

[http://zhengchongbin.com/six\\_canons.html](http://zhengchongbin.com/six_canons.html)

The techniques of Chinese Painting have been codified. The most notable codification was formulated in the 5th Century A.D. by the venerated master, *Hsieh Ho*. He wrote the "Six Canons of Painting" which form the basis of all Chinese Brush Painting. Although there are different criteria for Chinese painting nowadays, most of them are based on the Six Canons.

**1. Circulation of the *Ch'i*** (Breath, Spirit, Vital Force of Heaven) - producing "movement of life". This is in the heart of the artist.

**2. Characterizing the object through proper strokes** This is referred to as the bone structure of the painting. The stronger the brush work, the stronger the painting. Character is produced by a combination of strong and lighter strokes, thick and thin, wet and dry.

**3. Fidelity to the object in portraying form** Chinese painters strive to draw the object as they see it. In order to do this, it is very important first to understand the form of the object! This will produce a work that is not necessarily totally realistic as you observe it. Therefore, the more you study the object to be painted, the better you will paint it.

**4. Conformity to kind in applying colors** Black is considered a color and, in the painter's hands, the range of shadings is capable of creating an impression of many other colors. If color is used, it is always true to the subject matter. This is different from Western art which focuses on colors influenced by lights.

**5. Proper planning in placing of elements** Space is used in Chinese painting the same way objects are used. Space becomes an integral part of the composition.

**6. In copying, seek to pass on the essence of the master's brush & methods** To the Chinese, copying is considered most essential. Only when the student fully learns the time-honored techniques, can he or she branch out into areas of individual creativity.

Chinese painting is meant to be more than a mere representation of an object. It is also a symbolic expression. This is why a full plant is never painted, but rather a few blossoms which will represent the plant in its entirety. In fact, all of life itself which is a "Tao" principle. This is done without looking at the subject as you paint but bringing it forth from your mind and heart and becoming part of nature.

In each painting there should always be a "Host" which is the larger and stronger flower, tree, etc. and the "Guest" which is indicated by being smaller.

Around the 1st century BC the *Sadanga* or Six Limbs of Indian Painting, were evolved, a series of canons laying down the main principles of the art *Vatsyayana*, who lived during the third century A.D., enumerates these in his *Kamasutra* having extracted them from still more ancient works.

These 'Six Limbs' have been translated as follows

1. *Rupabheda* The knowledge of appearances.
2. *Pramanam* Correct perception, measure and structure.
3. *Bhava* Action of feelings on forms.

4. *Lavanya Yojanam* Infusion of grace, artistic representation.
5. *Sadrisyam* Similitude.
6. *Varnikabhanga* Artistic manner of using the brush and colours. (Tagore.)

The subsequent development of painting by the Buddhists indicates that Indian artists put these 'Six Limbs' into practice, and are the basic principles on which their art was founded.

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- Rupabheda which dealt with the subtle and stark differences in appearance of the figures
- Pramanam which like pixels made the artist work on the brush to bring out the accurate perception, measure and structure
- Bhava which made facial expressions which are generally ruled by the inner feelings. The artist had to visualize the situation, emotions and express them in form of expressions
- Lavanya was required to add a touch of panache to complete the finesse of the work
- Sadrisyam which called for enhanced strokes on enumerating the similitude in the subjects' attitude or action and lastly
- Varnikabhanga was the leeway which added the flavour of individuality in every piece of art as it allowed the artist to use the brush and colors in his own artistic flair.

<b>RASA</b>	<b>BHAVA</b>	<b>MEANING</b>	<b>COLOUR</b>
Shringar(Erotic)	Rati	Human love	Light Green
Hasya (Humorous)	Hasa	Laughter	White
Karuna (compassion)	Shoka	Sorrow	Grey
Raudra (Terrible)	Krodh	Anger	Red
Veera (Heroic)	Utsaha	Heroism	Pale Orange
Bhayanaka (Fearful)	Bhaya	Fear	Black
Bibhatsa (Odious)	Jugupsa	Disgust	Blue
Adbhuta (Wonderous)	Vismaya	Wonder	Yellow
Shanta (tranquil)	Calm	Peace	White

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian\\_aesthetics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_aesthetics)

## Eight primary rasas

[Bharata Muni](#) enunciated the eight Rasas in the *Nāṭyasāstra*, an ancient work of [dramatic theory](#). Each rasa, according to *Nāṭyasāstra*, has a presiding deity and a specific colour. There are 4 pairs of rasas. For instance, [Hāsya](#) arises out of [Śringara](#). The [Aura](#) of a frightened person is black, and the aura of an angry person is red. [Bharata Muni](#) established the following.<sup>[3]</sup>

