

# THE HUI AND THE CHINESE BORDER WOOL TRADE OF 1880-1937<sup>1</sup>

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According to a story told in 1964 by an old *maotou* (worker in wool shipping, packing and processing), it was a man named Baldy Ge (Ge Tuzi), sent in 1879 by British merchants in Tianjin on an investigation of the commercial possibilities of China's Northwest who was responsible for alerting foreign companies to the inexpensive wool produced in Tibet, Qinghai and Mongolia and thereby launching a trade that would become an important economic link between Hui (Chinese Muslim) and Han society, as it made sheeps' wool Tianjin's most important export by the 1890s. In Shizuishan, on the western leg of the Yellow River's great oxbow, Ge noticed a small group of the local inhabitants smearing what looked like earth into hanks of sheep's wool. He asked them what they were doing.

"Soaking it with shit to put on the crops," they replied. Bemused, Ge asked them why they did not sell the wool and make some money from it. The locals answered,

"Except for making felts, this stuff has no other use--there's no way to sell it. All we can do is soak it with shit." Baldy Ge, the story continues, made a tidy profit from this messy state of affairs by going into business as a procurer of wool for the foreign firm of Collins and Co. (Gaolin *yanghang*). Ge relied upon local middlemen, including inn-keepers and a transport boss, in order to communicate with the nomadic producers and to ship wool across the Inner Mongolian Ordos toward Tianjin (Liu Tingdong 1981:182-84).

Although its details are probably apocryphal, this tale nonetheless highlights two essential aspects of the little-known but important episode in the economic history of north China: first, that wool was a substance little valued by the Han Chinese themselves before a foreign market for it opened rather suddenly in the late nineteenth century;<sup>2</sup> and second, that the linguistic, cultural and geographic barriers arrayed between the Tibetan, Mongol and other producers of wool and the British, American and German buyers required the intercession of a variety of intermediaries.

Because the Hui of China's Northwest were situated culturally and geographically between Han China and Inner Asia, it was for the most part Hui who assumed the crucial intermediary roles in the wool trade that flourished in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, the economic opportunities provided by the wool trade to Hui merchants linked the wool-producing and -collecting areas of Qinghai, Gansu, and Ningxia more closely with the rest of North China, even as central

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was submitted in a graduate seminar at Stanford University ca. 1988. I benefited from the assistance of Professor Jonathan Lipman in the first stages of research; Professor Lyman Van Slyke offered valuable comments that informed the writing of this second version, which I submitted for publication a few years later, but never placed in a journal. Some of the data may still be useful, so I provide it now (July 2016), without further revision, via Academia.edu. I include the original glossary as a wry comment on the effects of software changes over the decades.

<sup>2</sup> The Chinese very early invented spinning and weaving technology and applied it to silk and a variety of bast fibers (such as ramie and hemp); after the thirteenth century cotton technology became important and eventually took pride of place from the bast fibers. Yet the Chinese never seem to have used woollen textiles for garments to any extent. People in the northwestern and western regions of China did manufacture woollen textiles as early as the neolithic period, and woven carpets have been common in the northwest up to recent times; Chinese used the skins of sheep and goats with the attached fleece for garments where these were available, and wool was felted to make hats and footwear. But woollen garments were never popular, padded outerwear of silk, cotton other vegetable fiber being the common cold weather choice. (I am indebted to Professor Dieter Kuhn for information on the history of Chinese textiles.)

governmental control over China as a whole weakened through the 1910s and 1920s. This paper examines the border wool trade during the period in which it flourished, concentrating on the Hui role in that trade and how that role expanded with the decline of central control and the withdrawal of foreign firms' direct operations from the Northwest.

## **WOOL COLLECTION AND TRANSSHIPMENT**

Throughout the height of the border wool trade, Hui were deeply involved in collecting wool from regions in Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia where it was produced, and in transshipping it as far as Baotou, a growing Inner Mongolian trade center on the northeast corner of the Yellow River oxbow.

Accurate assessments of the volume of wool production and trade from the border regions are virtually impossible due to the scattered and arbitrary nature of extant statistics (see Table I).<sup>3</sup> It is possible, however, to outline in some detail the Hui role in the process of exchange, where each stage in this process took place, and the changes in this process and in the commercial institutions involved in wool trading during the period 1880-1937.

It is useful to view the purchase, bulking and transshipment of wool from China's border regions in terms of a rough hierarchy of "central" places, in which the volume of wool handled increased and the primary type of commercial transaction differed at each higher level. As might be expected with trade in a bulky commodity through rough terrain, "centrality" of a place in this hierarchy was associated with location along the few land and water routes suitable for the transport of wool. The four types of place in the hierarchy are (1) producers' market towns, where nomads (or sedentary wool producers such as those in eastern Gansu) traded their wool and hides; (2) local collection-transshipment centers, where large quantities of wool were brought from (1) by brokers and merchants to be sold to other merchants, bulked and transshipped; (3) the regional collection-transshipment centers of Xining, Shizuishan and Baotou, which differ from (2) primarily in scale, but also occupy crucial positions on the major west-east waterway and where consignments of wool were bulked and also processed to some extent before transshipment; and (4), the export city of Tianjin, where the foreign companies that exported the border wool were based, and where even wool bound for Chinese woolen mills (in the 1920s and 1930s) was first accumulated before final shipment. The relationship between function and type of place was not as rigid as this schematic description suggests. Many larger producers' market towns were also the site of exchange of wool between the initial buyer and a long distance merchant or even of a brokered exchange between producers and representatives of foreign firms. Local and regional collection-transshipment centers also served their immediate hinterlands as producers' markets. I propose this hierarchical scheme, then, only to aid in explaining in general terms the complex transactions governing the border wool trade.

In addition to these geographical distinctions, a temporal division marked the course of the wool trade in the northwest. From the 1880s until the 1920s foreign exporters of wool, hides and other border products maintained an indirect presence in the Gansu-Qinghai border region, eastern Gansu, the Alashan (Ningxia after 1912), and the Ordos (after 1912, southern Suiyuan) through compradores engaged in purchasing wool either directly from the producers or from the predominantly Hui wool merchants. By

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<sup>3</sup> Estimates are available in many sources, but differ as to place and time, so that comparison is impossible. Moreover, the means by which figures were obtained often amounted to little more than guesswork. For example, to estimate the amount of wool marketed in the northwest in an average year in the early 1930s, the investigator Zhang Zhiyi took his estimates of regional sheep populations, multiplied them by the estimated average quantity of wool produced by each sheep in a given year, and subtracted an estimate of the amount of wool used locally by nomadic and sedentary pastoralists (Zhang Zhiyi 1941:8, 10, 12). Other estimates are summarized in Table I.

the late 1920s, however, faced with an onslaught of environmental disasters, wars and communal violence, political instability and rejuvenated tax collection, the foreign firms withdrew their purchasing agencies from the northwest. The tasks of collecting wool on the borders and shipping it eastward for sale in Baotou were thereafter taken on entirely by small Hui companies.

