

Hence, the absence of Sanskrit in Asoka's inscriptions indicates that it did not exist at that time, as otherwise he would have certainly used it. I pointed this out to my Brahmin friend and concluded that the doctrines of God coming into the world as a man, He being our Sacrifice, Salvation by Faith in Him, and our response of Total Surrender to God as a living sacrifice are doctrines of Christ, and these have influenced the writer of the Gita.

Several Indian scholars have recently established beyond a shadow of a doubt the existence of early Indian Christianity from the days of the first apostles. India had excellent trade relations by sea with the Roman empire during their time. Saivism first developed as a monotheistic doctrine and Siva was first called Isa which is the name for Jesus in the North. The avatar concept (God coming into this world as a man) in Vaishnavism is the influence of Christianity. Scholars have pointed out many other similar doctrines such as God indwelling man, Trinity, etc. Hence the core essence of Hinduism, Saivism and Vaishnavism, is from Christianity. Today, many use these similarities to propagate Monism and Reincarnation. Monism teaches that there is only one reality or thing or substance; everything else is 'maya' or illusion. Hence in Monism, we are God since there is no place for God and man! Monism and Reincarnation entered the Indian society in the 8th c AD as Advaita and corrupted the theistic faith of the Hindus.

Jesus said, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father, but by me. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. We have one life to choose.

Let's Reason Together

Dr. Alexander Harris
appiusforum@alum.MIT.edu
<http://appiusforum.net>

Significance of Sanskrit in Hinduism

Sometime back I was speaking to a Brahmin in Mylapore, India, who was a teacher of the Bhagavad Gita. Knowing that I was a Christian discussed the similarities between the two faiths with respect to the Gita. He pointed out the parallels in the doctrines of Sacrifice, Salvation by Faith, and Total Surrender to God. However, he quietly went on to say that the Gita was written several hundred years before the Christian era and probably even Christ might have read the Gita!

God tells us through His Word to always be prepared to give an answer to any one who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). Well, the earliest epigraphic evidence on languages employed in India comes from the inscriptions of Asoka inscribed in 3rd c BC. Asoka took care that his messages were intelligible to all and he used a particular kind of Prakrit. Even more remarkable is the fact, which has been recently discovered, that for those people who at the time lived in Afghanistan, his message was given in Greek as well as Aramaic. One of the Greek inscriptions is a translation of the Kalinga Edict, and the Greek in the inscriptions is not inferior in style to the classical Greek of Greek literature. In such circumstances neglect of Sanskrit by Asoka, if the language was in use, would be contrary to all his practices.

Nirad Chaudhuri in his book on Hinduism points out that 'the Gita is written in good classical Sanskrit, and epigraphic evidence clearly shows that the Gita could not have been written before the 2nd c AD.' He also points out that 'the Hindu religious texts, with the exception of the Vedas and their ancillary treatises, are all in classical Sanskrit. He says that in their present form none would be earlier than the 4th c AD.' The Vedas seem to be written in what he calls archaic Sanskrit, but, the X mandala of the Rgveda is written later. It is in the X mandala that we see the divine and human aspects of the Prajapati and His sacrifice of himself for us.

continued on last page

Historical Perspective of Worships and Religions in India

INDUS VALLEY BUDDHISM & JAINISM

Dravidian Civilization
before 3000 BC
discovered in 1920 AD

(Agnostic Religions)
Indian languages: Dravidi,
Artha-magadhi (Jainism)
Pali (Buddhism), Prakrit....

Dravidian Sacrificial worship

Syncretism of
Mitra into sun
worship

Hittite - Mitannian
Treatise (1380 BC)
Mitra, Varuna, Indra,
Nasatyas ...

Philosophers

Brahmanas &
Sramanas

Zoroastrianism
Persian Empire

Mithra loses
significance
Indra & Nasatyas
degraded as demons

Buddhism prospers under
Ashoka. Slaughter of
animals regulated

Rock Edicts
in Prakrit, Greek
and Aramaic

**Sunga
Dynasty**
Pushyamitra

Age of NW Invasions
Sakas, Pahlavas and
Kushans

Vegetarianism - influence
of Buddhism & Jainism

Buddhism
dominant
religion in the
North and
Jainism in the
South

Early Indian Christianity

South had excellent
trade relations by sea
with the Roman Empire

600 BC

300 BC

183 BC

0

**Split in
Buddhism & Jainism**
Mahayana Buddhism
Svetambara Jainism

First Sanskrit Inscription

Buddhism
& Jainism
Temple
worship

Idolatry
in the
North

Mahayana
Bodhisattva
concept

Sanskrit dominates inscriptions and literature

Gupta Dynasty
(320-540 AD)

Surya Worship
Numerous vedic solar deities
merged in Sun worship.
Sun Temple-Konarak, Orissa

Pallava Dynasty in South.
Development of temples and
idols in Hindu Religion.

Vedas compiled & given
written form by
Veda Vyasa

Sambandar
enters Saivism and
persecutes Jains

Advaita
based on Monism and
Cycle of Birth

Rajputs Period
(650-1200 AD)

Caste System established in North

Idolatry
in the
South

Split in
Saivism &
Vaishnavism

Caste System
in South

150 AD

500 AD

800 AD

Dr. Alexander Harris
Email: appiusforum@alum.MIT.edu

Monotheistic Religion

New Theistic Doctrines
Trinity, Avatar, Divine
fulfillment of sacrifice &
Salvation by faith

Chola Dynasty
(9th-12th c AD)
Kulothunga Chola III
persecuted Sittars who
were philosophers &
physicians.

Saiva Siddhanta
(12th - 14th c AD)

Sivagnanapotham
(13th c AD)
Indian Christian
Theology