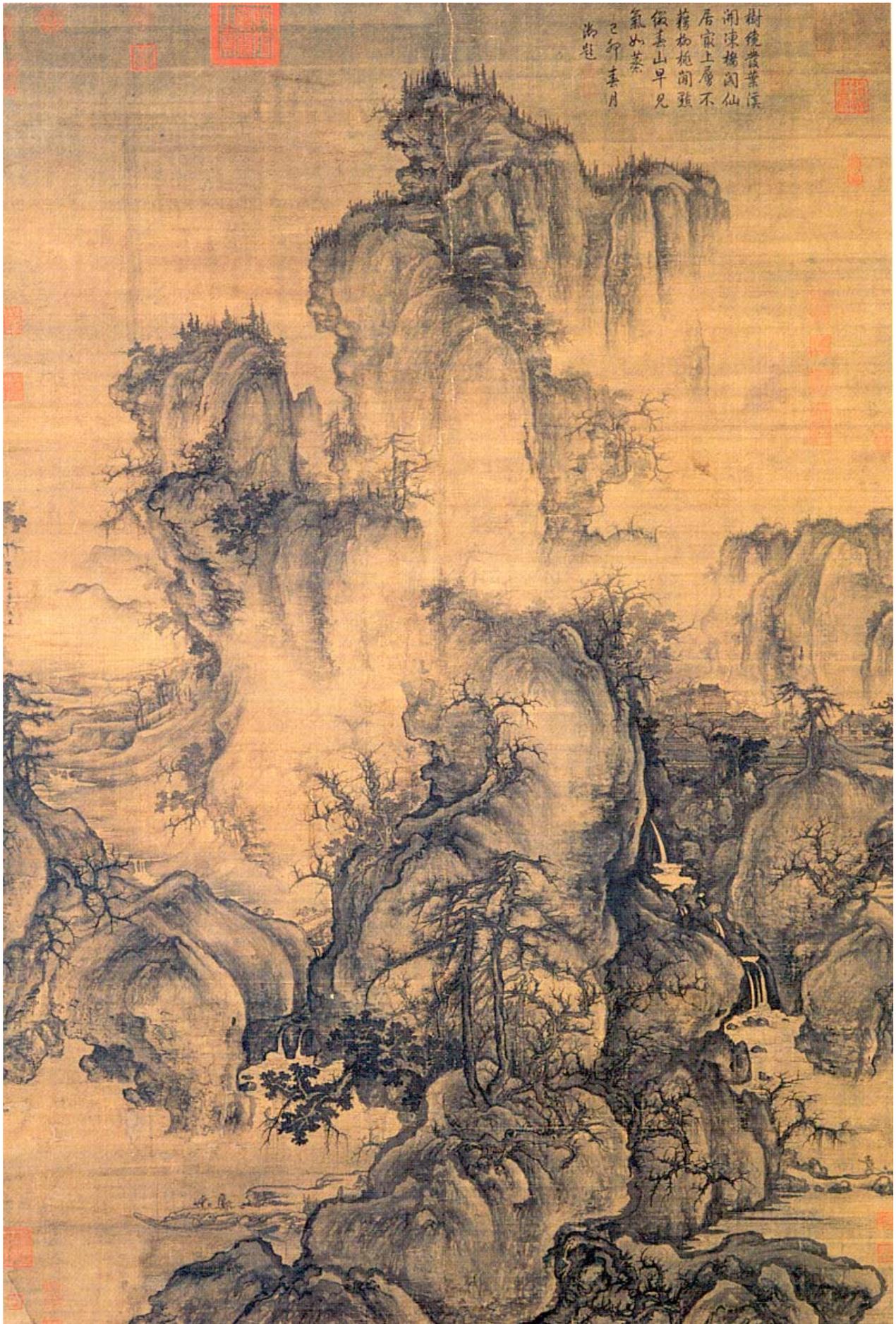
The Chinese word for brush is _____ and the word for ink is _____ . (1 point ea. Answer)

Bonus/ Extra credit (Worth 1 point each)

B 1. Chinese civilization began some _____ years before the birth of Christ.

