

## Field Note 1: Investigation and Thinking of Shandan Army Horse Taming Skills

Jiliang Xu<sup>1</sup>, Wenjing Li<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Polus International College, Sichuan, China, 610000, China

<sup>2</sup>Tianfu New Area Aviation and Tourism College, Sichuan, China, 610000, China

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**Abstract:** From July 2020 to August 2021, the author entered the Shandan army horse farm four times to conduct fieldwork. From the first visit to observation to experience to interview. I conducted investigations around the living inheritance of the intangible cultural heritage Shandan army horse taming skills, and obtained certain insights and my own thoughts. This thesis is based on field notes, field surveys, and interview records written by the author. On the one hand, it provides an overview of the current situation of Shandan army horse taming skills. On the other hand, it also analyzes Shandan army horse taming skills based on the academic framework of cultural anthropology's great tradition and little tradition.

### 1. Shandan Army Horse Farm

The Shandan Army Horse Farm is located in the Mayingtan grassland in the north of the main line of Qilian Mountains and the southern foot of Yanzhi Mountain. It is centered on Damayingtan (Dacaotan), and its scope spans the Wuwei and Zhangye regions of Gansu. It borders Yongchang and Sunan in the east, Tongziba River and Minle County across the river to the west, Lenglongling in Qilian Mountains and Menyuan in Qinghai Province in the south, the two counties of Qilian are bordered by Huocheng and Maying of Shandan County to the north. The total area is 2,192.54 square kilometers. As a military support enterprise for a long time, it is the largest military horse breeding base in my country and even in Asia. In the heyday of military horse breeding in the 1970s, the number of horses in stock exceeded 20,000. [1]

### 2. Shandan Army Horse Farm Museum (hereinafter referred to as the museum)

The museum is based on the historical development of Shandan Army Horse Farm and "Military Horse Culture". It consists of four parts: history, entrepreneurship, construction, and development. Three stone steles are placed in front of the museum. The three steles are placed in a triangular shape. From the stone records carved on the base, it can be seen that the construction of the Shandan Army Horse Farm is inseparable from the contributions made by the three types of groups: native wranglers, active soldiers who came from the army, and youths who graduated from colleges and universities. [2]

At the beginning of the history chapter, there is a majestic stone statue of Huo Qubing riding a war horse. As early as the Qin and Han dynasties, this place was the horse-grazing ground of the Huns. In January 1950, the horse farm was officially named the "Shandan Army Horse Farm of the Northwest Military Region of the Chinese People's Liberation Army".

Then began the entrepreneurial chapter of the Shandan Army Horse Farm. Following the policy of "mainly army horses (mules), combined agriculture and animal husbandry, and diversified operations" formulated by the Military Commission, army horse production has made great progress. In 1984, the "Shandan Horse" was successfully bred and won the prize. There were 8878 horses at that time.

After that, a new pattern of special animals such as deer, fox, Tibetan mastiff and other special animals was initially formed, with both horses, cattle and sheep, centering on the conservation and improvement of the "Shandan horse", realized the adjustment of the internal structure of the breeding industry, and moved towards the construction of Shandan Army Horse Farm.

In the future development of Shandan Army Horse Farm, we will adhere to the ecological standpoint. We focus on the modern planting industry focusing on virus-free potato seed production, modern animal husbandry focusing on improved seed breeding and house-raising, and plateau ecological food processing industry with green pollution-free beef and mutton as the core business and grassland ecological tourism with horse culture as the core. To cultivate and expand new industries, and to build an industrial system with the characteristics of Shandan Horse Farm, to promote economic transformation and development.

In summary, judging from the physical and literal records displayed in the museum, the main focus is on the rearing and nurturing of military horses. In July 2019, Shandan County announced the third batch of county-level intangible cultural heritage projects, of which the 28<sup>th</sup>—“Shandan army horse taming skills” was listed as a traditional handicraft technique. But regarding this part, the contents listed in the museum are basically not involved, and it is also learned from the trainer that there is no record of literal, graphic, video and other materials in this part of the domestication.

### 3. Thoughts on the Taming Skills of Shandan Army Horse

#### 3.1 Interview with the trainer in July 2021 (On July 26, 2021, the author communicated with the trainer Mr. Yuan and Mr. Liu through a semi-structured interviews centered on Shandan army horses.) [3]

According to the interview records, the author sorted out the interview records from the following seven aspects.

