ACTS OF THE APOSTLE THOMAS
THE STORY OF THOMAS CHURCHES

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# ACTS OF
# THE APOSTLE THOMAS
# THE STORY OF THOMAS CHURCHES
# M.M. NINAN

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"This Thomas preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians, the Hyrcanians and the Bactrians, and to the Indians of the Oriental region and penetrating the innermost regions and sealing his preaching by his passion he died transfixed with a lance at Calamina...a city of India, and there was buried with honor".  
*St. Isidore of Seville in Spain c. 630 AD*
The Holy Bible does not give any details regarding the Acts of Apostle Thomas. It does not even mention Thomas except as one of the disciples. It gives only the implantation of the gospel in the Greco-Roman culture. But it came as a surprise as I entered into writing the acts of Thomas to find a wealth of historical details and archealogical evidences to the vast ministry of Apostle Thomas. Compared to Paul and Peter, Thomas’ mission covered a larger region and a variety of alien and unfamiliar cultures. This study I hope will only be the beginning. Thomas indeed penetrated the innermost regions and sealed his preaching with a passion unmatched by any other.

The journey of Thomas had been a close parallel to my life journey. Thomas started as a scientist who refused to accept anything without evidence. But the historical reality of resurrection changed him completely. When I left India on a teaching commission, my parents reminded me of the great commission that Thomas handed down to my fore fathers. We were one of the four families who were given the responsibility of preaching the word and keeping the message pure. As a Physicist the existence of other dimensions were familiar concepts, but only as a theoretical possibility and assumption to explain phenomena. But once we experienced the resurrected Christ, like Thomas we cannot but preach the gospel.

« My Face now is engraved in you, 
remain in this world of darkness 
to guide and delight the eyes that are lost there. 
Bear witness to my Truth! »

Prof.M.M.Ninan
Mrs. Ponnamma Ninan
San Jose, CA 95126
Jan, 2011
Dedicated to
My Father & Mother
Who taught us all the deep mysteries of God, Jesus and his love

Mr. Madathilparampil Mammen Mammen
Printer, Publisher,Reformer, Freedom fighter

Mrs. Mariamma Mammen
Teacher

I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice
Prof. M.M.Ninan and Mrs. Ponnamma Ninan
Founding Moderator, International Christian Fellowship, Sanaa, YAR
Pioneers of Sudan Pentecostal Churches, Juba, Sudan.

He led you through the vast and dreadful desert, that thirsty and waterless land.
--Deuteronomy 8:15
APOSTLE THOMAS

Thoma Sleeha

Thomas was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

Mat 10:2 – 4

These are the names of the twelve apostles:
first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew;
James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;
Philip and Bartholomew;
Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;
James son of Alphaeus,
and Thaddaeus;
Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.
Thomas in Hebrew means "The Twin". So he was also known as "Didymus" which meant 'The Twin' in Greek. It obviously implies that Thomas was the twin brother of some other known person. His real name was Judas. **Judas** (Greek: Ιούδας) is the anglicized Greek rendering of the Hebrew name **Yehudah** (Hebrew: יְهوּדָה). Since there are so many persons with the common name Yehuda (Judah) the only way to identify is the nickname as Didymus. Here are some of the New Testament person by name Judas

- Judas Iscariot, the apostle of Jesus Christ who betrayed him
- Judas Thomas Didymus, commonly referred to as Saint Thomas and Doubting Thomas
- Judas Thaddaeus, son of James, one of the twelve apostles
- Saint Jude, a brother, stepbrother, or half-brother, to Jesus
- Judas the Zealot, whose identity is not completely clear, probably either of:
  - Saint Jude, who some traditions think is Judas Thomas Didymus
  - Simon the Zealot, the apostle named Simon that was not Simon Peter
- Judas Barsabbas, an emissary of the Church of Jerusalem to the Church at Antioch.
  - Judas Maccabeus, a founder of the Hasmonean dynasty
  - Judas of Galilee, also Judas of Gamala, Jewish revolt leader
  - Judas Cyriacus, man said to have assisted Helena of Constantinople find the True Cross

The Gnostics considers Thomas as the twin brother of Jesus. We have no evidence for this in the Bible. No, Mary did not give birth to two Children, Matthew 1:18-23. It also has the problem of a twin being conceived in Mary by Holy Spirit making Thomas also God incarnate. Jesus Christ is the Father's only begotten Son, John 3:16-17.

The *Book of Thomas the Contender*, found in the Nag Hammadi library, Jesus says: "Now, since it has been said that you are my twin and true companion, examine yourself..." Thomas probably looked like Jesus and so people called him the Twin. Still others consider that his attitude of rationality and interpretation corresponded a spiritual reflection of Jesus.

It has been conjectured that Thomas was the twin brother of Matthew. Some legends make Thomas the twin of James. What was his real name? All tradition ascribes the name Judas Thomas which makes his real name as Jude or Judas. In the lists of the apostles Thomas is always mentioned along with Matthew, who was the son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18), and that these two are always followed by James, who was also the son of Alphaeus. Hence it may be assumed that these three, Matthew, Thomas, and James, were brothers.

Even though the references to Thomas are few, they are sufficient to give us insight into this great rationalist scientist. Once committed he was willing to die for the cause. So when Jesus was planning to return to Jerusalem where people waiting to kill him, Thomas volunteered and encouraged his fellow brethren to dare to accompany Jesus even to death.

John 11:16 Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."
When Jesus began to speak of a heavenly abode, Thomas wanted a clearer explanation of where, when and how?

John 14:2-6 In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Thomas is also known as "The Doubting Thomas", because he demanded an objective proof of evidence for resurrection.

Thomas was the first disciple who confessed and acknowledged, Jesus as "My God and My Lord"

This indeed was the first time anyone ever recognized Jesus as God. Not even Peter ever came close to this realization even after the Mount of Transformation.

John 20:24-29 Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"
Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

In terms of Rom. 10:10 Thomas may be considered as the first Christian and was saved.

Rom 10:10 For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

In this sense Thomas indeed was the Twin of all the rationalists and scientists who stand up and shout loud “We demand evidence”

In all these Thomas is presented as a rational scientist who demanded evidence. He came to Bhakti (faith) through Jnana (Knowledge) and then went on to his business as a Karma (Action) yogi thus fully encompassing the dimensions of Spirit, Mind and Body.

JNANA YOGA - realization through Knowledge, objective scientific verification of truth
BHAKTHI YOGA - realization through Devotion (commitment).
KARMA YOGA - realization through Action,
In this sense Thomas indeed was the Twin of those who were like me rationalists and scientifically minded. We thank him for his incredulity that he may beget children of courage and absolute confidence.

« Because you see Me, you touch Me, and You kiss Me, Thomas, you are happy, you believe again, truly! Even happier and forever blessed are they who, in your midst, have believed without having seen... My Face now engraved in you, remains in this world of darkness to guide and delight the eyes that are lost there. Bear witness to my Truth! »
(Abbé Georges de Nantes, The Kiss of the Disciple)

Pentecost

First, Pentecost was an international experience. Jews from many nations were in Jerusalem, but surely, so were many Gentiles. "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." (Acts 2:9-11) But they were all Jews who gathered together in Jerusalem to celebrate the giving of the Covenant.

This was most probably in AD 30 - at any rate sometime between 29 and 33 AD giving all the uncertainties of dating.
Their voice has gone forth to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

(Rm 10:18)

Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185-254) writes that the apostles divided up the work of evangelizing the world between them. He mentions “Thomas was assigned Parthia, and John was given "Asia."” Origen was a contemporary to the writer of the Acts of Thomas, and was familiar with Thomas' adventures as a missionary in India. Acts of Thomas mentions that the Apostles "divided
the countries among them, in order that each one of them might preach in the region which fell to
him and in the place to which his Lord sent him."

“At that time we the apostles were all in Jerusalem—Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother;
James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew
the tax-gatherer; James of Alphæus and Simon the Cananæan; and Judas of James; — and we por-
tioned out the regions of the world, in order that each one of us might go into the region that fell to
him, and to the nation to which the Lord sent him. By lot, then, India fell to Judas Thomas, also
called Didymus. And he did not wish to go, saying that he was not able to go on account of the
weakness of the flesh; and how can I, being an Hebrew man, go among the Indians to proclaim the
truth? And while he was thus reasoning and speaking, the Saviour appeared to him through the
night, and said to him: Fear not, Thomas; go away to India, and proclaim the word; for my grace
shall be with you.”
Where did the Apostles go?

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<td>Parthia [Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia], Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew (Peter's brother)</td>
<td>Cappadocia, Galatia, Bithynia, Scythia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon the Zealot</td>
<td>North Africa [Egypt, Cyrena, Mauritania, Lybia], Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James son of Alphaeus</td>
<td>Spain, (and possibly Britain and Ireland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Parthia, Media, Persia [Carman, Hyrcani, Bactria – that is Iran and Afghanistan today], Northwest India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomew</td>
<td>Parthia, Media, Persia, Northwest India</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judas (Libbaeus Thaddaeus)</td>
<td>Assyria, Mesopotamia</td>
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<td>Philip</td>
<td>Scythia, Upper (Northern) Asia Minor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthew</td>
<td>Parthia, Asiatic Aethiopia (Hindu Kush)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td>Gaul? (modern France)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James (brother of John)</td>
<td>beheaded by Herod (Acts 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matthias (replaced Judas Iscariot)</td>
<td>Dacia (Romania), Upper Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul (Apostle to the Gentiles, Israelites, and kings)</td>
<td>Southern Asia Minor, British Isles</td>
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What Happened to the disciples?

1. Peter was crucified head down in Rome, 66 A.D.
2. Andrew was bound to death. He preached until his death in 74 A.D.
3. James, son of Zebedee, was beheaded in Jerusalem by the sword. (Acts 12:1-9).
4. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, 96 A.D. (Rev. 1-9).
5. Phillip was crucified at Heirapole, Phryga, 52 A.D.
6. Bartholomew was beaten, crucified, then beheaded by the command of a king, 52 A.D.
7. Thomas was run through by a lance at Corehandal, East Indies, 72 A.D.
8. Matthew was slain by the sword in the city of Ethiopia about 60 A.D.
9. James son of Alphaeus, was thrown from a pinnacle, then beaten to death, 60 A.D.
10. Thaddeus was shot to death by arrows, 72 A.D.
11. Simon was crucified in Persia, 74 A.D.

“Thomas (Didymus): Notable for his initial incredulity regarding the Resurrection and his subsequent forthright confession of the divinity of Christ risen from the dead; according to legend, preached the Gospel in places from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf and eventually reached India where he was martyred near Madras; Thomas Christians trace their origin to him; in art, is depicted kneeling before the risen Christ, or with a carpenter's rule and square; feast, July 3 (Roman Rite), Oct. 6 (Byzantine Rite).” Catholic Almanac
We meet Thomas in AD 40 in Taxila. However we do not have detailed mission activities of most of the Apostles including Thomas from the Pentecost till the middle of the century. The New Testament Acts of Apostles were written from the point of view of the Greco Roman Christians even that from the Mission fields of Paul and Peter only. There was no Luke to follow the other Apostles. Assuming that the crucifixion took place in AD 30

Father Vincenzo Maria was one of four Carmelite friars sent to India by the Pope in 1656. In his attempt to gather up the history of Thomas Christians from interviews with other Christian groups he built up a timeline of the ministry of Thomas.

Thomas, he says, began his mission in Syria-Mesopotamia. From there the apostle went east to China, "the States of the Great Mogul," and "the kingdom of Sian." (The city of Sian in northwest China was the ancient capital of the Han dynasty, western Tang capital, and site of a Nestorian stele.) He then revisited his original Middle East converts. A leap across a continent and an ocean brought him to Brazil, then back to Ethiopia, and thence to the island of Socotra, off the coast of the Arabian peninsula, and finally to southern India. There he evangelized the Malabar Coast, and finally the Coromandel Coast (Madras and Mylapore), where he was martyred.

First on Vincenzo Maria's list is Syria-Mesopotamia, "the neighborhood of Edessa," and expands it to all of the Persian empire, or "Parthia," where he preached "to Parthians, Medes, Bactrians (Northern Afghanistan), Hyrcanians (of Caspian Sea), and Taprobanians,(Ceylon / Sri Lanka).". This will indicate the vastness of the mission field.

St. Isidore of Seville in Spain (d. c. 630). confirms that,“This Thomas preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians, the Hyrcanians and the Bactrians, and to the Indians of the Oriental region and penetrating the innermost regions and sealing his preaching by his passion he died transfixed with a lance at Calamina (present Mylapore), a city of India, and there was buried with honour.”
A passage in the pseudo-Clement's *Recognitions* (possibly written in the third century) as well as Bardaisan speaks that "the righteous and true Prophet" (that is, Jesus) is able to overcome the barbarous customs "among the Parthians -- as Thomas, who is preaching the Gospel among them, has written to us."

Quoting Origen, Eusebius says: “When the holy Apostles and disciples of our Saviour were scattered over all the world, Thomas, so the tradition has it, obtained as his portion Parthia....”

**Indo-Parthian Kingdom – Davidean Kingdom?**

http://parthia-aramaic.org/

There is a common misconception that the ten tribes of Israel “disappeared” when they were carried away by Assyria and others migrated into Asia for fear. According to 2 Chronicles 15:9, members of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon "fled" to Judah during the reign of Asa of Judah. Whether these groups were absorbed into the population or remained distinct groups, or returned to their tribal lands is not indicated. In c. 732 BC, Tiglath-Pileser sacked Damascus and Israel, annexing Aram and territory of the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh in Gilead including the desert outposts of Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. People from these tribes including the Reubenite leader, were taken captive and resettled in the region of the Habor river system. Tiglath-Pileser also captured the territory of Naphtali and the city of Janoah in Ephraim and an Assyrian governor was placed over the region of Naphtali. According to 2 Kings 16:9 and 15:29, the population of Aram and the annexed part of Israel was deported to Assyria. Israel continued to exist within the reduced territory as an independent kingdom until around 720 BC, when it was again invaded by Assyria and the rest of the population deported.

Thus they were displaced from their original home. But they were never lost in the sense that their whereabouts were lost. Flavius Josephus (37 – c.100 AD) the well known historian wrote this in “Antiquities of The Jews” (Book XI – Chapter V – Verse 2.) “Wherefore there are but two tribes (Yahudah and Benjamin plus the Levites) in Asia and Europe subject to the Romans, while the ten tribes are beyond the Euphrates till now, and are in immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers. Josephus knew that their population had become too numerous to estimate, and that the Euphrates River served as their western border.”


‘Thus has the Lord, God of Israel, spoken: “Your fathers dwelt in olden times beyond the River [Euphrates], Terach, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from beyond the River and led him through all the land of Canaan....”

Thus what has happened was they were back to the land from which the Patriarchs started their journey. The Parthian Empire existed in and around Aram from where Abram came. This is the land of Mesopotamia, the land between the two Rivers. Many Jews found shelter in various other countries as well.

But majority of them were in Mesopotamia where they rose to become of the great powers of the period which contended with the Roman Empire. The Parthian empire occupied all of modern
Iran, Iraq and Armenia, parts of Turkey, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, and -for brief periods- territories in Pakistan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Palestine.
“...the picture of the world during the Roman period...put before students in ‘Histories of Rome,’ was 
defective, not to say false, in its omission to recognize the real position of Parthia...as a counterpoise to 
the power of Rome, a second figure in the picture not much inferior to the first, a rival state dividing with 
Rome the attention of mankind and the sovereignty of the known earth. Writers of Roman history have 
been too much in the habit of representing [Rome] as...a Universal Monarchy, a Power unchecked... 
having no other limits than those of the civilized world...the truth seems to be that...from the first to the 
last...there was always in the world a Second Power, civilized or semi-civilized, which in a true sense 
balanced Rome, acted as a counterpoise and a check... This power for nearly three centuries (B.C. 
64 – A.D. 225) was Parthia.” George Rawlinson, Parthia and The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy.

Parthians were at the feast of the Pentecost at Jerusalem as we read in Acts 2:1. The Parthians and Medes 
in Acts 2:9 are identified as persons from a geographical area where the northern ten tribes of 'Ephraim 
were exiled and scattered, according to 2 Kings 17:5-8 and 1 Chronicles 5:26.

Who were the Parthians?

“They have a Semitic-Israelite connection and a link to King David within the Parthian royal family. The 
names of Israelite tribes and clans are in evidence within the Parthian Empire. Parthia's first capital city was 
named after Isaac, the son of Abraham.

The Parthian Empire rose to power when Carthage fell. The ancient world empire of Parthia rivalled 
Rome's empire and lasted for a few hundred years. The Parthian empire was so powerful at its height that it 
was the one empire that Rome actually FEARED!

Just decades before the birth of Christ (around 53 B.C.), the Parthian Empire fought and soundly beat the 
Romans at the battle of Carrhae and killed Crassus (who, with Julius Caesar and Pompey, governed the 
entire Roman Republic)! The Parthians fought Rome again around 40 B.C. and took from them almost the 
entire eastern Mediterranean area known as the Levant (composed of Palestine, Syria, Jordan and other ar-

eas).

According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the Parthians even forced the ruling Herod the Great to flee for 
his very life:

"Now, in the second year, Pacorus, the King of Parthia's son, and Barzapharnes, a commander of the Par-
thians, possessed themselves of Syria. . . .

"Now Antigonus had promised to give the Parthians a thousand talents, and five hundred women, upon 
condition they would take the government away from Hyrcanus (the governor of the Jews and Herod the 
Great's father-in-law), and bestow it upon him, and withal KILL HEROD. And although he did not give 
them what he had promised, yet did the Parthians make an expedition into Judea on that account . . .

"... Herod was under great disturbance of mind, and rather inclining to believe the reports he heard about 
his brother and the Parthians, than to give heed to what was said on the other side, he determined, that when 
the evening came on, he would make use of it for his flight, and not make any longer delay, as if the dan-
gers from the enemy were not yet certain. " (History (Antiquities) of the Jews, Book 14, Chapter 13)
The Parthian empire came to an end when the Persians, who had been Parthian subjects for years, defeated them in battle. The empire of Parthia, which had existed for four hundred years, came to an end around 224 A.D.

*Parthia: The Forgotten Ancient Superpower*
by Steven M. Collins

During the 476 years that the Parthian Empire existed, all nations and empires of the world became part of the extensive Roman Empire except the following four: Caledonia-Scotland, China Dynasties, Kushan Empire and the Parthian Empire. Parthia was the largest of the four empire nations that did not come under the power of, or become part of the extensive Roman Empire. The lack of information on Parthia is likely resulted from the fact that history has been taught almost exclusively from a Greco-Roman perspective.

Local potentates played an important role and the king had to respect their privileges. Several noble families had a vote in the Royal council; the Sûrên clan had the right to crown the Parthian king; and every aristocrat was allowed/expected to retain an army of his own. The constituent parts of the empire were surprisingly independent and were allowed to strike their own coins, which was, in Antiquity, very rare. These are reminiscent of the period of Judges. Parthia controlled the Silk Road, the route from the Mediterranean Sea to China.

Various officials of the Achaemenid Persian Empire were from the Israelite tribe of Judah, and the Parthians were themselves descendants of the ten tribes of Israel. The term “Iran” comes from the ‘Ephraimite clan named after “Eran,”” and even the name of the language “Pahlavi” contains the name of the Israelite tribe of Levi! The name Parthia itself comes from the consonants are “B-R-TH,” the consonants of the Hebrew word for “Covenant.” The name Parthia simply means People of the Covenant. The very language of the Parthian Kingdom was Pahlavi which is same as Aramaic the language spoken by Jesus – of Semitic origin.

In the “sceptre”promise of Genesis 49:10 King David was promised that he would always have descendants ruling over the House of Israel (Jeremiah 33:17). Jeremiah’s prophecy was made after the relocation of the House of Israel (the northern ten tribes) into Asia. Therefore, because of the timing of Jeremiah’s prophecy, we should expect to find descendants of King David ruling over the ten tribes of Israel after they moved to Asia.
In II Kings 24:8-15, the last kings of Judah, Jehoiachin, was carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. But after 37 years in the dungeon of Babylon II Kings 25:27-30 says the King “…did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the thrones of the kings that were with him in Babylon…” (KJV) Thus not only that Johoiakim was made a vassal King, but he was given a higher position ruling over several vassal kingdoms in the Babylonion Empire. We should assume that Johoiakim was made ruler over the vassals who were themselves of the lost tribes. Jehoiakim himself may have appointed others from the tribes of Israel - who were themselves Princes of the tribes who led the migration - as his own vassals. Since Jehoiachin was a descendant of King David (of the Phares line), his descendants apparently established a dynasty which continued to rule over descendants of the ten tribes when they regained their independence. In fact I Chronicles 3:16-24 records that the royal family of Judah did not die out, but produced many descendants during the generations after the fall of Jerusalem.

The Phares branch of the Jews produced both King David and Jesus. This reference to the Zerah branch of Judah is rare in Parthian annals, but there are many Parthian kings with names containing the root word “Phares” (indicating David’s royal bloodline). From the eastern edge of Parthian rule and influence to the western edge, Parthian kings regularly included the “Phares” name. A Parthian king who ruled in the area of West India was named Gondophares, and several kings ruling over the Caucasus mountain kingdom of Iberia were named Pharasmanes.

The Bnei Menashe (from northeast India) claim descent from the lost Tribe of Manasseh. Their oral traditions depict them as originally going from the Persian Empire into Afghanistan. According to their traditions, they then went to China, where they encountered persecution, then pressed on to India and Southern Asia. DNA tests to determine whether or not they originate from the Middle East has yielded mixed results. The Israeli government has recognized them as one of the lost tribes and made them eligible for immigration under the Law of Return.
Notice the Indo-Parthian sub Kingdom that covers the Afghanistan area. A large population of this area claims direct descent from Jewish tribes even today.

**The Magi of Parthia**  

“The Magi were powerful members of one of the two assemblies which elected Parthian monarchs and wielded great influence within the empire. One assembly was composed of members of the royal family (the Arsacids), and the other consisted of the priests (the Magi) and influential Parthians of non-royal blood (the Wise Men). The Magi and Wise Men were jointly known as the Megistanes. The Greek word translated "wise men" is "magian," literally meaning "Persian astronomer or priest." Parthia had long governed all Persian territory at the time of Christ, and the Wise Men cited in the Bible were clearly members of the Megistanes - very high Parthian officials.

While traditional Christian accounts of this episode celebrate the coming of "the three wise men", the Bible does not limit the number of visiting Magi/Wise Men to three. Indeed, Biblical events and the realities of that time argue for a much larger contingent of Parthian Magi. …..

Since we saw ….that the Parthians were descended from the Ten Tribes of Israel and that their priests were likely descended from the tribe of Levi this delegation of Magi consisted of leading members of the [lost] Ten Tribes of Israel. Since there were numerous members of the tribe of Judah in Parthia's empire, they may have been represented as well. Consequently, the delegation of Magi could easily have consisted of at least ten or twelve men representing the various tribes of Israel. ….
Their arrival in Jerusalem was a very public affair because "all Jerusalem" was "troubled" by their arrival……

This suggests that the Magi came to Jerusalem in a caravan with costly treasures and escorted by a strong force of armed Parthian soldiers!... These high officials would have traveled with a large entourage of servants, animal-handlers, cooks, etc., on such a long journey... There may have been thousands of Parthian soldiers escorting the caravan. This is not an overstatement. Josephus records that treasure caravans bringing expensive offerings to Jerusalem from Jews living in Parthian territory did so with "as many as ten thousand men" as escorts. In ancient times, traveling with expensive items was dangerous. There was danger not only from brigands, but also from local satraps who might use their armies to conquer a treasure train passing through their territories ...

The Wise Men were not bringing just a few samples of gold and other precious things that they carried in their personal saddle bags. They were coming to worship a King. The caravan was so big that their arrival quickly became a "cause celebre" in Jerusalem. The whole city was in an uproar over their arrival, and that argues for a very visible and impressive Parthian caravan arriving in Jerusalem not long after Jesus' birth in Bethlehem. The sheer size of the caravan and its escorts awed King Herod and the whole city to the point they were all "troubled"... It is clear that the Jewish hierarchy understood that the Parthians were looking for the Messiah as they quickly looked for Messianic prophecies to locate the city of His birth. …..

They informed Herod they had come to worship Him "that is born king of the Jews"...

Since Matthew 1:3-17 tells us that Jesus Christ was also a descendant of Phares and King David, Jesus was a blood relative of the Parthian ruling dynasty which ... serves as a further explanation for the homage paid to Him by the Parthian Magi ...

**Alexander III of Macedon** (356 – 323 BC),

**Alexander the Great** was a Greek king of Macedon. Alexander was tutored by the famed philosopher Aristotle. In 336 BC he succeeded his father Philip II of Macedon to the throne after he was assassinated. Philip had brought most of the city-states of mainland Greece under Macedonian hegemony, using both military and diplomatic means. In 334 BC he invaded Persian-ruled Asia Minor and began a series of campaigns lasting ten years. Alexander broke the power of Persia in a series of decisive battles, most notably the battles of Issus and Gaugamela. Subsequently he overthrew the Persian king Darius III and conquered the entirety of the Persian Empire. The Macedonian Empire now stretched from the Adriatic sea to the Indus river. Following his desire to reach the "ends of the world and the Great Outer Sea", he invaded India in 326 BC, but was eventually forced to turn back by the near-mutiny of his troops.
Alexander’s Empire covered most of the Parthian area. After the death of Alexander Taxila was taken over by Gondaphorus and the Indo-Parthian Kingdom was established.

In 2010, Amir Mizroch in the Jerusalem Post referred to the theory that even Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan could be descending from the lost tribe of Efraim. Shahnaz Ali, a senior research fellow at the Indian National Institute of Immunohaematology in Mumbai, has started studying the blood samples that she collected from Afridi Pathans in Malihabad, in the Lucknow district in Uttar Pradesh, India, to check their putative Israelite origin.

It is evident that almost all Apsotles went to Jews in dispersion and established the first churches among the Jews. This is true in the case of Thomas also.

Religion during the Parthian era (ca.129 BC-224 AD)
http://www.angelfire.com/nt/Gilgamesh/parthian.html

“The Parthians left the local administrations and rulers intact when they conquered Mesopotamia. According to Pliny the Elder (Natural History VI. 112) the Parthian empire consisted of 18 kingdoms, 11 of which were called the upper kingdoms (or satrapies), while 7 were called lower kingdoms, meaning that they were located on the plains of Mesopotamia. The centre of the lower kingdoms was ancient Babylonia, called Beth Aramaye in Aramaic, and it was governed directly by the Parthian ruler…..

“During the Parthian occupation the ancient religion and cults of Mesopotamia came to an end and were replaced by mixed Hellenic and Oriental mystery religions and Iranian cults. Local Semitic cults of Bel, Allat, and other deities flourished alongside temples dedicated to Greek gods such as Apollo. The sun deity Shamash was worshiped at Hatra and elsewhere, but the henotheism of the ancient Middle East was giving way to acceptance of Universalist religions (Gnosticism)…..
In Mesopotamia, in particular, the influence of Jewish monotheism, with the beginning of rabbinic schools and the organization of the community under a leader, the exilarch (resh galuta in Aramaic), must have had a significant influence on the local population.

In the first two centuries of the Common Era, Christianity and various baptismal sects also began to expand into Mesopotamia. So far no Mithraism’s (underground temples for the worship of the god Mithra), such as existed in the Roman Empire, have been found in Mesopotamia, except at Dura-Europus, where Roman troops were stationed. Many local cults and shrines, such as that of the Sabians and their moon deity at Harran, however, continued to exist until the Islamic conquest. Parthian Zoroastrianism reinforced local Zoroastrian communities in Mesopotamia left from the time of the Achaemenians, and one of the Gnostic baptismal religions, Mandaeanism, which is still in existence, had its beginning at this time. Although Christian missionaries were active in Mesopotamia in the Parthian period, no centers, such as the one established later at Nisibis, have been reported, and it may be supposed that their activity at first was mainly confined to Jewish communities.

The known world during the Apostolic period. The powerful empires of the age were Roman, Parthian, Kushan and Chinese Empires.

Thus all traditions indicate that Thomas started his ministry in the empire of Parthia. In Parthia, the fiefdom of Edessa is particularly associated with Apostle Thomas.
Edessa

Edessa - the native name was Osroe, after some local satrap, this being the Armenian form for Chosroes; it became in Syriac Ourhoï, in Armenian Ourhaï in Arabic Er Roha, commonly Orfa or Urfa, its present name. Seleucus Nicator, when he rebuilt the town, 303 B.C., called it Edessa.

Edessa stands on the Silk Road,

Among the illustrious disciples of the School of Edessa special mention is due to Bardesanes (154-222), a schoolfellow of Abgar IX, the originator of Christian religious poetry. Bardesannes visited Malabar and contended with Manichaen in the Kingdom of Ranni on Pampa River.

Early Church historian Eusebius (AD 260-340) in his "Ecclesiastical History" gives the story of how Edessa came to be Christian. Edessa was a small Kingdom in Syria and at time of Jesus, Abgar Ukomo (AD 13-50) was its king. Abgar wrote a letter to Jesus. A copy of a letter written by Abgarus the toparch to Jesus, and sent to him by means of Ananias the runner, to Jerusalem.

"Abgarus Uchama the toparch to Jesus the good Saviour that hath appeared in the parts (place) of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard concerning thee and thy cures, that they are done of thee without drugs or herbs: for, as the report goes, thou makest blind men to see again, lame to walk, and cleanest lepers, and castest out unclean spirits and devils, and those that are afflicted with long sickness thou healest, and raisest the dead.

And having heard all this of thee, I had determined one of two things, either that thou art God come down from heaven, and so dost these things or art a Son of God that doest these things.

Therefore now have I written and entreated thee to trouble thyself to come to me and heal the affliction which I have. or indeed I have heard that the Jews even murmur against thee and wish to do thee hurt. And I have a very little city but (and) comely (reverend), which is sufficient for us both.
The answer, written by Jesus, sent by Ananias the runner to Abgarus the toparch.

“Blessed art thou that hast believed in me, not having seen me.

“For it is written concerning me that they that have seen me shall not believe in me, and that they that have not seen me shall believe and live. But concerning that which thou hast written to me, to come unto thee; it must needs be that I fulfil all things for the which I was sent here, and after fulfilling them should then be taken up unto him that sent me.

“And when I am taken up, I will send thee one of my disciples, to heal thine affliction and give life to thee and them that are with thee.”

The Syriac document *The Teaching of Addai* contains the purported correspondence (Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.*, I, 13). Eusebius, affirms that both letters were to be found in the archives of Edessa.

King Abgar illustration in 1898 book «Illustrated Armenia and Armenians»
It is said that after the assumption of Jesus, Apostle Thomas sent Addai (Thaddaeus) one of the seventy-two, to the king who healed the King and the King himself became a Christian. In this mission he was accompanied by a disciple, Mari, and the two are regarded as cofounders of the church. The *Liturgy of Addai and Mari* (c. AD 200), is still used by the Assyrian Churches of the East.

Hannan, the messenger, was archivist at Edessa, He was also the Royal painter to King Abgar. Part of the mission of Hannan was to paint a portrait of Jesus, which he did and brought with him to Abgar. The legend is also found found in the *Acta Thaddaei*, the "Acts of Thaddaeus".

Even though we don’t have the details of the missionary activities or even the physical presence of Thomas in Edessa, the personality of Thomas is impressed heavily on the Edessan Church. Edessa was unquestionably the most important locus for the faith in the Syriac-speaking world. Most of the Thomas literature originated from Edessa during the time of second century AD. Among them are:

*Acts of Thomas* is a dramatrical poetic work describing the ministry of Thomas in India. *Acts of Thomas*, survived over the centuries in monastic collections. *Acts of Thomas*, was composed ca. A.D. 225.

*Gospel of Thomas* discovered during archeological excavations of an ancient library in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt. The three papyrus fragments of Thomas – known as the Oxyrhynchus fragments – date to between 130 - 250 CE. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of sayings attributed to Jesus of Nazareth. It starts as “These are the secret words that the Living Jesus spoke, which Didymus Judas Thomas wrote down. And he said, "Whoever finds the interpretation of these sayings will not experience death."”

*The Book of Thomas the Contender*, from the *Nag Hammadi Library* Collection The content of this work is quite hyperbolic and gnostic in style and content. “The secret sayings that the savior spoke to Judas Thomas which I, even I, Mathaias, wrote down, while I was walking, listening to them speak with one another.” It was likely composed in the first half of the 3d century A.D.
The Apocalypse of Thomas  c. 300-400 C.E.

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas is a gospel about the childhood of Jesus that dates to the 2nd and 3rd centuries.

Silk Route

The silk route practically started from Syria and extended all the way to China. It is only logical to imagine that Apostle Thomas who was out to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, traveled that way all the way to China. Thomas Churches as found all along the Silk Route. We have enough evidence for Thomas’ visit to China by AD 59 from the eastern coast of South India. Evidently this is a devious route. Why did he take a ship to China while he was essentially ministering in South India? The reasonable explanation is that he had been in China before and he wanted to revisit the place and establish the seed he planted as a Church. It appears that it was the normal practice of Thomas to visit his field of mission twice. After going as far as China, he came back to Syria by 40 AD. Two additional names are associated with the areas where Thomas ministered. These were Addai and Barthelomew who were probably co-workers with Thomas.
Ethiopia

According to Church Tradition, the holy Apostle Thomas founded Christian churches in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Ethiopia and India. Actually Yemen was considered part of Ethiopia since both were ruled by Queen Sheba and her dynasty. Axum and Yemen were deeply involved in the trade network between India and the Mediterranean. Recent archaeological discoveries in Mareb, Yemen support the view that Sheba ruled from Mareb. The tradition asserts that Ethiopia was given by Sheba to her son from Solomon. Haile Selassie is considered as the 406th descendant of this dynasty.

Thomas did establish a church in Yemen. Until the Islamic take over, Yemen was indeed a Christian country. I worked in the Sanaa (Yemen) University and I am told that even today the heroes of local stories are still Christian – a legacy carried on from the early centuries. Mother Teresa was well received by the people and the state. I had the privilege of being the first moderator of the Christian Church which started essentially for the expatriate community in Sanaa. The Islamic community of Yemen has recently officially invited the Christian brethren to return and start open worship in that country. It is all a legacy of understanding that the Thomasian Churches left behind.

Thus Yemen probably was the first point of the second missionary journey of Thomas around 40 AD. This time Thomas took the sea route – the Spice Route.
The acts of Thomas are not found in the Acts of the Apostles. But an apocryphal book written around 200 AD called "Acts of Thomas", describes it with embellishments and exaggerations. “Like other apocryphal acts combining popular legend and religious propaganda, the work attempts to entertain and instruct. In addition to narratives of Thomas' adventures, its poetic and liturgical elements provide important evidence for early Syrian Christian traditions.” (Harold W. Attridge: The Anchor Bible Dictionary, v. 6, p. 531) The style of the book is typical of the period and is written in the form of a dramatic story telling. In the days when books were rare and not accessible to common man, the idea was to make the point clear with added techniques of keeping the major theme in tact while embellishing them with memorization fringes. Acts of Thomas, is thus an early Christian kind of novel, which was originally written either in Greek or Syriac.

Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the historicity of the events and hence the traditions were questioned by scholars.

“Did a king of the name of Gondophares reign over any portion of India, and was he a contemporary of the Apostolic age? Where was his kingdom situated? Was it practicable for the Apostle Thomas to have had access to it?

Should the above questions receive an affirmative solution, they would justify the inference that the recital in the Acts of Thomas in this point was based on historical knowledge; and further, that on this account the Acts themselves deserved closer study and examination.
The name of King Gondophares appears in the Syriac text of the Acts as Gudnaphar; in the Greek version as GoundaforoV: codd. Rand S of a later date give GoutaforoV and GoundiaforoV; the longer Latin version, De Miraculis, does not reproduce the name of the king; he is throughout styled ‘rex’; it appears in the shorter Latin version, Passio, as Gundaforus: codd. QGR of Max Bonnet’s Acta Thomae give Gundoforus.