B 2. Beginning with the Han Dynasty in 206 B.C. the human figure dominated in Chinese Painting, just as it did in the West. But in the ninth century the subject matter/ focus in Chinese painting began to change, and concentrated on _____?

樹從蒼葉溪
開陳樹閻仙
居家上層不
藉物施間豎
依去山早見
氣如蒸
己卯春月
洪起



Chinese Painting Terms Ancient Chinese saying- *Yu pi yu mo*
(*Have brush, have ink*) (How can there be painting without brush and ink?)
(Excerpted from the *Way of Chinese Painting* by Mai-mai See. Pages 134 –135)

Pi –Brush

Mo- Ink

Wua (revolving)- Applying the brush with light ink, around and around, stroke by stroke

Ts'un (brushstrokes for modeling or wrinkles)- Using the tip of the brush obliquely (at a 45° angle)

Hsuan (wash)- Applying three or four light ink washes

Hua (cleansing)- An ink wash soaking the whole painting

Tsu (grasping)- Holding the brush upright for horizontal or vertical strokes

Cho (pulling up)- Holding the brush upright and using the pointed tip

Tien (dotting)-Applying the tip of the brush (Tien is used in painting figures and things-Jen wu; and for mosses and leaves)

Hau (drawing or outlining)- Outlining with the brush (For drawing building, towers, and pine and fur needles)

Jan (painting or applying a wash)- Applying light washes on the silk (or paper) of the picture, to indicate mists without traces of brushstrokes

Tzu (saturating)- Traces of the brush showing in the painting of clouds or rippling water.

Fen (dividing or distinguishing)- In painting waterfalls, drawing on the natural color of the silk (paper) with the dry brush and light ink

Wu pi (not having brush)- To know how to outline peaks but not know the strokes for modeling (ts'un)

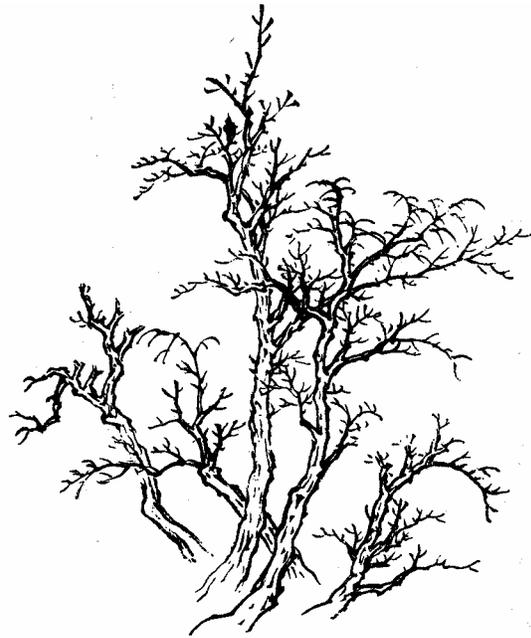
Wu mo (not having ink)- To know the strokes but not know how to handle ink tones to indicate the nuances separating near from far, clouds from reflections, and light from shadow

Wang Sshu-shan said "He who had command of his (or her) brush should not allow the brush to control him (or her)"

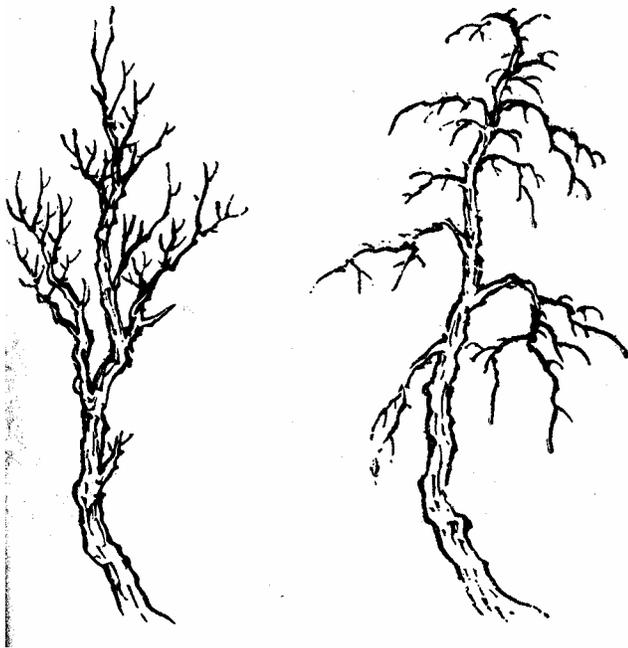
Chinese Painting From "The Way of Chinese Painting" written by Mai-mai Sze. 1959. Vintage Books: A Division of Random House. New York



