

hibiscus (木芙蓉 *mu fu-jung*, *hibiscus mutabilis*). It is different from the annual sowing in China, and so when he says that it lives for ten or more years it is clearly not a tree (cf. *Ciba Review*, 95, Dec. 1952, p. 340, where it is said that the cotton plant, indigenous in the tropics where it is perennial, is killed by frost and has become an annual in «the chief cotton-growing areas»). If *chi-pei* is called a tree, it is just as the *Yü-kung* uses the word herb (卉 *hui*; cf. *supra*, p. 487; the *hui* of the *Yü-kung* certainly does not refer to cotton), a word chosen to distinguish it from silkworm floss. If it is not called *mu-mien* in Min (Fu-chien) and Kuang[-tung], that is because there they call the *p'an-chih-hua* (*bombax*, cf. *supra*, p. 480) *mu-mien*. The *p'an-chih-hua* can be used to make mattresses and cushions; but though it is soft and glossy it is not tough, and cannot possibly be spun. How can it be made into cloth? If one suspects that *mu-mien* is this (i. e. *bombax*), and says that it can be made into cloth but the method is forgotten, he is mistaken; the *mu-mien* of which the *Wu-lu* speaks is precisely *chi-pei*. If one supposes that because it says that the tree is ten feet high it must be the *p'an-chih*, he forgets that the *p'an-chih* is more than 100 feet high. Since the *chi-pei* of the south will live for several years, that it should be more than ten feet high is after all no reason for surprise. So the *chi-pei* of Lin-i spoken of in the *Nan-shih* and the *mu-mien* of Yung-ch'ang in the *Wu-lu* both mean herbaceous *mu-mien* which will make cloth. I suppose that they are the *so-lo* tree (cf. p. 470 sqq.), but absolutely unrelated to the *p'an-chih-hua*. Moreover the cotton cloth (*mien pu*) woven in China differs from the Indian muslin (西洋布 *Hsi-yang pu*; cf. *TP*, 1933, 328) in fineness and is not brilliant at all. But when I saw the robe handed down from Shih Hui-nêng of Ts'ao-ch'i (曹溪釋惠能; 陸 LU Hui-nêng, 638-713, was one of the Patriarchs of the school of Bodhidharma), said to be of *ch'ü-shun* cloth, that is to say *po-tieh* cloth, and described as woven from the heart (心 *hsin*) of the *mu-mien* of the western countries, it looked as glossy as threads of silkworm silk. Was this the *so-lo lung tuan* (娑羅籠段, «*so-lo* covering damask»)? Or are there still other sorts of *chi-pei* in the western lands? Moreover I had suspected that the fineness of the foreign cloth (洋布 *yang pu*) could not have been made from the *chi-pei* of our country; and when I saw *chi-pei* from Bengal, that the seeds were extremely small and the floss extremely soft, quite different from the Chinese sort, then I knew that the *chi-pei* hitherto transmitted was not the best.»⁽¹⁾

This is a remarkable text, and I can only concur with almost every point of Hsü's argument. It is evident that a tree which is but ten feet high cannot be the *Bombax*, a great forest tree. Moreover, as Hsü says, the very mention that the *mu-mien* of the *Wu lu* could last ten years without being sowed again precludes the possibility that this *mu-mien* should be a long-lived tree like the *Bombax*. Without the slightest hesitation, we must conclude that it was a variety of *Gossypium arboreum*. The particulars given are in striking agreement with Polo's statements when the traveller describes in Guzerat «trees which make cotton, . . . six paces high . . . and these have quite twenty years» (cf. Vol. I, 420). Moreover YULE (*Y*, II, 394) has quoted extracts from Mohammedan authors who mention in India «cotton plants» which «grow as large as trees» and «yield produce ten years running». Another reference may be added, because it happens to give the same number of years as Polo: «Some Arabs of the tribe of Kälb, informed me

⁽¹⁾ Paragraphe écrit à nouveau par A. C. MOULE.