CHAPTER - IX

EPILOGUE:

EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE TERM MLECCHA.

As there is no unanimity with regard to the dates of a large number of texts, which have been explored in this thesis, we have arranged them thematically. A tentative chronology of the sources may help us in tracing the conceptual development of the term Mleccha.

The Sumerian texts bearing references to Meluhha are referrable to the period between c. 2350 B.C. and c. 2000 B.C.1

The earliest text in which the term Mleccha occurs is the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. It can be assigned to c. eighth century B.C. on the ground that the age of the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas roughly covers the period between c. B.C. 1500 and B.C. 700. The Dharmasūtras of Āpastamba and Baudhāyana have been assigned by Mm. P.V. Kane to the period between c. B.C. 600 and c. B.C. 300. To this period also belong the Dharmasūtra of Gautama as well as the Astadhyāyī of Pāṇini. The Dātupātha, traditionally ascribed to Pāṇini, however, may be treated as a comparatively later work.

With regard to the date of the Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali,
the opinions of scholars do not differ. Reference to Pusyamitra (Śuṅga ruler) and to the Yavana invasion, as an event of the recent past, indicates that Patanjali flourished in the middle of the second century B.C. There is, however, a good deal of controversy with regard to the date of the Arthasāstra. Traditionally ascribed to the Maurya period, the Arthasāstra indicates that the final compilation took place at a comparatively later period. The treatise, popularly known as the Manu-Samhitā, cannot be dated earlier than the beginning of the Christian era and by no means before the first century B.C. The social and geographical contents, however, may indicate a date around the 3rd century A.D.

There are, however, uncertainties with regard to the Buddhist texts which sometimes bear earlier traditions current during the lifetime of Buddha. Of the early canonical texts, the Vinaya Piṭaka, Aṅguttara Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya, Dīgha Nikāya and the Saṅyutta Nikāya can be assigned to the third century B.C., while the Thera Gāthā and the Theri Gāthā to the first century B.C.² Though the Jātaka stories have often been used as source materials for the reconstruction of the history of the age of the Buddha, their final compilation might have taken place at a comparatively later period. The representation of some of the Jātaka stories on the Bharhut railing may indicate
their existence as early as in the second century B.C. The Atīta-vatthu portions of the Jātaka, however, are undoubtedly later commentaries. It is thus difficult to say whether the Jātakas, which have come down to us, were all known in their present form during the 6th-5th centuries B.C.

There are speculations with regard to the date of the Sanskrit Buddhist work Lalitavistara. As a Tibetan translation of the (Hybrid) Sanskrit work was done in the ninth century A.D., the text cannot be ascribed to a period later than that century. The antiquity of the text does not go back before the commencement of the Christian era or even to the first century A.D. On consideration of the language, style and contents the text appears to have been a work of the third-fourth century A.D. It cannot be regarded as the basis of the work of Aśvaghosa.

Of the two Indian epics, neither the Mahābhārata nor the Rāmāyaṇa is the product of a single author. There are strong reasons to believe that the period between the beginning of the composition of the nuclei and that of the final compilation of both the epics was a long one. The nucleus of the oldest portion of the Great Epic can be dated to the fourth century B.C. It took its final shape not later than fourth century A.D. The Rāmāyaṇa can be placed between the second century B.C. and the second century A.D. In between the centuries, covered by the
epics, may be placed a large number of texts which have been utilised by us. The *Yuga Purāṇa*, one of the earliest texts to refer to the social upheaval effected by Mleccha domination, can be placed in the second-first century B.C.

