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# Living and Farming: The Donkey Culture in Dryland Terrace System

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# Overview

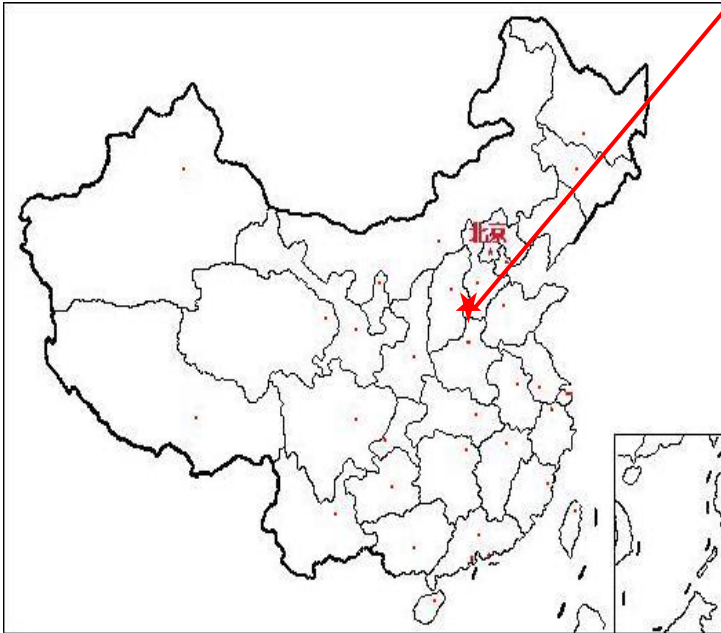
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- 1. Brief Introduction of Dryland Terrace System (DTS) in Shexian County, China**
- 2. Agricultural Production Model: “Donkey-Pepper-Stone” (DPS) Coupled Structure**
- 3. Rural Life Style: “Human-Donkey” Communication Pattern**
- 4. Significance of Rural Culture towards the Conservation of GIAHS**

# 1. Brief Introduction of DTS

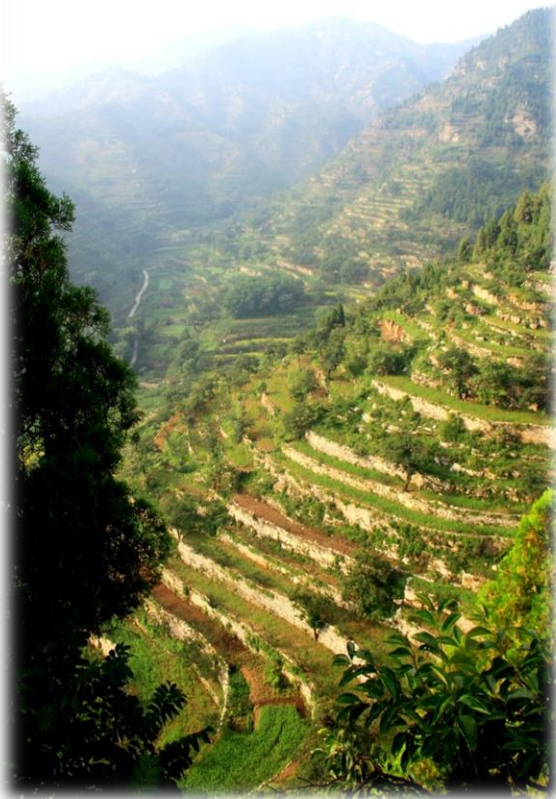
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## 1.1 Dynamic Adaptation System



† **The Dryland Terrace System**, 17000 hectares for its total area, is located in Shexian County, Handan City, Hebei Province, China. It is the product of dynamic adaptation and consistent efforts of local people, enabling the growing population, increasing fields and riching food harmony with the fragile ecological environment. It was praised as “**the Second Greatwall of China**” by experts of UN WFP.





