THE MLECCHAS IN THE VEDIC LITERATURE
AND OTHER EARLY SOURCES

The earliest reference to the term Mleccha occurs in the Satapatha Brahmana. In this text it is stated that the Asuras were defeated while uttering he'lavā, he'lavā. It further warns a Brāhmaṇa against uttering indistinct and corrupt speech, since by doing so he would become a Mleccha.

It is to be noted in this connection that in the Kanva recension of the Satapatha Brahmana a different reading is recorded. Instead of "he'lavā, he'lavā" we have "haile-haile". On the basis of this version Macdonell and Keith suggested that "the barbarians referred to were Aryan speakers, though not of Sanskrit but Prakrit form of speech". This interpretation rests on the hypothesis that "haile" or "he'lavā" is the Prakrit corruption of the original "be-arayah".

It appears from the Satapatha Brahmana, that at least a non-Sanskritic dialect or rather an user of it was known as Mleccha.

Patañjali (2nd Century B.C.) while explaining the utility of the study of the science of languages (śabdānuśāsana) warns a Brahmin to guard himself against the use of
In connection with apasabdha, Patanjali quotes the above noted passage of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. From the succeeding portion of the passage it appears that "beḷava" is a specimen of Mleccha dialect, which was used by the Asuras.

Apaśabdha means bad or vulgar speech. It also means an ungrammatical language or any form of language other than Sanskrit.

That the term apasabdha does not merely signify "corrupt words" is apparent from the succeeding portion of the text explaining "dustā-sabdha" separately. Patanjali, however, admits that apasabdhas are numerous in comparison to sabdas, and that for the identification of apasabdhas and sabdas one must acquire the secret of the science of words. Thus, it may be presumed that experts in the science of words were not unaware of apasabdhas; only their usage by a Brāhmaṇa was not prescribed.

It is evident that the Mleccha language used by the Asuras was either a vulgar speech or ungrammatical in character or anything but Sanskrit. In any case it is clear that Patanjali uses the term Mleccha in the sense of a
language or speakers of that language rather than that of a people or country. It may also be presumed that the Mleccha language had classic examples of *apāsābdas*.

The relevant passages of the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Mahābhāṣya* tend to indicate that the term Mleccha was used at least up to the time of Patañjali, i.e., about the middle of the second century B.C. in the sense of a language.

We may now explore earlier sources, foreign as well as indigenous, to find out whether the term Mleccha or its equivalent or a phonetically analogous word was ever used to designate a language or a people or country.

Much has been made of early Mesopotamian evidence to prove that the people of that ancient land had collected valuable information with regard to the countries which lay to the east and were connected with them through maritime trade. In this connection reference has often been made to the term Meluhha.

Meluhha is mentioned frequently in Old Mesopotamian documents, the earliest being an inscription of Sargon I of Akkad (2334-2279 B.C.). The reference relates to Meluhhek.
ships docked at Akkad, the capital city. The owner or "holder" of a Meluhha ship with Akkadian name is mentioned in a text of about 2200 B.C. and a man of the Meluhha ship is mentioned in another record from Akkad.

These references only indicate that the term Meluhha was sometimes used to distinguish either a particular type of ship or a particular seafaring community or a country or even a people.

In the above context we may refer to an Akkadian cylinder seal which mentions one Shu-ilisu, the eme-bal of Meluhha. The term eme-bal has been taken by Edzard and Oppenheimer to mean an interpreter of a foreign language. In that case it stands to reason that the language of Meluhha was not intelligible to the Mesopotamians and that the language did not belong to the "Mesopotamian linguistic empire".

That the Meluhhans, speaking a language different from that of the Mesopotamians, belonged to a different country transpires from the Gudean records. They mention Meluhha as "Kur" denoting either a "mountain" or "land" or even a "foreign land". Meluhha supplied gold to Gudea (2143-2124 B.C.). The Meluhhans feature regularly in these records as
dropping in from their country. Inscriptions of Gudea of Lagash states that the "Meluhhans came (or down) from their country" to supply wood and other raw materials for the construction of the main temple of Gudea's capital.

The continuous influx of the Meluhhans resulted in regular settlements. They find mention in texts datable from about the middle of the 21st century B.C. These texts refer to Meluhha village, the granary of the village of Meluhha, a Meluhhan and Meluhha garden.

Reference to the granary of the village of Meluhha may signify, according to Parpola, that it functioned as a unit of agricultural production delivering grains as tax or selling it. However, the granary could have been the store-house of grains used by the Meluhha people for trade. They themselves need not have produced the grain.

A village of Meluhha in this context was probably a settlement founded by the Meluhhans as a trade colony for the convenience of the seafaring merchants. That such colonies were in touch with the Sumerian society seems to be hinted at by the adoption of Mesopotamian names by the Meluhhans. For example, Ur-Lama described as the "son of Meluhha" and Ur-Babu son of Bazi of Meluhha are all Sumerian in character.
They imply that the people of the village of Meluhha were gradually being Sumerianized. Such an acculturation is possible only when a family or community live for at least a few generations in or under an alien culture. For the sake of argument it may be pointed out that the "son of Meluhha" as the qualifying epithet may even signify a personal name. But when compared to other relevant documents, it may be taken to mean as "the son of (the village of or the land of) Meluhha".

