

A Study of Chao Meng-Fu's Saddle Horse Painting from the Perspective of Ethnic Integration

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Abstract. The Yuan Dynasty was a period of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, mutual exchange and integration in Chinese history. As a Han official who served in the Yuan Dynasty, Chao Meng-Fu's artistic style not only inherited the orthodox Chinese culture but was also inevitably influenced by the culture of minority groups in the Yuan Dynasty due to his political identity. This paper attempts to start from an ethnic perspective, select the theme of saddle horse painting, which was more popular among ethnic minorities, and study the relationship between the evolution of Chao Meng-Fu's saddle horse painting style and the great ethnic integration of the Yuan Dynasty, to understand the relationship between the transformation of Chao Meng-Fu's artistic style and social development, and thus peep into the cultural and artistic development under the background of ethnic integration in ancient China. To the research results, Chao Meng-Fu's early artistic career mainly consisted of learning and inheriting the traditional culture of the Central Plains, but after joining the Yuan Dynasty, his saddle horse painting and artistic thoughts were influenced by the culture and arts of different ethnic groups, in the context of the integration of various ethnic groups in the Yuan Dynasty, eventually formed an artistic style of "simple brushwork and divine spirit with high intention," thus contributing to the development of ancient Chinese art from the perspective of artistic development. The author hopes that through this research, it can provide some contributions to scholars who study this field in the future.

Keywords: Ethnic integration; Chao Meng-Fu; Saddle horse painting.

1. Introduction

As an important part of ancient social life, the horse was ranked first among the six animals in the Rites of Zhou because of its characteristic of being "heavy and far-reaching." The Yuan Dynasty was the first great unification dynasty established by ethnic minorities in Chinese history, and multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious fusion and mutual development formed a unique multi-ethnic culture. As a famous artist of the Yuan Dynasty, Chao Meng-Fu's artworks and art theories not only directly influenced the creation of Yuan Dynasty artists but also marked a milestone in the development of Chinese art. The current research mainly studies Chao Meng-Fu's biographical genealogy, painting, calligraphy practice, and art theory from the perspective of the art science, which is a relatively single perspective. Combining the relevant theories of sociology and ethnology and cutting from the perspective of ethnic integration can better combine Chao Meng-Fu's artistic achievements with the social and ethnic environment and build a three-dimensional space for the study of Chao Meng-Fu. The first chapter of this paper mainly compares the genealogy of the development of saddle horse painting before the Yuan Dynasty and discusses the formation history of saddle horse painting. The second chapter focuses on exploring the aesthetic tendencies of the nomadic peoples in the north represented by the Mongols during the Yuan Dynasty and summarizes the common aesthetic orientation and aesthetic commonality. The third chapter selects two saddle horse painting works, "The Man Riding" and "The Autumn Country Drinking Horse", which were painted in Chao Meng-Fu's middle and late years respectively and are relatively unanimously recognized as authentic by the academic community. It explores the evolution of his style against the background of ethnic integration and the formation of his final artistic style to understand Chao Meng-Fu's artistic achievements from a new perspective.

2. The Development of the Image of the Saddle Horse in the Former Dynasty

As an important part of daily transportation and military combat in ancient times, the horse is a creature that is closely related to human life and highly compatible with spiritual culture, and the importance and love of horses throughout the ages have provided the possibility of creating art with horses as a theme. Although these paintings are primitive and crude in expression, it can be seen that humans had already begun to domesticate horses in primitive societies and had made careful observations of their forms and habits.

During the Qin and Han dynasties, the importance of the horse as a strategic material became more and more evident due to the long and intensive conquests, and the government sent Zhang Qian and other emissaries to the West to bring back "good horses from the West" to crossbreed and improve the Chinese horse breed. At this time, the portrayal of horses on the portrait stones had a more programmatic expression, with a slightly smaller head, prominent nose and eyes, a broad and retracted neck, a prominent chest, and full hips, using rounded and full lines for the neck, chest, and hips, and a fat and muscular torso, with straight and sharp lines for the limbs and hooves, fully demonstrating the horse's sense of speed in motion. During the Wei and Jin dynasties, with the development of figure painting, horses appeared in a large number of paintings as an accompaniment to depict figures, showing a new and lively posture.

