CHAPTER - VI.

THE MLECCHAS IN THE JAINA LITERATURE.

The Jaina literature can be broadly classified into Canonical and non-Canonical texts. The Jaina Canonical literature is known as Ṇagama or Siddhānta. It consists of twelve Aṅgas. Besides the Aṅgas, the Śvetambara Siddhānta includes twelve Upāṅgas, ten Paññas, six Chedasūttas, six Nandīs, six Anuyogas and four Mūlasūttas. The exegetical literature, which accumulated on the Jaina Canons, consists of Nijjutti, Bhasa, Chunni and Tikā. Among the non-Canonical texts, reference may be made to the Paumacariyam of Vimalasuri, Aṅgavijjā, Jambudīvapāṇī, Tiloyapaṇī, Trisastisālākāpurusacarita of Hemacandra, etc.

There are abundant references to the Milakkhas or Milakkhus or Mlecchas or Milācaś (i.e., Mlecchas) in the Jaina texts. Human population is divided into two classes — (1) Bhavyas and (2) Abhavyas. The first group can attain emancipation and the second cannot. The Bhavyas are again subdivided into two sections — (1) those who are sure to be liberated in near or distant future and (2) the Jātibhavyas, who will never be liberated. To the second category belong the Milakkhus, i.e., Mlecchas.

There are numerous references to the division of population into Ārya and Mleccha in Jaina texts. In the
Paumacāriyam of Vimalasuri, the Mlecchas are equated with the Anāryas. In a few cases the Mlecchas are bracketed with the Dasyus. Thus in the Uttarajbhyānasutta (i.e., Uttarādhyānasūtra), it is stated that "though one be born as a man, it is rare chance to become an Ārya for many are the Dasyus and the Mlecchas." The passage undoubtedly hints at the social superiority for the Āryas and the numerical strength of the Mlecchas. The connotation of the term Dasyu has not been indicated in the Uttarādhyānasūtra. Nor it is indicated whether the term had undergone any great change in concept. From references in the Rg Veda, it appears that at least a section of the non-Āryan population were known as Dasyus. By the time of the compilation of the Uttarādhyānasūtra, therefore, some of the non-Āryans were known as Mlecchas and some as Dasyus.

In Jaina tradition, India is divided into Āryakhandas and Mlecchakhandas. In the Paumacāriyam, the Kambojas, Sūkas, Kapotas and the countries peopled by the Śabarās are regarded as Mleccha lands. The rulers of these countries are described as the sons of Ācaraṅga, who ruled in Mayurāmāla. It had a Mleccha population. A city of the country was known as Addhababbara.

According to the Jambudīvapāṇāṭi of Paumanaṇḍiya, Kacchāvijaya is situated to the north of the river Sitā, to the
south of the Mt. Nīla, to the east of Uttaṇakuru and to the west of Citrakūta. The Mt. Vaitādhya is situated in the centre of Kacchavijaya. The regions in Kacchavijaya approaching the river Sītā consist of one Āryakanda and two Mlechakhandas. Lāhula, Pulinda, Barbera, Šabara, Kirāta and Simhala are included in the three Mlechakhandas of the regions contiguous to the Mt. Nīla.

The country called Addha-babbara (i.e., Ardha-barbara) lay to the south of Mt. Vaitādhya and to the north of Keilāsa and has been described as the home of the turbulent Mlecchas, who indulged in sensual enjoyment. They are half civilized and of low origin.

In the Śrī-Prajāpanopāngaṁ it is stated that the Mlecchas are of various kinds (anegaviḥ). It further subdivides the Mlecha population according to the countries they belonged to. Thus, they are categorised into Śaka, Yavana and so on. Both alien and indigenous races have been branded as Mlecchas.

The Śakas, Yavanas, Gīlāyas, Šabarasa, Barbaras, Murundas, Uṭtas, Bhadagas, Ninnagas, Pakkaniyas, Kukkkhas, Gondas or Godas, Sihala, Pārasa, Godhas, Konca, Damilas, Cīllālas, Pulindas, Harosas, Vokkanas, Gandhārās, Pahaliyas, Ajjhalaras, Rompasas, Pausas, Malayas, Koṅkanas, Pahlavas, Maggaras,
Abhisiyas, Kanaviras, Lbhsiyas, Khasas, Neduras, Mondhas, Khbhsiyas, Dombilas, Galaosas, Paosas, Kakkeyas, Akkagas, Hanaromas or Hnaramoga, Maruyas, Cilayas and the Viyavasis are designated as Mleochas.