Meluhha played an active role in the maritime trade of the Persian Gulf. The myth of "Enki and the World order" describes "magilum ships from Meluhha carrying gold, silver and lapis-lazuli for Nippur".

Boats from Tilmun, Magan and Meluhha are mentioned in the texts of the lexical series HAR-ra = hubullu. These texts probably belong to the period of the Third Dynasty of Ur (c.3130-2030 B.C.). The countries mentioned above exported copper and produced date-palms. Meluhha in addition exported red stone and special kinds of wood. Carnelian, mesu-wood, abba-wood and gold are included in the list of articles from Meluhha via the Persian Gulf during the days of the Third Dynasty of Ur.
Records of the time of Gungunum and Sumelium of the Larsa dynasty (c. 2030-1770 B.C.) enumerate articles which were given to the temple of the goddess of Ningal as tithes by the Tilmunites before and following their journey to Tilmun. Sumerian records also refer to offerings by the Tilmun merchants who carried their merchandise to Ur. The list also includes a variety of articles from Meluḫḫa like semi-precious stones, carnelian, lapis-lazuli, materials for paint and pigment, ivory, both worked and unworked, and meaḫ-wood.38

Meluḫḫa is described in the ḫar-ra-ḫubullu as a seafaring country like Tilmun and Magan.39 Magilum ships from Meluḫḫa carrying gold, silver and lapis-lazuli for Nippur are mentioned in the "Myth of Enki and the World Order".40

The country of Meluḫḫa is thus associated with Dilmun and Magan. Cornwell has referred to some inscriptions of Sargon II of Assyria (721-705 B.C.) in this connection. These inscriptions relate that the king of Dilmun "lives a fish 30 beru away in midst of the sea of the rising sun".41 In the Sumerian flood myth, Dilmun is described as the "land of the rising sun".42 It is important to note that "sea of the rising sun" was the Assyrian name of the Persian Gulf.43

Dilmun thus appears to have been an island in the
Persian Gulf. The distance up to Dilmun is estimated in the above mentioned records as 30 beru, which would be, according to Albright, 300 miles. It approximates the present distance from the mouth of the Euphrates to Bahrain.

Taking this identification of Dilmun with Bahrain as provisionally accepted, we may venture to suggest the location of Magan and Meluhha. It has rightly been noted that whenever the three territorial units are mentioned together in Sumerian records, the order of reference is either Dilmun, Magan and Meluhha, or Meluhha, Magan and Dilmun. It appears that these three territorial units were probably situated along the same line of communication. A possible identification of Magan (also given as Makan) may be sought for in the Makran coast in south-east Iran and south-west Baluchistan. Mention may be made in this connection to the Persopolis and Behistun inscriptions of Darius I, which refer to Maka along with Parthia, Drangiana, Aria, Bactria, Sogdiana, Gandara, Scythia, Sattagydia, Arachosia, etc. The Naqsh-i-Rustam inscription of Shapur I clearly mentions MKWRN along with Twgrn, P'rtm, Khdrtn etc. The name MKWRN = MKRN (< Maka + gliding N+ adjectival suffix AN) may be connected with the term Makan (Makaran). The fact that Maka or Makan was in the eastern sector of the Persian empire is an additional support in
favour of its identification with Makran. The land of Makan may be easily equated with that of Magan, which lay in the Makran coast to the south-east of Iran and south-west of Baluchistan.

Considering the order in which Dilmun, Magan and Meluhha are mentioned in early Sumerian records, we may place or locate the last of them somewhere to the east of the Makran coast, where Magan might have been situated. Landsberger also suggested for Meluhha a region to the east of Magan.

The distance between Mesopotamia and Dilmun recorded in the cuneiform texts has been referred to above. They give the distance between Mesopotamia and Meluhha as well. It is recorded as 120 beru from the mouth of the Euphrates to the border of Meluhha. It has been calculated to have been about 800 miles. The most important thing to note here is that it is exactly three times more than the distance between the mouth of the Euphrates and Dilmun, which is recorded as 30 beru. The space between Bahrain and the mouth of the Indus is also three times more than the distance between the mouth of the Euphrates and Dilmun or Bahrain.

The principal items of Sumer's trade with Meluhha may be taken into account in this connection. According to the
early Mesopotamian texts, Meluhha exported gold, silver, copper, melu-wood, abba-wood, ivory, both worked and unworked, kidney shaped beads, peacock, hen of Meluhhan species, ebony and furnitures made of it.

Wheeler points out that ivory work was an Indus craft. He refers to a person at Mohenjodaro as carrying an elephant tusk. Peacock is typically an Indian bird, which is also represented on ceramics from Cemetery R-37 of Harappa. The forests belonging to the domain of the Harappan culture were sources of different kinds of wood which were floated down the Indus for export. The sources of silver and copper were situated either within the Harappan realm or in the bordering territories. Copper was also supplied from Khetri and Debari mines of Rajasthan. Robat and Shah Bellaul in Baluchistan and Kurram mines in Afghanistan could have also supplied copper.

