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Tracing the Context of the Textual Field from the Framework of “Integrating Calligraphy into Painting”

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Abstract

This essay traces the complex and evolving relationship between text and image within the tradition of Chinese classical ink painting. It argues that writing, as an inherently abstract symbolic system, fundamentally shaped the aesthetic and spatial principles of ink painting. The analysis begins by examining the ontological tension between the abstract nature of writing and the representational aims of painting. It then demonstrates how this tension was resolved and transformed through key historical developments: the intervention of text, which led to the literarization of pictorial space; and the practice of "integrating calligraphy into painting", which created a unique "calligraphic-pictorial space." The essay meticulously charts the historical evolution of textual inscription on paintings—from early functional labels and eulogies to fully developed poetic inscriptions, records, and colophons. It concludes that the deep integration of writing, calligraphy, and poetry, culminating in the ideal of the "Three Perfections", established the philosophical and aesthetic core of classical ink painting, where text became its intellectual framework and calligraphic inscription its spiritual essence.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language, constrained by time and space, influences the vertical and horizontal transmission, dissemination, and exchange of culture, thought, knowledge, experience, and emotion. It served as the most crucial means of communication for humans in pre-literate history. Overcoming the inherent limitations of time and space imposed on language became a prerequisite for humanity's advancement into civilization. This monumental feat relied on the invention of "writing". Writing records language and thought, effectively transcending the

constraints of time and space on spoken words. It also provides the framework for the horizontal and vertical development of language, transforming into the symbolic representation of language itself. For artists, writing is a human-created and invented symbol, not a natural entity. It constitutes the most extensive abstract symbolic system ever constructed by humanity. "Abstract" is the essential nature of writing; the existence of writing signifies the existence of an abstract system. Long before the invention of writing, painting had already existed for ages. Comparing the earliest known human

paintings, such as the cave murals in Spain, with the earliest known writing system, "Sumerian cuneiform" (苏美文, Sumei Wen), reveals that painting predates writing by at least tens of thousands of years. Some scholars argue that where there are humans, there is painting—that painting is an innate human instinct and desire. If this holds true, then the history of human painting is a microcosm of the evolution of human civilization. In other words, humanity's desire for replicating objects and expressing emotion far surpasses its cultural longing for the abstract thought of written symbols. If painting represents humanity's instinctual impulse, then writing embodies its rational cultivation.

For phonetic writing systems, the invention and use of writing bear little intrinsic or conceptual relation to the essence of painting. Forming characters to create text and crafting images to create painting are distinct domains, each with its own clear boundaries. Yet, under what conditions did writing become embedded within painting, becoming a significant component of it? Objectively speaking, the inherent abstract nature of writing, characterized by anti-physicality and irrationality, stands in contrast—even conflict—with the representational and realistic qualities painting strives for in reproducing and replicating objects. The challenge of rationally juxtaposing text and image, abstraction and representation, became a crucial issue in the integration of "writing and painting". However, for pictographic scripts, writing is painting, and painting becomes an abstract symbol. This perhaps provides a more accommodating domain for exploring the "writing-painting" relationship. Yet, the influence of writing on ink painting has never ceased. Over the ensuing millennia, the integration of "writing and painting" became a prevailing trend, inevitably driving the fusion of classical ink painting with poetry, calligraphy, and seals. Even Western art, abandoning rationality and realism at the dawn of the 20th century in its pursuit of abstraction and sensibility, created opportunities for the compatibility of "writing and painting," a trend that continues to this day.

II. THE QUALITATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF SPACE IN CLASSICAL INK PAINTING

Writing is, by nature, a symbol. The existence of symbols is established by humans, not formed by nature. The form of written characters originates from the abstraction of objects, resulting from their pictorial representation and simplification. The formative principles of Chinese characters inherently possess both the pictorial qualities of images and the abstract essence of symbols. The existence of writing is an existence of abstraction, which is difficult to reconcile with realistic space; it easily creates opposition and conflict between the realistic and the non-realistic. Therefore, writing necessarily exists within an abstract space. It should be said: "The existence of writing is the existence of abstract space." On this foundation, classical ink painting underwent two significant transformations—literarization and calligraphization—which also influenced changes in the concept of "space".