Some of the Sanskrit texts belonging to the category of technical literature may be assigned to the third century A.D. Of them the *Yavanajātaka* of Sphujidhvaja bears the date 191, referrable to the Saka era, which corresponds to A.D. 269.⁷

The *Nātyaśāstra* of Bharata has been assigned to a period between the second century B.C. and second century A.D. or to the fourth century A.D.⁸ There is controversy among scholars with regard to the *Kāmasūtra* of Vātsyāyana also. According to some scholars, the work may be assigned to the third century A.D. The second view is that the date of the *Kāmasūtra* may be pushed back to the first century A.D., while some scholars are inclined to assign it to c. A.D. 500.⁹ The *Brhatsambhita* of Varāhamihira have been assigned to a period of about c. A.D. 500.¹⁰

According to Jaina tradition, the canonical texts cannot be dated before the fifth century A.D.¹¹ Jacobi is of the opinion that the Jainas did not have any written canon before 683 years had elapsed after the death of Mahāvīra.¹² There are some Jaina texts like the *Āyaranāgasutta*, *Suyagadānīga* and
Uttarājībhāyanasutta which exhibit the use of the most archaic language, and, as such, can be placed in the fifth-sixth centuries A.D. There are, however, at least two non-canonical texts which can be placed in the early centuries of the Christian era. These are (1) the Paumacariya of Vimalasuri who flourished 530 years after the nirvāṇa of Mahāvīra and (2) the Aṅgavijjā. The language, style and contents of the text on prognostication (i.e., Aṅgavijjā) indicate an early date not later than the third century A.D. Of the other Jaina texts, the Padma Purāṇa of Ravisena, was written down in A.D. 678. The Tiloyapannati and the Jambudvipapannati appear to be later texts which may be ascribed to the eleventh century A.D. Hemacandra's Trisastisalakāpurusacarita was written at the desire of king Kumārapāla between A.D. 1160 and A.D. 1172. The Adiśvaracarita is only a section of this work.

The real difficulty, however, lies with the dating of the Purāṇas and some Smṛti works. According to Wilson none of the Puranic works can be assigned to a period before the sixth century A.D. Al Beruni (973-1048 A.D.) mentions all the eighteen Purāṇas. It indicates that all the major Purāṇas were known before c. A.D. 1000, though additions and alterations in some of them had been going on even after that date. Some of these Purāṇas appear to have been composed sometime between
the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. The 
Harsacatita of Bāñabhaṭṭa (seventh century A.D.) refers to the 
Vāyu, while the Čandīsataka, ascribed to Bāṇa, and the Mālai-
ṛdhava of Bhavabhūti (eighth century A.D.) mention the 
Kārkaneya. The Viṣṇu and Mātṛya also have been regarded as 
two of the older Purāṇas. It is possible that at least a 
section of the Skanda Purāṇa was in existence in the sixth-
seventh century A.D. A large number of sections found in the 
Līṅga, Varāha, Nāradiya, Agni (Kūrma and Bhāgavata belong to 
the period between c. A.D. 800 and c. A.D. 1000.18

Of the later Smṛti texts explored by us, Al Beruni 
refers to the works of Atri, Hārīta, Likhita, Śārikha, Gautama, 
Bṛhaspati, Kātyāyana, Vyāsa and Usānas.19 As such these texts 
may be assigned to a date not later than c. A.D. 1000. The 
text of Devala may be dated about the 8th-9th century A.D.

Of the secular texts, the Mudrārakṣasa of Viśākhadatta 
can be ascribed to a period prior to the ninth century A.D., 
though a date between the sixth and seventh centuries may not 
be wide of the mark as Viśākhadatta appears to have been one 
of the older group of dramatists who succeeded Kālidāsa.20 
The Kathāsrīrīśāgarā, a version of the Brhatkathā, was 
undertaken by Somadeva of the eleventh century A.D.21
The dates of the rest of the principal literary texts are more or less certain. Bilhana wrote the *Vikramākādevacarita* during the reign of Vikramāditya VI (A.D. 1076-1126), the Calukya ruler of Kalyāṇa. Kalhana, the author of the *Rājatarangini*, was born in the beginning of the twelfth century and completed his monumental work in the year 1148, while Jonarāja, the author of the second *Rājatarangini* belonged to the second half of the fifteenth century A.D.

The dates of the sources, belonging to the two other categories, viz., foreign accounts and epigraphs, can be determined with certainty. It is well known that Hiuen-Tsang visited India in the first half of the seventh century A.D. and that the work of Al Beruni belongs to the first half of the eleventh century A.D. Most of the inscriptions, referred to in this thesis, bear dates. The date of the Gwalior Prāṣasti of Bhoja can be ascertained on the basis of the known dates of the Pratīhāra king.

