
**From Yunnan to Xinjiang:
Governor Yang Zengxin
and his Dungan Generals**

Anthony Garnaut
(Pacific and Asian History, Australian National University)

Abstract

This paper examines in detail one story illustrative of the many historical connections between the provinces of China's western borderlands that were forged by Chinese-speaking Muslims, the ethno-religious community known in Turkic dialects as the 'Dungan' and in Mandarin Chinese as the 'Huizu' or 'Huihui'. This is the story of the Dungan troops utilised to great effect by Yang Zengxin 杨增新 (zi Dingchen 鼎臣), governor of Xinjiang province during the two decades after the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912. Yang Zengxin and the two Dungan generals who served consecutively under his authority in Kashgar, were all from Yunnan province, and their respective families had connections dating back to the time of the great Muslim rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century.

This essay sketches the career paths that brought these three people from Yunnan to positions of high authority in Xinjiang. An attempt is made to understand the relationship between Yang Zengxin and the Dungan troops that served loyally under him from both Chinese provincial and Dungan communal perspectives.

Introduction

Yang Zengxin was the first effective governor of Xinjiang in the Republican period, following the fall of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Under his governorship, which commenced in 1912 and concluded with his assassination in 1928, he established military control over Xinjiang under his own authority while maintaining formal submission to the central Republican government in Beijing. His military power was founded on the support he received from the Dungan, or Chinese-speaking Muslim, community of Xinjiang from whose ranks he raised the core divisions of his provincial army.

This paper traces the biographies of Yang Zengxin and his two leading military commanders, Ma Fuxing 马福兴 and Ma Shaowu 马绍武, who between 1915 and 1933 served consecutively in the highest-ranking military post in southern Xinjiang. Yang and the two Ma generals were all from southern Yunnan, and were further connected through a network of officials and Dungan religious leaders that had its centre in Hezhou 河州, Gansu. Their biographies provide insight into the social and bureaucratic connections that existed between Yunnan, Gansu and the newly established province of Xinjiang at the end of the Qing dynasty.

The Dungan

In this paper, I use the term ‘Dungan’ to refer to Chinese-speaking Muslims resident in Xinjiang. This is the conventional word by which Chinese-speaking Muslims are known in the Turkic languages of Central Asia, and distinguishes this ethno-religious community from both non-Muslim Chinese and from Turkic-speaking Muslims. In order to avoid causing confusion with the established literature, I use the terms ‘Chinese-speaking Muslims’ or ‘Chinese Muslims’ for Dungan outside of Xinjiang.¹ Academic research to date on Chinese-speaking Muslims has focused on the Chineseness of this Muslim community, or on the tensions and identities between the Islamic and Chinese aspects of their traditions.² Detailed interrogation has been

¹ In this article, Gansu is defined according to its Qing dynasty borders, which remained largely unchanged into the mid-1920s. I have referred to all Muslims from Gansu as Chinese-speaking Muslims, when in fact the Muslims of Gansu include considerable numbers of Turkic-speaking Salars and Monguor-speakers classified by PRC ethnographers as the Dongxiang nationality.

² The two standard English-language academic works on Chinese Muslims are Gladney, 1996, and Lipman, 1997: the book is from 1997. For other general works, see also Ben-Dor Benite, 2005, and Allès, 2005.

mounted of the Chinese ethnonyms applied to them such as ‘Muslim’ (*Huihui* 回回) or ‘Chinese Muslim’ (*Hanhui* 汉回), as distinct from the turban-wearing Turkic Muslims (*Chanhui* 缠回) and the contemporary Communist ethnic marker of the ‘Hui Nationality’ (*Huizu* 回族). While their culture and language cannot be fully understood without reference to Chinese traditions, an equally rich field of interrogation is the tensions and commonalities between Chinese-speaking Muslims and their Turkic-speaking coreligionists in Central Asia, particularly in the Xinjiang region or East Turkistan. Here, Chinese-speaking Muslims are commonly known in Turkic dialects as the *Dungan* people (Uyghur Turkic *Dungan/Tungan*, Chinese *Dong’gan* 东干), a name that Chinese-speaking Muslims have at times used to refer to themselves.³

Xinjiang is the natural site to mount an academic interrogation of the Turkic side of Chinese-Muslims, something which has not been attempted in a comprehensive manner to date and will be attempted here in only one specific context. I acknowledge the existence of a rich Turkic perspective on the Chinese-speaking Muslims by referring to them following their Turkic name as the Dungan community; in order to limit confusion with the established academic literature, I also use the term ‘Chinese-speaking Muslims’ to refer to members of the group outside of Xinjiang, such as in Gansu and Yunnan. By mapping one recent chapter in the history of their relationship with Xinjiang province, I hope to help build up a multi-dimensional view of Chinese-speaking Muslims as a distinct Muslim community that has emerged out of negotiation between primarily the Turkic and Chinese cultural worlds.

Dungan troops and the Qing pacification of Xinjiang

The name Xinjiang 新疆 literally means ‘New Dominion’, reflecting both its geographic distance from the centre of the Chinese world and its historical status as the last of the five large ethnically-distinct regions to be incorporated into the Qing empire, during the reign of the Qianlong emperor (1735-1794). Prior to the great Muslim rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century, a dual system of a steppe-based military bureaucracy under the command of the Ili general and Islamic civil administration under the *beg* system (Turkic nobility). A major transformation in Xinjiang governance came about after the pacification of the great Muslim rebellion by the Qing state, when the *beg* system was replaced by Chinese provincial rule,

³ See Appendix A.

radically reducing the scope of native Turkic power in the region. After the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1912, the provincial system was further extended when the military authority of the Ili general was made subordinate to the authority of the provincial governor based in Ürümchi (Ch. Dihua 迪化).

From the time of the initial Qing conquest through to the end of the Republican period, Dungan people played an important role in the administration of the Xinjiang region. Their political influence reached its zenith under the Republican provincial administration of Yang Zengxin. Yang recruited Dungan troops at the onset of the Republican revolution in 1911, and used them to great effect in establishing his rule over the province. Dungan military commanders, supported by predominantly Dungan troops, served loyally under Yang in the main military posts in southern Xinjiang. After Yang's death in 1928, Dungan armies continued to be the most powerful military faction in southern Xinjiang until their power was curtailed by the new governor Sheng Shicai 盛世才, acting with Soviet support.

The military strength of the Dungan community in Republican Xinjiang is remarkable considering that they formed only a few percent of the population of the region as a whole. However, when placed against the historical role played by Chinese-speaking Muslims in the military history of western China, the status achieved by Dungan military commanders under Yang Zengxin is not entirely anomalous.

Since the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), Chinese-speaking Muslims had played a crucial role in negotiating both trade and military relations across the Chinese ethnic frontier.⁴ This role was most pronounced in Gansu province, which during the Ming dynasty (1366-1643) was a frontier zone of the Chinese Ming empire bordering on Tibetan, Mongol and Turkic lands. For most of the duration of the Qing dynasty, the strategic status of Gansu was reduced to that of an internal corridor linking the different ethnic regions of one empire, though Dungan people continued to play a prominent

⁴ Lipman discusses the special status of Chinese-speaking Muslims at the periphery of Chinese empire in the case of late-Qing and Republican Gansu in Lipman, 1997; Atwill, 2005, discusses similar issues in the more specific context of Yunnan province at the time of the great Muslim rebellion (1856-1877).

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military and economic role at the frontiers of Chinese settlement, including in Xinjiang.⁵

Until the nineteenth century, the Qing military system was dominated by a professional military class drawn in large part from the Manchu, Mongol and Chinese families that participated in the establishment of the empire in the seventeenth century. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing military system all but collapsed after it proved impotent in the face of both European powers in the two Opium Wars and a series of internal rebellions, including the Taiping movement which gained control of much of central and southern China and half of the population of the Qing empire.⁶ The solution that the Qing state found to restore order was to lend its support to local, ethnically-Chinese militia leaders, most famously through the private army established by a Chinese official from Hunan province named Zeng Guofan 曾国藩, which resisted and eventually destroyed the Taiping armies.

While the Qing state was devoting its resources to resisting the Taiping movement, Qing authority broke down in many parts of the empire and was replaced by the authority of local militia groups. In the provinces of Yunnan and Shaanxi, tensions between Muslim and Han Chinese militias lead to communitarian violence, and eventually took the form of a series of loosely-connected Muslim rebel movements that I refer to in this article as the great Muslim rebellion of the nineteenth century. Widespread Muslim rebellion occurred in Yunnan (1856-1873), Shaanxi province (1862-1864), Gansu (1864-1874) and Xinjiang (1864-1877).