### **Producers' Market Towns**

In central Tibet and Qinghai, some nomads dealt from their camps with traveling Hui merchants, trading their wool and other goods for tea, cloth, silks, cooking pots, and so on (Ekvall 1939:55-58). In general, however, producers traded their wool for grain and manufactures in small market towns on or near the steppe. These producers' markets varied in size depending on the depth of the hinterland they served, their location relative to major transportation routes, and so on. Travelers have left us some accounts of producers' market towns in the early twentieth century, such as Eric Teichman's description of Ebo on the Gansu-Qinghai border. The physical situation of this settlement is analogous to its economic role: the small walled Chinese town lay perched on the edge of the Qinghai plateau, astride a route that connected Tibet with the Gansu corridor through the Dubiankou pass. In all directions extended the vast grasslands where Tibetans grazed their herds and pitched their tents. The community of Chinese-speaking Hui whom Teichman encountered were solely involved in collection of wool and other steppe products which they transported for sale in distant towns below the plateau.<sup>4</sup>

Teichman had already traveled through Labrang, a major Lamaist monastic community on the Xia river near the Gansu-Qinghai border, and described the bazaar that served as a producers' market larger than Ebo. Here, in the mid-1930s, the Chinese journalist and travel-writer Fan Changjiang noted the great quantities of wool brought into the dusty market by Tibetans and sold to Hui merchants from Hezhou (now Linxia). Fan commented that many of the Tibetans doing the actual selling were women, and interpreted the unrestrained demeanor of these Tibetan women as signs of a "loose relationship" with the Chinese traders.<sup>5</sup>

The trading settlements in these descriptions each display the essential characteristics of wool producers' market towns in the Gansu-Qinghai border area. In such towns, nomadic producers came into direct contact with Hui merchants. The usual means of exchange was barter, although as nomadic economies in some areas became monetized, lump silver and various currencies began to be used.<sup>6</sup> And, although this point is not mentioned explicitly by the travelers, in order for trade to be possible, one party, usually the buyer, had to enjoy some proficiency in the language of the nomads as well as a local Chinese dialect.

Once collected by the buyer, the wool was packed into whatever bundles were most convenient for the local means of transportation. In Qinghai and the northwest in general, this meant that the long-

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<sup>4</sup> Teichman 1921:161-167. See also the stark photographs of Ebo in Rock 1956: plates III, IV.

<sup>5</sup> Teichman 1921:144; Fan Changjiang 1936:87-88. See Rock 1956: plate XVIII for a photo of the Labrang marketplace. For a description of a producers' market in Mongolia (Bayan Dalai) where nomads traded with Han representatives of Gansu and Beijing firms, see Ma Ho-t'ien 1949:17-18.

<sup>6</sup> By most reports, prices offered to the producers were low. The investigator Zhang Zhiyi provides a precise if perhaps extreme example: before the start of the second Sino-Japanese war, in the Gansu-Qinghai border area one brick of tea fetched an average of two hundred catties of wool (Zhang Zhiyi 1941:15). Since one Qinghai sheep produced two to three *jin* of wool annually, that price represents the yearly product of eighty sheep.

stapled wool was twisted into ropes, folding the softer inner within the coarser outer coat. (From this enfolding or covering process derived one of the prevalent names for wool from this region, *taomao*.) The ropes were wrapped into bales weighing sixty to seventy *jin* (1 *jin* equals approximately 1.3 pounds) with cords made of goat hair, then packed on the backs of animals to collection-transshipment centers. By the end of this journey and after what it had been through to get to market in the first place, the wool was usually a sodden, filthy mess (Chin 1937:46, 70).

### Collection-transshipment Centers

Collection-transshipment centers were the site of the next higher level transaction in the wool trade, that between local procurers of wool and the merchants involved with moving wool over the next, longest stage of its journey. These centers were in towns or cities of considerable size and economic importance; they were not necessarily located on the borders of wool producing districts, though neither were they too far away. Most important, they lay along major land and water transportation routes leading from the borderlands into China proper. Not surprisingly, Hui wool merchants had their headquarters in these collection-transshipment centers.

The most important wool collection-transshipment centers where Hui were active included Suzhou (Jiuquan), Ganzhou (Zhangye), Jingyuan, Datong, Huangyuan, Tangor, Guide, Hezhou (Linxia), Old Taozhou, Lanzhou, Tianshui, Zhangjiachuan, Pingliang, Yongdeng, and Liangzhou (Wuwei) in Gansu and Qinghai; as well as Zhongning, Zhongwei, Wuzhongbao, Ningxia (Yinchuan), Shizuishan (Shizuizi), Yingdingyuan and Dengkou along the Yellow River between the Alashan and the Ordos (see map).<sup>7</sup>

In the Northwest, two cities handled wool in such volume that they may be considered in a class by themselves, as regional collection-transshipment centers. Xining collected wool transshipped from north of the Yellow River in Qinghai, including the regions of the Tsaidam and around the Qinghai lake. Shizuishan on the Yellow River in Inner Mongolia concentrated the wool shipments from surrounding regions inside and outside the River's loop. In both places wool was dried and then processed somewhat, either sifted to free it of impurities or perhaps further adulterated to increase its sale weight. Then it was packed for shipment overland or by river. In Shizuishan after 1915 the foreign firms of Xintaixing (Wilson) and Renji (Forbes) jointly operated a processing-packing plant that employed over 1500 workers to untwist the wool-ropes, sift out excess dirt, wash and dry the wool before packing it for transshipment (Liu Tingdong 1981:192-93). Baotou, as the focal point of wool shipments from the entire northwest as well as Xinjiang and Mongolia, also served as a regional collection-transshipment center; it will be treated in a separate section below.

Close examination of the commercial role of collection-transshipment centers reveals the complex workings of cross-cultural trade in action. Before the 1920s, compradors for the Tianjin foreign firms, present in the northwest in force, obtained their wool through a variety of possible commercial channels, depending on the type and origin of the wool they demanded, how soon they wanted it, the time of year, the location of the agency and other factors (see Table II). These employees of the foreign firms

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<sup>7</sup> Chin 1937:48-49; Liu Tingdong 1981: *passim*; Zhou 1970:199-200; Ogawa 1941c:80. This is not a complete list. I have included towns on the basis of reference by travelers or investigators to the volume of wool transshipped and types of commercial functions undertaken in each place.