† Grandiose dryland terrace landscape is situated in the Taihang Mountains, the typical feature can be summarized as “high mountains , steep slopes, thin rocks and thick soil”. Therefore, local people think highly of donkeys, call them “precious property”.





† As one of the representative remedial measures to response to flood disaster, local people build arch structure inside of the stone weir to strengthen the terrace, and by the mean time, create a storage and rest space.







## Unique Survival Wisdom



**Farming Technique**

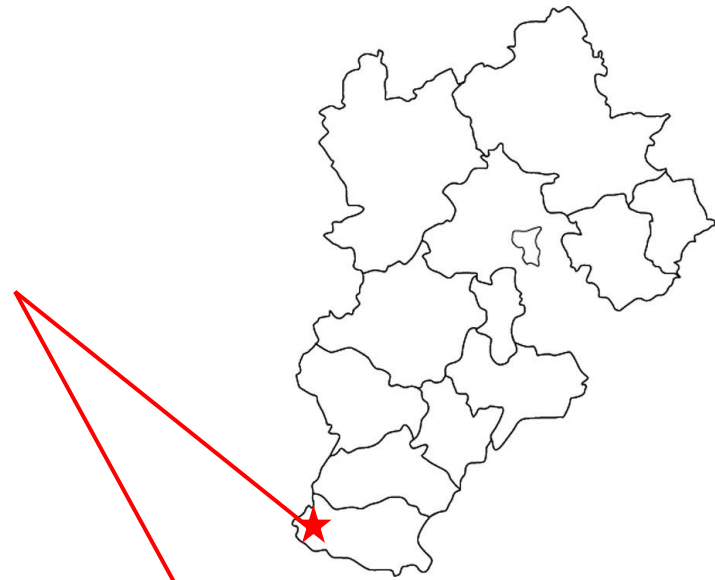


**Storage Technique**

## 1.2 Fieldwork Site

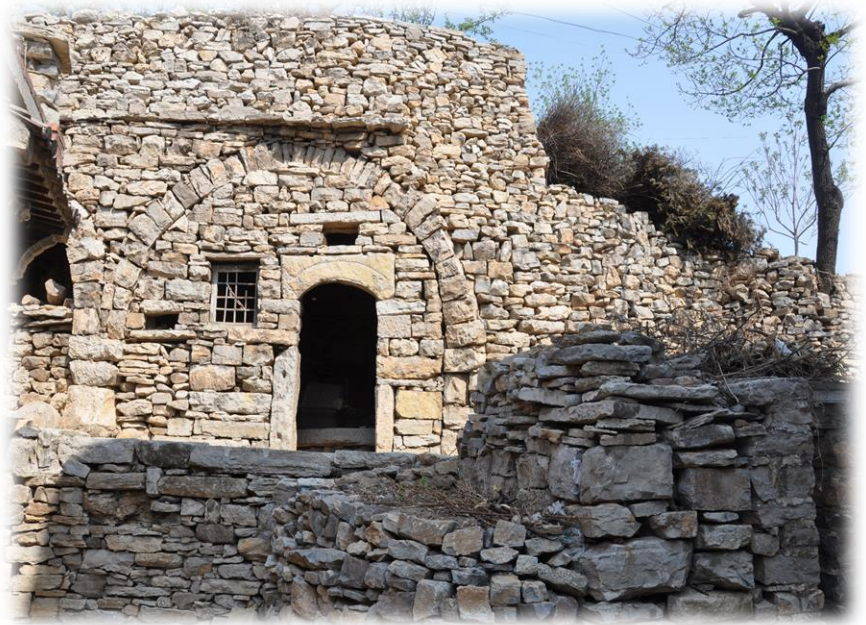
† **Wangjinzhuang Village** is situated in the **core area** of Dryland Terrace System. It is composed of 5 administrative villages, covering an area of 12 km<sup>2</sup>, with 4,500 resident population.

