

後記

中國文字結構奇特，所以數千年來除實用外，在藝術領域中也佔一重要席位，隨着社會的進步，書法之道已由實用價值轉變而為一門獨特的藝術。一幅布白巧妙，線條變化無窮的書法作品，能與音樂、舞蹈的美妙旋律、優美姿態比擬，令人陶醉而回味無窮。

少時習書，每遇俗事不能去懷的時候，便埋首臨池，頓覺一片澄明，心曠神怡，後受業於馮師康侯門下，始驚嘆書法篆刻之道，浩如煙海，雖窮畢生之力，也難究其梗概，此後工餘閒暇，即習此未嘗或輟。

後加入官立中文夜學院工作，講授書法與篆刻課程。才知道熱衷於此的年青人很多。但他們都遇上相同的困難，可練習的時間少，或更受到居住環境的限制。因此我嘗試指導他們盡量利用有限的時間、空間去達到預期的理想。

首先，我要求他們做好橫直線條，這比臨摹碑帖方便，隨時可利用零碎的時間不斷練習。線條是唯一的構圖基礎，開始時，我必向同學解說柔中寓剛、綿裏藏針的道理。又告訴他們藝術書法不是通常的書法，更忌用拙力。而是要拋掉通常的書法和拙力才能培植藝術的智慧。要把柔和的氣力灌注在線條上。運筆時先把柔力從腳跟帶到腰部，腰部就承着這股力帶動肩臂，再配合腕和指的徐徐運轉，自然可把全身的柔和氣力轉注於紙上。這樣，不但可使線條在柔和中顯得渾厚，更可增強它的含蓄感，使人百看不厭。若遵此多練，控制得宜，做到心手合一，自能揮灑自如。所以我再三提醒初學者，切忌急功近利，多貪臨池，若不能書出旋律優美，富於變化而有立體感的線條，就只能成爲一個善於描摹的書匠而已。學習的第二階段是要多讀多臨碑，讀是簡易練習的妙法，要能悉心領會其中的神味，才可爲章法增進意境。其次，我贊成同學們習字應始自篆隸，沿着文字的演進習書，不但對文字的結構加深認識，對於掌握字體的筆法，也有幫助。

第三個階段是創作，這是學習書法的人最困難的一段路。藝術以情動人，書法也不例外，線條是感情變化的具體表現，線條的節奏感有賴於書者本身的主觀條件與客觀因素。唐李陽冰曾說：「于天地山川，日月星辰，雲霞草木，文物衣冠，皆有所得。」由此可見，凡潛心學書的人，隨時隨地都會受外界影響而有所悟。此外，作品中除了披露作者喜、怒、哀、樂等感情外，本身的氣質與學養，也會直接影響書者的審美趣味與理想。古人多以學習書法來陶冶性情，變化氣質和培養高尚的情操，就是這個道理。其實，當書者注入感情凝神創作時，自會心神合一，萬緣放下，達到書家夢寐以求的物我兩忘的靜定境界。故書藝不獨是一種智德合一的藝術，更是調劑緊張生活緩和和精神壓力的妙方。

至於篆刻也要多讀多摹多刻，摹印也宜自漢印秦璽始，多寫篆書外更宜臨隸書、行書、楷書，吸取其中用筆、結體、行氣、布局的方法以拓展眼界。另一方面，不但能使刀筆相依，還可以了解文字的演變過程，就不會輕率地把字體錯誤入印，貽笑大方。

我只是把摸索得來的經驗獻給同學們，希望可以替他們找到一學習書法和篆刻的正確路向，將來無論臨摹任何碑銘或篆刻任何書體都可創出他的個人風格和面貌，這是我所希望達到的理想。

Postscript

The speciality of the structure of Chinese characters enables Chinese calligraphy to not only serve its practical functions but also play an important part in the realm of artistic creation. In the course of social progress, the significance of Chinese calligraphy has changed from that of practicality to that of being a unique form of art. A piece of Chinese calligraphy with ingenious composition of positive and negative space and strokes of limitless variety is comparable to a beautiful melody in music or elegant movements in a dance. The effect it creates evokes deep impression which is worth contemplating.