It was only about the middle of the nineteenth century that it became possible to say whether a king of that name ever existed and had reigned in India.

In 1854 General Alexander Cunningham, writing in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Vol.xxiii. pp.679-712), was able to say that in the preceding twenty years no less than thirty thousand coins bearing Greek and Indian legends, and extending over a period of more than three centuries, had been found in Afghanistan and the Punjab. A large, if not the greater, number belong to Greek princes who ruled over the country as inheritors of and successors to the conquests of Alexander the Great. Another portion bear the evidence of Scythian conquerors, confirmed also by other authorities, and of Parthian kings and rulers who had become masters of these territories. The coins of Gondophares, the king with whom we are concerned, belong to the latter category.” INDIA AND THE APOSTLE THOMAS, A.E. Medlycott

The exact route of Thomas is not clear. We know that on the way to India, Thomas actually established churches in the Yemen. This church was destroyed under the on rush of Islam around 600 AD. It is likely that they went directly to Taxashilla (Taxila) the capital of King Gondaphores. In that case it is sometime in 40s. This is supported by the current understanding of the date of the Kingdom of Gondaphorus which came to an end in AD 50. In that case he was in the region for nearly 10 to 12 years.
The fragment of Acts of Thomas in Coptic

A 17th Century drawing of St. Thomas going with Abbanes found in Denmark
The basic story is that a merchant Ambassador Habbanes (This is probably a Greek pronunciation of the name Appana. Habbanes was probably from the Kingdom of Pandhya Empire) and Thomas was sold to him as a master carpenter by his Master - Jesus the Carpenter. He was the ambassador for King Gondaphores the Indo-Parthian Kingdom of Indus Valley Area (Sind, Pakistan, Baluchistan and Afghanistan). Takshasila, (The English version of the name is Taxila which was a University City in the Indus Valley) the capital of Hondaphorus Kingdom. He established a church in that region before he traveled to other areas of India. These churches were annihilated during the invasion of Kushan and Moghal dynasty.

Phraotes

It has also been suggested that Gondaphares may be identical with Phraotes, a Greek-speaking Indo-Parthian king of the city of Taxila, met by the Greek philosopher Apollonius of Tyana around 46 CE according to the Life of Apollonius Tyana written by Philostratus.

The Ruins of Taxila, the Capitol of the Indo-Parthian Kingdom of Gondaphorus - now in Pakistan
St. Thomas is said to have begun his missionary work here in India.

The coins from Taxila with the seal and inscription of King Gudophorus as "Maharaja - rajarajasamahata -drimia -devavrata Gundapharase"

The discovery of Gondophoras coins was made by one Charles Masson who worked in the Bengal European Artillery. During his stay in Kabul he got interested in the antiquities. In 1833 he undertook digging in Begram, the ancient Kapis and discovered 1565 copper coins and 14 gold and silver coins. This brought alive the history of the long forgotten Indo-Parthian Kingdom.
This Takhth-i-Bahi Stone 17" long and 14.5" broad has the inscription "In the twenty-sixth year of the great King Gudaphara in the year three and one hundred, in the month of Vaishakh, on the fifth day"

“The Indo-Parthian kingdom was founded by the first of several kings named Gondophares in the late first century BC. Gondophares, as well as being a Saka king, was probably a member of the Suren family, one of the seven major noble houses of the Parthians, whose feifdom was in Seistan, by now known as Sakastan, on the eastern borders of the Parthian empire. Indo-Parthia expanded to the east, sometimes as vassals of the Parthians and sometimes independently, eventually stretching to Pakistan and northern India. Indo-Parthia suffered major defeats at the hands of the Kushans in the late first century AD, and eventually was reduced to the area of Sakastan and Arachosia until their conquest by the Sassanians during the 3rd century AD.”

**Gondophares-Sases, c.35-55 AD**

*British museum*
Pahlavas / Indo-Parthians

The expansion of the Kushans was checked by the Indo-Parthians, or Pahlavas, who had their origins in Persia. Gondophares was a vassal of the Parthian Arsacids, and it was he who declared his independence from them and ventured eastwards to establish his own kingdom in present day Afghanistan, Pakistan and northern India, sharing domination of the region with the Indo-Scythians.

c.AD 10 The Indo-Greek kingdom disappears under Indo-Scythian pressure. Pockets of Greek population probably remained for some centuries under the subsequent rule of the Kushans and Indo-Parthians.

c.AD 20 – 50 Gondophares Parthian vassal who declared independence

c.20 Gondophares ventures east and establishes an independent Indo-Parthian kingdom in Afghanistan
c.50 - 65 Abdagases I Nephew
c.60 Satavastres
c.70 Sarpedones
c.70 Orthagnes / Orthagnes-Gadana
c.75 The Kushan ruler, Kadphises, subdues the Indo-Scythians and establishes his kingdom in Bactria and the valley of the River Oxus, defeating the Indo-Parthians and recapturing the main area of their kingdom. The Pahlavas survive in northern India and Pakistan, mainly Sakastan and Arachosia.
c.77 Ubouzanes Son.
c.85 Sases / Gondophares-Sases
c.90 Abdagases II
c.100 The neighbouring Kushans capture former Indo-Greek Arachosia (Medieval Ghazi) from the Indo-Parthians.
c.100 – 135 Pacores / Pacores is the last king with any real power. One more Indo-Parthian king follows him but in diminished circumstances, and virtually unknown to history?
? Known from numismatic evidence only.
c.140? By this date, if not before, the last Indo-Parthians are conquered by the Kushans.

"Gondophares" was probably a title held by many kings of the period who ruled the Indo-Parthian Kingdom. The name Gondophares is a latinization of Greek ΥΝΔΟΦΕΡΡΗΣ, from Old Persian Vindafarna meaning "May he find glory." Indian names include 'Gondapharna', 'Guduvhara' and Pali 'Gudaphara'. Gondophares is 'Gastaphar' in Armenian. “Gundafarnah” was apparently the Eastern Iranian (Sistani) form of the name.

On the coins of Gondophares, the royal names are Iranian, but the other legends of the coins are in Greek and Kharosthi. Kharosthi is developed from Hebrew.

Gandhara's language was a Prakrit or "Middle Indo-Aryan" dialect, usually called Gāndhārī. Texts are written right-to-left in the Kharoṣṭhī script, which had been adapted for Indo-Aryan languages from a Semitic alphabet, the Aramaic alphabet. Gandhāra was then controlled by the Achaemenid dynasty of the Persian empire, which used the Aramaic script to write the Iranian languages of the Empire.

Semitic scripts were not used to write South Asian languages again until the arrival of Islam and subsequent adoption of the Persian-style Arabic alphabet for New Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi and Kashmiri. Kharosthi script died out about the 4th century. However, the Hindko and the archaic Dardic and Kohistani dialects, derived from the local Indo-Aryan Prakrits, are still spoken, though the Afghan Pashto language is the most dominant language of the region today.
As such there is every reason to assume that the poetic work Act of Thomas is based on real historical facts and that the Indian Traditions are highly reliable. The *Acts of Thomas* (Ch. 17) describes Saint Thomas' visit to King Gondophares in northern India. When *Acts* was being composed, there was no reason to suppose that a king named "Gondophares" had ever really existed. However, the discovery of his coins in the region of Kabul and the Punjab, and the finding of a votive inscription of his 26th regal year that was unknown until 1872, provided evidence that his reign commenced in 21 C.E. until c. 47 C.E. Thus, one scholar surmises, "It is impossible to resist the conclusion that the writer of the *Acts* must have had information based on contemporary history. For at no later date could a forger or legendary writer have known the name."

**Bene Israel of South Asia**

The Bene Israel (Hebrew: "Sons of Israel") are a group of Jews who live in various Indian cities, Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad. Prior to their waves of emigration to Israel and still to this day, the Bene Israel form the largest sector of the subcontinent's Jewish population, and constitute the bulk of those sometimes referred to as Pakistani Jews. The native language of the Bene Israel is Judæo-Marathi, a form of Marathi. Most Bene Israel have now emigrated to Israel. Some researchers believe that the Bene Israel are descended from the Ten Tribes.
Summary of

Acts of Thomas

From NewWorld Encyclopaedia

1—Thomas goes to India

Long considered fictional, King Gundaphorus, or Gondophares, is now believed to be the first king of the Indo-Parthian Kingdom, dating to the period after the crucifixion of Jesus.

The apostles gather in Jerusalem, where each of them is assigned as an evangelist to a different region of the world by drawing lots. Thomas is assigned to India, but refuses to go, pleading weakness of health and also that, as a Jew, he cannot live among Gentiles. The resurrected Christ then sells Thomas—who, like his twin brother Jesus, is a carpenter—as a slave to a merchant named Abbanes, the agent of King Gundaphorus of India. On arriving, Thomas attends the wedding feast of the king's daughter with his master. He declines food and drink, and refuses to gaze at a lovely flute-girl who dances for him. For his rudeness, he is struck by a royal cup-bearer. Thomas responds by bursting into a hymn of praise to the
dancer and God, in which he prophesies the cup-bearer's death. The cup-bearer is soon killed by a lion while drawing water from a well, and the flute-girl, a Jew herself, immediately breaks her flute and becomes Thomas' first disciple.

The king hears of the miracle and asks Thomas to pray for the success of his daughter's marriage, she being an only child. At the bridal chamber, Thomas blesses the couple and prays to Jesus as "the ambassador that wast sent from the height… who showestd the way that leadeth up unto the height." However, when the groom enters the bridal chamber, he sees a vision of Jesus speaking with the bride. Jesus declares "if ye abstain from this foul intercourse, ye become holy temples." He explains that procreation is an error, since "children become useless, oppressed of devils… they will be caught either in adultery or murder or theft or fornication, and by all these will ye be afflicted." The couple immediately convert, committing themselves to "abstain from foul desire." In the morning, the bride tells her parents: "I am yoked unto a true husband," and her groom gives thanks to Jesus "who hast removed me far from corruption." The king is understandably upset and commands that Thomas, "the sorcerer," be apprehended.

2—King Gundaphorus' palace

Thomas meets King Gundaphorus, who learns of his carpentry skills and commands him to build a new royal palace, leaving him with a substantial sum of money to complete the task. Thomas, however, gives the money away to the poor and the sick as an manifestation of God's love for them. The king then imprisons both Thomas and his master, declaring that they will be punished with death. The king's brother, Gad, then takes sick and dies. The angels carry him to heaven and show him a gorgeous house, which they explain was built there for Gundaphorus by Thomas. Gad receives permission to return to earth, where he attempts to buy the king's heavenly palace from him. Learning the true value of Thomas' actions, the king releases Thomas from prison and both the king and his brother humble themselves before Thomas, becoming disciples and devoting themselves to the care of the poor. Thomas seals their commitment with a sacrament of holy oil, reciting a liturgical psalm, and invoking the Trinity. In a Gnostic variation, however, he refers to the Holy Spirit as "Compassionate Mother… she that revealeth the hidden mysteries, Mother of the seven houses."

After this, Thomas continues his preaching, teaching all to "abstain from fornication and covetousness and the service of the belly."

3—Thomas and the Great Serpent

On the road, Thomas encounters the dead body of a handsome youth. A huge black serpent (or dragon) emerges from a nearby hole and declares that he has killed the youth out of jealousy over the youth's sexual intercourse with a beautiful young woman with whom the dragon was enamored. The dragon knows that Thomas is Christ's twin brother and identifies himself as "the son to him that sitteth on a throne over all the earth" and also as he who "spake with Eve the things which my father bade me speak unto her." He also takes credit for inspiring Cain to kill Abel and binding the fallen angels in lust toward human women, in order that children might be born who would do his will. He boasts of hardening Pharaoh's heart, causing the Israelites to sin in the wilderness, and moving Judas Iscariot to deliver up Christ.
II

AD 40

ARRIVAL OF APOSTLE THOMAS IN INDIA : M. M. NINAN

Unafraid, Thomas commands the beast to suck out the venom by which he has slain the youth. The young man revives, and the dragon swells up, bursts, and dies. The youth proclaims that he is now free of the lust that caused him to sin with the young woman. He then accompanies Thomas toward the city, and a great multitude of believers join the true faith.

4—Thomas and the talking colt

A young donkey then approaches Thomas and miraculously speaks, addressing him as "Thou Twin of Christ." The colt invites Thomas to mount him and ride into the city. Thomas asks the colt about his origins, and he answers that he descends from the very ass who spoke to the prophet Balaam, and also from the donkey on whom Jesus rode when he entered Jerusalem.

Thomas, feeling humbled, declines the colt's offer, but the donkey insists, and Thomas finally consents to mount him. A huge throng of onlookers follows Thomas and the colt. Thomas dismounts and dismisses the ass at the city gate, whereupon the poor colt promptly falls down dead. The crowd implores Thomas to raise the beast from the dead, but he refuses, not because he is unable, but because the colt had already fulfilled his miraculous purpose by speaking and testifying to the work of God. The people then bury the colt by the side of the road at Thomas' command.

5—The Devil's consort

Thomas and his throng enter the city, where he is approached by a very beautiful woman, who explains that she has been tormented by the Devil for five years. The trouble began when a "young man" had "foul intercourse" with her in her dream, which he has continued to until the present time. Thomas is outraged at this and commands the Devil to come forth and face him. No one but Thomas and the woman can see the fiend, but all hear him as he shouts: "What have we to do with thee, thou apostle of the Most High! … Wherefore wilt thou take away our power?" Weeping, the Devil says to the woman: "I leave thee, my fairest consort… I forsake thee, my sure sister, my beloved in whom I was well pleased. What I shall do I know not."

He then vanishes, leaving behind only fire and smoke, which were seen by the astonished crowd. Thomas then blesses the crowd and seals the woman and many others in the name of the Trinity. Those who are sealed then partake of the Eucharist. Once again Thomas speaks of the Holy Spirit as feminine: "She that knoweth the mysteries of him that is chosen… she that manifesteth the hidden things and maketh the unspeakable things plain, the holy dove that beareth the twin young; Come, the hidden Mother… Come and communicate with us in this Eucharist which we celebrate in thy name and in the love."

6—The misguided youth and his victim

A young man who has just taken the Eucharist is smitten with withered hands. He confesses that he had been in love with a young woman, but after hearing Thomas' teaching, he determined to refrain from having sex with her, asking her to join him in a spiritual marriage instead. When she refused, he murdered her with a sword, not being able to bear the thought of her having sex with another man. Thomas decries the "insane union" of unrestrained lust and commands the youth to bathe in holy water. They then go to the inn, where the victim's body lies. Thomas prays, and the young man takes his former lover by the hand, whereupon she comes back to life. She testifies that she has been in Hell, which she describes in
considerable detail. Many people become believers as a result of the miracle and the woman's horrifying testimony.

7—Thomas and Captain Siphor

The wealthy captain of King Misdaeus, later named as Siphor, asks Thomas to help his wife and daughter, who are being tormented by devils that throw them down and strip them naked, even in public. The two woman are so beset by these incubi that they have not been able to sleep or eat properly for three years. Greatly grieved for the man, Thomas first secures his commitment to Jesus and then agrees to help, converting many more believers through his public prayers.

8—Exorcisms and wild asses

Thomas travels with Siphor in his chariot or coach, but the animals pulling the vehicle soon tire. At Thomas' suggestion, the captain goes to a nearby herd of wild asses and commands four of them, in Thomas' name, to come. Thomas then commands the asses to yoke themselves in the place of the wearied other animals. When the chariot arrives at the captain's home city, Thomas instructs one of the assess to command the devils to come forth. The ass promptly enters Siphor's house and does as Thomas commanded, and the women approach Thomas in a zombie-like state. When Thomas confronts them, they both fall down as if dead, but the spirit inside the older woman speaks. Thomas recognizes him as the same demon he had driven out of the woman in the previous city. The devil pleads that he is only doing what comes naturally to him. Surprisingly, the wild ass now gives a lengthy sermon urging Thomas to act and declaring the doctrine which Thomas normally preaches.

Thomas responds by praising Jesus, the "heavenly word of the Father … the hidden light of the understanding, who shows the way of truth, the driver away of darkness, and blotter-out of error." He then prays: "Let these souls be healed and rise up and become such as they were before they were smitten of the devils." The women are immediately healed. Thomas then leads the wild asses outside the city and dismisses them back to the natural life and a happy ending.

9—Thomas and Mygdonia

King Misdaeus may represent an anachronchistic version of Vasudeva I, who is thought to have returned the relics of Saint Thomas from India in 232 C.E.

Here in the realm of King Misdaeus, Mygdonia, the wife of Prime Minister Charisius, comes to learn of Thomas and his "new god." Because of her arrogant attitude in pressing through the crowd to see him, however, Thomas blesses the servants who carry her palanquin, rather than the great lady herself. He teaches the crowd to abstain first of all from adultery, which he characterizes as "the beginning of all evils." After listening to Thomas' long moral sermon, Mygdonia jumps from her chair and prostrates herself before the apostle. He urges her to rise and instructs her to take off her jewelry and other fine ornaments, and also to refrain from "polluted intercourse with thine husband."
Her husband Charisius later discovers Mygdonia in a depressed state, refusing both to dine or to sleep with him, pleading illness. The next day Charisius leaves home early to salute the king, while Mygdonia goes to attend Thomas. Trouble brews between the couple when Charisius learns of his wife's seeming infatuation with the stranger, whom she calls a physician, but he suspects is a sorcerer. That night she again refuses either to dine or sleep with her husband. "Thou hast no more any room by me," she informs him, "for my Lord Jesus is greater than thou, who is with me and resteth in me." The distraught Charisius cannot hide his anguish from King Misdaeus, who sends immediately for Captain Siphor to deal with the troublemaker. Siphor testifies to the king concerning Thomas' good works. Ultimately, Charisius himself confronts Thomas and brings him before the king. When Thomas refuses to answer the king's questions, he is sentenced to death. In prison, Thomas is not anxious at all. Instead, he sings the remarkable *Hymn of the Soul* (see below), a Gnostic psalm of remembrance of the value of the spirit and the worthlessness of all material things, including the body.

Charisius, thinking his troubles are over, finds Mygdonia in deep grief over Thomas' fate. Even his own tears do not move her, as she only sits silently looking at the ground during his impassioned entreaties. She insists again that her love is only for Jesus.

10—The baptism of Mygdonia

Taking ten denarii to bribe Thomas' jailers, Mygdonia is miraculously met by an apparition of Thomas on her way. She is at first frightened, but after Thomas comforts and teaches her, she requests to be "sealed." Taking Thomas to her home, she receives the necessary elements for the ceremony from her nurse, Narcia. Thomas sanctifies her with holy oil, and she then comes to him clad only in a linen cloth to be baptized in a fountain of water. After dressing, she shares the Eucharist with him, and a voice from heaven declares "Yea, Amen!" Narcia, hearing the voice is also converted and receives baptism. Thomas then returns to prison.

The next morning at dawn, Charisius finds Mygdonia and her nurse praying: "O new god that by the stranger hast come hither unto us... turn away from us the madness of Charisius." He is outraged, imploring her to remember their love as bride and groom. She replies:

That bridal chamber is taken down again, but this remaineth always; that bed was strown with coverlets, but this with love and faith. Thou art a bridegroom that passest away and art dissolved, but Jesus is a true bridegroom, enduring for ever immortal. That dowry was of money and robes that grow old, but this is of living words which never pass away.

Charisius goes to the king and demands Thomas' death. King Misdaeus sends for Thomas and offers to let him go free if he will persuade Mygdonia to return to her husband. Back at Charisius' house, Thomas tells Mygdonia to obey Charisius, but she reminds the apostle of his own teaching, declaring that he has said this only "because thou art in fear." Thomas then leaves the house to stay with Captain Siphor, where Thomas baptizes the household and holds communion with them.

11—Thomas and Tertia

Tertia, the wife of King Misdaeus, visits Mygdonia, who testifies to the truth of Thomas' teachings. Tertia immediately goes to Siphor's house and asks to partake in the promise of life that Thomas offers. He
accepts her, and she returns to Misdaeus, who is understandably unhappy to hear that the teaching of the "sorcerer" now infects his own wife. He finds Charisius, and the two of them arrest Thomas again as he is teaching at Siphor's house. He is placed under guard awaiting trial by Misdaeus.

12—Iuzanes, the son of Misdaeus'

Midaeus' son Iuzanes speaks with Thomas and is inspired to help him escape, but Midaeus returns, and Thomas faces trial. He insists that the king has no power over him, and that his fate is in God's hands. The king orders that Thomas be tortured with red-hot iron plates, but a huge spring of water rises up to quench their heat. The king now begs Thomas to pray that the resulting flood will subside, and Thomas complies. Midaeus sends Thomas back to prison, accompanied by Iuzanes and Siphor. Thomas prays once more, including a version of the Lord's prayer, this time seemingly in preparation for death. "I am thine," he declares to his Lord, "and I have kept myself pure from woman, that the temple worthy of thee might not be found in pollution."

13—The baptism of Iuzanes

Iuzanes, who is chaste though married, wishes to become a disciple and requests that Thomas heal his ailing wife, Mnesara. Tertia, Mygdonia, and Narcia bribe the jailer to allow them entrance to the prison, where they join Iuzanes, Siphon, and Siphon's wife and daughter. Thomas and his band then go to Iuzanes' home, where Mnesara is quickly healed. Mygdonia anoints Mnesara, and Thomas anoints Iuzanes; then Thomas baptizes the couple, after which they share the Eucharist.

14 The Martyrdom of Thomas

Thomas returns to his prison, together with Tertia, Mygdonia, and Narcia. On the way, he declares to them and "the multitude" a final message in preparation for his departure. He stresses that they must focus on Christ, not himself, and should hope in his coming.

Misdaeus now places Thomas on trial again. The apostle confesses that he is the slave of Jesus. Taking him out of the city for fear of the crowds, the king commands four soldiers and an officer to take him to a nearby mountain and slay him there with spears. Iuzanes persuades the soldiers to allow Thomas to pray before his death. Thomas concludes his prayer and then invites the soldiers to do their duty. They pierce him with their spears, and he dies.

While Siphor and Iuzanes keep watch over his body, Thomas appears to them and asks: "Why sit ye here and keep watch over me? I am not here, but I have gone up and received all that I was promised." Thomas is buried with great honor, and with much mourning.

After this, the husbands of Mygdonia and Tertia badly mistreat their wives in a vain attempt to force them to perform their conjugal duty, but the two saints bravely hold up, and eventually their husbands allow them to live in chastity. Siphor becomes a presbyter and Iuzanes a deacon, and the church grows rapidly under their leadership. Thomas' bones are transferred to Mesopotamia, but even the dust where he lay possesses miraculous healing qualities. King Misdaeus, before his death, repents and receives forgiveness at the hand Siphor, amid much rejoicing.
Kerala Tradition starts from AD 52 only when Thomas arrived in Kodungallur. If Thomas landed in Taxila in AD 40 this will give him a period of 12 years of ministry in the Northern India, Parthia and China. It is probably during this period the Apostle traveled to Ephesus and to Jerusalem to visit the grave of Mother Mary. Mary died in around 45 AD, and Thomas was not able to be there as he was in North India at that time. But he arrived soon after the burial. So it was some time in 45-46 AD.

Apocryphal Story of the Assumption of Mary and Apostle Thomas

The House believed to be where Mother Mary lived under the care of Apostle John until her death in Ephesus, Selçuk in Turkey.
Mary after her death was placed in a sacrophage. While all the other Apostles were there when she was placed in the sacrophage, Thomas as usual was absent. When he reached there, he wanted see the body of Mary. When the Sacrophage was opened her body was said to be missing.
When the Sacrophagus was opened the body of Mary was found missing. This gave rise to the doctrine of Domition.

According to the belief of Christians of the Roman Catholic Church, the Eastern Catholic Churches, Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, and parts of the Anglican Communion and Continuing Anglicanism, the Assumption of Mary was the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into Heaven at the end of her life. The Roman Catholic Church teaches as dogma that the Virgin Mary "having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory." This doctrine was dogmatically and infallibly defined by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950 in his Apostolic Constitution Munificentissimus Deus. This belief is known as the Dormition of the Theotokos by the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches.

In the Apocryphal work, 'Assumption of Mary' (c.400) is found an account which tells how Thomas, who was in India, miraculously found himself along with the other Apostles beside the Virgin Mary at her dormition.

"And Thomas also answered and said: And I, traversing the country of the Indians, when the preaching was prevailing by the grace of Christ, and the king's sister's son Labdanus by name, was about to be sealed by me in the palace, on a sudden the Holy Spirit says to me, Do thou also, Thomas, go to Bethlehem to salute the mother of thy Lord, because she is taking her departure to the heavens. And a cloud of light having snatched me up, set me down beside you." (From the Greek)

The lengthier account from the Latin form of the same writing relates the favour the Apostle found with the Holy Mother and how the Apostle in his humility, undid as it were, through Mary, his obduracy and unbelief in Christ's resurrection.

"Then the most blessed Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most blessed body going up to heaven, and began to cry out and say: O holy mother, blessed mother, spotless mother, if I have now found grace because I see thee, make thy servant joyful through thy compassion, because thou art
going to heaven. Then the girdle with which the apostles had encircled the most holy body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and kissing it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat. He found all the apostles and another great crowd there beating their breasts on account of the brightness which they had seen. And seeing and kissing each other, the blessed Peter said to him: Truly thou hast always been obdurate and unbelieving, because for thine unbelief it was not pleasing to God that thou shouldst be along with us at the burial of the mother of the Saviour. And he, beating his breast, said: “I know and firmly believe that I have always been a bad and an unbelieving man; therefore I ask pardon of all of you for my obduracy and unbelief.”

And they all prayed for him. Then the blessed Thomas said: Where have you laid her body? And they pointed out the sepulcher with their finger. And he said: The body which is called most holy is not there. Then the blessed Peter said to him: Already on another occasion thou wouldst not believe the resurrection of our Master and Lord at our word, unless thou went to touch Him with thy fingers, and see Him; how wilt thou believe us that the holy body is here? Still he persists saying: It is not here. Then, as it were in a rage, they went to the sepulcher, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, not knowing what to say, because they had been convicted by the words of Thomas.

Then the blessed Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India--he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olives, and saw the most holy body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her girdle which she had about her. And the apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorifying God, all asked pardon of the blessed Thomas, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen the most holy body going up into heaven. And the blessed Thomas gave them his benediction, and said: Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”
IV DORMITION OF MARY : M. M. NINAN

St. Thomas receiving the Virgin Mary's girdle from heaven.

The Holy Belt, according to the tradition, was made by the Blessed Virgin Mary herself with camel hair. The Empress Zoi, wife of Leo 6th the Wise, out of gratitude for her miraculous cure, embroidered the Belt with gold thread, as it is found today, but divided in three pieces. Originally it was being kept in Jerusalem and later in Constantinople. Emperor John the 6th Katakouzinos (1347-1355), donated the Belt to the Holy Great Monastery of Vatopedi. It is still there is a silver casket.

Scripture does not give an account of Mary’s Assumption into heaven. This belief is therefore not scriptural. The only data we have is that the body was not found in the grave. We find homilies on the Assumption going back to the sixth century. The feast was celebrated under various names (Commemoration, Dormition, Passing, Assumption) from at least the sixth century.

The concept of dormition is not the same as going to heaven in their bodies as Elijah and Enoch and Jesus did. 1 Corinthians 15:20 Paul speaks of Christ’s resurrection as the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Here Mary is considered as one of the first fruits of resurrection after Jesus paid the price of Sin. The assumption of body of Mary is a symbol of the resurrection of the church where the dead in Christ will rise and they will receive a translated body and be with Christ.

Thomas returned to India. Most probably taking the Silk route.
The Indo-Parthian Empire was over run by the great Kushan Dynasty around 50 A.D, and the Apostle Thomas set sail to the Southern Parts of India. But tricky as the monsoon winds are he was shipwrecked and was pushed ashore in the Island of Socoto. According to the traditions of this Island this was in AD 51. Thomas himself is said to have built the first church out of the wreckage of the ship itself.

This is quite reasonable knowing that as recent as in 1897, in spite of all the advances in Marine navigation technology a British Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company ship Aden sank after being wrecked on a reef near Socotra, with the loss of 78 lives. In the first centuries, the island itself was inaccessible to the outside world because of the wind and climatic conditions of the sea.

Socotra or Soqotra is a small archipelago of four islands in the Indian Ocean. The largest island, also called Socotra, is about 95% of the landmass of the archipelago. It lies off some 240 kilometres (150 mi) east of the Horn of Africa and 380 kilometres (240 mi) south of the
Arabian Peninsula. The island is very isolated and through the process of speciation, a third of its plant life is found nowhere else on the planet. It has been described as the most alien-looking place on Earth. Socotra is part of the Republic of Yemen. Socotra appears as Dioskouridou ("of the Dioscurides") in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, a 1st century A.D. Greek navigation aid. In the notes to his translation of the Periplus, G.W.B. Huntingford remarks that the name Socotra is not Greek in origin, but derives from the Sanskrit dvipa sukhadhara ("island of bliss"). The Socotran people have their own language which is semitic and close to Aramaic.

One of the most striking of Socotra's plants is the dragon's blood tree (*Dracaena cinnabari*), which is a strange-looking, umbrella-shaped tree. Its red sap was thought to be the dragon's blood of the ancients, sought after as a medicine and a dye, and today used as paint and varnish. Also important in ancient times were Socotra's various endemic aloes, used medicinally, and for cosmetics. Other endemic plants include the giant succulent tree *Dorstenia gigas*, Moraceae, the cucumber tree *Dendrosicyos socotranus*, and the rare Socotran pomegranate, *Punica protopunica*. 
A.E. Medlycott in *India and the Apostle Thomas* states:

“The earliest mention of the existence of Christians on that island is that by Philostorgius, the Arian Church historian, in his narrative of the mission of Bishop Theophilus to the Homeritae; the reader will find the details, belonging to the year c. 354, given in Chapter V., Section iii.”
Cosmas Indicopleustes, before the middle of the sixth century (Topographia Christiana, Migne, P.Gr.-L., tom. lxxviii. col. 170), says: ‘Similarly on the island named of Dioscoris [the Greek name for Socotra], situated in the same Indian Ocean, whose inhabitants speak Greek, and are a colony placed there by the Ptolemies, the successors of Alexander of Macedon, there are clergy ordained in Persia and sent there, and a multitude of Christians.’

The Arab travellers of the ninth century, whose narrative was published by Reinaud, with Arabic text and a translation in French, in two small volumes, Paris, 1845, mention Christians on the island (vol.i.p.130): ‘The same sea holds the island of Socotra.... The greater part of the inhabitants are Christians.’


Marco Polo, a.d. 1294, also mentions these Christian inhabitants (vol. ii., ut supr., pp. 398-399): ‘Further towards the south you come to an island called Socotra. The people are all baptized Christians, and they have an Archbishop.’ And again: ‘Their Archbishop has nothing to do with the Pope of Rome, but is subject to the great Archbishop who lives at Bandas [Bagdad]. He rules over the bishop of that island, and over many other bishops in those regions of the world, just as our pope does in these.’

Assemani (Bibl. Or., tom. ii.p. 458 ff.) gives two lists of the sees under the Nestorian Catholicus or Patriarch. In the second, which is that by Elias, a Nestorian Bishop of Damascus, the see of Socotra is placed under the Metropolitan of Persia, and this appears to be the older of the two lists; while in the first list, that given by Amr’, son of Matthew, of about a.d. 1349 (Bibl. Or., tom.ii. p. 425), Socotra is placed as the eleventh Metropolitan see under the name of Katraba. No date can be assigned to the authorship of the first list. Lequien (Orients Christiana, tom. ii. col. 1290) mentions the transfer of one Elias from the see of Jerusalem to the Nestorian Metropolitan see of Damascus in the year 893, but concludes: Plane Eliam, tabulae et nomocanonis auctorem, illo de quo nunc est sermo recentiorem duxero.

Nicolò Conti, c. 1435, visited Socotra and spent two months there (R.H. Major’s India in the Fifteenth Century, London, Hakluyt Society, 1857, p. 20 of narrative): ‘this island produces Socotrine aloes, is six hundred miles in circumference, and is, for the most part, inhabited by Nestorian Christians.’

The evidence of the local tradition mentioned before is contained in St. Francis Xavier’s letter written from Goa, 18th September 1542, to the Society at Rome (Coleridge’s life and letters of St. Francis Xavier, London, 1872, vol. i. p. 117). As the saint gives the last full account of the state of Christianity on the island before its entire disappearance, we make no apology for reproducing it in full:

‘After sailing from Melinda we touched at Socotra, an island about a hundred miles in circumference. It is a wild country with no produce, no corn, no rice, no millet, no wine, no fruit trees; in short, altogether sterile and arid, except that it has plenty of dates, out of which they make bread, and also abounds in cattle. The island is exposed to great heat from the sun; the people are Christian in name rather than in reality, wonderfully ignorant and rude: they cannot read or write. They have consequently no records of any kind. Still they pride themselves on being Christians. They have churches, crosses, and lamps. Each village has its Caciz [Syriac term for priest; correctly Kâshisha], who answer
to the Parish Priest. These Caciz know no more of reading or writing than the rest; they have not even any books, and only know a few prayers by heart. They go to their churches four times a day—at midnight, at day-break, in the afternoon, and in the evening. They use no bells; but wooden rattles, such as we use during holy week, to call the people together. Not even the Caciz themselves understand the prayers which they recite; which are in a foreign language (I think Chaldean). They render special honours to the Apostle St. Thomas, claiming to be descendants of the Christians begotten to Jesus Christ by that Apostle in these countries. In the prayers I have mentioned they often repeat a word which is like our Alleluia. The Caciz never baptize any one, nor do they know the least what baptism is. Whilst I was there I baptized a number of children, with the utmost good will of the parents. Most of them showed great eagerness to bring their children to me, and made such liberal offerings out of their poverty of what they had to give, that I have been afraid to refuse the dates which they pressed upon me with such great good will. They also begged me over and over again to remain with them, promising that every single person in the island would be baptized. So I begged the Governor to let me remain where I found a harvest so ripe and ready to be gathered in. But as the island has no Portuguese garrison, and it is exposed to the ravages of the Mussulmans, the Governor would not hear of leaving me, fearing that I might be carried off as a slave. So he told me that I should soon be among other Christians who were not less, perhaps more, in need than the Socotrians of instruction and spiritual assistance, and amongst whom my work would be better spent.

‘One day I went to Vespers as recited by the Caciz; they lasted an hour. There was no end to their repetitions of prayers and incensations; the churches are always full of incense. Though their Caciz have wives, they are extremely strict in regard to abstinence and fasting. When they fast they abstain not only from flesh meat and milk, but from fish also, of which they have a great supply. So strict is their rule that they would rather die than taste anything of the kind. They eat nothing but vegetables and palm dates. They have two Lents, during which they fast; one of these lasts two months. If any one is profane enough to eat meat during that time, he is not allowed to enter the church.

‘In the village there was a Mussulman woman, the mother of two young children. Not knowing that their father was Mussulman, I was going to give them baptism, when they ran off, all of a sudden, to their mother to complain that I was trying to baptize them. The mother came to say that she would never let me baptize her children. She was a Mahommedan, and would never have her children made Christians. Upon this the people of Socotra began to cry out that the Mussulmans were unworthy of so great a blessing; that they would not let them be baptized however much they desired it, and that they would never permit any Mussulman to become a Christian. Such is their hatred of Mussulmans.’

“The customs described as prevailing among the Christians of the island are those peculiar to Nestorian Christians.

“The Carmelite Friar Vincenzo Maria di Santa Catarina (Viaggio alle Indie Orientali, Venezia, 1683, lib. v. cap. ix.p.472), describing the state of the island on his voyage home about the middle of the seventeenth century, found Christianity quite extinct, with but some faint traces of Christian names yet lingering.