The Trisatiśālakapurūṣācarita also enumerates the peoples who belonged to the Mleocha zone. In addition to the list given in the Śrī-Prajñāpanopāngam the present text refers to the Patanakas, Hayamukhas, Gajamukhas, Turagamukhas, Ajamukhas, Hayakarpas, Gajakarpas, and the .Cinas, as well as other non-Aryans who did not follow Dharma. Some of these names can be recognised in the Mahabhārata and in some of the Puranic texts. In the Ādiśvaracarita, the Mlecha tribes are described as living in the foothills of Mt. Vaitāghya and in the country of Kaccha. In another place of the same text, the Mleochas are placed in "the southern districts of Sindhu confined between the ocean and the Mt. Vaitāghya". In fact, the Mt. Vaitāghya is described as the very rampart of the Mleocha land.

In the Tiloyapani of Yativṛṣabhacārya, it is stated that the two rivers, the Sindhu and the Gangā, and the Mt. Vaitāghya have cleft Bhārataksetra into six vibhāgas or parts. Three vibhāgas lie in Uttara Bhārata and three in Daśīna Bhārata. The middle khaṇḍa in the southern Bhārata is an
Arya-khanda. The rest are Mleccha-khandas. In the east all the distributaries of the Gaṅgā, belong to the Mlecchakhanda. The confluence of the Gaṅgā and the ocean is called Māgadhā-tīrtha. In the west, land beyond the mountainous tracts of Vanavedī has been described as Mlecchakhanda.

Vanavedī is not known to us from Brahmanical and Buddhist sources. It may be identified with Kālakavana, the eastern limit of Āryāvarta, according to Patañjali. It can also be identified with Tāmasavāna or Prāyāga as mentioned by Hiuen Tsang. Prayāga, according to Manu, was the eastern limit of Madhyadesa. So Vanavedī (i.e., elevated forest land) may have been the same as Kālakavana (black forest). In that case the entire region lying to the east of Kālakavana or the Prayāga region up to the Gangetic delta would have to be regarded as a Mlecchakhanda.

The peoples, clearly mentioned as belonging to the Mlecchakhanda, are the Nāhalas, Pulindas, Barbaras, Kirātas and the Simhalas. The region lying to the south of the Nilācala- and Vakṣāra mountain and in the middle of the Raktā and the Raktodā has been described as Mlecchakhanda. It centres round the Vakṣāra mountain. Vakṣāra probably is the same as Vokshan, which may be identified with Wakhan in North Afghanistan near the border of U.S.S.R. As many as one hundred Mlecchakhandas
are enumerated in the Tiloyapannati as constituent parts of Jambudvipa.

