



The Research on the “Guard Town” Settlement Pattern of the Coastal Defense Towns System in Ming Dynasty-A Case Study of Pu Guard Town, Zhejiang Province, China

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The coastal defense towns system in Ming Dynasty is in accordance with the system of “Guard town”—a special military system created in Ming Dynasty, the main feature of which is “keeping the families together, and making soldiers as people”. Also “Guard town” has become a distinctive of the geographical units, forming a kind of particular type of settlement, with blending functions of defense, residence and farming.

In this paper, Pu Guard Town is taken as a case study—the main town in Puzhang Guard Towns system, which is the existing relatively complete system located in China’s southeast coastline, in order to demonstrate the layout characteristics of “Guard town” settlement patterns based on military capabilities and the creation of daily life environment. The research is conducted on two spacial dimensions, as the external morphological features and the internal morphological features of Pu Guard Town settlement. As to the external dimension, the research is about the choose of town location, form and scales, composition of external facilities, and the spatial layout relationship between various type of Guard Towns around. The paper mainly focuses on the internal morphological features of Pu Guard Town. On one hand, under the influence of the “Guard town” system, we research about the characteristics on formation of interior space, composition of the castle structure, configuration of function facilities, pattern expression and composition of spatial elements (egg. town walls, streets, squares, buildings, etc). At the same time, the migration and multi-culture integrations brought by the “Guard town” system have formed the unique local culture, which has a significant impact to the forming and changing of settlement patterns. On the other hand, with the historical changes, the original military and political functions have declined. The adjustment of demographic composition and emergences of more secular buildings also have a great impact on the changes of the internal morphologic pattern in Pu Guard Town.

Tracing the origin, with the analysis of Pu Guard Town settlement pattern, there is a preliminary analysis on the unique achievements of “Guard town”, which appeared in ancient Chinese towns under a special form of military organization. These achievements include the historical evolution of “Guard town”, settlement planning, living environment composition, construction technology and art, as well as regional folk culture. Meanwhile, on this basis, with the changing circumstances of the history and regime, a new town develops based on the ancient pattern of Pu Guard Town. In the face of the multi-issues such as the conversion of urban functions, the expansion of spatial scale, as well as the protection and continuation of historical and cultural heritage, we will be able to form an effective planning-oriented and measures to solve these issues for Pu Guard Town.

KEY WORDS: Coastal town system, Guard town, settlement pattern, planning-oriented