

The Art of the Brush in China and Japan Educator Guide



INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART
2007

Table of Contents

I. Educator Guide Introduction.....	3
II. Glossary	4
III. Image Handouts	5
IV. Activities	8
1. Chinese and Japanese Calligraphy	
2. Chinese and Japanese Brush Painting	
V. Bibliography.....	14
VI. Additional Resources from the Dutton Center	15

The Art of the Brush in China and Japan

Educator Guide Introduction

Using This Educator Guide

This teaching resource was created to introduce students to Asian brushwork. Chinese and Japanese calligraphy and brush painting are featured as examples of writing and painting using only ink, a brush and rice paper. These art forms combine basic materials with sophisticated processes and ideas to create imagery that is admired for its quiet beauty. Students will practice using these materials and techniques to make their own works of art.

The IMA also offers many other opportunities to learn about Asian art. Visit the museum for a tour of the galleries or visit the *In the Garden of Antiquities: Views of Chinese Art from the IMA* online activity on our website (www.imamuseum.org).

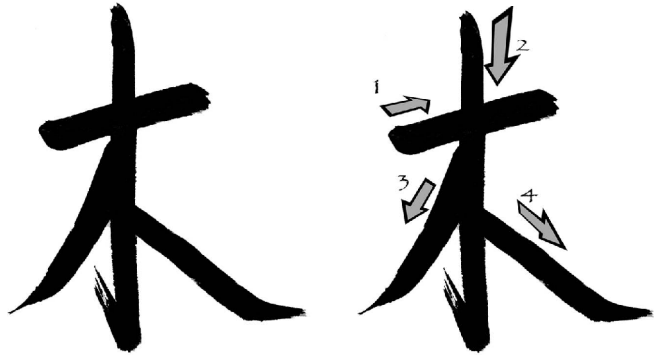
Helpful Hints

- Use this guide to assist you in lesson planning.
- Activities are given grade level recommendations and have appropriate standards listed for each one.
- Each activity has an estimated amount of time needed to complete an activity. Activities are generally divided into one or two, 30-minute sessions. The 30-minute format is designed to give you time for pre and post discussion or prep and clean up for production activities.
- Images of the Chinese and Japanese paintings can be printed out in hardcopy and given to students or projected digitally in the classroom (images can be found by typing the accession number into our “Search the Collection” feature on our website (www.imamuseum.org)).

Glossary

calligraphy	the art of writing with brush and ink in many Asian cultures
character	symbol comprised of strokes that denotes a word or syllable
composition	elements such as line, shape, light and color that make up a work of art
hand scroll	a portable horizontal painting format, typically with one horizontal composition, which is rolled for storage when not on display. The painting, on paper or silk, is mounted to backing papers for support. Although the hand scroll is often shown in its entirety in museum displays, historically a hand scroll would be viewed by one person who would unroll the painting from right to left in sections.
hanging scroll	a portable vertical painting format with one vertical composition which is rolled for storage when not on display. The painting, on paper or silk, is mounted to backing papers for support and decorative borders are added to the edges. The hanging scroll is displayed by hanging the painting from a cord. Once hung the entire composition is presented.
kanji	Chinese characters used in Japanese language
literati	painters who practiced outside the more restrictive confines of the court and who were members of the scholar–official class, for whom amateur painting and calligraphy was a means of expressing intellectual and moral superiority to the professional court painters. <small>© Oxford University Press 2006</small>
monochromatic	a composition made with only one color
stroke order	the order in which each brush stroke is added to construct a character
seals	Chinese seals are stamps made of bronze, gold, silver, jade, ivory, wood or stone, used as a sign of rank for government officials and for the authentication of documents or works of art. <small>© Oxford University Press 2006</small>
Three Perfections	In Chinese art, the arts of painting, poetry and calligraphy are referred to as the “Three Perfections”, as there is a close interconnection between these three arts.

Character Stroke Order



Stroke order for the “tree”



Stroke order for the “fire”



Stroke order for the “rain”