During the Sui and Tang dynasties, saddle horse painting reached a new peak. Firstly, the Tang culture had a clear tendency toward Huization, and the royal family of Li Tang itself was of Xianbei origin [1], which was richer and more direct than the general Han acceptance and understanding of grassland cultural customs, and thus had a deeper affection for horses. Secondly, the state was in full bloom during the Sui and Tang dynasties. Under the influence of openness and tolerance, as well as the spirit of "Shangwu" (Reliance on Strength), the construction of cavalry received unprecedented attention, and horse painting was extremely popular. In Zhang Yan Yuan's "Records of Famous Paintings of the Past Generations", the Saddle Horse Painting is divided into separate sections [2], while socially recognized famous painters such as Han Gan, Wei Yan and Chen Ma-cheng emerged.

During the Northern Song Dynasty, Li Gonglin, who was often known for his horse painting, through his creative use of white drawing, magnified the charm of lines in saddle horse painting, forming a new and uniquely fresh and concise style of painting, which was born from the rich coloring characteristics of Tang Dynasty saddle horse painting. At the same time, the Xuanhe Painting Manual also officially classified the painting of horses and animals. The classification of horses and horses in subsequent generations continued during the Northern Song Dynasty. During the Southern Song Dynasty, under the influence of the culture of literature and martial arts, there were few paintings of horses and saddles, except for the court painter Chen Bushong, who was good at painting horses and saddles, but at the same time, the Liao and Jin regimes in the north saw the emergence of such famous painters as Hu Gai, Li Zanhua, Yang Bangji, Li Chao, Zhang Yu, Zhao Lin, and others.

The need and sentiment of each regime and society for horses in successive generations influenced the creation of saddle horse painting, and the creation and development of saddle horse painting by artists also reflected the likes and dislikes and attitudes of the times towards the creation of this kind of artistic subject matter. Under the influence of these two factors, before the Yuan Dynasty, the Central Plains horse painting had developed more maturely, with a large number of famous painters and masterpieces, while the horse painting of the minority regimes in the north developed rapidly, with the portrayal of horses and large-scale hunting scenes reaching a high artistic level.

3. The Aesthetic Tendencies of the Northern Nomads

The Yuan dynasty emerged and originated among the nomadic peoples of northern China, which people can roughly define as the present-day Mongolian plateau, where the geographical environment and nomadic hunting customs have influenced many nomadic peoples, including the Xiongnu, Xianbei, Turkic, Khitan, and Mongolian peoples, five of which are large and whose existence and history are well documented. According to Study, an American anthropologist and advocate of

ecological anthropology, "cultural traits are formed in the process of gradual adaptation to the local environment, and in any culture, some cultural traits are more directly influenced by environmental factors than others" [3]. Nomadic peoples live by water and grass and are brave and warlike; therefore, in this paper, the author does not limit the aesthetics of the Yuan dynasty to the Mongols but place it in the context of the nomadic peoples of the north.

3.1 Simple and Vivid Form

On the vast Mongolian plateau, a large number of rock painting relics are created by the primitive northern nomads, whose distribution ranges from the Daxingan Mountains in the east to the Altai Mountains in the West. Rock paintings are a true record of the material and spiritual life of primitive human beings, especially those whose main means of survival was nomadic herding, and show the primitive aesthetic impulses of human beings. Most of the petroglyphs are depicted by grinding, scraping, and carving, with the overall contour line outlining as the main focus, depicting primitive humans and animals through simple and vivid forms. The rock paintings in Inner Mongolia's Alashan Mandrasha Mountain, for example, date from the late primitive society to the early Neolithic period, more than 6,000 years ago [4], and most of them use a flat modeling technique, without the perspective relationship of large near and small far, and fully simplify the structure of the objects in their depiction. The scene is mainly based on the most representative hunting of nomadic people, in which hunters run and chase with weapons in hand. Although the form is simple, the pose and proportion of the objects depicted are exceptionally natural and vivid. The simple and sincere style aptly demonstrates the spiritual core of the northern nomads' simplicity, and this pursuit of simple and vivid forms has been throughout the aesthetics of the northern nomads, becoming one of the representatives of the aesthetic tendencies of the northern nomads.

