

Passing the Disadvantageous Terrain and Containing Towns by Towns: Mongolian Strategy to Break Through Song's Mountainous Defense System

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Abstract

After Mongolian troops entered Sichuan Area in the Ogedei Period, although they caused serious damages to the areas of Chongqing-Sichuan in the years 1236-1241, they could not reach a substantial occupation of Sichuan due to the fault of simplex attacking-and-raiding strategy. In such a case, Southern Song troops were able to apply the policy of consolidating Sichuan. Song troops in Sichuan led by Yu Jie gradually regained lost territories and constructed a mountainous town defense system (MTDS) centering on Chongqing which has advantageous terrain of mountains. In the Mongka Period, in view of faults of military tactics in the Ogedei Period, Mianzhou Town and Lizhou Town were restored successively outside Sichuan to facilitate access to Sichuan from the north. In the years from 1258 to 1259, while the main force of Mongolian troops led by Mongka was attacking Sichuan, some soldiers were quartered to guard the occupied Song towns. Although the death of Mengge made the Song-Mongolia War come to an end temporarily, the Mongolian troops still substantially occupied certain areas of Sichuan in the Mongka Period. To the Kublai Period, on the one hand, civil strives broke out due to the fight for the title of Khan; on the other hand, strategic focus of attacking was transferred to the area of Lianghuai after the civil strives were put down. Under this circumstance, in order to contain the Song troops with partial force, the Mongolia troops in Sichuan battlefield inherited and developed the tactics of conducting military activities relying on military towns derived from the Mongka Period. Numerous military towns were restored and built against the mountainous defense system and the consolidation

of occupied territories from the Mongka Period was thus completed.

Key words: Song-Mongolia War; Military towns; Sichuan; Mountainous towns of the Song troops

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INTRODUCTION

In the historical time of China, early people constructed many military settlements for the purpose to defend or attack. After 1980s, researchers from various disciplines using their own special perspectives, deeply studied military settlements of different periods and locations. As a special form of settlement in historical time, military settlement shows its research value. By the efforts of previous researchers, military settlement study in Chongqing-Sichuan area (巴渝地区) has had now many research achievements, especially in terms of Sichuan-Shanxi Mountainous towns of Southern Song and anti-Mongolia mountainous towns. Taking Sichuan-Shanxi mountainous towns as an example, Tao Jinsheng in his *Military towns in mountain terrain and by riverside: Defense strategy used by the Southern Song*, demonstrates how Southern Song courtiers take well use of military towns in mountainous terrain and by riverside in the frontier defense, and he believes that Yu Jie's mountainous military towns have modeled Sichuan-Shanxi mountainous towns to some extent. Recent years, he Hongyu's study on Sichuan-Shanxi military defense has attracted much attention. In the light of central-local relationship, he discusses Sichuan-shanxi area's strategic status in the Southern Song period. He believes

that Mongolian troops' successful breakthrough in the Sichuan-Shanxi area should be due to Southern Song's insufficient deployment on towns and fortress defense. (He, 2012) Comparing to academics' studies on Sichuan-Shanxi mountainous towns and anti-Mongolia mountainous towns, Mongolian military towns constructed haven't attracted sufficient research attention in the Song-Mongolia War. In the Song-Mongolia War, Mongolian troops restored occupied towns and constructed new ones, and gradually controlled and clutched Southern Song's mountainous towns in the Sichuan battlefield. Mongolian military towns are important part of historical Sichuan military settlements. When discusses about Song-Mongolia War or anti-Mongolia mountainous towns, previous researchers have occasionally and briefly mentioned them. So far, there is no systematically discussion about Mongolian military towns' construction process, their functions in the Song-Mongolia War, and their're the dynamic relationship with military tactics. Based on the time line of military tactic transformation during the time of Ogedei period, Mongka period and Kublai Khan period, this paper tries to explore the dynamic relationship between Mongolian military towns and military tactics as well as their impact on Sichuan Battlefield, in terms of temporal and spacial dimensions of the Mongolian construction of military towns.