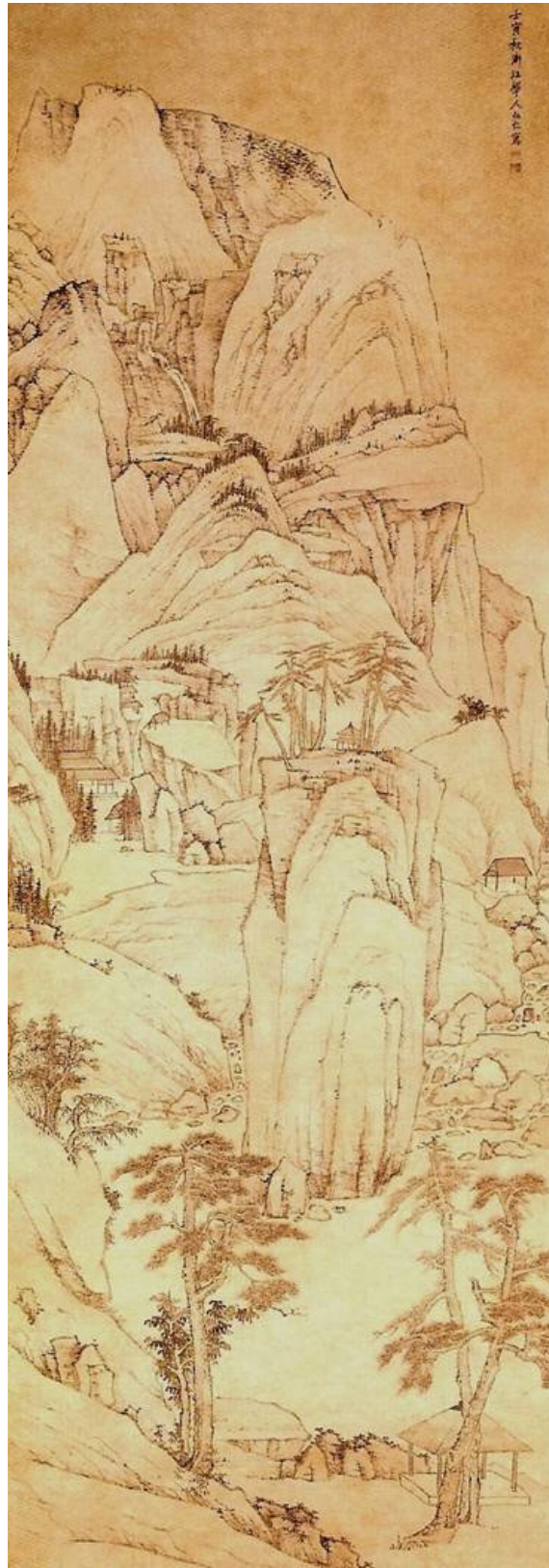
Stroke order for the “flower”



Chen Hongshou, Chinese, 1599-1652
Birthday Celebration (Immortals Celebrating a Birthday), 1649
Ink and color on silk
Accession Number: 2004.13



Shen Zhou, Chinese, 1427-1509
Three Catalpa Trees, c. 1481
 Ink on paper
 Accession Number: 60.140



Hongren, Chinese, 1610-1663
Monumental Landscape, 1662
Ink on paper
Accession Number: 2004.3



Kano Tan'yu, Japanese, 1602-1674
Scholar Viewing a Lake
Edo period, 1600-1868
Ink and light color on paper
Accession Number: 2000.64



Xining, Qinghai Province
Landscape with Yellow River



Mountain View from the Great Wall 1



Mountain View from the Great Wall 2

Activity 1: Chinese and Japanese Calligraphy

Recommended for Grades K-12

One or Two, 30-minute session(s) depending on grade level

Objectives

- Students will practice writing Chinese characters using ink and brushes.
- Students will consider the complexity of the process of writing calligraphy.

Indiana Academic Standards met by this activity

Visual Art: K.2.1, K.3.1, K.8.1, K.9.2, K.12.1, K.13.2, 1.1.1, 1.1.3, 1.2.3, 1.5.2, 1.8.1, 1.9.3, 1.13.2, 2.1.1, 2.1.3, 2.2.3, 2.3.1, 2.9.2, 2.13.2, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.2.1, 3.3.1, 3.5.2, 3.9.2, 3.13.2, 4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.3.1, 4.9.2, 4.13.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1, 5.9.2, 6.1.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, 6.9.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.2.2, 7.3.1, 7.9.2, 8.1.1, 8.1.3, 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.3.1, 8.9.2, 8.13.2, H.1.2, H.1.3, H.2.1, H.2.2, H.7.3, H.9.1

Social Studies: K.5.1, 1.5.5, 2.5.3, 7.5.5, S.2.1

Supplies

- Video—*An Introduction to Calligraphy with Hirokazu Kosaka*
These video segments can be found by visiting the IMA website (www.imamuseum.org) and clicking on the “Interact” tab. Links to the IMA pages on iTunes U and YouTube are located there.
- Character stroke order handout for 4 different characters
- Images of Chinese paintings in the IMA’s collection that include calligraphy—*Chen Hongshou and Shen Zhou* (digitally projected or printed out hardcopy)