2.1 The Interpretation of Space in Classical Ink Painting

"Space" is the "dimension" of artistic creation and, moreover, its "limit" and measure. Regarding the artwork, "space" not only broadly refers to its specifications and bounded scope but also indicates the arrangement of two-dimensional space or the simulation of three-dimensional space within the picture. Its crucial aspect lies in the artistic philosophy and spiritual connotation that the spatial composition attempts to express. The concept of "the spatial character of writing within painting" is proposed on this basis; it signifies the spatial interplay between the representational and the abstract, image and text, in planar painting. Within "pictorial space," the arrangement and composition of objects determine their positions within the painting—the spatial relationships between objects and the relativity between positions. This is what Xie He of the Southern Dynasties termed "composition and placement" in his Six Principles [1]. In the context of ink painting, it is referred to as "layout"; in modern painting terminology, it is called "composition." Regarding the objects themselves, the focus leans towards the treatment of "light and shadow perspective," emphasizing three-dimensionality and volume. In ink painting, this becomes the dialectic of yin-yang, void-solid,

emphasizing the calligraphic quality of brush and ink lines. For handling relationships between objects, reliance is placed on the application of geometric perspective and "aerial perspective" [2], which emphasize the depth, thickness of space, and the dialectic of scientific logic—the simulation and reproduction of realistic images.

The attitude of classical ink painting towards spatial treatment did not rely on rational perspective to solve problems; scientific thinking was absent from the minds of classical ink painters. Instead, they employed the philosophical concept of yin-yang and void-solid to address spatial issues within the picture. This philosophical, abstract speculation provided the abstract philosophy of "leaving blank spaces", which is also classical ink painting's method of interpreting spatial concepts. This includes techniques like nearer objects larger, farther smaller; multi-point perspective; and "anti-perspective". From the "Three Distances of the Tang style" to the "Three Distances of the Southern Song", the pursuit was a "poetic space" of "unity of poetry and painting". Moving to the Ming and Qing dynasties' "calligraphic-pictorial space" achieved by "integrating calligraphy into painting", within the framework of "common origin of calligraphy and painting", an excellent opportunity was provided for writing to intervene in the picture. Perhaps it can be broadly said that this is a "mind-image space" distinct from Western perspective.

In other words, the "bubai" that "leaves space for heaven above and earth below" appears formless yet contains multitudes of forms, akin to "images beyond images", meaning beyond words, resonance beyond the note. It enriches the picture with imaginative space, thus making it lively and ethereal.

2.2 The Implantation of Text and the Qualitative Transformation of Pictorial Space

The planar space provided by books and documents is the primary medium for the presentation of text. Binding sheets of paper into a thick book turns it into a three-dimensional object with height and thickness, yet the essence of text still resides within a 2D planar structure. When text is applied to physical objects to fulfill certain functional requirements—such as textual advertisements

on buses, or textual descriptions and advertisements on beverage cans—the text becomes objectified. It transforms into a three-dimensional object, a type of item, thereby losing its inherently abstract nature. These phenomena of making text three-dimensional and material represent attempts to break away from its original abstractness, aligning text with the logical thinking habits of humans. This is the phenomenon of textual space becoming physicalized.

Text, as a body of writing, is the primary state of textual application and expression, representing its normal condition. Objectified form, on the other hand, is the material manifestation of text. The former is the expression of textual space, occurring and concluding within an abstract spatial structure. The latter, in its spatial expression, disrupts this abstractness, replacing it with a scientifically logical space. The aim is to convert abstract space into physical space. The former represents the spatial expression method of classical ink painting and is one mode of expressing abstract space. The latter is the spatial expression of realistic and naturalistic painting.

In a painting, juxtaposing the abstract space of text with physical space would create opposition, contradiction, and conflict within the pictorial space. Traditional Western painting primarily focuses on expressing physical space, and the fact that text finds no place within painting means the development of Western traditional painting cannot integrate with textual symbols. Even in paintings emphasizing "poetic and pictorial quality", it remains difficult to permit the intentional, subjective intrusion of text into the picture. This is similar to why text-image juxtaposition is unacceptable in many realistic paintings. If text must be added, it can only be reluctantly signed in obscure places, hidden away to mitigate the awkwardness of juxtaposing abstraction and realism in the picture. It is akin to inscribing prose on a life photograph; the abstract space formed by the text would clash, contradict, and oppose the physical space of the photo, causing mutual interference between text and image.