Local collection-transshipment centers elsewhere on China's borders included Yulin and Shenmu in Shaanxi; Khobdo, Uliassutai and Urga (Kulun) in Outer Mongolia; and Khotan (Hezhen), Kuchar (Kuche), Hami and Barkul (Zhenxi) in Xinjiang.

correspond to the "upcountry purchasers" relied upon extensively by such concerns as Augustine Heard for procurement of tea and silk (Hao 1970:75-82). Known as *waizhuang*, these upcountry wool purchasers might send out their agents (called *xiaolaoban*, "little bosses,") to make loans to the producers and collect wool in repayment; this was commonly the case in the areas of Inner Mongolia around Shizuishan (Liu Tingdong 1981:186). For the most part, however, they dealt through the predominantly Hui wool merchants (*maofanzi* or *dafanzi*) based in collection-transshipment centers. Upon receipt of an order and an advance of twenty to sixty percent of the purchase price, the Hui wool merchants sent their buyers (*xiaofanzi*) to the producers' market towns or smaller collection-transshipment centers. Here, the Hui buyers stayed in combination brokerage-inns (*xiejia*, literally "rest houses"). These brokerage-inns, themselves often run by Hui, fulfilled the triple function of accommodation, brokerage and interpreting.<sup>8</sup> The Hui wool merchants' buyers placed orders and left cash advances with the "rest house"; with this money, the inn-keepers or their employees bought goods to trade with the nomads in exchange for wool (which might not be delivered to the Hui merchants themselves until six months or one year later). For their services, the proprietor-brokers took a commission of two percent. Because the Hui wool merchants likewise required compensation, the foreign firms might themselves occasionally deal directly with the "rest houses" in order to bypass one middleman.

When they needed wool urgently (to fill an order before the freezing of the Yellow River delayed delivery to Tianjin, for example) the *yanghang* upcountry branches had yet another method for buying wool: directly from small wool merchants on the market in Xining, a major collection-transshipment center. This method had the advantage of allowing upcountry purchasers to view the goods before concluding a deal and saved them the risk of advancing large sums of money to intermediaries. However, merchants bringing wool into Xining had no guaranteed market, and so charged a higher price to cover potential loss on their speculation. In general, the *waizhuang* availed themselves of this Xining spot-sale wool market only for small purchases (see Diagram Ia; Chin 1937:60, 106-07; Liu Tingdong 1981:186; Miyazaki 1915:79; Zhou 1970:204-205).

During the first phase of the border wool trade, the comprador agents of foreign firms, mostly Han natives of Tianjin, maintained a high profile among the wool traders in the northwestern collection-transshipment centers.<sup>9</sup> Those who came to Hezhou near the end of the Guangxu reign period (1875-1908)

all bought official position, wore a brass band on their caps, and did not even nod when they saw town or district officials. They led extravagant, sumptuous lives. The Xintaixing firm had a boss in Lanzhou--I think his name was Wang Sandie--who entertained every rank of official to be found in the city. . . . At his nightly banquets there were always famous courtesans attending the wine, and mahjoong, and opium smoking.... [The agents] spent so lavishly, no official could compete. . . . The foreign firms used only the best

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<sup>8</sup> A similar institution could be found in Dajianlu (present day Kangding) on the Sichuan-Tibet border, after Chongqing was opened as a treaty-port in 1891 and a small trade in Tibetan wool via the Yangzi river developed. In Dajianlu, the brokerage-inns were called "kettle houses" (*guozhuang*), and like the *xiejia* of the northwest they provided interpreting and brokerage services to guests residing in the inn (Chin 1937:63; Wilson 1913:205-208; Xie and Guo n.d., 176-179).

<sup>9</sup> On the upcountry purchasers, see Liu Tingdong 1981: *passim*, and Qin, Ma, and Zhang 1980:175-181. In particular, see page 181 where Zhang Zhida lists the names of several "*laoban*" in charge of operations for various *yanghang* in Zhongwei, Zhongning and Haiyuan, in Gansu. All, he says, are from Tianjin; none of the surnames are those commonly associated with Hui families (i.e. Ma, Hu or An).

imported tools. [The managers] dressed elegantly and changed three times a day. All year long they retained tailors in their homes to make them new clothes) Qin, Ma and Zhang 1980:177-78).

There was also business to be accomplished. The local Hui wool merchants met among themselves to set asking prices for wool, so the representatives of the foreign firms met as well to determine what they would offer. In Hezhou at least, the upcountry purchasers collaborated to purchase wool: when the wool was delivered, it was allocated according to how much money each firm had invested. Xintaixing (Wilson and Co.) was the largest buyer, usually taking about fifty percent of the wool. Each autumn, the Hui merchants and the compradors held price negotiations during which disputatious discussions often arose. Once a price had been settled upon, however, the foreign firms' *laoban* advanced the necessary cash.<sup>10</sup>

I have uncovered little information on how monetary transfers from Tianjin were realized; what is available describes only how funds were supplied to foreign agencies in Shizuishan. Because the procurement of wool required cash advances, usually in silver, during the first years of the wool trade the foreign companies undertook deliveries of silver to this major collection-transshipment center themselves, employing the services of armed escort companies from Guihua (Inner Mongolia) for protection en route. Later they began to use the larger "native banks" (*qianzhuang*) and Chinese goods merchants (*shangdian*) who handled some financial business. Still later, the *yanghang* employed their own gangs of guards to accompany silver shipments, and finally, after the extension of telegraph service to the northwest, the upcountry purchasers were able to conduct direct, long-distance financial exchanges with Beijing and Tianjin for themselves and even for other local merchants and government in northwest towns. By providing such financial services as currency exchange and credit, the *yanghang* branches earned commission fees of up to ten percent (Liu Tingdong 1981:187).

Under the unequal treaties, foreign firms were allowed to transport goods bound for export from the treaty ports through China without paying local transport taxes (*lijin*), and it was upon this privilege that their conspicuous presence in the northwestern collection-transshipment centers relied. The Tianjin offices of the *yanghang* reported their wool orders to the Maritime Customs and the type and amount was recorded on a form known as the "triple certificate" (*sanlianbiao*). The triple certificate was delivered to the firms' upcountry branches in wool collection-transshipment centers, and it then accompanied the wool back to Tianjin as an "inland transit pass" which legally excused the shipment from taxation en route. Thus, in theory, the foreign firms paid only the one, modest Maritime Customs Tax on shipments of wool.

There was trouble ahead for the foreign agencies enjoying the advantages of this tax system, however. As early as 1913, Ma Qi, the Hui warlord of Qinghai, established an official wool and hide bureau. This agency, Qinghai Pimao Gongguju, attempted to prevent the direct sale of wool to the representatives of foreign firms and to place an export tax on the commodity. Nonetheless, this interference apparently did not impede trade in wool immediately, for the years 1919-1926 are referred to as the "golden age of Qinghai wool" (Zhou 1970:200). The bureau may even have proved useful to buyers by guaranteeing weight, quality and ultimate delivery of wool orders (Miyazaki 1915:79).