1. MONGOLIA'S SIMPLEX ATTACKING-AND-RAIDING STRATEGY IN OGEDEI PERIOD IN SICHUAN REGION AND SOUTHERN SONG'S CONSTRUCTION OF MOUNTAINOUS TOWN DEFENSE SYSTEM

In the Ogedei period, the strategy Mongolian troops used was to attack the Southern Song by military auxiliaries and took loots, which means Mongolian troops took temporary benefits ruthlessly without long-term consideration." They just kill and rob, and they don't develop the region. After raiding, they abandoned the land." (Duo San Mongolian History, volume one, Zhonghua Book Company, 1962, p.257) Ogedei used this strategy from the year 1234, when the Mongolia troops went into Sichuan, in the year 1241, when Ogedei died of disease. Mongolian troops didn't occupy Sichuan substantially, but just made great damage to Sichuan region, which didn't deprive the Southern Song of its ruling foundation in Sichuan. After that, although Southern Song's Xingzhou (兴州), Mianzhou (沔州), Lizhou (利州), Langzhou (阆州), Mianzhou Town (绵州), Chengdu (成都), Pengzhou (彭州) and Meizhou (眉州) were in the control of enemy for a long period, it gradually took back those areas and then constructed a

mountainous defense system to fight against Mongolian Troops, which was successful to some degree.

In 1242, Emperor Song Lizhong appointed Yu Jie to lead the Song-Mongolia War in Sichuan as the Emperor's messenger, which called Xuanyushi. Yu arrived in Sichuan and found the West Sichuan had lost its strategic defense advantage under the attack of Mongolian troops, while the East Sichuan was suitable to defend against Mongolian cavalry's long-distance raid, where there were five parallel valley. He set up command center in Chongqing, and then recruited wisdom men to get solution to save the Southern Song's regime. Jin Ran and Pu Ran were two brothers from Bozhou. They suggested that Song troops should take advantage of the mountainous terrain and constructed military towns there, in which could contain provisions and soldiers, and defend with not so many troops. So Jie Yu constructed military towns along the upper reaches of Yangtze River from Kuizhou (夔州), the east end, to Jiading (嘉定), the west end. He also built up about 20 military towns along five north-south oriented rivers, which are Tuojiang River (沱江), Minjiang River (岷江), Fujiang River (涪江), Jialingjiang River (嘉陵江) and Qujiang River (渠江). All the 20 mountainous military towns could mutually support each other and formed a defense system based on the advantageous terrain of mountains and rivers. They were flexible as a whole one. From that time, the defense system began to convert Song's passive situation in Sichuan battlefield. In the year of 1250, the two rivals came into balanced confrontation again.

2. TACTICS IN MONGKA PERIOD TO BREAK THROUGH THE RESISTANCE: TROOPS STATIONING AND MILITARY TOWNS CONSTRUCTION IN THE FRONTIER AREA

In 1251, Mongka ascended the throne, and Mongolia changed its military tactic, which means Mongolian troops changed its simplex attacking-and-raiding tactic. Kublai, the younger brother of Mongka, was appointed to take full responsibility of military activities in Han area (where Han people live), which was in the south of Mongolia desert. Yao Shu suggested to Kublai that,

in the Ogedei period, although the troops made great achievement, killing and raiding blindly would only terrify and drive away those Song generals who originally wanted to surrender, and this add to the resistance against Mongolia troops. the tactic not to take land but only raid would empty the cities and wasted farmlands. it might be as well to send troops to strategic significant position, construct towns and store grain. Then, the Southern Song will be perished gradually (Yao, 1936, pp.176-177).

Mongolian rulers took Yao Sui's advise, and began to construct military towns in the frontier areas near Southern Song, which included Sichuan, Huainan and Huaibei (两淮). They grew up wasted farmland, attracted residents, and stationed soldiers there, as a preparation for large-scale wars to perish South Song.

From 1251 to 1257, Mongolian troops had gradually transformed the tactic. In 1251, after the enthronement of Mongka, Yu Jie had set up a mutually supported MTDS, which combined points into a line, around the center Chongqing. At that time, Ogedei's simplex attacking-and-raiding tactic had lost its advantage. Mongolian Troops wanted to detour around the Southwest, attack directly to South Song's belly part, and then go down the Yangtze River to destroy the Southern Song (Song, 1976, p.3651).