The Nīla mountain has been identified with the Tien-shan ranges, and the river Sītā with the Kizil-su-Kashgar-Tarim river. Mt. Vaitāqbya cannot be identified with certainty. Can the term Vaiśa be related to Bota, i.e., Bhoṭa or Tibet? As the Mlecchakhanda lay to the north of Kailāsa, the association of Mt. Vaitāqbya with Tibet may not be ruled out as impossible. The Vāsudevahindi, while referring to the enterprises of Āru- datta, states that from the mouth of the Indus the merchant proceeded towards the north-east and crossed the countries of the Hūnas, Khaśas and Cīnas. Finally he reached the Śāṅkupatha of the Vaitāqbya mountain. The Śāṅkupatha was located on the river Vijaya. On crossing over this river Āru-datta approached the river Iṣuṣege. Since the Iṣuṣege and the Vijaya can be identified with the Oxus and Jaxartes rivers respectively, Vaitāqbya may be taken as standing for Tashkurgan. All these tend to suggest that Kacchavijaya of the Jaina texts probably included regions lying to the west or contiguous to Kashgar. Whether Kucha lying midway between the Tarim river and the Tien- shan ranges bears memories of ancient Kacchavijaya cannot be definitely established. Nevertheless, if the identification of the Nīla mountain and the river Sītā be accepted then it
must be conceded that large tracts lying in Chinese Turkestan or in modern Sinkiang has been marked as Mlecchakhanda in Jaina texts. At the same time, all the regions, however, did not belong to the Mlecchas; for, the regions contiguous to the river Sītā are called Āryakhanda. As such, according to Jaina tradition, even regions lying beyond the traditional limits of India sometimes belonged to Āryakhanda. It should be mentioned that the tribes like the Pulindas, Śabaras, Barbaras, Kirātas and even Simhalaś are located in tracts approaching the Mt. Nīla, i.e., the Tien-shan ranges. The location does not conform to Puranic tradition. The Pulindas and Śabaras, according to the indigenous Sanskrit texts, were the various tribes, mostly belonging to the hilly regions covered by the Vindhyan complex, who lived on hunting. The only possible explanation is that in the regions adjacent to the Nīla or the Tien-shan ranges, there were tribes who lived a primitive life. Otherwise, we have to assume that either the Jaina texts like the Tiloya-paṇñati and the Jambudīvapaṇñati do not give us the true geographical map or the proposed identification of the rivers and mountains are wide of the mark. The Jaina texts refer to a large number of countries as Mleccha or Anārya land. Some of them are extra-Indian countries and some non-Indian tribes of India, who figure in the Brahmanical texts as well.
All the Mlecchas did not belong to one particular racial stock. They differed from each other in colour and physical characteristics. According to the Paumacariya, the Mlecha army who fought on behalf of Āgrārāṇga, belonged to different colours. Some of them were as black as charcoal, some had the colour of the wings of parrots and some were copper-coloured. Some of them were again dwarfish and flat-nosed, which negatively indicates the existence of tall and sharp-nosed Mlecchas. The flat-nosed Mlecchas remind us of the Cirrhadae of the Periplus who are described as "a race of men with flattened noses". They have been identified with the sub-Himalayan Kirāṭa tribes. Ptolemy also mentions Kirrhadai in two different contexts. The Mlecchas of the Vindhyan region were very dark (māsivannam).

With regard to the dress and ornaments, the Paumacariya records that some of them put on simply birch leaves and some only loin clothes. They adorned themselves with ornaments or flowers. Some of them even painted their persons with metal paints. The Kirātas, who are described in the Ādiśvasaracarita as Mlecchas, lived in the dense forests and adorned themselves with the skin of the deers.

The Mlecchas, according to Jaina tradition, were great fighters. The Tiloyapanṭati refers to their forts (khandāvēra).
The Adisvaracarita alludes to the Kirata chiefs wearing armour, impregnable like tortoise shells, helmets, covered with the hair of bears, holding bows made of horns and iron arrows and fighting with swords, lances and clubs. In the Paumacariyam, they are described as fighting with arrows, spears and missiles (khantā). The Jaina texts, however, recognise the language of the Mlecchas as distinct from that of the Āryas. Thus, the Suyagadam (Sūtrakṛtāṅga) states, "as a Mlecha repeats what an Ārya has said, but does not understand the meaning, merely repeating his words, so the ignorant, though pretending to possess knowledge, do not know the truth, just as an uninstructed Mlecha". That the Mlecchas spoke a different language is clearly hinted at in the Adisvaracarita.

Various religious rites and ceremonies as well as festivals are mentioned in the Jaina texts. It is difficult to determine which ones of them were practised by the Mlecchas. The Nisītha-Curni, however, refers to the festival called "Bahu-Milakkha-maho" in which the Milakkhas, i.e., Mlecchas, participated.

The Mlecchas followed the practice of burying the dead bodies. They did not cremate them. The burial ground is
referred to as "Madaga-giha". In the Churni of the Nisītha-sūtra, "Madaga-giha" has been explained as the room (gharabbha-tara), where the dead bodies lie buried and not cremated.

Although a better position for the Mlecchas has been hinted at in the Aṅgavijñā, the old contemptuous feeling, which scatters in the Brahmanical texts, also recurs in the Tiloyapannati. In reviewing the circumstances under which the Kalkis and Upakalkis of the Jaina tradition took birth in order to put an end to social disorder (dharma-droha), it is stated that the people at each stage turned dullard, appeared like monkeys and followed manners and customs of the Mlecchas. In the commentary of Malayagiri on the Śrī-Frahāpanopāngam the religion and rituals followed by the Āryas have been described as those par excellence (upādeya). It negatively indicates that the Mlecchas were far inferior to the Āryas in religion and culture.