- **Śṛṅgāram** (शृङ्गारं) Love, attractiveness. Presiding deity: [Vishnu](#). Colour: light green
- **Hāsya** (हास्यं) Laughter, mirth, comedy. Presiding deity: [Pramata](#). Colour: white
- **Raudram** (रौद्रं) Fury. Presiding deity: [Rudra](#). Colour: red
- **Kāruṇyam** (कारुण्यं) Compassion, mercy. Presiding deity: [Yama](#). Colour: grey
- **Bībhatsam** (बीभत्सं) Disgust, aversion. Presiding deity: [Shiva](#). Colour: blue
- **Bhayānakam** (भयानकं) Horror, terror. Presiding deity: [Kala Ratri](#). Colour: black
- **Veera** (वीरं) Heroic mood. Presiding deity: [Indra](#). Colour: yellowish
- **Adbhutam** (अद्भुतं) Wonder, amazement. Presiding deity: [Brahma](#). Colour: yellow<sup>[4]</sup>

## Śāntam rasa

A ninth rasa was added by later authors (See *History* section). This addition had to undergo a good deal of struggle between the sixth and the tenth centuries, before it could be accepted by the majority of the Alankarikas, and the expression *Navarasa* (the nine rasas), could come into vogue.

- **Śāntam** Peace or tranquility. deity: [Vishnu](#). Colour: perpetual white

Shānta-rasa functions as an equal member of the set of rasas but is simultaneously distinct being the most clear form of aesthetic bliss. Abhinavagupta likens it to the string of a jeweled necklace; while it may not be the most appealing for most people, it is the string that gives form to the necklace, allowing the jewels of the other eight rasas to be relished. Relishing the rasas and particularly shānta-rasa is hinted as being as-good-as but never-equal-to the bliss of Self-realization experienced by yogis.

## Other additions

In addition to the nine Rasas, two more appeared later (esp. in literature): Additional rasas:

- **Vātsalya** (वात्सल्यं) Parental Love
- **Bhakti** (भक्ति) Spiritual Devotion

However, the presiding deities, the colours and the relationship between these additional rasas have not been specified.

The *Natyasastra* lists eight *bhavas* with eight corresponding *rasas*:

- *Rati* (Love)
- *Hasya* (Mirth)
- *Soka* (Sorrow)
- *Krodha* (Anger)
- *Utsaha* (Energy)
- *Bhaya* (Terror)
- *Jugupsa* (Disgust)
- *Vismaya* (Astonishment)

FOR ADDITIONAL READING:-

## Rasa Theory

Of particular concern to Indian drama and literature are the term 'bhAva' or the state of mind and **rasa** ([Sanskrit](#) रस lit. 'juice' or 'essence') referring generally to the emotional flavors/essence crafted into the work by the writer and relished by a 'sensitive spectator' or *sahṛdaya* or one with positive taste and mind. Rasas are created by *bhavas*.<sup>[1]</sup> They are described by [Bharata Muni](#) in the [Nāṭyaśāstra](#), an ancient work of [dramatic theory](#).

Although the concept of rasa is fundamental to many forms of [Indian art](#) including [dance](#), [music](#), musical theatre, [cinema](#) and [literature](#), the treatment, interpretation, usage and actual performance of a particular rasa differs greatly between different styles and schools of [abhinaya](#), and the huge regional differences even within one style.

## Experience of rasa (rasAnubhava)

A rasa is the developed relishable state of a permanent mood, which is called sthAyI bhAva. This development towards a relishable state results by the interplay on it of attendant emotional conditions which are called Vibhavas, anubhAvas and sancharI/ vyAbhichArI bhavas. The production of aesthetic rasa from bhAvas is analogous to the production of tastes/juices of kinds from food with condiments, curries, pastes and spices. This is explained by the quote below:

Vibhavas means karana or cause. It is of two kinds: [Alambana](#), the personal or human object and substratum, and Uddipana, the excitants. Anubhava, as the name signifies, means the ensuants or effects following the rise of the emotion. vyAbhichArI bhavas are described later.

## Vedic concept

The Rishi Praskanva insists (Rig Veda I.46.6) that the sources of knowledge some of which are open and some hidden they are to be sought and found by the seekers after Truth, these sources are not available everywhere, anywhere and at all times. In this context Rishi [Agastya](#) (Rig Veda I.187.4) stating thus –

तव तये पितो रसा रजांस्यनु विष्ठिताः ।  
दिवि वाताइव श्रिताः ॥

reminds the ardent seekers about the six kinds of Rasa or taste which food has but which all tastes cannot be found in one place or item, for these tastes are variously distributed throughout space. Food, in this context, means matter or objects or thoughts, which are all produced effects, effects that are produced owing to various causes. The Rasas are the unique qualities which bring about variety in things created whose source is one and one only.<sup>[2]</sup>