⁵ In the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), Dungan were often commissioned as border guards to regulate trade and movements of armed men between the Ming empire and the bordering Tibetan, Mongol and Turkic territories, and at least by the end of the dynasty had established such an existence along much of the western border of the Sinophone lands. Large Dungan communities were established in cities such as Suzhou 肃州 and Ganzhou 甘州 in the far west of Gansu, and from here plied their trade throughout Turkistan, and travelled as pilgrims and students to the religious centres of Kashgaria. At the opening of the Qing dynasty Dungan from these towns were at the centre of a rebellion against the newly established Qing state, which was closely linked to the authority of the Turkic king of Hami. See Yang Huaizhong, 2003, pp. 925-32. This was the first of three large scale Dungan rebellions staged in Gansu province during the Qing dynasty, the latter two taking place in 1781-84 and 1864-74.

⁶ The Christian (or Southern Baptist-inspired) Taiping movement (1851-1864) began in Guangxi in southwest China and established its capital in Nanjing or 'New Jerusalem'. Other major rebellions of the same period were those of the Nian Army 捻军 in central China (1851-1868), of the Miao 苗 in Guangxi (1855-1873), and the great Muslim rebellion discussed in the main text below.

The earliest outbreaks of Muslim rebellion in Yunnan grew out of disputes over mining rights. These disputes escalated into widespread communitarian violence between Chinese-speaking Muslims and Han Chinese, as the weakened Qing state proved ineffectual in arbitrating local conflicts.⁷ Similar violent episodes erupted in Shaanxi province, where armed clashes between Han and Sinophone Muslim militias evolved into a full-scale Muslim revolt against Qing authority in 1862.⁸ The Muslim rebels of Shaanxi were passively supported by their co-religionists in Gansu, who were drawn into the revolt in 1864. At this time, the Muslim rebellion also spread into Xinjiang through insurrections mounted by the Chinese-speaking Muslim, or Dungan, troops stationed within the Qing garrisons at Kucha (Ch. Kuche 库车), Ürümchi, Yarkand (Ch. Shache 莎车) and Kashgar (Ch. Kashi 喀什). After the first outbreak of Dungan insurrection in Xinjiang, several months transpired before the first insurrection movement led by Turkic Muslims took place.⁹

As the trajectory of the outbreak of rebellion was from Yunnan through to Xinjiang, the Qing pacification of the rebellion also proceeded from Yunnan into Shaanxi, Gansu and eventually Xinjiang, with Chinese-speaking Muslims again leading the way in the Qing pacification campaign. In 1862, a number of Sinophone Muslim rebel leaders in Yunnan were given senior military titles by the Qing state, and these people brought a semblance of Qing control over the province.¹⁰ In Gansu, the centre of the rebellion in the Northwest from 1862, a similar policy was pursued with some success.¹¹

⁷ In 1855, the Taiping Kingdom was at the height of its power to the north of Yunnan, consuming the military energies of a Qing state that was already sapped by its defeat at the hands of aggressive European imperial forces. To the south of Yunnan, these same forces were making their presence felt, with Rangoon annexed by the British in 1852, and Saigon annexed by the French in 1859.

⁸ See, for example, Ouyang Yuefeng, 1990.

⁹ The uprisings in these four districts took place in June and July of 1864. The first uprising where Turkic Muslims played the leading roles was in Khotan (Ch. Hetian 和田) in September, 1864. See Kim Hodong, 2004, pp. 37-71.

¹⁰ These leading figures being Ma Rulong and Ma Dexin 马德新. The latter had taught Ma Rulong for a brief period upon his return to Yunnan in 1849 after performing the Hajj. See Yao Guoliang, 2000, p. 297; Atwill, 2005.

¹¹ Ma Hualong, the Muslim leader and shaykh of the Jahriyya order based in Jinji Pu (now in Wuzhong, Ningxia), was enlisted into the Qing military by the Qing general Mutushan in 1865 and bequeathed the title *Chaoqing* 朝清 ('Faces the Qing'), though the Qing general later given charge of pacifying the Muslim rebellion, Zuo Zongtang, rejected Ma Hualong's submission as fake. Ma Rulong's name was also a title bequeathed by the Qing state upon .

Some years later, the Qing general Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠 (1812-1885), brought his Hunanese army, battle-hardened after successful campaigns waged against the armies of the Taiping and Nian rebels, to attack the Chinese Muslim armies in Gansu. He met with limited success in eastern Gansu until he enlisted the support of local rebel leaders from Gansu, including both Muslim such as Li Decang 李得仓 and non-Muslims such as Dong Fuxiang 董福祥.¹² Their support was crucial in Zuo Zongtang's victory over the most powerful of the Chinese Muslim rebel leaders named Ma Hualong 马化龙, based in the Ningxia district.¹³ After Zuo Zongtang secured this victory, the next most powerful Chinese Muslim rebel leader surrendered to the Qing state. Chinese Muslim troop divisions then played a front-line role in the steady march of Zuo Zongtang's campaign to Kashgar.¹⁴

The role played by Chinese-speaking Muslims in the pacification of the great Muslim rebellion had important ramifications for the Qing order that was then established in the northwest provinces of Gansu and Xinjiang, in the closing decades of the Qing dynasty. The connections between Yunnan, Gansu and Xinjiang established during the military campaigns were institutionalised into the post-rebellion administration established in the Northwest by Zuo Zongtang. This was reflected in the rotation of officials between the three provinces, with Gansu in particular serving as a training centre for officials posted to Xinjiang.¹⁵ The Gansu provincial capital of Lanzhou became the logistics centre for military operations through the

¹² This non-Muslim rebel incorporated into Zuo Zongtang's army was Dong Fuxiang, whose biography is included in the *Qingshi gao* (Draft official history of the Qing). Dong was not Muslim but the structure of his rebel militia, based in forts built around his ancestral village, resembled in many ways the structure of the Dungan rebel armies in Gansu, and he was familiar with the Muslim rebel groups.

¹³ Ma Hualong's leadership status was founded on his position as shaykh of the Jahriyya religious order, the same lineage-based Islamic order (Ch. *menhuan* 门宦) to which the Dungan military commander Ma Shaowu belonged.

¹⁴ There is limited academic work in English or Chinese on the involvement of Dungsans on the side of the Qing state in Zuo Zongtang's Northwestern campaign. An account of the Dungan involvement in the campaign that reflects the Dungan oral history tradition in Changji, the main Dungan centre in the Ürümqi district, is found in Han Bin, 1995. A biography has been compiled of Cui Wei, one of the Shaanxi Muslim leaders who surrendered to the Qing in 1872; see Ma Guoqiang, 1995.

¹⁵ The Chinese provincial administration system employed by the Qing state in China Proper continued the Ming practice of requiring officials to serve outside of their home province. The rotation of officials between Yunnan, Gansu and Xinjiang is documented in the biographies of many prominent Chinese officials of the nineteenth century, including such notable officials as Lin Zexu 林则徐.

Northwest, a role that has been retained by the Chinese military to this date. In the Republican period, after the collapse of the Qing bureaucratic system and in the absence of effective new forms of national ties, the administrative and military connections between the three provinces of Xinjiang, Gansu and Yunnan established in the lifetime of Zuo Zongtang were maintained largely through informal connections between the Sinophone Muslim communities that lived, and the Qing officials that served, in the three provinces.

A sketch of the career of Yang Zengxin¹⁶

Yang Zengxin was governor of Xinjiang from 1912 to 1928, when he was assassinated by one of his underlings.¹⁷ Initially as adviser to the last Qing governor, Yuan Dahua 袁大化, and then as governor in his own right, he was the architect of the strategy to recruit Dungan troops to a central position in the military administration of Xinjiang.