The Ādiśvaracarita states that even a Brähmana estranged from religion would be born as a Mleccha. The story of Vasu-bhuti, related in the Paumacarīya, shows that a person committing murder was reborn as a Mleccha.

In the Trisastisālakāspuruṣacarita, the Mlecchas are stated to be devoid of the sense of vice and virtue. They have been compared with beasts (pasūṣaricchānam). The monks and nuns
on pilgrimage are advised to avoid the frontiers inhabited by
the robbers and the Mleechas who indulge in incontinence (liter-
ally who rise and eat at an improper time). They are further
advised to avert the places where there are accessories to
temptation, i.e., where there are cars and chariots and where
the Mleechas and foreigners congregate.  

The Mleechas were rich both in men and money. The
Kirātas of the northern half of Bharatavarṣa, named Āvaḷas
(Āpatas), are described as having unlimited mansions, much gold
and silver, live-stock and retinues of slaves. The Mleccha
rulers of the Kaccha country are said to have presented to
general Susena heaps of gold and jewels, elephants, horses and
chariots.

The Mlecchas also lived in the villages of the Bahalī
country, which was very rich and prosperous. The Mlecchas of
the villages are described as having immense wealth. They
 hailed from the northern half of Bharatakṣetra. It may be
mentioned that Takṣasila (modern Shabdheri near Rawalpindi,
Pakistan) was the capital city of the Bahali Country.

The Āvasyakacūrṇī refers to the Tañana Mlecchas of
Uttarāvaha, i.e., Uttarāpatha. They went to Dakṣiṇāpatha for
trade. The merchandise included gold and ivory. They could
not understand the language of the southerners and the entire transaction was carried by the signs of hand.

The Nayādharmakāhā, Viyāhāpananti and the Nisītthasūtra refer to the women of Babbara, Pausa, Joniya, Pahlava, Isinīya, Thārugin, Lāsiya, Laksikka, Dravida, Simbala, Āraba, Pulinda, Pakkana, Murunḍa, Sabara and Pārasya countries. According to the Nisītthasūtra, they were not allowed to visit the crowned king. As we have already seen, most of the countries figure in the Śrī-Prajñāpanopāṇgam as belonging to the Mleccha zone.

Although aspersive statements are not altogether absent, the Jaina texts definitely envisage a better social and economic position for the Mlecchas. There is reference to the Mlecchas congregating in cities crowded by cars and chariots. They amassed wealth and maintained slaves. Socially they were not boycotted. The Paumacariyam records the story of king Sumitra of Satadhārapura in Dhatukhanda of Airavata gastra. Once the king while riding entered a jungle and was taken captive by the Bhils who followed non-Aryan customs and manners. There the Mleccha king gave his daughter in marriage to Sumitra who returned to his capital with the newly wedded wife.

The primary importance of the Jaina texts in the present context lies in the fact that for the first time they
unambiguously refer to extra-Indian territories as belonging to
the Mleccha domain. The copious reference to non-Indian tracts
as Mleccha might have been due to growing knowledge of the Jaina
traders of the foreign countries in course of trade.

A large number of votive inscriptions from Mathura,
ascrivable to the period of the Imperial Kuśāṇas, indicate the
donors' adherence to Jainism. Mathura during this period
rapidly developed as a great centre of trade and commerce. The
non-Indian characteristics of the terracotta figurines from
Mathura and other north Indian sites definitely prove either
the presence of or close contact with the foreigners. Be it
noted that extra-Indian territories are regarded as Mleccha land
in an early text, i.e., Jambudvāpannati, which probably bears
the memories of an earlier tradition. Thus, the concept of
the term Mleccha in the sense of foreign countries was fast
emerging in the early centuries of the Christian era largely
due to the increasing knowledge of foreign countries in the
wake of trade.

Notes and References ... p.154.
NOTES AND REFERENCES.