Basic structure of the four main branches



Trunks and main branches of five trees

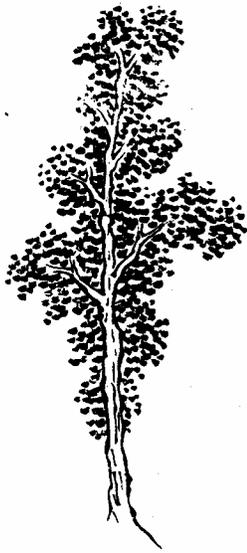


Examples of Stag-horn and crab-claw brush strokes



Examples of exposed roots

Types of foliage



Mouse tracks
(Dotting)



Chrysanthemum
(Star or flower shape)

Dotting Leaves

Small eddies
(Directly below)

The character
Chieh (below)



Pine needles
(Middle left)



Hanging vine
(Middle right)



Plum blossom
(Bottom left)



The character Ko
(Bottom right)



Three strokes coming together (Top left)



Water grass (Top right)



Dropping grass (Middle left)



Sharp points (Middle right)



Split brush points (Bottom left)

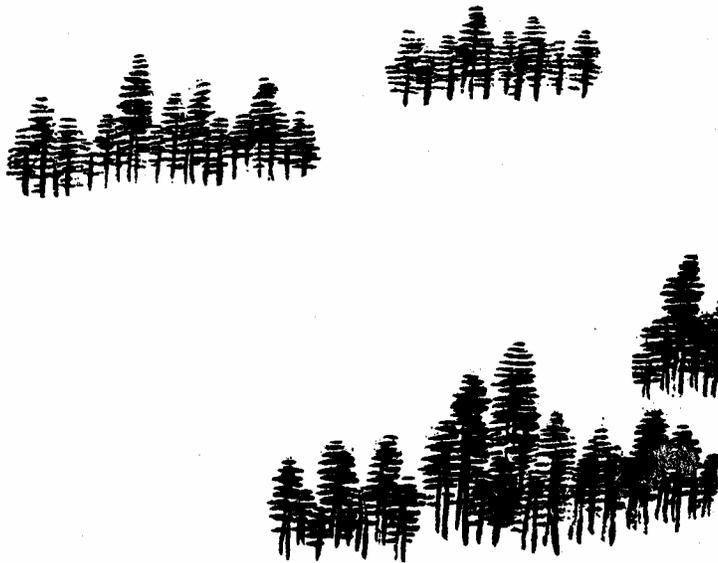


Sprig of Red-leaf leaves (Bottom right)

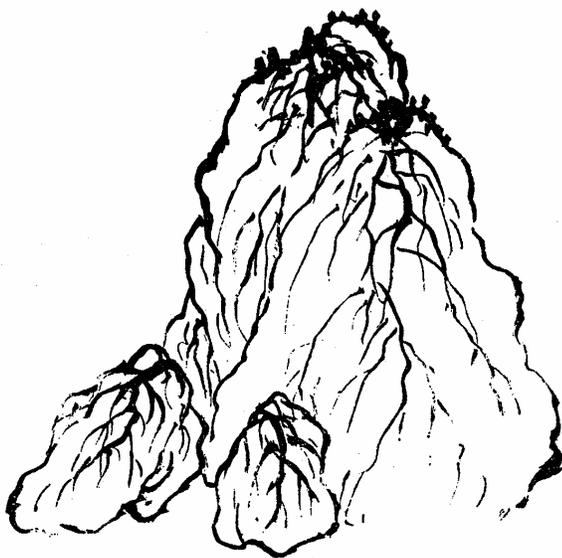


Tung Yuang's style of painting trees in the distance

(Trees in a distance should be painted and dotted in the same manner)