Table 1 Interview Record (after collation)

Horse breeding	<p><b>Past:</b> In the past, horses were raised as groups of horses, and they were placed directly on the grassland. They used natural grasses as their main energy. In terms of feeding, for example, if you want to graze this group of horses today, you have to follow this group of horses to the grassland, you have to follow them, and wherever the horses go, you have to go wherever they go.</p> <p><b>Present:</b> There are fences on the grassland. You only need to count the number of horses, then put the horses on the grassland and let the horses eat by themselves. You don't need to follow it all the time. This is already convenient.</p>
Cultivation process	<p>Before cultivating this process (mare inspection), first select the conceived mare, select the horse every day according to its estrus cycle, and then touch the mare's ovulation situation.</p> <p>Check the horses that need to be fertilized through the rectum, manual collection—semen inspection—semen dilution—semen extraction—end.</p> <p>For example, this is 20 horses. I checked out that there are 5 horses that need insemination. After marking the 5 horses, I will do the next step. After a stallion came in, a dedicated staff gathered the semen. After the semen was collected, I went to check the semen, dilute the semen, and then a specialist to inseminate the sperm. The work was over.</p>

Taming	<p>We follow the normal process. When the horse is three years old, we start to catch it, and after catching it, we start the taming process. This is a relatively dangerous and relatively long process. In this process, the relationship between trainer and horse is cultivated by holding it, pulling it, brushing it, and then carrying until it can obey you, and you can ride easily, this is a taming process from beginning to end. In other words, from being able to approach it, to riding it, to allowing it to walk and run, the whole process is considered to be a process of taming.</p> <p><b>Past taming</b> (from the trainer's perspective) At the beginning, it may be out of caution and the lengthy process of training. It may take me two months to be able to tame well.</p> <p><b>Current taming</b> Judging from my accumulated experience, I may know how to tame it at the beginning, and how to prevent some of its attacks on me. The more experience I accumulate, the faster the process.</p> <p><b>Taming time</b> I started taming it at the age of three in the spring of April and May, because the grass is not particularly lush in April and May, and the horse's strength is not particularly violent. For example, now that the grass is so good and the water is well fed, it is already difficult for people to control it in the process, and its power has exploded.</p>
The purpose of taming horses	<p>a. Conservation of Shandan Horse Breeds; b. On the basis of protecting Shandan horse breeds, we use stallions to purify Shandan horses; c. Buy and sell as a herd of horses after breeding.</p> <p>Purpose of buying horses: There are competitions and tourism around us. This pregnant mare serum also has a scale at present, but it is not large. We are a fourth team. In first team, there is a group of "pregnant mare serum collection horses", which is a group of pregnant horses. It is doing "pregnant mare serum" collection work. Pregnant mare serum is the collection of mare serum, and the serum is left after separation, because mare serum is indispensable for many vaccine biological products.</p> <p>The taming method is the same. Unless there are special requirements, it will have different taming methods.</p>
	<p>The method is similar, unless it is what I told you just now, except that you have special requirements. Just like my taming method may be different from theirs, but they may be</p>

Similarities and differences in taming between horse farm people and local people	the same. Unless there are special requirements, the taming method will be different. From the beginning you couldn't get close to the horse, and now you can close to the horse, and even saddle and riding can be done, but you start to focus on taming in April and May. Like the two people sitting on the bench just now, although they work here, they are hired workers, not employees. They are also training and taming horses in April and May. After they have trained the horse well, they can go to run tourism just like this season.
Inheritance method of taming	a. Experience. b. Master lead apprentice. The taming part is taught by a master, that is to say, it is generally that everyone learns and exchanges experience together. This is a process of learning from each other. Me: I see, there is no tradition literal material. You go to class again? Mr. Yuan: No, not for taming horses. But it also needs to explore and learn slowly based on experience.
The current difference between the taming of Shandan army horses and equestrian training	Regarding taming, whether he is an employee, hired worker, or horse breeder, the training process is similar, but it is two concepts with equestrian training. The equestrian training is that I hope that after I tell you my instructions, you can stop when I say stop. But the instruction here is that I only need to be trained until you can surrender to me, you can carry me, and you can not fear me, that's OK. Me: In terms of training, do you think equestrianism or Shandan horse is easier to operate? Mr. Yuan: It must be Shandan army horse.