3.2 Dynamic, Realistic Modeling

The nomadic people in the north live in a relatively hostile natural environment, fighting for living space and obtaining living resources in the unpredictable temperate continental climate zone, living by water and grass and constantly hunting and migrating. The nomads must pay attention to the changing natural scenery, the herd that is always moving, chase the prey that is struggling to escape, and be alert to the natural environment that is in danger. Their artworks' pursuit of dynamism and realistic expression has put higher requirements. The spring mural shows the Khitan practice of goose hunting in the spring, with birds swimming in different poses on the freshly thawed stream, some about to dive into the water and some about to fly, fully showing the natural scenes of spring business. The remaining summer, autumn, and winter murals also appear in the peony, fallen leaves, snow, and other corresponding natural landscape. At the same time, the goose hunting picture also appeared first with the seasonal correspondence of the elk, geese, roe deer, and other animals; these animals are also in a dynamic form in the goose hunting picture. The natural landscape formed a vivid scene of echo and harmony. The Xiongnu gold crown unearthed in Inner Mongolia has an eagle with two outstretched wings made of gold pieces. The head and tail of the eagle are attached to the main body with gold wires, and the head and tail of the eagle will show a dynamic effect of spreading its wings to fly with the person's action during the wearing process. The pursuit of dynamics and speed is the aesthetic consciousness of nomadic people whose living environment has been influenced for a long time. They put high demands on the dynamics of the matters appearing in the picture, especially the realism of the dynamics, which contrasts with the Chinese culture, which is influenced by the agricultural civilization and pursues a clear and gentle picture.

3.3 Simple and Elegant Colors

The use and preference of color can reflect people's underlying thinking and aesthetic tendencies. The nomadic peoples of northern China consistently prefer "white," and white has a more sublime meaning in their different national cultural systems. The Xiongnu had Xing white horse for the alliance, and the Khitan had a white horse sacrificed to the sky; the "Great Golden State" has a record

that "Jin custom is good white clothes," shows that the Khitan group of people also dress mostly white [5]. It is said that the ancestors of Mongolia are the wolf and the white deer, who crossed a river named Tengkisi and lived in front of Mount Bu'erhan, the source of the river Okunan, and gave birth to a man, from which the whole Mongolian nation was derived. Therefore, the Mongolian people have the national characteristic of "white is the most auspicious national custom," and the religious head of the Mongolian people, the "Bekhi," are required to wear white clothes and ride a white horse during the rituals. Chagan Ridge, translated as "white food," is also used in the Mongolian diet, and Hvmisi, made from horse milk, is considered a holy drink and is only served to distinguished guests. It was also considered a holy drink and was only offered to distinguished guests [6]. The reason behind this is that, apart from the relatively poor production and the lack of great dyes, one of the reasons is that most of the northern nomads believe in shamanism, in which white is regarded as the color of the sun. The source of life, so white, also has the meaning of auspiciousness and vitality. The other is that white also occupies a large proportion of the living environment of the northern nomads, with the snow-covered mountain tops, the vast family of snow-covered mountain tops, the clouds, the flocks of sheep, and the white and fragrant milk all precipitated in the collective unconscious of the nation. The appearance of white in life activates the most primitive and pleasurable reaction of the nomads' underlying emotions, which is reflected in the pursuit of simple and elegant colors in art appreciation. From a practical point of view, the aesthetic pursuit of simple and elegant colors has further contributed to the trend of changing Chinese painting colors to ink and wash.

4. Characteristics of Chao Meng-Fu's Saddle Horse Paintings from the Perspective of Ethnic Integration

The Yuan Dynasty was the first unified dynasty in Chinese history established by the Mongols, a nomadic people from the north, and its predecessor people can trace back to the early "Great Mongolian State." As the Mongolian iron horseback riders plundered the Uyghur, Western Xia, Jin, and Southern Song dynasties one by one, their own culture matured as they absorbed and developed the cultures of various ethnic groups. After the establishment of the Yuan dynasty, Kublai paid great attention to learning Han culture, realizing that he had to learn from the culture of the previous Han rule if he wanted to rule and govern the Central Plains well, and recruited more than 60 Han scholars before his succession as Khan [7]. In general, after the completion of the unification of the Yuan dynasty, there was a significant reduction in the conflict and antagonism among the various ethnic groups, and the society was continuously integrated among the various ethnic groups in the context of the great unification, and social conflicts were moderated. It is important to emphasize that there is an inertia in the scholarly community about the hierarchy of ethnic groups in the Yuan Dynasty (the four-class system). That is, the Yuan Dynasty treated Han Chinese, especially those in the south, severely, but as the study of Yuan history advances, the actual Yuan Dynasty laws never divided the ethnic groups into four classes but actually set some different policies for the treatment of the diverse and complex foreign ethnic groups in Yuan Dynasty society, in which there was indeed a class aspect, but not a clear division into classes [8].

