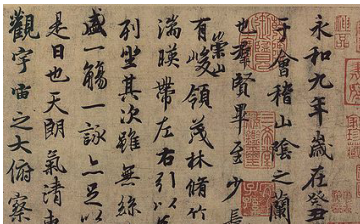


Exercise

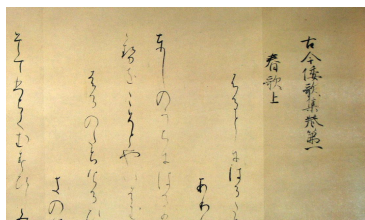
When practicing calligraphy, it is said to be extremely beneficial to imitate and copy ancient famous writings. Above all, we admire Wang Xizhi (王羲之).

The engraved text of the severe and simple touches from the Beiwei era (北魏) is particularly interesting to imitate.



Lanting Xu by Wang Xizhi

There are many grand masters from the early Tang (唐) period, such as Ouyang Xun (歐陽詢), Yu Shinan (虞世南), Zhu Suliang (褚遂良), and many more.



Koyagire

In Kana calligraphy, it is often unrealistic to identify the author. Instead, we usually use the name of a book or a handscroll. Koyagire (高野切)

is believed to be the most beautiful Kana text in history. Other examples include Sekidobon Kokinshu (関戸本古今集) and Sunshoan Shikishi (寸松庵色紙).

Script Style

There are 5 script styles in Kanji.

- Seal script(tensho 篆書)
- Clerical script(reisho 隸書)
- Cursive script(sosho 草書)
- Semi-cursive script(gyosho 行書)
- Standard script(kaisho 楷書)

Kana was created in Japan by modifying the cursive script to phonetically express Japanese words.

Exhibitions & Competitions

Among the numerous exhibitions and competitions held every year, the 'Nitten' (日展) is regarded as the highest rank. The Nitten Exhibition takes place in November, and only about 10 percent of the submissions from enthusiasts throughout the country are selected for exhibition.

Enjoy Calligraphy!

Matsumoto Regional
Calligraphy Society

50th anniversary celebration

Categories

The calligraphy has several categories.

- Kanji: Writing poems written in Chinese Kanji characters.
- Kana: Writing poems written in Japanese Kana characters.
- Mixture(Chowa-tai): Writing modern Japanese poems/sentences using a mixture of Kanji and Kana.
- Seal Carving: Calligraphy works are completed by stamping a seal, but the act of carving the seal itself is also a part of calligraphy.

Kanji and Kana have distinct characteristics, and the mixture can be created in either a Kanji-prone style or a Kana-prone style.

Expression

The following elements should work for the outcome of the creation.

- Composition: Number of lines, size of characters (including size of each character)
- Ink color: it is not limited to black. It can be cold(bluish) black or warm black, depending on the choice of ink.
- Ink density: Ink density can vary, with options ranging from thick ink to thinned ink.
- Amount of ink: Strokes with a rich amount of ink or faint strokes with scarce ink, as well as the combination and placement of these two types. It provides perspective to the calligraphy piece.
- Paper: Size and color of the paper.
- Types of strokes: obedient strokes, round-in, reverse-in etc.

What is written

Most of the time, poems are written for calligraphy pieces.

There are many Chinese and Japanese poets. Here are 5 major Chinese poets selected by ChatGPT: Li Bai (李白), Du Fu (杜甫), Wang Wei (王维), Bai Juyi (白居易), Su Shi (苏轼).

For Kanji calligraphy poems written in Chinese Kanji are usually selected. For Kana calligraphy, ancient Japanese poems are often chosen. Selections from modern Japanese poems fall under the Mixture category.

Tools & Material

The following tools and materials are used for practicing calligraphy.

- Ink stick
- Inkstone
- Brush
- Paper

Preparing *Sumi* Ink

With a small amount of water, rub the ink stick on the surface of the inkstone.



The surface of the inkstone may appear smooth at first glance, but it actually has fine ripples. The inkstones made from stones

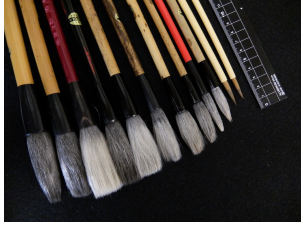
extracted from high-quality mineral veins, such as Duan River (端溪), Guangdong Province in China, are very expensive. Ink sticks are made of oil soot or pine soot mixed with glue (nikawa).

Soft water is better for grinding. With hard water, it is difficult to obtain high-quality ink.

Alternatively, you can use ready-made ink, which can be purchased in a calligraphy shop. Ready-made ink is especially convenient when writing large pieces with thick lines.

Choice of brush

There is a variety of writing brushes available with different thickness, and with different lengths of brush hair.



Material of the hair also varies: horse, hare, raccoon dog, goat, kolinsky, etc. Experienced practitioners tend to choose brushes with goat hair, which are soft and flexible.

Choice of paper

Japanese hand-molded paper (Washi) is commonly used for calligraphy. Washi paper is made from fibers of plants such as gampi bark, kozo mulberry, mitsumata oriental persh, and bamboo.

Text Orientation

Text is written vertically, with columns arranged from right to left. Even when it's a single horizontal line, calligraphy is usually written from right to left because it is considered a vertical text with only one character in each column.

(In contemporary Japanese, both vertical and horizontal texts are used, with vertical text reading from right to left, while horizontal text reads from left to right.)