† The village was entitled as “Historic Village of Hebei Province” in 2008 and “Traditional Village of China” in 2012





# Scenery of Wangjinzhuang Village





## 2. Agricultural Production Model: DPS Coupled Structure

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### 2.1 Rational Choice of Terrace Labor



† As surrounded by hilly mountains, people in Wangjinzhuang Village have to solve two major issues: to build terraces and to choose appropriate livestock.

† The distribution of fields is separated and highly-dropped while the distance between fields and houses is long. After a lengthy screening process, **DONKEYS** are chosen to be the livestock of Wangjinzhuang Village to plow the dryland terrace. 9

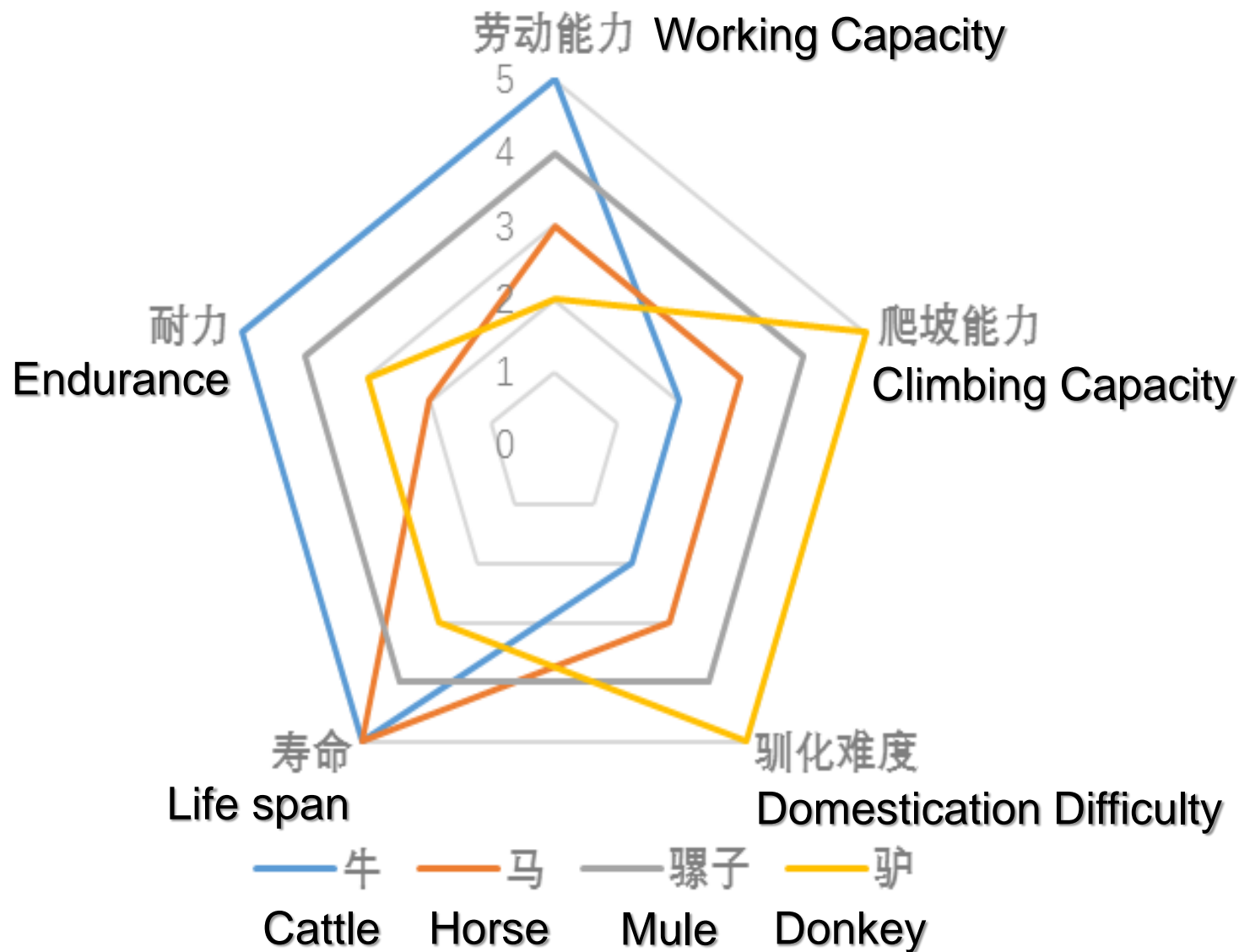
## Interviewee (19 people)