Conversely, if realistic norms are broken, and spatial conventions are defied or weakened, space tends to become abstract, and the

opposition between text and image is simultaneously dissolved. This trend is not hard to discern in the developmental trajectory of modern and contemporary Western works, such as conceptual art, graffiti art, and countless other examples. This can be seen as a qualitative transformation of Western pictorial space.

In contrast, the existence of ink painting is a testament to the existence of textual space and the embodiment of abstract space. When text intervened in painting, it sparked a revolution in the abstract space of ink painting. The triangular relationship between "bubai," text, and imagery led to the literarization of pictorial space. This constituted the first qualitative transformation of space in classical ink painting. If the space before textual intervention was a "painterly abstract space" , afterwards, it became a kind of "poetic abstract space" . When textual writing became a discipline and expression of painting brushwork, textual structure and the principles of textual calligraphy began to influence the development of painting. "Integrating calligraphy into painting" once again induced a qualitative transformation of pictorial space, merging with the "poetic space" to form a "calligraphic-pictorial space." At this point, the painting is not merely a painting, nor the calligraphy merely calligraphy; it is poetry, yet also seems not to be poetry.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CALLIGRAPHY AND PAINTING IN THE TRADITION OF INK PAINTING

The trinity of "Poetry, Calligraphy, and Painting" has been celebrated as the "Three Perfections" since ancient times. The History of the Southern Dynasties: Biography of Emperor Yuan of Liang mentions [3] that Emperor Yuan was skilled in calligraphy and painting. He once painted a portrait of Confucius and composed a four-character eulogy in praise of it. Contemporaries elegantly referred to this as the "Three Perfections," highlighting Emperor Yuan's extraordinary talent. This illustrates the fundamental composition and relationship between the three elements: calligraphy was used to inscribe the pictorial eulogy, and the eulogy was used to praise the portrait. In other words, the painting served as the object of

literary praise, while the poetic text constituted the written content of the "characters."

Poetry, simultaneously, became the medium linking calligraphy and painting, unifying the three—poetry, calligraphy, and painting—into a cohesive image to a certain degree. The juxtaposition of characters and images provided literature with the most direct and convenient starting point for establishing its place within painting. It allowed "poetic painting" to return, from the elaboration of poetic and literary artistic conception, to the functions of readability and narrativity inherent in the juxtaposition of image and text.

In terms of superficial relationships, this phenomenon resembles modern popular formats like comics, illustrated posters, and other promotional materials that combine text and images. If further visualized, it becomes multimedia advertising or video, which shares a similar artistic aim with the art of inscribed colophons that juxtapose text and image. However, within ink painting, this represents a long-term evolutionary process involving the presentation of various literary forms. It can be broadly categorized into five literary styles and aspects: inscribed labels, pictorial eulogies, inscribed poems on paintings, pictorial records, and pictorial postscripts.

3.1 The Use of Inscribed Labels as the Origin of Colophons

Zhang Yanyuan (815–907) of the Tang Dynasty wrote in his Records of Famous Paintings Through the Ages: "Painting accomplishes moral instruction, assists human relations, exhausts spiritual transformations, plumbs the profound and subtle, sharing equal merit with the Six Classics." He also stated: "That which exists for admonition and warning is painting and imagery." This explains the origin of colophons and their connection to explaining the content of paintings—that the intervention of text stemmed from practical social needs. The earliest text inscribed on paintings was the inscribed label on Han Dynasty figure paintings. The Book of Han: Biography of Su Wurecords this phenomenon: "In the third year of the Ganlu era of Emperor Xuan of Han, the Chanyu first came to court. The emperor, reflecting on the excellence of his key ministers, had their images painted in the Qilin Pavilion, capturing their forms and appearances, and