In the light of the above discussion, the following table of the chronology of the sources explored by us may be built up:

(A) c. B.C. 2350—c.B.C. 2050 — Sumerian Records.
(B) c. 700 B.C. — Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
(C) c. 600 B.C. — c. 300 B.C. — The Dharmasūtras of Āpastamba, Baudhāyana and Gautama.

(D) c. 300 B.C. — 1 B.C.:
1. Vinaya Piṭaka
2. Aṅguttara Nikāya
5. Saṁyutta Nikāya.
6. Thera Gāthā.
7. Therī Gāthā.
8. Arthasaśstra of Kautilya.
9. Mahābhāṣya.
10. Dhātupātha of Pāṇini.
11. Yuga Purāṇa.

(3) c. 300 B.C. — 400 A.D. —
1. Mahābhārata.
2. Rāmāyaṇa.

(F) c. 1 A.D. — 300 A.D. —
1. Maṇu Smṛti.
2. Nārada Smṛti.
4. Paumacariya of Vimalasuri.
5. Aṅga Vijjā.
7. Viṣṇu-Smṛti.
8. Yavana Jātaka.
(G) c. A.D. 300 — A.D. 750 —
1. The Vāyu, Viṣṇu, Agni, Yatsya, Märkaṇḍeya Purāṇas.
2. Brhatsambhita of Varāhamihira.
3. Āyarsāgасutta.
4. Suyagadārīga.
5. Uttarājñānasutta.
6. Padmapurāṇa of Raviśeṇa.
7. Prajñāpanasūtra.
8. Skanda Purāṇa.
9. Hiuen Tsang's account.

(H) c. A.D. 750 — A.D. 1200 —
1. Mudrārākṣasa of Viśākhadatta.
2. The Padma, Kūrma, Bhāgavata, Garuḍa, Varāha, Vāmana and Brāhmaṇḍa Purāṇas.
3. The Smṛti works of Vyāsa, Devale, Atri, Usānas, Sāṇḍilya, Parāśara and Hārīta.
4. Tāloyapānāṇati and Jambudvipānāṇati.
5. Triṣastisālākāpurusācarita of Hemacandra.
7. Al Beruni's Account of India.
8. Vikramānākaḍevacarita of Bilhaṇa.

contd ... 260.
10. Epigraphic Records between c. A.D. 750 and 1200 A.D.

2. Rajatarangini of Jonaraja.

The survey of the contexts, in which the term Mleccha and its variants have been used in the sources of different categories, brings out that their connotation varied in accordance with the changes in the social outlook and political perspectives. In the light of the tentative dating of the sources, an attempt may be made here to trace the chronological development of the concept of the term.

In the second half of the third millennium B.C., a country or a people was known to the Sumerians as Meluhha. Its people carried on a thriving trade with and had their colonies in Mesopotamia. In all probability, the land of Meluhha lay somewhere to the east of Makran. The tentative suggestion that the Semitic term Meluhha may have its counterpart in Sanskrit Mleccha can be defended on linguistic reasoning.25 Although
Meluhha had been known to the Sumerians as a country or a people, the term **Mleccha** came to be used by the Vedic Aryans as connotating a language or denoting the speakers of an obscure language unintelligible to them. This is apparent from the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* which contains the earliest reference to the word **Mleccha**. The specimen of Mleccha speech, cited in this text, does not, however, help us in any way to reconstruct the morphology of the language. The infiltration of Mleccha words into Sanskrit seems to be vouchsafed by the statement of Jaimini (I. 3. 10) that the words like **pīka** (cuckoo), **nema** (half), **sata** (a wooden vessel) and **tāmarasa** (red lotus) are to be understood in the same sense in which the Mlecehas used them. This is adumbrated in the *Nighantu* and the *Nirukta*. Nevertheless, the concept of the term concerned lingered through down to the second century B.C., when Patañjali recognised the language negatively by almost laying down an interdiction against its use. In the *Mahābhāṣya* the same passage from the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* has been quoted as an illustration of the Mleccha speech indicating thereby the transmission of an earlier tradition through centuries. It is equally possible that by the time of Patañjali (c. middle of the second century B.C.) the actual Mleccha language had already become obsolete, and, as such, the great grammarian could not collect any other specimen of that obscure speech. It may be added that Patañjali's objective was
to instruct the learners to guard themselves against the use of *apas'abdas*. The *Mahābhāṣya* recognises only two divisions of words or language, *viz.*, Vedic (*Vaidikāḥ*) and popular or classical Sanskrit (*Laukikāḥ*). As illustrations of *laukika-śabdas*, *Patanjali* mentions *gauḥ, sāva, purusah, sākuniḥ, mṛgah* and *Brāhmaṇa* and as those of the Vedic lore *"sanno-devir-abhis-taye"*, etc. The *apas'abdas* belonged to neither of them. The passage from the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* has been cited only as an illustration of the ungrammatical language.