The life course of Chao Meng-Fu (1254-1322), character Zi'ang, numbered Xuesong, Daoist of Xuesong, and also Daoist of Shuijing Palace, can be roughly divided into four stages.

First, during his youth (1254-1286), the scope of Zhao Mengfu's activities was mainly concentrated in the cultural circle of Jiangnan. At this stage, he was gifted with natural talent, and coupled with the hard work of practicing his painting and calligraphy skills day and night, he achieved considerable fame in the Jiangnan cultural circle. Second, during the period of serving the Yuan Dynasty and traveling between the north and the south (1287-1309), Cheng Jiufu was ordered by the Yuan Emperor Kublai to go south to search and visit, and Chao Meng-Fu was recommended to be summoned, thus beginning his 30-odd year career in the Yuan Dynasty. Thirdly, during his long residence in Dadu (1310-1319), his political career peaked, and he was a first-rank official. The painting of "Autumn Suburb Drinking Horse" was completed at this stage. Fourthly, in his later years

(1320-1322), Chao Meng-Fu returned to the south with his sick wife, Piping Sheng. Afterward, the Emperor of the current dynasty repeatedly issued edicts to invite him to return to the capital. Still, he finally requested to be dismissed because of his old age and weakness. This essay will not discuss whether Zhao Mengfu's entry into the Yuan dynasty lost the bones of the Han Chinese and whether there was any "flattery to the Yuan" in the "saddle horse paintings" painted by Zhao Mengfu, and the analysis of the paintings in this essay will focus mainly on the two saddle horse paintings that are less controversial in academic circles as to their authenticity, namely, "Man Riding" and "Drinking Horse in the Autumn Countryside[9]".

This research paper hopes to explore the evolution of Zhao Mengfu's painting ideology and painting style from the perspective of artistic development, as well as the process by which his painting style was influenced by ethnic integration. The study divides Zhao Mengfu's artistic career into three parts: in his youth, he developed the idea of pursuing "ancient style"; in his middle age, he engaged in cultural exchanges with minority writers after entering politics, and during this period he produced *The Riding Man*; in his later years, his painting style gradually became clear against the background of ethnic integration, and *The Drinking Horse in the Autumn Countryside* marks the establishment of his personal style.

4.1 The Origin of the Idea - Seeking Ancient Meaning

As a descendant of the Southern Song dynasty, Chao Meng-Fu received a good cultural education from childhood. His father, Zhao Zhuo, excelled in poetry and painting and had close contact with many literati of the same period, while his family's art collection was also very considerable. The good cultural environment of his family enabled him to receive subtle cultural inculcation since his childhood, and Chao Meng-Fu could appreciate and copy his family's art treasures that had been handed down for generations since he was a child. In his "Picture of Young Public Opinion and Gulch," he wrote in his postscript that "I have loved painting since I was a child, and I had not failed to order my brush to write it down when I got an inch of suspicion."

Chao Meng-Fu lived in his youth at the time of the change of Song and Yuan dynasties when the nomads in the north represented by the Yuan dynasty swung southward and were invincible. The Southern Song regime was defeated and eventually destroyed. The unification war of the Yuan Dynasty was so destructive that people would think that Mongolian rule was exceptionally brutal and must have been oppressive in the cultural field. Still, reading through historical materials, people would find that under Mongolian rule, the management of Yuan Dynasty in peacetime was relatively lenient. "