W. B. Huntingford notes that

“The inhabitants seem always to have been a mixed people. Some of them at one period were Christians, converted it was said by St. Thomas in AD 52 while on his way to India. Abu Zaid Hassan, an Arab geog-
raper of the 10th century, said that in his time most of the inhabitants of Socotra were Christian... but by the beginning of the 16th century Christianity had almost disappeared, leaving little trace but stone crosses at which Alvares said the people worshipped... However, a group of people was found here by St. Francis Xavier in 1542, claiming to be descended from the converts made by St. Thomas (G. W. B. Huntingford ed. Trans. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1980)

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We can surmise that the mission took around an year or less and Thomas continued his journey to South India when the sea route became conducive during the next monsoon season reaching Kodungallur in Area 52.
VI

KERALA TRADITION

The Biblical Magi "Gaspar"

The Gospel of Matthew, alone mention the Magi, states that they came "from the east" to worship the Christ, "born King of the Jews". Although the account does not tell how many they were, the three gifts led to a widespread assumption that they were three as well. There might have been several Kings and Wise Men from several countries.
The Magi are popularly referred to as wise men and kings. The word Magi is a Latinization of the plural of the Greek word magos (μαγος) itself from Old Persian maguš from the Avestan magâunô, i.e. the religious caste into which Zoroaster was born, (see Yasna 33.7: 'yâ sruyê parê magaunô ' = ' so I can be heard beyond Magi '). The term refers to the priestly caste of Zoroastrianism. In general the title was not applied to priests of any one particular religion. Diodorus Siculus bears this out, for he says that magi controlled the temple of Bel in Babylon. (Bibliotheca Historica, II, 31; Ephraem Syrus II, 48) after the Medes had stormed the city. And priests of Inanna in northern Europe were called 'magi'. They had separated from the southern Chaldees in the time of Peleg, after the sixth millennium flood. Obviously the title of 'mage' has been bestowed upon priests of different religions.

The same word is generally used for wise men if the olden times. They were the scientists of the period and were Magicians, Sorcerers and were advisers to Kings and emperors. We meet "Elymas the sorcerer" in Acts 13:6-11, and Simon Magus, in Acts 8:9-13. Daniel was considered a Magician in the Babylonian Court.

Traditions identify a variety of different names for the Magi. In the Western Christian church they have been commonly known as:

- Melchior
- Caspar or Gaspar (and several other Greek or Latin variants such as Gathaspa, Jaspar, Jaspas, etc.).
- Balthasar (Bithisarea, Balthassar).

These names apparently derived from a Greek manuscripts probably composed in Alexandria around 500 A.D.,

One candidate for the origin of the name Caspar appears in the Acts of Thomas as Gondaphares (AD 21 – c.AD 47) The name of Gondaphares was translated in Armenian in "Gastaphar", and then in Western languages into "Gaspar". He may be the "Gaspar, King of India", who, according to apocryphal texts and eastern Christian tradition, was one of the three Biblical Magi who attended the birth of Christ. Bible historian Chuck Missler mentions about an Armenian tradition identifying the Magi as Balthasar of Arabia, Melchior of Persia and Gasper of India.

"Rajakkalude Pally"

Piravam Valiya Pally in Muvattupuzha river at Piravom, is popularly known as the 'Church of the Kings' ("Rajakkalude Pally"). "The place-name Piravom means "Nativity". It is believed that three of the wise men who were experts in Astronomy came from this area. Indian traditions assigns other Kings from Kerala as well.

When they returned, they built a church to worship infant Jesus on this mount. Kaniyanparambil Kurian Corepiscopa in the History of St.Thomas (Page. 15; Suriyani Sabha) states that St. Thomas himself acknowledged these 'Megusans' (MAGI), while he was in Kerala.

All the ancient documents in the church were destroyed by the Portugese during the Udayamperoor Synod (Suriyani Sabha. Page. 131).
According to Pierre Perrier this was in AD 51 taking the silk route back to Ephesus and Jerusalem. A very ancient tradition fixes the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in that year, and the travel of Apostle Thomas. This time, St. Thomas decided to leave by the south, to take the sea route that leads to India, by following the trading posts founded by Hebrew merchants along the Spice Route. He landed on the Indian coast at the end of summer 52, at Maliankara in present-day Kérala. He landed in AD 52 in Kodungallur. It is possible that he touched Bombay Kalyan area enroute.

'Church of the Kings', Muvattupuzha

An ancient painting in the church
(St. Mary with infant Jesus being worshipped by MAGI)
Nasranis of Kerala (ancient Malabar)

The Nasranis of Kerala, India, are of Hebrew or Israelite heritage but not much is known of their past, making it difficult to be certain that they are also descended from the 'Lost Tribes'. (Ref. Dr. Asahel Grant's 'The Nestorians or the Lost Tribes of Israel' for more about the Nazarenes and Nestorians). However, recent DNA analysis results suggest significant Middle Eastern / Israelite components among the Nasranis, also known as Mar Thoma (St. Thomas) Syrian (Syriac) Christians, of Kerala (ancient Malabar). Dr. Avigdor Shachan, in his book ‘In the Footsteps of the Lost Ten Tribes’ (translated from the Hebrew, Devora Publishing, Jerusalem, New York) refers to this ancient Christian community and their faith as follows: “One could label the Christianity which Thomas introduced in Taxila, Malabar and other Israelite communities in central Asia and along the eastern and western coasts of India, “Israelite Christianity”, an offshoot of the Jewish religion, for the language, culture, ritual and spirit that prevailed in this ancient church until the western missionaries arrived was a hybrid of Aramaic-Syrian-Eretz Israel and Eastern...”
Archaeologists in Kerala have discovered a 2000-year-old port settlement probably dating back to the first BC to third AD, in Pattanam about 50 km from the modern day port city of Kochi. The Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR) suggests that this could be the lost town of Muzires (Muziris) mentioned in early Roman manuscripts of Periplus. Pattanam is now being excavated.

Chronology of Pattanam: a multi-cultural port site on the Malabar coast
P. J. Cherian1, G. V. Ravi Prasad, Koushik Dutta, Dinesh Kr. Ray, V. Selvakumar and K. P. Shajan

They attended the banquet at the marriage ceremony of the daughter of Cheraman Perumal (the King of the Chera Kingdom) where Thomas came across a Jewish girl in the King's court. During the period of seven days of his stay there, several Jewish people were converted to Christianity.

It is said that Thomas ordained one Prince Peter to be the head of the church of the Jews and left for the other areas of India.

Here he preached to a Jewish community who accepted mesia and their synagogue became a Christian church.

He returned to Kerala where he established seven and half churches with 75 Brahmin families as teachers and over 3000 converts from Kshatriyas, Nairs and Chettiaras. These new converts were called St: Thomas Christians. This church is one of the most ancient churches in Christendom.
Traditional site where St. Thomas landed - Cranganore in Malabar coast - in 52 AD.
Legend:

A: Major cultural currents of the prehistorical period, based on archaeological studies.
B: Pre-Mauryan Indian routes based on Buddhist sources
C: Mauryan network, according to Greek sources and archaeological studies.
D: Trade routes at the beginning of the Christian era, based on literary sources.
E: The Indian "Z"
"Ezharappallikal",
The seven and a half churches
are at
1) Cranganore (Kodungalore, Maliyankara)
2) Quilon (Kavulam, Kollam, Kurakkeni Kollam)
3) Niranam (Nelkunya).
4) Nilackal (Chayal).
5) Kokkamangalam (Gokkamangalam, Pallipuram.)
6) Parur (Paravoor, Kottakavu).
7) Palur (Palayur).
And the half church of
Thiruvithamkode
"Ezharappallikal",
The seven and a half churches
1) Cranganore
   (Kodungalore, Maliyankara)
2) Quilon
   (Kavulam, Kollam, Kurakkeni Kollam)
3) Niranam (Nelkynda).
4) Nilackal (Chayal).
5) Kokkamangalam (Gokkamangalam, Pallipuram).
6) Parur (Paravoor, Kottakavu).
7) Palur (Palayur).
And the half church of Thiruvithamkode
Local traditions among the Christians include the Rambaan Paattu or Thomma Parvom - a song about the Acts of Thomas written around 1600 by Rambaan Thomas. Rambaan Thomas of Malyakal Family descends from the first Bishop whom St. Thomas is said to have ordained. The poem is the oral tradition handed down through generations. It is said to have been originally written by the Rambaan Thomas, the Bishop Bishop.

Margom Kali and Mappila Paattu are series of songs of the Acts of Thomas and the history of the Malabar Church. They are sung in consonance with dance forms that are typical of the Syrian Christians. Some of them are dance dramas performed in the open as part of the festivals of the church. These have no specific origin, but grew up in the course of history.
Veeradian Paattu is sung by a local Hindu group (called Veeradians) in accompaniment of Villu - a local instrument - during Christian festivals. This form of art also dates back to unknown period handed down through generations and modified in that process.

The tradition of Christians of Thomas is a much more reliable source of information than the Acts of Thomas. According to this tradition thousands of locals including Brahmins, Khathriyas and Dravidians were baptized by St. Thomas
I will sing of the way
in which our holy religion was introduced in Malankara..
The Apostle Thomas landed at Maliankara with the merchant Habban.
He performed miracles and in eight months
he established the Church of Jesus Christ in that city.
Then he went to Mailepuram (Madras) where he preached the Gospel of the Lord for four and a half months and then took ship for China.

He stayed four and a half months in China and returned to Mailepuram.

After he had been there for about a month, the son-in-law of the Rajah the king of Thiruvanchikulam came to him and begged him to return to Malabar.

They took ship and came to Maliankara where the apostle converted the Rajah and his family, forty Jews and four hundred others in less than six months.

He preached to the people, built a church with a cross, and ordained priests.

One of the first whom he consecrated was the Rajah’s son-in-law and was called Kepha.

Accompanied by Kepha he went to Quilon where he set up a cross and baptized 2400 people.

From Quilon, he went on to Chayal, in the mountains, Stayed there a whole year as he had done in Quilon, Baptized 2800 people and set up a cross.

At the request of the rulers of Tripaleswaram, he returned to that village. But when he saw that the people had desecrated the cross which he had set up, he cursed that place. Nonetheless, he remained there for two months. He once more set up a cross and instructed the people so that they should no longer return to heathendom and ordained as a priest Thomas, one of the leaders who had remained true to his faith.

During these two months that he stayed in Tripaleswaram He strengthened all the Christians in their faith and converted two hundred heathens.

Not far from there, further south,
he built the church of **Niranam**
and ordained as priest
his first pupil Thomas Maliyekal
who had been born there.

Then he went to **Kokkamangalam**, where he stayed for a year
and converted fifteen hundred people,
set up a cross
and taught the people how they were to worship God.

He again visited **Kottakavu Parur**, stayed almost a year there
and converted 2200 people.

From there he went to **Maliankara** along the southern road,
and was pleasantly surprised
to see the flourishing state of the Christian community there.
He stayed there only two weeks
and went away to the north, to **Palayur**, Where in one month
he baptized 1280 people
and according to his custom set up a great cross.

Towards the end of the year (59 AD) he returned to **Mailepuram**.

He went back once more to **Malabar**
and the angels protected him on his journey.

He stayed two months at **Maleattur**
and converted 220 people,

Stayed a whole year at **Niranam**
and was satisfied with the faith of the people
and the exemplary life that they led;

He gave communion to those
who had not yet received the sacrament.
Then he took his leave of the Christians
and told them that they would never see him again,
and set off for the **land of the Tamils**.

Thomas Rabban and Kepha the son-in-law of the Rajah
accompanied him for seven and a half miles
and then took their leave of him.
It would be impossible to relate
all the wonders which our saint performed
by making the sign of the cross
with the hands that had touched the wounds of the Lord.

He raised 29 dead men to life,
Freed 250 who were possessed by devils,
Healed 330 lepers,
Restored their sight to 250 blind people
And the use of their Limbs to 120 cripples,
And their speech to 20 deaf mutes.

He healed 280 sick people
who had been given up by their physicians.
He converted to the Christian faith
17,490 Brahmins;
350 Vaisyas (merchants) and farmers,
and 4289 Sudras.
He ordained two bishops and seven priests,
Of whom four were called Rabban
And appointed 21 deacons.

Ramban song does not mention Taxila mission and hence this must have been an earlier mission. Since Thomas landed in a ship in Kodungallur in 52 AD we could assume the Taxila mission was somewhere in 40 – 52 AD during the time of Gondaphores. He might have made his first mission trip to China during this 12 year period, for which we have no mention positively. The song mentions the mission trip to China by sea which might have been a follow up mission as he seems to have done in South Indian areas also.

Among the first converts there were forty members of the Jewish community including Rabbi Paul of the Cranganore Synagogue where every Saturday the Apostle used to go and read and explain the Old Testament for the Jewish congregation. Though Rabbi Paul received baptism and became a Christian, a good number of the Cranganore Jewish community continued to stick fast to their ancestral religion and gave the Christians the name "Nazaranis ", meaning followers of the man from Nazareth i.e.; Jesus Christ.
Cochin Jews
The "Black Jews" settled in the Malabar coast during the times of King Solomon of Israel, and after the Kingdom of Israel split into two.

A massive migration came soon after the destruction of temple in 70 AD. These Jews are called “Paradesi Jews” or “White Jews” A chieftain by the name of Joseph Rabban was granted a principality over the Jews of Cochin by the Chera Emperor of Kerala, Bhaskara Ravivarman II. Rabban's descendants maintained this distinct community, which was called Anjuvannam. C. Achuta Menon (A.D. 1911), says:

"In the first centuries of Christian era, a number of Jews immigrated into Kerala and settled in that portion of it which afterwards became the Kingdom of Cochin and Christianity also made its way in to the country about the same time...steadily grown in prosperity and importance so much so that the local Kings by charters engraved in copper plates constituted them self governing communities. By these charters Joseph Rab-
ban was made the hereditary chief of the Jews and Irvi Cottan that of the Christians and they were also given powers and privileges of Naduvazhi chiefs. Most of the privileges mentioned in the Jews deed are identical with those enumerated in the grant to the Christians but the latter were also given the right of "the Curved Sword", that is the right of carrying arms which was not granted to the Jews…".

During the first five centuries three powers ruled over today’s Kerala. They were Aay Rajas in the southern side, Ezhimala Kings in the northern side, and the first Chera kingdom comprising most of the present central Kerala. The capital of Chera was Vanji or Tiruvanchikulam and the most important port was Muchiri (Muziris). The capital of Chola Kingdom was Urayur and the most important port was Kaveri. The capital of Pandian kingdom was Madurai and the most important port was Korkai. The area from Gokarnam to CapeComerin (the land created by Parasu Rama and given to Brahmans) was ruled by the Chera kings. The Chera kingdom existing at that time was ruled by Udayan Cheran Athen-I (page 44 of Cochin State Manual). In Cochin State Manual (pages 52-53)

South India in the First Century AD

They were ruled by a large number of local rulers controlling few villages.
Kodangallor Evangelization

Besides Jews, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Nairs, and Chettiar were among the earliest converts to Christianity. The first Brahmin convert was a young member of a Niranom Brahmin family that had settled down in Cranganore engaged in some business. The young man's conversion was not liked by his father, who decided to cast him away from the family. The Apostle called the young convert and asked him to live with him. The young man, who had received the Apostle's name in baptism agreed to live with him and came to be known as Thomas Maliyakal, in recognition of his Brahmin family name. Subsequently he was raised to priest hood, and after sometime was given the title of Ramban or Arch-priest. In course of time a Jewish Synagogue as well as a Hindu temple at Cranganore were transformed into Christian churches. Accompanied by Prince Kepha, who was consecrated as the Bishop of Cranganore and Malabar, St. Thomas left Cranganore to preach the Gospel elsewhere.

Kodungallor is believed to be the ancient Muziris of Pliny, and the Periplus, on the north bank of Periyar River today. It is also known as Maliankara in ancient times. It is now known as Pattanam, is near Cochin
The story starts with a human sacrifice in the Kali temple in Kodungallur. It was the practice to select a male child under 5 years old from one of prominent families by lot. The lot that year fell on Kunjan, the nephew of King Aten Cheran I while he was on tour to the Pandyan empire. The family of Kunjan came to the new divine person recently arrived from abroad for help. Thomas and his Jewish friends were present at the ceremony and promised the family that they will save the child if they will believe in Isa. Before delivering the child for sacrifice the child was baptized in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and sealed him with the Holy Spirit. The Brahmin Priest took the child into the inner sanctuary of Kali and the door was shut. However the door was never reopened announcing the fulfillment of sacrifice. When the waiting crowd finally forced opened the door, Kunjan was standing there smiling and the Priest was not to be found anywhere.

“The whole city which was present accepted Jesus and were baptized in a repetition of Pentecostal day. The custom of Narabali came to an end. Thus Kodungaloor became a Christian city. It is since then known as the city of the Great God, city of Mahathevar viz., Mahodayapuram. The king on his return himself became a Christian under the name Andrew. Kunjan being saved from Narabali became ‘Kepa’.”

P.E.Easow

Kollam Evangelization

Quilon was the next scene of the labors of the Apostle. The majority of the people of Quilon belonged to the Chettiar caste, the recognized trading caste of the time. A good many of them accepted the Gospel attracted by the preaching of the Apostle and the miracles performed by him. Many inhabitants of Quilon hated the new religion and migrated from Quilon to Nanjinad to keep themselves away from the influence of the new religion; After erecting a cross for the worship of the converts who numbered about one thousand and four hundred, the Apostle left Quilon.
The Apostle and Prince Kepha proceeded from Quilon in a northeasterly direction and arrived at Thrikapaleswaram, near Niranom. Thrikapaleswaram had Hindu temples at that time, and to provide a place of public worship to the Christian community, the Apostle planted a cross a few furlongs away to the west of one of the temples. The non-Christian people in the locality did not like this and they pulled it out and cast it into the nearby river.

This desecration took place sometime after the Apostle had left the place for Chayal or Nileckal. Two Christians from Thrikapaleswaram went there and requested the Apostle to re-visit their place and set matters right. The cross that had been thrown out into the river moved downwards floating on the waters for some distance, and eventually rested on a strip of land on the opposite bank of the river. Here at Niranom a new site for a church was secured. During this second visit, the Apostle stayed at Niranom for two months and during this period two hundred persons were baptized by him giving new vigor and strength to the Christian community. Local tradition is that most of the Nambutiris having been made Christians by St. Thomas, left the place after giving the boxes containing the documents relating to their landed properties to a Kymal or Nair chieftain, who has since been known as Niranam Petti Kaymal. Of the various miracles performed by St. Thomas at Niranam, the most remarkable was the restoration of life to a child of a barber put to death by anti-Christian families, who wanted to throw the responsibility for the crime on the Apostle. The present building, supposedly the fourth, was constructed in 1912 and was reinforced during the year 2000. Among the attractions at the church are a huge Cross made of granite, relics of St. Thomas, remnants of the old church, the golden cross etc.
The St. Mary's (Orthodox) Church, Niranam, Kerala.

Nileckal Evangelization

The Apostle returned from Niranom to Chayal or Nileckal. According to the Ramban song the Apostle worked here for one year and during this period one thousand and one hundred persons were converted to Christianity. It was ruled by Vel kings of the Ayr kingdom. Names like Ayroor confirms this thinking. Vel-Nadu must have become Venad. Most likely this kingdom had its borders along the Southern side of Pampa River up to Thiruvella which later became part of Venadu.
Nilackal Church founded by St Thomas is situated on the side of the pond opposite to the present Nilackal Ambalam as per the tradition of St Thomas Christians. This monument is near the original Church site.

**Kokkamangalam Evangelization**

![The St. Thomas (Catholic) Church Kokkamangalam, Kerala.](image)

Kokkamangalam, far to the north of Quilon, Niranom and Nileckal, was the next centre of the missionary activities of St. Thomas. The Ramban song says that the Apostle spent one year at Kokka-mangalam and baptized one thousand and six hundred persons to Christianity. After planting a cross and opening a church there the Apostle left the place. During the absence of the Apostle unknown hands removed the cross from its site and threw it into the nearby backwater lagoon. The cross moved with the water current and reached Pallipuram. The believers at Pallipuram installed the cross solemnly at a suitable place and a church was opened there.

**Kottakuvu Evangelization**

Kottakuvu near Parur was the next centre where the Apostle preached the Gospel and founded a church. According to the Ramban song the Apostle succeeded in receiving into the Christian fold one thousand seven hundred and seventy persons at this center.
The St Thomas (Catholic) Church, Kottakkavu, North Paravur, Kerala.

Palayur Evangelization

From Kottakavu the Apostle proceeded to Palayur, one of the strongest Brahmin centers in Kerala.
Built 1607
The St. Thomas (Catholic) Church Palayoor, Kerala
Palayoor is near Guruvayoor/Kunnankulam

Palayur was the stronghold of the Namboodiri Brahmins. Ruins of an ancient Jewish Synagogue are still visible the Church. “When Thomas came to the great Brahmin centre of Palayur, a leading Brahmin Gramam (Village) among the 64, he came across some Brahmins doing the Pithru Yajna or Pooja to the manes or ghosts of deceased ancestors. They were throwing water into the air (Tharpan) while reciting manthras. The Apostle learned from them the meaning of this ritual and remarked: ‘If your performance is acceptable to the gods they could keep the water suspended in the air without allowing it to fall again and again’. “The Brahmins said that this was unthinkable as it was opposed to the laws of nature. Then Thomas asserted that the One true God he worshipped could do it, and he proceeded to perform a miracle on condition that the Brahmins accept his faith if he is successful. The Apostle, invoking the Holy Trinity, made the sign of the Cross and threw a handful of water up into the sky. After reaching a particular height the water stood still in the air, the particles glittering like diamonds. Looking down the Brahmins could see the cavity made by the removal of the water still there in the pond. Most of the witnesses were baptised on the spot. However those Brahmins who did not accept the faith called the place ‘Shapa Kadu’ or Cursed Place and left the place immediately promising to take the next bath only at Vembanattu, unpolluted by the new faith. Even today, true to the oath taken by their ancestors, the Brahmins do not eat or drink in the vicinity of Palayur or Chowghat (Shapa Kadu).”

Syrian Christians traditionally believed that the four Brahmin families Kalli, Kaliyankal, Sankarapuri & Pakalomattam were converted at this place.
Persian Cross at Palayur.
Sankarapuri Family Tradition

Sankarapuri was among the families who received Baptism in Palayoor. The families of Shankarapuri, Pakalomattom, Kalli, Kalikavu, and Kolath were given Priestly Status by St. Thomas.

Migrations of Our forefathers from Palayoor to Etamanoor:

In the 2nd Century AD all the four Family migrated from Palayoor via Angamali, Kadathuruthi to Etamanoor. The Devasom of Etamanoor did not allow them to stay there and sent them to a place 5 Km. away which was the Forest of the Goddess Kali. In those days the Forest of goddess Kali was believed to be full of Witches and Devils and people, were scared to stay in such places. The people who came from Palayoor stayed there without any fear not knowing about these facts. To prove this there are documents. The entire house names, house numbers, survey numbers are there in the Government Records. Survey 460/5, 460/6, 519/8 belonged to these Families. During those days there was no place for worship or Burial and the families worshipped at home and used their own property to bury the dead. Where these 4 families stayed they established a Chapel. There still exists 5 Graves near the famous Forest of Kali (Kalikavu) Grotto. It is believed that these are the graves of 5 important members of these families. This cemetery was just next to the Shakutirikal Family. Right now it is in the procession of Claratu Bhavan Seminary.

It is believed that the above said 4 families and the Kadapoor family, which came from Palayoor, joined together and established the Kuravilangattu Church. The Kalli and the Pakalomattom Families stayed on the Northern side of the church and the Shankarapuri, Kalikavu and the Kadapoor families stayed on the Southern side of the Church. So it came to be that Sankarapuri Family got the house name Thekkedethu meaning Southern Side, and Pakalomattom Family got the house name Vadakaedethu meaning Northern Side.

From there one family moved to Chengannur. From Chengannur one family moved to Kozhencherry in Plamoottil. From this came the Chennattu family out of which came Madathilparampil Family.
Thiruvithamcode Half Church

Apostle founded another church at Malayattur which is accorded the status of half church. Another tradition claims this half church as the one founded in Thiruvithamcode. When the Christians in east coast suffered persecution St. Thomas took 64 families with him across the ghat over Aruvamozhi Pass into Venad. These were mostly converts from Chettiar of Nagercoil. The King of Thiruvithamcode offered them refuge. The tradition says that when the King offered them sacred ash (Vibhuthi) they refused and so these Christians came to be known as Vibhuthi Dharia Chettikal. ("A History of Christianity in Kerala" by Dr. C.V.Cherian)

Except Nilackal all the Churches are on the coastal line. In some records Nilackal Church is termed Arappally not meaning half church byt as Head Church. There is a place called Plapally also known as Thalapally (meaning Head Church) very close to Nilackal today.

The Church of the Thomas Christians was one of the four great "Thomite Churches" of the East. The three others were the Edessan, the Chaldean (of Mesopotamia or Iraq) with Seleucia-Ctesiphon as its center, and the Persian (of Persia proper or Iran). These four Churches were "Thomite" in the sense that they looked to St. Thomas as to their direct or indirect Apostle.

Syriac Christianity did not originate in Antioch, but in Nisibis and Edessa. It was Apostle Thomas who sent Addai to Edessa who started the church there. Mar Addai ordained Mar Aggai to succeed him. This is the origin of the Catholicate of the East.

The Church in Antioch was founded by Apostles Peter and Paul, as well as other Apostles.

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According to the tradition of the Church in India, Thomas finished his mission in Mylapore (Meliapouram) for China at the beginning of AD 65. He returned to India and continued his ministry with his headquarters in Mylapore.
Founding of the Church in China by the Apostle St. Thomas between 65 and 68 AD according to the archaeological evidences. It is more likely that it took place between 40 and 52 AD. If this dating AD 65-68 AD is true, this took place soon after the first tour of Kerala ministry. "Such a discovery rehabilitates the tradition of the Chaldean Church (Iraq) and of the Church of the Syro-Malabar rite in Southern India called the “Christians of St. Thomas”, who have always considered the apostolate of the Apostle and the Christian establishment in China in the first century of our era as facts. In the Chaldean breviary, for example, one can read: "By St. Thomas, the Kingdom of Heaven took wings and flew all the way to the China."

Kerala tradition indeed speaks of two tours. The mission in Kerala has a break in between 52 and 62 when Thomas went to other parts of India and probably to China.

According to the tradition of the Church in India, the Apostle finished his mission there in 64 AD, and left from Meliapouram (near Madras) for China at the beginning of... 65 AD. The Indian and Chinese sources agree. There is thus a strong possibility that the two figures of Kong Wang represent the Apostle himself with, at his side, his acolyte-interpreter."

China and Japan claim that St. Thomas personally brought Christianity to China and Japan in 64 and 70 C.E., respectively. This view is promulgated by the Keikyo Institute.
THE APOSTLE SAINT THOMAS FOUNDED THE CHURCH IN CHINA

Brother Thomas of Our Lady of Perpetual Help
September 2008

Kong Wang Shan (Kong Wang Cliff)
THE DREAM OF EMPEROR MINGDI

Kong Wang cliff drawing

«Mingdi had a dream in which he saw a tall blond man, the top of whose head was encircled with a halo [...]. He was eight zhang tall [close to two metres]: he was of golden complexion [or “like gold”]. »

Upon awaking, the emperor questioned those who were charged at the Court with interpreting dreams. They told him that the man that he had seen in the dream did not originate from either China, or the North, or the South or the East, but that it was necessary to turn towards the West, where « tall, blond » men could be found.

«One of them told him that in the West there existed a god called “luminous” [or “the Man-Light”]. The Emperor, desirous of enquiring about the true doctrine, dispatched an envoy to the land of Tianzhu so that he might inquire about the precepts of the visionary. It is beginning from that time that paintings and statues reached the Middle Kingdom and Ying, prince of Zhu, began to have faith in this Way [or in the person who preached it] and thanks to that, the Middle Kingdom received it with esteem. »

With Pierre Perrrier, let us set aside the Buddhist interpretation, or rather appropriation of this dream, according to which this « Man-Light » would be Buddha, called the “visionary”. The famous Silk Road, on which the first Buddhist monks were said to have come was closed at the time, and the first archaeological traces of Buddhism only appear in China in the second century, in accordance with the commercial agreement signed in 158 a.d. with the Kushan Empire, which opened China to exterior religious influences…….

« These bas-reliefs, unquestionably contemporaneous with the arrival of St. Thomas in China, offer evidence that is unique in the world. Once the keys to the Judeo-Christian interpretation have been given, there appear:

1° the Apostle presenting the Cross –

2° his deacon with his scroll as a memory aid –

3° the Virgin carrying Her new-born Child.

In addition to the deacon, whose written scroll attests the coming of the Messiah whom Israel was expecting, the Mother and the Child who confirm the human birth of the Son of God, and the glorious Cross that represents His death and resurrection, this bas-relief presents the apostolic testimony of the Apostle St. Thomas. »
The upper portion of the Nestorian Stone (Hsian monument), discovered by Jesuit missionaries in 1625 AD in the province of Shensi in China. The title of the stone reads, "A monument commemorating the propagation of the Ta-Chin luminous religion (Christianity) in the middle kingdom".

« His mission in China would last three years, the length of time required to train disciples, deacons and elders, to organise a well-structured Church that would subsist after the departure of its founding Apostle. He was accompanied by a collaborator acting as an interpreter, whom he would leave there as resident bishop.

As soon as he arrived, St. Thomas undoubtedly went directly to the capital, Luoyang, where Emperor Mingdi resided. He seems to have given St. Thomas a free hand to preach, and even to build a church, the chancel of which, according to the hypothesis of Mr. Perrier, was the base of a wooden tower reputed to be the first pagoda in China.

The half-brother of Mingdi, Prince Liu Ying, converted at the preaching of St. Thomas. This prince, the Chronicles say, disappointed by the official religion that had become formalist and artificial, was searching for the dao, the true “way” that leads to Heaven. It was not in Buddhism that he found it, but in the Gospel! As he was the governor of the maritime province of Zhu, St. Thomas went to see him at Xuzhou (today Jiangsu), where it seems that the first Chinese Christian community came into being.

It is in this province of Zhu that the most numerous pieces of evidence of a very ancient Christian presence can be found, in particular a tomb dating from 86 a.d., decorated with bas-reliefs that are surely Christian: crosses, biblical scenes and even another representation of the Virgin with the Child. Let us not forget to mention a dish or paten on which are engraved two fish and five round loafs of bread, and the character Yi, which means “to share” in Chinese. It is an obvious allusion to the multiplication of the five barley loaves and the two fishes, related in the Gospel. Other clues, in particular Christian graffiti, bear witness, Perrier writes, « to an extensive and rapid propagation of the Christian Faith » (p. 294)……..

St. Thomas had to leave China after three years. The sculpture of KongWang Shan, which celebrates his stay in China, was probably executed with the consent of the imperial authorities just after his departure in 68-69. Shortly afterwards, however, Confucian Court scholars laid siege to the emperor to have him close
this new “way”, and stop this new religion from spreading, because they understood that it supplanted their “wisdom” and would prevent them from dominating the people. Mingdi yielded to their entreaties, and Prince Ying, according to the chronicle, had to resign his office, was exiled and condemned to commit suicide in 71 AD., as was the custom in China when one had ceased to please the emperor.»

Relying on the authority of Chinese historians, the sinologist Andre Muller found that “in AD 65, XACA (Sakya), an Indian Philosopher, came to China and preached amongst other doctrines that of the Divine Three-in-One.

This faith in Mahayana language is that of the Trinity – the Three in One

三一

i.e.

AMITABHA 阿弥陀 the Heavenly All-Father

DAI SEISHI 大势至菩萨 the Redeemer –Son

KWANNON 觀音 the Holy Spirit and Mother of man’s Soul.

Those who followed the teachings called themselves Xe Kiao and also Fo-Kiao. It would seem that this was the doctrine of XACA rather than Himself, unless it refers to His “twin”?

In the temple devoted to Amitabha, who receives and leads the soul to Paradise, there is a noteworthy Triad – viz.

Yakushi Nyorai 藥師如來 the Healing Buddha,

with Kwanon 觀音 and

Jizo 地藏 on either side.

THE BUDDHIST HIGHJACKING.

In the years that ensued the Buddhisms came via the Silk route. They not only tried to eradicate the Thomas Way but actually hijacked the teachings.
« The traces can be seen:

1° on the rock face of Kong Wang. The upper arm of the cross has been hammered, as has the Infant Jesus on the lap of His Mother. Other figures were added, several times the very characteristic figure of Buddha. These Buddhist sculptures, however, are posterior to the bas-relief sculptures of Parthian workmanship. They date from the beginning of the fourth century, when the Northern Wei dynasty, the successors of the Han emperors, adopted Buddhism as the official religion. The dream of Mingdi was the object of a Buddhist reinterpretation, as well as the two figures whom we identified as St. Thomas and his acolyte.

2° In Luoyang there is nowadays a Buddhist temple called Baima Si, which means “Temple of the White Horse”, presented in all the official guides as the cradle of Chinese Buddhism because it marks the site of the arrival of the « two foreigners who came from India » to the court of Emperor Mingdi in 65. Originally, however, it was a Christian church, as Pierre Perrier discovered by remarking the west-east orientation of the underlying ruins, while all the other Chinese pagodas are oriented south-north.

3° In the legend of Buddhist origins in China, we read that the two alleged monks who came from India brought with them a “sûtra”, a sort of popular Buddhist catechism presenting the sermons or moral counsels of Buddha. It happens that this “sûtra” was composed of… forty-two texts, not one more, not one less. This is the number of scrolls of the Christian missionaries! The copying is obvious, right to the very word, because “sûtra” is said to come from the Aramaic souartha, which means “good news” made up of the words and deeds of a given person. Thus it is that the “good news”, no, the Buddhist “bad news”, was substituted for the Catholic Gospel!

4° The worst is perhaps the appropriation and the misrepresentation of the figure of the Blessed Virgin. In Chinese Buddhism today there is the bodhisattva Guanshiyin, – she, it is said, “who pays attention to the voices of the world”. She is commonly known as Guanyin and also called “goddess of Mercy”. She is one of the key concepts that was introduced by the “Great Vehicle”, the broader form of Buddhism, more syncretistic than the “Little Vehicle” of Northern India. This figure of the “goddess of Mercy” experienced an immense popular success that has never flagged. »

The gospel that was brought in by Apostle Thomas was nourished by the contact other Christians through the Silk Route

Studies show that as early as 86 A.D., or the third year under the reign of "Yuanhe" of Eastern Han, Dynasty Christianity entered into China, 550 years earlier than the world accepted time.
When studying a batch of stone carvings of Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 A.D.) stored and exhibited in the Museum of Xuzhou Han Stone Carvings, Christian theology professor Wang Weifan was greatly surprised by some stone engravings demonstrating the Bible stories and designs of early Christian times. These include representations of six days of creation, the temptation of Eve, Expulsion from the Garden, and nativity.

Studies showed that these engravings were made in 86 A.D., or the third year under the reign of "Yuanhe" of Eastern Han Dynasty.

**The unmistakable vessel of communion**

Five Loaves and Two Fish on The Yi Vessel
The word Yi also means “sharing.” “To share with you.” It is not difficult to imagine that this was a vessel used by the early church in Eastern Han for sharing food and to celebrate the “love feast,” Holy Communion.

Since 2000 a research team of Australia-based scholars has systematically collected and analysed finds by Chinese archaeologists and scholars relating to the diffusion and cultural adaptation of two religions of Near Eastern origin, Manichaeism and Christianity, which had reached China via the Silk Road in the Middle Ages. The project focuses particularly on Manichaean and Nestorian remains found in the port city of Quanzhou (Ch’üan-chou, viz. the Zayton of Marco Polo) which was a thriving multicultural centre throughout the Middle Ages.

