

different tribe, both the records (No. 13, No. 14) claim that Skandagupta completely defeated these enemies.³³³ The fact that in both the inscriptions, the reference to the fight with the Hūṇas and Mlecchas is preceded by a reference to the falling fortunes of the family supports the identification.

We also find a reference to the oppression of the earth by the Mlecchas in the epilogue of the play *Mudrā-Rākṣasa* written by Viṣākhadatta where it is prayed that 'The earth may now be protected by "His Highness" along with relatives and retinue by king Candragupta'. It is probable that the play was written after the Rāmagupta episode and probably the word Mleccha in this context alludes to the Śakas who were suppressed by Candragupta II in the guise of the Gupta queen Dhruvasvāminī.

D.C. Sircar³³⁴ is of the view that Mleccha is the name applied to the Muhammadans and other foreigners. In the Sanskrit language originally there does not appear to have been any general term for a foreigner. But as the *Dāsa*, *Dasyu*, *Barbara*, and *Mleccha* became more or less absorbed in Āryan civilization and the original specific meaning of these terms was no longer remembered, these words came to be used for any foreigner.³³⁵

The word Mleccha was used to refer to both the eastern and western Ānavas. In course of time it came to be used for almost any non-Āryan and even for Āryans of impure speech. Subsequently the term meant something like "foreigner", but that was after most of the Ānavas had become assimilated.³³⁶ When not used in association with the foreigners the word Mleccha is used for one who is impure, dirty or uncultured. It is derived from the root $\sqrt{mlich} \sim mlech$,³³⁷ meaning to speak indistinctly (like a foreigner or barbarian who does not speak Sanskrit). We find the use of root in Mahābhāṣya.³³⁸

The Sanskrit term Mleccha, referring to the indistinct speech of some non-Āryans, is taken from proto-Bodish (proto-Tibetan) *mltse* "tongue", Old Bodish *ltse*, Kukish generally *mlei*, the combination of initial consonants (*mltś*—) being simplified in various ways in different Tibeto-Burmic languages. Aspiration cannot occur after *l* in old Bodish; and the proto-Bodish form may have been *mltse* for all we know, so the 'cch' of Sanskrit "Mleccha may come nearer the primitive affricate