The development of art under the Yuan dynasty was a field that lost its "guardian" [10], limited by the lack of experience in ruling at the level of culture and art in the early Yuan dynasty and the process of continuous multi-ethnic integration, the cultural field was actually in a turbulent and open state. The practical nature of artistic creation was dissolved, and the removal of the original practical nature allowed the content of artistic creation to be entirely based on personal preference, which also resulted in a more versatile approach to art in the Yuan dynasty and the ability of artists to express their thoughts directly. It was also against this background of national integration that Chao Meng-Fu developed the idea of "painting with an ancient meaning." Chao Meng-Fu's "ancient intent" was not a retro school completely detached from reality, but opposed to the form of "slender brushwork and rich colors" in Southern Song painting art, pointing to a kind of pursuit and imitation of "ancient style." The pursuit and imitation of "ancient style." The "ancient style" here does not exactly point to a specific time [11], but to the foreground of a painting to learn from the Tang dynasty and even earlier Qin and Han paintings, and to pursue the artistic style of "gas finished but not yet dispersed" in the picture. With such a highly critical spirit, As one might expect that if it had appeared in the Song Dynasty or in a dynasty dominated by the Chinese culture in the order of traditional changes, Chao Meng-Fu would have been designated as a deviant by the scholars and put behind bars. It was in the multi-ethnic integration and relatively relaxed cultural management atmosphere of the Yuan

Dynasty that Chao Meng-Fu's idea of "ancient meaning" could be expressed and developed into the theoretical and practical basis of Chinese painting.

Chao Meng-Fu's idea of "ancient meaning" in artistic aesthetics was a product of his artistic study and practice, but in the process of forming and finally promoting this idea, people can not ignore the era in which he lived, and it was precisely in the process of national fusion and mutual influence and tolerance of various cultures that Chao Meng-Fu had the environment to express and seek his aesthetic pursuit. From another point of view, the "ancient meaning" pursued by Chao Meng-Fu in the field of art is precisely in line with the Mongolian pursuit of simple and vivid art forms. The appreciation of his artistic works and the development of his artistic ideas were more from an emotional resonance between the aesthetics of ethnic minorities and the aesthetics of the Central Plains.

4.2 Traveling to and Fro - Eclecticism

Chao Meng-Fu's friendship with ethnic minority people was mainly concentrated after he joined the Yuan Dynasty, and the most representative one is the friendship between Chao Meng-Fu and Gao Kegong. Gao Kegong was a native of Fangshan, a native of the western region, of Hui ethnicity, and a member of the Simeon family. He was both a famous minority politician and one of the most influential painters in the Yuan Dynasty. Chao Meng-Fu and Gao Kegong met on their way to Beijing to take up their posts. At that time, Gao Kegong "had not painted much" [12], but because of his love for Chinese culture, he established a friendship with Chao Meng-Fu. Later, when Gao Kegong took up his post in Jianghuai, Chao Meng-Fu also returned to Wuxing due to illness, and the two became closer and closer, often holding and participating in literati gatherings and frequently interacting with artists in painting and calligraphy such as Li Zhongbin, Xian Yushu and Guo Youzhi. During this period, Gao Kegong's painting and calligraphy also continued to improve. Gao Kegong's landscape painting was based on the style of Dong Yuan and Mi Fu of the Five Dynasties and the Northern Song Dynasty, which Chao Meng-Fu admired, and Chao Meng-Fu praised Gao Kegong's paintings with poems on many occasions. Although Chao Meng-Fu's fame in the painting world was far above that of Gao Kegong, it can be seen from their correspondence that they always respected each other, and "South Zhao and North Gao Kegong" became a good story in the painting world in the early Yuan Dynasty. In addition, other minority artists with whom Chao Meng-Fu interacted included the Hui calligrapher and painter Sadu Zing, the Uyghur calligrapher Lian Xigong, and the Kazakh calligrapher Kangli Jinkun, etc. It can be said that Chao Meng-Fu's interaction in the cultural circles of the north and the south after he joined the Yuan Dynasty, especially during the period from 1287 to 1309, made it possible for the rule of minority groups in the early Yuan Dynasty to be bridged in the cultural field. The social circle centered on Chao Meng-Fu was rich in both Chinese and minority cultures and social roles, and they learned from each other, not only promoting their own literary and artistic achievements but also realizing the mutual learning and integration of cultures.