They have found large number of St. Thomas crosses in the tomb stones which strongly indicates the connection with the Thomas Christians of Malabar.

(Manichaean and (Nestorian) Christian Remains in Zayton (Quanzhou, South China)ARC DP0557098 Compiled by Professor Sam Lieu FRHistS, FSA, FAHA and Dr Ken Parry)

The introduction of Christianity into China has been ascribed not only to the Apostle of India, St. Thomas, but also to St. Bartholomew. In the third century, Arnobius, in "Adversus Gentes", speaks of the Seres, with the Persians and the Medes, as among the nations reached by "that new power which has arisen from the works done by the Lord and his Apostles". . They seemed to have reached China in the seventh century,
according to the. The church was augmented after the Nestorian Schism (Council of Ephesus (431 AD)) when many Nestorians moved to China as shown in the Si-ning-fu inscription. The Nestorians were successful in converting the Keraits to Christianity at the beginning of the eleventh century, as related by the Christian historian, Bar Hebræus. The Keraits remained Christians till the time of Jenghiz Khan, Their head is spoken of by Rubruck and Marco Polo as Ung Khan (Wang Khan). Ung Khan is sometimes referred to as the possible Prester John by some.

The Mongol emperor Kublai Khan sent two monks as emissaries to the West. One of them, Rabban Sawa, arrived in Rome and visited Pope in 1287. He was questioned by the Cardinals"Which of the Apostles taught the Gospel in your quarter of the world?"

Sawma replied: "Mar Thomas, and Mar Addai, and Mar Mari taught the Gospel in our quarter of the world and we hold at the present time the canons which they delivered to us."

The Chaldean church. refers several times to the role of Thomas among the Chinese in its breviaryas:
"by St. Thomas the Chinese also with the Ethiopians have turned to the truth;"
"St. Thomas has flown and gone to the Kingdom of Heaven among the Chinese;"
"the Indians and the Chinese . . . bring worship in commemoration of Thomas to Thy name, our Savior."

Whether Thomas reached China through the Silk Route or through the sea from South India is not clear. It appears that Thomas did reach China through the Silk Route first and later also from South India. He might have visited and the returned to Edessa during the period of 30 – 40 AD. But we have no archaeological evidence for such an early visit available.
In 1623 grave diggers working outside of Xian dug up a stele weighing two tons and carved with 2,000 Chinese characters.

The Monument Stele says:

“The Emperor Taizong was a champion of culture. He created prosperity and encouraged illustrious sages to bestow their wisdom on the people. There was a saint of great virtue named Aleben, who came from the Qin Empire carrying the true scriptures. He had read the azure clouds and divined that he should journey to the East. Along the way, Aleben avoided danger and calamity by observing the rhythm of the wind.

In the ninth year of the Zhenguan reign [A.D. 635], Aleben reaching Chang-an [Zian]. The Emperor sent his minister, Duke Xuanling, together with a contingent of the palace guard, to the western outskirts to accompany Aleben to the palace.

The translation work on his scriptures took place in the Imperial Library and the Emperor studied them in his Private Chambers. After the Emperor became familiar with the True Teachings, he issued a decree and ordered that it be propagated…

… the Emperor issued a proclamation, saying:

“We have studied these scriptures and found them otherworldly, profound and full of mystery.

We found their words lucid and direct.

We have contemplated the birth and growth of the tradition from which these teachings sprang.
These teachings will save all creatures and benefit mankind, and it is only proper that they be practiced throughout the world.”

Following the Emperor’s orders, the Greater Qin Monastery was built in the I-ning section of the Capital. Twenty-one ordained monks of the Luminous Religion (Jing Jiao )were allowed to live there…

The Emperor Gaozong [A.D. 650-683] reverently continued the tradition of his ancestor and enhanced the Luminous Religion by building temples in every province. He bestowed honors upon Aleben, declaring him the Great Dharma Lord of the Empire. The Luminous Religion spread throughout all ten provinces, the Empire prospered and peace prevailed. Temples were built in 100 cities and countless families received the blessings of the Luminous Religion.”

Christianity flourished in China for at least two hundred years around A.D. 850when persecution caused all foreign religions to close down and all monasteries closed and monks return to lay life. This affected both the Buddhist and the “Luminous Religion”

In 1880 a Taoist monk Wang Yuanlu discovered 50,000 ancient Chinese manuscripts hidden away in more than 500 caves in Dunhuang. Among them are the Jesus Sutras which early missionaries brought into China. They paraphrase passages from the New Testament and thus provide direct evidence that the ancient Chinese writers of these texts clearly knew the Gospel accounts:

“Do not pile up treasures on the ground where they will rot or be stolen. Treasures must be stored in Heaven where they will not decay or rot.”

“Always tell the truth. Do not give pearls to swine; they will trample and destroy them. You will only be blamed by them for your actions and incur their anger. Why don’t you realize this yourself.”

“Knock on the door and it will be opened for you. Whatever you seek, you will obtain from the One Spirit. Know on the door and it will be opened for you.”

“Look at the birds in the air. They don’t plant or harvest, they have no barns or cellars. In the wilderness the One Spirit provided for the people and will also provide for you. You are more important than the birds and should not worry.”

If you listen to these sutras and take pleasure in them, if you read them aloud and carry them in your mind, you will plant strong roots for many generations to come. Your father and grandfathers, your mother and grandmothers, who cherished these teachings and found joy in them before you, have created a tradition you are continuing.”

Evidently these Jesus Sutra texts clearly shows how the basic gospel of Salvation is embedded in the culturally relevant form of China. They translates the Christian ideas and ideals into an Chinese terms which are steeped in Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian symbols and concepts.

Thus, the Jesus Sutras speak of the “Higher Dharma” that leads to Peace and Joy. “It is the Sutras of the Luminous Religion that enable us to cross the sea of birth and death to the other shore, a land fragrant with
the treasured aroma of Peace and Joy.” “The Sutras are like a great fire burning upon a high mountain. The light from that fire shines upon all.”

Here is how the Jesus Sutras relate the story of Jesus:

“The Lord of Heaven sent the Cool Wind to a girl named Mo Yen. It entered her womb and at the moment she conceived. The Lord of Heaven did this to show that conception could take place without a husband. He knew there was no man near her and that people who saw it would say, “How great is the power of the Lord of Heaven.”…”

“… Mo Yen became pregnant and gave birth to a son named Jesus, whose father is the Cool Wind.

When Jesus Messiah was born, the world saw clear signs in heaven and earth. A new star that could be seen everywhere appeared in heaven above. The star was as big as a cart wheel and shown brightly. At about that time, the One was born in the country of Ephrath in the city of Jerusalem. He was born the Messiah and after five years he began to preach the dharma.

… From the time the Messiah was 12 until he was 32 years old, he sought out people with bad karma and directed them to turn around and create good karma by following a wholesome path. After the Messiah had gathered 12 disciples, he concerned himself with the suffering of others. Those who had died were made to live. The blind were made to see. The deformed were healed and the sick were cured.

… For the sake of all living beings and to show us that a human life is as frail as a candle flame, the Messiah gave his body to these people of unwholesome karma. For the sake of the living in this world, he gave up his life.

… After the Messiah had accepted death, his enemies seized the Messiah and took him to a secluded spot, washed his hair and climbed to “the place of skulls,” which was called golgotha. They bound him to a pole and placed two highway robbers to the right and left of him. They bound the Messiah to the pole at the time of the fifth watch of the sixth day of fasting. They bound him at dawn and when the sun set in the west the sky became black in all four directions, the earth quaked and the hills trembled. tombs all over the world opened and the dead came to life. What person can see such a thing and not have faith in the teaching of the scriptures? To give one’s life like the Messiah is a mark of great faith.”


Not long after Jing Jiao reached China, the emperor Tang Taizong ordered and financed a "Persian Temple" to be built in Chang An by Jing Jiao priests. Jing Jiao spread across China very rapidly, by the time of emperor Tang Gaozong, every county has Jing Jiao temples, and the religion reached the prosperous stage of "doctrines spread in ten ways, temples abound in hundreds of cities".
Amazing Discovery in China Changes Christian History in Asia
Sian, China

The oldest Christian site in Asia has been discovered dating back to 638 AD. The site which is near the ancient Chinese capital of Sian has shattered previous understanding of the role of Christianity in China, Japan and Asia.

When Jesus commanded the disciples to go to the `ends of the earth` they went and the gospel was proclaimed and the Church grew to India in 51, China in 64 AD, and it’s estimated in Japan around 70 AD.

The proclamation of the Gospel to those who have `never heard`, as opposed to those who are descended from those who once knew, brings the dual blessings of pride in ones past, as well as the inherited prayers of generations gone previously.

A recent discovery - according to the local is `old news` near the city of Sian, in Central China has dramatically changed the historical record of China and Asia.

Asia with China and Japan in particular are thought of as predominately Buddhist areas. The record of the Church is very limited throughout Asia with the exception of The Philippines and Korea.

As amazing as it may seem the oldest Christian site in Asia has been discovered dating back to 638 AD. The site which is near the ancient Chinese capital of Sian has shattered previous understanding of the role of Christianity in China, Japan and Asia.

The Nestorian Monument, a stone tablet in the city of Sian which was discovered in the 1600s was the only testimony to Christianity in China. What was always a puzzle was that it clearly stated that `monasteries abound in a hundred cities`. This monument which is often called the `Rosetta Stone` of Christianity in Asia was the only proof of this past.

The discovery of the Christian site has dramatically changed all this. The Church is in the center of the Imperial area of the Tang Dynasty and its location is what is particularly bringing amazement to experts on the Silk Road. With the Church in the center of the imperial area it confirms for the first time the stories that have long been passed down and appear frequently in Chinese narratives which tell of a major Church in China in the Tang Dynasty from 618-877.

According to The Cross and The Lotus by Lee Shiu Keung in 635, Bishop Alopen from The Church of the East began his mission in Chang Ang, present day Sian. Christianity had first come to China in the year 64 when the Apostl Thomas came to Sian, China from India where he had come in the year 52. Other believers
are believed to have brought the gospel on to Japan by the year 70 AD.

The Church had lost contact with the rest of the world through the cutting off of the Silk Road by the people of Turkestan and the restoration of the links brought great joy and strength to the Church in China, Japan and the rest of Asia as contact was once more restored with the rest of the Church.

In 630, however the Silk Road was restored and travel between the East and the West resumed. The Tang Dynasty was a very special period in Chinese history where there was a broad policy of tolerance and interest in fostering foreign religions., In 638 Alopen completed the first Christian book in Chinese The Sutra of Jesus the Messiah.

In this book it was carefully argued that Christianity was part of China's ancient tradition. In appreciation for the good of the Eastern Christians an Imperial Degree was proclaimed that provided for the first building of a Church. Later on The Church of the East was favored by another Imperial degree and Alopen was promoted to be Great Spiritual Lord, Protector of the Empire, Metropolitan of Chang An.

The Church encountered ups and downs but following a period of persecution falling the fall of the Tang Dynasty grew again in the 13th and 14th Centuries and were again so respected by the Emperor that according to the ancient Chinese document the Yuan Shi, Chapter 89, the Governor appointed a special officer to take charge of the affairs of the Church of the East with the second high-test rank in China.

This office was solely to manage the affairs of the many bishops, priests, monks and to see that all the sacraments were carefully observed. According to the Yuan Shi there were 72 Church of the East monasteries during the period 1289 to 1320 not to mention the multitude of churches and believers.
Thomas next proceeded overland to the Coromandel coast and ministered in what is now the Chennai (Madras) area, where a local king and many people were converted. One tradition says that he went from there to China via Malacca and, after spending some time there, returned to the Madras area (Breviary of the Mar Thoma Church in Malabar). According to the Syriac version of the Acts of Thomas, Masdai, the local king at Mylapore, after questioning the apostle condemned him to death about the year A.D. 72. Anxious to avoid popular excitement, “for many had believed in our Lord, including some of the nobles,” the king ordered Thomas conducted to a nearby mountain, where, after being allowed to pray, he was then stoned and stabbed to death with a lance wielded by an angry Brahmin. A persecution of Christians in Southern India followed and sixty-four families eventually fled to Kerala.

Apostle Thomas was martyred in Mylapore near Madras. (Tradition calls this place Kalloor - the place of rock) in Tamilnadu State, India. Tamil word Mailapur (i.e. the town of peacocks), which the Greeks rendered as Miliarpha, the Portuguese as Meliapor, and the English as Mylapore. The traditional date of martyrdom is 19th of December, 72 AD.
His followers took his body and buried him in the tombs of the Chiefs.

The Church which stands over the cave at Little Mount where St Thomas traditionally known to have hid himself from his murderers

The inscription in a marble tablet at the entrance to the cave reads as follows:
“The cave where lay hid persecuted just before being martyred by RAJA MAHADEVAN, king of Mylapore, A.D. 68, THOMAS one of the twelve, the great Apostle of India, the very one who put his finger into the wounds of his Lord and God”
The Church on St. Thomas Mount, which was built by the Portuguese in 1523 and extended in 1547. Coja Safar, an Armenian, extended it further in 1707.
The Marthoma Cross which is on the main altar, in the Church on St. Thomas Mount.
The Church in St. Thomas Mount, Mylapore, Chennai The Gothic Cathedral built in 1893. The tomb is found inside this church.

"it was found to contain the among other Relics, the piece of spear, a small piece of the Apostle's bone. This is all that the Cathedral possess"
Original tomb of Apostle Thomas in Mylapore.

Tomb in 1900
Piece of a hand Bone of St. Thomas which touched the wound of Jesus, it was brought from Edessa and preserved in the Milapore St. Thomas Museum

Tip of the lance that took the life of St. Thomas which was recovered from the grave during the Portuguese excavation and preserved in the Milapore St. Thomas Museum

A merchant from Edessa in Syria who visited that region exhumed his body and took it to Syria. In 232 the relics of the Apostle Thomas are said to have been returned by an Indian king and brought from India to the city of Edessa, Mesopotamia, on which occasion his Syriac Acts were written. The Indian king is named as "Mazdai" in Syriac sources, "Misdeos" and "Misdeus" in Greek and Latin sources respectively, which has been connected to the "Bazdeo" on the Kushan coinage of Vasudeva I.
Obv: Vasudeva in tall helmet, holding a scepter, and making an offering over an altar. Legend in Kushan language and Greek script (with the Kushan letter "sh"):
"Shaonanoshao Bazodeo Koshano": "King of kings, Vasudeva the Kushan".
Rev: oesho, a conflation of Zoroastrian Vayu and Hindu Shiva, holding a trisula scepter, with the bull Nandi. Monogram (tamgha) to the left.

He is reported to have been converted to Hinduism during his reign. It must have been Saivism an early form of Christianity.

The martyrrologist Rabban Sliba dedicated a special day to both the Indian king, his family, and St Thomas:
"Coronatio Thomae apostoli et Misdeus rex Indiae, Johannes eus filius huisque mater Tertia" ("Coronation of Thomas the Apostle, and Misdeus king of India, together with his son Johannes (thought to be a latinization of Vizan) and his mother Tertia") Rabban Sliba (Mario Bussagli, "L'Art du Gandhara", p255)
St. Ephrem's works note that the bones of St. Thomas were venerated there in his time. The great
ymnodist alludes to the transferral of the bones in his Carmina Nisibena (42:1.1-2.2, Kathleen McVey,

The evil one wails, "Where then
can I flee from the righteous?
I incited Death to kill the apostles
as if to escape from their scourges
by their death. More than ever now
I am scourged harshly. The apostle I killed in India
[has come] to Edessa before me. Here is he and also there.
I went there, there he is.
Here and there I found him, and I am gloomy.
Did that merchant carry the bones?
Or perhaps, indeed, they carried him!

A Nestorian bishop of Basrah, at the mouth of the Tigris-Euphrates, wrote the Book of the Bee in the
thirteenth century which states:

"Thomas was from Jerusalem of the tribe of Judah. He taught the Parthians, Medes and Indians; and
because he baptized the daughter of the King of the Indians, he stabbed him with a spear and he died.
Habban the merchant brought his body and laid it in Edessa, the blessed city of Christ our Lord. Others say
he was buried in Mahluph [Mylapore], a city in the land of the Indians."

His relics were moved from Edessa. The Edessene Chronicle says that in 394 "the casket of the Apostle
Thomas was removed to the great church erected in his honor."

Muslims captured Edessa in 1142, at which the Christians took the relics to the isle of Chios in the Aegean
Sea, where they remained for more than a century.

In 1258 the prince of Taranto raided Chios and sent the relics to Ortona, Italy, where they were installed in
the cathedral. In 1952 Cardinal Tisserant arranged to have sent to Cranganore a thigh bone in 1952, on 19th
centenary celebration the arrival of Thomas there.

After a short stay in the Greek island of Chios, on September 6, 1258, the relics were transported to the
West, and now rest in Ortona, Italy.
St. Thomas Apostle Basilica in Ortona, Italy
X 72 AD  APOSTLE ST. THOMAS MARTYRED: M. M. NINAN

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The golden copper urn in the Basilica St. Thomas

Ortona's great cathedral has the privilege of housing the bones of St Thomas Apostle, which arrived in Ortona on September 6, 1258, a booty taken by captain Leone degli Acciaioli when the island of Chio was sacked.
There are several references to Thomas' acts in India, which corroborates the general validity of the story.

1. 'The Doctrine of the Apostles' 100 AD?

Jonathan Draper writes (Gospel Perspectives, v. 5, p. 269):

"Since it was discovered in a monastery in Constantinople and published by P. Bryennios in 1883, the Didache or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles has continued to be one of the most disputed of early Christian texts. It has been depicted by scholars as anything between the original of the Apostolic Decree (c. 50 AD) and a late archaising fiction of the early third century. It bears no date itself, nor does it make reference to any datable external event, yet the picture of the Church which it presents could only be described as primitive, reaching back to the very earliest stages of the Church's order and practice in a way which largely agrees with the picture presented by the NT, while at the same time posing questions for many traditional interpretations of this first period of the Church's life. Fragments of the Didache were found at Oxyrhyncus (P. Oxy 1782) from the fourth century and in coptic translation (P. Lond. Or. 9271) from 3/4th century. Traces of the use of this text, and the high regard it enjoyed, are widespread in the literature of the second and third centuries especially in Syria and Egypt. It was used by the compiler of the Didascalia (C 2/3rd) and the Liber Graduun (C 3/4th), as well as being absorbed in toto by the Apostolic Constitutions (C c. 3/4th, abbreviated as Ca) and partially by various Egyptian and Ethiopian Church Orders, after which it ceased to circulate independently. Athanasius describes it as 'appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of goodness' [Festal Letter 39:7]. Hence a date for the Didache in its present form later than the second century must be considered unlikely, and a date before the end of the first century probable."

"A new consensus is emerging for a date c. 100 AD." Latest date for the available document is 250 AD.
“After death of the Apostles, there were Guides and Rulers in the Churches; and whatever the Apostles communicated to them, and they had received from them, they taught to the multitudes. They, again, at their deaths also committed and delivered to their disciples after them everything which they had received from the Apostles; also what James had written from Jerusalem and Simon from the City of Rome, and John from Ephesus and Mark from the great Alexandria, and Andrew from Phrygia and Luke from Macedonia and Judas St. Thomas from India, that the epistles of an Apostle might be received and read in the Churches in every place, like those Triumphs of their Acts which Luke wrote, are read, that by this the Apostles might he known...’

“India and all its own countries, and those bordering on it, even to the farther sea, received the Apostle’s hand of Priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the Church which he built and ministered there”. In what follows “the whole Persia of the Assyrians and Medes, and of the countries round about Babylon…. even to the borders of the Indians and even to the country of Gog and Magog” are said to have received the Apostles’ Hand of Priesthood from Aggaeus the disciple of Addaeus.”

2. **Bar-Daisan (A.D. 154-223)** was a Syrian poet, astrologist, and philosopher, of Edessa, a wealthy Persian, or Parthian parents. Though he started as a Gnostic he became a strong Christian. He is said to have visited Kerala and met the Gnostic Mani the Manichaen in Ranny. He is probably the poet who wrote “The Acts of Thomas”. He reports that in his time there were Christian tribes in North India which claimed to have been converted by Thomas and to have books and relics to prove it. But at least by the time of the establishment of the Second Persian Empire (A.D. 226), there were bishops of the Church of the East in northwest India, Afghanistan and Baluchistan, with laymen and clergy alike engaging in missionary activity. The difficulty with the Acts of Judas Thomas is in identifying the places and persons in history. The names are Persian attempt at Indian pronunciation.

3. **Saint Pantaenus (180 – 216 AD)**

**Saint Pantaenus** was a Christian theologian who founded the Catechetical School of Alexandria about AD 190. (Eusebius, Church History V.10), This school was the earliest catechetical school, and became influential in the development of Christian theology.
Pantaenus was a Stoic philosopher teaching in Alexandria. He converted to the Christian faith, and sought to reconcile his new faith with Greek philosophy. His most famous student, Clement, who was his successor as head of the Catechetical School. Pantaenus initiated the study of Christian theology, on the interpretation of the Bible, the Trinity, and Christology. Being familiar with the Gnostic movement he was the main supporter of Serapion of Antioch for acting against the influence of Gnosticism.

A deputation from India reached Alexandria some time in 179 or 189 AD. In A.D. 189 Pantaenus himself went on a missionary tour to India, and Eusebius says that he brought home with him the Gospel of Matthew, in Hebrew, that had been carried to India by Bartholomew. (Bartholomew mission was in Kalyan near Bombay. Some believe that the name Bartholomew is a corruption of Mar Thoma. He brought the gospel back with him to Alexandria, where he returned after he had zealously employed some years in instructing the Indians in the faith. St. Pantaenus continued to teach in private till about the year 216 AD. Saint Jerome, following Eusebius wrote that Pantaenus visited India, “to preach Christ to the Brahmans and philosophers there.”

4. Origen of Alexandria, Egypt c185-254 AD,

Origen taught in Alexandria and then in Caesarea. As quoted in Eusebius;

He is the first known writer to record the casting of lots by the Apostles. Origen original work has been lost; but his statement about Parthia falling to Thomas has been preserved by Eusebius.

“Origen, in the third chapter of his Commentary on Genesis, says that, according to tradition, Thomas’s allotted field of labour was Parthia”.

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5.  Clement of Alexandria:  c. 235 AD

Greek Theologian, Clement makes a passing reference to St. Thomas’ Apostolate in Parthia. This agrees with the testimony which Eusebius records about Pantaenus’ visit to India.

6.  Ephrem of Syria: 306 – 370 AD  the poet affirms Edessan Church’s strong conviction concerning St. Thomas’s Indian Apostolate. There the devil speaks of St. Thomas as “the Apostle I slew in India”.

Also “The merchant brought the bones” to Edessa.

In another hymn eulogizing St. Thomas we read of “The bones the merchant hath brought”. “In his several journeyings to India, And thence on his return, All riches, which there he found, Dirt in his eyes he did repute when to thy sacred bones compared”. In yet another hymn Ephrem speaks of the mission of Thomas “The earth darkened with sacrifices’ fumes to illuminate”. “A land of people dark fell to thy lot”, “a tainted land Thomas has purified”; “India’s dark night” was “flooded with light” by Thomas.

"It was to a land of dark people he was sent, to clothe them by Baptism in white robes. His grateful dawn dispelled India's painful darkness. It was his mission to espouse India to the One-Begotten. The merchant is blessed for having so great a treasure. Edessa thus became the blessed city by possessing the greatest pearl India could yield. Thomas works miracles in India, and at Edessa Thomas is destined to baptize peoples perverse and steeped in darkness, and that in the land of India.” - Hymns of St. Ephraem, edited by Lamy (Ephr. Hymni et Sermones, IV).
St. Ephraem, writes in the forty-second of his "Carmina Nisibina" that the Apostle was put to death in India, and that his remains were subsequently buried in Edessa, brought there by an unnamed merchant.

7. Eusebius of Caesarea: c. 263–339 AD

Eusebius says: “When the holy Apostles and disciples of our Saviour were scattered over all the world, Thomas, so the tradition has it, obtained as his portion Parthia….” According to Eusebius’ record, Thomas and Bartholomew were assigned to Parthia and India.


“What? were not the Apostles strangers amidst the many nations and countries over which they spread themselves? … Peter indeed may have belonged to Judea; but what had Paul in common with the gentiles, Luke with Achaia, Andrew with Epirus, John with Ephesus, Thomas with India, Mark with Italy?”
9. Ambrose of Milan: 339-397 AD

Ambrose gives a good deal of information on India and Indians. He speaks of the Gymnosophists of India, the Indian Ocean, the river Ganges etc., a number of times. “This admitted of the Apostles being sent without delay according to the saying of our Lord Jesus… Even those Kingdoms which were shut out by rugged mountains became accessible to them, as India to Thomas, Persia to Matthew.”

10. St. Jerome 342- 420 A.D

"He (Christ) dwelt in all places: with St. Thomas in India, Peter at Rome, with Paul in Illyricum."

+ Pontius Meropius Anicius Paulinus was born of a prominent Bordeaux family.

+ He received his education in the school of the rhetorician Ausonius.

+ At an early age he attained the dignity of senator and then of consul. As governor of Campania, he chose Nola as his seat.

+ In 409 he became bishop of Tours. Paulinus was an author and poet; he corresponded with the great saints and scholars of his time, Ambrose and Augustine

“Parthia receives Mathew, India Thomas, Libya Thaddeus, and Phrygia Philip”.

12. St. Gaudentius, Bishop of Brescia, c 427 AD


"..... St. Thomas among the Indians, Andrew and Luke at the city of Patras are found to have closed their careers."

13. St. Gregory of Tours c 594 AD (538 -593 AD)

Gregory the Great

d. 604  Bishop, Musician, Biblical Scholar

- Doctor of the Western Church
- Sent Augustine to re-evangelize Britain
- Opposed coerced conversions of pagans and Jews
- Reformed the Latin Mass
- Supported musical changes that developed into Gregorian Chant
- Wrote sermons, Commentary on Job, Dialogues on the Life of St. Benedict, Book of the Pastoral Rule, and many letters
‘St. Thomas the Apostle, according to the narrative of his martyrdom is stated to have suffered in India. His holy remains (corpus), after a long interval of time, were removed to the city of Edessa in Syria and there interred. In that part of India where they first rested, stand a monastery and a church of striking dimensions, elaborately adorned and designed. This Theodore, who had been to the place, narrated to us.’

14. St. Isidore of Seville in Spain c. 630 AD

"This St. Thomas preached the Gospel of Christ to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians, the Hyrcanians and the Bactrians, and to the Indians of the Oriental region and penetrating the innermost regions and sealing his preaching by his passion he died transfixed with a lance at Calamina...a city of India, and there was buried with honour".

Calamina is the present Mylapore. There are many explanations for the name Calamina17. It seems to have derived from two Tamil words kallin mel or kallin mele which means ‘on the stone’ or ‘on the hill’. kallin mele, evolved as kalamene, kalamine and then Calamina.

15. St. Bede the Venerable c. 673-735 AD

"Peter receives Rome, Andrew Achaia; James Spain; St. Thomas India; John Asia...."
16. St. John Damascene  676 - 749 AD

St. John grew up at the court of Damascus where he succeeded his father as the caliph's chief councillor. He was educated as a Christian by a slave who was an Orthodox monk. A talented writer, he wielded his pen so successfully in battle against the iconoclasts that they slandered him before the Caliph, whereupon he was dismissed and his right hand cut off. It was miraculously restored after fervent prayer. St. John then retired to the monastery of St. Sabbas near Jerusalem, where he continued to produce an inspired stream of commentaries, hymns and apologetical writings, including the Octoechos (the Church's service book of eight tones) and An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, a summary of the dogmatic writings of the Early Church Fathers.

“India, an immense and thickly populated country, is situated at a great distance from Egypt and is separated from that country by the Ocean. It touches Persia on one side of the land. The most holy Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles was sent to India to preach the Gospel of salvation”.

17. Chronicle of the Kings of England: The Anglo-Saxon Kings

King Arthur did send gifts to the tomb of Thomas in India in AD 883

“And in the same year, Singhelm and Aesthalstan conveyed to Rome the alms which the King had vowed to send thither and also to India to St. Thomas...”
William of Malmesbury states: “Beyond the sea, to Rome and to Saint Thomas in India he (Alfred) sent many gifts. The legate employed for this purpose was Sigelinus the Bishop of Sherborne, who with great success arrived in India, at which every one of this age wonders. Returning thence he brought back exotic gems and aromatic liquors which the land there produces.”

Florence of Worcester in 883 AD says: “Asser, Bishop of Sherbone died and was succeeded by Swithelm, who carried King Alfred’s alms to St. Thomas in India and returned in safety.”

18. Udayapur inscription

A Sanskrit inscription on the porch of a Hindu temple in Udayapur in central India refers, according to one translation and interpretation, to Jesus Christ as the uncreated divine Orient descended on earth and of his holy Apostle as Nadattigam Buddha sent to India. This is a very extensive mural inscription like the third century B.C. rock edicts of Asoka. This inscription contains the following statement.

“The glory and mercy of the Uncreated, the Divine Orienta, the man God, Christ, descended on the earth and, after having laid down the weight of his mortality entered upon the possession of his glory; and later his holy Apostle (St. Thomas, Nadattigam Buddha) arrived among us. To date it according to the new era, the era of Emperor Vikrama, it is 1,116 years old (George Nedungatt, "A Controversial Church/Temple Inscription in Central India", Orientalia Christiana Periodica 74 [2008] 133-164., at p.138

The Vikrama era, named after King Vikramaditya, dates from 56 B.C., in the month of March; therefore, the self-dating of this inscription is 1060 A.D.


The Book of the Bee is a collection of theological and historical texts compiled by Solomon of Akhlat in the thirteenth century. The book consists of 55 chapters discussing various topics including the creation, heaven and earth, the angels, darkness, paradise. Old Testament patriarchs, New Testament events, lists of kings and patriarchs, and the final day of resurrection.

The book was originally written in Assyrian/Syriac and has been translated into English and Arabic.

In the 13th C Solomon wrote in his Book of the Bee as follows:
"Thomas was from Jerusalem of the tribe of Juda. He taught the Persians, Medes and the Indians; and because he baptized the daughter of the King of the Indians he stabbed him with a spear and died. Habban
the merchant brought his body and laid it in Edessa, the blessed city of our Lord. Others say that he was buried in Mahluph (Mylapore) a city in the land of Indians.”

20. Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India (1947 – 1964)
“Glimpses of World History” (1934)

You may be surprised to learn that Christianity came to India long before it went to England or Western Europe, and when even in Rome it was a despised and proscribed sect. Within 100 years or so of the death of Jesus, Christian Missionaries came to South India by sea. They were received courteously and permitted to preach their new faith. They converted a large number of people, and their descendants have lived there, with varying fortune, to this day. Most of them belong to old Christian sects which have ceased to exist in Europe.”

21. Pope Pius XII

declared on 31 December, 1952 on the occasion of the 19th century celebrations of the arrival of the Apostle in India: "Nineteen hundred years have passed since the Apostle came to India ... During the centuries that India was cut off from the West and despite many trying vicissitudes, the Christian communities formed by the Apostle conserved intact the legacy he left them ... This apostolic lineage, beloved sons and daughters, is the proud privilege of the many among you who glory in the name of Thomas Christians and we are happy on this occasion to acknowledge and bear witness to it."
22. Dr. S. Rajendra Prasad, President of India (1952-62).

At the St. Thomas Day celebration in New Delhi on December 18, 1955, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, said:

"St. Thomas came to India when many of the countries of Europe had not yet become Christian, and so those Indians who trace their Christianity to him have a longer history and a higher ancestry than that of Christians of many of the European countries."

23. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India (1962-67) in “East and West in Religion” (1958)

“Christianity has flourished in India from the beginning of the Christian era. The Syrian Christians of Malabar believe that their form of Christianity is Apostolic derived directly from the Apostle Thomas. They contend that their version of the Christian faith is distinctive and independent of the forms established by St. Peter and St. Paul in the west. What is obvious is that there have been Christians in the West Coast of Indian from very early time. They were treated with great respect by the Hindus, whose princes built for them churches.”

“Christianity has been with us from the Second Century AD. It has not merely the rights of a guest but the rights of a native “

From his speech on October 26, 1983, inaugurating the Paurastya Vidyapitham, Vadavathoor, Kottayam.

“Christianity in India dates back to the days of Saint Thomas, one of the original disciples of Lord Jesus. Since then, it has flourished here and added a new dimension to India’s rich cultural heritage. With deep root in the soil, Indian Christianity has developed an independent personality of its own- Christian in religion, Oriental in worship and Indian in culture. This local character has been sustained, and enriched over the last many centuries”

24. Pope Benedict XVI

The Pope, in a general audience at St Peter’s Square on September 27, 2006 said: “Let us remember that an ancient tradition claims that Thomas first evangelised Syria and Persia then went on to Western India from where Christianity also reached Southern India.”

Apparently people have tried to misinterpret this statement to imply that Pope denied Thomas as the Apostle to South India. Far from it. This statement is historically correct in that it recognizes the history that Thomas visited Taxila first and then from there he took a ship and landed in Kodungallur as the South Indian tradition states.

"It is the constant tradition in the Eastern church that the Apostle Thomas evangelized India, and there is no historian, no poet, no breviary, no liturgy, and no writer of any kind who, having the opportunity of speaking of Thomas, does not associate his name with India. Some writers mention also Parthia and Persia among the lands evangelized by him, but all of them are unanimous in the matter of India. The name of Thomas can never be disassociated from that of India. To refer to all the
Syrian and Christian Arab authors who speak of India in connection with Thomas would therefore be equivalent to referring to all who have made mention of the name of St. Thomas. Thomas and India are in this respect synonymous."
(Mingana, Early Spread of Christianity in India, p. 301.)

India 60 AD

An anonymous writer in his book “Periplus Maris Erithrae” writes in 60 A.D. :

“Near the river Indus, lies the kingdom of ‘Scythia’ (=Sithia) with its headquarters Minnagaram, ruled by Parthian kings. On the other side of the Bay of Baracea, lie Bariyagas (Broach) and the coasts of Ariyaka, which is the boundary of India. The west of this is not called India. On the east of Scythia, lies the territory of Abira (the land of Abhiras) and the coast is called Syrastrene" (=Saurashtra).

Macrindle says that Ariyaka was on the south of Larick (which is the present Gujarat); “Syrastrene is the present Kathiavar,” according to Schoof.

Ptolemy’s Geography (C. 150 A.D.) gives the boundary lines of India thus :-“On the West Paropanisaley (i.e. Syrastrene according to Periplus), Arachosia, Gedrosia; on the North, Imaos (=Himalaya mountains); on the East, the Ganges; South and West, the Indian Ocean.” –

“Cosmas Indicopleustes in his Topographia Christiana” (C. 522-545A.D.) says:- “Sindu is where India begins. India and Persia are separated by Sindu.” He speaks of R. Kaberis, Baiscara, Mussirissi and several towns of commerce in Malabar. Hence, we see that in the “India” of the ancient westerners, not even Sindu was included.—

The first century Kerala

“When St Thomas arrived in Muchiri (other names: Musiris, Cranganur, Kodungalure etc) in Mali Island on the Alwaye coast in 52 AD the Chera kingdom existing at that time was ruled by Udayan Cheran Athen-I (page 44 of Cochin State Manual).