The following supplies can be purchased at your local art supply store or online at a supplier such as www.enasco.com or www.dickblick.com

- Small, disposable containers for ink
- 30 brush pens
- 30 bamboo brushes in a variety of sizes)
- Ink
- Blank newsprint paper
- Rice paper

Introduction

The **characters** used in Chinese and Japanese language are often viewed as inaccessible to the Western eye due to the stark contrast between this type of writing and the Romanized alphabet. However, the construction of characters and their meaning are often poetic and artistic, originating from ancient pictographs and being simplified over time to become the contemporary symbols of language. This activity is organized to assist you and your students in the process of discovering the meaning and creation of Chinese and Japanese characters in order to better understand them but also to recognize the beauty of these written languages.

The characters featured in this activity are **kanji**, a Japanese term that refers to Chinese characters that are used in Japanese language. While the Japanese pronunciation of these words differs from the Chinese original, the meaning is typically the same.

The tools and materials used for both Chinese and Japanese **calligraphy** and painting are ink, paper or silk, and a brush. Ink is made by grinding an ink stick on a stone and mixing with water to create a liquid. An example of an ink stick and grinding stone are included in the kit. The ink stick is a compressed bar of charcoal made from burning a variety of natural materials that result in slightly different ink colors. Sometimes colored inks were made, but the examples included in this kit are **monochromatic** in black.

Silk and paper are both traditional materials used as the painting surface. The properties of a specific painting surface can affect the artist's choice in brush, style and subject matter. In China, ink on paper was traditionally preferred by the **literati**, as opposed to silk which was favored by court painters.

Many different kinds of brushes exist ranging in size from just a few hairs to very large brushes as tall as a person. The materials used to make brushes also varies and any type of fibrous material, such as animal hair, whiskers or eyelashes, as well as plant fibers, such as bamboo, have been used to make brushes.

The artist featured in the DVD for this activity is Hirokazu Kosaka, a Japanese artist living and working in Los Angeles, California. He has selected a variety of kanji to review with students. The DVD lesson features the construction and meaning of each character as well as discussion of preparing ink and unique stories of the production of brushes.

Procedure

For Grades K-5 (one 30-minute session)

1. Allow students to view the examples of Chinese paintings in the IMA's collection that include calligraphy.
2. Give each student a brush pen and a large piece of blank newsprint paper for practice. Using the character stroke order handout, demonstrate for the group the correct **stroke order** of the marks on the paper and emphasize that meaning is created with these strokes in the same way letters are used in the English alphabet, so precision is important. For K-2 groups allow practice of two of the characters so they can experiment with this new tool. It will be easier for any beginner to make larger characters, so the younger the group the bigger the paper should be.
3. After practicing with the brush pen, allow each student to use one bamboo brush and share containers of ink. Demonstrate for each student how to dip just the tip of the brush in ink and then begin making strokes on rice paper copying their work with the brush pen on the newsprint paper. Again, using larger strokes will be easier for young students.
4. After practicing, students can create a final page with their best characters.

For Grades 6-12 (one, 60-minute session or two, 30-minute sessions)

1. Allow students to view the examples of Chinese paintings in the IMA's collection that include calligraphy.
2. Using the video—*An Introduction to Calligraphy with Hirokazu Kosaka*, you can choose to watch the entire lesson (about 20 minutes) or select segments such as description of brushes, preparation of ink, or just the calligraphy lesson. The video menu provides you with these options.
3. Students can begin practicing writing characters as the video is playing or afterward. Feel free to stop and restart the video to allow extra time for student practice. The character stroke order handout can aid student practice. If breaking this activity into 2, 30-minute sessions, students can practice stroke order with the brush pens first and then practice painting with bamboo brushes during the second session.
4. Demonstrate for the group the correct stroke order of the marks on the paper and emphasize that meaning is created with these strokes in the same way letters are used in the English alphabet so precision is important.
5. Allow each student to use one bamboo brush and share containers of ink. Demonstrate for each student how to dip just the tip of the brush in ink and then begin making strokes on rice paper copying their work with the brush pen. Using larger strokes will be easier for beginners.
6. Either during practice or afterward ask students to consider why these characters have aesthetic appeal both in Eastern and Western cultures.

Activity 2: Brush Painting

Recommended for Grades 6-12
One or Two, 30-minute session(s)

Objectives

- Students will practice techniques used in Chinese and Japanese brush painting.
- Students will consider the inspiration of nature in art.