Painted in the second year of Yuanzhen (1296), "Man Riding" is a representative of Chao Meng-Fu's saddle horse painting at this stage. There is an inscription on the painting: "I have loved painting horses since I was a child, and when I came to see three scrolls of Han Gan's authentic works, I began to get his intention, which was inscribed by Zi'ang." According to this inscription, it can be seen that Chao Meng-Fu had a passion for painting horses since his childhood and that the "Human Riding Figure" was created after he got three authentic Han Gan paintings and continued to appreciate and learn the essence of the paintings. It can be seen that Chao Meng-Fu was quite satisfied with the painting he made. Previously, there have been numerous articles emphasizing the relationship between Chao Meng-Fu's artistic style and the famous saddle horse painters Cao Ba and Han Gan of the Tang Dynasty, so this article will not repeat them here. What needs to be emphasized here is that if Jin imitated Chao Meng-Fu's saddle horse painting, it would certainly not become a typical example in the history of Chinese saddle horse painting. In addition to absorbing the artistic style of the previous dynasty, the unique characteristics of the period of national fusion can also be seen in "Man Riding." First of all, in terms of painting method, "Man Riding" adopts a painting method based on line outlining and supplemented by haloing, and the lines of the picture do not pursue excessive

roundness, and it is obvious that the astringency of the lines and the changes in the lightness of the ink color appears when the brushwork is fast, indicating that Chao Meng-Fu pursued the creation of the image in one go rather than the excessive perfection of the lines when creating this painting, and the brushwork is long, and he pursues vividness and realism in the shaping of details. Secondly, as for the portrayal of horses, the image of the horse in "Man Riding" is more realistic. When Chao Meng-Fu painted horses, he promoted the painting of the horse's spirit and bones. Underneath the calm demeanor is the demand for peace and tranquility in the face of the rule of a foreign regime and the unprecedented fusion of diverse national cultures after the recent turmoil. Finally, in terms of stylistic style, Chao Meng-Fu does not have the tension of opening up the frontier and expanding the land as the surviving human and horse pictures of the Tang dynasty do, but the "Human Riding" shows a peaceful and uncontested scene of a prosperous and peaceful world, with both the horse and the human presenting a leisurely and relaxed look.

As a representative work of Chao Meng-Fu's saddle horse paintings, it is easy to see from the painting style that he was still deeply influenced by the saddle horse paintings of his predecessors, but it can also be found that his artistic creation was obviously influenced and began to gradually form his own style after he joined the Yuan Dynasty and started to travel with minority artists.

4.3 The Final Source of the Heart - The Fusion of the Birth

The major turnaround in Zhao Mengfu's political career came after the Crown Prince Aiyubulibashibada (later Yuan Renzong) called him to the capital. Influenced by Chinese culture since his childhood, the prince was fond of literature and art. He valued Zhao Mengfu's profound knowledge and hoped that his fame could be used to decorate his facade.

Single disciplinary studies are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of society, and in the future people need to combine multidisciplinary knowledge with artistic research in greater depth. The influence of social factors on the work of artists cannot be ignored, and people need to focus on these issues and conduct further research. In October of the third year of his reign (1310), Chao Meng-Fu was appointed as a bachelor of the Hanlin service, a judge of the system, and a co-reviser of the national history, a third-ranking official. Within six years thereafter, Chao Meng-Fu reached the first rank, "pushing his grace to three generations," and reached the peak of his political career. At the same time, Chao Meng-Fu's artistic career reached its peak. In Fang Hui's "Sending Zhao Zion to write the Golden Scriptures," he wrote: "Small people carry scrolls with common people, while large people have thicker systems for princes and lords. I have stepped through the iron gate in front of the door and struggled to find the real work from the king's son." This shows the great influence of Chao Meng-Fu in the capital at this time.

In the first year of the Emperor's reign (1312), Chao Meng-Fu created the painting "Drinking Horses in the Autumn Countryside." This painting of horses and saddles is small in size, but it is really the pinnacle of Chao Meng-Fu's painting of horses and saddles, and it is also the symbol of his maturity in painting horses and saddles against the background of national integration. The scene depicted in the painting is a suburban scene in autumn. In the painting, a red-clad Xi Guan crosses a horse and holds a whip, leading ten horses to a stream, and by making use of the inherent color of silk, Chao Meng-Fu only slightly depicts the shore but makes people feel that the water in the stream and the lake is clear and rippling. The mountains in the distance and the rocks near the painting, which are finely carved with stone green stain, form a contrast between near and far. The horses have different colors of fur, brown, white, black, gray, and spotted, and their postures vary from galloping and chasing each other, to walking slowly, to kissing and pecking, to drinking with their heads down.