Reeds and rushes

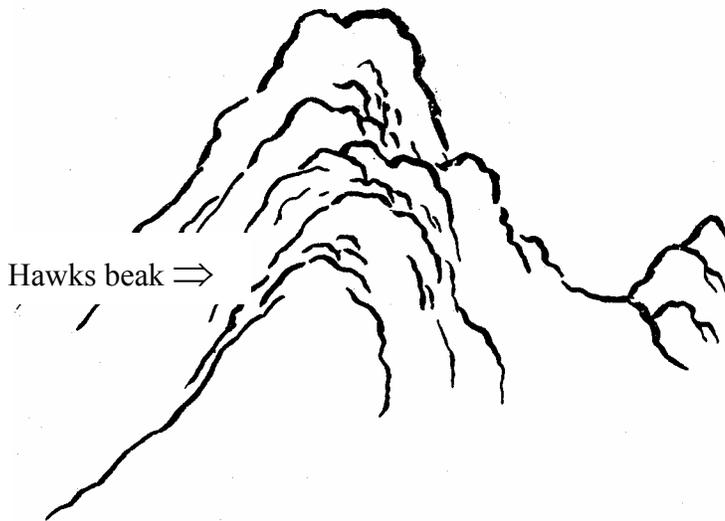


Rock painted with brushstrokes like a lotus leaf



Rock painted with brush strokes like iron bands

Skull of the mountain



Method of beginning to paint mountains

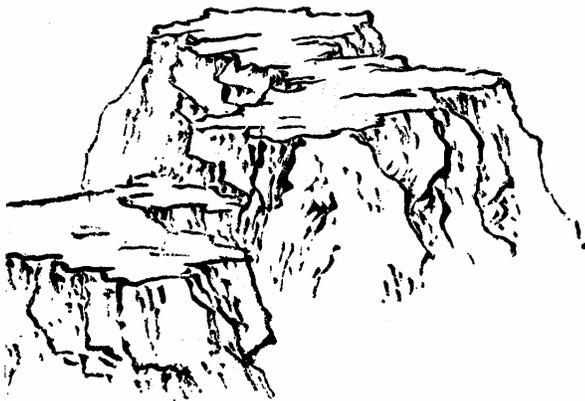
First establish the outline called *lun k'uo* (also called wagon wheel rims) Afterwards come the brush strokes in modeling.

Ancient Chinese painters divided the scroll (format) into 3 or 4 sections painting and fully completing details in each section before one before moving on to the next. This may be one reason why Traditional Chinese paintings have multiple focal points.

(Western style painting usually focuses on one main focal point, adding lesser points to add variety and interest to the composition.)

Ancient Chinese painters paint and describe mountain features in terms of the human body.

“When painting mountains the first brush strokes outline the central most peak (the nose on the face of the mountain-Hawk’s beak).” Then you must estimate “the body of the mountain by placing its head; the brushstroke encompassing the mountain range (*chang kai*) marks the top of the skull of the mountain.” All the other features of the mountain and the trees, houses, and foliage are placed in relation to the beak and skull of the mountain, forming its body.



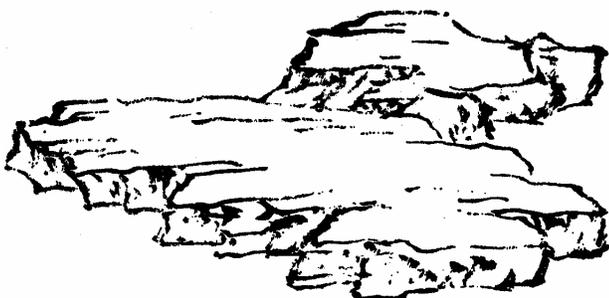
Painting slopes and plateaus- (Plateaus of rock, earth, or both)

Their form depends on where they are placed in the picture. “They should be flat when placed at the summit of a mountains and expansive at the base.” They should have a solid base, like a bowl turned upside-down.