2. Āvasayakacūrni of Jinādāsa, Ratlam, 1928, p.99a; Visesāvasyakabāṣya with the commentary of Mālādhari Hemachandra, Benaras, 1911, Śloka 1821ft.; Ādīśvēracerita, GOS, LXI, p.1, n.3; H.R. Kapadia, "Ethico-Religious Classification of mankind as embodied in Jaina Canons", ABORI, 1933-34, pp. 97 f.

3. Paumacariya, Chap.XXVII, Sec.29, p.226; XXXIV, 39, p.274.

4. "... Ariyattam punarayi dullaham / Bahaye Dasuya Milukkhuyē .... // (J. Carpentier, op. cit., X. 16, p.103); see also SPÉ, XLIV, p. 43.
5. RV, I. 34. 7; I. 100. 18; I. 103. 3; I. 117. 21; II. 11. 19; II. 13. 9; III. 4. 9; IV. 18. 3; VII. 5. 6; X. 49. 3 etc.


7. Ibid.

8. Jambudīvapāṇati, VI. 33-34, p. 121.

9. Ibid., VI. 79, p. 126.

10. Ibid., VI. 109, p. 129.


12. Paumacariyam, XXVII. 64, p. 231.

13. Ibid., XVIII. 64, p. 231.

14. Śrī-Prajñāpanopāngam, I. 36, p. 54.

15. Ibid.


21. They may be identified with Maroundai of Ptolémy (op. cit., p. 212). They are located on "the left bank of the Ganges, south of the Gogra, down to the top of the delta". According to a Chinese text, a king in India bearing the title Meou-loun...
ruled in the middle of the 3rd century A.D. His capital lay about 7,000 li (i.e., more than 1,000 miles) from the mouth of the Ganges. Meou-Loun has been taken to be the Chinese corruption of Muruṇḍa. It may be mentioned that according to Hemachandra, Lāmpaka and Muruṇḍa are identical (Abhidhāna-cintāmanī, Ed. by Hargovindas, Bhavnagar, Veer Era 2441, p.383). They are mentioned in the Allahabad pillar inscription of Samudragupta along with the Śakas. See also Allan, CCGD, p. XXIX and JBORS, XVIII, p. 210.

22. Possibly Sanskrit 'Uṣṭras'. They cannot be identified.


24. Its location is not known.

25. J.C. Jain identifies them with the Pareikanoi of Herodotus. They formed a part of the empire of Darius I and were probably the early inhabitants of Ferghana (J.C. Jain, Life in Ancient India as depicted in Jaina Canons and Commentaries, New Delhi, 1984, Reprint, p. 438).

26. They have been equated with the Kulatthas mentioned in the Mbh. (J.C. Jain, op. cit., p. 436). In the Mārkandeya Purāṇa, they are mentioned as a people of Northern India (Pargiter, op. cit., p. 375).

28. Most probably Ceylon.

29. According to the Áváyakaumrī (op. cit., p. 472), it was a great centre of trade. Merchants from different corners used to congregate there. It has been identified with Persia (D.C. Sircar, Cosmography and Geography in Early Indian Literature, Indian Studies, Past and Present, Vol. VII, No. 3, p. 342).


31. They may be identified with the Dravīḍas of Sanskrit literature.

32. Possibly the Kirātas.

33. They are mentioned in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VII. 8), the Mbh. and Rām. (IV. 43. 11). Kālidāsa places them in the Vindhyā region (Raghuvaṁśa, XVI. 99. 32). In R.E. XIII of Aśoka, they are associated with the Andhras. The Navagraha grant of the Parivṛ̤jaka Mahārāja Hastin mentions Pulindarāstra (El., XXI, p. 216). The Mbh. refers to the Pulinda-nagara (II. 29. 10).
34. Cannot be identified.

35. They are mentioned in the Brhat Samhita (XIV. 20) and in the Divyavadana (E.B. Cowell and R.A. Neil Ed., Cambridge, 1886, XXXVII, p. 580). S. Levi is inclined to identify it with Wakhan (JUPHS, XVI, Pt. II, p. 49).

36. Most probably the people of ancient Gandhara.

37. Probably the Pahārīya. Pahāriya is mentioned as a script in the Prajñāpanopāṇgam (I. 37, p. 55).

38. Cannot be identified.

39. They are mentioned as Roma or Romasa or Romaya or Romaka. It has been identified with the Salt Range in the Punjab (A. Cunningham, op. cit., p. 181).