If the *Dharmaśūtra* of *Gautama* be ascribed to the third century B.C., as has been done by *Mm. P. V. Kane*, then there are reasons to believe that the import of the term *Mleccha* had undergone changes before the days of *Patañjali*. *Gautama* uses the term not in the sense of a language but in that of people or peoples and describes them as *aśuci* and as *adharmaṇa*. The implication is that all social transactions with the Mlecchas, who did neither perform the vedic rites nor follow the principles of social deportment, were forbidden. The transformation of the import of the term had thus taken place sometime between the completion of the text of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* about the 7th/8th century B.C. and the date of the composition of the *Gautama Dharmaśūtra* (c. third century B.C.). The *Dharmaśūtras* of *Āpastamba* and *Baudhāyana* (ascribed to the period between
B.C. 600 and B.C. 300 by Mr. Kane) do not contain any explicit reference to the Mlecchas, though the latter prescribes for the performance of purificatory rites for a person travelling to the countries which lay beyond Madhyadesa.

With the spread of Aryanisation the term Mleccha acquired a new dimension. In the early Buddhist texts, viz., the VInaya Pitaka and the Anguttara Nikaya, the entire population of Jambudvipa has been divided into Ariyaka (Aryaka, i.e., Arya) and Milakkha or Milakkhyu (i.e., Mleccha). The latter lived in outlying countries which lay beyond the pale of Buddhism. It appears that the Mlecchas of the Dharma Sutra of Gautama and the Milakkhas or Milakkhus of the early Buddhist texts denoted the indigenous peoples or tribes who were driven away by the large scale agricultural communities "into the forested mountains, where they have survived even to this day". In other words, the peoples with a primitive economy, who could not adjust themselves to the new religious ideas and mode of production of the invaders, retired to "areas of isolation" where they had the scope to preserve their age-old beliefs and practices. These are the people who have been denoted by the terms Mleccha and Milakkha/Milakkhu occurring in the early Dharma Sutras and Buddhist canonical texts respectively.