inscribed their official titles, ranks, and names." The account states that "the emperor's reflection on the excellence of his key ministers" provided the motivation for the paintings. Following "their forms and appearances," they were painted in the Qilin Pavilion. After completion, their "official titles, ranks, and names" were inscribed, enabling viewers to "see the text and recognize the image," and "recognize the image and know the person" at a glance. The phrase "capturing their forms and appearances" here means painting portraits based on the likenesses of the meritorious ministers; inscribing their official titles, ranks, and names refers to writing these details beside each portrait. This was the popular "inscribed label" of the Han Dynasty. Nearly nine out of ten paintings with political or didactic functions bore such "inscribed labels." Numerous examples can still be seen in Han Dynasty stone carvings and murals, such as the Han tomb murals in Wangdu, Hebei, which include clerical script inscriptions like "Men Xia Xiao Li" (Minor Clerk of the Secretariat). Another example is the Han Dynasty Wu Liang Shrine stone carving The Assassination Attempt of Jing Ke against the King of Qin, which also features inscribed labels [4], identifying the characters in the scene: "Jing Ke," "King of Qin," "Qin Wuyang," "Head of Fan Yuqi," etc. The content is drawn from the Records of the Grand Historian: Biographies of Assassins, describing the story of Jing Ke's attempt. The use of inscribed labels did not disappear with the emergence of pictorial eulogies. On the contrary, their usage expanded alongside the development of eulogies, extending from figure painting to landscape, bird-and-flower paintings, etc. The Qing Dynasty painter Xu Gu (虚谷, 1823–1896) painted an Album of Miscellaneous Flowers, one leaf depicting blooming yellow chrysanthemums with ink leaves, cascading from the upper right to the lower left of the picture. A line of text inscribed on the left directly and clearly states the painting's content: "Chrysanthemums have yellow flowers" . This is also an application of the inscribed label model, akin to a title indicating content, specifying the object, representing the most direct and primitive structure of "juxtaposing text and image" through a one-to-one correspondence between word and picture.

3.2 Pictorial Eulogies as the Foundation for the Literary Development of Colophons

In ancient times, when shamans performed sacrifices, music officials would often provide an explanation before singing. These explanatory phrases were called "zan" (赞) [5]. The Han Dynasty established the post of "Honglu," responsible for offering praises on various ceremonial occasions. Originally meaning "to explain," "zan" as a literary form was mostly used for praising and lamenting subjects, typically concise and often in four-character rhymed verse. The earliest extant pictorial eulogies are found on the stone chamber portrait carvings of the Wu Family Shrines from the Eastern Han. One eulogy reads: "Zengzi, pure in filial piety, connected with the divine and brilliant, penetrated and moved the spirits and deities, making his name renowned in all directions. Later generations emulate him, using him to correct models and principles." Painting portraits of meritorious officials and martyrs had become a social custom in the Han Dynasty. To commend their achievements, merely inscribing labels was clearly insufficient. Thus, text was used to supplement, explain, and further extol them, giving birth to pictorial eulogies, which became quite popular by the Eastern Han. Due to the strong explanatory nature and intent to praise in pictorial eulogies, rhymed verse developed rapidly. Against this background, their combination with painting-inspired poetry and picture-poems naturally led, in time, to the formation of inscribed poems on paintings. This also established the path for colophons to develop in a literary direction.

3.3 The Combination of Pictorial Eulogies and Object Poetry Forming Inscribed Poems on Paintings

Poets are innately endowed with rich, keen, and profound emotions. Deeply moved by various life experiences, people, events, and objects, often lamenting the times, they frequently compose poetry to express their feelings and unburden their hearts. This characteristic, within the painting realm dominated by literati, naturally facilitated the formation of pictorial inscription literature. Historical records indicate that as early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, painting served as subject matter for poetic composition. This poetic form was called "picture-poem" [6]. Due

to updates in poetic genres and creative methods, early inscription styles resembling inscriptions or eulogies were mostly four-character rhymed verse, focused on praise and entirely objective narration, closely related to the era's emphasis on "moral instruction." By the Six Dynasties, with the rise of five-character poetry, literati applied it to pictorial inscription literature. Figures like Jiang Yan (444–505) and Zhi Dun (c. 314–366) composed colophon-style inscribed poems on paintings, while Bao Ziqing (Liang Dynasty of the Southern Dynasties, dates unknown) [7] and Yu Xin (513–581) composed painting-inspired poems. Gradually combining with the then-popular object poetry—which praised not only fans and screens but also paintings—this slowly led painting-inspired poetry to break away from the inscription/eulogy style and content of mere praise. It shifted towards describing forms and objects, using them to convey aspirations, taking the initial shape of inscribed poems on paintings. Poets and painters praising paintings through poetry became a fashion.