More information with regard to the people of Meluhha is available from early Sumerian texts. In the "Curse of Agade", an Old Babylonian hymn, the Meluhhans are described as black complexioned and belonging to a foreign country. They used to bring commodities from all countries into the city of Akkad. In the "Myth of Enki and the World Order" also the Meluhhans are described in a similar tone.
Craniological examination of the skeletal remains from the Harappan sites reveal a sizable percentage of "long-headed" or "Dolicho-cranic" type. This racial element is present in Cemetery H of Harappa and may be compared to Group 'A' skulls (Proto-Austroloid) from Mohenjodaro. At Lothal the majority of skulls are meso-cranial (medium head), dolicho-cranial (long-headed) and a very few brachy-cranial (broad-headed). This clearly proves the presence of at least a recognisable percentage of "long-headed" type of people in the Harappan population. They probably belonged to the Veddoid or Austroloid group. Sewell and Guha designated them as Proto-Austroloids. They had probably dark skin and black hair.

Thus the reference to the country and people of Meluhha as black tallies at least to some extent with our knowledge of the racial types making up the Indus population. As has already been noted, the distance between Meluhha and Mesopotamia is recorded in early Sumerian texts. Following the distance and direction from the mouth of the Persian Gulf we arrive at a place not far from the Indus. To the west of the Indus plain we have a cluster of sites in Baluchistan, beginning with Mehergarh, yielding relics of the Harappan culture. In the east the domain of this urban civilization
spread as far as Alamgirpur in western Uttar Pradesh.

Excavations at Lothal and the adjoining regions have yielded unambiguous evidence of the sea-faring activities of the Harappan people. Lothal was the port whence maritime enterprises were undertaken in the direction of Dilmun (Bahrain).

The relationship that existed between the Harappans and the Mesopotamians has been dealt with in details. For a study of the cumulative evidence, it appears that the relationship was a close one. Peoples of the two countries were definitely known to each other. But we do not know the name by which the Mesopotamians were known to the Harappans.

However, the information that we gather from Akkadian texts regarding Meluhha and its people favours, to some extent, the hypothesis that they refer to the Harappan people. It is significant that reference to Meluhha in early Mesopotamian records disappears from a time which coincides with the beginning of the decadent phase of the Harappan culture. Carbon-14 testing proves that the dockyard at Lothal was abandoned by c. 1800 B.C. Incidentally, this date tallies with what we know of the end of the Mesopotamia-Meluhha trade. The beginning of this trade about c. 2350 B.C., as known from Akkadian texts, also coincides with the time when the Harappan culture.
had been in its maturest stage. The beginnings and terminus ad quem of the Mesopotamia-Meluhha trade cover the mature stage of Harappan culture. There is thus sufficient reason to postulate that at least a section of the people or a region within the domain of the Harappan civilization were known to the early Mesopotamians as the people of Meluhha.

Some idea of the physical and racial characteristics and culture of the people against whom the invading Aryans had to combat for territorial possessions is reflected in a few Rg-Vedic passages. The general appellation for these indigenous people is Dasa and Dasyu. These peoples are described as "black-complexioned" and as anasa. They spoke a language which was unintelligible to the Aryans. That these dasas or dasyus adhered to a religious belief quite different from that of the Rg-Vedic Aryans is amply proved by such terms as a-karman, a-devayu, a-vrata, a-brahman and anya-vrata. They have been used to characterise the Dasas. Some positive idea with regard to the features of their religious life can be had from the terms a-yajvan and aśīna-devaḥ. They lived in forts having ramparts.

Allchin has tried to show that by the time of the composition of certain hymns of the RV, a number of settlements
of an earlier population had already been transformed into ruins. From what we know of the people termed dāsa or dasyu, it appears that they lived in fortified cities and were phallic worshippers. This easily reminds us of the relics of the Harappan culture. They spoke a language which was obscure to the Rg-Vedic Aryans. We may compare it to the reference in the Mesopotamian records to the language of the Meluhhans. Let it be added that the dāsas and dasyus are described as dark-complexioned and that Meluhha has been described as a "black country" in the Akkadian texts. We may thus surmise that the people with whom the Aryans had encountered and the people called Meluhhans in early extra-Indian sources had certain common characteristics. As such both the Dāsas and the Dasyus of the RV and Meluhhans of the Mesopotamian records may refer to a class of pre-Aryans in India or even the people of the Harappan cycle.

Now the dāsas and the dasyus were speakers of a language which was not intelligible (mrdhra-vāc) to the Rg-Vedic Aryans. In other words the language did not belong to the Old Indo-Aryan group. The Satapatha Brāhmaṇa refers to the Mlecchas who spoke a language obscure to the Vedic Aryans. The language of the Mlecchas, thus, may be supposed to have belonged to a group other than the Indo-Aryan.
The people of Meluhha, as is evident from relevant data, were speakers of a language which did not belong to the Semitic linguistic empire. If Meluhha be placed within the cultural domain of Harappa, it has to be conceded that the language did not belong to either the Semitic or the Old Indo-Aryan group.

Three major linguistic groups are known to have existed in India, viz., Munda, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan. A.L. Basham conjectures that the ancestors of the speakers of Munda and Dravidian languages entered India in the Palaeolithic and Neolithic Ages respectively. Existence of a language group other than the Indo-European and Dravidian has been postulated. It influenced the vocabulary of the two others. Such a hypothesis may explain the survival of the Burushaski language in the Pamir and Hindukush valleys. It is important to note that this language does not belong to any known linguistic family.

