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Submitted by:

Edgar W. O'Harew

Assistant Trade Commissioner

(Name)

(Title)

D.P.O.

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CUSTOMS SERVICE

HAND-MADE PAPER INDUSTRY IN WUYUAN, ANHWEI PROVINCE

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(Paper used in the manufacture of Chinese umbrellas, lanterns, fire-crackers, labels for tea boxes and other containers.)

For your information there is quoted below an article which appeared in the January 14 issue of the Chinese Economic Bulletin on the "Hand-Made Paper Industry in Wuyuan, Anhwei Province:"

"Hand-made paper was the only variety available for writing and other purposes in China before the introduction of the machine-made variety from the West. The last few decades have seen the gradual passing of the once predominant position held by hand-made paper, partly due to changes in custom and methods of printing, and partly to the expense in comparison with the cheaper but extremely useful grades of imported paper. However, the hand-made product still enjoys a unique position in certain respects, as when in the case of the finer grades used for Chinese painting and artistic writing, for printing Chinese-style books, and in the cheaper qualities for making oiled paper, paper umbrellas, fire-crackers, etc.

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"Hand-made paper is produced in practically all parts of the country, with Kiangsi, Chekiang, Fukien, Anhwei and Hunan taking the lead. In Anhwei manufacturing activities are concentrated in the south-east. The "hsuan tse" produced in Hsuancheng and Tsinhsien is of high repute, and was a local tribute to the emperors from the days of the Tang Dynasty. In Wuyuan, which is situated at the extreme south of the province, "pi tse" and "Tsin fang" of fine quality are produced. Bamboo, the chief raw material required for hand-made paper, abounds on the adjacent hills, and as the supply is always plentiful, the number of paper factories increases at the slightest stimulus of trade.

"Thirty years ago some of the makers began to experiment with "hsuan tse" and succeeded in producing a tough white paper of such quality as to easily pass for the genuine "hsuan tse" from Hsuancheng and Tsinhsien. The only drawback was the labor required, which added seriously to the cost of manufacture and after repeated efforts to overcome this difficulty they at last gave up the attempt. Today only "pi tse" and "tsin fang" are produced in Wuyuan, and production and consumption vary considerably every year.

"Pi tse" or Skin-paper - The character "pi" means skin or any thin outer covering. "Pi tse" is usually white and tough, rather fibrous, and not uniform in thickness. It presents a very irregular surface and is rough to the touch. This paper is mostly made in Yutan and Yuankow, both small districts attached to Wuyuan, but the industry is not conducted on a large scale in factories and is in reality a cottage industry. In Yutan there are over a hundred families engaged in such work, each family being a manufacturing unit. Of these about a dozen have comparatively large capital behind them, and are able to furnish better grades of "pi tse." In Yuankow there are in all only about ten families so engaged.

"Tsin fang" - This paper is manufactured chiefly in north. The raw material for making "pi tse" is the bark of the pomegranate, obtainable in the valleys of north-eastern Wuyuan. Highly elastic, it closely resembles China-grass or ramie in most of its properties, and the mountain folk find it a source of profit. Every year large quantity of bark is stripped and sold by the picul (80 catties) to the paper-makers, the price ranging from \$14 to \$20 depending upon the quality of the bark. There are usually three grades: red, black and "shi" or fine. The bark is made up into bundles and left to soak in water for a lengthy period, after which lime is mixed with it, followed by a long series of operations such as steaming, kneading, washing, bleaching, baking and folding.

The finished product may be paper of six kinds, according to the process employed - "yuan liao si pi", "tsen liao tiao lien", "Chi liao tiao lien", "ta lien ting liao", and "shiang pi." "Yuan liao si pi" is mostly used in making oil-paper for umbrellas, "tsen liao tiao lien" finds its chief customers among the lantern-makers, "ting liao" is used for making fuses for fireworks, and "shiang pi" is used for making labels on tea-boxes and other containers. In addition to the local demand Wuyuan "pi tse" commands a market in the adjacent provinces of Chekiang and Kiangsi.

are chiefly used for wrapping tobaccos and for binding of packing paintings. "Chang chung" and "chang tsien" are used for binding scrolls and for making colored paper.

"In regard to prices, "yuan liao si pi" is sold at \$15 per picul, while the other varieties are sold by the "tao," recent quotations being as follows: "tsen liao tiao lien," \$0.90; "chiao liao tiao lien," \$0.50; "ting liao," \$1.20; "ta lien," \$1.20; "shiang pi," \$0.90.

"During prosperous times the paper-makers in Yutan and Yuankow number 300, or even more. Taking the average annual production of each family at \$500, the total production would show a value of \$150,000. The last three years, however, has seen continued trouble as a result of Communist activity along the Kiangsi border, and Yutan being within the disturbed area, a great number of paper-makers had to stop work. At the same time the firework industry in Lohping, Kiangsi, declined rapidly owing to the same cause, and led to a heavy decrease in the demand for "ting liao." During 1932 the families actually commencing paper-making operations in Yutan and Yuankow numbered only about 130, and the average production of each came down to some \$300, making an annual total of \$39,000.

"Tsin fang" - This paper is manufactured chiefly in northern Huiyuan, the main producing districts being Shuangkwei, Shuifeng, Kweikwun, Takang, Shih-men-yao, Tung-yuan-kwan, Fung-ki-tai, Chengkiashan, Shan-yen-shan, Kwang-lien-kang, Chutsin, Peshan, Piwu, Hungyuan, Chenchio, Huchiu, and Chungkang. There are over 200 "tsao" or manufacturing tanks in operation, and the majority of the population depend upon paper-making for their subsistence.

"Raw material is furnished by the bamboo which grows in abundance in these hilly regions. The plant is cut when very young, and only those portions which have not become hardened and whose fibres can be easily separated are used for paper-making. The process of manufacture is essentially the same as for making "pi tao."

"Tsin fang," "chung fang," "chang chuang", and "chang tsien" are the four varieties into which this kind of paper is generally divided. The sizes and prices are as follows: "tsin fang," 2 ft. 3 in. x 1 ft. 3 in., \$18 to \$20 per picul of 24 "tao" (1 "tao" contains 196 sheets); "chung fang," 1 ft. 8 in. x 1 ft. 2 in., \$16 to \$19 per picul of 40 "tao"; "chang chuang" 3 ft. x 1 ft. 2 in. \$20 to \$24 per picul of 40 "tao"; "chang tsien", 3 ft. x 8 in., \$18 per picul of 40 "tao." The first two varieties are chiefly used for wrapping tobacco and for binding or pecking paintings. "Chang chuang" and "chang tsien" are used for binding scrolls and for making colored paper.

"For many years the best markets for these products have been found in Tunchi, Anhwei Province, and Hangchow and Yenchow, Chekiang Province. During the last two years there has been a great expansion of the Wuyuan market because Communist activities put a complete stop to the paper industry in the neighboring "hsien" of Teshing, Kiangsi. Dealers who used to buy from Teshing are now compelled to patronize local manufacturers, and consequently the demand has grown faster than the supply, although manufacturers are straining their producing capacity to the limit. The future of the industry is therefore rather bright. According to recent investigation, the annual output is about 8,000 piculs, and with an average of \$20 per picul, the total production is \$160,000 annually."

Edgar W. O'Harew
Assistant Trade Commissioner

Approved for Transmission:

A. Bland Calder
Assistant Commercial Attache

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Note: Prices are in Mexican dollars. Mex.\$1.00 equals approximately \$0.20 U. S. currency at present exchange rates in Shanghai.