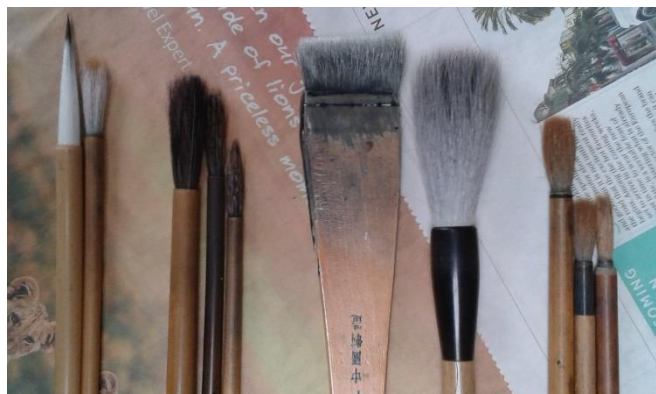


# Choosing the right brushes for Lingnan Painting

Marion Dearlove



Long White Horse Point Cloud Hair      Flat Wash      White Hair      Wolf Hair

When Jane Evans was living in Manila, she decided to try her hand at Chinese Brush Painting. Her first teacher, Professor Chen Bing Sun, taught Xeiyi (free style) and Gong bi (meticulous style) and was very strict about the brushes that new students should use. For those on a limited budget he recommended buy one good brush that does what you need and if you could afford it buy the 3 wolf hair brushes listed below. Be careful, some brushes appear to be wolf hair but are made from dyed hairs and are not as resilient and don't hold ink as well.

**Bamboo Orchid Brush** – must be good wolf hair. This is the must have brush. If it is good quality, it can do its job and the jobs of the other 2. Its job is to create good thin to thick lines, add texture and lay in washes.

**Plum Blossom brush** – must be good wolf hair. Used for plum blossom flowers, detailed work, colour blending and smaller washes.

**Fine line brush** – must be good wolf hair. Used for fine flowing lines and orchid petals.

As she progressed other brushes were added but, with Professor Chen, these were always wolf (which he called fox, by which he meant weasel!) hair. The only non wolf hair brush he used was a:

**1.5 inch Flat Wash Brush** – no metal fittings! Used to create background washes. Jane was taught how to use one 4 inch brush with colour loaded at one end and water to wash out at the other but advises it is much easier to have 2 x 1.5 inch brushes – one used for colour and one to wash out. Never use the washing out brush for colour.

Later, Jane also studied with Lingnan painters Hau Chiok and Sy Chiu Hua and went on to develop her current well known and much-loved style of painting.

In addition to the brushes used by Professor Chen, Lingnan artists use the following brushes. Note: they had to be removed from the brush wrapper before attending Professor Chen's class as he did not approve of them:

**White hair brush** – must be good quality sheep, goat or mixed hair and large enough to create lotus leaves

**Mountain Horse Hair Brush** – These must be good quality Japanese brushes. The Japanese brushes contain stiffer and sharper bristles. Chinese horse hair is not strong enough. Chinese artists use Japanese brushes! The brushes come in a range of sizes. All have long bristles. These brushes are used to add lines and textures to Lingnan paintings.

**White Cloud** – These brushes are used to add washes to subjects in the picture. They are also used to create soft shapes, such as a bird's breast or a furry animal.

In developing her own style, Jane has added the **Long Point Brush** to her collection of must have brushes. The brush must be good quality. They usually have goat or sheep hair outside and strong dark hairs inside. Their use requires good brush control and, once mastered, they can be used to generate very expressive long lines for tendrils in wisteria and other climbing plant pictures, grass stems and for expressive lines in landscapes.



Jane Evans – Wisteria demo painted in Dedham

Now you know which brushes you need – check out what you have and have fun using them!