Name	Gender	Age	Identity
王林怀	Male	58	present director of Village Union
王相魁	Male	47	present director of Yijie Village
李书魁	Male	45	present director of Sijie Village
王祯祥	Male	63	present director of Sanjie Village
李反祥	Male	80	former director of Sijie Village
曹京灵	Male	53	former director of Sanjie Village
曹海魁	Male	59	former director of Erjie Village
李阳地	Male	61	former director of Wujie Village
王树梁	Male	62	editor of Historical Records of Wangjinzhuang Village
王林定	Male	55	deputy editor of Historical Records of Wangjinzhuang Village



## Interviewee (19 people)

Name	Gender	Age	Identity
王书吉	Male	68	director of veterinary station
曹榜名	Male	60	villager/veterinarian
李榜锁	Male	62	villager/donkey salesman
李书只	Female	67	villager
曹士魁	Male	55	villager
刘彦肥	Female	55	villager
曹京石	Male	70	villager
李乃荣	Female	68	villager



**Note:** Four kinds of livestock are those who have once appeared in Wangjinzhuang Village. Five indexes are extracted from the interview material with 19 interviewees. Index values are conversed and assigned from importance ranking given by 19 interviewees.



## 2.2 “Donkey-Pepper-Stone” Coupled Structure



† In the Dryland Terrace System, donkeys (major labor source), pepper (representative of crops) and stone weir (agricultural production space) are three indispensable factors, and there exists close relationship between each other.

† The coupled structure can be understood as a system that is composed of interrelated and complementary elements in function. The “Donkey-Pepper-Stone” (DPS) coupled structure is the breakthrough point for us to understand the secret of sustainable running of Dryland Terrace System.



# Donkey



Plough, transportation and cultivation  
Treatment

Farm manure  
Stone and soil solidation  
Farming space

## “Donkey-Pepper-Stone” Coupled Structure



# Pepper

Growing space

Stone and soil  
solidation



# Stone



# 3. Rural Life Style: “Human-Donkey” Communication Pattern

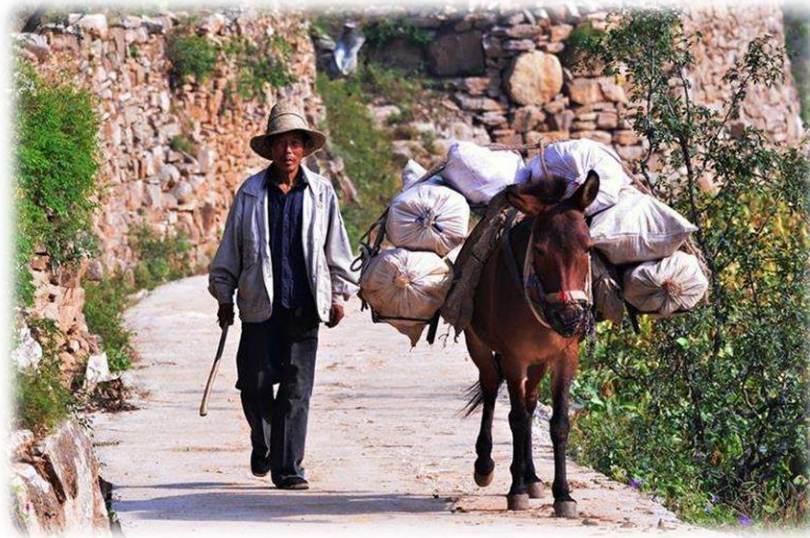
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## 3.1 Language System



“Da...”

go forward



“Dada...”

turn right



“Lili...”