40. Cannot be identified.

41. Probably Mālavas.

42. They probably lived in the strip of land between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea from about the Bombay point to Goa (Cunningham, op. cit., p. 486). In the Uttarādhyāyana curni (p. 115), it is mentioned as 'Asandinādiya', which did not overflow with periodical sea tides. For other references see J.C. Jain, op. cit., pp. 382-83.

43. See Chapter V, n. 14.

44. Possibly the Margaras of the Brhat Samhita (XIV. 18). J.C. Jain is inclined to identify them with the Madrakas (Jain, op. cit., p. 437).
45. Probably the Abhisas of the MBH. (VIII. 91. 40).

46. See Chapter V, n. 17.

47. May be identified with the Mundas. For their habitat and language see S. Fuch, op. cit., pp. 38-39 and 165-67.

48. It reminds us of the Khari tribe of Meghalya.

49. They are probably the Dombas mentioned in the Nisīthaścrapuni (IV. 2619, p.243), who used to worship the Ghanātya Jakkha. It was a caste of degraded musicians who belonged to Northern India (Census of India, 1931, Vol.I, Pt.I, p. 564).

50. See Chapter V, n. 20.

51. According to the Avasyakacūrṇī (p.440 f.), it was situated on the way to Ujjeni (i.e., Ujjayini) from Vibhaya. The Nisīthasūtra (XVI. 5652) refers to the extreme crisis of water in this land. It is probably the same as Marusthali, which denoted the desert of Rajasthan.

52. Cannot be identified.

53. Vindhyavāsin(?)

54. In the MBH., they are mentioned along with several other tribes. To Manu, they were Vṛṣṭya Kṣatriyaḥ (X. 43-44). They have been located in Gilgit, Astor and Yassan regions by Atkinson (E.T. Atkinson, Notes on the History of the Himalayas and North Western Provinces of India, 1883, p.12).

55. H.M. Johnson (Trans.), Trisastisalākāpurusacarita, GOS, LXI, 1931, pp. 393-94.
56. Ibid., p. 232.
57. Ibid., p. 230.
58. Ibid., p. 244.
60. Ibid., IV. 267.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid., IV. 245, p. 171.
63. Ibid., IV. 244.
64. Ibid., IV. 1333, p. 319.
66. Life, p. 76.
68. Cannot be identified.
69. See n. 33.
70. See Chap. V, n. 7.
72. Most probably Ceylon.
73. Tiloyapannati, IV. 2290, p. 433.
74. Ibid., IV. 2291, p. 433.
75. Ibid., IV. 2397, p. 445.
76. S.M. Ali, Geography of the Purāṇas, New Delhi, 1966, p. 10; see also the map facing p. 112, fig. 11.
77. Ibid.
79. Moti Chandra, Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India, New Delhi, 1977, p. 131.
82. Ibid., p. 253.
83. S.N. Majumdar Shastri (Ed.), McCrindle's Ancient India as Depicted by Ptolemy, Calcutta, 1927, pp. 218 and 276.
84. Paumacariyam, XXXIV, 38, p. 276.
85. Ibid., XXVII. 33, p. 226.
87. Tiloyapannati, IV. 1335, p. 319.
94. Ibid., III. 1535, p. 225.
95. Tiloyapannati, IV. 1539, p. 346.
96. Prajñāpanopāgām, p. 55.
98. Paumacariyam, XXXIX, 37-36.
100. Paumacariyam, XXVII. 17, p. 225.
101. Ayaramgasutta, II. 3. 1. 8, p. 83.
102. Ibid., II. 11. 17, p. 117.
104. Ibid., p. 232.
105. Ibid., p. 276.
106. Ibid., p. 183.
107. Āvasyakacūrṇī, I. 20.
111. Ibid., Vol. I, p. 121.
112. Prajñāpanopāgām, I, 36, p. 54.
113. Paumacariyam, XII. 13-14, p. 129.
114. B.N. Mukherjee, Mathura and Its Society in the Saka-
115. A. Ghosh, "The Kushanas of some Excavated sites in
      Northern India", in Central Asia in the Kushāna Period,