“From the 1st century AD or before the most known kingdoms in South India were Chera, Chola, and Pandian. The capital of Chera was Vanji or Tiruvanchikulam and the most important port was Muchiri (Musiris). The capital of Chola Kingdom was Urayur and the most important port was Kaveri, where as the Pandian kingdom had Madurai as its capital and the most important port was Korkai. The area from Gokarnam (now in Carntakata towards Goa) to CapeComerin was ruled by the Chera kings and Kerala derived the name from Cheram ,

”There was also another ancient kingdom known as Ayr ruled by Vel (kings) in the High Ranges south of Pampa River (Baris) where Nilackal, one of the churches founded by St.Thomas, existed. They ruled this area more than 1000years from first centuryAD. When St. Thomas landed in Nilackal they were possibly the rulers. 3 Ptolemy in his writings in the second century recorded this place as Aioi. Venadu is derived from Vel Nadu. It seems that the name Ayroor and AyurVeda had its root from this kingdom. The history
of this kingdom requires research

“The Christians (Jews) came with St. Thomas settled mostly in Cattukulangara (Kunnamkulam). The Arthattu Church in the name of St Mary in Kunnamkulam is believed to be one of the oldest churches from the time of St Thomas. The Christians at the time of St Thomas were called Nazaranikal. They were also referred to as "Issanis" in the epic poem of Manimekalai in Tamil by Mani around 3rd century AD”

D.N.Jha
WHO ARE NAZARANI AND SYRIAN CHRISTIANS? AND WHO RULED KERALA WHEN ST. THOMAS CAME?
A second mission by another disciple of Jesus called Barthelomew is reported to have reached India.

Mat 10:2 – 4

These are the names of the twelve apostles:
first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew;
James son of Zebedee, and his brother John;
Philip and **Bartholomew**;
Thomas and Matthew the tax collector;
James son of Alphaeus,
and Thaddaeus;
Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

The Catholic Encyclopedia gives the following details:

One of the Twelve Apostles, mentioned sixth in the three Gospel lists (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:14), and seventh in the list of Acts (1:13).
The name (*Bartholomaios*) means "son of Talmai" (or Tholmai) which was an ancient Hebrew name, .....It shows, at least, that Bartholomew was of Hebrew descent; it may have been his genuine proper name or simply added to distinguish him as the son of Talmai. Outside the instances referred to, no other mention of the name occurs in the New Testament.

Nothing further is known of him for certain. Many scholars, however, identify him with Nathaniel (John 1:45-51; 21:2). The reasons for this are that Bartholomew is not the proper name of the Apostle; that the name never occurs in the Fourth Gospel, while Nathaniel is not mentioned in the synoptics; that Bartholomew's name is coupled with Philip's in the lists of Matthew and Luke, and found next to it in Mark, which agrees well with the fact shown by St. John that Philip was an old friend of Nathaniel's and brought him to Jesus; that the call of Nathaniel, mentioned with the call of several Apostles, seems to mark him for the apostolate, especially since the rather full and beautiful narrative leads one to expect some important development; that Nathaniel was of Galilee where Jesus found most, if not all, of the Twelve; finally, that on the occasion of the appearance of the risen Savior on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, Nathaniel is found present, together with several Apostles who are named and two unnamed Disciples who were, almost certainly, likewise Apostles (the word "apostle" not occurring in the Fourth Gospel and "disciple" of Jesus ordinarily meaning Apostle) and so, presumably, was one of the Twelve. ....

No mention of St. Bartholomew occurs in ecclesiastical literature before Eusebius, who mentions that Pantaenus, the master of Origen, while evangelizing India, was told that the Apostle had preached there before him and had given to his converts the Gospel of St. Matthew written in Hebrew, which was still treasured by the Church. "India" was a name covering a very wide area, including even Arabia Felix. Other traditions represent St. Bartholomew as preaching in Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Armenia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, and on the shores of the Black Sea; one legend, it is interesting to note, identifies him with Nathaniel.

The manner of his death, said to have occurred at Albanopolis in Armenia, is equally uncertain; according to some, he was beheaded, according to others, flayed alive and crucified......

Eusebius of Caesarea (AD 263–339) and Saint Jerome (331 – 420) speaks of a tradition of a visit of Pantaenus to India in the second century. According to Eusebius, Pantaenus, “is said to have gone among the Indians, where a report is that he discovered the Gospel according to Mathew among some there who knew Christ, which had anticipated his arrival: Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them and had left them the writings of Mathew in Hebrew letters, which writing they preserved until the aforesaid time”

Eusebius of Caesarea's *Ecclesiastical History* (v §10) states that after the Ascension, Bartholomew went on a missionary tour to India, where he left behind a copy of the Gospel of Matthew. Other traditions record him as serving as a missionary in Ethiopia, Mesopotamia, Parthia, and Lycaonia. Along with his fellow apostle Jude, Bartholomew is reputed to have brought Christianity to Armenia in the 1st century. Thus both saints are considered the patron saints of the Armenian Apostolic Church.
According to Saint Jerome, an Indian legation of traders came to Alexandria and requested Demetric, Bishop of Alexandria to send some scholars to India. In India Pantaenus “found that Bartholomew, one of the twelve apostles, had preached the advent of Lord Jesus according to the Gospel of Matthew, and on his return to Alexandria he brought this with him written in Hebrew characters.”

The disciples of Pantaenus Clement, (died 215 AD) the Greek theologian who took over the chair of the catechetical school of Alexandria, and Origen Adamantius, (185–254 AD) both refer to India and speaks about “Indian Brahmans”, “gymnosophists”, and “Sarmanane” the “hermits” and “holy men of India” as they heard from Pantaenus.

“Early in the 3rd century, St. Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus (cir 220 AD) also assigns the conversion of India to the Apostle Bartholomew. To Thomas he ascribes Persia and the countries of Central Asia, although he mentions Calamina, a city of India as the place where Thomas suffered death.” (The Indian empire: its people, history, and products By Sir William Wilson Hunter)

Saint Ambrose (339 -397 AD) says: “And when the hearts of the people of his neighbours sufficed not to him to receive his seed, he (St. Bartholomew) through-pierced like in fleeing in to the last countries of the lands of India, and entered in to the temple where there was great company of sick people without number”

Theodore (759-820 AD asserts: “The blessed apostle Bartholomew preached first in Licaonia, and after in India, and at the last in Alban, a city of great Armenia, and there he was first flayed and afterward his head smitten off, and there he was buried.

As such we have no basis in assuming that these people has mistaken India for other parts of the world as some suggest.

Cultural and Religious Heritage of India: Christianity By Suresh K. Sharma

“For the early christianization of North India we do not possess any actual vestiges as we have for that of South India. The South India claim to the apostolate of St. Thomas is supported by two monuments: the community of St. Thomas Christians with their living tradition; and the tomb of Mylapore. which is definitely identified as the burial place of St. Thomas ai least from the 14th century onwards. ……

St. Bartholomew the Apostle and India

Two ancient testimonies about the alleged apostolate of St. Bartholomew in India are those of Eusebius of Caesarea (early 4th century) and of St. Jerome (late 4th century). Both of these writers refer to this tradition while speaking about the reported visit of Pantaenius of India in the second century. According to Eusebius, Pantaenius “is said to have gone among the Indians, where a report is that he discovered the Gospel according to Matthew among some there who knew Christ, which had anticipated his arrival; Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them and had left them the writings of Matthew in
Hebrew letters, which writing they preserved until the afore-said time...."St. Jerome would have that Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, sent to him India, at the request of legates of that nation. In India Pantaenius "found that Bartholomew, one of the twelve Apostles, had preached the advent of Lord Jesus according to the Gospel of Matthew, and on his return to Alexandria he brought this with him written in Hebrew characters..." Eusebius appears to be not quite sure of the reported fact; Jerome is more forthright.

Previously the consensus of opinion among scholars was against the apostolate of St. Bartholomew in India. Beginning with the Bollandist; Fr. Stiltingus. S.J. a few have supported his Indian apostolate. But the large majority are still sceptical about it. Their main argument is that the India of Eusebius and Jerome should be in fact Ethiopia of Arabia Felix. Two recent studies, one by Fr. Perumalil and the other by Dr. Moraes. have attempted to show that this argument is untenable. They hold that the Bombay region on the Konkan coast, a region which Just have been known after the ancient town Kalyan, was the field of Bartholomew's missionary activities, and his martyrdom. The town of Kalyan, situated as it is at the north-east end of the Thana Greek, was an ancient port and it is supposed to be the "Kalliana", the traveller Cosmas Indicopleustes visited in the 6th century as he reports in his Christian Typography.

According to Pseudo-Sophronius (7th century) St. Bartholomew preached to the "Indian who are called Happy", and according to the Greek tradition the Apostle went to "India Felix". The word Kalyun means "felix" or "happy", and it is argued that the Kalyan region came to be known to the foreign writers "India Felix" and its inhabitants. Indians "called the happy". Fr. Perumalil interprets the "India Citerior" of Hicronymian Martyrology as western India, and the "India" of the Pass/o Bartholemi as the Maratha country.

Now for the Indian apostolate of St. Bartholomew there is no Indian tradition as we have one for St. Thomas. This absence, Dr. Moraes would explain, is due to the fact that the history of the Christians of Bartholomew got intermingled with that of the Thomas Christian who came under the control of the Persian Church. And in the tradition of this Church Bartholomew was associated with Armenia and not with India. Fr. Perumalil however, thinks that the Bartholomew Christians continued as a separate community till the coming of the Portuguese and then got merged with the Christians of Bombay.

Legends of St. Bartholomew Connecting Bombay and Mangalore in India

By Jesuvera

In their work, "The land called South Kanara" (2000, Image flex Publishers), William Pais and Vincent Mendonca add more background to the Kalyanpur-Barkur claims:

"Christianity has been long established in South Kanara and its adherents are more numerous here, than any other district of India. It is certain that, foreign Christian merchants were visiting the coastal town of Kanara and during that period of commerce some priests also might have accompanied them for evangelical work. According to tradition Kanara had its first missionary the Apostle St. Barthelomew, who landed on the shores of river Swarna at Colombo or Colombo village an ancient maritime port adjacent to
Kallianpur, stayed there to preach. He was popularly called Bethel and so the origin of the place Barkur...

The 1981 Milagrian Charles E.G.Lewis has this to say:

"It can be said that it was the knowledge of that early Christianity in Kallianpur that prompted and urged the Portuguese Hierarchy to establish again the Church in Kallianpur when it did in 1678, or they must have found clues or traces of it when they arrived here. The Church at Kallianpur which was rebuilt in 1806, by the Goan priests and which later was demolished in 1940, had icons of St. Thomas the Apostle and that of St. Bartholomew on its façade on either side of the main entrance evidently because of the tradition of St. Bartholomew in the place's. Msgr. Denis Jeromme D'Souza who built the present Church saw to it that the tradition was carried forward. In the main body of the Church where the twelve Apostles of Christ are honoured with their statues all round the walls that of St. Bartholomew is prominently placed at the head of the apostles, nearest to the sanctuary. Opposite to him is St. Paul the apostle of Gentiles and by his side is placed St. Thomas the Apostle of India. These realities speak volumes of un-written tradition"

Philostorgius (368 – 439 AD) was a Anomoean Church historian of the 4th and 5th centuries. Anomoeanism questioned the Trinitarian account of the relationship between God the Father and Christ and was considered a heresy by the Catholic Church, which adopted the term "homoousia" in the Nicene Creed. He wrote a history of the Arian controversy titled *History of the Church*, of which only an epitome by Photius (Partriarch of Constantinople) survives as *EPITOME OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF PHILOSTORGIUS, COMPILED BY PHOTIUS, PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE*. In it according to Philostorgius, the Christians in Central India who were converted by the preaching of St. Bartholomew, did not believe in the Trinity. They believed that the Son is not of the same substance with the Father just like what was taught by Arius of Alexandria. He adds that Theophilus the Indian, who had embraced this opinion, came to them, and delivered it to them as a doctrine; and also that these Indians are now called Homeritae, instead of their old name of Sabaeans, which they received from the city of Saba, the chief city of the whole nation.

This will explain why a large group of Barthelomew Christians became Anomoeanists and later became part of the Hinduism.
There is something strange about the History of South India, especially of Kerala. Whereas we have unbroken history of the reigns of Kings elsewhere in India, the history of South India is blank from the coming of St. Thomas until around fifth century for most South Indian states (Chera, Chola and Pandya States) until around eighth century in Kerala.

Pandiya mean *old country.*
Chera means *hill country* and
Kalabhra Interregnum

The people who controlled South India during this period is referred to as Kalabhras. According to most historians Kalabhras were the South Indian dynasty who between the third and the 6th century A.D. ruled over the entire Tamil country, displacing the ancient Chola, Pandya and Chera dynasties. But nothing of their origin, character, religion or social structure is known.

After the tail end of the Sangam period (AD 200 or 300), it is believed that Kalabrar over ran the kingdoms of Chera, Chola and Pandyas.

It is repeatedly asserted that they did not leave any artifacts or monuments. How come that we cannot trace any artifacts or monuments? The only source of information on them is the scattered mentions in Buddhist and Jain literature and a few scattered inscriptions.

One copper inscription says that a Kalabrar king defeated 3 Kings and their kingdoms. (Velvikudi Paddayam). But the names of the 3 kings who were defeated by the Kalabrar are not known.

The author of Yaaparankalam (a Tamil grammar book) talks about a Kalabrar King by the name Achchuthan.

Moorthy Nayanar Puranam describes that in Pandiya Nadu when a Kalabrar King died without a successor, they used an elephant as was the practice of those periods to choose the next king. The elephant chose the saffron-clad Moorthy Nayanar.

Periya Puranam says that Kootruva Naayanar - One of the 63 Naayanmars belonged to the Kalabrar clan.

Idankali Nayanar who ruled Kodumpaloor belonged to the Kalabhra clan.

Some say the Muththarayar (who ruled all 3 areas) are Kalabrar and they were Tamils.

Several inscriptions tells us who defeated the Kalbhras.

One Inscriptions says that King Kadungone defeated the Kalabrao and restored the Kingdom in the 6th century.

Pallava King Simha Vishnu of Thondamandalam defeated the Kalabrar king who was ruling Chola Nadu.

But we have no record of the defeat of Kalabhrar of Chera.

The chieftains of this tribe mentioned in Sangam literature are Tiraiyan of Pavattiri and Pulli of Vengadam or Tirupati.

Thus we have the Wikipedia statement: "Historians speculate that these people followed Buddhist or Jain faiths and were antagonistic towards the Hindu and Brahminical religions adhered by the majority of inhabitants of the Tamil region during the early centuries C.E. As a result Hindu scholars and authors who followed their decline in the 7th and 8th century C.E. may have expunged any mention of them in their texts and generally tended to paint their rule in a negative light. It is perhaps due to this reason, the period of their rule is known as a ‘Dark Age’ – an “interregnum”. Wikipedia
These were intentionally destroyed. Blotting out names and history was an age-old method practiced in ancient cultures. Historians affirm that this is exactly what happened in the case of South India as a whole until the sixth century. In Kerala this period extended probably until the eighth century.

This period is referred to as Kalabhra interregnum is often called the Dark Ages. It is called a dark age, not because it was anything evil or dark, but because of the lack of information about the people of the period. It is as though somebody took a marker and covered these pages with black ink. It is an age that has been blacked out by some body because they did not like the Kalabhras and their ways.

As such the identification of who this Kalabhra remain a problem. There had been a number of attempts to identify the Kalabhras based on the etymology of the word.

Some attempts in Identification Kalabhras

- T.A. Gopinath Rao identifies Kalabhras with Muttaraiyars of Kondubalur (of eighth to eleventh century C.E.). taking their Tamil common name Kalvan to have been translated as Kalabhra is Sanskrit
- M Raghava Iyengar identifies Kalabrahs with Vellala Kalappalar which are referred to in Tamil literature and inscriptions
- Most historians think that there was a group of Buddhist or Jain marauders who were anti-Brahminic anti-ritualistic who forcefully occupied the land during this period and whose identity is not known.
- Others regard them as Karnatas on the strength of a reference in Tamil literature to the rule of a Karnata king over Madurai.
- Some others identifies the Kalabhras with the Kalavar, and the chieftains of this tribe mentioned in Sangam literature as from Tiraiyan of Pavattiri and Pulli of Vengadam or Tirupati. The latter is described as the cattle lifting robber chief of the frontier.

None of these will however explain the fact that the Kalabhras covered the whole of South India and ruled for practically six centuries and yet left no trace of them in terms of art, artifacts, culture, documents and religion. This is obviously not a possibility. The only explanation is that we are missing something significant and obvious. We are looking for the Kalabhras in the wrong places. We may be actually having the answer right in front of us.

While there is no doubt that Buddhism and Jainism (coexisting with Vedism and local religions) existed in Kerala since second century BC (at the least); why should there be a sudden change in their attitude in the first century AD that they are considered heretical during that period? “heretica” to what? Were they not heretical before? The very basis of Buddhism and Jainism are extreme non-violence and respect for life. (This is the principle of Ahimsa – they are not allowed even to kill an insect) and no where in India they have ever attacked another religion or kingdom. To think of them as marauders and terrorists is simply absurd and only the audacious fraud alone can
represent them in that mode. In fact Asoka became a Buddhist on seeing the bloodshed he has caused in war. So Jain or Buddhist groups could not really be the Kalabhras.

((((((((((((((((((

Ahimsa

Ahimsa in Jainism
Ahimsa is a fundamental principle forming the cornerstone of its ethics and doctrine. The term "ahimsa" means “non-violence”, “non-injury” or absence of desire to harm any life forms. Vegetarianism and other non-violent practices and rituals of Jains flow from the principle of Ahimsa. According to Adian Rankin, the concept of Ahimsa is so much intertwined with Jainism that it conjures up images of ascetics who cover their mouths and sweep the ground before them with small brushes to avoid injuring the most minuscule forms of life and Jain-owned animal sanctuaries where even the sickest, most deformed birds and beasts are protected and cherished.

Ahimsa in Buddhism

All beings fear violence; all fear death. If you take yourself as the measure, do not kill and do not let others kill. All beings fear violence; all love life. If you take yourself as the measure, do not kill and do not let others kill. (Dhammapada7, Chapter 10)

Do not kill living beings. Do not let others kill. Do not allow others to kill. One needs to control violence toward all living beings whether they are strong and powerful in society or they are fearful and weak. (Sutta-Nipata8, Chapter 2, #14)

Ahimsa in Hinduism

The principle of Ahimsa was unknown to Vedic Hinduism. It was the extreme acts of killings at every turn as sacrifice that led to the development of Jainism and Buddhism as reaction. In the latter Hinduism killing became the duty of one class of people “Kshatriyas”. This is the teaching of Gita.

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However we know that Buddhism - which was a powerful religion of the intelligent rationalistic Keralites practically came to a close during the Kalabhra period. Jainism was never a strong religion of South India.

So we have to look elsewhere for the real “Kalabhras”. It may be legitimately assumed that it came out of the epithets "Cerobothras" of the Periplus. Pliny the Roman historian of the first century calls them as Caelobothras. These may be the foreigner’s effort to pronounce what Asoka named as "Keralaputra" referring to the Sons of Kerala. All other given explanations are clearly forced.
In early Tamil literature the great Chera rulers are referred to as Cheral, Kuttuvan, Irumporai, Kollipurai and Athan. Chera rulers were also called Kothai or Makothai. The nobility among the Cheras were called Cheraman in general. The word Kerala, of possible Prakrit origins, does not appear in Sangam Literature. Ashoka's edicts mention an independent dynasty known by the name "Kedalaputho", who were outside Ashoka's empire. The
unknown author of "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea" mentions Chera as "Cerobothra" ("Keralaputhra") whose capital is Karur, while Pliny, the Roman historian of the first century, calls it "Caelobothras". [ P. 104 "Indian Anthropologist: Journal of the Indian Anthropological Association" By Indian Anthropological Association ] Some kings of the dynasty referred to themselves as Vanavaramban, Imayavaramban etc. [ P. 15 "The Ācārya, Śaṅkara of Kāładī: A Story" By Savita R. Bhave, M. G. Gyaltsan, Muṣṭafā Amīn, 1933- Madugula, I S Madugula]

"Tyndis is of the Kingdom of Cerobothra; it is a village in plain sight by the sea. Muziris, of the same kingdom, abounds in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks; it is located on a river, distant from Tyndis by river and sea five hundred stadia, and up the river from the shore twenty stadia. Nelcynda is distant from Muziris by river and sea about five hundred stadia, and is of another Kingdom, the Pandian. This place also is situated on a river, about one hundred and twenty stadia from the sea.”

Periplus. Ancient History Sourcebook Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/periplus.html

The king of Muziris, at the date of publication of Pliny’s work was Caelobothras. In one of the manuscript it is given as “Celobotras who belonged to the Keralaputra dynasty”. In Ptolemy’s Geog (vii, 1, 86) the name appears as Kerobothros and in the Periplus as Kiprobotras (Ancient India as Described in Classical Literature, By John Watson M'Crindle)

Mudiraja tradition

Perhaps there is something in the Mudiraja tradition The Muthuraja of Tamilnadu, the Mudiraja of Karnataka and Mudiraj of Andhra Pradesh are one and the same people having the same blood and professional background. Mudiraj people are believed to be the descendants of kalabhra kings of South India who invaded South Indian Peninsula and uprooted the kingdoms ruled by Adhirajas (Great Kings) of Chola, Chera and Pandya dynasties. The kalabhra kings who played a great havoc in South Indian Peninsula by snatching away the kingdoms of the then ADHIRAJAS declared them as the real GREAT KINGS (MUDIRAjas). We have strong records to indicate the presence of powerful Christian groups in Pandya areas and there was constant communication with Kerala Christians during the Kalabhra era. Christians in Kerala themselves are still known as MAHAPILLAI (Sons of the Kings)

The Thomas songs mentions the conversion of large number of Vellalas to Christiandity.

Evidently speculation of the Indian historians always left out the impact of St.Thomas and his ministry intentionally to the extent modern historians take their existence as feeble. A similar willful neglect on basic historical realities is also seen in every modern Hindu History.

All Hindu historians agree that for some reason Vedic gods got extinct and new gods of Hinduism came in during the first century. But there is no reason given!. A sudden change for no reason? A Personal God, Brahman, the
idea of Om, the idea of incarnation etc were never even heard of in India before the coming of St.Thomas. They also agree that St.Thomas and other Thomases came to India and had established churches from North India to South India from Taxila to Cape Comorin, just before this change. But they refuse to see the connection. There is an intentional blocking out or ignoring of the Christian presence and influence anywhere in India. This is really the basic Kalabhra Interregnum. What I am suggesting is that the period referred here as “Black Age” is the epithet given to the Christendom in South India by the later Brahminic historians probably with some help from the Aryan Persian Gnostics who followed the Christian world. It was simply a period which they did not want to remember. There is no dearth of evidences, art or artifacts for this period– only all these are ignored willfully in an ongoing attempt to rewrite history. A search in the literature and internet will simply show the same willful attempt to black out any mention of St.Thomas’ ministry to the extent of trying to establish that Jesus is a myth and Christianity came to India only with the Portuguese colonization. You can actually identify who caused this twisting by identifying the modern twisters of Indian history.

Christianity was indeed the religion that supplanted Vedism. Vedism and Vedic Priests who were weakened under the rationalistic movements of Buddhism and Jainism disappeared from Kerala till the seventh century. What happened to the Vedic Priests who remained rare? The Archeological Survey of India and the Official Namboodiri Website assures that none of the Brahminic families of today could trace their presence beyond the seventh or eighth century. Were there no Vedism of Brahmins in Kerala before this period? Kerala was raised out of the sea by Parasu Rama and was given to Brahmins according to the incarnation story. What happened to these Brahmins of Kerala from the first century to eighth century? The only explanation is that they must have simply adopted the new religion and became “Nazareneees” or “Isanuvadikal” exactly as the tradition says. The absence of Brahmins in Kerala from the first century to the eighth century itself is the evidence of the accuracy of the Thomas traditions.

The symbol of the Nasranis is the Syrian cross, also called the Nasrani Menorah Mar Thoma sleeba in Malayalam. It is based on the Jewish menorah, the ancient symbol of the Hebrews, which consists of a branched candle stand for seven candlesticks. (Exodus 25). In the Nasrani Menorah the six branches, (three on either side of the cross) represents God as the burning bush, while the central branch holds the cross, the dove at the tip of the cross represents the Holy Spirit. (Exodus 25:31). In Jewish tradition the central branch is the main branch, from which the other branches or six candles are lit. Netzer is the Hebrew word for "branch" and is the root word of Nazareth and Nazarene. (Isaiah 11:1).

Varying degree of Indian Symbolism can be found in St. Thomas Cross. The cross rises from a lotus blossom which forms its base. Lotus is the national flower of India and it represents the ancient civilization symbolizing purity and spontaneous generation. It also symbolizes divine birth. At the bottom of the cross there are three steps representing God the Father. The cross itself represents God the Son, and a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, is at the top of the cross. The lotus represents a natural inculturation with Indian civilization symbolizing divine birth. Some critiques has pointed out a Buddhist influence, as lotus is a widely used symbol of divinity in Buddhism. Some of the St.Thomas crosses in Kerala, has leaves which are downward pointing. This is indigenous. This symbolism and tradition are not found in Persian or Middle East or even in Byzantine art.
These typical Marthoma crosses are still found the following locations,

**Taxila, Pakistan.** Taxila cross is dated (ca 2-6 century)

**Agasaim, Goa.** This Cross is dated of 6th Century.

**St. Thomas Mount, Tamil Nadu.** This Cross is considered as the oldest cross in India.

**In Kerala.** It us found in several places showing the presence Christians all over the Kerala

**Kadamattam.** The Cross is dated between 6-8th Century.

**Muttuchira.** The Cross is dated between 6-8th Century.

**Kottayam, Kerala.** One cross is considered of late origin (C10th century) and the other dated between 6-8th century.

**Kothanalloor.** This Cross is dated between 6-8th century.

**Alangad.**

**Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka.** Anuradhapura, Anuradhapura, was one-time capital of Sri Lanka. There is also a baptismal fonts dating 5th century discovered from Anuradhapura. This Cross is considered as another oldest Cross.

By the 6th century at least we are certain that Christianity was a popular religion of India in these regions which also are the areas where St. Thomas is said to have evangelized. Cross as a symbol of Christian faith developed only after the second century because of political reasons. Until that time fish was the most popular symbol.
Mar Thoma Crosses
The Bleeding Cross, St. Thomas mount

Kottakkavu (Parur) Cross

Niranam Cross

north altar (Left side)   south altar (right side)

Kottayam Valiyapalli
Kothanalloor Cross.

This is found at the Gervasis and Prothasis church at Kothanalloor of the Syro Malabar Catholic Church. This church was believed to be founded by Persian Bishops Mar Sabour and Afroath in AD 826. The original church was in Pallikkunnu.

Muttuchira Cross.

Ruha’D Qudisha Forane Church, Muttuchira of the Syro Malabar Catholic church.
Changanacherry Valiyapalli. Crosses

Alengadu Cross.
The Portuguese inscriptions runs like this- ‘...A DE s.TOME.....DO R....ILEZ VS.....642.....’ which has been interpreted as ‘A deS (Sao) Tome...do R(Regiao?) Ilez (Ilhas?) vs (Vizinhas?)...642(1642)’ It could be roughly translated as That which belongs to Saint Thomas’ (Christians?) from the region of (the neighbouring) islands (Tiswadi) 1642’
Unbroken presence of Christianity in South India

*Manimekalai*, written between second and third century C.E., mentions the Nasrani people by the name *Essanis*. The important churches which were erected during this period based on tradition are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Church locations &amp; Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 40 AD</td>
<td>Saint Thomas the Apostle at King Gondaphares in North India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 52 AD</td>
<td>Saint Thomas the Apostle lands at Cranganore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 52-72 AD</td>
<td>Saint Thomas the Apostle builds churches or communities (Palayoor, Kodungaloor, Parur, Kokamangalam, Niranam, Nilackal, Kollam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These must have started as house churches,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 3rd, 72 AD</td>
<td>AD Martyrdom of Saint Thomas the Apostle at Mylapore, India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 105 AD</td>
<td>Kuravilangadu Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 290 AD</td>
<td>Pallipuram Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 300 AD</td>
<td>Ambazhakad Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 301 AD</td>
<td>Aruvithara Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 400 AD</td>
<td>North Pudukad Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 400 AD</td>
<td>Puthenchira Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 427 AD</td>
<td>Chambakulam Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450 AD</td>
<td>Akaparambu Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>450 AD</td>
<td>Angamali Church founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 480 AD</td>
<td>Mattam Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 510 AD</td>
<td>Muttuchira Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 510 AD</td>
<td>Kaduthuruthy Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 510 AD</td>
<td>Enammavu Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 510 AD</td>
<td>Udayamperoor Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 593 AD</td>
<td>Edapally Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 600 AD</td>
<td>Chalakudy Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 600 AD</td>
<td>Mylakombu Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 650 AD</td>
<td>Kolenchery Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 650 AD</td>
<td>Moozhikulam Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 824 AD</td>
<td>Kayamkulam Church founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 826 AD</td>
<td>Kothanalloor Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 835 AD</td>
<td>Athirampuzha Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>890 AD</td>
<td>Kottayam Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 AD</td>
<td>Nagapuzha Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>943 AD</td>
<td>Manjapra Church founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>943 AD</td>
<td>Mavelikara Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950 AD</td>
<td>Kadamattom Church founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>960 AD</td>
<td>Pazhuvil Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999 AD</td>
<td>Arakuzha Church founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>999 AD</td>
<td>Nediasala Church founded</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
999 AD  Kottekad Church founded
999 AD  Kunnamkulam Church founded

From Ancient Churches with traditional dates of foundation & Stone Crosses of Kerala- Saint Thomas Cross, Nazraney Sthambams and other Persian Crosses  Authored by NSC- Admin on Tuesday, January 16, 2007

Nasrani Sthambams

Cross are made out of one granite stone. The plinth of these crosses represents lotus petals and lotus flowers and has a square base. It also has a variety of iconographic motifs, including elephants, peacocks and various other animals, depictions of the Holy Family and of the Crucifixion.

These crosses are found in Kottekkad, Enammavu Mapranam, Puthenchira, Parappukara, Veliyanad, Kalpparambu, Angamaly, Kanjoor, Malayattoor, Udayamperur, Kuravilangad, Uzhavoor, Chungam, Kaduthuruthy [2 Nos.], Muthalakodam, Muttuchira, Kudamaloor, Niranam, Kothamangalam, Chengannur, Thumpamon, Chathannur and many other places

2nd Century Open Air Rock Cross called Nazraney Sthambams at Kurvilangadu, Kerala

We can see an unbroken growth and presence of churches throughout Kerala for the first millennium through the Kalabhra Period.
Pre Kalabhra Political Structure

When Thomas entered India, it was essentially a village based culture with local rulers who ruled more like family patriarchs rather than Kings. Sometimes the villages formed together for self protection to form a confederacy. So when we are talking about Kings and rulers the extent of their power weakened with distance. When Kings went out to war to conquer, they left the land with local ruler or a regent. The regents or local ruler often rebelled and made themselves free. Most of our history is read in from the literature.

The only source available for us regarding the early Chera Kings is the anthologies of the Sangam literature. Scholars now generally agree that this literature belongs to the first few centuries CE. [The age of Sangam is established through the correlation between the evidence on foreign trade found in the poems and the writings by ancient Greek and Romans such as Periplus of the Erythrian Sea. See Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., History of South India, pp 106] The internal chronology of this literature is still far from settled.

The Sangam literature is full of names of the kings and the princes, and of the poets who extolled them. Despite a rich literature that depicts the life and work of these people, these are not worked into connected history so far. Their capital is stated to be modern Karur in Tamilnadu.

THE CHERA GENEALOGY.

(According to “The Chronology of the early Tamils – K.N.Sivaraja Pillai, University of Madras 1934 based on Sangam Literature and other researchers.)

25 B.C. -1 A. D.
(1) Karuvur-Eriya-Ol-Val-Kopperumcheral-Irumporai, the Conqueror of Karuvur.

1 A.D. -25 A.D.
(2) Udiyan Cheral probably son of (1). It is said that he fed the rival armies during the war of Mahabharata which would make the Mahabharata war in the first century AD.
(3) Antuvan Cheral probably son of (1).

25 A.D. -50 A.D.
(4) Kudakko Neduncheralatan, son of (2) "Imayavaramban" another Sangam age king claimed to have conquered up to the Himalayas and to have inscribed his emblem in the face of the mountains.
(5) Palyanai- vel-Kezhu Kuttuvan, son of (2)
(6) Celva-Kadum-Ko alias Chikkarpalli-tunciya Celva Kadumko son of (3)
50 A.D. - 75 A.D.
(7) Chenkuttuvan Cheran (Kadal Pirakottiya Vel Kezhu Kuttuvan) son of (4).
(8) Kalaihkay- kanni-Narmudi- Chheral son of (4)
(9) Kuttavan Trumporai, the conqueror of Takadur, son of (6)

75 A.D. - 100 A.D.
(10) Adukotpattu- Cherlatan son of (4).
(11) Kudakko- Ilam Cheral Irumporai son of (9).

100 A.D. - 125 A.D.
(12) Cheraman-Kuttuvan-Kodai.

125 A.D. - 150 A.D.
(13) yanaikan-Ocy-Mantaran-Cheral-Irumporai.

150 A.D. - 175 A.D.
(14) Cheraman Mari-Vanko.
(15) Cheraman-Kokkodai-Marpan.

175 A.D. - 200 A.D.
(16) Cheraman-Kanaikkal-Irumporai.

In early Tamil literature the great Chera rulers are referred to as Cheral, Kuttuvan, Irumporai, Kollipurai and Athan. Chera rulers were also called Kothai or Makothai.

Archaeology has also found epigraphic evidence regarding these early Cheras. [See report in "Frontline", June/July 2003] The most important of these is the Pugalur (Aranattarmalai) inscription. This inscription refers to three generations of Chera rulers: Athan Cheral Irumporai, his son Perumkadungo, and his son Ilamkadungo. Athan refers only to a crowned King of Chera dynasty who accepted this title at the time of coronation. Athan Cheral Irumporai was probably the last crowned king of the first dynasty.

At the time of Thomas part of Chera was ruled by Athan I (AD 40-55) who became a Christian. His son Athan II Vana-Varman / Chelvak-dadduvan (father of Chenkkuddavan/Imaya varanan) AD 55-90 was also a Christian. Ilango the Tamil epic writer was asked by Thomas to succeed King Athan II as his first son Chenkuddavan was war thirsty.

In the Chola Kingdom Karikal AD 50-95 and the Pandya King Pandya Nedun Cheliyan AD 50-75 were Christians. Christianity was at its peak under Pandya Nan-Maran (Good Pandya) son of Ugra peru valuthi in whose court Tiru Kural was published. Nan maran organized Holy Communion every day for his subjects for which he imported wine from Greece and Rome. According to Purananuru he used a gold grail.

As is evident, the whole of Dravida was Christian by the second century. The other religions of the period in this region were the rationalistic religions of Buddhism and Jainism along side of the local tribal and native cults. If
there were Vedics they merged with the local cults or were totally converted to Christianity. Thus we see no Vedic presence at all till the sixth century AD.

*The Chera dynasty came to an end by the end of second century.*

**Kalabhra Era** Started soon after from the third till the eighth century when Christianity had powerful presence in South India.

“The Kalabhras seem to have put an end to the old Tamil Chera and Pandyan dynasties of the Sangam Age. The great ruler Acuta Vikranta Kalabhra ruled from Kaverypumpattinam in Tanjore district at the mouth of Kaveri river probably in the fourth century AD. The second capital of Kalabhras was at Madura. Kasakundi plates refers to Simhavishnu' conquest of the Kalabhra late in the 6th century AD. The Velvikudi plates plates of Nedunjadayan show the defeat of the Kalabhras at the hands of Kadungon (c. A.D. 600).” Geography from ancient Indian coins & seals By Parmanand Gupta

“ The Kalabhrs, who ruled in the far South including Kerala and the South Mysore minted and circulated a large quantity of copper coins from about 250 AD to the Middle of sixth century AD” (Ramayya, S. Anote in Kalabhra kootan's coins, JNSI, XLII pp 18, JNSI XXXV, 142)

**Society under the Kalabhrs**

At the same time, efforts were made to remove the evils from the society. The Tamil Siddhars like Thirumoolar had preached their philosophical ideas. Morals and ethics had been preached through education and literature. We will have more to say about this society under King Mahabali.

