

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 8<sup>th</sup> 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

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## 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

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# 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 ...

### Zoroastrianism

Persian Empire

Mithra loses  
significance  
**Indra & Nasatyas**  
degraded as demons

### Philosophers

Brahmanas &  
Sramanas

### Megasthenes

**Persian**  
influence  
in NW

**Greek**  
conquests  
in NW

Buddhism prospers under  
**Ashoka**. Slaughter of  
animals regulated

### Rock Edicts

in Prakrit, Greek  
and Aramaic

**Sacrificial**  
worship  
declines

**Sunga  
Dynasty**  
Pushyamitra

**Vedic**  
worship  
develops

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

## Monotheistic Religion

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

600 BC

300 BC

183 BC

0

## Split in Buddhism & Jainism

Mahayana Buddhism  
Svetambara Jainism

## First Sanskrit Inscription

Buddhism  
& Jainism  
**Temple**  
worship

Mahayana  
**Bodhisattva**  
concept

**Idolatry**  
in the  
North

Development of iconography (sculptures)  
Taxila-Mathura-Aihole-Kanchipuram

## 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**

Tamil Bhakti literature  
Devaram,Thiruvagasam,... Divya Prabhandham,...

**Sambandar**  
enters Saivism and  
persecutes Jains

**Idolatry**  
in the  
South

**Advaita**  
based on Monism and  
Cycle of Birth

**Rajputs Period**  
(650-1200 AD)

**Caste System established in North**

**Split in**  
Saivism &  
Vaishnavism

**Caste System**  
in South

Muslims  
control the seas

## 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

150 AD

500 AD

800 AD

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