The Military Governor (*dujun*) of Gansu, Zhang Guangjian, imposed a more serious burden on the trade in 1915 or 1916. A few years after assuming office, Zhang collected 15,000 taels from each of nine

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<sup>10</sup> Chin 1937:105; Qin, Ma and Zhang 1980:176, 181. Between 1911 and 1921, the wholesale price for a *jin* of wool in Zhongning was about "six *fen* of silver" (Qin, Ma, and Zhang 1980:181). In Qinghai between 1919 and 1926 the price ranged between eight and ten taels for one hundred *jin* (Zhou 1970:200).

local wool and hide merchants to establish a provincial wool monopoly. This monopoly, the Gansu Pimao Gongmaibu, at first levied a tax of one tael per picul (100 *jin*); the rate rose quickly over the next few years as Zhang consolidated his ability to collect it. A tax office in Shizuishan between 1916 and 1919 tripled the rate of taxation on outbound shipments of wool after Zhang stationed a detachment of 30 soldiers there to tighten inspection procedures. Wool shipments that did not correspond in type or quantity to the record on the triple certificate were fined and/or confiscated. Local power-holders in Suiyuan and Chahar began to employ similar methods to enhance their revenue through tax on the wool trade as the control of the central Chinese government disintegrated in the warlord struggles of the second and third decades of the century and the triple certificate system fell into disarray.

With local taxation and official control of the trade cutting into the profitability and scope of their interior agencies, and with banditry and seizure by warlord armies of means of transportation in north and northwestern China contributing to the risks of the already hazardous process of transshipping wool eastward, the foreign firms chose to withdraw to the security of Tianjin. The upcountry agencies left Hezhou in 1920; between 1921 and 1926 they left Shizuishan; those in Zhangjiachuan were gone by 1926-27 (Qin, Ma and Zhang 1980:178; Liu Tingdong 1981:197).

Thereafter, companies owned and operated by Hui took over the leg of the wool trade abandoned by the foreign firms. In places, including the Huangyuan, Guide and Datong area of Qinghai, the brokerage-inns expanded their operations to include long distance trade with Baotou. Elsewhere the Hui wool merchants took on the task of shipping wool and hides eastward from the northwest. In particular, Hezhou's wool merchants prospered after the upcountry purchasers departed (See Diagram Ib). In similar fashion, Han or Hui traders from Henan and Shaanxi joined local merchants in transporting and marketing wool collected in Zhangjiachuan (Chin 1937:60; Qin, Ma and Zhang 1980:178; Zhou 1970:204).

## **TRANSPORT**

After the consignments of wool were delivered and concentrated in collection-transshipment centers, the next stage was to ship them eastward to the cities where they were to be exported or used in the manufacture of carpets or, later, woolens. Communications in the borderlands and in north China as a whole were more difficult than in south and central China, where a dense system of waterways allowed for relatively rapid and inexpensive shipping. Nevertheless, Chinese traders could accommodate the increased volume of eastbound wool in a flexible communications network that exploited available geographical and animal resources. Because transport within this network required specialized equipment and expertise as well as herds of draft animals, merchants in the wool trade contracted out to transport houses (*tuohu* or *fashang*) for the conveyance of their wool and hides to eastern markets. And for the most part in Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia, overland and fluvial transport was the domain of Hui enterprises. Thus in this aspect as well, the growth of the wool trade was of great importance to Muslim Chinese entrepreneurs in the northwest.

## **Wool Caravans**

Caravan companies from the Inner Mongolian towns of Guihua and Baotou had plied the overland routes to Xinjiang and linked north China with Outer Mongolia, Zungharia and Eastern Turkestan since

Qianlong times.<sup>11</sup> After the 1880s, along with transportation houses based in Gansu, they took on much of the overland shipment of wool from all over the northwest. In addition to the Xinjiang routes, major caravan routes ran from the western Gansu corridor via Alashan to Shizuishan, or from the Xining area to Shizuishan along the banks of the Yellow River. From Shizuishan to Baotou, caravans either cut across the Ordos directly or followed the bank of the river around to the north, through Wuyuan, where the grazing was better.

Many of the caravan companies based in Inner Mongolia, particularly the smaller ones, were run by Hui; companies from Lanzhou or those in Huangyuan that made use of the Tsaidam to pasture their camels were almost entirely Muslim-operated.<sup>12</sup> This fact is reflected in the typical diets eaten by "camel pullers" traveling in each direction: through Mongolia, the caravan crew ate mostly millet fried with butter--a Mongol food. On routes south of Guihua, however, mutton was the staple, supplemented by noodles, both of which are typical Hui fare (Shen 1984:187).

Despite these differences, the organization and routine of Chinese caravans plying the routes east from Xinjiang or northeast from Gansu and Qinghai were broadly similar. "Strings" (*lian*) of twelve to eighteen camels were led by one "camel-puller"; the strings were paired into *bazi* for the purposes of loading and unloading, as the strength of two camel-pullers was required to lift the twin bales of up to 200 catties of wool onto the frame that held loads to the camels' humps. A *fang*, or "tent," consisted of eight *bazi*, and was the basic organizational unit of the caravan. When in camp, the caravan leader, the cook, his assistant, anyone else not on watch duty, and seven or eight dogs all slept in a *fang*.<sup>13</sup> Chinese caravans traveled by night and camped and grazed the camels from midday to sunset each day. While on the road the camel-pullers often spun or knit camels' hair, a hobby made possible, in part, by the fact that Chinese caravan companies, unlike Mongol caravans, did not travel during the hot season but rather pastured their camels (even feeding them a mixture of green mung bean soup and sesame oil to cool their "internal heat") and used this spare time to repair equipment and gather the wool shed by Bactrian camels in the summer months.<sup>14</sup>

This seasonality of Chinese caravan shipping had interesting consequences for the border wool trade, for it neatly complemented the yearly schedule of river transport in the north and northwest. The Yellow River is frozen in its upper reaches between December and March and in flood from mid-June until July. Thus the river was navigable for large wool-laden boats for only 150-200 days out of the year

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<sup>11</sup> The history of the development of the caravan companies (*tuohu*) that plied these routes is a major topic in its own right. See the entire issue of *Nei Menggu wenshiziliao* 12, which is devoted to "Lu Meng shang Dashengkui" [The Dashengkui: traveling merchants in Mongolia]. See also Millward 1993: Chapter 5.

<sup>12</sup> Zhang Zhiyi 1941:22; Zhou 1970:227. According to Zhang Zhiyi, there were fifteen *tuohu* in Lanzhou ca. 1936, most of them Hui. According to a European source, there were thirty caravan companies in Baotou in 1926, organized into a guild known as the Mawangshe (Anonymous 1926:204).

<sup>13</sup> The source of this oral account, Shen Shide, clearly used *fang* to mean both the physical structure and the unit of men who slept in it and traveled together (Shen 1984:186). In similar fashion, "tent" or "yurt" is used among many Inner Asian nomadic groups to designate a social unit.

<sup>14</sup> Shen 1984:187. Mongol caravans differed fundamentally in many respects from Chinese ones. See Owen Lattimore's discussion in Lattimore 1941:138-39, 147-60.



(Zhang Zhiyi 1941:15; Ma Tinggao n.d., 102). Camel caravans were slower and more costly,<sup>15</sup> but could take consignments of wool to Baotou during the cold season of September to April if necessary.