It is not known whether the Mlecha language of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa survives in Burushaski. For the mere reference to 'Meleva', etc., in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa does not allow us to reconstruct the grammar of the Mlecha language. The only feature which might have been common is that neither the Burushaski nor probably the Mlecha language belonged either to the Semitic or to the Indo-European Group.
Indications given in the early Mesopotamian records with regard to the location and trading activities of the people of Meluhha have allured scholars to find out a counterpart of the term Meluhha in Indian languages. It is Mleocha, which has its earliest reference in the Satapatha Brahmana. Prof. Gadd and, following him, Leemans, point out that the toponym Meluhha and the term Mleocha indicate resemblance in form. It has been suggested accordingly that the country where Meluhha can be located was partially populated by the Mleochas.

According to R. Thapar, Meluhha can be derived from Proto-Dravidian *Melekku. The latter is the combination of the *√mel inflected by ukku (*mēl+ukku). *Mēl means 'up', 'high', 'the extremity'. The extended meaning may be superior and also western. Thapar suggests "mēl-ukku as a possible alternative and that KK might have been transliterated into HH in Sumerian. She thinks that the term Aparânta of Sanskrit texts, meaning 'western', may be taken as a translation of Proto Dravidian *mēlekkku. We may note that Mrs. Thapar does not account for the insertion of 'U' between *mēl and kku. Change of Proto-Dravidian KK into Sumerian 'HH' cannot
also be linguistically solved. Moreover, the implication of the expression 'Western' in the context of the Indus Valley Civilization remains obscure. The term 'aparanta' had been used in the sense of westernmost regions of India, only when 'madhyadesa' or the middle region came to be regarded as the centre par excellence. So the term Meluhha cannot mean 'western'.

Certain terms, which can be philologically related to Mleccha, occur in Buddhist and Jaina traditions. The relevant Buddhist texts contain references to Milakkha, Milukka, and Milāca (Milakkha > Milaccha > Milaccă > Milāca). In Jaina texts we come across with the terms Milakkhu, Melakkhu, Mleccha, Mecha and Miccha.

The cluster of unvoiced, unaspirated and aspirated velar stop KKH and unvoiced, unaspirated and aspirated palatal CCH have their origins in Old Indo-Aryan cluster of unvoiced, unaspirated velar stop and retroflex fricative KS. The former characterises the dialects of Eastern India and Madhyadesa while the latter those of North-Western India. KKH developed from the Indo-European labio velar *qʷ and the palatalised Chh from velar *q. The Vedic literature itself shows variation between KS and Chh.
Thus, Pali and Prakrit Milakkha or Melakkhu and Sanskrit Mleccha can be equated on philological grounds (Mleccha > Mlekkha > Milekkha), the insertion of short vowel being an anaptyxis or svarabhakti. The common origin of both the words may be *mleiksa in Old Indo-Aryan language group.

Bailey points out that the word *mleksa (i.e., the OIA form of Mleccha, "was a foreign name, adapted to the usual verbal system, giving the participle mlista". The derivative meaning of mlista would be "spoken indistinctly or barbarously". It may be derived from the √mlich added by the suffix te and compared to Slavic mlesti and Lithuanian mlisti.

The sound l is very rare in Vedic Sanskrit. In fact Indo-European l has been replaced in Old Indo-Aryan by r. Even later grammarians also state that l and r are interchangeable (ra-leyor-abbedab). As both the sounds are alveolar, they cannot be distinguished phonetically from each other. Hence, mlista and Mrsta are philologically the same.

Of the two, i.e., mlista and Mrsta, the latter, again, can be derived from √mrj+ta, since Sanskrit ja and jha (connected with the Old Indo-European palatal series g and gh) when followed by a dental develop into cerebrals, e.g., √raj+tta > rāstra. The root mrj in the form of marjastati means
'to roam' or 'to move about'. Whatever may be the linguistic connection, the words mlīsə and mrsta convey entirely different meaning.

The word mrasa found in the RV may be considered in this connection. The meaning is 'to heap', 'to rub', 'to collect', 'to strike', etc. The corresponding word in the Avestā is perhaps maraxa, maraaxa and mara, meaning 'to kill', 'to slay', 'to destroy', etc.

Mrasa, according to Phonetic law, may develop into *mlakṣa. From *mlakṣa, Mleocha can be derived (Mrasa > *Mlakṣa > *Mlkṣa > Milakṣa > Milaccha > Mleocha). As has already been pointed out, Mleocha of the Satapatha Brahmāṇa means indistinct speech or speakers of an indistinct speech. But the words derived from mrasa cannot signify etymologically any obscure tongue or indistinct speech.

Such a position gives rise to the question whether *Młeksə (the hypothetical word in the OIA group) is a foreign or hyper-Sanskrit word in Vedic language. It is well known that heterogenous words infiltrated into Vedic Sanskrit. In the age of the RV, the basic dialect of the north-west predominated. This is corroborated by the Satapatha Brahmāṇa and the Kauśitaki Brahmāṇa. The former regards speech among
the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas in the upper region as pure. The latter, on the other hand, states that "In the northern quarters is speech uttered with more discernment and northword go men to learn speech; he who comes thence, to him men hearken". The above examples clearly prove that the dialects of the Aryan language were losing their purity in the rest of India at a time when the north had preserved it.