When painting-inspired poetry consciously, through the act of writing, directly intervened in painting, being inscribed onto the picture itself, it transitioned from directly praising the object to entering the juxtaposed structure of poetry and painting converging, thus forming the inscribed poem on painting. Inscribed poems on paintings abandoned the inscription/eulogy style and restrictive content, transforming into a vehicle for literati to express their sentiments and aspirations. Painting also became a realm for literati to freely display their talent and express their will, elevating pictorial inscription literature from a subsidiary, complementary role in painting to an independent aesthetic medium [8]. After entering the Song Dynasty, with shifts in imperial and aristocratic tastes and social customs, the status of ink painting became more elevated, and the creation of inscribed poems on paintings grew even more important as a symbol of refined status for literati and scholar-officials, granting them greater independent aesthetic value. Ms. Zheng Wenhui categorizes pre-Ming inscribed poems on paintings into two types: closed and open [9], offering the best interpretation of the poetry-painting relationship. The closed type refers to poems used to describe the painting's content.

The relationship between painting and poem is like "telling a story based on the picture"—the correspondence between painting and text must be both relevant to the theme and adhere to "stating the facts of the matter" and being "neither too detached nor too attached". This originates from the basic characteristics of pictorial eulogies and object poetry. The open type refers to the fact that after Su Shi and others in the Northern Song proposed the concept of expressive painting, inscribed poems on paintings gradually moved beyond merely describing forms and objects to include more allegorical works, aligning with the aesthetic taste that valued expressiveness over realistic representation. By the Yuan Dynasty, under foreign rule, many literati and scholar-officials, having lost their ambitions for official careers, retreated into poetry, calligraphy, and painting. The content of inscribed poems on paintings also shifted from describing objects in the painting to expressing personal feelings and aspirations. The corresponding relationship between poetry and painting, in conveying and lodging emotions, presented a more open structure.

For example, Zheng Sixiao (郑思肖, 1241–1318) was not originally named Sixiao; he changed his name to Sixiao after the fall of the Song, adopting the sobriquet "Suonan Weng" (所南翁) to express his longing for the lost Southern Song and unwavering loyalty. His Ink Orchid painting deliberately omits the roots [10], intended as an allegory for the pain of being "rootless". The inscribed poem reads: "Since time past, bowing my head I ask Fuxi (or 'the sun'), / Who are you that have come to this place? / Before the painting existed, opening nostrils, / Throughout the sky floats the ancient fragrance." It alludes to the Li Sao (《离骚》, Li Sao), where fragrant orchids symbolize noble character and integrity. The rootless orchid allegorizes a person of a lost nation who still cherishes the former dynasty and longs for the homeland; hence, the orchid still emits its fragrance. Comparing himself to the legendary emperor Fuxi (or interpreting as addressing the sun), he shares a similar state of mind with Tao Qian, hoping the "ancient fragrance" fills heaven and earth to awaken collective memory. Here we see the interdependent relationship between poetry and painting. The poem no longer merely

describes the painting's content but highlights its spiritual essence, giving the ink orchid allegorical meaning, enabling the expression of feelings and the unburdening of the heart, highlighting his great sentiment of concern for the nation and its people. It can be said that allegory, lyricism, and discourse are important characteristics of the "openness" of inscribed poems on paintings. They not only enrich the lyrical quality of the painting's artistic conception, enhance the expression of subjective emotions, strengthen the dynamism of pictorial expression, but also invigorate artistic criticism of painting, contributing to the establishment of traditional aesthetics in ink painting.