### 3.2 Thoughts on taming

Horse culture reflects the relationship between man and horse and is a branch of human culture. [4]It includes human knowledge of horses, domestication, and human art, cultural and sports activities related to horses.[5] This investigation mainly focuses on taming of army horse culture. In terms of taming, it can be divided into taming and raising. From the interview records in Table 1, it can be seen that the great traditions of Shandan army horse farms mainly revolve around how to raise, how to cultivate, and how to prepare pregnant mare serum according to the market, while the little traditional intangible heritage—army horse in taming skills lack systematic inheritance. It can also be learned from Table 1 that there is no record of text, images, and videos about the taming (training), and the taming is based solely on the mentoring system and past experience. Shandan army farm is the largest army farm in China. The Shandan horse is an excellent breed of horse, with an annual output of 400,000 army horses. Shandan horses are easy to fight on the plains and have played an important role in countless battles in the past. In July 1987, after appraisal and acceptance, it was determined to be a new breed of army horse mainly for civil use, which is suitable for the military needs of our country. With the advancement of science and technology, the main uses of Shandan army horses are now for breeding, racing, traveling, and pregnant mare serum. It can be said that

raising is the great tradition, while taming is the little tradition.

#### **4. Great Tradition and Little Tradition**

American anthropologist Robert Redfield pioneered the use of the analytical framework of the great tradition and the little tradition. The great tradition is the culture of political elites, and the little tradition is the social customs and folk culture. When Chinese scholars used the concept of great and little traditions to analyze Chinese social culture, they noticed the connection between great and little traditions in Chinese society. For example, Yu Yingshi discussed the relationship between great and little traditions in Chinese culture. He believes that, generally speaking, the great traditions and the little traditions are independent of each other on the one hand, and they also constantly communicate with each other on the other. From the relationship between the great tradition and the little tradition, the latter is the source of the former, and the great tradition will inevitably return to the folk in the end. [6]

From the field survey, it can be known that the Shandan army farm has been a royal army farm since ancient times. In the past, the Shandan army horse was used as a war horse, but after the founding of the People's Republic of China, it was used for military purposes and civilian purposes. The current Shandan army horse is mainly to protect the serum of Shandan horse breeds, tourist horses, racing horses, and pregnant mare serum. Therefore, there are similarities and differences between the past taming skills and the current taming skills. In the past, the great tradition was the taming of army horses, the little tradition was that raising horses included breeding horses, but now the great tradition is that raising horses includes breeding horses, and the little tradition is taming horses. From the survey, it is also learned that most farmers do not have time to taming horses (training). The interaction between the great and little traditions actually reflects the changes in Shandan army horse taming skills under the influence of the great tradition (that is, politics, society, and economy).

#### **5. Conclusions**

In the following research, longitudinally investigated the process of changes in Shandan army horse taming skills, and found the “change” and “unchanged” in it. Ye Shuxian [7], by enumerating the rise and fall of the Indus civilization in South Asia and the rise and fall of the Liangzhu civilization in China, pointed out that without breaking through the prejudices and constraints of the little traditions of character, the true existence of the great traditions will not be recognized. And the cultural traditions of the pre-character era and the oral cultural traditions parallel to the writing traditions are called “great traditions”. The research on the former mainly relies on the symbols of cultural relics, images and ruins, while the research on the latter mainly relies on oral narratives, rituals and folk customs. The cultural tradition of writing encoded by Chinese characters is called “little tradition”. Therefore, based on the “N-level coding theory” proposed by Mr. Ye, the author will find past taming skills through fieldwork, document investigation, and interview methods, and trace the taming of army horses, and understand and record the current taming skills through interviews and observation methods, also the way of inheritance. Horizontally, the current army horse taming skills are compared with horse racing taming, tourist horse taming, and pregnant mare serum horses, so as to advance with the times and serve the present. Finally, we can learn from the flexible measures adopted by neighboring Japan in the breeding of army horses and the strategies of protecting intangible cultural heritage to think about the path of the lively inheritance of Shandan army horse taming skills.

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