

STUDY UNIT I

Introduction

THE HISTORY OF CHINESE BRUSH PAINTING

When learning an art form or skill it's always a good idea to understand something of the background of its evolution. I feel this is particularly important with Chinese painting as for westerners the stylised depiction of flowers and birds can appear alien from our own traditions of representational painting.

There are roughly four ages of Chinese art spanning some five thousand years

1. The origins of Chinese painting (3000 B.C. – 220 A.D.) Covering the period from Prehistoric painting to that of the Han dynasty
2. The introduction of foreign art in china (220 A.D. - 581 A.D.) especially the introduction of Buddhist painting provided the basis of inspiration for art and sculpture of this period.
3. The golden age of Chinese painting (581 A.D.– 1278 A.D.) This period is regarded as the golden epoch of painting dating from Sui, Tang to Sung Dynasty.
4. The less creative period (1280 A.D. – 1912 A.D.) In the Yuan, Ming and Ching Dynasties the great tradition of Chinese painting lived on however it is regarded as an artistically less creative than the Tang and Sung Dynasties.

The tradition of Chinese painting is that it is not technique alone but a complex interaction of art, culture, philosophy and religion. When one looks at traditional paintings it is obvious that there are two distinct styles.

The first is the Academic (Gongbi) in which there is detailed fine depiction it is representational in nature with colour added by the artist where appropriate.

The second is the Literary (Xieyi) free brush style where the essential nature of an object is portrayed using the minimum of strokes. It will be this style of painting that we shall be

LAYERS OF INK

For a single layer of ink pour a little of the charred ink and add water until the desired shade is obtained, stir the ink thoroughly with the brush that you intend to use until the wash is entirely smooth adjust with more ink or water if necessary. If you are using very absorbent paper apply the wash swiftly it may blur a little

To cover an area with deep black ink achieves a very different effect from applying overlaid washes of in to the same area. I suggest you experiment with different strengths of washes both singly and overlaid, you will find

That overlaid washes suggest more subtle tonal gradations and give a feeling of distance, while the strong tones give energy and immediacy to the image.

Quite often charred ink will be applied on top of light washes, this can be done while the lighter underwash is still damp and create a blurred effect or when the underwash is dry which gives a crisper effect. This is particularly

Useful when painting veins on leaves.