3.4 The Flourishing of Pictorial Records and Appreciation/Collecting Giving Rise to Pictorial Postscripts

The emergence of pictorial records was still a result of the further development of pictorial eulogies into prose, reflecting the diversity of pictorial inscription literature and painting's need for textual functions. According to *Records of Famous Paintings Through the Ages*, the earliest inscription of a record on a painting can be traced to the Jin Dynasty calligrapher-painter Wang Yi (王廙, 276–322) [11]. Thereafter, it became a standard feature of painting and calligraphy. For example, the Northern Song Wang Shen's (王诜, 1048–c. 1104) *Snow over Fishing Village* (《渔村小雪图》, Yucun Xiaoxue Tu), housed in the National Palace Museum in Taipei, bears a Yuan Dynasty inscribed poem and pictorial record by Song Ke (宋克, 1327–1387). The poem reads: "The Commandery Governor knew painting holds transcendence. / Able to capture ten thousand li within a foot of silk. / Fishing village veiled amidst river and sky snow. / Hiding countless mountains south of the stream." The record states: "Wang Jinqing's *Snow over Fishing Village*. I viewed this at the residence of Wang Lin in the capital. Its brushwork is vigorous and powerful, arguably unsurpassed by predecessors. Coupled with the inscribed lines by Master Songxue (Zhao Mengfu), it is truly a supreme divine work. May my elder clansman treasure it. Song Ke of Wumen." It discusses the painting's circulation at the time. Following this is a pictorial record by the Ming Dynasty's Wen

Zhengming (文征明, 1470–1559), which talks about Wang Jinqing's life experiences and the painting's circulation in his time, considering it a rare, superior masterpiece. In the Yuan Dynasty Qian Xuan's (钱选, 1239–1299) *Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains*, the painting bears an inscribed poem by the Qianlong Emperor [13]. The Ming Dynasty Jin Shi (金澍, a juren of the Xinyou year in the Zhengtong era, dates unknown) wrote the three characters "山居图" in seal script on the leading sheet. Following the scroll are poems and inscriptions by Yuan Dynasty figures such as Qiu Yuan (仇远, 1247–1327), Zhang Yu (张雨, 1283–1350), Huang Gongwang (黄公望, 1269–1354), Gu Ying (顾瑛, 1310–1369), Zheng Yuanyou (郑元佑, 1292–1364), Monk Qi Chushi (琦楚石, 1296–1370), Ni Zan (倪瓚, 1301 or 1306–1374); Ming Dynasty figures Yao Shou (姚绶, 1422–1495), Zhou Ding (周鼎, late Ming painter, dates unknown), Yang Xunji (杨循吉, c. 1456–1544), Xiang Yuanbian (项元汴, 1525–1590); and Qing Dynasty figure Wang Yirong (王懿荣, 1845–1900). By the Tang Dynasty, due to the vigorous development of painting and calligraphy, appreciation and collecting activities flourished greatly, making pictorial records not uncommon. From the Song and Yuan onwards, inscriptions and records on paintings became even more common.

Pictorial postscripts are a form of colophon involving inscribing poetic or prose text on a painting. Distinct from inscribed poems and records written within the work itself, since the Song and Yuan dynasties, literati and connoisseurs have left numerous pictorial records and postscripts. The content of pictorial postscripts often records the viewer's mood and thoughts while appreciating the work. They may mention the work's aesthetic appeal, comment on the work or artist, narrate the process of acquisition and circulation, authenticate the work, or interpret its content. They reflect the interactive structure between the work and the viewer, while also documenting the collecting and connoisseurship activities of collectors and appreciators. For example, the Yuan Dynasty painter Chen Lin (陈琳, 1260–1320) painted *Duck by a Stream* [14], an impromptu ink-play created during a visit to Zhao Mengfu