### Water-borne Wool

Wool shipments by river began soon after the *qingming* festival, when the ice broke up. Workers hired by wool companies took the wool, which had been piling up into "wool mountains" around Xining on both banks of the Huang River since the previous autumn, and loaded it onto skin rafts, the conveyance most commonly used on the rough upland rivers of this border region since ancient times and one still employed today. These rafts, locally called *huntuo* (the standard Mandarin name is *pifa*), were constructed from skins removed whole from decapitated cows and sheep. After the animal's throat had been cut, air was blown into a small incision in a hindquarter and the carcass flogged until the skin could be flayed. The hides were scraped clean and then fashioned into inflatable sacks by sealing the openings at the neck, front legs and hindquarters. The skin was then filled with vegetable oil and salt to cure the hide from the inside out. Before inflating the bags the boatmen or wool-hands sometimes packed them with up to 150 *jin* of wool. (This prevalent practice may have originated as a way of smuggling wool not covered by an inland transit pass from the Maritime Customs.) Once inflated and sealed, the cowhide bags were lined belly-up into arrays of one hundred and twenty and lashed together. (Rafts constructed with sheepskins employed fewer bags; these hides were lighter and sheepskin rafts therefore were used primarily for short hauls.) Wooden planks or logs laid lengthwise atop the bags served as a makeshift deck for crew, passengers and additional cargo.<sup>16</sup> Like the pontoon rafts employed by today's professional river-runners, the *pifa* had a shallow draft to clear the shoals of the Huang and upper Yellow rivers, was flexible, could be simply repaired, and was easily transported over dry land after deflation. Unlike pontoon rafts, *pifa* were made of locally available products; raft travel on the Huang and Yellow Rivers thus represented a remarkable adaptation to and exploitation of geographic conditions and animal resources.

Most boats put in at Xining and floated downriver to meet the Yellow near Lanzhou. Some rafts carrying wool from Taozhou, Hezhou and Xunhua began their journey on the Xia river, joining the Yellow at Yongjing. Gansu Hui boatmen, many from the towns of Gaolan and Daohe, maneuvered the rafts through rapids to Lanzhou, where the vessels were linked into larger, 500-bag rafts capable of carrying 60,000-70,000 *jin* of wool.<sup>17</sup>

Past Lanzhou there were more gorges and rapids to be shot; once below Zhongwei, however, shallows and fierce winds from the Ordos were the problem. (Teichman ran aground here and Fan Changjiang in his sheepskin raft was so buffeted by winds that despite the fluvial promise of his name he disembarked and proceeded by shank's mare (Teichman 1921:184; Fan 1936:312). After Ningxia, large wooden scows (*minchuan*) joined the rafts on the river, conveying 30,000-40,000 *jin* each of wool from Inner Mongolia to Baotou. All boats entered Shizuishan, a mud town whose unprepossessing appearance

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<sup>15</sup> In the 1920s and early 1930s, camel caravan took forty days versus twenty-five by raft under good conditions; caravan shipping cost from three to five taels more than river freight charges for about 280 *jin* (Imanaga 1966:101; Chin, 1937:109).

<sup>16</sup> Chin 1937:108; Ogawa 1941c:75; Worcester 1957:73-74. For photographs of these rafts, see Moore 1932:743-52, Rock 1956: plates LXIXa, b, and Kubota 1985: plates 64-65.

<sup>17</sup> Zhou 1970:206; Ogawa 1941c:74. Ma Tinggao (n.d., 103) estimates the freight capacity of the rafts at only 10,000 catties. Rafts of various sizes could carry between 20,000 and 100,000 catties (Imanaga 1966:101).

belied its role as a juncture of land and water routes and major collection-transshipment center for the wool trade. Besides wool collection and processing, Shizuishan subsisted on the custom of riverine and caravan travelers about to set off upon the last leg of the trip to Baotou. Only the innkeepers and tax collectors, Fan Changjiang remarked, were more numerous than the prostitutes who rushed out at the first sound of horses hooves or camel bells (Fan 1936:312). Some vessels carrying wool for foreign firms were able to avoid the tax barriers, at least, by means of a white flag emblazoned with the characters "*baohu*" (protect), and often English or German equivalents as well (Qin, Ma and Zhang 1980:177).

Downstream from Shizuishan banditry was a perennial hazard. Mongols shot at Eric Teichman from the riverbanks in 1917 (Teichman 1921:191); After 1922, when the Gelaohui struck a deal with Ma Fuxiang, a Hui general then occupying Baotou, groups of mounted, armed, "Brothers and Elders" occupied the towns and countryside on both sides of the Yellow River from Dengkou to Baotou. Only those merchants who bought "protection" in Baotou from the Gelaohui could expect their shipments of wool and hides to get through unmolested (Liu Chonggao, Cheng and Pang n.d., 43-45).

There were other methods by which wool was transported from collection-transshipment centers to Baotou and Tianjin. Wool from southeastern Gansu, for example, traveled by oxcart to Xian and from there by rail to Tianjin. Wool collected in Shaanxi's main wool producing regions, Yulin and Shenmu, was likewise transported to its destination, Baotou, by oxcart (Zhang Zhiyi 1941:16; Ogawa 1941c:74). But by far the largest portion of the wool shipped to Baotou from Qinghai and Gansu was shipped by river. According to an expert in the development of Baotou's communications network, during the high point of the wool trade with the northwest, every year about three hundred skin rafts, mostly shipping wool, and between eight and twelve hundred scows floated from Qinghai to Baotou (Ma Tinggao n.d., 102). After arrival and unloading there, rafts were disassembled and the skins, emptied of their bootleg wool, were packed overland back to the borders. The timbers were sold, and hide bags too worn to be reused (usually after the third trip) became shoeleather.

## **BAOTOU**

The entrepôt into which the Hui steered this stream of eastbound wool was aptly named "Baotou"-head-point of bales. During the height of the wool trade, Baotou was a town of "mud walls and mud houses on the side of a treeless hill" rendered somewhat picturesque by its cultural diversity and booming commerce. Because of its situation between the Yin Mountains of Inner Mongolia and the Yellow River, Baotou was the natural meeting place for Han and Mongol culture as well as trade items; both groups held festivals within the town (Alonso and Fletcher 1979:54-63). Batteries of shops awaited the customer on the commercial streets, each shop easily recognized by its own signboard or trademarks: six-foot high white, pink or red candles outside the chandlers' shops; long banners and head-sized black balls to represent pills in front of the apothecaries; giant saddles hung from the saddlers' and for the Mongol cobbler, a colossal leather boot (Yi n.d., 159).

There was also a sizeable Hui population in and around Baotou, consisting of some who came during the late Qing and many more who migrated after the 1923 completion of the Beisui Railway. Hui traders from the northwest made temporary homes here while marketing their consignments of wool, hides, or medicines; Muslim restaurants could be identified throughout the town under the "*Qingzhen Huihui*" sign, with its Arabic equivalent painted alongside (Iwamura 1938:43-44; Yi n.d., 159).