The concept of the division of the population into Arya
and Mleccha can be traced in the Arthasastra of Kautilya as well.
The distinction between the two lay in matters relating to
economic privilege and habitat, only the outlying regions and
outsides of villages being marked for the Mlecchas. Instead of
referring to them as "impure" barbarians, Kautilya enumerates
the Mlecchas along with the thieves and robbers who threatened
the security of the bordering provinces. Sometimes they were
recruited in the army as well as in the allied department of
espionage for their proficiency in secretly inoculating poison
into the body of the enemy. The Arthasastra does not indicate
any substantial change in the concept of the term concerned.
The text, however, suggests a modification of the over-all atti-
tude towards the Mlecchas. The extent of the empire of the
Mauryas, frequent movement of army, enterprises undertaken by
the merchants and traders and attempts at mobilization of the
resources, both natural and human, led to the opening of new
routes and hardly left any region totally isolated from exploita-
tion. The result was that a large number of non-aryan people
came into contact with the bearers of a higher culture. Kautilya
does not count them as elements of the varna system; still he
encourages the increase of the slave population by enjoining
that selling or mortgaging children is not a punishable offence
to a Mleccha couple.
In the Dharmasastra of Manu, better known as Manu Samhitā, reference has been made to Brahmāvarta, Brahmārṣıdeśa, Yajņīyaśe, Āryāvarta and Mlecchadeśa. While the geographical boundaries of the first four have been outlined by Manu, Mlecchadeśa is stated to denote regions beyond Āryāvarta (lying between the eastern and western seas and between the Himalayas and the Vindhyas). It appears that the above terms have been used by Manu purely in a cultural or sacerdotal sense. Āryāvarta was practically synonymous with Aryan culture and primarily the land of the śīstas who were devoted to the cultivation of Vedic studies. Mlecchadeśa, as such, would denote the regions beyond Aryan dom where Aryan culture could not make its headway by the time of the composition of Manu Samhitā. Manu reiterates the concept of the term Mleccha in the sense of a language and distinguishes it from the speech of the Āryas. He further comments that the people, who had been declared as out-laws due to their reluctance to observe Brahmanical rites and relegated to the position of Dasya, spoke either Ārya or Mleccha language. The peoples of extra-Indian origin like the Yavanas, Śakas, Pāradas, Pahlavas and Činas and those of indigenous origin like the Paṇḍrakas, Oḍras, Dravidas, Kirētas, etc., have been regarded as Śudras. The Śudras, again, would settle either in Āryadeśa or Mlecchadeśa, according to their
choice and scope of subsistence. Nevertheless, Manu does not specify the countries and the peoples to be marked off as Mleccha. In other words, he does not use the term concerned in a geographical or ethnic sense. The import of the term Mleccha is primarily cultural in character. The concept of the term Mleccha in an opprobrious sense also developed which continued through centuries. In the classification of the living world, the Mlecchas are regarded as equal only to the best of the animals like elephant, horse, etc.

An important stage in the development of the concept of the term Mleccha can be discerned from the two epics of India which were compiled between c. B.C. 400 and c. A.D. 400. Being repositories of diverse traditions, old and new, the epics mention both indigenous and outlandish peoples as Mlecchas. For the first time, the Yavanas, Kāmbojas and Činas are explicitly referred to as Mlecchas. The coastal regions of the east, south and west, the Vindhyan ranges in the centre and mountains in general sheltered the Mlecchas of indigenous origin. The criterion for distinguishing them remains unaltered. They did not observe the Brahmanical rites, nor did they follow the norms of social behaviour prescribed by the law-makers. Matrimonial alliance with the Mlecchas are not unknown. Śalya, the Madra prince, has been described as a Mleccha. He was the
brother of Mādrī, the second queen of Pāṇḍu. We can postulate that the Mlecchas of the Indian epics belonged to at least two categories, viz., (1) the various indigenous tribes of mountainous regions and coastal belts, and (2) the Mlecchas who belonged to the nobility and had connections with the Indian ruling houses at diplomatic levels through matrimony.

Further development of the concept of the term Mleccha is illustrated in the Jaina texts. The geographical, ethnographical and cultural import of the term is perceptible in the division of the world into Ārya-khanda and Mleccha-khanda, polarization of the human population into Ārya and Mīlakkха (Mleccha) and in the categorization of the deities into Ārya-devatā and Mleccha-devatā respectively. For the first time extra-Indian countries (not peoples) are mentioned clearly as Mleccha countries. The river valleys abounding in Ārya and Mleccha populations have been referred to. More emphasis has, however, been given to the region now included in Soviet Central Asia. The Jaina texts undoubtedly demonstrate furtherance of the knowledge of the geography and ethnography of the Indian sub-continent and the foreign countries. The Jaina text on prognostication, viz., the Aṅgavijñā, indicates that at least some of the Mlecchas had grown rich and became masters of slaves. The Aṅgavijñā can be ascribed to the period between the second
and third centuries A.D., when the far-flung empire of the Kushānas had already rendered the openings to and from Central Asia busy with caravans led by merchants. The presence of a large percentage of foreign population in Mathura can be deduced from archaeological remains. It was the growing knowledge of the Jaina traders regarding the countries lying beyond the traditional confines of India which had largely been instrumental behind stamping the foreign countries and population as Mlecchas. The tradition had been handed down from generation to generation and thus recorded in the Jaina texts of later days. The principal criterion for distinguishing the Mlecchas was foreign origin rather than observance of Brahmanical rites.