(赵孟俯, 1254–1322), who later retouched it. Thus, the postscript states: "Chen Zhongmei (Chen Lin) playfully created this painting. Modern painters all cannot match it. Ziang (Zhao Mengfu)," giving high praise. Additionally, there is an imperial inscription by the Qianlong Emperor and postscripts by Yuan Dynasty figures like Qiu Yuan on the mounting. The Tang Dynasty Han Huang's (韩滉, 723–787) Five Oxen lacks the artist's signature or seal [15], but at the end of the scroll are inscriptions by fourteen individuals, including the Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799), Zhao Mengfu, Kong Kebiao (孔克表, 1314–1386), Dong Gao (董浩, 1740–1818), Xiang Yuanbian, Yao Shiyu (姚世钰, 1703–1757), Jin Nong (金农, 1687–1763), Jiang Pu (蒋溥, 1708–1761), Wang Youdu (汪由敦, 1692–1758), Qiu Yuexiu (裘曰修, 1712–1773), Guan Bao (观保, 1711–1777), Dong Bangda (董邦达, 1699–1769), Qian Weicheng (钱维城, 1720–1772), Jin Deying (金德瑛, 1701–1762), and Qian Rucheng (钱汝诚, 1722–1779). Among them, Zhao Mengfu inscribed it three times. Besides praising the painting, he also discussed its collecting status at the time: "I formerly collected this painting, not knowing when it entered the Crown Prince's study. The Crown Prince bestowed it upon Tanggudai the Grand Councilor, thus allowing me to view it again. How fortunate! Inscribed again on the 13th day of the 3rd month, 1st year of the Yanyou era. Zhao Mengfu, Academician Reader-in-waiting of the Jixian Academy, Grand Master for Proper Consultation." Currently housed in the Tokyo National Museum, the Northern Song Li Gonglin's (李公麟, 1049–1106) Five Horses scroll features annotations by Huang Tingjian (黄庭坚, 1045–1105), courtesy name Luzhi (鲁直), inscribed after each of four horses [16], detailing each horse's name, when it entered the stable, origin, age, size, etc., along with a postscript. Among all the inscriptions, the contemporary Zeng Yu (曾纡, 1073–1135) discusses various aspects of this painting, becoming important documentation for its study. The text reads: "In the Gengwu year of the Yuanyou era, I came to the capital in response to the decree for the 'Fangwen' examination and met Master Luzhi (Huang Tingjian) at the Puchi Temple. Luzhi was then inscribing annotations for Zhang

Zhongmo on Li Boshi's (Li Gonglin) painting Heavenly Horses. Luzhi said to me: 'How extraordinary! When Boshi depicted Manchuanhua from the imperial stables, as soon as he laid down his brush, the horse died. It seems the essence and spirit of this divine steed were all taken away by Boshi's brush tip. This is truly an extraordinary event past and present. We should write a few words to record it.' Fourteen years later, in the Guiwei year of the Chongning era, I was banished to Lingling as a factional offender. Luzhi was also stripped of his official status and exiled to Yizhou. Passing by my place on the Xiao and Xiang rivers, he recounted with Xu Jingguo and Zhu Yanming the story of Boshi painting Manchuanhua to death, saying Mr. Zeng (himself) had personally witnessed this scroll. I said: 'Master, you should fulfill your earlier promise and record it.' Luzhi laughed and said: 'I'm just lacking this one sin to commit.' Two years later, Luzhi died in exile. Another twenty-seven years later, when I was supervising transport in the two Zhe circuits, in the Xinhai year of the Shaoxing era, I arrived at Jiahe. With Liang Zhongmo, Wu Desu, and Zhang Yuanlan, I boated to visit Liu Yanzhong at the Zhenru Temple. Yanzhong promptly brought out this painting. Unrolling the scroll, I was startled; it was exactly as in the past. Recalling the event and the past, over forty years of life's hardships remain, I alone survive towering, wandering and mourning my shadow, as if in another body. Therefore, I record the whole story in detail, not only to let later generations know about this extraordinary event concerning Boshi but also to fulfill Luzhi's unfulfilled intention. Moreover, I present the jade axis to Yanzhong, so he may re-mount it properly. Written by Zeng Yu (style name Kongqing, sobriquet Gongjuan)."

IV. CONCLUSION

A conclusion section must be included and should indicate

The writing-painting relationship is the precursor to the calligraphy-painting relationship and the unshakable cornerstone of the poetry-painting relationship. From "introducing writing into painting" to "integrating calligraphy into painting" and "unity of poetry and painting," writing has consistently been the most fundamental unit,

yet it has always exerted the greatest influence. The developmental trajectory of text, writing, and literature within painting, from the "common origin of calligraphy and painting" and "unity of poetry and painting" to "integrating calligraphy into painting," demonstrates how the lyrical and ideographic nature of writing is fully expressed in painting. Literature and writing, both being "the mind's painting", become realms for painters to "unburden their hearts". From the explanatory labeling of "inscribed labels" to the further development of textual function towards poetry and verse in "pictorial eulogies," the process of achieving "unity of poetry and painting" inevitably involved the transformative influence of the interest in textual writing on painting brushwork. Since Zhao Mengfu of the Yuan Dynasty proposed: "Rocks are like 'flying white' strokes, trees like ancient seal script; painting bamboo should also master the Eight Principles of calligraphy. If someone can comprehend this, they will know calligraphy and painting share the same origin." [17] and championed "integrating calligraphy into painting," this trend born from writing surged forth like a tide, unstoppable. The influence of writing on painting was no longer merely the superficial meaning of the characters, but rather the spatial structure of writing and the spiritual resonance of its inscription. "Juxtaposing text and image" metamorphosed into "unity of calligraphy and painting." The meaning of writing exists within colophons, manifesting in the layout of literature and the pictorial composition. "Integrating calligraphy into painting" penetrated deep into the very bones of painting, deepening the use of brush and ink, enriching the connotation of linear vocabulary, and influencing the development of Ming and Qing painting for four to five hundred years. Perhaps it can be said that writing is the brain of classical ink painting, while textual inscription and literature are its soul.