Baotou's importance as a mercantile city began in the Yongzheng (1723-1735) and Qianlong (1736-1795) reign periods of the Qing, when the area, a Mongol holding during the Ming, was brought

under unified Chinese control. Merchants based in Baotou and in Guihua to the east helped provision the Qianlong Emperor's campaigns in Chinese Turkestan. According to an encyclopedic study by the Mantetsu investigator Ogawa Kunan, the first wool and hide merchants in Baotou were the Chen family from Shanxi, who established the Gongyidian in 1832. These Shanxi merchants bought wool and other products in Baotou for sale in Shanghai, Jiaozhou and Ningbo, and although many firms specializing in hides opened up during the following years, the small scale Gongyidian and its offshoots were the only dealers in wool until the Tongzhi period--another indication of the relative unimportance of wool in China until late in the nineteenth century. Tianjin was opened as a treaty port in 1860, however, and when Baotou merchants felt the tug of international demand for Chinese wool and hides in the early 1880s, wool and hide brokers called *pimaodian*, along with hide merchants known as *pizhuang*, began opening shops one after another to provide for the needs of foreign agencies newly arrived in the town.<sup>18</sup> In the late Guangxu period there were fourteen or fifteen, in the early Republican period there were twenty-two or twenty-three, and by the eve of the First World War in Europe, there were thirty wool concerns in Baotou (Imanaga 1966:86; Chin 1937:111-112).

Baotou had a competitor for the long distance trade from Xinjiang and Mongolia: Guihua (Guisui, modern Hohot) had traditionally been the eastern terminus of caravan traffic along the Great West Road and other routes. But a stele dating from the Daoguang period (1821-1850) found in a temple in Baotou (the Guandi Miao) contains an admonition that shipments of wool, hides, horsetails and medicines should be taxed in Guihua before coming to Baotou. From this statement, Ogawa concluded that Baotou had been siphoning off Guihua's share of the border trade since this early time. (In 1848 the Qing local authorities stopped bucking this trend, and established a branch tax office in Baotou.) The perennial growth in the relative importance of northwestern wool during the nineteenth century and Baotou's commanding location on the Yellow River only improved its position vis-a-vis Guihua. The extension of rail communications as far as Zhangjiakou (Kalgan) in 1905 helped further, for although Guihua is closer to Zhangjiakou than is Baotou, the railroad brought the goods of both cities "nearer" to eastern ports. It was in 1923, however, with the completion of a spur of the railway as far as Baotou, that this city's supremacy as "Gateway of the Northwest" was firmly established. All raft and boat traffic stopped here, and at least seventy percent of all goods shipped from the west were transhipped here for ultimate destinations in Beijing or Tianjin. The population more than doubled to 150,000, and the Shanxi merchants faced new competition: Tianjin- and Beijing-based firms.<sup>19</sup>

Baotou's development was linked both to the growth of the north China transportation network and the demand for the wool that traveled along it. By the 1930s, the period covered in Ogawa's study, the *pimaodian* (wool and hide brokerage-inns) had evolved a highly specialized process for mediating the exchange of wool between the *xiluke*, or merchants from the west who come to sell, and *dongluke*, the eastern merchants who came to buy. We know little about intermediate stages in this development; in particular, there is no information about the function of the *pimaodian* during the period when foreign agencies controlled wool collection and transshipment in the Northwest. The system I will describe

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<sup>18</sup> These included representatives of Wilson, Forbes, Tianjude, Tianjuren, Xintaihe, Ruiji and others (Ogawa 1941c:74). For the early commercial history of Baotou, *pimaodian*, and *pizhuang*, see Ogawa 1941a:68-78; Imanaga 1966:83-90; Ma Tinggao n.d., 99-100.

<sup>19</sup> Ogawa 1941a:73, 75; Imanaga 1966:83, 86; Kwan 1982:54; Ma Tinggao n.d., 101-102; Anonymous 1926:202. For the history of the construction of the Beisui railway, a key link in the north China communications network, see Matsumoto 1936:123-41 (summarized in part in Kwan 1982:30.)

below, then, is based on Ogawa's description of wool brokerage in Baotou during the second phase of the wool trade: after the mid-1920s when the foreign firms withdrew their upcountry purchasers and restricted their operations to the purchase of wool in Baotou or in Tianjin.

The sellers of wool in Baotou included traders of various ethnicities and hailing from many directions: Uzbek or Han, from Xinjiang; Shanxi Han merchants carting wool from Shenmu and Yulin to the south, or, from the north, representatives of far-flung Shanxi trading companies; Mongols from Uliassutai or further. But the bulk of the most valuable wool originated in Gansu and Qinghai. According to Japanese estimates for the period preceding the July 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident, there were 300-400 regular suppliers from Gansu and Qinghai selling in Baotou and another 100-200 from places closer to the city (Ogawa 1941c:80).

Whether they first approached the city from its west or northwest gates, from Guandukou south of the river, or via Nanhaizi (Baotou's river port), wool merchants were met by the *pimaodian's* runners. These "river runners" and "gate runners" then returned to headquarters in Baotou to report the arrival of a supplier and the approximate quantity and type of his wool, and to fill out required paperwork, including a preliminary tax statement that was forwarded to the Baotou tax office. After the supplier had been escorted into the city, he was lodged in the *pimaodian* and his wool stored either in the in its courtyard or in secure warehouses. Around 1926 an English investigator visited and described a *pimaodian*:

Open to a wide and high porch is a spacious courtyard with five or six parlors on the north where business is transacted, and with about a dozen bedrooms for visiting clients on the other two sides. Behind the parlors stand several rows of houses where foods are stored and regular customers make their temporary abode (Anonymous 1933:37).

Besides providing food and lodging, the *pimaodian* advanced funds to cover costs incurred by the wool seller during his stay in Baotou, including taxes on the wool and the outlay he needed to purchase manufactures for sale after his return to the borders.<sup>20</sup> This was necessary because merchants arriving from the wool producing regions often had invested highly in the wool itself and had little cash until the broker completed the sale.

As representatives of large Chinese or foreign firms, the *dongluke* were in a better financial position. They generally did not require the financial services of *pimaodian*, nor were they restricted to dealing solely through one broker. Nevertheless, because of the convenience of residing in the same place where they transacted business, many wool buyers also stayed in *pimaodian*. For their part, the *pimaodian* did their best to entice wool and hide buyers to their establishments by offering meals and accomodation gratis and keeping the Tianjin firms posted throughout the year by letter and telegram regarding stocks on hand and market conditions. The largest of the *pimaodian*, the Guanghengxi, stationed an employee in Tianjin for this purpose. In addition, the manager of the *pimaodian*, his assistant, and a class of employees known as "street runners" (*paojie*) canvassed for potential buyers throughout Baotou.

When it had located a potential buyer, the *pimaodian* mediated during the often lengthy negotiation process<sup>21</sup>, officiated over weighing, and arranged for cleaning, packing and delivery of the

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<sup>20</sup> For a complete breakdown of taxes and costs faced by the merchant selling a shipment of wool in the late 1930s, see Ogawa 1941c:89-91.