Indiana Academic Standards met by this activity:

Visual Art: 6.1.1, 6.2.1, 6.3.1, 6.4.1, 6.9.2, 7.1.1, 7.1.2, 7.2.2, 7.3.1, 7.9.2, 8.1.1, 8.1.3, 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 8.3.1, 8.9.2, 8.13.2, H.1.2, H.1.3, H.2.1, H.2.2, H.7.3, H.9.1

Social Studies: K.5.1, 1.5.5, 2.5.3, S.2.1

Supplies

- Images of Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings in the IMA's collection—*Hongren and Kano Tan'yu* (digitally projected or printed out hardcopy)
- Photographs of Chinese landscapes (digitally projected or printed out hardcopy)

These supplies can also be purchased at your local art supply store or online at a supplier such as www.enasco.com or www.dickblick.com

- Small, disposable containers for ink
- 30 bamboo brushes
- Ink
- Rice paper

Introduction

Traditional Chinese painting has several characteristic components such as technique, format and style.

The techniques used to create paintings like the examples included in this kit are attained over a lifetime with practice and careful observation of master works by other respected artists. The first important thing to learn is how to skillfully manipulate the brush. Certainly some brushes are easier to use than others and as an artist progresses he will use more challenging brushes.

Learning a variety of brushstrokes is also important as is practicing them repeatedly to become skillful at reproducing them. This relates to the practice of **calligraphy** and the repetition of basic strokes to compose increasingly more complex **characters**.

Another important technique is learning how to pair materials with the format and style of the desired composition. This knowledge, gained through practice and careful observation, becomes a key component of master works.

Hanging scrolls and hand scrolls are common formats for traditional Chinese painting and are either vertical or horizontal in orientation. Screens, more often associated with Japanese art, have a practical application to create privacy or block light or wind.

Hanging scrolls are displayed for short periods of time on a wall and rolled for storage and transport.

Another characteristic of Chinese painting is the red stamp, or **seal**, that is often seen. Some paintings have a variety of them and they can serve as a signature of the artist or also denote various owners, collectors and dealers.

The style of Chinese painting evolved over time in a way similar to that of Western art movements. Usually coinciding with dynastic periods, the style of art reflected the cultural interests, politics, aesthetics and traditions of the people who made it. Even landscape paintings which at first glance seem to be idyllic or pastoral can have hidden symbolism referring to people, places and events that reflect an artist's allegiance or disagreement with an important historical figure, policy or societal issue. In China today, many artists and scholars believe the traditional ways are still the only way to paint, while other contemporary artists challenge this idea with works that incorporate the old and new or adopt more Western approaches to creating visual art.

The history of Japanese painting is inextricably linked with China. From language to materials and even technique many ideas and processes were appropriated by the Japanese through trade and travel. The example of Japanese painting included in this kit is very similar to that of the Chinese one, showing the relationship between these two nations in the development of art.

Japanese painting did evolve in different directions to accumulate new and different conventions that were perpetuated in woodblock prints and paintings reflecting the mixture of old and new traditions.

Procedure

1. Allow students to view the Images of Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings in the IMA's collection. Ask students to describe what they see in the pictures either through discussion or writing. Create a list of adjectives to describe the mood, tone, formal properties and aesthetics of both works. Students should consider these ideas as they create their own paintings. Another topic for discussion is the selection of nature as a theme for painting. Ask students to brainstorm about the reasons why it has been historically popular but also continues to inspire artists.
2. Allow each student to use one bamboo brush and share containers of ink. Demonstrate for each student how to dip just the tip of the brush in ink and then begin making strokes on rice paper. Ask students to explore the effect different amounts of pressure and speed have on the mark created by the brush.
3. Ask students to consider the two Images of Chinese and Japanese landscape paintings in the IMA's collection, and the list of words that describe them. Students can begin practicing making brush strokes on newsprint paper by mimicking the shapes and brush strokes seen in the two paintings.

4. Students can either reproduce the composition of one of the paintings featured or for a more advanced activity consider the 3 landscape photographs and choose one to depict in a monochromatic composition. How can the impression of these landscapes be captured with stylized lines and black ink?

Bibliography

Calligraphy. <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/callig/callmain.htm>. 2006

Hickman, Money L. *Painters of Edo Japan*. Indianapolis Museum of Art: Indianapolis, IN, 2000.

Lei Lei, Qu. *The Simple Art of Chinese Calligraphy*. Cico Books: London, 2002.

Swann, Peter C. *A Concise History of Japanese Art*. Kodansha International: Tokyo and New York, 1987.

Weng, Wan-go. *Chinese Painting and Calligraphy: A Pictorial Survey*. Dover Publications, Inc.: New York, 1978.

Yee, Chiang. *Chinese Calligraphy: An Introduction to Its Aesthetic and Technique*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1973.