**Education and Literature**

The Kalabhra rule in the Tamil country had witnessed the growth of education and literature. Sanskrit and Prakrit languages had been introduced in the Tamil region. This had resulted in the development of a new script called Vattezhthhu. The Tamil literature had also taken new forms, and the Tamil grammar had also undergone a few changes during this period. Many works under Pathineen Keezhkanakku were composed during this period. Epics like Seevaka Chinthamani and Kundalakesi were written. Nigandus were also composed during the Kalabhra period. The Buddhist and Jain monks had contributed much to the growth of education. The Buddhist educational institutions were called Ghatikas. Scholars like Buddhadatta, Buddhaghosha and Bodhidharma lived during this period. The Jain Palli had remained important educational centers during the Kalabhra rule. The Jain Palli (School) at Thirupathirippuliyur remained an important educational centre during this period. Sarva Nandhi and Vajra Nandhi were the two great Jain scholars, who lived in this period.
As per Tamil tradition, Tiruvalluvar is believed to have lived some time during the 1st millennium AD. While most scholars place him between 100 and 300 AD, there are a few who consider him to have lived around 600 A.D. and therefore certainly within the Kalabhra era. Maraimalai AdigaL did extensive research on the date of thiruvaLLuvar. While presiding over the Thiruvalluvar Day conference of Thiruvalluvar Kazhagam held on 18 Jan 1935, he declared that thiruvalluvar was born 30 years before the birth of Jesus. His suggestion was that the Tamil Thiruvalluvar year can be obtained by adding 31 years to the Christian Calender. (http://tamilelibrary.org/teli/tvazthu.html) So when Thomas landed in Kerala he was probably in his 80s, a respected old man, full of wisdom. Even if the dates are little off the mark, it is almost certain that he was a in the right place and time to be a disciple of St.Thomas and within the margin or errors of the relevant datings of the periods. In 1975 Dr. M. Deivanayakam and Dr. R. Arulappa. co-authored the book Perinba Villakku in which Tiruvalluvar is represented as one of the first disciples of St.Thomas in the Mylapore area.

Like all other Indian scriptures, the trend of the orthodox hindu is to predate everyone and every document way back into antiquity. New tactics is to post date Valluvar to avoid his presence during the time of Apostle Thomas. Thus the Hindutvas consider Tirukkural as composed during Sangam period (500-200 BC). However C. Rajagopalachari,( Indian independence activist with Gandhi, leader of the Indian National Congress who was the last Governor-General of India who after independence served as the Premier of the Madras Presidency, Governor of West Bengal, Minister for Home Affairs of the Indian Union and Chief Minister of Madras state, the founder of the Swatantra Party and the first recipient of Bharat Ratna) says that Kural belongs to a period anterior to 2nd century CE. Some scholars put it in the 1st century BC. Some put the date between 200 BC to 800 CE. Some even to 1000 CE.
In the year 1969, Dr. M. Deivanayagam the founder of the Dravidian Spiritual Movement published a book titled 'Is Thiruvalluvar a Christian?' establishing in it Thirukkural as a book of Christian ethics and Thiruvalluvar was a Christian. Later on, in an assembly of 36 Thirukkural Scholars, convened by the Christian Arts and Communication Centre, Chennai. Dr. Deivanayagam convinced the assembly about his research findings. Subsequently a scholar named T.S. Sathyam, was propped up by non-Christians to undertake a Ph.D. dissertation to disprove the findings of Dr. Deivanayagam. But, after 3 years of research, the Ph.D. thesis of Dr. Sathyam approved by the university of Madras also concluded and affirmed the findings of Dr. Deivanayagam. Also the University of Madras conferred a Ph.D. degree on Dr. Deivanayagam for a thesis which established that Saivism and Vaishnavism are the offshoots of St. Thomas Dravidian Christianity. This new finding was debated in a Saiva mutt in the assembly of spiritual leaders and scholars like the Head of the Saiva Siddhanta Dept. of Madurai Kamaraj University, heads of Saiva Mutts like Kunrakkudi Adigalar etc., where they all conceded to the research findings, but pleaded for time to accept the same as they are altogether new to them. In 1975 Dr. M. Deivanayakam and Dr. R. Arulappa co-authored the book Perinba Villakku in which Thiruvalluvar is represented as being Christian. The book of Dr.Deivanayagam - based on his Ph. D. thesis – “Bible, Thirukural and Saiva Siddantha, a comparison” (Vivliyam, Thirukkural, Saiva Siddantham – Oppu Ayvu) was published in 1985-86 by Tamil Nadu Government, International Institute of Tamil Studies, Adayar, Madras (His Ph. D moderator was highly regarded Scholar-S.V.Subramanian.). Dr.Deivanayagam conclude his book with a finding that Thiruvalluvar was a Christian and a disciple of St.Thomas and most of the Shaiva Siddantha and the vivid knowledge found in Thirukkural were essentialy expressions of Christian experience and principles. This study was followed by a series of Ph. D. level studies by Dr. Devakala (The Origin and Development of Tamil Bhakthi Movement – in the Light of the Bible ), Dr. J.D. Baskara Das (Six Darsanas and Religions of the Tamils), Dr. Moses Michael Farradey (The Songs of Tamil Sidhars and the Bible), Dr. Johnson Thankiah (Trinity in Tamil Literature), Every Scholar who studied could not but express how parallel the Tirukural teachings are to the teachings of Christianity. G.U.Pope who translated the Tirukural into English observes that much of its teaching is an echo of the Sermon on the Mount.

It is therefore certain that Kalabhras were the Christians who practically took over the entire Dravida. The Christians were not known as Christians. That was the name given to the followers of Jesus cult in Antioch. The religion was known as “The way”. In India they were known as “Margam koodyor”, which means “one who follow the Way” and Isanuvadi (followers of Isa) and Nasranis (followers of the Nazarene)

Post Kalabhra Period

During the seventh century AD, Pallavas under Mahendravarman I and his son Mamalla Narasimhavarman I drove out Kalabhra Kingdom. The Pallavas were originally executive officers under the Satavahana Empire. After the fall of the Satavahanas, around 550 AD under King Simhavishnu they emerged into prominence. They subjugated the Cholas and reigned as far south as the Kaveri River. Pallavas ruled a large portion of South India with Kanchipuram as their capital. The Pallavas were replaced by the Pandyas in the 8th century C.E.
A good look at the time line of South Indian history will give lots of insight. The Time line goes like this:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sanga Kalam</th>
<th>Sangam Maruvia Kalam AD 100 – 500</th>
<th>Kalabhra interregnum AD 150 - 500</th>
<th>Bhakti Or The Pallava Period AD 500 - 800</th>
<th>Epic or Chola Period AD 800 - 1200</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC 3000 – AD 100</td>
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</table>

In Chola and Pandya regions of South India

When it came out of the Kalabhra Interregnum period it was the Pallavas who were ruling the Pandya and the Chola Kingdoms. We should be able to assume legitimately that the decimers of Kalabhras were indeed Pallavas.

Who were the Pallavas?

The word Pallava means branch in Sanskrit

The Early Pallavas claimed to be Brahmins of Bharadwaja gotra. They styled themselves as Brahma Kshatriyas (Brahmins in Pursuit of arms). Later by the fifth century CE, the Pallavas were regarded as Kshatriyas. They were followers of the Brahmanical religion in the sense that the Aryan dominance was trying a come back. They pushed themselves down from the North.

The Early Pallavas claimed to be Brahmins of Bharadwaja gotra. They styled themselves as Brahma Kshatriyas. They were Brahmins who took arms.
The earliest known coinage in lead issued by the Pallavs dated between 3rd and 4th century AD.

Pallavas c.645 CE during Narasimhavarman I

**Persian Origins of Pallava Kingdom**

Recent historical, anthropological, and linguistic evidence indicates that the Pallavas who ruled Dravidian Chera area were of Parthian origin and the name *Pallava* is just a variant of a well known Sanskrit Pahlava. The Pahlus were the peoples who spoke Pehlvi, a language of Persia. Pallavas are originally connected to the Pahlavas of Iran. The Pallavas came to India sometime during second century BC and settled in south-western and southern India. The Markendeya Purana and Brhat Samhita mentions Pahlava and Kamboja settlements. The earliest known coinage in lead issued by the then Pallavas could be dated between 3rd and 4th century AD. The must have come as merchants just as the later colonisers. They became powerful and became Kings only by the third century AD. This Pahlava tribe of Indo-Iranian descent migrated Southward and first settled in Krishna River valley. This region is called Pallavanadu even today. Pallavas later extended their territory and established their capital in Kancheepuram. They had their capital near Kanchipuram. During the 5th century, the Pallavas expanded very fast. At the end of 500 AD, the territory came into the possession of *Simha Vishnu*, and he became the founder of the Pallava dynasty. This gave impetus to the syncretism of Persian and Indian religions absorbing Christianity along with it.

Savism and Vaishnavism were the major religious denominations of the Pallavas. The Early Pallavas claimed to be Brahmins of Bharadwaja gotra and were evidently Vaishnavites. Later they became Saivites. They in fact built large number of temples during their period – among them are the Shore Temples and Chariots of Mahabalipuram shores. These are probably some of the oldest Hindu temples of India. Vaishnavism was more popular in the
North while Saivism became popular in the South. Kanchipuram became the center of Persian trade, Gnosticism and of “Hinduism”. Their Dynasty lasted till the Ninth century AD.

In actual fact Hinduism as we know today started with the Pallavas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Foreign Kingdoms</th>
<th>Northern Empires</th>
<th>Southern Kingdoms</th>
<th>Kerala</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>600 BC</td>
<td>(Persian rule)</td>
<td>Magadha</td>
<td>Pandyan</td>
<td>Chera Kings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 BC</td>
<td>(Greek conquests)</td>
<td>Nanda empire</td>
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<tr>
<td>400 BC</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>300 BCE</td>
<td>Indo-Greek kingdom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cholas</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 BCE</td>
<td>Indo-Scythians</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 BC</td>
<td>Indo-Parthian Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kushan Empire</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 AD</td>
<td>Western Kshatrapas</td>
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<tr>
<td>200 AD</td>
<td>Indo-Sassarians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pallava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 AD</td>
<td>Kidarite Kingdom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chalukya</td>
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<tr>
<td>400 AD</td>
<td>Indo-Hephthalites</td>
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<td>Perumals</td>
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<td>600 AD</td>
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<td>Gupta</td>
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<tr>
<td>800 AD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pala</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is easy to see that the Kalabhras were actually defeated and displaced by the Pallavas of Syrian origin. Though they were Brahmins they became a terrorist group to take over the Kalabhra Empire. It was this dynasty who gave refuge to the Gnostics from Syria and were the architects of modern Vaishnavism. Pallavas are famed for their temples which are spread all over Tamil Nadu.

“Bhakti and temple-building movements went hand in hand after the Kalabhra interregnum ended. There was a definite paradigm shift from Vedic yajnas to archa worship in temples and the Velvikkudi copperplates are eloquent witness to the rejuvenation of the Vedic-Brahmanic religion in South India.” (The Hindu, Sunday, Dec 23, 2001)

However Kerala survived the assault of gnosticism for another three centuries. At the end of the 'long historical night' which continued in Cheranad till early 8th century A.D there arose an illustrious line of
Kings known as the Kulashekharas who ruled Kerala until 1102 A.D. The empire they built is commonly
called the 'Second Chera Empire' to signify the renewal of the Chera rule in Kerala after a break of three
centuries. The kings of Second Chera empire united Kerala into a homogeneous political unit from 800-
1102 A.D. They are referred to as Cheraman Perumal. “The Chera kings took the title of "Perumal"
during this period and patronised the Vaishnavite sect.” (http://en.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/1316247)

Following is the list of Cheraman Perumals who ruled Kerala during the Second Chera empire-

1. Kulashekhara Varman (800- 820 A.D)- also called Kulashekhara Alwar.
2. Rajashekhara Varman (820- 844 A.D)- also called Cheraman Perumal (Nayanar)
3. Sthanu ravi Varman (844- 885 A.D)- contemporary of Aditya Chola
4. Rama Varma Kulashekhara (885- 917 A.D)
5. Goda Ravi Varma (917- 944 A.D)
6. Indu Kotha Varma (944- 962 A.D)
7. Bhaskara Ravi Varman I (962- 1019 A.D)
8. Bhaskara Ravi Varman II (1019- 1021 A.D)
9. Vira Kerala (1021- 1028 A.D)
10. Rajasimha (1028- 1043 A.D)
12. Rama Varma Kulashekhara (1090- 1102 A.D)

As a result the Kalabhra Interregnum extended till the eighth century in Kerala. It ended with the coming of
Brahmins from outside India with Parasurama. At the end of eighth century we see temples and idols appear all of
a sudden in Kerala.

Thus soon after the Kalabhra interregnum we see an upsurge of Hinduism specifically of Vaishnavite tradition both
in Tamil region and in Kerala. Thus it is certain that the rewriting of history was done by these people to blot out
the memory of the vast and powerful history of the Indian Christendom. Apparently they succeeded.

“At the end of the eighth century A.D, South Indian kingdoms such as the Pallavas, the Chalukyas, the
Rashtrakutas and the Pandyas succeeded in overthrowing the Kalabhras.”
(http://www.indiasite.com/kerala/history.html)

Is it surprising that the same people are pursuing the same decimation of Christian presence and the mission of
Thomas today relentlessly? You only have to look at the vaishnava sites and the twisting of facts in the attempt to
remove St.Thomas and Christianity from South India. Wikipedia states:
Either destroyed the history of Kalabhra epigraphists
or twisted it beyond normal understanding of common people.

Kalabhra Interregnum
(The Dark Ages)
was the result of an attempt to obliterate the Christian Period of Cacophobia by the Vaishnavites
What form of Church did Thomas Institute?

The question now is, what happened to these churches? Looking at the story of Thomas as a rationalist doubter turned believer, who unhesitatingly declared Jesus as “My Lord, and My God”, we should have no doubt about the theology of the churches he established. He certainly emphasized the God incarnate as the Jesus ben Joseph, the Carpenter, his Lord and Master. He was no Gnostic. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed God and Lord.

The first Council of the Churches at Jerusalem (49 AD) under James set the standards for gentile churches. It was Paul of Tarsus who proposed the model for Gentile Churches. The Council decided that the central core of the Gospel is not to be confused with the cultural forms of worship and life of the Christians. The Church was to interpret the Gospel, which was revealed in the Jewish cultural context to the other cultures in a culturally relevant manner. Paul illustrated the working of the model in transferring the gospel in Greco-Roman culture. This was already in process before Thomas left Jerusalem and Middle East. Thomas therefore knew the Apostolic mission and must have established norms and standards, which were culturally relevant to the Indian context. Hence we should not expect Thomas Churches of India to have the ritualism and structures of Greco-Roman or Asia Minor. There would be no church building with a cross on the top, no altars nor candles and candle stands. We should expect a replication of the events of the early Christian Churches in Jerusalem soon after the resurrection. These emphasized communal living, fellowship, sharing, singing, worship, common meals with God and Man. For a very long time Christianity left no artifacts. Institutionalization came most probably after a century of Christian existence. Symbols and church buildings and rituals came into existence as a means of communication. In the Bible we do have these initial stages of the Christian Church in the Greco-Roman Churches under the leadership and
guidance of Paul and Peter. While the embedding of the message of salvation through Yesua is central to every mission, how it plays out in different cultures vary. How was this working out in India?

Thomas found a people who were very similar to the Hebrews in the Dravidians who were at that time concentrated in the Southern States. We have reason to believe that at least a part of the blood of Dravidans came from Abraham through his second wife Keturah. They worshipped a God of love who was
willing to die for his creation and practiced animal sacrifice for the propitiation of sins. There were also a large Jewish presence in the South Indian coast who migrated as long ago as the time of Solomon. So it was easy for Thomas to preach to the Dravidian population rather than to the Aryans. There are some who believe that one of the wise men who visited baby Jesus was from these people. Compared to the Dravids, Aryans were still pagans, worshipping the elementary forces of nature and involved deep in magic and witchcraft (Yajur Veda). This shows why Thomas had greater success in supplanting the Buddhism, Jainism and Vedism in the South rather than in the North.

The introduction of Christianity in the Indian religious arena brought forth an explosion of change, which can be easily seen by comparing the religious theology and practice before and after the arrival of St.Thomas.

Yesu Paran
At any rate after a million years of “Hindu” existence in India, (as is claimed) something happened in Indian religions that drastically changed its content and form during the first century. The lower nature gods of Rig Veda and their worship as expressed in the four Vedas were replaced with the concept of Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman and a new understanding of a Personal God who is love and who pervades his creation.

The name for God became Iswaran which expanded is Yesu Paran (Jesus is Lord)

Parameshwara. [Iswara = God. Param = Most High.]
The prescript Param can be replaced with Maha meaning “The Great” to give Maheshwara – The Great God.
These words Parameswara and Maheswara occur in Indian religious scenario only after the first century.

The name of God as Isa stands in sharp contrast to the devas of the Pre-Christian Period.

It is a personal name as opposed to a generic name for god. The name appears only in the post Christian Upanishads written in Sanskrit. The name “Iswa”. “Iswara” etc is never found before the Christian era anywhere in the Indian literature even in oral tradition.

Isavasya Upanishad is one of the first Upanishads written in Sanskrit language which originated as early as 150 AD. Regarding the starting word “Isavasya” this is what the Sanskrit Scholar Dr. A. Stone states: “It is clear that the first word, ii;sa, could theoretically be a proper noun in compound with the second word (which might be aa- or with no vowel), OR the instrumental singular of either ii;s or ii;sa or ii;sa. “If this is true then this upanishad specifically is naming Jesus as God.
The Hebrew name of the person whom we refer as Jesus was יְהוֹשֻׁעַ Yehoshuav which is rendered in English as Joshua. A shortened form of the name is יְשועַ Yeshua from which we get the Dravidian translation through St. Thomas as Yesu, Easow, Isa, Iswara.

In contrast, the name given in Greco-Roman culture is derived from their context as follows: When the good news of the gospel was translated into the Greco-Roman culture by Paul and his group it was rendered in Greek as Ἰησοῦς Iesous, pronounced as Yesous. Y in some languages is pronounced as J (ya as ja) rendering it as JESUS. While we have no hesitation to accept the name Jesus, even though it is only a Greco-Roman version of the real name, we should have no problem in seeing the name Isa, Maheswara, Parameshwara as equivalent to Jesus. Evidently this was brought into Indian scenario by Thomas who arrived in India by 52 AD and traveled all around into for twenty years and was finally martyred in 72 AD in Madras, Tamil Nadu. Shiva's epithet Mahābaleśvara, "The Lord God Almighty" (Maha = "great", Bala = "strength", Īśvara = "God") is an exact translation of the Jewish concept.

In fact there is no Isa in Vedas. It was after the Gnostic infiltration by the third century they took away the historical Jesus, and the word Isa was reinterpreted to mean “any favorite deity name” according to which religious sect quoted it. Thus Vaishnavite equate Isa with Hari or Krishna, and Saivite with Siva. It is not difficult for any reader to see what was happening. Isa became a generic name than a personal name. This moves the pawn one step into “New Age” of the Early Christian Period.

This was very new to the Indian continent. It transformed all the religions of India – Vedism, Buddhism, and even Jainism to some extent. The idea that there is a Personal God who is Omnipotent and loving changed the whole theology of Indian continent as the later religious scenario shows. The extent of this impact indicates that Thomas established churches with Jesus as center of worship as the Parameshwara throughout India. Sufficient records are there to show that:

* There existed a thriving Christian community in Kerala at that time.

There are palm leaf records, which show that:

* Among the Dravidians in Central India (Kaveri Area) there was a Church as early as 293 AD. These documents show that, Seventy-Two families of Christians of Vellala origin from Kavery Poopatanam of Puhur District on the River Kaveri arrived in Kollam (Quilon) in Kerala as refugees fleeing from the persecution in AD 293.
Original Thomas Christians of Dravids

In Kerala itself the first Christian Church was established among the Jews. Hence at least for these Jewish Christians, historians are of the opinion, that Thomas established the early liturgy in Aramaic (Syriac) the language spoken by Jesus and the Jews of that period. They were therefore called Nazaranees (Those who follow the Nazarene).
But for the Churches that he established in his second visit among the non-jewish Indians he must have used local cultural symbols and expressions as well as modes of worship. In these areas Isa worship took the form of Saivism. I would rather say that Saivism formed the first denomination of Christians in South India while in Kerala they remained as Nazarenes. In Kerala he used the Jewish symbolism and communication media while elsewhere he used the Indian symbolism and communication media. These two forms developed side by side. In the North India, the church was essentially Saivism as the distribution of Sivalingas indicate. In South India Nazareens were predominant as the distribution of the crosses indicate.

**Saivism**

The existence of Sivalingams all over suggests that at least in the early Christian era Saivism extended all over India from Taxila to Tamil Nadu.

There existed a Tantric cult based on worship of the Phallus the male organ placed in Yoni the female organ, which were later integrated with the Saivite tradition. These traditions go back to around 250 BC from Kashmir. The original Savism was of South Indian origin and had no connection with these Tantric religions until the 6th century. These were attributed to Savism to denigrate them by the later Vaishnavites.

**“Worship of the Phallus”**

According to some scholars, worship of Shiva Linga in effect means worship of the reproduction function. For, they say that the other meaning of the Sanskrit word ‘Linga’ is gender in general and phallus (the male reproductive organ) in particular. They believe that the base of the Lingam corresponds to the Yoni which mean vagina or the female reproductive organ. Correspondence of Linga and Yoni in a Shiva Linga is therefore interpreted as the representation of the process of copulation. Scholars further opine that the Kalash (container of water) that is suspended over the Shiva Linga from which water drips over the Linga also correspond to the idea of intercourse.

Connecting the origin of Shiva Linga to the early Indus Valley civilization, scholars opine that
tribes of the Indus Valley took to the togetherness of Lingam and Yoni in a Shiva Linga as the point of energy, creation and enlightenment.

**Interpretation in Tantra**

According to Tantra, Lingam is a symbol of Shiva's phallus in spiritual form. They say, the lingam contains the soul-seed within which lies the essence of the entire cosmos. The lingam arises out of the base (Yoni) which represents Parvati according to some or Vishnu, Brahma in female and neuter form according to others.

**Interpretation in Puranas**

Puranas, especially the Vamana Purana, Shiva Purana, Linga Purana, Skanda Purana, Matsya Purana and Visva-Sara-Prakasha attribute the origin of Shiva Linga to the curse of sages leading to the separation of and installation of the phallus of Lord Shiva on earth.

**Swami Vivekananda** gave a lecture at the Paris Congress of the History of Religions in 1900 ……..To this Vivekananda objected, …….to the effect that the Shiva-Linga had its origin in the idea of the Yupa-Stambha or Skambha—the sacrificial post, idealized in Vedic ritual as the symbol of the Eternal Brahman. According to Vivekananda, the explanation of the Shalagrama-Shila as a phallic emblem was an imaginary invention. *Vivekananda argued that the explanation of the Shiva-Linga as a phallic emblem was brought forward by the most thoughtless, and was forthcoming in India in her most degraded times, those of the downfall of Buddhism*” http://www.mahashivratri.org/shiva-linga.html

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**Dr. Alexander Harris** puts this as follows:

“In its section on the history of the Indian Subcontinent, the Encyclopedia Britannica (1982 edition) describes major changes in the religions of India. For instance the Vedic religion underwent changes with the gradual fading out of some of the Vedic deities, and further they state that,

"The two major gods were Visnu and Siva, around whom there emerged a monotheistic trend . . ."

"Sacrificial ritual was beginning to be replaced by the practice of bhakti (personal devotion), positing a personal relationship between the individual and the deity"

Thus we see a new religion arise, based on a monotheistic doctrine, and God who is first called Isa.

"The cult of Siva or Saivism emerged first, and the Vishnu-Krishna cult or Vaishnavism came afterwards as an imitation or duplication. The earlier appearance of Siva is indicated in the first instance by the fact that it is he alone who is called Isa or Isvara."
and

"This peculiar character of the cult makes it permissible to infer that Siva was probably the first and only god of the monotheistic Hinduism which replaced Vedic polytheism as the highest expression of the religious sentiment of the Hindus. That is to say, originally the monotheism was unitary. In fact, even in recent times the Saivas of the south maintained that Siva was the only supreme deity.”

By the time the Puranas were composed, Lord Siva was recognized as a part of Hindu Trinity and His worship became popular in many parts of the Indian subcontinent. Both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata mention Lord Siva as a prominent Hindu god. Credit goes to the Saiva Puranas, which were composed mostly in the early Christian era, in making Saivism a popular religious sect. Of the 18 Puranas originally composed, six were Shaiva Puranas, namely Siva Purana, Linga Purana, Matsya Purana, Kurma Purana, Skanda Purana and Agni Purana. The Agamas are the most authoritative works on Saivism. They deal with the methods of ritual worship and contemplation of Lord Siva.

It is clear that Saivism was one of the first sects that existed. Other sects developed later as a result of developments within Saivism and with interaction with local cults and religions. I have dealt with these in my book, ‘Development of Hinduism’

Those of us who have been collaborating closely with the Bible Translators in Africa know the innuendos of the translation. There are occasional traps in translation. It can go at a tangent and the concept can be misconstrued and misinterpreted. This is because the symbols we use to build has long and obscure values which we don’t recognize as they are used.

Siva Kovils – Early Indian Christian Churches

All the places associated with Thomas are Saivite Temples. Those who place “Hinduism” - whatever that means - to have been in existence millions of years has it that this indicate the destruction of Temples and take over of temple sites by Christians. One such series is elaborated in “The Myth of Saint Thomas and the Mylapore Shiva Temple”. Mylapore Shiva Temple was most probably one of the Kovils established by Thomas and was probably his seat in the Southern India. For all probability the Saivite temples were really the original Christian Churches. They flourished for at least three centuries when Gnostics and Brahmins took over these “churches” and converted them to “temples”. In this sense there is a truth in the claim that some of the churches today are on ancient temples. It may be argued the other way round also.
The Mahavanirvana Tantra (chapter 14):

Thirty-five million known and unknown places of pilgrimage and all the holy places abide near Shiva. The land within a radius of a hundred cubits of the linga is declared to be Shiva-kshetra (9-10). This land of Isha is very sacred. It is more excellent than the most excellent of holy places, because there abide all the Immortals and there are all the holy places (11). He who in a devout spirit lives there, be it even for but a little while, becomes purged of all sins, and goes to the heaven of Shangkara after death (12).

Sivlinga – Form of the Formless

The development of the symbols of Sivlinga and the development of Makan as Ganapathy are interesting studies in the concept developments. They also show how symbols can be misinterpreted by later generations and an edifice of myths and legends can come out of something very simple and direct. Today Sivlinga has been given a sexual interpretation assuming that it represents the penis. However any Saivite will be horrified by such a reference and will tell you that this is a misrepresentation of the concept by people who wanted to denigrate the Saivites. Since the God of creation do not have a form, the best visible representation of Invisible formless form is a formless form - the lingam. All symbols are meant to convey some deep mental and spiritual concept. These may be in sound as in languages and music, or form as in icons, idols and artifacts and architecture.
Later in order to represent that this incomprehensible God incarnated in human form a face was added to the lingam. The earliest Ekmukh lingams (Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh) are still in existence. “The word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

In the same way it is not difficult to see the distribution of the Jyotirlingas all over India fall on the route of Thomas and its density proportional to the number of years Thomas labored in those areas most probably during his Taxila tour. Thus we have a large number of Jyotir lingams near Taxila and Tamil Nadu area during his south Indian tour. What is conspicuously missing is the Kerala area because of its contact with Syria and because of the presence of the Jewish Christians. All along the route of Thomas, schools of theologies developed and major teachers arose from these schools in the years that followed as attempts in revival of original Christian theology.

**Lingam: Encyclopedia II - Lingam - Interpretations**

**Lingam - Interpretations**

Various interpretations on the origin and symbolism of the Shiva lingam obtain. While the Tantras and Puranas deem the Shiva lingam a phallic symbol representing the regenerative aspect of the material universe, the Agamas and Shastras do not elaborate on this interpretation, and the Vedas fail altogether to mention the Lingam.

**Lingam - Lingam as a phallic symbol**

Hinduism conceptualizes Brahman, the supreme power, as having three main roles: that of God the Creator, God the Preserver and God the Destroyer. This trinity is represented iconically by the deities Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva respectively. Thus, it is Shiva, the destructive form of the Almighty, who is represented by the Lingam or Mark, which is manifestly the CREATIVE power of Divinity. This points to an origin of the tradition of using the Lingam as a divine symbol that is utterly sublime Light(Jyoti) in its philosophical underpinnings.

The form of the Lingam serves to further emphasize this inference. The base of the Lingam is the *Yoni* which has been termed ‘Parashakti’ elsewhere in this article. The upright portion of the Lingam is shown as being protuberant through the yoni, and the two form a unified structure. Thus, the Lingam represents *the very instant of creation*, or rather of *regeneration*, when the
perishable and eventually destructible Old renews and regenerates itself in another form, the New that is to come.

Some Tantras consider the lingam to be a phallic symbol and to be the representation of Shiva's phallus, in its erect form. Accordingly, the lingam contains the soul-seed containing within it the essence of the entire cosmos. The lingam arises out of the base (Yoni) which represents Parvati according to some or Vishnu, Brahma in female and neuter form according to others.

The puranas, especially the Vamana purana, Shiva purana, Linga purana, Skanda Purana, Matsya Purana, and Visva-Sara-Prakasha, have narratives of the origin and symbolism of the Shiva lingam. Many puranas attribute the origin to the curse of sages leading to the separation of and installation of the phallus of Lord Shiva on earth; many also refer to the endlessness of the lingam, linked to the egos of Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma.

**Lingam - Lingam as an abstract symbol of God**

Some knowledgeable interpreters of Hindu scripture believe the lingam to be merely an abstract symbol, and point out that Lingams in many of the more important temples are not of the shape described above. Furthermore, many are the instances in Hindu lore where a sundry rock or pile of sand has been used by heroic personages as a Lingam or symbol of Shiva. For example, Arjuna fashioned a linga of clay when worshipping Siva. Thus, it is argued, too much should not be made of the usual shape of the Lingam. This view is also consonant with philosophies that hold that God may be conceptualized and worshipped in any convenient form; the form itself is irrelevant, the divine power that it represents is all that matters.

Sri K. Thirugna Sambantha, in his web site of Saivism, explains that the Siva lingam is the ruparupa aspect because it is neither a manifested form of Siva, nor is it formless, because the
linga is a tangible piece of stone, and a symbol of God. Thus, it is intermediate between the formless Absolute, Parasiva, which is beyond the sensory perception of man, and the many manifest forms of Siva.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami explains in the lexicon section of his book, *Dancing with Siva*, that "Sivalinga is the most prevalent icon of Siva, found in virtually all Siva temples. It is a rounded, elliptical, aniconic image, usually set on a circular base, or peetham. The Sivalinga is the simplest and most ancient symbol of Siva, especially of Parasiva, God beyond all forms and qualities. The Peetham represents Parashakti, the manifesting power of God. Lingas are usually of stone (either carved or naturally existing, svayambhu, such as shaped by a swift-flowing river), but may also be of metal, precious gems, crystal, wood, earth or transitory materials such as ice. According to the Karana Agama (6), a transitory Sivalinga may be made of 12 different materials: sand, rice, cooked food, river clay, cow dung, butter, rudraksha seeds, ashes, sandalwood, darbha grass, a flower garland, or molasses."

As a Veerashaivite follower in this site, said, "Linga is the amorphous representation of Shiva and can be regarded as the highest emblem of Shiva because of its least anthrophomorphic nature."

Swami Sivananda, states that the linga represents the formless, attributeless Nirguna Brahman or the formless Supreme Being Lord Siva, who is the indivisible, all-pervading, eternal, auspicious, ever-pure, immortal essence of this vast universe, the undying soul seated in the chambers of your heart, and the Indweller, innermost Self or Atman and who is identical with the Supreme Brahman.

He further holds that although the Agamas do not derive their authority from the Vedas, the two are not mutually antagonistic. Some scholars hold the view that anything that contradicts the Vedas or is inconsistent with its spirit is not authoritative. According to this perspective, the Puranic and Tantric conceptualizations are secondary to the Vedas and the Agamas which are vedic in spirit. In this point of view, the conceptualization of the lingam as a phallic symbol does not carry much weight, since the Vedas & Agamas say nothing in the matter.

There are two other places which are considered as Jyotirlingas by Maharashtrian people:
Naganath (Aundha, Maharashtra)
Vaidyanath (Parli, Maharashtra)
Kushan worshipper with Shiva/Oesho (the Iso the Saviour), Bactria, 3rd century CE

Notice that Kerala do not have the Saivism. Thus we see two denominations already in existence because of the Jewish, Brahminic and Syrian presence. They were called Nazaraneses.

Compare this with the distribution of Nasranee crosses
How would you translate the Christian concept of God and incarnation into Indian cultural context which never had that concept defined?

The concept of Trinity

Again there is no Trinitarian concept found in any of the four Vedas.

Except for Dravids, there probably was no name for God. For Dravids the word translated as Isa or Maheswara or Param Eswara – El Elyon – “Great God”, God the Father. That was exactly the experience of Thomas when he said “My God and My Lord”. How would the Apostle translate the holy Trinity, Father, Spirit and the Son in Dravidian language? Father is evidently Appan. (Abba – Father) The Aramaic female gender Holy Spirit that gives life is best translated as Amma and Son, evidently as Makan. And the original true Saiva Siddhantha was born. The correlation goes much deeper.

Nirguna Brahman is the ultimate God who cannot be comprehended, who resides in the darkness, cannot be seen or known. This God revealed himself as Saguna Brahman, who can be comprehended, seen, heard and touched and is a person, not just a force of nature. He is a person with a purpose and so created the cosmos. Purpose cannot come within monism.

Sada Siva Murthy, Elephanta Caves, Bombay 4-6 century AD?
“The Form of The Eternal God.”
The three faces are called:
Tatpurusha-Mahadeva, (Self Existent Great God)
Vamadeva-Uma (feminine - right side), (The Right Hand Lady God) and
Aghora-Bhairava (Masculine Fierce - left side).
Dr. M. Deivanayagam and Dr. Devakala in their studies on “Hinduism – Dravidian Religion” - The Revival Movement of Dravidian Religion mentions five new doctrines that appeared all of a sudden in the Indian religious scenario in the first century:

- “Doctrine of Avatar - God becoming a man in order to redeem human beings. Trinity or Triune doctrine - God in triune stage - Appan, Ammai, Makan (Saivism); Siva, Vishnu, Brahma (Vaishnavism)
- Doctrine of fulfillment of sacrifice - The offering of sacrifice has ceased even though there is sacrificial altar in the temple. People do not offer sacrifice while they worship God.
- Doctrine of forgiveness of sin - There is forgiveness for the sins of human beings by the grace of God and this doctrine is totally controversial to the saying that ‘the actions of one person would definitely yield its fruits’.
- Doctrine of bhakthi - Appreciating the bhakthi which is in ones heart irrespective of one’s appearance, color, culture etc. (Kannappa Nayanar)
The five doctrines mentioned above are the basic doctrines for the religion of the Tamils or the religion of the Dravidians or for the Hindu religion. These doctrines are the Taproots for Hindu religion (Saivism, Vaishnavism)."