It is apparent that the language of the RV is to some extent different from that used in the rest of the Samhitās, all of which exhibit some form of eastern colour. The language of the later Brāhmaṇas, Upanisads and Sūtras, in many points, bear some resemblance to that represented in the works of Yāska, a predecessor of Pāṇini.

The phonological and morphological changes were most probably due to contact between the Aryans and the non-Aryans. The contact became gradually closer with the eastward expansion of the Aryan culture and the consequent shifting of its centre from the Land of the Five rivers to the Ganges valley. Intermingling of the Aryans with the non-Aryans naturally led to the infiltration of non-Aryan words into Vedic Sanskrit and vice versa. This is why grammarians of the Prakrit language classify Prakrit words into three groups —
(a) Derived from Sanskrit (Sanskrita-yoni).
(b) Words which are used in the same sense in both Sanskrit and Prakrit (Sanskrita-samam).
(c) The words which are of indigenous origin and used in a particular region in a particular sense (Desi-prasiddha).

It is, therefore, reasonable to think that the word Mleccha is a hyper-Sanskrit one or was introduced into Sanskrit phonology. It is to be noted in this connection that the word does not occur in the Rg Veda Samhita nor does mleksa in Vedic Sanskrit. The word mrekṣa, from which Mleccha can be derived, carries a different sense. Hence, the possibility of its being a non-Vedic or non-Sanskritic word should be taken into consideration.

Let us now examine whether the toponym Meluhha of Akkadian records can be philologically equated to Milakkha or Milakkhu of Pali and Prakrit texts.

J. Hansmann associates the word Mleccha with Melubha. A. and S. Parpola point out that the terms Mleccha and Melubha are identical. According to them, the closest linguistic form of Melubha is Milakkha or Milakkhu. Wheeler, Allchin and S.R. Rao also think in the same line.
The sound cluster $\text{KKH} (\text{K} + \text{KH})$, as has already been pointed out, developed from $\text{OIA KS} (\text{K} + \text{S})$. So also is $\text{CCH} (\text{C} + \text{CH})$. All these forms are pronounced in the post velar to glottal region. The laryngial fricatives (ş) found in the toponym Meluhha is also uttered from the same organ. The sound $\text{KKH}$ may be accepted as a substitute for a foreign velar fricative. The same sound is exposed in Arabic by $\text{KH}$.

The sound clusters $\text{KKH}$ and $\text{HH}$ being articulated from the same organ, may, thus, be regarded as phonetically similar. As such, Semitic Meluhha and Prakrit Milikkha have the same phonetic values. Therefore, Milakkha or Milukkha, Mleooha and Melubha may be regarded as having the same phonetic connotation.

We should also bear in mind that the term Meluhha occurs in Sumerian texts, which record specimens of Semitic language, while Milakkha and Mleooha appear in the documents written in the languages belonging to the Indo-Aryan family. The two groups have different phonetic as well phonemic systems. Secondly, there is a gap of more than a thousand years between the date of the Sumerian documents and that of the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. By this time the languages belonging to the two families had undergone changes with the movement of
races and peoples. Unfortunately, due to lack of concrete evidence we are not in a position to assess these changes. The example is furnished by the well known term 'Septa-sind hva' of the RV. In the Indian context it denotes the "seven rivers" while the Avestan counterpart signifies "seven high places".

Thirdly, philological rules seem hardly to have been followed in recording names of places, countries, rivers and mountains in different languages. Some of these names were recorded by the foreigners, as they sounded to them, according to their alphabetical system. Nevertheless, we should not eliminate the possibility of connection between the terms Meluhha, on the one hand, and Milakkha and Mlecoha, on the other.

To sum up, the term Mlecoha occurs for the first time in the Satapatha Bṛhmaṇa, which may be ascribed to c. 8th century B.C. From the relevant passage, it appears that it was used to characterise the speech or dialect of the pre-Aryan population of India, or a speaker of such a speech. In the 2nd century B.C. Patañjali used the term in the same sense. The term Mlecoha cannot be linguistically related to any inc...
European word. Mleocha has been taken as equivalent to Meluhha of Semitic texts of ancient Mesopotamia. So the language spoken by the Meluhhans did not belong to the Indo-European linguistic empire.

The Akkadian records testify to brisk commercial activities of the Meluhhan merchants. Mesopotamia imported various articles like gold, silver, wood, ivory, carnelian, red stone, lapis lazuli, pigments, etc., from Meluhha. The Meluhhans founded a trading colony at Lagash. Their ship frequently visited the quay of Akkad. They had to take the help of interpreters in their dealings with the Sumerians, indicating thereby that their language was not affiliated to the Semitic group.

The Meluhhans are referred to as "black people" and belonging to a "black country", pointing to their racial traits. The epithet 'black' clearly shows that the people of Meluhha were racially different from those of the Aryans. They can be identified with the dolicho-cranials, who had formed the bulk of the Indus Valley population.

