

TRADITIONAL ARTS INDIANA

Creativity, Community, Continuity

The Art of Words: James Yang and His Chinese Calligraphy



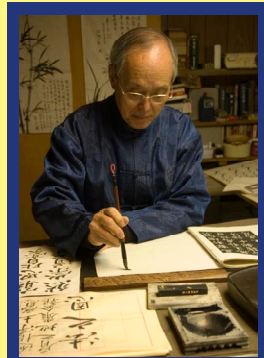
James Yang completed a doctorate in the 1970s at Indiana University. He and his wife Jenny returned to Bloomington in 2001.

Chinese calligraphy embodies the beauty and spirituality of Chinese literature and art. Born in China, James Yang learned calligraphy from his father while growing up in Taiwan over sixty years ago. Today, he demonstrates, teaches, and exhibits many styles of Chinese calligraphy throughout Indiana, enabling Hoosiers to experience Chinese culture.

The “four treasures”—the brush, the ink stick, the inkstone, and rice paper—are the main instruments used to create Chinese calligraphy. Traditionally the ink is created by grinding a solid ink stick on the inkstone, the reservoir that holds the ink. Today most people use prepared liquid ink.



James writes several words to demonstrate his use of the “four treasures.”



James writes with his wrist raised from the table.

The first step is to learn how to hold the brush. In the “supported wrist method,” students learn to keep their forearms fixed as they master controlling the brush. By raising their wrists, they can express the dynamics of the drawing more freely.

While there are many styles of Chinese calligraphy, students usually begin by learning the standard style from masters’ drawings. James teaches the techniques, aesthetics, and history behind the drawings and their context in Chinese culture.



James writes the word “dragon” in a cursive style that shows the dynamics of the brush.



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