Mongolian troops restored Mianzhou Town and Lizhou Town, which was at the entrance of Sichuan. In the spring of 1252, Commander Wang Decheng was ordered by Mongolia to restore Mianzhou Town damaged in Sichuan War, to repair housings inside, and to set up administrative system to govern the town. Mianzhou was a thoroughfare on the upper part of Jialingjiang River (Song, 1976, p.3651) and, by which, the occupied troops could make a threat to Lizhou and Langzhou. Mongolian troops constructed military town in Mianzhou, which could not only control Sichuan from the upper reaches, but could also reopen the entrance to Sichuan, and this would lay foundation to construct Lizhou Town. In the autumn of 1252, Mongka ordered Wang Decheng to restore Lizhou Town as a measure to take Sichuan (Bi, 1979, p.4729). In 1253, Kublai exempted Lizhou's corvee and taxes after taking the report by Wang Decheng. He also set up Water Transport Department in Mianzhou, which could help to restore Lizhou Town. (Zhang, 1990, p.32) By that, Mongolia ruler showed his emphasis on the construction of Lizhou Town and the backup function of Mianzhou Town. By the year of 1254, despite attacks of Song troops, Mongolia had restored the Lizhou Town. Since the time, Mongolian troops were established in Lizhou, and implemented farming and battling strategy. Southern Song troops dared not assault or harass it (Song, 1976, p.3653).

When Song troops had established its MTDS in Sichuan battlefield, simplex attacking-and-raiding tactic in Ogedei period could no longer play an important role. In Mongka period, Wang Decheng was firstly ordered to construct town in Mianzhou to control Sichuan from the upper reaches, and was then ordered to restore Lizhou Town at the entrance of Sichuan. Mongolian troops used Southern Song's tactic to prepare for the march to Sichuan. When the Mianzhou Town and Lizhou Town were constructed, Mou Zicai, a man from Southern Song, said it was a tactic to pass the dangerous areas for the

Mongolian troops covering 350 km to restore Lizhou Town in Sichuan (Mou, 2005, p.120).

3. MILITARY STRATEGY TRANSFORMATION IN KUBLA KHAN PERIOD AND TOWN CONFRONTATION TACTIC

From 1258 to 1259, with the help of Mianzhou Town and Lizhou Town, Mongka attacked Sichuan with his main force. In the spring of 1257, under the order of Mongka, Mongolian troops divided into left wing and right wing to attack Southern Song. Mongka led the right wing troops in person. Mongka planned to take Sichuan by his main force, control the upper reaches of Yangtze River, float down along the river, press forward to Song capital Linan, and perish Southern Song at one stroke. To the autumn of 1258, most of Sichuan areas were occupied by Mongolian troops, including Jianzhou (剑州), Langzhou, Dazhou, Guozhou (果州) and Quzhou. Mongolian troops had basically taken the east Sichuan and the north Sichuan. Hereto, the MTDS constructed by Yu Jie since 1243 had been partially destroyed. Mountain towns in places like Langzhou, Guozhou were occupied. In 1258 winter, Mongka arrived in the Fishing Town, Hezhou. Mongolian troops had fought against Song troops for 8 months here, and it was called The Battle of Fishing Town. The Battle had great influence on the world history. In this battle, Mongka died and the successor was not yet decided, as a result of which, Mongolian troops' slacked attack led to a stalemate between the two sides. It is worth noticing that Mongolian troops commanded by Mongka took different military tactic from that of Ogedei's. Mongolian troops choose to occupy Song's military towns and station soldiers there, while previously they would abandon. According to historical materials, Song's military towns Mongolian troops substantially occupied include Changning Mountain Town (长宁山城), Dahuocheng Town (大获城), Qingjucheng Town (青居城), Yunshancheng Town (运山城), Daliangcheng Town (大良城), etc.. In other words, the confrontation line moved to the East Sichuan from Mianzhou-Lizhou area thereafter. Mountainous towns of Southern Song still left were part of those that spread over the Yangtze River and the East Sichuan.