Denotation of the term Mlecha widened to the greatest possible extent in the Purāṇas which distribute the Mleccha population over the different island-continents (dvīpas) and in the countries watered by certain rivers of immense importance. The number of peoples branded as Mlecchas swelled up. The earlier concept of the term, however, survives. The indigenous tribes of coastal belts, forests and hills, not abiding by the rules laid down by the law makers, as well as the foreign peoples and countries, known to the compilers of the Purāṇas, came to be recognised as Mlecchas. The attempt at bringing them into the Brahmanical fold is noticed in the matter of giving
them an origin from Pracetas, Ikṣvākus and the Pauravas and also in that of recognising them as an element of the thirteen ājātis of the Indian population. The Mlecchas, considered to be a jāti, appear to have been those of indigenous origin; for Al Beruni in the eleventh century A.D. remarks that the Hindus call the foreigners by the name Mleccha meaning impure. Impurity, no doubt, characterises the Mlecchas for which all sorts of contact with them, according to the later Śrīmā texts, required performance of purificatory rites. Nevertheless, the statements made by Al Beruni seem to point to the bearers of Islam as the main target of the Hindus. This is corroborated by the epigraphs of northern India from the ninth century A.D. onwards in which the term Mleccha occurs first for the Arabs and then for the Turkish invaders of northern India. The same term has been used in the later Tārāṅgas of the Rājatarāṅginī of Kālhaṇa, the Prabandhacintāmaṇi of Kerkutūṅga and in the Rājatarāṅginī of Jonaśāja to denote the Turks. The finest illustration is furnished by the Delhi Museum inscription referring to Mleccha Sahāvadina (i.e., Sahab-ud-din Ghuri) as the first Turuṣka who seized Ḍhillikā (i.e., Delhi).

In eastern India, however, a ruling dynasty of Prāg-jaotisā (Assam) of the early medieval period came to be designated as Mlecchas. In all probability, it is an attempt to
Sanskritise the tribal designation 'Mech' who still survive in Assam and have a Tibeto-Burman or Mongoloid origin and were absorbed into the Indian society at an early period.

The upshot of the above discussion is that the term Mleccha in the earliest stage stood for a particular language or the speakers of that language. The various indigenous peoples, who had taken shelter in the isolated regions of hills and forests during the period of the gradual extent of the Aryan culture and had preserved their primitive way of life, were then branded as Mlecchas. As India came into closer contact with the world outside through campaigns launched by foreigners, the denotation of the term Mleccha widened. It denoted the peoples who did not adhere to Brahmanism and, on the other hand, followed the practices which were not prescribed by the social thinkers of ancient India. In the next stage the term under review denoted the Arabs and finally the Turks or the followers of Islam. This connotation survived till the advent of the Europeans professing Christianity. The term Mleccha then came to be applied to the followers of Islam and Christianity in general.

Several other terms, sometimes considered along with the Mlecchas, are Antyaja, Patita and Vrātya. In the list of
antyajas, enumerated in the later Smritis, the Mlecchas are conspicuous by their absence. The difference lay in the fact that while the antyajas constituted the lowest strata of the society, the Mlecchas did never figure as an element of varna and jati. Even in the list of varnasamkaras, given in the Manusambhï or in such late texts as the Brahmagivartta and Brhadddharma Purânas, the Mlecchas have not been recognised. Thus, in spite of the existence of the Mlecchas in different parts of the country, they were never considered as a constituent element of the Brahmanical society.

The Patitas, on the other hand, denoted those who had been excommunicated from the society for their non-observance of the rules and regulations laid down by the social thinkers of ancient India. Mm. P.V. Kane quotes a passage from the Vâśistha Dharmastra (XV. 17) which states that the Patitas could be re-admitted to all social intercourse when they performed the prescribed penances. Both the Antyajas and Patitas were actually the despised castes who were provided with the lowest professions. They lived outside villages, but were recognised as elements of the society, particularly in the early medieval period. The land grant documents of this period from eastern India contain references to the despised
castes like the Medas, Andhakas, Candalas, etc., in a manner which indicates their association with cultivation in some way or other.