The Sargonic texts refer to the distance as well as direction from Meluhha (Indus Valley) to Tilmun (Bahrain). The distance between Mesopotamia and Meluhha was three times
more than the distance between Mesopotamia and Dilmun. The geographical order in which Tilmun, Magan and Meluhha are uniformly mentioned in early Sumerian texts allures us to place the last one to the east of Magan (Makran). Taking Tilmun and Magan as identical with Bahrain and the Makran coast respectively, we find a place for Meluhha somewhere near or in the domain of the harappan culture. Reference may be made to the existence of a clan known as the Me-lah-ha. They form a section of a sea-faring tribe of Sind, viz., the Mohanas, and are the speakers of a language which does not belong to the Indo-European group. 148

The term Meluhha of the Sumerian records may be equated with the term Milakkha (*Milaccha* > Mleccha of Indian records. The phonetic similarities are apparent.

All these facts lead us to conclude that the term Meluhha of the Sumerian records was used to designate a people or a country. The term Mleccha had initially been used to designate a language and also the speakers of such a language.

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Notes and References ... p.41.
NOTES AND REFERENCES.

1. Te-(a)sura ittavācaso he'lavāvo he'lavāvo iti vadantah parākṣā-
vaḥ // 23 // Tatrāitāmapi vācamādah / Upajīmāsvām sa
Mlecchastasmānna Brahmaṇo Mlecchādsuryāhāisa // 24 //.

III. 2. 1. 23-24.

(Sat. Br. (in the Madhyandina Sākhā), Ed. by A. Weber (re-
print edn.), Varanasi, 1964, p. 235.)

"The Asuras being deprived of speech, were undone, crying,
'He'lavāḥ, he'lavāḥ! // 23 // Such was the unintelligible
speech which they uttered, - and he (who speaks thus) is a
Mleccha (barbarian). Hence let no Brahmaṇa speak barbarous
language since such is the speech of the Asuras ..." // 24 //

(J. Eggeling, SBE, XXVI (Pt. II), (reprint edn.), Delhi, 1933,
pp. 31-32.)

2. The Asuras are classed along with the Easterners in the Sat.
Br. (III. 8.2.1 and XIII. 8.1.5). Their burial customs
differed from those of the godly people. The burial places
of the latter were four cornered while those of the former
were round (XIII. 8.1.5). The sepulchral mounds of the
godly people were built on the ground while those of the
people of the Asura nature, the easterners and others, were
separated from the earth (XIII. 8.2.1). (Eggeling, op. cit.,
Vol. XLIV, pp. 423- and 425.)
3. He'elava has been explained by Sayana as 'be-arayah', i.e.,
01 you enemies. (Commentary of Sayana, p. 325).

4. According to the Rg.Veda, I. 164. 45 and Sat. Br., IV.
1.3.17, there are four grades of speech. Of these, three
are deposited in secret and the fourth grade is spoken by
beings. Only one fourth part of the speech, which is
spoken by men is intelligible, the rest is unintelligible.
(Sat. Br., IV. 1.3.16, p. 268.)

5. Eggeling, op. cit., p. 31, n. 3.

6. Ibid, 'Haila' means 'He ila' i.e., "ho speech".

7. Macdonell and Keith, Vedic Index, (reprint edn.),
Varanasi, 1958, p. 181.

8. V.S. Agrawala, "Some Foreign Words in Ancient Sanskrit",

V.S. Agrawala thinks that "be'alava" is defined from 'ilu'
or 'eloh' which means 'God' in all Semitic languages.
(Babylonian-Cannite - 'ilu', Phonecian - 'el', Akkadian -
'ilu', Aramaic - 'elah', Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. AI
(fourteenth edn.), p. 354). According to him, 'ilu' or
'eloh' in vocative case becomes "be'lava-be'layo" or
"hailo". He thinks it to be a battle cry of the Asuras
with whom the Aryans came into conflict.

(Second edn.), p. 10.
"Te(a)surāh" / "Te(a)surā helayo helaya iti kuvantah parābhūvuh / Tasmād brāhmaṇena na Mlecchitavi nāpabhāsītaivai, Mleccho ha va esa yadapaśābdaḥ // Mleccha mā bhūmetyādyeyam vyākaraṇam / Te(a)surāh /" i.e., "Those demons saying "he'lavah, he'lavah" suffered defeat. So a Brahmana shall not speak indistinctly like a Mleccha, shall not use words or expressions that are corrupt, for a corrupt word is Mleccha. We should read grammar so that we may not become Mlecchas."

12. See M—Williams under apaśābda, p.52. In the Nyāyakośa, the term apaśābda is explained as one born of corrupt pronunciation of the śādu-sabdā. (Jhalkikar's Nyāyakośa, ed. by V.S. Abhayankar, Bombay Sanskrit Series No. XLIV, Poona, 1928, p. 56.
15. Yāska in his Nirukta does not definitely refer to the language of the Mlecchas, but recognises the existence of the languages other than that of the Aryans (II. 2), and the differences thereof (L. Swaroop, The Nighantū and Nirukta, Delhi, 1967, p. 67).

17. Parpola and Brunswick, op. cit., p. 130; H. Hackman, BIN, VIII, p. 298.

18. lu-ku-ma-me-luh-ha-ke, i.e., a man of the Meluhha ship.