These form the backbone of the St. Thomas Christianity or Hindu Sanadhana Dharma, the Indian Catholic Church. Thus just as Roman Catholic Church developed in the cultural context of Greco-Roman culture, Indian Catholic Church was developed in the Indian cultural context just as Thomas expected it to be. Just for the fun of it, if you remove Jesus from the Roman Catholic Church, you will probably be surprised to see the modern Hindu Sanadhana Dharama.

Later another interesting representation was the placement of the Tamil Om on top of the lingam, which later led to the form of Ganapathy, the elephant faced. None of these symbolisms are found earlier than the first century AD.

Om as Logos

Aum, is the root mantra and primal sound from which all creation issues forth. It is associated with Lord Ganesha

AUM is an aspect of God — it is the divine creative vibration of the whole universe. Word is the outer part and meaning or thought is its inner part. Every word has a meaning or a thought and so every thought finds expression only through word. It is the hovering of this vibration in the beginning that created. John calls it the Word. “In the beginning was the Word, the word was with God and the word was God.” This word is a symbol of primal vibration through which the universe manifests. It is the very first thought of God. It is the power differentiating the oneness into multiplicity.” This concept originated in Christianity as it appears in John and is not found in any prior religions without involved interpretation.

B.K.S. Iyengar, says, "Sound is vibration, which, as modern science tells us, is the source of all creation." (This is in his commentary on the 27th sutra of the first chapter, which refers to the meaning of pranava or Aum. in Light On The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

Aum first appears in the Taittareya Samhita in the post Christian period. Yet it appears on every early St. Thomas Church. It can be seen even today in several churches. It was certainly the greatest contribution of Thomas to Indian culture.
When the Word became flesh, when Om took form we have the simple expression of Om overlapping the Lingam.

**Amen and Aum**

A century ago, the German scholar Max Müller, (M. Müller, Three Lectures on the Vedânta Philosophy, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894) who introduced the Indian Scriptures to the west, had the idea that om might be a contraction of the word avam, “a prehistoric pronominal stem, pointing to distant objects, while ayam pointed to nearer objects…… Avam may have become the affirmative particle om, just as the French oui arose from hoc illud.” This follows the common everyday use of a syllable produced by the “up sound” or exhalation producing om to mean “Yes, I agree” Chândogya Upanishad clearly spells out the equation between the words udgîtha and pranava. The first record of this usage is in the Brihad-Âranyaka-Upanishad (3.9.1) itself, where om is employed seven times in this manner. Indeed, the Chândogya-Upanishad (1.1.8) clearly states: “That syllable is a syllable of assent, for whenever we assent to anything we say aum [= om].” “If, then, om meant originally that and yes, we can understand that, like Amen, it may have assumed a more general meaning, something like tat sat, and that it may have been used as representing all that human language can express.” (Max Muller)

In this sense it is an expression of how an idea begins and expresses into reality. This is the creation process. And God said: “Let there be …and it was so” It also indicate the presence of the trinity in the process of creation in the agreement.

**First appearance of Aum**

The study of the sacred sound Om indicates that it is the representation of the Logos concept. In fact John 1:1 is replicated in exact form in the later Indian scriptures. Surprisingly the Om is not found directly or indirectly in any document or Vedas before the advent of Thomas. The earliest direct references are found in Prashna Upanishad and in Mandukya Upanishad which were written after 150 AD. On the other hand Om is inscribed in all Kerala Christian Churches of antiquity at the entrance.

Just as various theological stands produced various denominations and sects in the Western World in the later period, various sects were also developed in India emphasizing one or the other aspect of God and or ritual.

Saivism and Vaishnavism developed as a Bhakti movement around 6th, 7th c. A.D. in South Indian Thomas Churches. Yet in years to come these were disfigured and manipulated by Gnostics and the Aryans from Persia under the influence of Mani. Thus the modern Hinduism is an outgrowth of the Gnostic Christianity, and is a heresy of Christianity.

We can only make guesses regarding the original form of Indian Catholic Church prior to the 3rd century.
Sivagnanapotham, the theological foundation for Saivism says as follows,

"Avan aval athu yenum avai moovinaimayin
thotria thithiye odungi malaththulathaam
antham aathi yenmanaar pulavar"
(In the beginning God created man (avan-first man), woman (aval-first woman) and the world (athu) in
three different actions and they were holy. But, later on they fell into the sin or malam, which ended the life of holiness and was the beginning of sin say the scholars.)

(Sivagnanapotham - 1)

"Muththi mutharkodikkae mogak kodi padarnthu
aththi paluththathu yenru vunthee para
appalham vunnaathae vunthee para"
(Amongst the creatures which were holy, on the first creeper (first man), the creeper of sin crept over it and bore the fruit of evil. Speak this forth. Do not partake of that fruit. Speak this forth.)

(Thiruvuntiyar 41)

"Aimpula vaedarin ayarthanai valarthena
thammuthal guruvumoi dhavaththinil vunarththa vittu
anniyam inmaiyn aran kalhal selumae"
(God who came into this world as a Guru on seeing the souls who are living in worldly pleasure by enjoying the pleasures of the five senses, made them to feel through his penance of suffering of death that they have forgotten their creator and are living in sin. Once the soul is enlightened through his suffering, it repents of its sins, and the separation with God is removed and it reaches the feet of God)

(Sivagnanapotham - 8)

'Aviyaai aviyumaagi arukkamaai perukkamaagi
paaviyar paavam theerkum paramanoi Brahmanaagi'
(The supreme God became Brahma and he is the sacrifice and sacrificed himself in order to redeem sinners)

(Thirunavukkarasar Devaram – pa. a. 320)

"Pori vaayil ainthaviththaan poitheer olhukka
neri ninraar needu vaalhvaar"
(Those who follow the one, who sacrificed his five senses on an instrument and showed us the way and who is the life and truth, will have eternal life)

(Thirukkural – 6)
Saiva Sidhanta
The basic creed of the saiva sidhantha is given by the Saiva Sidhantha Church as follows:

“A Creed of Saivite Hindus

1. We BELIEVE Lord Siva is God, whose Absolute Being, Parasiva, transcends time, form and space.

2. We BELIEVE Lord Siva is God, whose immanent nature of love, Parasakti, is the substratum, primal substance or pure consciousness flowing through all form as energy, existence, knowledge and bliss.

3. We BELIEVE Lord Siva is God, whose immanent nature is the Primal Soul, Supreme Mahadeva, Paramesvara, author of Vedas and Agamas, the creator, preserver and destroyer of all that exists.

4. We BELIEVE in the Mahadeva Lord Ganesa, son of Siva-Sakti, to whom we must first supplicate before beginning any worship or task

5. We BELIEVE in the Mahadeva Karttikeya, son of Siva-Sakti, whose vel of grace dissolves the bondages of ignorance

6. We BELIEVE that each individual soul is created by Lord Siva and is identical to Him, and that this identity will be fully realized by all souls when the bondage of anava, karma and maya is removed by His grace.

7. We BELIEVE in three worlds of existence: the Bhuloka, where souls take on physical bodies; the Antarloka, where souls take on astral bodies; and the Sivaloka, where souls exist in their own self-effulgent form

8. We BELIEVE in the law of Karma — that one must reap the effects of all actions he has caused — and that each soul continues to reincarnate until all karmas are resolved and moksha, liberation, is attained.

9. We BELIEVE that the performance of charya, virtuous living, kriya, temple worship, and yoga, leading to Parasiva through grace of the living satguru, is absolutely necessary to bring forth jnana, wisdom

10. We BELIEVE that there is no intrinsic evil.
11. We BELIEVE that religion is the harmonious working together of the three worlds and that this harmony can be created through temple worship, wherein the beings of all three worlds can communicate.

12. We BELIEVE in the Panchakshara Mantra, the five sacred syllables “Namah Sivaya,” as Saivism's foremost and essential mantra.”


Compare this with the Nicean Creed of the Chrsitian Churches outside of India in which one of the Indian delegate also was present.

*The Nicean Creed*

“ We believe in **one God, the Father All-sovereign**, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one **Lord Jesus Christ, and the only-begotten Son of God**, Begotten of the Father before all the ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father, and comes again with glory to judge living and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end.

We believe in the **Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver**, that proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshipped together and glorified together, who spoke through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism unto remission of sins.

We look for a **resurrection of the dead**, and the life of the age to come. “

Evidently the basic understanding of the trinitarian Godhead and the salvation through faith is seen as the basis. Though later additions to the substratum is clear they must have identical basis. It may be safey
assumed that this was the faith that existed until the third and fourth centuraries in India when the idol worship became prevalent and the inner core of faith was lost.

Thus Dr. M. Deivanayagam and Dr. D. Devakala in The Revival Movement of Dravidian Religion lists the following factors which emerged independent of Vedic influence.

1. Emergence of the basic doctrines of Saivism and Vaishnavism depending not on Aryanism or the Vedas.
2. Development of these doctrines which are not seen in the Vedas.
3. Emergence of new Agamas, totally contrary to the Vedas.
4. Emergence of temple worship, contrary to the Vedas.
5. Emergence of Nayanmars and Alwars who did not belong to the Vedic religion.
6. The doctrinal explanation of Sankara, Ramanuja and Mathva which are contrary to the Vedas.
7. Emergence of the names of Gods viz. Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, Sakti .... who are contrary to the Vedic deities.
8. Emergence of the worship of God in Triune form instead of worshipping the Vedic deities'.

They conclude thus:

“When Christianity came to India, the New testament was not compiled at that time. Naturally this would lead to the lack of historicity. The need of presenting Christianity at the grass root level in the later period led to the development of myths. Since the doctrine of trinity, doctrine of avatar, and the doctrine of fulfillment of sacrifice have to be explained in the mythical aspect at the grass root level, mythical Christ is seen in the Indian religions in different languages in different terms.

“Though the terms are different and seem to be different Gods and Goddesses, they all refer to one God. An unbiased examination of myths would unveil the hidden Christ. “

http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/1412/origin.html
http://www.viewzone.com/matlock.html

**Biblical Christianity, Judaism and Shaivite Hinduism Share the Same Names for God.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Judaism</th>
<th>Shaivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ish; Yish; Is; Isa; Issa; El; Al; etc. (Suffixes and prefixes to mean &quot;God&quot;)</td>
<td>The same in Shaivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yahve; Jahve; Tseeva (God)</td>
<td>Shiva; Shaiva; Siva (God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elohim; Elokhim (God intellectualized)</td>
<td>Lakhimi (Goddess of Prosperity); Lokhi; Lukh (Shiva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Shaddai (The Almighty)</td>
<td>Saday; Sada (Shiva)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha-Kadosh (The Holy One)</td>
<td>Hakh-e-Kheda (God's Duty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Elyon (Possessor of Heaven and Earth)</td>
<td>Il Layun (Absorption in God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesoda (Dual Sexual Nature of Life)</td>
<td>Yeshoda (Shiva's Dual Sexual Nature)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar sacred symbolism and iconography are associated with both the Hebrew Yah-Veh and the Kashmiri Shaiva: The Holy Trinity; the flame; the cherub; the guardian angel; the snake; the bull; blowing of bull's horn, etc.

**Hebrew and Kashmiri Cabalistic Terminology Is About the Same.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Kashmiri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ani (he spark of life)</td>
<td>Agni (Vedic god of fire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoda (work; labor)</td>
<td>Vud; Wud (skilled labor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayeen (void; non-being)</td>
<td>Ayen (eternity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabala (acceptance)</td>
<td>Cabul (acceptance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guevara (force)</td>
<td>Gavr (surrounding and attacking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keter (crown)</td>
<td>Kash'r (crown of the head)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kijum (destiny)</td>
<td>Ko-Yimi (path to death)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klim (nothing)</td>
<td>Kholi (nothing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malkuth (kingdom)</td>
<td>Mulakh (kingdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nefesh (soul)</td>
<td>Naph's (soul; spirit self)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sephiroth (spiritual energy centers)</td>
<td>Sipath (spiritual energy centers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesu; Yesh; Yeh; Yahu; Yakhu; Yah; Yao; Ie (The Material Universe)</td>
<td>The same as in Judaism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesh me Ayeen (The Goal of Creation)</td>
<td>Yech me ayen (Creation Fused to the Void)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zohar (brilliance)</td>
<td>Swar; Svar (Heaven; light; brilliance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Development of Sects and Gnostic infiltration – Enter Mani**

As time went on evidently new thought patterns and theologies brought in varying sects emphasizing the various aspects and rituals of the Church. This resulted in competing and practically opposing groups. Gnostic infiltration into Christianity started early - even during the Apostolic era. Simon Magnus who is revered as a saint in the Gnostic Church is referred to in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8:9ff.). While they were thwarted off by collective churches that emphasized the historical Jesus, the Gnostics thrived in many countries, especially in Persia.

_Gnosticism_ is a philosophical and religious movement, which started in pre-Christian times. The term is derived from the Greek word _gnosis_, which means "knowledge". It introduced novel beliefs and new gods and goddesses who exist in “divine dimension”. They insisted on universal revelation and insisted on considering all religions as equal and the ultimate salvation being achieved through the inner knowledge or enlightenment. Some of the early Gnostics include, Simon Magnus and Simonians, Nicolaitans, Cerinthus, Marcion, Basilides, (130-150 AD), Theodotus (140-160 AD), Valentinus, (140-160 AD), Heracleon, (170-180AD), and The Sethians. All these were dealt with by the early church. However the idea that Man can become God had always been a tender spot and temptation for man from the beginning with Adam and Eve. The Gnosticism always revived.
The land route to India brought in Gnosticism into India from its home land of Persia and impacted it to the utmost in the North India. It transformed Buddhism and Christian Churches of Inner India. Even though Gnosticism practically died out in Persia it still survives in China and India. Today we still call it “New Age” if we want to avoid calling it Hinduism.

It is told that Bardaisan came to Kerala during AD 154 – 222. (35). We have no details about this visit. But there are evidences that indicate that Bardesai met Mani in Kerala in Ranni. It was after this visit he wrote the Acts of Thomas to present Thomas as a Gnostic. Apparently his labors were not fruitful in Kerala. Since at the end of his life Bardaisen returned to Christian faith, his followers probably returned to faith or merged with Manicheans.

Mission of Bardesai was followed by the ministry of Manichean (Mani or Manes) (c.216-300 AD). “About the year 242, he undertook an extensive journey as an itinerant preacher, proclaiming himself as the "Messenger of Truth," the Paraclete promised by Christ. Traveling throughout the Persian Empire and as far as India, he gathered a considerable following.” Manicheanism was centralized in Kanchipuram Pallava Dynasty of Dravidia with its capital in Kanchi is known to be of the Persian race. Pallavas trace their origin to Syrian immigration.

Pallava: Encyclopedia II - Pallava - Persian Origins

Pallava - Persian Origins

The Pallavas are believed to be hereditary Hindu rulers who dominated southeastern India between the 4th and 9th centuries. Presently the Palav is one of 96 Maratha clans.

One view is that they belonged to Kuruba(Kurumbar) Clan. But recent historical, anthropological, and linguistic evidence indicates that the Pallavas were of Parthian origin and the name Pallava is just a variant of a well known Sanskrit Pahlava. According to Dr Carnegy, the Pahlavas were the peoples who spoke Pehlvi, a language of Persia. And according to Dr Buhler, Pahlava and its Iranian prototype Pahlav are corruptions of Parthava. It is also notable that for the same people, the different recensions of Puranas interchangeably write Pahlava as well as Pallava

The Pallavas represent a section of the Pahlavas who, in alliance with Sakas and Kambojas, had encroached into India during second/first century BCE and settled in south-western and southern India around the beginning of Christian era. The Markendeya Purana and Brhat Samhita ¹ indeed attest Pahlava and Kamboja settlements in south-western India (i.e. nairRtyAM dizi dezAH Pahlava-Kamboja......Brhat Samhita) …… This evidence shows that a section of Pahlavas (Parasikas) were also residing in southern India as late as first quarter of the 8th century AD. Thus, it appears that the Pallavas of Kanchi were indeed a branch of the Iranian Pahlavas, who with passage of time, had embraced Hinduism and become followers of Brahmanical way of life. French scholar George Coedes, among numerous others, identifies the Pallavas with the Iranian Pahlavas and further also sees close affinity between the Pallavas of Kanchi and the Kambuja rulers of Cambodia
“The Pallava kingdom of southern India began when Parthians migrated from the region of ancient Iran to southern India in the 4th century AD (according to this link) and their empire continued for centuries afterwards. This perfectly fits the Parthian timeline as the Parthian Empire fell in the 3rd century AD and refugees could have consolidated a new position of dominance in southern India by the time of the following century. The link below extensively documents the Parthian origin of the Pallavas, but it is a secular source which does not realize the Israelite origin of the Parthians. It notes similarities between Pallava and Bactrian king”

See also http://www.cais-soas.com/CAIS/History/ashkanian/parthian_colony.htm

India's Parthian Colony On the origin of the Pallava empire of Dravida, By: Dr. Samar Abbas, India

Mani is associated with peacock and he is said to have had the ability to fly as a peacock. Probably the city of Mylapore was the headquarters of Mani also. He practically took over Thomas Churches. Some people think that it is probably this concept of Mani the Ambassador of Light, that crystallized later in the Subramaniam myth associated with Saivism

He called himself the Prophet of Jesus and Jesus was one of the first emanations from godhead.

In Mani’s own words: “At the close of King Ardashir’s years I set out to preach. I sailed to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life and I chose there a good selection.” And what did Mani teach? “The Bride is the Church, the Bride Groom is the Light Mind; the Bride is the soul and Jesus is the bridegroom! If he rise in us, we too shall live in him, if we believe in him, we shall transcend death and
Mani’s work were in Chola region where he had a great following. He removed the Jesus of Nazareth as an incarnation and replaced him with a teacher who showed the inner path to realization. As a result the historical Jesus was of no consequence nor his life and death and resurrection. Gnostics differentiated Jesus from the Christ. The experience of the divine within each person was only important. As a result Inner Indian Churches became Gnostic Churches and dropped off Jesus as a whole. After returning to Persia, Mani sent his Father and one of his disciples called Thomas to India to continue to evangelize the nation. Mani was executed for heresy in Persia and all his followers in Persia went to the East – to India and China. All his apostles and his mother Mary were buried in Kashmir in a place called Barmulla. It is this last Aryan Brahminic migration that made a great difference in Indian Religious scenario. Mani’s version of the Christianity is still seen in the Gnostic Churches of America and the Church of the East which presents the Yoga of Jesus. Thus Indian Christian Churches took a new form - the form of Sanadhana Dharma, meaning Eternal Religion – Religion that started even before Man. In the process of historic growth it became the “Hinduism” as we know today.

The early Gnostic Hidutva unleashed a war on historic Christianity - ideological, social and physical. In the North India the believers went underground as a group of Fakirs, who were sworn in secrecy as to their true identity. These Fakirs surface occasionally. Sadhu Sunder Singh report to have seen them on his journey to the Himalayas. When the poor Indian missionaries need help, they always appear from nowhere. Among the Sindhi’s of the North India there is a group called Tatanagar Fakirs, who venerate Thomas as Thuma Bhagat.

It was probably during this time Pantaneus was sent to India from the School of Alexandria to counter the teachings of Mani. The Manigramakkar, a sect of Hindu Nairs found in Quilon and Mavelikara, still preserve certain Christian customs. They are said to be the descendants of those apostatized early Christians.

When the cloud clears off we have a large number of sects of varying faith and practices all over India. The Inner India Churches became Gnostic (“Hinduism”) since they had little or no contact with the Christian Churches elsewhere. The Malabar Churches however because of its geographic position was in constant contact with other churches in Alexandria, Ethiopia, Rome and Antioch through the sea route. Because of this they remained within the Apostolic traditions – the faith that was handed over once and for all at the shores of India by Apostle Thomas – as was practiced in the rest of the world especially in Alexandria, Ethiopia, Rome and Syria. By the third century while the rest of India became Hindu, Hinduism came to stay in Malabar Coast only by the eighth century. Malabar remained a safe haven for Christians for several centuries.

As a result when the Gnostic (Hindu) persecution broke out in the Chola and Pandya region, many believers fled to Malabar. One such mention is seen in the Palm Leaf documents.

“AD 293. The Vallala converts to Christianity in Kavery poopattanam were persecuted by their King. So 72 families embarked on a ship and came to Korakkeni (Kollam, Quilon) where there were Christians at that time.”

This is followed by another citation, which says:
“AD 315 A certain sorcerer called Manikka Vachakar came (to Kollam) and converted back to Hinduism 116 persons belonging to eight of the 72 families from Puhur”

This story is also cited by other historians such as Moraes, White House, and Ittup.

Another Palm Leaf says:
“A certain sorcerer called Manikka Vachakar came to Kollam and converted back to Hinduism 116 persons belonging to 72 families from Puhur, 4 of about half a dozen families subsequently came from Coromandel Coast (perhaps from Puhur itself) and 20 families of local Christians (presumably from Quilon)”. Pam-leaf quotation.

We are not sure who this Manikka Vachakar is. The mention of the term Sorcerer and the name Manikka leads us to identify this person as Gnostic.

The impact of this Persian Gnosticism is seen in the appearance of idols and temples and an endless system of myths and legends and visions. By the end of third century most of the region beyond the Sahya Mountains became “Hindu”. It took at least three centuries more for it to reach Kerala.

“Taproot of the Hindu religion:

- Doctrine of Avatar - God becoming a man in order to redeem human beings. (Unborn Prime God was born in order to give us eternal pleasure)
- Trinity or Triune doctrine - God in triune stage - Appan, Ammai, Makan (Saivism); Siva, Vishnu, Brahma (Vaishnavism)
- Doctrine of fulfillment of sacrifice - The offering of sacrifice has ceased even though there is sacrificial altar in the temple. People do not offer sacrifice while they worship God.
- Doctrine of forgiveness of sin - There is forgiveness for the sins of human beings by the grace of God and this doctrine is totally controversial to the saying that ‘the actions of one person would definitely yield its fruits’.
- Doctrine of bhakthi - Appreciating the bhakthi which is in ones heart irrespective of one’s appearance, color, culture etc. (Kannappa Nayanar) “
The Revival Movement of Dravidian Religion Dr. M. Deivanayagam, Dr. D. Devakala

Pillayar Concept

In the Savite Trinity of Appan, Amma and Makan – while the concept of Appan (Father), Amma (Sakthi – Holy spirit) and Makan (Son) – we often confront the son in the form of the Elephant. Pillaiyar is depicted as Gana Pathy which in itself simply means Lord or Saviour of People – Emmanuel. Yet the Elephant figure have come to dominate the religious ceremonies. Though it blows off the stretch of
imagination, this was a natural development of the concept of incarnation. It is a symbolisation the “The only begotten Son of God” as the following research indicates.

In “The Wonder that is Pillaiyarpatti” Sivashankar Chandrasekaran describes this original concept thus: Pillaiyarpatti is a small town twelve kilometers from Karaikudi, near Madurai, in the Sivagangai District of Tamil Nadu. The town is named after the Ganesa Temple that adorns it. Here, Lord Ganesa is known as Pillaiyar, Tamil for revered and noble son, and 'Karpaga Vinayakar', Lord who offers his blessings like the celestial tree Kalpaka whose specialty is 'you ask and it will be given'.

This temple is 1,600 years old. It contains fourteen stone inscriptions dated between 400 AD and 1238 AD that reveal that the place was known as 'Ekkattur', 'Thiruveengaikudi', 'Maruthankudi' and 'Raja Narayanapuram' before it became to be called Pillaiyarpatti. An inscription dated 1284 AD, on the right side wall of the Thiruveesar sanctum, suggests that the original name of the Ganesa was 'Desi Vinayaga Pillaiyar',

Pillaiyarpatti Temple is a rock cut temple. The image of Karpaga Vinayakar and that of a Siva Linga were carved out of stone by a sculptor called 'Ekkattur Koon Peruparanan' who put his signature on a stone inscription found even today in the sanctum. He put his name in the 'Tamizhi language' which was in use between 2nd and 5th century AD. It can concluded that the icon of Karpaga Vinayakar must have been carved around 4th century AD

This is an image of the rock cut Karpaka Vinayakar Shrine at Pillayarpatti near Karaikkudi at one of the oldest Cave Temples (Rock Cut) temples of Tamilnadu. Pillayarpatti is situated between Pudukkottai and Karaikkudi.
Karpaga Vinayakar is one of the oldest Vinayakar images in the world for it has only two arms. The significance of the two arms is that the first god evolved by ancient man was in the shape of man. This male god created out of stone was called Yaksha and the female god was called Yakshi. Later on to show the superiority of god to man the head of the man was removed and in its place a head in the shape of OM was fixed. The OM head was similar to that of an elephant. There are only two images of Vinayakars with two arms in the world. One is at Pillaiyarpatti the other is in Afghanistan. The one at Afghanistan must have been made later, for it is in a standing posture and has a number of ornaments adorning it. The one at Pillaiyarpatti is in a sitting posture mediating. He does not have Modakam (the most favourite sweet of Pillaiyar) but a Siva Linga in his palm. He mediates for the well being of the people and so their prayers are answered immediately.

Both Arjuna and Krishna worshipped Him and obtained favors from Him. In the Ramayana too we come across several references to Him. Sage Valmiki depicted Ravana, the demon king and chief villain of the epic, as a great devotee and daily worshipper of Lord Shiva. It is believed that worship of His icons was widely prevalent as early as 2nd or 3rd Century B.C.,.

The concept of Son of God is clearly indicated in this icon representation where the word Om is superimposed on the Formless Form of Sivlinga to represent the incarnate God who mediates between God and Man. God reaching down to man.

Heb 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, But a body didst thou prepare for me;

In fact the similarity goes much deeper as explained in detail by Dr. Devakala in Theological Foundation of Hindu Religion (http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/1412/theology.html)

Siva Lingam

Siva-linga at Baramula in Kashmir
Does the face suggest any one?

Trinity as expressed in Saivism groups

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<th>Father</th>
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<th>Son</th>
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<td>Siva</td>
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"Saivism and Saiva Sittantha"

The devotional literature of the Bhakti movement is known as 'Panniru Thirumurai' and the fourteen Sastras of the theological exposition are known as 'Saiva Sittanta Sastras'. Sivagnanapotham by Meykanta Tevar is regarded as the basic text of the Saiva Sittanta Sastras. The Saiva Sittanta Sastras are also known as the Meykanta Sastras.

Sivagnanapotham, the basic text of Saiva Sittanta explains from the creation of man to salvation. To quote a few examples from the first book of Saiva Sittanta Thiruvunthiar:

Neelakhanda – One who drank the poison of cosmos which otherwise would have killed all the living
(i) Sin

“In the beginning god created man (avan), woman (aval) and the world (athu) in three different actions and they were holy. But later they fell into sin (malam) which end the life of holiness and was the beginning of sin say the scholars. (Sivagnanapothan –1)

“(Muththi mutharkodikkae mogk kodi padarnthu
aththi paluththathu yenru vunthee para
appalhan vunnaathaw vunthee para”

Among the creatures which were holy, on the first creeper, the creeper of sin crept over it and bore the fruit of evil. Speak this forth. Do not partake of that fruit. Speak this forth.

(ii) Avatar

'The hitherto unknown God came down as one of us and gave up Himself to save us from evil'.

(iii) Salvation through His sufferings

'He who has accomplished the works of salvation through His sufferings will not come again in His body, He has no birth or death again'.

(iv) Eternal life

'If you join Him who shared His home with the thieves you will attain the heavenly abode which is light'.

Songs from other literature are also quoted. In defining the Trinity as three persons in one God head:

(v) Trinity and Avatar

"The eternal God(Siva) and the Ornamented one (Vitnu).
And the eternal one on the Lotus (Brahma).
If examined are one and the same
But the ignored are confused”.

In Saivism God is visualized in three forms as 'Aruvam' (God without form), 'Uruvam' (God with a form) and 'Aruvuvram' (God with semiform).

'The Triune Prime God'

sings Thirugnana sampanthar in Tevaram.

The author of Potripahrotai sings
"Iravaa Inpathu Yemai iruththa vendi piravaa muthalvan piranthaan."

(To give us eternal pleasure, the unborn prime God was born). He delivers us from our original sin (Sahasa malaa).

(vi) Sacrifice

The Godhead had lost all his glories and offered himself as a 'Sacrifice', so that mankind could be restored to a new life leaving the inherent qualities of leading a sinful life. In short, he gave himself as 'Sacrifice' for the remission of sins of the mankind. This is sung by Thirunavukkarasar in Tevaram as follows

'Aviyumaahi'  
(He offered himself as sacrifice)

"Aviyaai aviyumaahi arukkamaai Perukkamaahi Paaviyar paavam theerkum paramanaai brahmanaahi"

(He being the sacrifice he offered himself as Sacrifice, decreased yet multiplied, he is the Transcending Brahman who washes away the sins of the sinners.)"

http://www.geocities.com/athens/ithaca/1412/origin.html

Dr. M. Deivanayagam, Dr. D. Devakala: The Revival Movement of Dravidian Religion

Saivism has changed with the advent of Gnosticism. Here are the basic tenets and traditions of Saivism as is now.

Main Saivite Traditions

Dr. Kanti Chandra Pandey (M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt., M.O.L. Shastri, Lucknow University) in Bhaskari (Varanasi, 1998, p. VI) (also "Saivism: Some Glimpses", Delhi, 1996.) lists eight systems of Shaiva philosophy:

1. Pashupata dualism
2. Siddhanta Shaiva dualism
3. Dualistic-cum-Non-dualistic Shaivism of Lakulisha Pashupata
4. Vishishtadvaita Shaivism
5. Visheshadvaita Shaivism (Vira Shaiva)
6. Nandikeshvara Shaivism
7. Raseshvara Shaivism
8. Monistic Shaivism of Kashmir

Pasupatis of Vairagis

Probably the oldest school within Shaivism. The school of Shaiva Siddhanta is a continuation of this tradition.

Shaiva Siddhanta

The Shaivasiddhantins date as early as the sixth century AD. Followed by many intellectuals. It has a personal doctrine, stressing the plurality of souls (as opposed to the *advaita* idea that all souls are one with God). According to Shaiva Siddhanta the God is formless (arUpa). But for the salvation of mankind He took the form of *lingam* – form of the formless (arUpa rUpa). This is very close to the Christian Theology and will probably identical with if Ganapathy, the Lord of reconciliation can be identified with Christ the form of the formless.

Kashmiri (Trika) Shaivism - Shiva-advaita.

Abhinavagupta (c. 960 – 1020) was the proponent of this theological movement. In this the aim of the believer is to "become Shiva". There is only one reality, that is *Cit* – consciousness. This the the advaita version of Saivism. It is almost identical with the Lurianic Kaballah of Judaism. This theology is very close to the Eastern Christian Theology of creation of cosmos.

Virashaivism (the Lingayats)

This movement started with Basava of the 12\textsuperscript{th} c. It opposed caste differences.

Shaiva Asceticism – the rebels in Saivism

Shaiva has long been connected with rigorous asceticism and odd behaviors. Well known are the naked Nagas. Many yogis are Shaivites. Prominent are the Nathapatnis, followers of Gorakhnatha, and the Aghori who deliberately contravene moral norms.

The Saiva Siddhanta School is one of the most ancient schools of Saivism. It has a history of more than 2000 years. Its roots can be traced back to both Kashmir and southern India. It gained popularity in the south and established itself as a dominant sect of Saivism. In the past it had sizeable following in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. But currently it is popular mostly in the south.

Gnosticism was perhaps the most dangerous heresy that threatened the early church during the first three centuries. Influenced by such philosophers as Plato, Gnosticism is based on two false premises. First, it espouses a dualism regarding spirit and matter. Gnostics assert that matter is inherently evil and spirit is good. As a result of this presupposition, Gnostics believe anything done in the body, even the grossest sin,
has no meaning because real life exists in the spirit realm only.

Second, Gnostics claim to possess an elevated knowledge, a “higher truth” known only to a certain few. Gnosticism comes from the Greek word gnosis which means “to know.” Gnostics claim to possess a higher knowledge, not from the Bible, but acquired on some mystical higher plain of existence. Gnostics see themselves as a privileged class elevated above everybody else by their higher, deeper knowledge of God.

To discredit the idea of any compatibility between Christianity and Gnosticism, one has only to compare their teachings on the main doctrines of the faith. On the matter of salvation, Gnosticism teaches that salvation is gained through the acquisition of divine knowledge which frees one from the illusions of darkness.

The Person of Jesus Christ is another area where Christianity and Gnosticism drastically differ. The biblical view of Jesus affirms His complete humanity as well as His full deity.

Saiva Siddhanta Philosophy

The central doctrine of the Saiva Siddhanta philosophy is that Siva is the Supreme Reality, and that the Jiva (individual soul) is of the same essence as Siva, but not identical. Pati (God), Pasu (soul), and Pasam (the bonds) and the thirty-six Tattvas (principles which constitute the world), are all real.

Characteristics of the Supreme Reality (according to Saiva Siddhantam):

- The Supreme Reality is called Siva.
- He is infinite consciousness.
- He is eternal, changeless, formless, independent, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, one without a second, beginningless, causeless, taintless, self-existent, ever free, ever pure, and perfect.
- He is not limited by time.
- He is infinite bliss and infinite intelligence.
- He is free from defects, the all-doer, the all-knower.

Lord Siva is the God of Love. His grace is infinite. His love is infinite. He is the saviour and Guru. He is engaged in freeing the souls from the thraldom of matter. He assumes the form of a Guru out of His intense love for mankind. He wishes that all should know Him and attain the blissful Siva-Padam (the state of Siva). He watches the activities of the individual souls, and helps them in their onward march. He liberates the individual souls from their fetters or bonds.

The five activities of the Lord are: Creation, Preservation, Destruction, Veiling, and Grace. These, separately considered, are the activities of Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, Maheshwara, and Sadasiva.
Siva, Sakthi and Maya: Lord Siva pervades the whole world by His Sakthi. He works through Sakthi, who is the conscious energy of the Lord Siva. She is the very body of Lord Siva. The potter is the first cause for the pot. The stick and the wheel are the instrumental causes. The clay is the material cause of the pot. Similarly, Lord Siva is the first cause of the world. Sakthi is the instrumental cause. Maya is the material cause. Sakthi is not the material cause of the universe, because She is of the nature of consciousness (Chaitanya). Siva is pure consciousness, but matter is pure unconsciousness. Sakthi is the intermediate link between the two. Sakthi is the reflex of Siva. It has no independent existence. Siva assumes this form out of His great love for mankind. Siva wishes that all should know Him.

Evolution of the Tattvas from Suddha Maya: The world undergoes evolution for the benefit of the souls. The whole process of creation is for the sake of the salvation of the souls. The world is real and eternal. The world of matter and souls forms the body of the Lord.

The Saiva Siddhanta analyses the universe into 36 Tattvas (principles). The 36 Tattvas arise from Maya, the material cause of the world. Suddha Maya is maya in its primal state. From it arise the five pure principles called Siva Tattva, Sakthi Tattva, Sadasiva Tattva, Iswara Tattva, and Suddhavidya Tattva. Siva functions through these five pure principles.

Maya evolves into the subtle principles, and then into the gross. Siva Tattva is the basis of all consciousness and action. It is undifferentiated (Nishkala Suddha Maya). The Sakthi of Siva starts her activity. Then Siva becomes the experiencer. Then He is called Sadasiva, known also by the name Sadakhya (who is not really separate from Siva). The Suddha Maya becomes active. Then Siva, the experiencer, becomes the ruler. He is then Iswara (who is not really separate from Sadasiva). Suddhavidya is the cause of true knowledge.