During my pursuit of calligraphy at youth, I used to indulge myself in copying ancient writings whenever I came upon some trivialities which burdened me. Once I started writing, I became spiritually free and my peace of mind was regained. Later, I studied calligraphy and seal-carving under the guidance of the late Mr. Fung Hong-hou, a renowned artist, and was astounded by the broadness and depth of the arts. I realized that even with the efforts of one's life span, one might not even succeed in having a rough grasp of the art. Since then, I have been practising the art at my leisure with persistent efforts.

At present, I teach calligraphy and seal-carving in the Evening School of Higher Chinese Studies. I always ask my students to practise writing horizontal and vertical strokes carefully and properly as strokes are basic and essential in a calligraphic composition. I try to explain to them the theory of using and maintaining "strength with lightness" when painting a stroke. My students are asked to bear in mind that the art of calligraphy is different from daily writing and the use of force in painting the stroke should be strictly forbidden if artistic wisdom in calligraphy is to be cultivated. As one writes, one should exert a natural strength into the strokes. Before putting the brush into action, it is necessary to summon the strength from the heels to the waist and further bring it to the shoulders and arms, and through synchronized movements of the wrist and the fingers, it is possible to transfer the gentle strength of the whole body onto the paper. In this way, it allows the stroke to become gentle but full in dimension and this further enhances the subtlety it conveys, allowing lovers of the art the pleasure of reading with increasing interest. It is not too difficult to acquire the skill as long as one practises regularly to gain appropriate control and co-ordination of the mind and hands. I have also frequently reminded my students not to be pragmatic. They should be able to create strokes with rhythm, varieties and dimension after they have practised copying a lot of ancient writings, otherwise they will be considered to be mere craftsmen and not artists.

Greater exposure to and more practice on ancient writings are important in the second stage of learning. Through careful studies and analysis of scripts of ancient writings, students' understanding of the art and their presentation of calligraphic composition will be improved. Then, I would advise them to proceed with practising the writings of seal script and clerical script. In practising these scripts which reflect the development of Chinese characters, one can, not only develop a further understanding of the structure of Chinese characters, but also acquire a better mastery of the expression of the strokes.

The third stage of learning is creativeness which is most difficult to be achieved by a learner of Chinese calligraphy. Calligraphy, as an art, arouses the feeling of people with its expression. Strokes in calligraphy are, in fact, expressions of the writer's mood and emotion. As for the rhythm of the strokes, it is governed by the personal qualities and objective factors which the writer is subjected to. Li Yang-bing of the Tang dynasty once said that people could be inspired by the sky and earth, sun, moon and stars, clouds, haze and plants and even apparel and the like.

Thus, a person who is devoted to the art of calligraphy is bound to be affected at all times by external stimuli which may help him to gain an insight into life. Furthermore, a piece of art reveals not only the writer's feelings, let it be joy or grief, anger or happiness, but also his disposition and academic qualities which directly affect the development of his aesthetic interest and ideals. Hence many scholars foster their temperament through practising calligraphy as an emotional outlet. In fact, when one practises the art whole-heartedly, his body and soul become one and he can cast off all troubles and reaches a realm of total serenity which is void of ego and objects. So calligraphy, as an art, is a combination of wisdom and perfection and, as a means of relaxation, can relieve the tension and pressure of life.

As for seal-carving, it is advisable to study, imitate and practise as much as one can. One should start by copying seals of the Qin dynasty and Han dynasty. Besides practising the writing of seal script, one should learn to write the clerical script, running script and regular script. This helps to widen one's horizon in relation to the use of the brush and the structure, spatial arrangement and lineage in resonance of calligraphy. With adequate knowledge of the evolution of Chinese characters, wrong choice of scripts for a seal could be avoided.

I earnestly dedicate my experience gained through years' of exploration in this field to my students, hoping that some light could be shed on the proper channel in learning calligraphy and seal-carving. It is also my wish that one day my students could succeed in creating their own style and characteristics from types of ancient writings or seal-carvings they prefer to model after.

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(Translated by CHAN Yuen-bing)