24. Parpola and Brunswick, *op. cit.*, p. 131; Cyl. Z. IX. 19; XIV. 5; XVI. 22ff; Cyl. B. XIV. 13.


36. Leemans, *Foreign Trade*, p.10; *JESHO*, XI, p. 221.


40. See 35.


42. Caspers etc., *JESHO*, XX, p.134.

43. B. Cornwell, "Location of Dilmun", *BASOR*, No.103 (1946), p.133.


45. Arrian (2nd Century A.D.) in his *Anabasis* states that Ikaros (Failaka) lay 120 stadia away from the mouth of the Euphrates and that Tylos (Bahrain) was about a day and night's journey for the ship running before the breeze from the mouth of the Euphrates (Caspers etc., *JESHO*, XXI, p. 134; Cornwell, *op. cit.*, p. 163). There is thus a discrepancy between the estimate given in the inscriptions of Sargon II on the one hand and that given contd ... p.55.
by Arrian on the other. The voyage is of 60 hours (30 bern x 2 = 60 hours) according to the inscriptions, while it is 48 hours according to the calculation of Arrian. This discrepancy may be due to the advance of the coastline at the mouth of the Euphrates and the head of the Persian Gulf. This probably took place in the period between Sargon II and Arrian (Caspers etc., op. cit., p.134). The other factor that may be taken into account is that Arrian calculates the time for the ship sailing with the wind behind.


P.V. Glob identifies Tilmun with Bahrain (ILN, 11th January, 1958, pp. 54-55). Oppenheim at first located Dilmun in Bahrain (Ancient Mesopotamia, p. 63) but later he changed his opinion and identified it with Failaka.

47. Leemans, JESHO, III, p.29. Leemans quotes Eilers, according to whom the Sumerian name Magan /Mak(k)an/ lives in the name Makran on the south-east of Iran.
   Behistun inscription of Darius I, p. 117 and Persipolis
   Inscription of Darius I, p. 136ff.


50. Cf. Mkwn of the Nāqsh-i-Rustam Inscription of Shapur I,
   (ibid). There is a theory that Makai of Herodotus may
   be placed in Arabia.

   specified the north shore of the Persian Gulf including
   Iran past Elam and Anshan and the country stretching up.
   to the Indus Valley for the possible location of Meluhha.
   p.5; Caspers etc., *JESHO*, XXI, p.122). A more precise
   location of Meluhha has been proposed by Hansmann who
   places it in eastern Baluchistan particularly in the
   Balakot District along with the deltaic region of the
   Indus. (J. Hansmann, "A Periplus of Magan and Meluhha",
   609-10), The Meluhhans have been identified with the
   people of the Indus Valley or the Harappan in its widest
   chronological setting (Elisabeth, C.I. Caspers and

contd ... p.57.
A.L. Basham has suggested that Meluhha may be located in Gujarat (Leemans, Foreign Trade, p.164, n.1 and JESHO, XI, p.223). J. Thapar identified it with Gujarat and northern Konkan ("A Possible Location of Meluhha, Dilmun and Magan", JESHO, XVIII, p.11). Leemans located Meluhha in Sindh (Foreign Trade, pp. 162-64), and Herzfeld has suggested the Red Sea coast of Egypt (The Persian Empire, Weisbaden, 1968, pp. 63-64) as the probable location of Meluhha.

Landsberger suggested that the geographical names Magan and Meluhha in later Mesopotamian records became coterminus with Egypt and Ethiopia (ZA, XXXV, Pt.III, p. 217, n.2). The reason behind this transfer of names might have been the import of gold and silver from Egypt and Ethiopia to Mesopotamia which in earlier periods were imported from Magan and Meluhha (Ibid). For the identification of Meluhha with Ethiopia see Kramer, "The Sumerians", pp. 276-79 and "Dilmun: Quest of Paradise", Antiquity, No. CXLVI, p.114, n.11; Jacobson, Iraq, XXII, p.184, n.18. For the transfer of the name cf. G.F. Hourani, Arab Seafaring, p. 39.

52. Caspers etc., JESHO, XXI, p. 134.
53. Ibid.
54. See fn. 31.
55. ZA, LVI, p.67 and p. 105; JESHO, XI, p. 221.
57. Leemans, Ibid., p.161; and JESHO, III, p. 25; Parpola etc., JESHO, XX, p. 133.
59. Leemans, Ibid., XI, p. 222; ZA, LVI, p. 105, l. 22.
61. ZA, LVI, p. 104, lines 219-20.
63. Wheeler, Ibid., plate 21; Indus Civilization, Cambridge, 1968 (3rd edn.), p. 96, Fig. 14, No.10.
64. S. Asthana, "Harappan Trade in Metals and Minerals" in G.L. Possehl (edited), Harappan Civilization, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 275-77.


69. MANSI, IX, p. 58.

70. Ibid., p. 58; see also B.S. Guha and P.C. Bose in Mackay's Further Excavations at Mohenjodaro, pp. 630-31; Guha in M.S. Vats' Excavations at Harappa, Vol. II, p. 238.