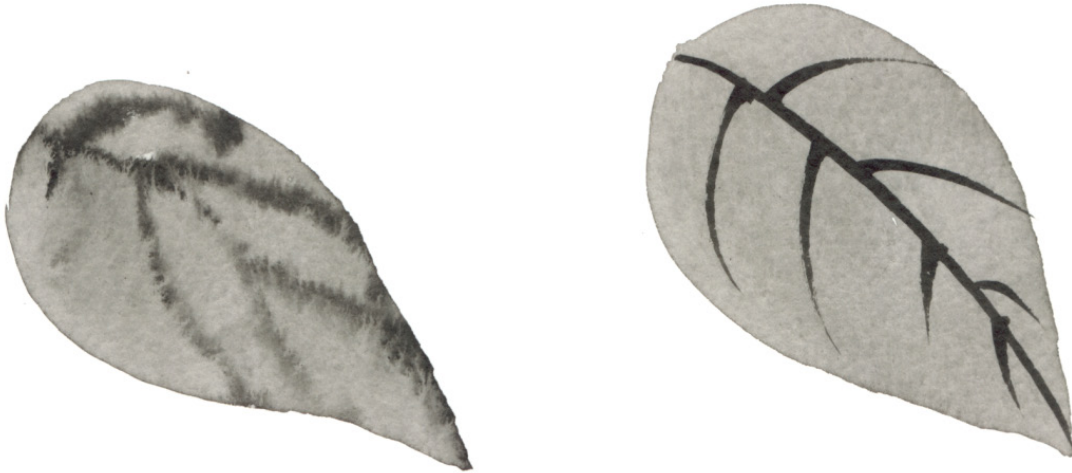
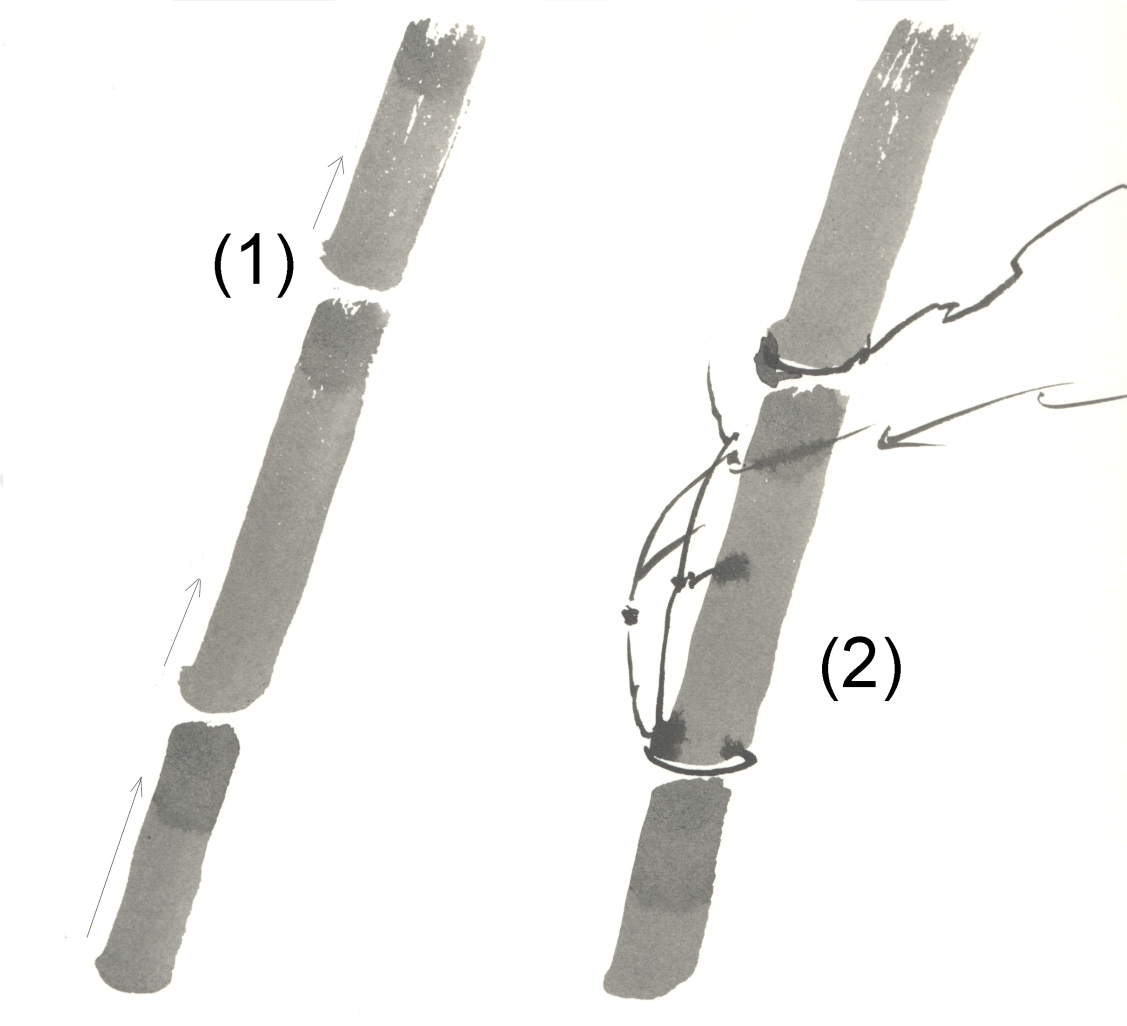
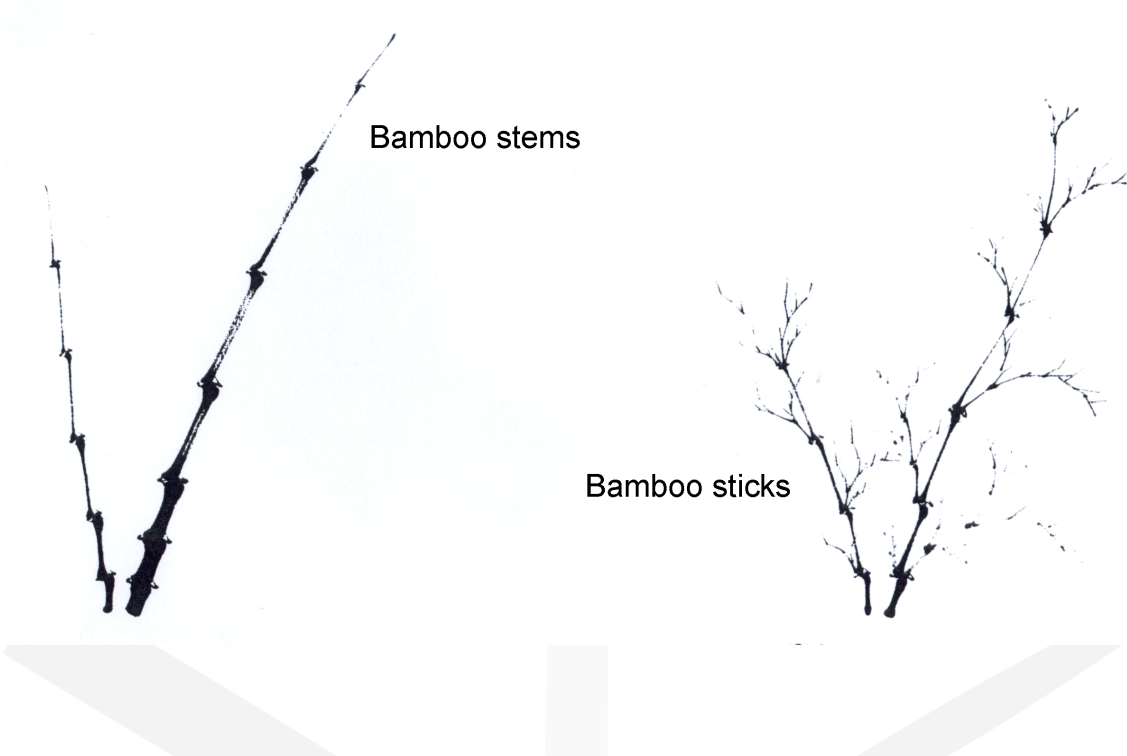