After the strategic failure of Mongka's attempt to occupy Sichuan with main force, the new Emperor Kubla Khan was busy to consolidate the inner stability in Mongolian court, continue to implement Han Means (汉法) Police and reform in many aspects, so he took defensive position against the Southern Song. When the Mongolian political situation was stabilized, they began to plan for large-scale aggression war to perish the Southern Song again. In 1260, soon after the enthronement of Kubla Khan, Mongolian nobleman Kan Guo (His political

title was Qianhu, 千户) advised that the strategic focus of the troops should be moved to Huainan-HuaiBei area (两淮地区) (Bi, 1979, p.4796). In 1267, a previous Southern Song general Liu Zhen advised Kubla Khan that the movement of the strategic focus from Sichuan to Huainan-HuaiBei was feasible (Bi Yuan, History As A Mirror continued, pp.4875-4876). Kubla Khan accepted the advice and decided to move the military strategic focus. In Sichuan, he used a fraction of troops to pin down the weakened MDTs, and his main force was to attack Xiangyang (襄阳) and Fancheng (樊城). The transformed military strategy, as a the aftermath of Kubla Khan's enthronement, directly influenced the solution to fight against Song's defense system. The new solution was town confrontation tactic (以城制城). The strategy tried to clutch Southern Song troops by Military towns constructed in strategic location, gradually cut apart Song's defense system, and then occupy separately.

In Kubla Khan period, the attention the town confrontation tactic should be paid to four Mongolian command centers. They were typical Mongolian towns captured from Southern Song, including Qingjucheng Town, Dahuocheng Town, Yunchengshan Town and Daliangshan Town, where many Mongolian troops were stationed there to contain the remained Song mountainous towns. Qingjucheng Town were surrounded by rivers in the east, the north, and the west. However, its northern part was relatively far away from rivers so that the rivers could not use to construct the town moat. The southern part was too flat and had no advantageous defensive terrain. In the south of Qingjucheng, the Fishing town in Hezhou (合州) was located (Yao Sui, Muan collected works, p.201), from which Southern Song troops assault and harass it from time to time. Mongolian troops quartered there was under great pressure. Under such circumstances, in the year of 1262, Kubla Khan ordered Wang Weizheng, the Commander of Shanxi Province and Gongchang (巩昌), send more troops to Qingjucheng Town and set up East Sichuan Command Center. This deployment in confrontation zone, backed up by Qingjucheng, was to contain the Hechuan Fishing town which was located on the lower part of Jialingjiang River. Except that, three surrendered Song general were sent to station troops in three military towns. They were Yang Dayuan in Dahuocheng Town (大获城), Zhang Dayue in Yunshancheng Town (运山城), and Pu Yuangui in Daliangcheng Town (大良城). When Qingjucheng contained Fishing Town in its south, Dahuocheng Town, Yunshancheng Town and Daliangcheng Town were able to cross Qujiang River (渠江) and expand its military influence on the strip area of Dazhou, Kaizhou, Liangshanjun (梁山军) and Kuizhou. Thus, Qingjucheng was the parclose for the three towns (Yao, 1936, p.202). Before 1262, when Kubla Khan was busy to stabilize the inner political

situation, Mongolian troops had captured Qingjucheng Town, Dahuocheng Town and Daliangcheng Town, which not only reinforced military achievement made in Mongka period, but also laid ground for the Mongolia to construct military towns against South Song's defense system.

After 1262, in order to decrease military pressure and contain its counterpart, Mongolian troops began to construct military towns intentionally. To stop the Southern Song's assaults and harassments, Mongolian troops restored Meishancheng Town (眉山城) and Jianzhoucheng Town (简州城). Southern Song troops regarded Jiadingcheng Town as the most important position to control the east Sichuan. For example, when Southern Song lost Chengdu, the Southern Song troops harassed Mongolia-occupied east Sichuan for many times from Jiadingcheng Town. Another example was that, in 1260, a Southern Song navy of 2000 soldiers went up along the river and moved close to Xinjiang (岷江), nearby Chengdu, but it was repelled by Mongolian general Hudu (Song, 1976, p.3278). Mongolian troops also harassed Jiadingcheng Town to stop its attacking intention, but it was not successful. Under such conditions, Mongolian began to construct military towns to contain Jiading's Song troops, by constructing military towns. In 1266, Liu Yuanli made a report to Kubla Khan and advised that Mongolia should restore Meizhou Town to control the main road between Chengdu and Jiadingcheng Town (Bi, 1979, p.4868). In 1267, His advise was agreed by Kubla Khan and he rudimentarily restored Meizhou Town within 7 days. Almost at the same time, Mongolian General Zhang Wanjianu was ordered to restore Jianzhou Town which located in the east of Chengdu. Then Jianzhou and Meizhou formed defense system against Chengdu.