<sup>21</sup> Because of the great variety of wools available and differing demands, the brokers often had to juggle multiple buyers and sellers until they reached a feasible match. Distinctions between wools on the Baotou and Tianjin markets were made on the basis of season

wool to Beijing or Tianjin. For its services, the *pimaodian* took a two percent commission from each party in the transaction. The buyer usually settled with the *pimaodian* immediately; the seller, however, depending on the market price of wool and the length of time he had spent enjoying the interest-bearing "hospitality" of the *pimaodian* might take an extension on the loan. It was to the advantage of *pimaodian* to extend credit to *xiluke* in order to assure their continued business in years to come (Ogawa 1941c:87-110; Chin 1937:114-15).

Imanaga Seiji has described the Hui-operated *pimaodian* of Baotou, further complicating our picture of the Baotou wool business. Hui *pimaodian* ran along lines similar to *pimaodian* under Han control, with two important differences. First of all, the Hui *pimaodian* provided food and accommodation only to Hui merchants selling wool and hides in Baotou. Indeed, the requirement of adherence to Islamic dietary laws and mutual Han-Hui suspicion would have made it difficult for Hui to reside anywhere else, and this was probably a factor contributing to the development of these Hui versions of Baotou's inn-brokerage institution. The second difference was that Hui *pimaodian* enjoyed no direct relations with buyers, but found a market for their clients' wool only through Han *pimaodian* and *pizhuang*. By customary arrangement, *pimaodian* did not charge a brokerage fee to other *pimaodian* that assisted in completing a deal. The Hui *pimaodian* could thus charge only the sellers, and earned only a two percent commission on their transactions. Therefore, according to Imanaga, Hui *pimaodian* operated on a slimmer profit margin than their Han competitors, who took two percent each from buyer and seller (Imanaga 1966:94-95, 108, 114).

This second difference was in part a consequence of the first, since the buyers were all Han and thus would not choose to stay in a Hui establishment. But it may also have stemmed from the fact that Hui *pimaodian* developed later than their Han counterparts and consequently were forced to squeeze into an established industry by accepting a smaller share of the profits. Information on early *pimaodian* in general is scanty, and material on Hui concerns more so. It is especially difficult to establish an exact chronology of their origins and development. Nevertheless, Imanaga argues on the basis of Ogawa's data that Hui *pimaodian* originated as inns and warehouses for Hui merchants from the northwest, and developed their brokerage functions in tandem with the growth of international demand for northwestern wool and other border products (Imanaga 1966:109). It seems reasonable to suggest further, therefore, that the Hui *pimaodian* carved out their niche in the 1920s, when the withdrawal of direct foreign purchasers from the northwest led to an increase in the numbers of Hui merchants shipping wool from Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia. With the greater influx of Hui long distance traders accompanying their wool and hides into Baotou, Hui warehouse owners and inn-keepers expanded the scope of their operations to include those additional services provided by the established *pimaodian* to their clients: processing of local paperwork (especially tax forms), credit advances and canvassing for buyers.

## CONCLUSION

In Baotou, wool from Gansu and Qinghai passed from Hui into Han hands; from then on the story of the Chinese wool trade ceases to involve the Hui directly. Of course, to some extent, fluctuations in the international demand for wool affected the livelihoods of Han and Hui wool traders in places inland from

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gathered, (spring wool, autumn wool), gathering method (combed, clipped, pulled, taken from pelts), packing method (ball wool, rope wool, loose wool), production regions and collection-transshipment centers (Mongol wool, Ganzi wool from Ganzhou, Suzi wool from Suzhou, Xining wool, Yulin wool, etc.). And of course, there were also varieties of lambs' wool, camels' wool and goats' wool to contend with.

Tianjin. As mentioned above, the United States, in particular, U.S. carpet manufacturers, provided the major market for sheeps' wool from China's Inner Asian borders. During the period 1880-1937 changes in U.S. demand and trade policy meant either good profits for Chinese wool exporters, or piles of unsaleable wool in Tianjin and Baotou godowns. For instance, in 1884 a reduction in the U.S. tariff on low grade wools first opened the large American market, and made possible the rapid rise of sheeps' wool to the position of Tianjin's single largest export by 1894. Conversely, when the U.S. auctioned off its wartime stockpile of lowgrade wool in 1920, many Chinese wool exporters were ruined.<sup>22</sup>

We have little evidence by which to assess the effects of these fluctuations on inland wool dealers, however. In fact, what indications there are suggest that the influence of these market shifts was diluted by the time-lag required to ship wool to Tianjin. Rather, political, military and environmental upheavals in China and on the borders seem to have had greater impact on Chinese wool dealers inland, especially after 1911. For example, a business slump hurt the *pimaodian* in Baotou in the years 1918 and 1919, during which time six concerns closed up shop. Meanwhile, according to Maritime Customs reports, demand and prices for wool in Tianjin had been high since 1915 while export totals remained steady. This suggests that the slump in Baotou was due, then, not to any flagging of demand, but rather to a shortage of supply, for which the destructive campaigns of Bai Lang in Henan, Shaanxi and especially on the Gansu-Qinghai border in 1914 may have been a contributing factor. Four other *pimaodian* closed between 1914 and 1917 (CIMC 1899-1920; Ogawa 1941a: chart facing 76).

Other events during the next years in north China and on the borders likewise influenced the wool trade. The completion of the rail link to Baotou provided a boost to the trade in 1923, but wars among the militarists, rampant banditry and gangs of deserters interrupted north Chinese river, caravan and rail transportation. Ma Zhongying's attack and capture of Hezhou in 1924 caused many northwestern wool merchants to go bankrupt. The warlord Feng Yuxiang occupied the area around Baotou during the second half of 1927, and the deleterious effects of his army's exactions were exacerbated by the severe drought in the northwest in 1926 and 1927 (Chin 1937:112; Ogawa 1941a:77).

As noted above, these events, combined with the revival of local- and provincial-level taxation and monopolies on wool, resulted in a steep decline in use of the inland transit pass system by foreigners after 1922. In that year, fifty-seven million taels worth of "native goods" left China under triple certificate; by 1928, the figure was only six million (CIMC 1921-1933). These developments struck at the heart of the Chinese wool trade: its small margin of profitability in light of the high cost of getting it to Tianjin. Shipping costs and the profits of intermediaries added greatly to the minimum price of wool in Baotou and Tianjin. By one set of estimates, prices in Tianjin could reach one thousand percent of those on the border.<sup>23</sup> Thus even at the best of times, Chinese wool could only just slip into the American market at a price lower than that of Argentinian wool, its chief competitor. With the decline of the inland transit pass system and the insecurity of the routes from the northwest after 1928, Tianjin's annual exports of sheep's wool declined (see Diagram II).

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<sup>22</sup> For a detailed account of the economic history of Chinese wool exports from Tianjin and Chongqing see Millward 1987:55-65.