From the references to the Vrātyas in later Vedic texts it appears that they originally denoted some non-Aryan tribes. Their cradleland was South Bihar. They were not governed by the rules of varna and āśrama and were worshippers of Śiva. According to the Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa, the Vrātyas did not till the soil, nor were engaged in trade. It also appears that they spoke the _language as the orthodox people. They differed only in their ways of life and food habits. The Kātyāyana Śrautasūtra lays down that "by performing the Vrātyastoma sacrifice, they ceased to be Vrātyas and become eligible for social intercourse with the orthodox Āryas". Thus, like the Patitas, the Vrātyas also could be readmitted to the Brahmanical society. It is, thus, clear that by duly performing the propitiatory rites prescribed in the legal texts any person fallen or excommunicated from the society could regain his position within the Brahmanical fold. No such rites are, however, prescribed for the Mlecchas. This shows that they were neither fallen nor outcaste. That is to say, they were not regarded as a constituent of the varna system. It is only in the later Smṛti works of the early medieval period that some propitiatory rites have been prescribed for
contamination with the Mlecchas, Candalas, etc., by way of food or intercourse. A survey of the injunctions laid down in the legal works, however, brings out that the degree of punishment for the offence gradually lessened with the passage of time mainly due to the presence of the foreigners in large numbers. The relaxation of the rules had to be formulated since reciprocality in social intercourse between the Indians and foreigners could no longer be arrested. The attempt on the part of the Indian thinkers to bring such people as the Yavanas, etc., who have been branded as Mlecchas under the Brahmanical influence, is perceptible in the Śāntiparvan of the Mahābhārata. Candragupta Maurya is known to have contracted a matrimonial alliance with the Greek king Seleucus in the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. The appointment of the Mlecchas as governor of provinces was not unknown in ancient India. As early as the third century B.C. one Yavanarśja Tusāśpa was the governor of Surāśtra during the reign of Aśoka. In the tenth century A.D., we know of one Sugatipa of the Tajika (i.e., Arab) race, who had become the governor of Samyāna country (i.e., Sanjan) during the reign of Indra III. His father Madhumati was also the governor of the same region during the time of Krṣṇa II. The presence of Arab feudatories in the Sanjan territory is attested to by contemporary records. There are thus reasons to believe that the relation between the
ruling class of India, on the one hand, and the alien rulers branded as Mlecchas, on the other, continued at the diplomatic level.

The attitude of the Indians, other than the ruling class, towards the Mlecchas is clear from the writing of Al Beruni. He points out that to the Indians all the foreigners were Mlecchas and impure. Al Beruni has tried to explain the causes which led to the antagonism between the Hindus and the foreigners. The depredations carried on by the bearers of Islam have been accounted for the repugnance of the Hindus. But the more potential factor, according to Al Beruni, was the national character of the Hindus who were "haughty, foolishly vain, self conceited and stolid". These were actually the factors which led the Indians to look upon the foreigners in general with a feeling of contempt. This feeling persisted throughout the medieval period and even in the early stages of British rule.

It may be noted that another term, occurring in various sources of Indian history in different contexts, is Yavana. The concept of this term also underwent changes in different ages. In the earliest stage it denoted the Greeks. Ultimately it came to denote the followers of Islam and had finally become interchangeable with the term Mleccha.

Notes and References ... p.275.
NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. For further details see Chapter II.
5. Ibid., p. 246, n. 1.
12. SPE, Vol. 45, p. XVIII.
15. Ibid., p. 485.


25. See Chapt. II.


30. *Ibid*.

31. See Chapter IV.

32. See Chapter III.


34. See Chapter IV, Sec. B, n. 13.


44. See Chapter VII.

45. *Mbh.*, Śāntiparvan, Ch. 65; see also *HDS*, II, p. 389.


48. See Chapter VIII.