The early years of Yang's biography fit a template for young Han officials who rose rapidly in rank in the last decades of the Qing. He was born in 1864 to a lineage of distinguished scholar-officials in the town of Mengzi, southern Yunnan. His paternal grandfather won the high honour of being nominated to sit the metropolitan exams (*gongsheng* 贡生). His father was a graduate of the provincial exams (*juren* 举人), and ran a school in Chuxiong prefecture in southern Yunnan. Yang Zengxin passed the provincial military exams in 1888, and the following year passed the metropolitan exams (*jinshi* 进士).¹⁸

Yang's examination success marked him out as a young official of promise, and he was recommended to the Gansu provincial government. His first official appointment was as paymaster in the provincial treasury in Lanzhou. In 1894, he returned to Yunnan to mourn the death of his father. The following year, while on his way back to Gansu to take up his first appointment as a county magistrate, a local rebellion broke out amongst the

¹⁶ See Appendix B.

¹⁷ Yang Zengxin was assassinated by a clique led by the head of the Xinjiang foreign affairs bureau, Fan Yaonan 范尧南. Jin Shuren 金树仁 apprehended the clique and subsequently succeeded Yang Zengxin as governor. See Chen Feng, 'Jin Shuren zhu Xin neimu huiyi pianduan,' Cultural History Research Committee of Xinjiang CNPCC, 1979-80, vol. 2. Yang's assassination marked the eclipse of Britain's influence in Xinjiang by the Soviet Union, Britain having previously been the dominant foreign power in Xinjiang for a decade since the Russian Revolution of 1917.

¹⁸ I have tended to follow the article on Yang Zengxin in Mengzi Gazetteer Compilation Committee, 1995, *op. cit.*; Boorman, 1967, gives a year later for Yang Zengxin's successive degrees.

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Muslims of the Hezhou and Huangzhong 湟中 districts of southern Gansu. He was commissioned with the temporary task of dissuading the Muslims of eastern Gansu from making common cause with their co-religionists in the south of the province, a task which he carried out with distinction, and he was rewarded with the important post of district magistrate of Hezhou.¹⁹

The Hezhou district is the area of Gansu with the most concentrated Muslim population and the living centre of many of the Islamic religious orders (Ch. *menhuan* 门宦),²⁰ In the great Muslim rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century, the main Muslim armies in Gansu were generally organised through the institutional structures of these religious orders. Consequently, Hezhou became one of the leading Muslim military centres during the rebellion, and retained this role after the pacification under the leadership of a former-rebel leader who had surrendered to the Qing state.²¹

The office of district magistrate involved maintaining close relations with important Muslim military and religious leaders, and arbitrating between different factions of the Muslim religious orders in what were often volatile sectarian disputes. Yang earned himself a reputation as a capable manager of the affairs of the Chinese-speaking Muslims of Gansu, something for which few late-Qing officials won distinction. He then served as private secretary to the governor-general of Shaanxi-Gansu in Xi'an. He was in Xi'an in 1901 when the Qing imperial court sought refuge there while Beijing was under military occupation by the Foreign Powers at the tail-end of the Boxer crisis. Gansu troops, predominantly Muslims under the authority of Dong Fuxiang, the non-Muslim commander of the Gansu military region (*tidu* 提督), were amongst the most effective of the troops loyal to the Qing imperial court, and one of the Muslim commanders under Dong Fuxiang was appointed as the head of the special guard that accompanied the Qing imperial court on its retreat from Beijing to Xi'an. Yang Zengxin is likely to have played an instrumental role in recruiting the Gansu troops who served under Dong Fuxiang during the Boxer crisis.

Yang's career fortunes continued to rise until in 1907 a factional change in the office of the governor-general of Shaanxi-Gansu forced him to seek employment elsewhere. Yang moved to Xinjiang, where he was recommended to the provincial governor by the head of the Xinjiang

¹⁹ Yang Zengxin is likely to have met with the Jahriyya leader Ma Yuanzhang at this time. See Ma Guobing, 2004, p. 174.

²⁰ The standard description of the *menhuan* of Gansu remains Ma Tong, 1983.

²¹ Namely Ma Zhan'ao 马占鳌; see Lipman, 1997.

provincial treasury, under whom he had previously served during his first official appointment in Gansu. In 1908, he was made circuit commissioner (*daoyin* 道尹) of Aqsu 阿克苏, and two years later was promoted to commissioner of judicial affairs (*jianti fashi* 兼提法使) in Ürümchi, the seat of the Xinjiang provincial administration.

The Wuchang uprising that marked the beginning of the Chinese Republican revolution took place on October 14, 1911.²² Yang found his big break in the transformation of Xinjiang politics that followed the Wuchang uprising. In December, a revolutionary uprising took place in Ürümchi, led by a group of Han Chinese with secret society connections. The incumbent governor, Yuan Dahua, suppressed this uprising but further insurrections followed. In January 1912, a mutiny took place in the garrison of the Ili general (Ch. *Yili jiangjun* 伊犁将军), led by a faction of military officers who proclaimed their sympathy with the revolutionary cause. The incumbent Ili general was killed, and replaced by a banner officer who was willing to support the young officers. The new Ili general declared his independence from the Qing, and a Republican government was established in the northern districts of Xinjiang.

The success of the revolutionary officers in Ili inspired a fever of revolutionary activity throughout the Xinjiang region, including successful military coups led by Han secret society members in a number of towns in southern Xinjiang. The Ürümchi government was also faced with the threat of Russian intervention, such as actually took place in Kashgar in May with the arrival there of 700 Cossack troops. On another front, a large uprising took place in Qumul under the Turkic leader Tömür Khälphä, initially under the sanction of the Hami prince, which drew widespread support from the Turkic Muslims of the Qumul (Ch. Hami 哈密) and Turpan (Ch. Tulufan 吐鲁番) districts.

At the time of the Wuchang uprising, the military troops under the direct control of the incumbent governor Yuan Dahua were predominantly the aged and poorly disciplined remnants of the Hunan armies brought to Xinjiang in the 1870s by Zuo Zongtang. It quickly became apparent that these troops alone would not be able to control the escalating unrest. Yuan consulted Yang Zengxin, who advised that a number of divisions of Dungan troops be raised. With the assistance of a Dungan fellow provincial of Yang's, an ex-

²² This follows the account of Ma Fushou in Yu Junsheng, ed., 1998, vol. 1, pp. 67-74; Ma Fushou's father served as commander of one of the three divisions under Ma Fuxing. See also Skrine, 1926, pp. 173-187.

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military official named Ma Fuxing, three divisions of Dungan troops were raised from the Dungan mosque-based communities around Ürümchi. These were given the responsibility of maintaining order in Ürümchi, under the command of Ma Fuxing. Yuan sent his regular forces to fight the rebel government in Ili, which were annihilated. Yuan ordered that the Dungan troops recruited by Yang Zengxin be sent to Ili, but the Dungan troops would only act on Yang Zengxin's orders, and Yang stalled for time.

Stalling for time was a strategy adopted by many officials who commanded the personal loyalties of troops in the months after the Wuchang uprising, as they waited to see which way the cards would fall in the struggle between the Qing imperial court, the modernised section of the Qing army and the revolutionaries. When the emperor finally abdicated in March 1912, power tended to fall into the hands of such officials. Yang Zengxin claimed that he needed more time to equip his new Dungan troops before sending them off to Ili, and this signalled the beginning of a show of strength between Yang and Yuan Dahua. In June, after Ma Fuxing recruited yet more Dungan troops to augment Yang's claims to the governorship, Yuan graciously retired from public office, and Yang's position as governor was duly ratified by the President of the Republic, Yuan Shikai 袁世凯.

Yang then turned to face the many remaining armed groups that stood opposed to his provincial government based in Ürümchi. Yang came to an agreement with key members of the Ili government, giving them important posts in southern Xinjiang, while less agreeable leaders were assassinated through the agency of Yang's Dungan connections within the army of the Ili government. The post of Ili general was dissolved, and the northern districts incorporated into the Ürümchi-based provincial administration. He then moved steadily to bring southern Xinjiang under his personal control. He sent his new divisions of Dungan and Han troops against the rebel army of Tömür Khälphä in Qumul, capturing Tömür in February 1913. At the same time, he filled up the important official posts in Xinjiang with family members and fellow provincials, and steadily increased the number of districts in which his Dungan troops were the main effective fighting force. A Dungan named Ma Shaowu was appointed district magistrate of Aqsu in 1913, and then of Kashgar in 1915. In 1916, Ma Fuxing was given the most senior military post in southern Xinjiang, as circuit commander (*daotai* 道台) of Kashgar. This was the beginning of the two decades (1916-1937) during which effective military power in southern Xinjiang lay in the hands of Dungan military leaders.