“Brushstrokes indicating the sides of plateaus should strong and firmly joined, for they depict earth and rock that has stood long” against the forces of nature.

Two types of brushstrokes commonly used are the “*P'i ma ts'un* (Brush strokes like spread out hemp fibers) combined with a *few fu pi ts'un* (ax cut strokes).

“... These forms should have an air of complete naturalness, born of Heaven.”



Lecture Notes for Chinese painting

China is home to the only man made structure that is visible from the surface of the moon- the Great Wall. China is the third largest country in the world and is home to more than 1/5 of the world's population. Numerous mountain chains dot the Chinese landscape, dividing the country into distinct Northern and Southern regions. Despite a history of bitter civil wars and foreign invasions, Chinese culture and art traditions have survived for thousands of years, thanks to the Chinese knack for blending tradition with innovation. A good example of Chinese enduring traditions is the Chinese written language. Whether it is painted with a brush or cut into stone, it remains virtually unchanged since its first appearance more than three thousand years ago.

The art of calligraphy has traditionally been regarded as the highest of all art forms. Mastery of the brush, whether used to write a poem or paint a picture, is recognized in traditional Chinese culture, as the hallmark of the educated person. Materials and techniques used to practice calligraphy and painting is essentially the same. In the beginning, Chinese painters wrote and painted on bamboo sticks, later on silk, and eventually on paper mostly using ink..

Chinese paintings are traditionally mounted as hanging scrolls or hand scrolls, both of which are traditionally rolled for storage. Smaller paintings, in various geometrical shapes were often pasted into albums that could be unfolded so all the paintings could be viewed at once or mounted as pages in a book. Chinese paintings often include a poem or other inscription by the artist or art collectors.

Several painting has been found from the early part of the twelfth century and is regarded as the finest examples of traditional Chinese painting. The South Sung court

style of landscape painting had a concern for supremacy of surface composition combined with the elegance of fine ink drawing. To portray depth in the paintings, painters turned their attention to atmospheric space. The illusion of distance was achieved through carefully tinted washes, unpainted areas, and careful attention to scale. In the great traditional Southern Sung artists used ink on silk for their paintings, but some artists were beginning to use paper more and more.

Later an Academy of 13th century painters adopted the one corner composition style, shifting the balance of the picture. It is at this time in Chinese painting history that the brush stroke, itself, becomes an important consideration.

Traditional Chinese painting cannot be properly discussed or studied unless you consider the spiritual influences of the Chinese culture on the arts. “Despite their seeming contradictions, Daoism and Confucianism are the backbones of ancient Chinese culture. Confucianists focus on the duty of the individual, a ridged hierarchal social order, and a clear defined code of moral behavior. Daoist, on the other hand, embraced spontaneity and nonconformity in an effort to live in harmony with nature or the “Indescribable Way” known as the Dao or (Toa). Daoism and Confucianism share common ground in their shared concern with living life in harmony and balance. Later Buddhism was imported into China; it was gradually adopted and incorporated into Chinese culture.

To understand Chinese culture it is necessary to understand how the traditional Chinese view mankind’s position in the universe. In China, heaven, earth, and man are perceived as links in a great cosmic chain. The emperor- the son of the heaven- is the mediator between heaven and earth.

Chinese also traditionally believe that nature operates through an ever shifting balance of yin (dark, passive forces) and yang (light and active forces, subtly sifting to maintain balance. In China, concepts of negatives and positives are not viewed as opposites but as complements

Chinese artistic values are different than from our own Western based art concepts. Western-based art is usually a public affair and extols the Greek concept of man being the all measure of things. In China, creating and viewing art is considered to be a private meditative or contemplative process. Chinese traditionally value the individual brushstrokes, where as, we Westerners highly value the painted illusion. Brushstrokes, imitation, and tradition are regarded highly in Chinese Art. But Chinese artists and critics both warn new painters against habitual imitation and set habits that could result in lifeless pictures that are in denial of the Toa (Dao).

For the ancient Chinese, painting was an act of reverence, ritual, worship, and celebration. Painting was a literal attempt to bring heaven down to earth in hope that harmony and dignity might prevail here on earth.