

t'a (*t'âp) or *ta* (*tâp) of Han times as the first element of 𦉰𦉱 *t'a-têng* (*t'âp-têng), the designation under the Later Han and until T'ang times of a fine woollen rug with designs (LAUFER, *Sino-Iranica*, 492, has given an ancient pronunciation which would be *d'iep or d'âp, and referred for *d'iep to ch. 19 of the *I-ch'ieh ching yin-i*; but I find no gloss on *t'a-têng* in ch. 19 either of Hsüan-ying's or of Hui-lin's works which bear that title; on the other hand, both works comment more than once on *t'a-têng*, but always say that the pronunciation is *t'âp-têng; cf. Tōkyō *Tripit.* of Meiji, 爲, VII, 7 b, 17 a, 45 b, 60 a; VIII, 163 b; IX, 66 b, 110 a, 119 b, 149 b; X, 37 a). I think, however, that *t'a-têng* must be left out. First of all, it was not a cotton, but a woollen textile; in Tōkyō *Tripit.* of Taishō, 54, 986, *t'a-têng* (the form is corrupt in the edition) translates Skr. *kambala*, «woollen blanket or rug». On the other hand, I feel inclined, like LAUFER, to see in *t'a-têng* a term of Iranian origin, though perhaps not in the way he meant (cf. my review of LÜDERS's *Textilien in Oriental. Literaturzeitung*, 1938, No. 3, 185).

Yen Shih-ku was certainly right in stating that the «*ta* cloth» of Han texts was a coarse fabric and could not be what in his time was known as *po-tieh*, i. e. real «cotton stuff», but it is quite possible that, at an early date, before our era, the technique of cotton weaving was not yet perfected, and that a coarse cotton cloth was woven in south-western China, which went under a name «*ta* (*tâp) cloth» or «*tu* (*tuo) cloth», borrowed from some non-Chinese language of the south. Although I am not in a position to say where the «*ta* cloth» of the Former Han period was made and used in paying taxes, we must not forget that Ma Yüan's garment of «*ta* cloth» or «*tu* cloth» was offered to him in Ssü-ch'uan (the *t'a-pu* in the *Shih-shuo hsin-yü* may be a «literary» survival, inspired by Ma Yüan's biography). *Tieh* (*d'iep) may be the 3rd cent. transcription of the same foreign word which was formerly rendered *ta* (*tâp) and *tu* (*tuo). It is of some moment that a scholar of the first half of the 3rd cent. like Mêng K'ang should say that the «*ta* cloth» (or «*t'a* cloth») is the same as *po-tieh*; he clearly identified *ta* and *tieh* as one and the same word. Even Yen Shih-ku, while opposing Mêng K'ang, certainly thought of *tieh*, «to duplicate», when he said that *ta* implied the idea of «thickness» and «heaviness», and the authors of the *Tz'ü-yüan* have merely given a more express agreement to Yen Shih-ku's opinion when they state that *ta* was used instead of *tieh*. So, in my opinion, it is *tieh* alone, and not *po-tieh*, which is the direct continuation, in the 3rd cent., of the former *ta* and *tu* as the designation of a cotton fabric. The nature of that cotton will be more fully discussed in the last part of this inquiry, but I may already state here that, in my opinion, it was the product of the cotton tree (*Gossypium arboreum*).

Early in the 3rd cent., Chinese maritime trade with Indo-China and Indonesia also brought to China cotton goods, made from the down of either the cotton plant or the cotton tree, or of both. They too were designated as 帛疊 *po-tieh* or 白疊 *po-tieh*. Both forms are easily explainable, the first one, «silky *tieh*», implying an allusion to the glossy appearance of the fabric, and the second, «white *tieh*», referring to its colour, and it is difficult to decide which of the two was adopted first. In view of parallel cases to be quoted next, an original «white» meaning is, however, more probable. The two *po* (*b'pk) were absolute homophons, and there are even cases when they were used indiscriminately. The 白旆 *po-peï*, «white streamers», of the *Shih ching* (LEGGE, *Chin. Classics*, IV, 283) is quoted as 帛旆 *po-peï* in the sub-commentary of the Kung-