74. C. Piggot, Pre-Historic India, pp. 146-47.


81. For the proposed identification of Meluḫḫa see Nos. 51, 52, 53 and 54.

82. RV, V. 34.6; VI. 22.10; VI. 33.3; VI. 50.6; VII. 83.1; X. 38.3; X. 69.6 etc.

83. RV, I. 34.7; I. 51.8; I. 100.18; I. 103.3; I. 117.21; II. 11. 18-19; II. 13. 9; III. 34.9; VI. 18.3; VII. 5.6; X. 49.3, etc.

84. Cf. Krṣpatavac in RV. I. 130.9; IX. 41.1.

85. RV, V. 29.10; Anāsa has been interpreted by Śaṭyaṇa as "without face" (an-āśa). It may also mean "noseless" or

contd ... p. 61.

86. Mrdhravac, RV, V. 29. 10; VII. 6. 3.
88. Indifferent to gods, RV, VIII. 70. 11.
89. Law-less, RV, I. 51.8; I. 175.3; VI. 14. 3; IX. 41.2.
90. Without devotion, RV, IV. 16.9.
91. Having a different law, RV, I. 33.4-5; IV. 16.9; V. 7.16; V. 42.9; VI. 14.3; VIII. 70.10; X. 22. 7-8, etc.
92. Not sacrificing, RV, VII. 6. 3.
93. Worshippers of the phallus, RV, VIII. 21.5; X. 99.3.
94. Cf. Purah, RV, II. 20.8; I. 131.4; VI. 20. 10.
95. Dehya, RV, VI. 47. 2.
96. Allchin, op. cit., p. 155. ; cf. the ruins of Vaitasthanaka and Mahāvaitasthanaka.
97. Parpola etc., op. cit., pp.130-131; Caspers etc., op. cit., p.131; Sollberger, op. cit., p. 248; Wölzard, op. cit., No. 15.33; Oppenheim, op. cit., p. 335.
99. See Nos. 97.


It is significant that in the Assyrian period the term Balubhu had been used for the region covering modern Sindh. Balubhu seems to be developed form of Meluhha (J. Hansmann, "The Periplus of Magan and Meluhha", BSCAS, XXXVI (1973), Pt. III, p. 556 and 581; XXXVIII (1975), p. 609). If Balubhu be taken as a later form of Meluhha, then the latter can be located in the same region, i.e., Sindh. A.L. Basham proposes the location of Meluhha in Gujarat and the identification of the Indus Valley people with the Mlecchas (Leemans, Foreign Trade, p.164, n.1; JESHO, XI, p.223). Evidently, Basham takes the toponym Mleccha and Meluhha as identical. Allchin also thinks in the same line (Allchin, op. cit., p.271). Such a proposition and indications given in the AV with regard to the culture of the Dāsas may lead us to the conclusion that the Dāsas or Mlecchas were the inhabitants of Northern India before the advent of the Rg Vedic Aryans. (A. and S. Parpola, Studia Orientalia, LXVI, pp.20-3.)

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid.


108. A. and S. Parpola, St. Or., XLVI, pp. 205-38. Parpola traces the word from *mēl-akam meaning 'above land'. That is to say he reconstructs Uhha as Akam.


113. Ibid., p. 263. Prajnpanopāngam, published by Agamodāya Samiti, Mehsana, 1918, p. 54; Sutrakrtānga, Ed. by P.L. contd ..., p. 64.
Vaidya, 1928, pp. 16, 105, 106 and 120; Acharangasūtra, 
114. Jambudvipapaññatisamgañha, Ed. by A.N. Upadhyay and H.L. 
Jain, Sholapur, 1958, pp. 129, 131, 133 etc.
115. Paumacariya, Ed. by H. Jacobi, Varanasi, 1964, pp. 44 
etc.; Tiloyapaññati, Ed. by A.N. Upadhyay and H.L. Jain, 
Sholapur, 1956, pp. 171, 174, 319, etc.
116. Paumacariya, p. 219 etc.
117. S.K. Chatterji, Origin and Development of Bengali 
118. B.K. Ghose, A Linguistic Introduction to Sanskrit Language 
Calcutta, 1975 (reprint), p. 75; S.K. Banerjee, "On the 
Etymology of Prakrit  sukckha and Vachchha meaning Tree",
sneha > sineha, klesa > kilesa, ratna > ratana etc.
Bailey thinks that the vowel 'e' of Mleccha is due to the ablaut system 'e': 'i'. (Bailey, op. cit., p. 585).

121. Ibid.
123. Ibid., p. 77.
124. RV, VIII. 39. 3.
125. RV, VIII. 74. 13.
126. The corresponding pronunciation in Sanskrit would be 
128. "i" is due to anaptyxis.
129. L. Renou, l'Inde Classique, p. 363; M. Jha, Magadhi and Its Formation, Calcutta, 1961, p. 3.
134. J. Hansmann, op. cit., p. 564.

136. Ibid.


140. \( K \) = unvoiced, unaspirated velar stop.

141. \( KH \) = unvoiced, aspirated velar stop.

142. \( S \) = Retroflex fricative.

143. \( G \) = Unvoiced, unaspirated palatal stop.

144. \( GH \) = unvoiced, aspirated palatal stop.


146. *RV., I.* 32.12; 34. 8; 35.8; 71.7; 102.2; *IV.* 28.1;
   *VIII.* 24.27; 96. 1 etc.