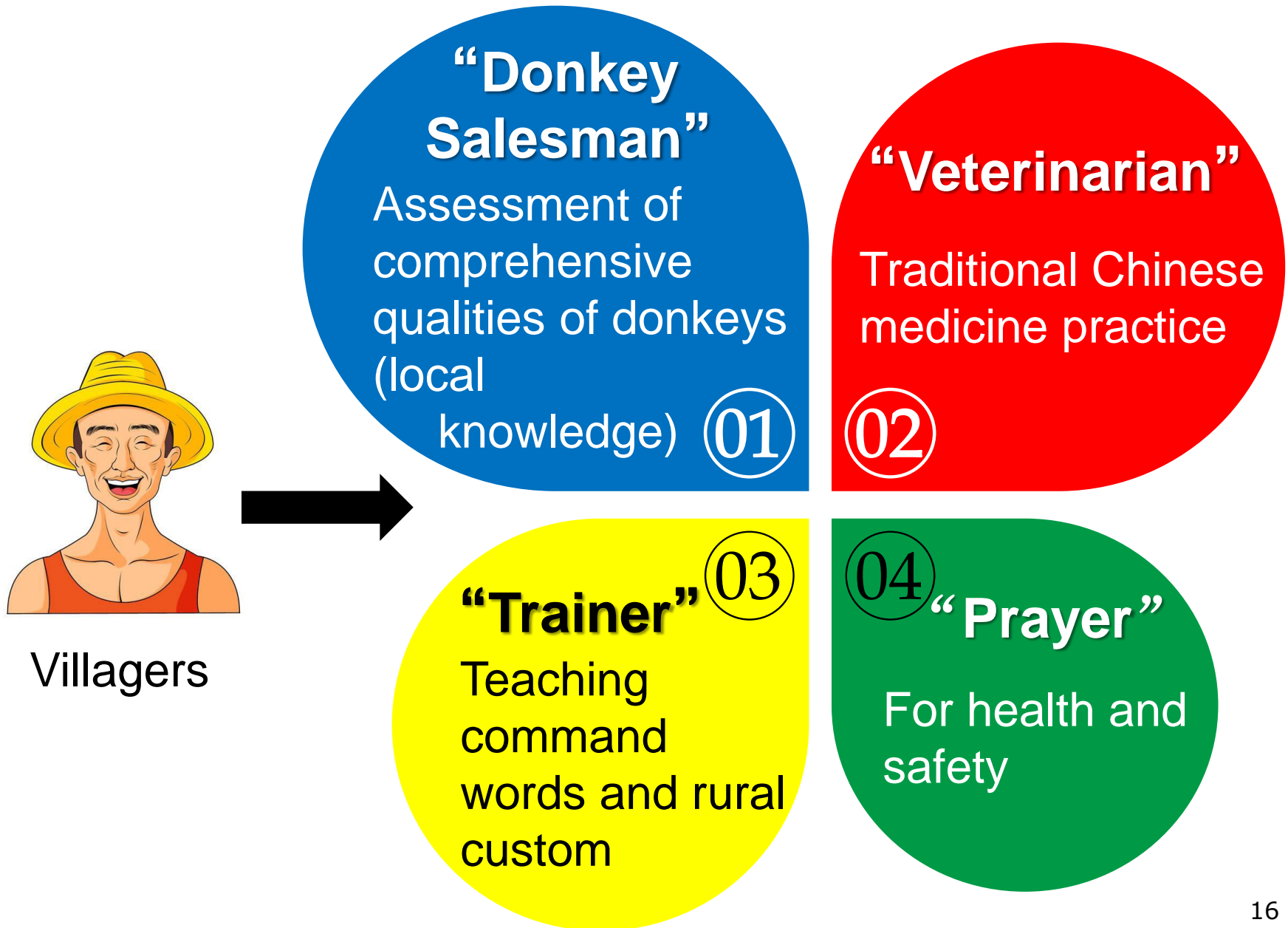
turn left



“Wo...”