<sup>23</sup> In 1914, wool that sold for 3-4 taels per picul in Hezhou sold for 30-40 taels in Tianjin; from 1918-1920, the prices were 7-8 taels in Hezhou, and 50-70 taels in Tianjin (Qin, Ma and Zhang 1980:176.) Around 1935 it cost twenty Chinese dollars per picul to ship wool from Lanzhou to Tianjin, even with the railroad. By contrast, the freight charge from Tianjin to New York was only a little over seven dollars, including three dollars export duty (Rasmussen 1936:67).

The wool trade to Tianjin suffered its *coup de grace* after the Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the outbreak of open hostilities between Japan and China. Japan captured Baotou and took control over the trade in livestock, hides and wool; by means of a "wool purchasing association" in Tianjin the Japanese monopolized wool trade with the interior, and from October 1938 forbade the export of wool from the port, presumably to maintain wool supplies for its own wartime use. But wool was no longer getting through to Tianjin in anywhere near its former quantities. According to a report by the association of Han *pimaodian* in Baotou, in 1936 twelve million *jin* of wool passed through that city; in 1937 that number was reduced by almost fifty percent. By 1939 Baotou brokered less than 1.5 million *jin* of wool; one reason for this was that after the outbreak of open hostilities with Japan in the summer of 1937, the Nationalist Chinese redirected much of the wool supply from its source. The Guomindang Trade Committee (*maoyi weiyuanhui*) in 1937 established a monopoly in Lanzhou to collect wool in the northwest and ship it to Hankou for manufacture or reexport via Shanghai. After the loss of Wuhan to the Japanese in October 1938, the committee sold its wool to the Soviet Union via the Xinjiang town of Xingxingxia (CMC 1933-1940; Han n.d., 94; Zhang Zhiyi 1941: 10-12, 22).

Despite the volatility of its international demand and the frequent interruptions of supply due to domestic turmoil, trade in wool from China's borders, in particular the Gansu-Qinghai area, was of great consequence to the development of the cities through which the wool passed--the local and regional collection-transshipment centers of Hezhou, Xining, Shizuishan, Baotou--and even of Tianjin, from which it was exported.<sup>24</sup>

And for the Hui themselves, who at first mediated between nomadic producers and Han buyers, and later managed the tasks of purchase, bulking and transportation as far as Baotou, involvement in the wool trade during a half century otherwise fraught with Han-Hui tensions was an important factor running counter to the general disintegration of the Chinese state. As Jonathan Lipman has put it, "Though the Hui had always dealt with the Han, and with China, the quantitative increase in the wool and hide trade produced qualitative changes in the relationship." (Lipman 1980:131). Because of the wool trade, especially after the late 1920s, Northwestern Hui wool merchants, caravaneers and boatmen had strong economic reasons to involve themselves with China proper and with Han society; while Islam may have enjoined the Hui of Qinghai, Gansu and Ningxia to turn their eyes westward, they also looked to the east, after the bales of wool en route to market.

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<sup>24</sup> In addition to being Tianjin's single largest export for several years after 1894, sheep's wool sparked off a new industry in the city: rugs made by traditional cottage industry in Gansu, Ningxia and Shaanxi were sold internationally after 1910, named "Tientsin carpets" for the city through which they were exported. After a boom in these carpets began in the 1920s, some carpet factories did open in Tianjin itself (303 workshops by 1929), and hand spinning of the wool they used became a major source of casual labor for women and children in that port city (Chin 1937:94-95; Anonymous 1926:204; Hershatter 1982:75).

## GLOSSARY

Baotou ☉☿ ☌☆

bazi ▣↓ ☉●

dafanzi ☉er 𠂇𠂇 ☉●

Dajianlu ☉er ☌☌ ☌𠂇

Datong ☉er ○𠂇

Dengkou ☌☌ ☉✂

dongluke ✂☌ ☌☌ ✂✂

dujun ☌☑ ☌☑

Ebo ✂✂ 𠂇☌☑

fang 𠂇✂

fashang ☌✂ ☌☌

Ganzhou ☉☌ ☌☌

Gaolin ☌✂ ✂☌

Ge Tuzi ☌☌ ☌☌ ☉●

Gongyidian ☉☌ ☌☌ 𠂇☌

Guide ✂✂ ☌◆

Guihua ☌☌ ☉☌

guozhuang ☌☌ ✂☌

Huangshui ✂☌ ☉☌

Huangyuan ✂☌ ☌☌

huntuo ☌☌ ✂☌

Jingyuan ☌◆ ☌☌

Jiuquan ☌◆ ✂◆

Juli 𠂇” ☉☌

Kangding ☌☌ 𠂇◆

lian ☌☌



Liangzhou ✧☞ ○☞

lijin ⌚← ✧↗

Linxia ⌚☞ ☼☞

maofanzi ☞↓ ㄣ൬ ☞●

maotou ☞↓ ⌚☆

Ma Qi ㄟ□ ㄣ→

Mawangshe ㄟ□ ☞☒ ✧⌚

minchuan ☞⌚ ✧↘

paojie ☆☼ ☼↔

pifa ☞☒ ☼

pimaodian ☞☒ ☞↓ ▲☞

pimao gongguju ☞☒ ☞↓ ☞⌚ ○↕ ■⌚

Pingliang ☞ ✧☞

pizhuang ☞☒ ✧↗

qianzhuang ⌚□ ✧↗

Renji ☞☼ ㄟㄅ

Ruiji ⌚← ㄟㄅ

sanlianbao ☞☼ ㄣ♦ ✧↘

shangdian ㄟ↗ ▲☞

Shichang ☞☒ ▲↗

Shizuishan (Shizuizi) ☞☒ ⌚☞ ☞♦ ○☼ ☞● ○γ

Suzhou ☼⌚ ○☞

taomao ☼●☼ ☞↓

Taozhou ★★ ○☞

Tianchanghe ☞ㄣ ▲↗ ▲☼

Tianchangren ☞ㄣ ✧↗ ☞☼

Tiansui ☞ㄣ ☞↕

tuohu 🕒🕒 🕒↑

waizhuang 🕒” ✧🕒

Wuwei ✦🕒 ★🕒

Wuyuan 🕒 ↗

xiaofanzi 🕒☐ 🕒🕒 🕒●

xiejia 🕒✧ 🕒🕒

xiluke 🕒➡ 🕒🕒 ★🕒

Xinglong 🕒🕒 ☆🕒

Xingxingxia ★🕒 ★🕒 🕒●

Xintaixing 🕒✦ 🕒🕒 🕒🕒

yanghang ★✦ 🕒🕒

Yihe 🕒🕒 🕒🕒

Yongdeng 🕒🕒 🕒🕒

Zhangye 🕒🕒 🕒🕒

Zhongning 🕒🕒 🕒🕒

Zhongwei 🕒🕒 🕒🕒

## ABBREVIATIONS

CIMC: China Imperial Maritime Customs

CMC: China Maritime Customs

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