

# Historic Urban Morphology and Continuous Influence on Nowadays City

LIU Linan

(Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology)

## **Euro-China Exchange:**

### **Technology and Culture of Generative Design Approach**

AsiaLink Seminar on Generative Design

The Italian Embassy, Beijing

14 – 16 April 2004

---

**Abstract:** Xi'an was once called Chang'an. The history of being the first capital of China could be dated back to the 11<sup>th</sup> BC. From the 6<sup>th</sup> A.D. the urban construction of Chang'an city in both size and population had stepped into the height of its glory. With the area of nearly 84 squared kilometers and the dwellers over one million, the capital Chang'an city could boasted to be one of the major cities in the world.

As the first capital city, the urban morphology continuously substantialized the development of the later cities of China. Furthermore the influences of the historic morphology have taken the effects on the today's construction of Xi'an. The most significant features are as follows:

Emphasis on the dignity of the city's axis (强调城市中轴线的尊贵); The Chinese ancient ideology of urban construction had a high regard for the dignity of centre and axis of a city. Today's Xi'an prolongs the historic axis of 2.3- kilometers to the current 8.7 kilometers. It seems a complication of the urban functions.

Organization of the grid-form street system(网格道路系统的组织); The Chinese ancient ideology of the street system in a city should be orthogonal with the longitudinal and latitudinal streets. We have not produced a rational recognition to the low efficiency of the grid street system when we are facing the much heavier traffic pressure than before.

Division with wall-enclosed(围合的用地划分); Because of the grid-form street system, the urban land for construction consequently were divided into different

rectangle blocks and enclosed by various walls, similarity of a kind of derivative from the city wall or the Great Wall. The appearance of “wall within wall” looks like a special feature of the cityscape.

**Keyword:** Xi'an, morphology, influence, axis of city, grid-form street system, wall-enclosed division,