stop

## 3.2 Related Identities



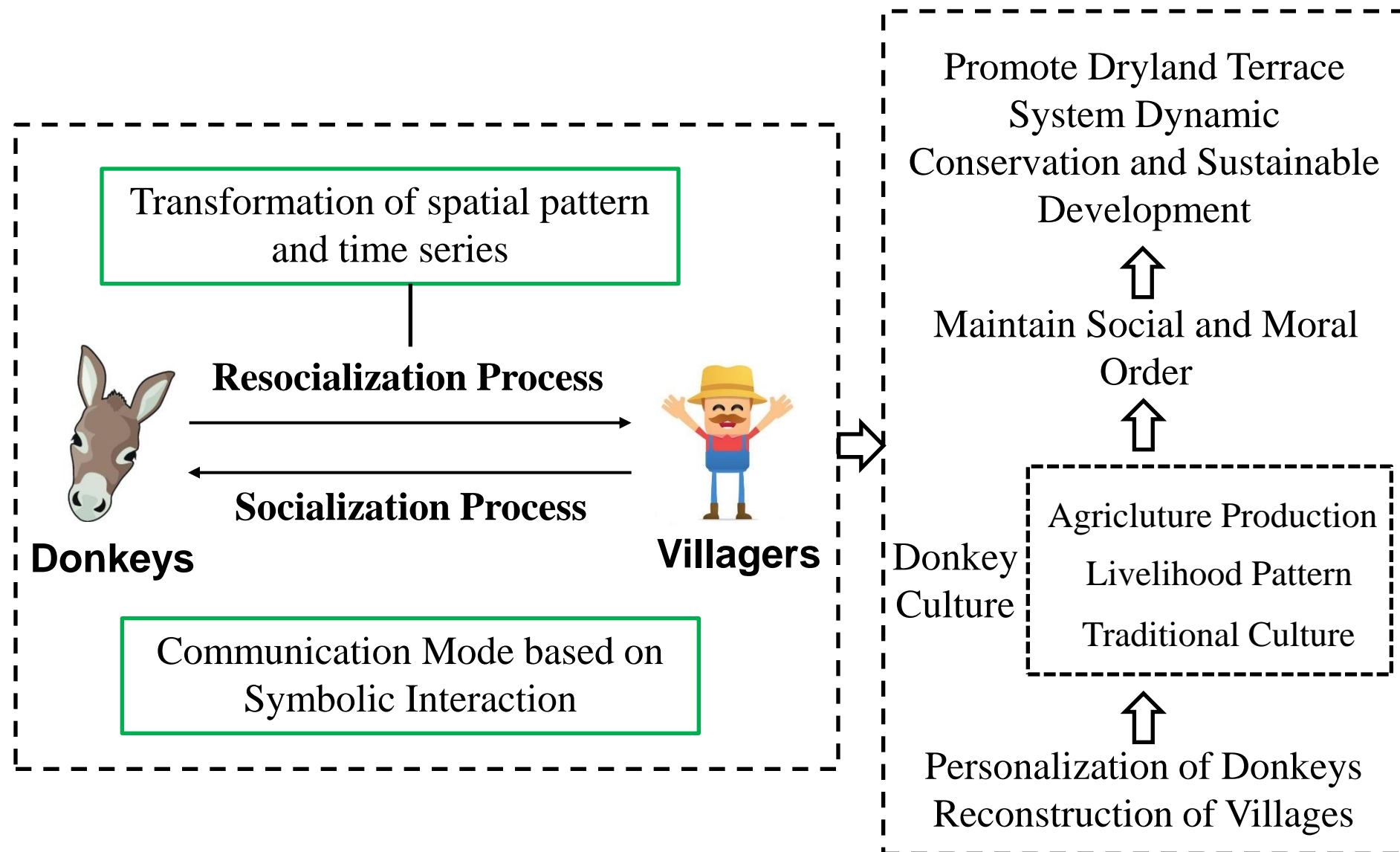
### 3.3 Value System

† Many years ago, donkey owners in Wangjinzhuang village choose December 22<sup>th</sup> as Donkey's Birthday to thank for their dedicated devotion to agricultural production after a year's hard work. People prepare noodles made by coarse food grain instead of cake to celebrate