To contain the Song troops in Fishing Town, Mongolia constructed Mudezhang Mountain Town (母德章山城) and Wushengcheng Town (武胜城) in order. Under that circumstance, Hezhou was a place of strategic importance that the two sides both strive for, with Guozhou and Langzhou in its north, and Chongqing in its south. With the advantageous location of Hezhou, Fishing Town became important protective shield for Chongqing. Based on Qingjucheng Town, Mongolia continued to construct towns in its south to stop Song troops in Fishing Town to develop its military influence northwardly, which specially limited its military activity. In 1262, Mongolian general Wang Liangcheng suggested to construct Wushengcheng Town to contain Fishing Town, which would be placed in the south of Qingjucheng Town. (Bi, 1979, p.4825). After 1263, in the command of General Zhang Yu, the Song troops were more powerful than before. For this reason, in 1267, Wang suggested to constructed Mudezhang Mountain Town to contain the Fishing Town, which was on the south bank of Jialingjiang River (Bi, 1979, p.4874). To the year of 1268, Mongolia renamed Mudezhang

Mountainous town to Dingyuancheng Town (定远城), and Wushengcheng to Wushengjun Town (武胜军), from which Mongolia's military purposes could be showed. Mudezhang Mountain Town and Wushengcheng Town worked together to form a powerful system, which can both defend Qingjucheng and attack Fishing town. The three towns contained Song troops in Hezhou.

To consolidate its ruling in occupied Tongchuan area, Liu Yuanli constructed Pengxi Fastness (蓬溪寨). In 1265, When Xia Gui, General of Zhizhi (制置) with his fifty thousand soldiers attacked Tongchuan, the two sides were engaged in lasting battles in Pengxi area, and Liu Yuanli thought the loss of the area meant the loss of Tongchuan. It was easy to know Pengxi Town was not far from Tongchuancheng, controlling the main road outside the latter. So Yuan Yuanli constructed Pengxi Fastness to guard Tongchuancheng Town, which reinforced the control in this area. Besides, Tongchuancheng was located in the connecting point between Chengdu and Chongqing. It was strategically important. Mongolian troops often assist Chengdu Qingjucheng from Tongchuan. In light of this perspective, Pengxi Town not only provided protection to Mongolian troops in Tongchuan, but also gave much strategic space.

To capture Kuizhou area, Mongolian troops had constructed a group of military towns in the band of Quzhou, Dazhou and Kaizhou, including Zhangguangping Mountain Town (章广平山寨), Huxiaocheng Town (虎啸城), Panlongcheng Town (蟠龙城), Fangdoucheng Town (方斗城), Jintangcheng Town (金汤城) and Shenxian Mountain Town (神仙山城). In 1261, Daliangcheng Town in Quzhou was took back by Song troops, and they blocked Mongolian's access from Qingju to Kuizhou across Qujiang River. To break through Song's blockage and achieve the plan to go down along the river after the capture of Kuizhou, Mongolian troops began to send troops continuously to the areas of Quzhou, Kaizhou and Dazhou, as a result of which, many military towns had been constructed to contain Song's mountain towns. In 1262, Yang Wenan constructed military town on the main road between Kuizhou and Dazhou, cutting off the connection of the two towns. In 1263, Yang Wenan continued to construct Fangdoucheng Town as the assisting backup for Panlongcheng Town (Song, 1976, pp.3778-3779); Daliangcheng Town was took forth and back between Song and Mongolia in the period. When it was captured by the southern Song, Mongolia constructed Huxiaocheng Town and Zhangpin Mountain Town successively. In 1263, Zhang Tingrui in the Qingjucheng Command Center dispatched an army to Kaizhou and Dazhou, which constructed Longxiaocheng Town along the Qujiang River. It broke through the passway across Qujiang River and contained Dalinag Town (Song, 1976, p.3778). In 1269, general of east Kuizhou province constructed Zhangguangpin Mountain Town in the main