Diagram showing wet on wet and dry on wet ink

Another useful technique for grading washes is to first soak the brush in a lighter tone of ink and then dip the tip in a darker shade, and then draw the brush horizontally across the paper using the brush side. When you come to using colours this is the way one obtains subtle blending of colour, sometimes using several colours on the brush simultaneously



BEE STEP-BY-STEP



Step 1



Step 2



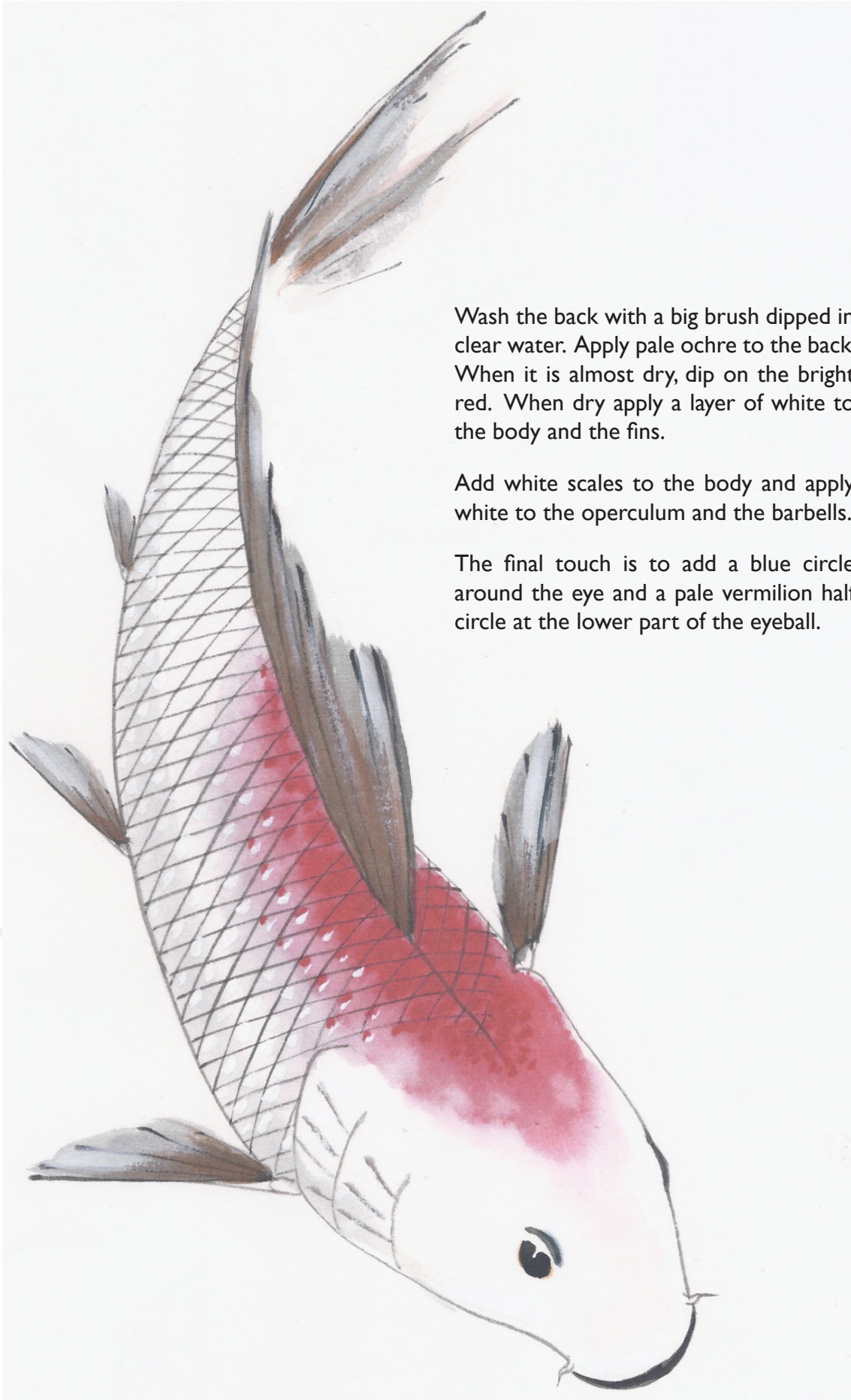
Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Wash the back with a big brush dipped in clear water. Apply pale ochre to the back. When it is almost dry, dip on the bright red. When dry apply a layer of white to the body and the fins.

Add white scales to the body and apply white to the operculum and the barbells.

The final touch is to add a blue circle around the eye and a pale vermilion half circle at the lower part of the eyeball.