In terms of the layout of the picture, Chao Meng-Fu has effectively utilized the silk panel and adopted the composition of a middle scene with open ground without open air to organically integrate three different ways of scenography: flat, elevated, and overhead, and appropriately handled the relationship between the size of people and horses, trees, and the river bank, making the overall composition balanced and with variations and the picture as a wholly simple and vivid. In the depiction of horses, people can see that the form of the horses here is significantly different from the

horses in the previous "Human Riding." First of all, this is related to the types of horses depicted. The saddle horses of the previous dynasty that Chao Meng-Fu studied and observed before were mainly Central Asian horses, which had been introduced through the Silk Road in successive dynasties since the Han Dynasty to improve the horses in the Central Plains, and the Central Asian horses had high shoulders and long legs and were exceptionally fit. The Mongolian horses were not large and not very explosive, but they were hardworking and had outstanding ability to continue fighting and were the main horses of the Mongolian guerrilla cavalry. People can speculate that as Chao Meng-Fu continued to integrate into the social life of the Yuan Dynasty, his observation of horses also changed from the relatively tall Central Asian horses to the lighter Mongolian horses of the Yuan Dynasty. Secondly, the posture of horses was also more diverse. The former saddle horse paintings mostly depicted horses from a front and side angle, which was actually an ideal type of painting of horses, but the Mongolians, the people who grew up on horseback, had a more thorough understanding of horses than the former dynasty, and their pursuit of saddle horse paintings no longer emphasized the beautiful posture of horses, but required a more vivid and apt depiction of the dynamic shape of horses, showing the natural state of horses. In "Autumn Country Drinking Horse," Chao Meng-Fu shows the habits of horses to the fullest extent, with horses in groups of three or two, showing the daily posture of the horse herd, overflowing with the beauty of the Yuan Dynasty's northern ethnic minorities in their roughness and frankness, while Xi Guan and horses coexist harmoniously, showing an artistic field that belongs especially to the literati's empty spirit and leisure, and the two appear to complement each other. Once again, in terms of coloring, the picture adopts the more traditional green and blue painting method, applying blue and green according to specific things, filling and dyeing maple leaves with vermilion, green and green grass on the shore, rendering autumn waves with flowers and green, showing horses in black, white, orange and yellow, and punctuating them with red-clad Xi officials, the color composition of the whole picture is fresh and bright, and the overall scenery is very clear and quiet. However, he was also influenced by the influence of northern minority cultures' preference for simplicity and elegance in color aesthetics during his long tenure in the Yuan Dynasty. Finally, in terms of depiction techniques, the entire scroll is extremely simple in terms of characters, horses, trees, stream banks, and water flow. Although the brushwork is all sketchy, it can achieve the business of depicting the bones of the objects without any gaudy and vulgar air.

5. Conclusion

Ethnic integration has been an inevitable product of China's political and social life since ancient times, and it is a universal social phenomenon and way of occurrence, which is often shown in the art field as a dynamic social two-way exchange. From "Man Riding" to "Autumn Countryside Drinking Horse," Chao Meng-Fu's saddle horse paintings show a path of achievement from the mastery of ancient Han and Tang dynasties to the exchange with ethnic minorities and the incorporation of various styles, and then to the ultimate realization of his personal style. Against the background of cultural integration of various ethnic groups in the Yuan dynasty, Chao Meng-Fu's saddle horse paintings developed and formed an artistic style of simple brushwork and ancient intention. The history of China is the history of continuous exchanges and integration of various ethnic groups into a pluralistic Chinese nation. The mutual integration of cultures of various ethnic groups during the Yuan Dynasty laid the foundation for the formation of the Chinese cultural circle in terms of cultural identity and the mutual influence of the arts of various ethnic groups in the field of art contributed to the brilliant artistic achievements of the Yuan Dynasty. This paper hopes to open up a new field for the study of artistic development through the perspective of ethnic fusion and to promote a more active interdisciplinary exchange. Single disciplinary studies are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of society, in the future people need to combine multidisciplinary knowledge with artistic research in greater depth. The influence of social factors on the work of artists can not be ignored, and everyone need to focus on these issues and conduct further research.

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