Yang Zengxin on the recruitment of Dungan troops²³

The document that opens the first published selection of Yang Zengxin's official correspondence presents Yang's own defence of his policy of employing Dungan troops.²⁴ It is titled 'Report on the reasons for raising and employing Dungan troops,' and dated February 12, 1913.²⁵ After surveying the Dungan and Han divisions that were raised in the aftermath of the Wuchang uprising, he explains the difficulties involved in recruiting Han troops in Xinjiang (Han Chinese in Xinjiang lived as temporary migrants without family roots, and so were hard to control). He takes pains to state that Han divisions still far outnumbered Dungan divisions, a statement that may have been true on paper, though most of these Han divisions had long since ceased to exist as fighting units. He then lists six arguments in support of his deployment of Dungan troops.

The first two arguments relate to the contingent demands for effective military troops created by the onset of the Republican revolution. The last three are rhetorical arguments, justifying the use of non-Han troops in terms of the ideals of freedom of religion and racial equality enshrined in the Republican constitution. The remaining argument is the one most pertinent to the special status of Dungan in history of Northwest statecraft. Yang writes:

The third reason is that at the time that Turkic Muslims were waging rebellion in the early years of the Guangxu reign, the 'five elite divisions' that governor general Liu Jintang led out of the Pass were all Dungan troops [*Hui dui* 回队]. Back then, Dungan military commanders such as Cui Wei and Hua Dacai were surrendered troops who had been redeployed. These are undoubtedly cases of pawns who went on to achieve great merit. When Cen Shuying was in charge of military affairs in Yunnan, the Muslim troops and

²³ An outline of relevant Chinese and English-language sources is given in Appendix B.

²⁴ See Appendix A.

²⁵ The main fuel for these rumours were events in Gansu province where, for much of the first decade of the Republic, the Han governor Zhang Guangjian fended off a push by an alliance of Muslim district commanders in Gansu to have a Muslim installed as governor. This alliance was initially led by Ma Anliang, whose father was the second major Muslim leader during the rebellion of the mid-nineteenth century to surrender to the Qing. After Ma Anliang's death in 1919, the push was led by Ma Fuxiang, a graduate of the provincial military examinations who had risen up the official ranks under Dong Fuxiang. The push came to a head at the end of 1920, when Ma Fuxiang backed down in favour of one of the Han district commanders of Gansu, Lu Hongtao, and accepted a promotion from his existing post of district commander of Ningxia to become governor of Suiyuan.

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generals that he used included many rebels, and it was because of them that the Muslim rebellion in Yunnan was pacified. These are examples to show that Muslim troops can be used effectively even while Muslim uprisings are still in progress. What is more, since the establishment of the Republic, Dungan have demonstrated not the slightest hint of errant behaviour to suggest that they may prove to be unreliable.²⁶

Liu Jintang 刘锦棠 was the senior field commander under Zuo Zongtang, and the inaugural governor of the provincial administration established in Xinjiang after the pacification of the rebellion. Cui Wei 崔伟 and Hua Decai 华德才 each led one of the 'Eighteen Shaanxi Divisions' of rebellious Muslim troops that, after retreating from Shaanxi, continued to fight the Qing in Gansu. Of the eighteen divisional leaders of these divisions, six were killed, eleven including Cui Wei and Hua Decai surrendered to the Qing and one, Bai Yanhu, found sanctuary in the Russian empire. After their surrender, Cui Wei and Hua Decai spearheaded the Qing attack of many of the fortified towns of eastern and southern Xinjiang. Their example was given by Yang to demonstrate that Dungan troops could be used to great effect by capable Han leaders.

The main concern with using Dungan troops was their questionable loyalty, and commanding Dungan troops certainly required an effective understanding of the issues that provoked or inspired Dungan to rebel. The administration established by Zuo Zongtang in the Northwest had an institutional understanding of Chinese Muslim issues, well demonstrated by officials such as Dong Fuxiang and Yang Zengxin who had each held senior posts in predominantly Muslim areas of Gansu. Yang's authority over his Dungan troops was premised on the great energies he expended in maintaining close relations with Dungan religious leaders. He would go out of his way to pay them his respects on religious festivals, and consulted with them widely on policies that had a bearing on religious activities. His testimony on the reliability of his Dungan troops held true for the duration of his provincial leadership, with the partial exception of the incident described below that took place in 1924.

Biographies of two Dungan generals

In 1916, Yang Zengxin appointed Ma Fuxing as circuit commissioner of Kashgar, the highest-ranking military post in southern Xinjiang. In 1924,

²⁶ Yang Zengxin, 1921-24, vol. 1.

Yang suspected Ma Fuxing of harbouring disloyal thoughts, and commissioned a senior civil official, another Dungan by the name of Ma Shaowu, to arrest the suspected traitor. Ma Shaowu successfully executed this commission, and then succeeded to Ma Fuxing's post in Kashgar. Ma Shaowu was the most powerful military official in southern Xinjiang at the time of Yang's death in 1928. His power was curtailed by events surrounding the establishment of the East Turkistan Republic in Kashgar, and he was assassinated on the orders of Sheng Shicai in 1937.

Biographic materials on these two Dungan military commanders are scarce, particularly relating to their early careers and the sources of their high standing amongst Dungan in Xinjiang. I will attempt here to provide an outline of the background and official careers of the two Ma generals up until 1924, based largely on biographic sources from Yunnan and anecdotes found in the biographic literature produced by one of the Chinese Muslim religious orders.

Ma Fuxing (1864-1924)²⁷

Ma Fuxing was Yunnanese, like many of the senior officials of Yang Zengxin's provincial administration. He was born in Huilong village 回笼村, near the city of Lin'an 临安 in southern Yunnan, the first city up the Red River 红河 valley from Yang's hometown of Mengzi 蒙自. In addition to shared geographic ties, the two appear also to have been fellow graduates (*tongnian* 同年) of the same year of the Yunnan military examinations, and so shared one of the most important forms of personal ties between members of the Chinese imperial bureaucracy.²⁸ His first appointment was as a divisional commander of the garrison (*shouying shoubei* 守营守备) at Dali 大理, and he was soon promoted to the rank of adjutant general (*canjiang* 参将) under the Yunnan governor in Kunming 昆明. In 1901, he was sent to Xi'an to join the guard of the Qing imperial court, possibly on the recommendation of Yang Zengxin who was then serving as private secretary to the governor-general of Shaanxi-Gansu based in Xi'an.²⁹ His next post

²⁷ This account of Ma Fuxing's early career is drawn from his biography in the most recent gazetteer of his home county in Yunnan, though this source does not mention his ancestry; Jianshui Gazetteer Compilation Committee, 1994, pp. 759-60.

²⁸ The doubt arises from the various years between 1888 and 1890 being given for their candidature. The norm in the Qing dynasty was for provincial exams to be held every three years, which would render irrelevant the discrepancies in the dates, though there may have been an exceptional exam schedule implemented in the wake of the Muslim rebellion.

²⁹ One source says that he served under Ma Fulu 马福祿, who was killed in action during the siege of the Legations in 1901; Jianshui Gazetteer Compilation Committee, 1994, p. 759. Ma

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was as adjutant general to the provincial governor of Henan. After he was in this post for several years, he was involved in a violent dispute with another official, and was sentenced to exile in Xinjiang in 1907.³⁰

In Xinjiang he found employment with the trading companies run there by Dungan from Yunnan. He is reported to have had some business interactions with Yang Zengxin after the latter took up an official post in Ürümchi in 1910, in relation to a program to develop a new tract of agricultural land. At the close of 1911, he was recruited by Yang Zengxin to serve as commanding officer of three divisions of Dungan troops that he helped recruit from the Dungan mosque-based communities of the Ürümchi district. He led these divisions under the personal authority of Yang Zengxin, acting effectively as the head of Yang's private guard, until Yang took over as governor in 1912.³¹

Ma Fuxing continued to serve Yang loyally, first in securing Yang's control over the Ürümchi district, and later leading his Dungan divisions against the Republican government established in Ili. His reputation for efficiency and ruthlessness was an important factor in convincing the Ili government to recognise Yang as the prevailing authority in all of Xinjiang. In recognition of his success in Ili, Ma Fuxing was appointed district commander (*titai* 提台) of Ürümchi in 1913, and was promoted to circuit commander (*daotai* 道台) of Kashgar in 1916. In the latter post, his executive powers included negotiating directly with the Russian and British consuls stationed there. For the next eight years he was the most powerful official in southern Xinjiang, and the most powerful military commander under Yang's authority.