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- [2] Cited from Zeng Zuyin, *Categories of Ancient Chinese Aesthetics* (《中国古代美学范畴》, Zhongguo Gudai Meixue Fanchou), Taipei, Danqing Books Co., Ltd., 1987, p. 200.
- [3] *History of the Southern Dynasties, Volume 8: "Skilled in calligraphy, good at painting, made a portrait of Confucius, composed a written eulogy for it, contemporaries called it the Three Perfections."*
- [4] *The Wu Family Shrines are Han Dynasty ancestral halls and tombs located north of Wudai Village, Zhifang Town, Jiexiang County, Jining City, Shandong Province. Built during the reigns of Emperors Huan and Ling of the Eastern Han. A stone chamber for protection was built in 1962. In 1972, the carved stones embedded in the walls of the old houses were removed and moved to the chamber for display. The Wu Family Shrines scenic area was established in 2014.*
- [5] See Shen Shuhua ed., *The Art of Inscriptions in Chinese Painting* (《中国画题款艺术》, Zhongguo Hua Tikuan Yishu), Beijing, People's Fine Arts Publishing House, 1998.
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- [7] *Poem in Praise of a Painted Fan* (《咏画扇诗》, Yong Hua Shan Shi) by Bao Ziqing, a poet of the Liang Dynasty of the Southern Dynasties, is a five-character poem, included in *Poetry of the Pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties, Volume of Liang Poetry, Chapter 28**.
- [8] Aoki Masaru once said: 'Inscribed poems on paintings are the result of the convergence of pictorial eulogies and object poetry.' See Aoki Masaru, trans. Wei Zhongyou, "Literature of Inscriptions on Paintings and Its Development," *Chinese Culture Monthly*, No. 9, July 1970, p. 84.
- [9] Zheng Wenhui, *Poetic Sentiment and Pictorial Meaning* (《诗情画意》, Shiqing Huayi), Taipei, Dongda Book Co., Ltd., 1995, pp. 36–55.
- [10] See Yuan Dynasty Zheng Sixiao's *Ink Orchid* (《墨兰图》, Molan Tu). Ink on paper, image 25.7 x 42.4 cm, housed in the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts, Japan.
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- [12] See Northern Song Wang Shen's Snow over Fishing Village, Handscroll (《渔村小雪图卷》, Yucun Xiaoxue Tu Juan). Ink and color on silk, image 44.5 x 219.5 cm, housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.
- [13] See Yuan Dynasty Qian Xuan's Dwelling in the Floating Jade Mountains (《浮玉山居图》, Fuyu Shanju Tu). Ink on paper, image 29.6 x 98.7 cm, housed in the Shanghai Museum.
- [14] See Yuan Dynasty Chen Lin's Duck by a Stream (《溪凫图》, Xi Fu Tu). Ink on paper, image 35.7 x 47.5 cm, housed in the National Palace Museum, Taipei.
- [15] See Tang Dynasty Han Huang's Five Oxen, Handscroll (《五牛图卷》, Wu Niu Tu Juan). Ink on paper, image 20.8 x 139.8 cm, housed in the Palace Museum, Beijing.
- [16] See Northern Song Li Gonglin's Five Horses, Handscroll (《五马图卷》, Wu Ma Tu Juan). Ink on paper, 29.3 x 225 cm, housed in the Tokyo National Museum, Japan.
- [17] See Yuan Dynasty Zhao Mengfu's Sparse Trees and Elegant Rocks, Handscroll (《秀石疏林图卷》, Xiu Shi Shu Lin Tu. Juan). Ink on paper, image 27.5 x 62.8 cm, housed in the Palace Museum, Beijing.