

# Inking Techniques

Traditional Chinese artists use a special black ink (*mo*) that is said to contain “infinite gradations of color.” This ink is made from a mixture of burnt pine soot and glue that is molded into an inkstick.

- A small amount of water is placed in the inkstone reservoir (the inkstone is commonly made of water-resistant rock such as slate). The inkstick is gently ground with the water in a circular motion to create a deep black liquid.
- The tip of a moist brush is dipped into the ink. As the ink is absorbed into the brush, the moisture that is already in the brush dilutes the ink and creates lighter gradations of ink further away from the tip.
- To use a side-ink technique, a brush is loaded with a light wash of ink. The brush is held in an oblique position and the sides of the brush are dipped with ink. This technique is used to paint subjects such as the lotus flower.



## Brushstroke Examples

The following examples were painted with an upright brush.

- a) fast speed, light pressure
- b) medium speed, medium pressure
- c) slow speed, heavy pressure
- d) combination of light and heavy pressure
- e) “flying white” (*fei bai*): fast speed, little moisture

Notice how, by using different ink techniques, gradations of ink can be created within a single brushstroke.

- f) Load the tip of the brush with ink and create a brushstroke by holding the brush in an oblique position.
- g) Load the brush with a light wash of ink and dip opposite sides of the brush with dark ink. This is an example of a side-ink technique.