In 1924, Yang intercepted correspondence between Ma Fuxing and one of the leaders of the military factions of China proper that led him to suspect the loyalty of his most senior military commander.³² Yang recalled the

Fulu's younger brother, Ma Fuxiang, who in the early years of the Republic became one of the most powerful of the Gansu Muslim military commanders in Gansu. An account of Ma Fuxiang's career is given in Lipman, 1997, pp. 167-186.

³⁰ The Jianshui gazetteer account says that he beat up the derelict son of the Henan provincial governor; Jianshui Gazetteer Compilation Committee, 1994, p. 759.

³¹ A rich account of Ma Fuxing's role in the struggle between Yang Zengxin and Yuan Dahua is given by Ma Fushou: 'At the time of the stand off between the incumbent governor Yuan and Yang Zengxin, Ma Fuxing led an overnight drive to enlist the support of all the young Dungan men in Ürümchi, who turned out on the streets in a show of support for Yang.' Ma Fushou, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

³² The factional dealings that lay behind the fallout between Yang Zengxin and Ma Fuxing are variously explained in British and Chinese sources as involving either the Soviets or Cao Gun, the president of China and head of the Zhili military clique, with whom Ma Fuxing had a

circuit commissioner of Uch Turpan (Ch. *Wushi* 乌什), Ma Shaowu, to Ürümchi for consultations on how to deal with the threat posed by Ma Fuxing.

Ma Shaowu (1874?-1937)³³

Ma Shaowu was born into a prominent religious family in southern Yunnan. He was a direct descendant of the founder of the Jahriyya order, Ma Mingxin 马明心, and the nephew of Ma Yuanzhang 马元章, who was the pre-eminent shaykh of the order during the early years of the Republic. He passed the military exams in the twilight years of the Qing dynasty. He appears not to have held office under the Qing imperial system, partly because he was a decade younger than both Ma Fuxing and Yang Zengxin.³⁴ He left his home province in the closing years of the Qing dynasty, and travelled initially to Gansu before continuing on to Xinjiang, where he was recommended to Yang Zengxin through his family's religious connections.³⁵ He served as county magistrate of Kucha in 1913, and then as district magistrate of Kashgar New City (Ch. Shule 疏勒) in 1915. In the following year, conflict with the circuit commander of Kashgar, Ma Fuxing, led to his reappointment as district magistrate of Uch Turpan.

In 1924, he was recalled to Ürümchi by Yang Zengxin to discuss how to deal with Ma Fuxing. He was commissioned to carry out Ma Fuxing's arrest, supported by a large body of Han and Dungan troops. The latter were under

family connection. Both these explanations are substantial, though the key player was actually 'the Christian general' Feng Yuxiang 冯玉祥, as argued in the convincing account of the episode given by Luo Shaowen, 1995. As presented by Luo, Feng Yuxiang hoped to gain the support of Ma Fuxing in ousting Yang Zengxin and establishing himself as the dominant political figure in northwest China.

³³ There are many sources relating to Ma Shaowu's career after 1924, though very little on his family background or early career. A brief biography is given in Ma Guobing, 2004, pp. 177-78. Ma Shaowu's son and daughter-in-law currently reside in Ürümchi, and the latter informed me in 2006 that a biography of Ma Shaowu was currently being compiled in Kashgar, though I have been unable to find any information on research relating to Ma Shaowu being carried out in southern Xinjiang.

³⁴ He may have been born and passed the examinations in Guizhou, where some of his family members settled after fleeing successively from Talang and Donggou during the Muslim rebellions. The military examination system had become outmoded by 1905, when new-style army schools became widespread and most up and coming officers travelled to Japan to study.

³⁵ The direct recommendation probably came through Jin Yunlun 金云仑, the representative (Ar. *ra'īs*) of Ma Yuanzhang in the Turpan district, who assisted Yang Zengxin in the battle against the Qumul leader Tömür Khälphä in 1913, and is mentioned in Yang Zengxin's correspondence in relation to the suppression of the Tömür revolt; Tan Wutie and Fu Yu, 1985, p. 69.

the direct command of Ma Shaowu, and included two thousand Dungan troops newly-recruited from the Jahriyya mosque-based communities of the Turpan, Yanqi and Shanshan districts. Ma Shaowu carried out his commission with great skill, leading a small advanced troop on a swift overnight march from Atush to Kashgar, where, he surprised Ma Fuxing at his private residence and arrested him with barely a struggle.³⁶ The following day, acting on the telegraphed instructions of Yang Zengxin, he executed Ma Fuxing and placed his corpse on public display for three days. He then moved into Ma Fuxing's former position as the most powerful military figure in southern Xinjiang.³⁷ The motivation commonly given to explain Ma Shaowu's willingness to support Yang Zengxin against a fellow Dungan is that, in addition to regular political jealousies, the two were divided by a long-standing family feud.³⁸ The most detailed Chinese account of the incident explains that Ma Shaowu executed Ma Fuxing, rather than allowing him to retire, in part due to fear that Ma Fuxing would later cause trouble, and in part because of enmity between them stemming from their respective membership of the New and Old religious factions.³⁹

Yang Zengxin's familiarity with Dungan politics

The narrative recounted thus far of Yang Zengxin and his leading Dungan military commanders can be gleaned from published accounts provided by various Chinese and British officials who were involved in different capacities with Yang Zengxin's provincial administration. However, these sources are vague about the origins of Ma Fuxing and Ma Shaowu, and confuse the nature of the animosity between the two. These sources also do not discuss the complicated and long-standing relationship that existed in southern Yunnan prior to the Republican revolution between the families of Yang Zengxin and his two leading Dungan military commanders. A closer examination of early biographic material from Yunnan allows for a more precise explanation of the origins of the relationship between Yang Zengxin and the two Ma generals, and provides a more specific explanation of the source of the long-standing animosity between the latter two.

³⁶ A rich account of the apprehension and execution of Ma Fuxing is given in a memoir by Zhang Ziqing, the chief of staff of the army sent to arrest Ma Fuxing, see Zhang Ziqing, pp. 87-91.

³⁷ A report in the India Office archives on the execution of Ma Fuxing was filed by the British consul in Kashgar, C.P. Skrine: "Chinese Turkestan: overthrow of Ma Titai, the General Officer Commanding, Kashgar, 9 Mar 1924-15 Jul 1924", IOR/L/PS/11/248, item P 2742/1924.

³⁸ See Han Bin, 1995.

³⁹ Zhang Ziqing, pp. 87-91.

Ma Fuxing's ancestral village of Huilong is best known as the hometown of Ma Rulong 马如龙, one of the leaders of the Muslim camp at the onset of the Muslim rebellion in Yunnan who later led the Qing campaign to regain political control over the province. At the conclusion of the pacification campaign, following the conquest of the rebel base of Du Wenxiu 杜文秀 at Dali in 1874, Ma Rulong was the most powerful Qing military official in the province. Though he retired from active service in 1877, he continued to exercise his influence in political affairs through his family members and political allies who remained in office both in Yunnan and further a field. Ma Fuxing may not have been a direct relation of Ma Rulong, though what can be said with certainty is that his early career was closely tied to the political legacy of Ma Rulong. Ma Fuxing's first two official posts were in Dali and Kunming, which were both key centres of the post-rebellion military bureaucracy established by Ma Rulong.

In the late 1860s, when Ma Rulong led the campaign to restore Qing authority in central and western Yunnan, a great-uncle of Ma Shaowu named Ma Shenglin 马圣麟 led the defense of the town of Greater Donggou 大东沟 against Ma Rulong's forces in one of the major battles of the rebellion in central Yunnan.⁴⁰ Ma Shenglin was both the spiritual leader of the Jahriyya order in Yunnan and one of the prominent Muslim rebel leaders. He was killed by mortar fire shortly prior to the fall of the town in 1871.⁴¹ It is clear that the death of Ma Shenglin at the hands of Ma Rulong is the source of

⁴⁰ While there were religious differences between Ma Rulong and Ma Shenglin, these differences were subsumed under strategic military conflicts between the two. Ma Rulong's sectarian affiliation was with Ma Dexin, the leading Muslim scholar of Yunnan in the nineteenth century, who taught Ma Rulong briefly at the mosque of Huilong village. Ma Dexin was on good terms with Ma Shenglin for most of the conflict, and while he joined with the Qing cause, he stepped back from the final pacification campaign led by Ma Rulong. A poem by Ma Dexin in praise of Ma Shenglin, titled *Lao Talang* [The Talang Master], is appended in Yao Guoliang, *Ma Dexin zhuan, Du Wenxiu zhuan, fu Ma Rulong* [Biography of Ma Fuchu, Biography of Du Wenxiu, with an appendix on Ma Rulong] (Chuxiong, 2000); 'the Talang Master' is one of the titles of Ma Shenglin, who also appears in documents produced outside of the Jahriyya order as Ma Chenglin 成林 and Ma Shilin 世林.