road outside Daliangcheng Town. By the successful construction of this town, Mongolia won most of battles against Song troops in Daliang town; Besides, in order to contain Song's Kaizhou Town and Dazhou town, Mongolia constructed Jintang Town and Shenxian town in order. In 1272, Yang Wenan built up Jintangcheng Town against the defensive fortress Longzhua Cheng. In 1275, the Southern Song general Ge De took back Kaizhou town, and Yang Wenan constructed Shenxian Mountain Town to contain (Song, 1976, p.3771).

After 1262, based on those occupied towns, Mongolia constructed more military towns to fight against Song, with the intention to cut apart the Song defense system by the construction of towns in the main road and strategic location connecting Song's mountain town. To stop Song's harassment, Mongolia restored Meizhou and Jianzhou to control the main road between Jiading and Chengdu. To contain Song's troop in Hezhou, Mongolia moved southward from Qingjucheng and constructed Mudezhang Mountain Town and Wusheng Town. The two towns are on one hand had restrained Song's troops in Hezhou, and on the other hand ease the pressure on Qingjucheng. To reinforce the control in Tongchuan area against Song, Mongolia constructed Pengxi Fastness there and stabilized the access between the east Mongolian troops and the west Mongolian troops. In Kuizhou, Kaizhou and Dazhou, Mongolian troops controlled the main road between Kuizhou and Kaizhou by Panlongcheng Town and Fangdoucheng Town, contained Dazhou by Jintang Town, contained Kaizhou by Shenxian Mountain Town, and controlled Daliang Town in Quzhou by Huxiao Town and Zhangguangpin mountain Town. After that, in Kubla Khan period, Mongolia contained Song's defense system with a fraction of troops in the town confrontation tactic.

CONCLUSION

As for the research on Song-Mongolia war, Mongolia's dynamic transformation of military tactics is worth much attention as well as Song's military tactics and mountain town. After the breakout of Song-Mongolia war, Mongolian military tactics are transformed in a dynamic way. In the Ogedei period, the insufficient provision and weak defense of the Southern Song provided Mongolian troops the opportunity to come into Sichuan, when Mongolia at that time just attacking and raiding; in the Mongka period, the Southern Song reorganized the troops and provisions, and build up mountainous defense system against Mongolia when Mongka died. To deal with Song's defense system, Mongolia took the tactic of stationing troops and constructing towns to take place of the previous strategy. They first constructed Mianzhou town outside the entrance of Sichuan, and then sent

troops into the entrance to construct Lizhou Town under risky conditions, by which they took the advantageous terrain in the entrance, and then confronted with Song's troops in Lizhou and Dazhou area. They also made massive attack on Song's mountain town, trying to occupy Sichuan at one stroke. In Kubla Khan period, the Emperor transferred the military focus to Jingzhou-Xiangyang area (荆襄地区), leaving only partial troops to contain the weakened mountainous defense system. During that time, Mongolian troops consolidated their occupied towns and constructed more towns in strategic places to paralyze Song's defense system, which separated Song's towns and deprived its ability to assist each other. Except that, as the military conditions changed and Mongolian strategies transformed, the towns they constructed showed different features. In Mongka period, Song and its counterpart confronting each other in Shukou area (蜀口, the entrance of Sichuan). It was to break through the Shukou that Mongolia took risk to construct Lizhou Town inside the Shukou after the building-up of Mianzhou, which was a pre-arrangement for massive attack. In Kubla Khan period, because the military focus had been transferred, the military towns were built for containing Song's towns and occupying them at convenience. By studying the military towns constructed by Mongolia, it was easy to find Mongolia gradually changed its military tactics to fit in mountainous terrain for protracted war. It was the same that Mongolian towns were not constructed at short

time, which were built up during Mongka period and to Kubla Khan period, and the tactics also changed, when at first they constructed towns in frontal zone and later in strategic position to control Song troops.

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