### 3.4 Personification and Socialization Mechanism



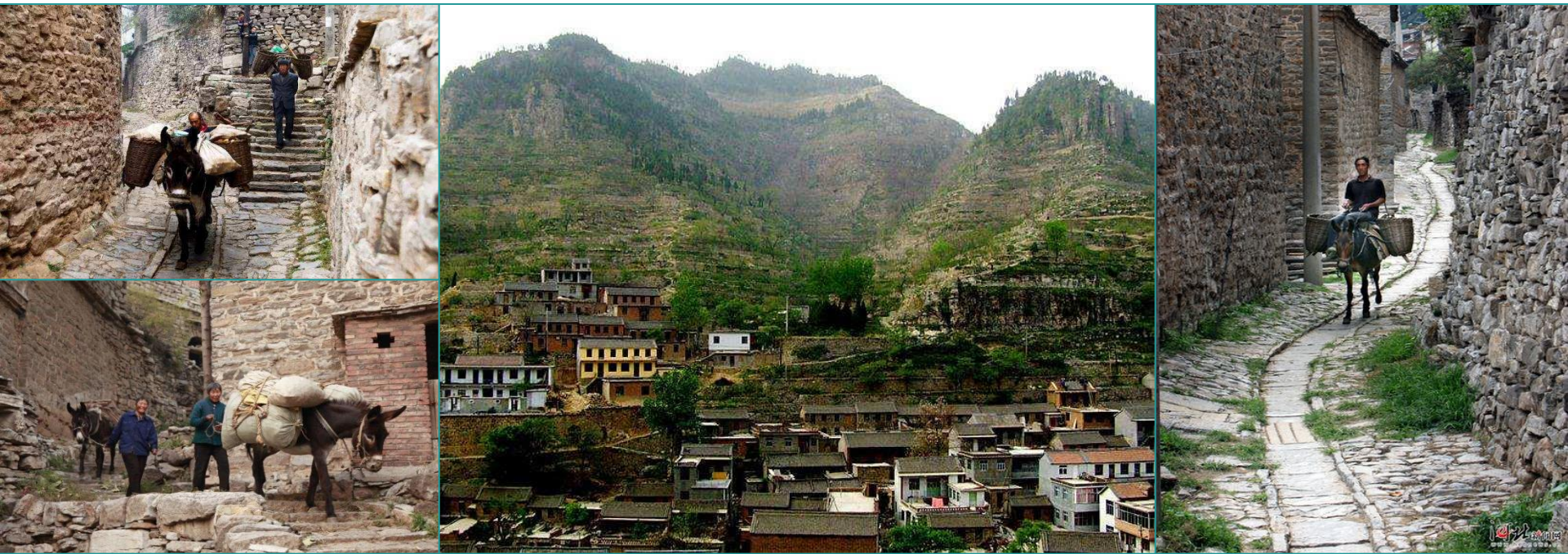
## 4. Significance of Rural Culture towards the Conservation of GIAHS

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† Rural culture is a kind of condensed presentation of landuse, folklore, biodiversity, and landscape management etc. It plays an integrative role of social factors like agriculture production, rural life and emotional memories.





† Recent decades, marketization and Commercialization influences Chinese society profoundly. With the trend of GIAHS conservation and development around the world, excavation and recognition process of rural culture and values will be beneficial to biodiversity and cultural diversity, to revitalize the harmonious village interpersonal pattern, unite all the member by means of “Sense of Community”, and to make combined efforts on rural development.





# **Thank You for Listening**

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