⁴¹ The first major incident in which Ma Shenglin was involved took place at Talang, one of two mine sites (the other being Shiyang) where disputes occurred between Han and Muslim miners that provoked the rebellion. The siege of Greater Donggou was a milestone in the pacification campaign waged by Ma Rulong between his home base of Lin'an up the Mekong valley to Du Wenxiu's base at Dali. I have not been able to ascertain exactly where Ma Shaowu's branch of the family was located at any stage of the rebellion, though it is not unlikely that his father was present at Talang and Donggou during the incidents just mentioned. The events at the mines is given an excellent account by Emile Rocher (see note 45). See also Atwill, 2005, pp. 116-138.

stories of the blood debt owed by Ma Fuxing to Ma Shaowu. It is worth mentioning that the blood debt story provided Ma Shaowu with a moral justification for his act of political assassination, allowing Ma Shaowu to present himself as a righteous leader who had avenged an insult suffered by the Jahriyya community, while at the same time ridding the people of Kashgar of a tyrant.⁴² Throughout his military career, Ma Fuxing identified with the military legacy of Ma Rulong, and neither he nor Ma Rulong had pretensions as religious leaders.⁴³ Ma Shaowu, on the other hand, identified closely with the religious legacy of Ma Shenglin, demonstrated by his active involvement in the affairs of the Jahriyya order.⁴⁴

While the ancestors of Ma Fuxing and Ma Shaowu both played important roles in different Muslim camps during the Muslim rebellion in Yunnan, Yang Zengxin's father was a prominent figure in the main Han camp in the vicinity of Ma Rulong's base area.

The Muslim rebellion began with armed conflicts over mining rights in 1855, followed by Han massacres of Muslims in the towns near the mines.⁴⁵ The first major Muslim response was to besiege the local city of Chuxiong 楚雄 where Yang Zengxin's father ran a Confucian academy. At the onset of violence in Chuxiong, Yang's father retreated to his hometown of Mengzi, which in the following three years was besieged several times by Muslim forces, including by forces under the command of Ma Rulong. The town was successfully defended each time; Yang Zengxin's father was from one of the most distinguished scholarly lineages of the town, making him a likely leader of the effort to defend the town, and he may have fought directly against Ma Rulong during the period of the sieges. In 1862, Ma Rulong surrendered to the Qing, and he and Yang's father found themselves in the same camp fighting against the remaining Muslim forces. Yang Zengxin was born two years later, into a family that had established connections with

⁴² The story of the blood feud probably originated within the Jahriyya order in Xinjiang, where Ma Fuxing was cast as the successor to the 'tyrant' Ma Rulong, while Ma Shaowu was cast as heir to the religious legacy of the 'true shaykh' Ma Shenglin. The Jahriyya narrative of the blood feud was not cast as one between diametrically opposed religious sects.

⁴³ See Yao Guoliang, 2000, p. 297.

⁴⁴ For example, Ma Shaowu organised for the construction of major Jahriyya religious buildings including the South Mosque in Ürümchi, which was built in the year of his ascension to power in Kashgar and still stands today. He also donated a thousand ounces of silver towards organising the funeral of Ma Yuanzhang in 1920; Ma Guobing, 2004, p. 347.

⁴⁵ The account of the Muslim rebellion in Yunnan by Emile Rocher, published in 1879, remains unrivalled: Rocher, 1879. Rocher served as French consul in Kunming for a period of the Muslim rebellion in Yunnan, and supplied Ma Rulong with a shipment of arms that had a decisive impact on its outcome. Also see Atwill, 2005, p. 134.

leading Muslim families. These historical connections were further consolidated through the military exams, and in the early stages of his official career in Gansu and Xinjiang, and left him well placed to comprehend the true nature of the antagonisms between Ma Fuxing and Ma Shaowu.

Cloaked in the blessings of the shaykh

So far in this paper, Yang Zengxin has been presented as a governor whose authority was premised on his command over Dungan leaders. One anecdote from a Dungan biographic history text inverts this portrayal of the relationship between Yang and the Dungan community, by describing Yang as serving as governor subordinate to the authority of a Dungan religious leader. It reflects the influence that members of the Dungan community had over Yang's actions, and provides us insight into the motivations of the Dungan who served as loyal servants to Yang. The anecdote is drawn from a collection of biographies of the last three shaykhs of the Shagou branch of the Jahriyya order, composed in Chinese by Ma Shangwu based on oral sources, and published in 2005. It follows the conventions of Sufi biographical writing in that it is comprised of short accounts of miraculous manifestations of the spiritual graces (Arabic: *manaqib*) of a lineage of spiritual leaders, each attributed via a reputable chain of transmitters to a reliable witness of the miracle. The shaykh concerned here is Ma Yuanzhang 马元章 (1853-1920), known as the Shagou Master, who was the most acclaimed shaykh of the Jahriyya order in the early Republican period, and the paternal uncle of Ma Shaowu.⁴⁶ It is the only anecdote known to this writer that traces the origins of the relationship between Yang Zengxin and his Dungan military commanders back to their common origins in Yunnan.

⁴⁶ The precise relation is paternal great-uncle, a relation that in Chinese kin terminology is commonly known by the same word as used for one's father's elder brother (*bobo* 伯伯). Ma Yuanzhang's father, Ma Shenglin, was the middle of five brothers, the eldest of whom died young. Ma Shenglin's next younger brother was Ma Shengxing, who had one son named Ma Wuchun, whose eldest son was Ma Shaowu. The first five generations of the Jahriyya spiritual lineage (Ar. *silsila*) is as follows: Ma Mingxin ('Guanchuan Ma' 官川马 clan) → Mu Xianzhang 穆宪章 → Ma Datian 马达天 ('Lingzhou Ma' 灵州马 clan) → Ma Yide 马以德 (Lingzhou Ma clan, son of previous) → Ma Hualong 马化龙 (Lingzhou Ma clan, son of previous); after this, leadership of the Jahriyya was contested between Ma Yuanzhang of the Guanchuan Ma (a great-grandson of Ma Mingxin), and Ma Jinxi 进西 of the Lingzhou Ma clan (a grandson of Ma Hualong). See Jahriyya lineage chart in Aubin, 1990; see also the complete table of Ma Mingxin's direct male descendants (i.e. the Guanchuan Ma clan) down to the sixth generation in Ma Guobing, 2004, p. 297, and the chart of the Lingzhou Ma clan given as an insert in Zhang Chengzhi, 1992.

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An 87-year-old man surnamed Li narrated the anecdote to the compiler of the biographic collection in Ili in 1993, who was recalling a story passed down within his family. In the transcribed words of Mr Li:

My grandfather said that Master He 何 told him that during the second return visit of the Shagou Master to Yunnan, he was walking four abreast with his companions down the main road in front of the South Gate,⁴⁷ when two men of equally impressive stature came walking towards them.

The Master said to them, ‘Look what we have here, two fine graduates of the imperial exams, and two fine pillars of the nation.’

The two men hurriedly bowed down to pay their respects, saying, ‘Thank you, and thank you again, for your kind blessings.’

They then asked the Master for his name, which he gave to each of them, and each presented their own name cards in return. Before they left, the Master said to them, ‘After you become important officials, you must not forget me.’

