

Islamic Cuisine As Described in the *Chüchia Piyung Shihlei*:  
A Yüan Dynasty Encyclopedia of Daily Life

OZAKI Kikuko

There are twelve food names and simple recipes for each under the heading “*huihui shihp'in*” 回回食品 in the *Chüchia Piyung Shihlei*, seven of which are transliterated into Chinese characters from their original languages, Arabic, Persian or Turkish. There is the Persian sweetmeat, *shakarbüra*, the Turkish pasta dish, *tuṭumāj*, the Arabic flour porridge, *harisa* and four Arabic sweetmeats, *fālūdhaj*, *ḥalwā'*, *qurṣ* and *zalābīya*. The other five names are paraphrastic translations appearing as Chinese ideographs: samosa (*chüanchien-ping*), rice porridge (*kaomi*), sweet and sour meat stew (*suant'ang*), savory bottled custard (*hailossü*), and stuffed lung (*hêhsifei*).

According to the Arabic sources regarding the seven transliterated foods, five (other than *shakarbüra* and *qurṣ*) were popular and well-known throughout the Islamic world during the 13th century and were often served at parties and on festival days. *Harisa*, *fālūdhaj*, *ḥalwā'* and *zalābīya* were also sold at food stands in the markets of the eastern Islamic world. *Shakarbüra*, however, is found only in Persian sources; and there is no sweetmeat in either the Arabic or Persian sources resembling *qurṣ*. *Ḥalwā'* and *tuṭumāj* first appeared in the Arabic sources in the 13th century, which implies that the Chinese description of “*huihui shihp'in*” 回回食品 was written around that time.

Four of the five foods appearing in paraphrastic translation have their counterparts in the extant medieval Arabic cookbooks, and nothing resembling stuffed lung *hêhsifei* can be found.

The reason why the recipes for “*huihui shihp'in*” 回回食品 do not call for the spices that were generally used in the Islamic world is because the *Chüchia Piyung Shihlei* was compiled for Han people who had no actual intention of cooking for Muslims or trying to obtain the rare spices in the original dishes. Rather, the description of Muslim food in the Chinese sources was provided for members of the Mongol ruling elite and Han bureaucrats and wealthy bourgeois who had found it necessary to know about Muslim cuisine in order to entertain highly ranked Muslims who came into their company, since most Chinese sources of the time reflect nothing but loathing for Muslims in

general.

Notwithstanding, the descriptions of "*huihui shihp'in*" 回回食品 do show relatively closer political and economic relationships between Muslims and the Chinese within the political and economic environment created under the Yüan Dynasty.