The two said, ‘With the encouragement of your words, and on the back of your blessings, we will certainly not forget you should we meet with success.’ Five days later they sat for the examinations, and each achieved the highest rank.⁴⁸

The names of the two students are given later in the same biographic history text as Zhang Guangjian and either Li Sanpin or Li Pingsan. These names appear to each be corrupt transmissions of the name Yang Zengxin.⁴⁹

Zhang Guangjian served as governor in Gansu at the same time as Yang Zengxin was governor in Xinjiang. His name appears to have become confused in the transmission of the story from the province where the story was originally narrated in Xinjiang, to the place where it was written down in Gansu.⁵⁰ Zhang Guangjian was a generation older than Yang, and from Anhui province rather than Yunnan. The character wearing his name in the written story was probably referred to simply as ‘the governor’ in an earlier

⁴⁷ Presumably the South Gate of Kunming city.

⁴⁸ Ma Shangwu and Ma Zihong, 2005, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁹ Historical accounts of early Republican history that are based on oral evidence gathered after 1949 tend to confuse the names of characters whose historical lives were a step removed from the familiar surrounds of the local community that gave rise to the oral tradition.

⁵⁰ Actually Yinchuan in Ningxia, which was part of Gansu province for the historical period referred to here.

oral version of the story passed down within the Dungan community in Xinjiang. In this presumed oral version, what I believe to be this governor's true identity of Yang Zengxin may have been considered either obvious or irrelevant to the religious context of the story, where the focus is on the shaykh rather than on the governor.

The name Li Sanpin is probably a corruption of the Hunanese Liu Jintang *zi* Sanpin 三品, mentioned earlier, who in 1884 became the inaugural governor of the Qing province of Xinjiang. Li and Yang are two of the most common Chinese surnames, and the fact that the author was not sure whether the name of this second candidate was Liu Sanpin or Liu Pingsan suggests a specific phonetic path by which the governor of Xinjiang while Ma Yuanzhang was at the height of his power became confused with an earlier governor (Yang Zengxin 杨增新 < Yang Pingsan < Li Pingsan < Li Sanpin < Liu Sanpin 刘三品).

The identification of the names of *both* of the characters in Mr Li's story with Yang Zengxin leaves unidentified the true name of the second of the 'two fine graduates' mentioned in the story. I believe that prior to the several retellings that resulted in the published version of the anecdote presented above, this second graduate was in fact Ma Fuxing, Yang's fellow graduate in the provincial military exams of 1888. Three decades after they had jointly achieved examination success, when Ma Fuxing based in Kashgar and Yang Zengxin based in Ürümchi were the two most powerful officials of Xinjiang, the pair could fittingly be described as the 'two fine pillars' upholding the authority of the Republic 'nation' in Xinjiang.

The reading of Li Sanpin as a corruption of Yang Zengxin is supported by the passage that follows directly from that quoted above:

After taking up his post, Li Sanpin wrote a letter to the Shagou Master thanking him for his supportive prayers, which he would never forget. At that time, the emperor ordered the governor of a certain place to take up a post, but the old governor of that place did not want to go, and so the two men could not avoid a war, with the winner to take up the appointment. But this governor named Li, armed only with the blessings of the Master, was able to walk safely into the post. This is why he wrote a letter to thank the Master.⁵¹

This incident described here matches well with the struggle over the Xinjiang governorship that took place in 1912 between Yuan Dahua and

⁵¹ Ma Shangwu and Ma Zihong, 2005, p. 37.

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Yang Zengxin. This struggle ended with Yang taking the governorship without engaging in direct armed conflict with Yuan after the former ordered the latter to move his Dungan troops against the Republican government established in Ili, which seems likely to be the historical event behind the anecdotal paragraph above.

Yang's bid for the governorship was backed by the awe generated by a vast number of Dungan troops, hastily recruited from the Dungan mosque-based communities of the Ürümchi district. Some of these troops were Jahriyya members loyal to Ma Yuanzhang, who had given his blessing to Yang Zengxin's bid for power. The blessings of 'the Master' Ma Yuanzhang and other Dungan religious leaders was what underlay Yang Zengxin's ability to raise at short notice a large body of troops from the Dungan mosques of Ürümchi and environs, which in turn underwrote his successful bid for the governorship.

The story continues:

After over a year, a student from Yunnan named Ma Shaowu (the grandson of the Fourth Master of Yunnan, and the elder son of Ma Wuchun) arrived before the Master and reported, 'I could not find work at home after my graduation, and so my father sent me to see your respected self.'

The Shagou Master sent Ma Shaowu to Xinjiang, and while sending him off gave him his instructions, 'When you get to Yunnan, there is one matter that you must attend to.'

Ma Shaowu asked, 'What matter is this?'

The Master said, 'You must erect four pavilions, and properly organise the land to build them on.'

Before Ma Shaowu's departure, the Master wrote a letter to Li Sanpin, asking him to take on the young student. When Ma Shaowu arrived in Xinjiang, he first went to see Li Sanpin and gave him the Master's letter. Li Sanpin appointed him as the head of the civil affairs bureau.⁵² Now that he had achieved high office, he was able to use all types of connections to erect all of the pavilions in Xinjiang, including the

⁵² The 'head of the civil affairs bureau or a prefecture' 民政厅的厅长 is an official title that only was used from the 1930s, after the historical period referred to here. The function of the title approximates that of posts that Ma Shaowu held in the decade leading up to 1924 district and circuit commissioner in Kucha, Kashgar and Uch Turpan (Wushi).

pavilion at Suiding 绥定 that was surrounded by over 600 *mu* of land.⁵³

The four pavilions referred to here are shrines in honour of family members of the Jahriyya founder Ma Mingxin, which were established or renovated with the direct assistance of Ma Shaowu in the first two decades of the Republic.⁵⁴ Ma Shaowu's official fortunes brought a boon to the Shagou branch of the Jahriyya in Xinjiang, providing the order with access to resources to carry out building works on a new scale.⁵⁵

In the testimony of Mr Li, Yang Zengxin (under the corrupted aliases Li Sanpin and Zhang Guangjian) is presented greeting a Dungan religious leader in Yunnan in the most respectful manner, and later sending a cordial letter from Xinjiang to the same Dungan religious leader in Gansu. Mr Li's testimony matches other published accounts of Yang Zengxin's rule in Xinjiang, which describe how he would go out of his way to pay his respects to Muslim religious leaders in the Dungan mosques.

On one level, the relationship was a simple one of political self-interest, the Dungan community supporting Yang Zengxin's rule in return for the wealth and prestige that came with military office in Republican Xinjiang. Mr Li gives a different perspective on the relationship. He presents the story of Ma

⁵³ Ma Shangwu and Ma Zihong, 2005, pp. 37-38. A *mu* is roughly one-fifteenth of a hectare.

⁵⁴ The four pavilions (Ch. *tingzi* 亭子) are small mausoleums (Ch. *gongbei* 拱北, cf. Uyghur Turkic < Persian *gumbaz* 'dome/shrine') at four separate locations in Xinjiang erected in honour of Ma Mingxin's second wife, two of his daughters and a female servant, all of whom were transferred as slaves to Xinjiang following the execution of Ma Mingxin in 1781.

⁵⁵ Ma Yuanzhang wrote a couplet in honour of Ma Shaowu that emphasises the role of tomb-builder for which he was best known within the Jahriyya order. The couplet was written on the occasion of the death anniversary of Ma Mingxin's wife in whose honour the most important of the tombs was built, on the 1st of the first lunar month, 1918; the first line of the couplet makes a play on the middle character *shao* 绍 of Ma Shaowu 马绍武. The founding ancestor refers to Ma Mingxin, while the 'departed sage' probably refers to Ma Yuanzhang's father Ma Shenglin. The word translated here as 'worthy descendant' is also a lineage term for fourth-generation direct descendant, for Ma Shaowu was a fourth generation direct descendant of Ma Mingxin (Ma Shangwu and Ma Zihong, 2005, p. 179):

Ten thousand *li* to pay his respects at the isolated tomb and satisfy the wish of the founding ancestor,

Those that satisfy the wishes of their ancestors are truly filial.

In the home province he built up the embankment in honour of the departed sage,
Not only by showing respect for the departed but in his countenance he is a true worthy descendant.

万里祭孤坟而绍祖志，能绍先志方称孝子
原籍修河堤而祭前圣，亦能继前亦象乃为贤孙。

Yuanzhang's relationship with the 'two fine graduates' as one minor proof of the spiritual authority of the Jahriyya shaykh. His story is a reminder of the bounties that Dungan religious leaders could bestow upon respectful Chinese officials in China's Islamic borderland. He gives an insight into why Dungans were happy to do the bidding of a non-Muslim governor, for from Mr Li's perspective this non-Muslim power was nothing more than a pawn installed in power to do God's work within the vast, cosmic order ruled over by the Jahriyya shaykh Ma Yuanzhang.

Appendix A: Chinese-speaking Muslims in Xinjiang: *Dungan* or *Huizu*?

Chinese-speaking Muslims today, despite being categorised by the Chinese government as a distinct national minority called the *Huizu* 回族, tend to refer to themselves simply as 'Muslims' or 'believers', evincing a common Muslim disdain from publicly affirming their loyalty to a tribal or ethnic fraction of the greater Islamic community. Nevertheless, Chinese-speaking Muslims now and in the past have tended to settle in separate, endogenous settlements both in areas dominated by ethnic Chinese and also in areas dominated by Turkic Muslims such as eastern and northern Xinjiang, justifying their being spoken of as a distinct ethnic group. My usage of the term 'Chinese-speaking Muslims' follows Lipman's Sino-Muslims of 'Sino-Muslims' (Lipman, 1997).

The word 'Dungan' has been used by James Millward (Millward, 1998, ch. 6) and Joseph Fletcher to refer to Chinese-speaking Muslims in Xinjiang at the time of the Qing conquest of the region in the mid-18th century, Fletcher citing a Chaghatai manuscript where the term 'the Dungan scholars' (*ulama-i Tunganiyyan*) is used to denote a specific faction of the Islamic clergy in Xinjiang (cited in Lipman, 1997, p. 59, n.4). British sources conventionally use the term 'Dungan' to refer to Chinese-speaking Muslims in Xinjiang in the early Republican period (Skrine, 1973), and coined the term 'Dunganistan' to describe southern Xinjiang in the decade after Yang Zengxin's assassination in 1928, when independent Dungan military leaders formed the most powerful military faction in the area (Fleming, 1936).

Textual evidence from Chaghatai Turkic manuscripts can be produced courtesy of David Brophy to show that the term 'Dungan' was used to describe Chinese-speaking Muslims by both Turkic and the Chinese-speaking Muslims themselves. One source can be cited from the Republican period that repeatedly uses the term *Tungani* (spelt with 'T' rather than 'D'; the Persian adjectival suffix -i suggests that the Dungan were considered to be a distinct ethnic, linguistic or cultural group); see Buğra, 1952. Another

source from the late-Qing period records the following conversation between the author and a Dungan man (Ayağuzi, 1894, p. 253):

When I asked a reliable person: ‘Where does the name “Tungan” come from?’, he said: ‘The Chinese (*Khitaylar*) call us people (*biz khalq*) the Khuy Khuy [cf. Ch. *Huihui* 回回]. Regarding this, in the ancient language of the Chinese it originally means someone who caused strife and discord (*a’rāz va inqilāb qildi*). The Turks translated it into “Tungan”, and through a great deal of usage even our own people have come to adopt this name, and it has become very widespread.’

The etymological discussion found here is difficult to make concrete sense of, and may reflect a blending of Persio-Turkic roots found in Dungan/Tungan (e.g. Persian *dun* ‘lowly’) and Chinese homophones of the character repeated twice in *Huihui* 回回 (e.g. *hui* 毀 ‘to destroy’). This style of linguistic discussion of the origin of words used to refer to Muslims in China is similar to Chinese etymological discussions found in a number of Chinese-language works by Dungan scholars. The most common of these etymological derivations claims that *Huihui* 回回 is derived from the character *hui* 回 ‘to return’, which denotes the focus of Muslim practice and belief on the ‘return’ after death of the believing soul to God.

Dungan people have formed only a modest proportion of the population of the Xinjiang region since its incorporation into the Qing empire in the eighteenth century. Accurate population statistics for Dungan in Xinjiang are difficult to ascertain, as the ‘Dungan’ did not constitute a standard category used by either Qing or Republican statisticians. For the Republican period, Nationalist figures from the 1930s that give Han and Dungan as each forming 15% of the Xinjiang population can be taken as a radical overestimation. One late Qing gazetteer gives a figure of 95% for Turkic Muslims, with 3% Chinese and 1% Dungan, which can be taken as a rough guide, bearing in mind that Dungan communities established in Xinjiang prior to the nineteenth century rebellion were often classified amongst Turkic Muslims, and that there was considerable Dungan migration into the province in the first two decades of the Republic (see Sun Hanwen, [1936] 1985, pp. 516-536).

Yang Zengxin referred in his memorials to his Dungan troops in Xinjiang as *Hui dui* 回队. This term that might also be rendered as ‘Chinese Muslim troops’ or ‘Chinese Muslim divisions’, as the reference is specifically to Chinese-speaking Muslims who had migrated from China Proper to Xinjiang since the 1870s as distinct from Turkic-speaking Muslims indigenous to

Xinjiang. The distinction between Chinese and Turkic Muslims was well understood by officials who served in the north-west though perhaps not by all those in the political circles of Republican China who concerned themselves with north-western affairs. In his official correspondence, Yang uses several terms to refer to Dungans, namely *huimin* 回民, *huizu* 回族 and *hanhui* 汉回, all distinguished from the Turkic Muslims whom he consistently refers to by the term *chanhui* 缠回 ‘turbaned Muslims’.

Appendix B: Sources on Yang Zengxin and his Dungan generals

The main sources used for Yang’s biography are: ‘Yang Tseng-hsin’ in Boorman, 1967, pp. 11-13 (official titles follow Boorman); ‘Yang Zengxin’ in Mengzi Gazetteer Compilation Committee, 1995, pp. 976-83; Li Xincheng, 1993 (the only full biography of Yang Zengxin). Yang Zengxin published three collections between 1920 and 1924 of his correspondence with the Beijing government and with his subordinates, namely Yang Zengxin, 1921-24. These documents have been examined with the guidance of Chen Huisheng, 2000, vol. 2, pp. 227-255. Yang Zengxin also published a collection of reading notes that I have not been able to consult, see Yang Zengxin, 1921a *Buguozhai riji* 补过斋日记 [Diary from the Studio of Repairing Transgressions].

The memoirs of Burhan Shāhidi give an account of Yang Zengxin’s administration and his use of Dungan troops from the perspective of a Uyghur official who served in the provincial government at the end of the Republic: *Bao'erhan* 包尔汉, ‘Yang Zengxin tongzhi shiqi’ 杨增新统治时期 [The period of Yang Zengxin’s rule], Yu Junsheng, 1998, pp. 75-180. Dungan military power is a prominent theme in the papers of the British Consul at Kashgar, George Macartney. The report in these papers are excellent for events that took place in southern Xinjiang, though are less clear on how these events related to affairs in Ürümchi. For an introduction to these papers see C.P. Skrine and Pamela Nightingale, 1973, pp. 232-247 and *passim*. Skrine was the British Consul in Kashgar from 1922-24, and was in Kashgar at the time of Ma Fuxing’s death.

Published primary sources on Dungan in Xinjiang under Yang Zengxin’s rule are limited, due in part to the lack of established Turkic presses and the weakness of Chinese bureaucratic administration in the province during the period. I have relied exclusively on published Chinese and English sources, and have made no attempt to incorporate in this paper any materials representing the perspective of the Uyghur peoples who made up overwhelming majority of the population of southern Xinjiang, or the

Russians/Soviets who were the most influential foreign power in Xinjiang at the time of the Xinhai revolution, and again from the mid-1920s. A balanced evaluation of the role of Dungan in Xinjiang politics after the death of Yang Zengxin, through the rise and fall of the first East Turkistan Republic in Kashgar, could not ignore any of these perspectives, or that of Turkic peoples in neighbouring Andijan and further west. The most substantial Chinese source is the collection of Yang Zengxin's published writings (Yang Zengxin, 1921-24), the first published in Tianjin in 1920, though Yang did subject these documents to a selection and editing process prior to publication. These documents can be seen as a defence against opportunistic critics of his administration in Xinjiang, and the timing of the publication of the first volume coincides with a heightened point of tension in the factional military politics of Republican China, resulting amongst other things in the forced resignation of the governor of neighbouring Gansu.

PRC collections of cultural history articles (*wenshi ziliao* 文史资料) include articles by the sons of Dungan military commanders and of other important players in political events of the time (Yu Junsheng 余骏生, 1998, vols. 1-2; Cultural History Research Committee of Xinjiang CNPCC, 1978-80, vol 3).

anthony.garnaut@gmail.com

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