The bonds that bind the soul (Anava, Karma, Maya): Souls (Pasu) are by nature infinite, all-pervading, eternal, and all-knowing like Lord Siva (Pati). Yet, souls think that they are finite, limited, little-knowing, ignorant, and temporary. This is due to the bonds (Pasa), viz., Anava, Karma, and Maya, which are called the three Malas (or impurities). Anava is the impurity which makes the all-pervading Jiva think itself to be atomic (Anu). It produces the erroneous notion of finiteness. The second impurity or bond is Karma. The soul acts in certain ways on account of its limitation, and does good and evil actions. Karma brings about the conjunction of the soul with its body. The results of the Karma have to be worked out in the world. There should be worlds and bodies, in order to experience the fruits of actions and acquire knowledge. These are provided by Maya, the third Mala or bond. Maya is the material cause of the world. The soul gets experience and limited knowledge through Maya.

The soul learns, by long experience, that this Samsara (cycle of birth and death) is full of pains and is transitory, and that he can attain eternal bliss and immortality only by attaining Sivatva (the nature of Siva or God-realisation). He develops Vairagya (dispassion), and Viveka (discrimination between the Real and the unreal, the Permanent and the impermanent).

Discipline and grace culminate in Jnana. Jnana is the supreme means of salvation or the attainment of the final beatitude. Karma and other means are only subsidiary to it. They are auxiliaries.
The attainment of Sivatva (or Siva-nature) does not mean complete merging of the soul in Siva. The liberated soul does not lose its individuality. It continues to exist as a soul in God. Sivatva is the realisation of an identity of essence in spite of difference. The soul attains the nature of Siva, but it is not itself Siva or God.

Three orders of Jivas: the Siddhantins divide Jivas (or Pasus) into three orders, viz., Vijnanakalas, Pralayakalas and Sakalas. Vijnanakalas have only the Anava Mala (egoism). Maya and Karma have been resolved. Pralayakalas have been freed from Maya alone, in the stage of Pralaya. Sakalas have all the three Malas. The Malas affect only the Jivas, and not Siva. Those who are freed from the Malas (or impurities) attain Sivatva or the nature of Siva. They are the Siddhas (perfected beings).

The way to the attainment of Sivatva (God-realisation): You must free yourself from the three bonds (described above), if you want to attain salvation. You must annihilate Maya, which is the root of all sins. You must destroy all Karmas which produce rebirth. You must remove the erroneous notion of a finite self. The three bonds can be removed only through rigorous Tapas, proper discipline, guidance from a Guru, and, above all, the grace of Lord Siva. Charya (observance), Kriya (rites), and Yoga (Yama-Niyama) constitute the discipline. When the aspirant practises in right earnest Charya, Kriya and Yoga he obtains the grace of Lord Siva. Then the Lord instructs the soul, reveals Himself to him, and illumines him. Then the soul realises its nature as Siva.

Swami Sivananda
http://www.skandagurunatha.org/deities/siva/home.asp
Though Sanskrit is claimed to be the oldest language in the universe, the sanskrit as we know today is of very recent origin.

“The first epigraphic evidence of Sanskrit is seen in 150 AD and this inscription is in the Brahmi script.” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1982).

From the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions.

Earlier documents used Pali and Prakrit. Asoka who took every care to make his messages intelligible to the common man used all existing scripts and languages. These 3rd Century inscriptions do not include Sanskrit. It included Prakrit, Greek and Aramaic. But no Sanskrit is found because it was not in existence at that time.
Sanskrit was developed out of Prakrit and other existing languages during the interval of 100 AD to 150 AD. “The first evidence of classical Sanskrit is found as an inscription dating around A.D.150 in the Brahmi script. It records the repair of a dam originally built by Chandragupta Maurya, and also contains a panegyric in verse, which can be regarded as the first literary composition in classical Sanskrit. It is at Girnar in Kathiawar and was inscribed by Rudradamana, the Saka Satrap of Ujjayini, on the same rock on which the Fourteen Rock Edicts of Asoka were also found.

It is significant that Rudradamana employed classical Sanskrit in a region where about four hundred years before him Asoka had used only Prakrit. This definitely proves that in the second century AD Sanskrit was replacing the dialects. Even so the language did not replace Prakrit everywhere, but it continued to be used in inscriptions for something like one hundred years or even more after this date. However, from the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions.” (Hinduism, by Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Oxford University Press, USA, 1979.)

If that is the case in what language was the Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads transmitted since Sanskrit did not exist? Except for most part of Rig Veda all others are written in Sanskrit. What that tells us that they were written only after the first century AD.

This evidently puts new and sharp change in the way we look at Hinduism. In fact Hinduism did not come to exist before first century. Hinduism is totally different from the Vedic religion. The mistake early indologists who came from Europe was to assume the continuity of Vedic religion and Hindu religion. Hindu religion itself was a convenient artificial definition of the British.

Thus apart from portions of the Veda which were not written in Sanskrit, all other Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmanas and Puranas etc were written down later than 100 AD at liberal estimate. They must have been written down much later in actual fact. A more realistic estimate will be around 6th Century AD. “The pious view is that the Vedas are eternal and uncreated and exist essentially as sound. More conventional, but still pious, scholarship may still exaggerate the antiquity of the Vedas, sometimes claiming they go back to 10,000 BC or earlier. Now, however, it looks like even the oldest parts of the Rg Veda do not antedate the arrival of the Arya in India, although the gods and elements of the stories are older, since they are attested with Iranian peoples and the Mitanni, with parallels in Greek and Latin mythology.” (Kelly Ross)

“Thus for instance the vast amalgamation of Puranic tradition known as the Skandapurana, as far as we can speak of it as a single work at all, cannot be older than the 16th century, as has been shown in the Groningen Skandapurana project (see Adriaensen et al 1994). Many scientific manuals and commentaries were composed during the 17th and 18th centuries, and a 19th century compilation, the Sukraniti, passed for a long time as a genuine ancient work. And of course Indian scholars of traditional learning are all the time producing new Sanskrit literature.” Klaus Karttunen http://folklore.ee/folklore/vol8/veda.htm
"Mahabharatha as given to us could not have been written before A.D. fourth Century. Panini, who is the famous grammarian, has mentioned several important personalities of the epics of that period. While the reprints published later have made several errors, variations and exaggerations, the main characters and the imports of the stories remain in tact. There is no doubt that Geetha came into existence only during the period of Gupta Empire."

K.M. Panicker (A Survey of Indian History p.67)

"It is certain that Manu did not know anything about the Trinity or their functions as Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. Yet by A.D 6th Century this concept was popular as is clear from the works of Kalidasa"

Ramesh Chandra Dutt, History of Civilizations in India Vol II P.191

All Hindu myths are developed over a long period of times, where each myth was built over some older historical fact or person. This is often due to confusion of names and times. Most of them were local stories, which got incorporated, in the bigger picture. So when a purana was presented in a codified form it was normally done in a third person method where this person sees the act being carried out in some distant places at distant time. This was indeed the normal style of story telling of the period. In the present day art forms of Katha Kala Shepam and Thullal this is clearly visible.

In A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th century Upinder Singh says:

"In the Deccan and South India, Sanskrit inscriptions appeared along with Prakrit ones in the late 3rd/early 4th century CE, for instance Nagarjunkonda in Andhra Pradesh. The Sanskrit element gradually increased. In the transitional phase of the 4th and 5th centuries, there were bilingual sanskrit-Prakrit inscriptions, as well as those in a mixture of two languages. Thereafter, Prakrit fell into disuse.

Between the 4th and 6th centuries, Sanskrit emerged as a premier language of royal inscriptions all over India. There after, it attained the status of a language associated with high culture, religious authority, and political power not only in the subvontinent but also in certain other areas such as Southeast Asia. However, in the post-Gupta period, there was also an important parallel trend towards the evolution of regional languages and scripts. Even Sanskrit inscriptions show the influence of local dialects in spellings and words of non-Snsrit origin.

In South India, inscriptions in the old tamil language (and the Tamil-Brahmi script) appeared in the 2nd century BCE and the early centuries CE……There are examples of bilingual Tamil-Sanskrit Pallava inscriptions from the 7th century onwards. …..

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Late 6th century epigraphs of the of the early Telugu Chola kings mark the beginnings of Telugu as a language……Malayalam inscriptions appear in about 15th century."
The earliest epigraphic evidence on languages employed in India comes from the inscriptions of Asoka inscribed in third century B.C. Asoka took care that his messages were intelligible to all and he used a particular kind of Prakrit. ……So, the absence of Sanskrit in his inscriptions indicates that it did not exist at that time, as otherwise he would have certainly used it.

In India, before the Christian era, there were many foreign invasions which introduced many foreign languages. These mixing with the early Indian languages led to what is often called a Prakrit which was diverse in nature. The first evidence of classical Sanskrit is attested by an inscription dating around A.D.150 in the Brahmi script. It records the repair of a dam originally built by Chandragupta Maurya, and also contains a panegyric in verse which can be regarded as the first literary composition in classical Sanskrit. It is at Girnar in Kathiawar and was inscribed by Rudradamana, the Saka Satrap of Ujjayini, on the same rock on which the Fourteen Rock Edicts of Asoka were also found. It is significant that Rudradamana employed classical Sanskrit in a region where about four hundred years before him Asoka had used only Prakrit.

A key evidence often presented in the dating of Sanskrit is Patanjali’s Vyakarana - Mahabhasya (Great Commentary). The Mahabhasya is both a defense of the grammarian Panini against his chief critic and detractor Katyayana and a refutation of some of Panini’s aphorisms. Patanjali is dated anywhere from 2nd c BC to 5th c AD.

On Patanjali’s date, the composition of the Mahabhasya and its early tradition, Joshi and Roodbergen write,

*It is nearly unanimously agreed that Patanjali has lived around 140 BC. But as stated by Winternitz, we are not in a position to confirm that this is the correct date. The question largely depends on the other question, namely, whether Patanjali was the author of the examples he quotes. According to Tarn, there is nothing conclusive in Patanjali’s assumed date, precisely because his grammatical examples are, or in any particular case may be, not necessarily his own composition but traditional examples. Nor are the dates assigned to Panini and Katyayana in the fourth and third century BC more than a working hypothesis, that is, ornate guesswork.*

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The stone pillar inscription of Samudra Gupta (AD 330 to 380) written in Sanskrit and a late Brahmi script called the Gupta script is an undated inscription incised on an Asokan pillar at Allahabad. Composed by Harisena, a commander-in-chief of the king it describes elaborately the moral, intellectual and military achievements of this king. This inscription possibly dates 350 AD…………

Another interesting fact is that the Allahabad inscription of Samudra Gupta mentions King Vishnugopa of Kanchi (Pallavas 4th to 9th c AD) who was defeated by Samudra Gupta and then liberated about the middle of the 4th c AD. The southern Pallavas are often linked with the North Western Pahlavas, however, this is not conclusive. Through these invasions, the Gupta language and culture spread south.
The spread of Sanskrit South is first evidenced by the Talagunda stone pillar inscription of Kadamba Kakusthavarman in the Shimoga District, Karnataka dated between 455 and 470 AD. It is written in late southern Brahmi inscribed in the reign of Santivarman (450 to 470 AD). It is a posthumous record of Kakusthavarman.

Sanskrit then spreads in the South evidenced by the inscriptions in Early Grantha, dating from the 5th to 6th c. AD on copper plates and stone monuments from the kingdom of the Pallavas near Chennai (Madras). The Grantha alphabet, which belongs to the writing system of southern India, was developed in the 5th c. AD to mainly write Sanskrit. From the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions which indicates that Sanskrit was replacing the dialects.

Further more research on the development of writing scripts in India certainly puts a rather late date on these Sanskrit writings. ……

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A key area of error is linguistic research, and in India it is based on the erroneous Aryan theory projecting civilization in India as uncivilized until the entry of the so called Aryans. Today, groups like the RSS and VHP will vehemently deny this theory realizing the implication of the Indus Valley discovery in 1920. Scholars write…………

The scriptures of Hinduism are written in Sanskrit, and epigraphic evidence clearly shows that they could not have been written before the second century A.D. The Christian thought is seen in the Hindu scriptures and this influence traces back to Christian Gospel preached by the Apostle Thomas first to the Pahlavas.

The bibliographical evidences indicate that the Vedas are written in the Grantha and Nagari scripts, and according to tradition Veda Vyasa, a Dravidian, compiled and wrote the Vedas. The Grantha script belongs to the southern group of scripts and Veda Vyasa being a Dravidian would certainly have used it. Since the earliest evidence for Grantha is only in the 5th c. AD, the Vedas were written rather late.”

Dr. Alexander Harris
http://appiusforum.net/sanskrit.html

What does it mean?

The analysis shows that the claims of Sanskrit developed during the Pre-Christian era is a Brahminic attempt to rewrite history. Seriously it also would simply mean that Brahmanas and Upanishads were written well after Second Century AD. The early determinations of Upanishadic period as 5th C BC was in total error. The early Students of Sanskrit among the westerners swallowed the opinions of the opinions of the pundits who guided and interpreted for them/ Here for example is the official stand on Sanskrit by the Hindu Religious adherents.

“The origin of Sanskrit can be accredited to the Vedic society. Vedic Sanskrit is believed to date back to the 2nd millennium BC, when knowledge was handed down through the generations verbally.
Mystic traditions of India ascribe a wholly sacred origin to the language, describing it as the language of the gods.

By 400BC a Hindu Indian grammarian by the name of Pāṇini had formally recorded rules of Sanskrit grammar. This is known as the Ashtadhyayi (Aṣṭādhyāyī).

The Ashtadhyayi consists of eight chapters, each divided into four sections, or ‘padas’. It characterises the difference between the language of the sacred texts and that of common street language. 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology have been set out, much in the way of a mathematical function, to define the basic elements of the language including sentence structure, vowels, consonants, nouns, and verbs. Pāṇini’s work is still used in the teaching of Sanskrit today.

The Sanskrit verbal adjective saṃskṛta- may be translated as "put together", "well or completely formed", "refined", "highly elaborated". It is derived from the root saṃ(s)kar- "to put together, compose, arrange, prepare", where saṃ- "together" (as English same) and (s)kar- "do, make". The language referred to as saṃskṛta "the cultured language" has by definition always been a "sacred" and "sophisticated" language, used for religious and learned discourse in ancient India, and contrasted with the languages spoken by the people, prākṛta- "natural, artless, normal, ordinary". It is also called dēva-bhāṣā meaning the "divine language" or the "language of devas or demigods".

It is essentially a prescriptive grammar, i.e., an authority that defines (rather than describes) correct Sanskrit……The term "Sanskrit" was not thought of as a specific language set apart from other languages.

“It is significant that Rudradamana employed classical Sanskrit in a region where about four hundred years before him Asoka had used only Prakrit. This definitely proves that in the second century AD Sanskrit was replacing the dialects. Even so the language did not replace Prakrit everywhere, but it continued to be used in inscriptions for something like one hundred years or even more after this date. However, from the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions.” (Hinduism, by Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Oxford University Press, USA, 1979.)

If that is the case in what language was the Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads transmitted since Sanskrit did not exist? Except for most part of Rig Veda all others are written in Sanskrit. What that tells us that they were written only after the first century AD.

This evidently puts new and sharp change in the way we look at Hinduism. In fact Hinduism did not come to exist before first century. Hinduism is totally different from the Vedic religion. The mistake early indologists who came from Europe was to assume the continuity of Vedic religion and Hindu religion. Hindu religion itself was a convenient artificial definition of the British.
Thus apart from portions of the Veda which were not written in Sanskrit, all other Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmanas and Puranas etc were written down later than 100 AD at liberal estimate. They must have been written down much later in actual fact. A more realistic estimate will be around 6th Century AD.

“The pious view is that the Vedas are eternal and uncreated and exist essentially as sound. More conventional, but still pious, scholarship may still exaggerate the antiquity of the Vedas, sometimes claiming they go back to 10,000 BC or earlier. Now, however, it looks like even the oldest parts of the Rg Veda do not antedate the arrival of the Arya in India, although the gods and elements of the stories are older, since they are attested with Iranian peoples and the Mitanni, with parallels in Greek and Latin mythology.” (Kelly Ross)

“Thus for instance the vast amalgamation of Puranic tradition known as the Skandapurana, as far as we can speak of it as a single work at all, cannot be older than the 16th century, as has been shown in the Groningen Skandapurana project (see Adriaensen et al 1994). Many scientific manuals and commentaries were composed during the 17th and 18th centuries, and a 19th century compilation, the Sukraniti, passed for a long time as a genuine ancient work. And of course Indian scholars of traditional learning are all the time producing new Sanskrit literature.” Klaus Karttunen http://folklore.ee/folklore/vol8/veda.htm

“Mahabharatha as given to us could not have been written before A.D fourth Century. Panini, who is the famous grammarian, has mentioned several important personalities of the epics of that period. While the reprints published later have made several errors, variations and exaggerations, the main characters and the imports of the stories remain in tact. There is no doubt that Geetha came into existence only during the period of Gupta Empire.” K.M.Panicker ( A Survey of Indian History p.67)

“It is certain that Manu did not know anything about the Trinity or their functions as Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. Yet by A.D 6th Century this concept was popular as is clear from the works of Kalidasa” Ramesh Chandra Dutt, History of Civilizations in India Vol II P.191

All Hindu myths are developed over a long period of times, where each myth was built over some older historical fact or person. This is often due to confusion of names and times. Most of them were local stories, which got incorporated, in the bigger picture. So when a purana was presented in a codified form it was normally done in a third person method where this person sees the act being carried out in some distant places at distant time. This was indeed the normal style of story telling of the period. In the present day art forms of Katha Kala Shepam and Thullal this is clearly visible.

In A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th century Upinder Singh says:
“In the Deccan and South India, Sanskrit inscriptions appeared along with Prakrit ones in the late 3rd/early 4th century CE, for instance Nagarjunkonda in Andhra Pradesh. The Sanskrit element gradually increased.
In the transitional phase of the 4th and 5th centuries, there were bilingual sanskrit-Prakrit inscriptions, as well as those in a mixture of two languages. Thereafter, Prakrit fell into disuse.

Between the 4th and 6th centuries, Sanskrit emerged as a premier language of royal inscriptions all over India. Thereafter, it attained the status of a language associated with high culture, religious authority, and political power not only in the subcontinent but also in certain other areas such as Southeast Asia. However, in the post-Gupta period, there was also an important parallel trend towards the evolution of regional languages and scripts. Even Sanskrit inscriptions show the influence of local dialects in spellings and words of non-Sanskrit origin.

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In a way the name Sanskrit had given way to large misuse by the religion. Sanskrit when is used for both the Vedic and the Puranic languages differ considerably. It bears the relation as between Latin and English.

"By Ancient Sanskrit we mean the oldest known form of Sanskrit. The simple name 'Sanskrit' generally refers to Classical Sanskrit, which is a later, fixed form that follows rules laid down by a grammarian around 400 BC. Like Latin in the Middle Ages, Classical Sanskrit was a scholarly lingua franca which had to be studied and mastered.

Ancient Sanskrit was very different.

It was a natural, vernacular language, and has come down to us in a remarkable and extensive body of poetry."

http://www.utexas.edu/cola/centers/lrc/eieol/vedol-0-X.html

the Ancient Sanskrit is referred to here is now called Vedic which is a direct recognition under pressure to recognize it as different from Sanskrit language by the Hindus. This is same as the Persian Indo- European language of the Zoroastrians which is the language used in Zend Avesta or very close to it. In sharp contrast Sanskrit is of recent origin. Archeological and Linguistic studies indicates that the language of Sanskrit came into existence only by the second century AD. Ujjayini (Ujjain) became a center of Sanskrit learning and was taken as meridian by Indian astronomers.

The word Sanskrit means completed, refined, perfected. Sam (together) + krtam (created). The Vedic form of Sanskrit is a close descendant of Proto-Indo-European, the reconstructed root of all later Indo-European
languages. Vedic Sanskrit is the oldest attested language of the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European family. It is very closely related to Avestan, the language of Zoroastrianism. The genetic relationship of Sanskrit to modern European languages and classical Greek and Latin can be seen in cognates like mother and *matr* or father and *pitr*. Other interesting links are to be found between Sanskrit roots and Persian, present in such a striking example as the generic term for 'land' which in Sanskrit is *sthaan* and in Persian *staaan*.

European scholarship in Sanskrit, initiated by Heinrich Roth and Johann Ernest Hanxleden, led to the proposal of the Indo-European language family by Sir William Jones, and thus played an important role in the development of Western linguistics. Indeed, linguistics (along with phonology, etc.) first arose among Indian grammarians who were attempting to catalog and codify Sanskrit's rules. Modern linguistics owes a great deal to these grammarians, and to this day, key terms for compound analysis are taken from Sanskrit. The oldest surviving Sanskrit grammar is Pāṇini’s c. 500 BC *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (“8 Chapter Grammar”).

http://www.haryana-online.com/History/sanskrit.htm

The Indian Scripts are originated from two early sources – one from the Semitic Languages and the other from the Aryan (Indo-European) Languages. The early scripts of Brahmi originated from the Semitic Languages from the 7th century BC while the Kharosti originated from the Indo-European Languages about the same time. It is interesting to note the Sanskrit Script as used today was actually an offshoot of the Semitic influence rather than Aryan. Certainly there must have been mutual influence and interaction during the development. This interaction between the two major ethnic languages can be traced back to the Persian invasion of Israel. Ahasaures, also known as Artexerxes was probably the husband of Queen Esther. From then on the relation between the Aryan and the Semitic people were very cordial. This led to the mutual influence that we see in the script and languages.
Sites of Asokan Rock and pillar edicts covers most of the North and Central India and were written in the regional languages.
Proto-Semitic ——— Hieroglyphs

Phoenician 1100 BC

Greek 850 BC

Etruscan

Latin

Greek

Aramaic 1000 BC

Nabataean 350 BC

Hebrew

Armenian

Georgian

Indian scripts

Roman

Persian

Arabic

Gothic

Bilingual edict (Greek and Aramaic) by king Ashoka, from Kandahar - Afghan National Museum.
Vedas were originally written using the Grantha and Nagiri Scripts. Since the earliest evidence of Grantha Scripts are found only around 5th c AD, the Vedas in Sanskrit could not have been written anytime earlier. It may be argued that Vedas could have been in oral form. This is a conjecture. People certainly have been philosophical even without a written document. But they are not crystallized until they are written down. Nāgarī script belongs to the eighth century and the oldest manuscript written in it dates to the eleventh century.

The first epigraphic evidence of Sanskrit is seen in 150 AD and this inscription is in the Brahmi script. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1982).

From the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions.

The use of Sanskrit as a language was first observed in the ramayana (Sundarakanda, 30/17-18).

Shyam Rao makes the following clear statements in regards to Sanskrit in his Anti-Sanskrit Scripture' by Shyam Rao, published by Sudrastan Books, Jabalpur, 1999 (free from any Copyright). It was thence reprinted in Dalitstan Journal, Volume 1, Issue 2 (Oct. 1999)

**Vedas** - The word 'Sanskrit' does not occur anywhere in the Vedas. Not a single verse mentions this word as denoting a language.

**Chandasa** - The Vedic language was referred to as Chandasa even by Panini himself ['Indo-Aryan and Hindi', S. K. Chatterji, Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta-12, p. 63], and not as 'Sanskrit'.

**Buddha** - The Buddha was advised to translate his teachings into the learned man's tongue - the 'Chandasa' standard [Chatterji., p. 64], there is no mention of any 'Sanskrit'. The Buddha refused, preferring the Prakrits. There is not even a single reference in any contemporary Buddhist texts to the word 'Sanskrit'. This shows that Sanskrit did not even exist at the time of the Buddha and that the people at that period, even the Brahmins themselves, were not aware of themselves as speaking 'Sanskrit'; they referred to their language as 'Chandasa'.
**Ramayana** - The word 'Sanskrit' occurs for the first time as referring to a language in the Ramayana: "In the latter [Ramayana] the term 'samskrta' "formal, polished", is encountered, probably for the first time with reference to the language" [Encyclopaedia Brittanica 22 'Langs', p. 616] It is to be noted that extant versions of the Ramayana date only to the centuries AD.

**Asokan Script** - The first inscriptions in Indian history are in Prakrit and not in Sanskrit. These are by the Mauryan King Ashoka (c. 273 BC - 232 BC), and number over 30. They date to the 4th century BC. The script utilised is not 'sacred' Devanagari, and the language is not 'Mother' Sanskrit. They are mostly in the Brahmi script, while 2 inscriptions are in Kharoshthi. They are in various Prakrits and some in Afghanistan are in Greek and Aramaic ['Inscriptions: Their Literary Value I', R. Basak, 'Cultural Heritage of India' vol. 5, p. 390-406,. p. 390-1]. In fact all inscriptions in India were in Prakrit till the early centuries AD: 'The earlier inscriptions up to the 1st century AD, were all in Prakrit' -- ['Prakrit Language and Literature', Cultural Heritage of India vol. 5, 164-183, A. N. Upadhye., p. 164].

**Satavahana Inscriptions** - The Satavahanas, the first historical dynasty of the Deccan, also used a Prakrit language. There is no usage of Sanskrit. The Nagarjunikonda inscriptions are by the Satavahana king Vijaya Satakarni in the early 3rd centruy AD & end with the Ikshvakud Rudrapurusadatta who ruled for 11 years in the second quarter of the 4th century. Most of the large number of inscriptions are in Prakrit and only a few belonging to Ehuvulu Santamula are in Sanskrit (he ruled during the last 24 years of the 3rd to the early 4th century AD) but even most of his inscriptions are in Prakrit and those which are in Sanskrit are heavily influenced by Prakrit [Bhatt., p. 408 ftn. 46].

**The Nanaghat cave inscriptions** in Poona distt. are in Prakrit and are the work of the Satavahana Satakarni I. They have been dated to the first half of the 1st century BC. The contemporary religiion of this region was Vedic. Indra and Vasudev are mentioned as the Vedic gods then worshipped [Basak, p. 395]. The later cave inscriptions of Nasik in the 1st and 2nd centuries AD are in the local Prakrit [Basak, p. 395]. Thus, although the Vedic religion was followed in the Satavahana regions, Sanskrit was not in use.

**Gandhari** - Even Gandhari existed prior to Sanskrit. The Pali Dhammapada in Gandhari was discovered at Khotan in Kharoshtri script. It dates to the 1st or 2nd century AD. A Gandhari inscription was discovered on a copper casket containing relics of the Lord Sakyamuni [Basak, p. 393].

**Kharavela's Kalinga Inscription** - Kharavela's Kalingan inscription of the 1st century BC were in a Prakrit of the east indian type. Interseting is the first mention of the word Bharatavarsha in an inscription. Kharavela is described as invading Bharatavarsha, which then evidently denoted only North India [Basak, p. 393].

**First Sanskrit Inscription**: 150 AD - The earliest inscription in Sanskrit is by the Saka Mahakshatrapa Rudradaman at Junagarh in Gujarat dated to AD 150. However, even here several of the words are wrong according to Sanskrit grammatical rules, some words show Prakrit influence and a few are un-Paninian [Basak 397-8]. This inscription is several centuries later than the earliest Prakrit inscriptions, and are the creation of Sakas, not Arya kings.
In fact all inscriptions in India were in Prakrit (vernacular languages) till the early centuries AD.

It is evident that there was no Sanskrit before 150 AD. Chandasa was renamed as Sanskrit inorder to claim predating Sanskrit writings.

Alexander Harris explains it as follows: http://www.appiusforum.com/sanskrit.html

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Further more research on the development of writing scripts in India certainly puts a rather late date on these Sanskrit writings."

Earlier documents used Pali and Prakrit. Asoka who took every care to make his messages intelligible to the common man used all existing scripts and languages. These 3rd Cenataury inscriptions do not include
Sanskrit. It included Prakrit, Greek and Aramaic. But no Sanskrit is found because it was not in existence at that time.

**Asoka’s Edict in Prakrit**

Sanskrit was developed out of Prakrit and other existing languages during the interval of 100 AD to 150 AD. "The first evidence of classical Sanskrit is found as an inscription dating around A.D. 150 in the Brahmi script. It records the repair of a dam originally built by Chandragupta Maurya, and also contains a panegyric in verse, which can be regarded as the first literary composition in classical Sanskrit. It is at Girnar in Kathiawar and was inscribed by Rudradamana, the Saka Satrap of Ujjayini, on the same rock on which the Fourteen Rock Edicts of Asoka were also found.

It is significant that Rudradamana employed classical Sanskrit in a region where about four hundred years before him Asoka had used only Prakrit. This definitely proves that in the second century AD Sanskrit was replacing the dialects. Even so the language did not replace Prakrit everywhere, but it continued to be used in inscriptions for something like one hundred years or even more after this date. However, from the fifth century A.D. classical Sanskrit is seen to be the dominant language in the inscriptions. (Hinduism, by Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Oxford University Press, USA, 1979.)

"The earliest epigraphic evidence on languages employed in India comes from the inscriptions of Asoka inscribed in third century B.C. 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 of 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 practice.1 So, the absence of Sanskrit in his inscriptions indicates that it did not exist at that time, as otherwise he would have certainly used it." Dr. Alexander Harris: Significance of Sanskrit.

**Thus apart from portions of the Veda which were not written in Sanskrit, all other Vedas, Upanishads, Brahmanas and Puranas etc were written down later than 100 AD at liberal estimate. They must have been written down much later in actual fact. A more realistic estimate will be around 6th Century AD.**

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Panini

Panini's *Astadhyayi* is the main Sanskrit grammar book. The name Panini came to stand for the unknown author who started the grammar writing process. In a later period, *Astadhyayi* became even more authoritative through the contributions of Vartikakara Vararuchi (or Katyayana) and Bhasyakara (the commentator) Patanjali. So the complete *Astadhyayi* is called *Trimunivyarakarana* (contribution of three grammarians). The rules, which have been compiled in *Astadhyayi*, are considered to be essential for Sanskrit language and literature. Besides *Astadhyayi* there are many other famous grammars in Sanskrit.

Panini was born in Shalatula, a town near to Attock on the Indus river in present day Pakistan. The dates given for Panini are pure guesses. Experts give various dates in the 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th century BC and there is also no agreement among historians about his date or to the extent of the work with which he is honored.

Panini was a grammarian trying to refine existing languages (to make a "Sanskrit" language), who gave a comprehensive and scientific theory of phonetics, phonology, and morphology. Sanskrit was the classical literary language of the Indian Hindus and Panini is considered the founder of the language and literature. The word "Sanskrit" means "refined" – it is refined from some raw material language. A treatise called *Astadhyayi* (or Astaka) is Panini's major work. It consists of eight chapters, each subdivided into quarter chapters. In this work Panini distinguishes between the language of sacred texts and the usual language of communication. Panini gives formal production rules and definitions to describe Sanskrit grammar. Starting with about 1700 basic elements like nouns, verbs, vowels, consonants he put them into classes. The construction of sentences, compound nouns etc. is explained as ordered rules operating on underlying structures in a manner similar to modern theory. In many ways Panini's constructions are similar to the way that a mathematical function is defined today.

There is no means of knowing the date of Panini. The references to existing authors (there are ten of them) does not give any indication since we don’t know about those authors, that Panini per definition lived at the end of the Vedic period: he notes a few special rules, marked *chandasi* ("in the hymns") to account for forms in the Vedic scriptures that had fallen out of use in the spoken language of his time, indicating that Vedic Sanskrit was already archaic, but still a comprehensible dialect. An important hint for the dating of Panini is the occurrence of the word *yavanānī* (in 4.1.49, either "Greek woman", or "Greek script") There would have been no first-hand knowledge of Greeks in Gandhara before the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 330s BC. Aside from the more abstract considerations of long-distance artistic or philosophical influence, the concrete evidence we have for direct contact between Greeks and Indians is largely limited to the period between the third century BCE and first century CE.", ("Hellenistic India' by Rachel R. Mairs, University of Cambridge) He mentions documents which he has referred as Greek (Yavanani). These would place him after the invasion of Alexander the great when India came in direct contact with the Greek. He certainly lived after Buddha because of his reference to Dharma. How long after that is still a problem. In general the any attempt to date Panini is just pure conjecture. He could have lived well after the first century AD. Panini’s dating and the complete grammatical structure is important in the Sanskrit history since Classical Sanskrit is normally dated from Panini.

It is not certain whether Panini used writing for the composition of his work, though it is generally agreed that he did use a form of writing, based on references to words such as "script" and "scribe" in his *Ashtadhyayi*. No one with any clear understanding of the complexity of his system could conceive that he
worked without written notes using human notepads. That is exactly what we are asked to do by those who want to date back Panini. (It is proposed that he composed it with the help of a group of students whose memories served him as 'notepads'. Writing first reappears in India (since the Indus script) in the form of the Brāhmī script from ca. the 6th century BC, though these early instances of the Brāhmī script are from Tamil Nadu in southern India, quite distant from Gandhara in northwestern India. Since Gandhara was under Persian rule in the 6th century BC, it would also be possible that he used the Aramaic alphabet (from a variant of which the Brāhmī script is likely a descendant). Along with the understanding that the first sanskrit documentation is only from the second century AD we are forced to date panini in the first or second century AD rather than at the time of Buddha nor Alexander. One of the Aryan deity was still Vasudeva as Panini refers and so it was long before the appearance of the name Krishna which appears only after the third century AD. Kushan kings took their Indian name from Vasudeva until third century AD.

Based on the Archeological, linguistics and geographical reasons, the most probable date of Panini is soon after the first century. The Classical Sanskrit starts from there. At any rate we do not have any Sanskrit documents of work of earlier dates in existence.

While Panini’s date is unknown we have other Grammarians whose dates are well established. 
*Katantravyakarana* by Sharvavarman (100 AD),  
*Chandrayakarana* by Chandragomin (c 700 AD),  
*Vakyapadiya* by Bhartrhari (700 AD),  
*Katantrasutravrtti* by Durgasingha (900 AD),  
*Siddhahemachandranushasana* by Hemachandra (1050-1100 AD),  
*Mugdhavodhavyakarana* by Vopadeva (1200-1250 AD),  
*Jaumaravyakarana* by Kramadishvara (1200-1250),  
*Saupadmavyakarana* by Padmanabha Datta (1300-1350),  
*Harinamamrta* by Rupagosvami, (c 1470-1559), and  
*Siddhantakaumudi* by Bhattojidiksita (1700 AD)

Thus in among the known authors the dates starts from 100 AD. Thus we can guess that Panini must have lived sometime in the later half of the first century which was the time when Sanskrit began to appear as a language archealogically.

In a similar manner we can look at the Time Line of Sanskrit Literature which will again give some clue to the beginning of the Sanskrit as a language.

We leave aside the legendary authors like Valmiki and Vedavyasa whose dates are really not fixed by any scientific method.
Thus, Dugald Stewart, the philosopher, wrote an essay in which he endeavoured to prove that not only Sanskrit literature, but also the Sanskrit language, was a forgery made by the crafty Brahmans on the model of Greek after Alexander's conquest. Indeed, this view was elaborately defended by a professor at Dublin as late as the year 1838……

**Avestan and Vedic languagea**

Considering that the affinity of the oldest form of the Avestan language with the dialect of the Vedas is already so great that, by the mere application of phonetic laws, whole Avestan stanzas may be translated word for word into Vedic, so as to produce verses correct not only in form but in poetic spirit; considering further, that if we knew the **Avestan language at as early a stage as we know the Vedic, the former would necessarily be almost identical with the latter**, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Indian branch must have separated from the Iranian only a very short time before the beginnings of Vedic literature, and can therefore have hardly entered the North-West of India even as early as 1500 B.C. …..

**Dating of literature**

It is evident from what has been said, that before 500 A.D. literary chronology, even in the Sanskrit period, is almost entirely relative, priority or posteriority being determined by such criteria as development of style or thought, the mention of earlier authors by name, stray political references as to the Greeks or to some well-known dynasty, and allusions to astronomical facts
which cannot have been known before a certain epoch. Recent research, owing to increased specialisation, has made considerable progress towards greater chronological definiteness. More light will doubtless in course of time come from the political history of early India, which is being reconstructed, with great industry and ability, by various distinguished scholars from the evidence of coins, copper-plate grants, and rock or pillar inscriptions. These have been or are being published in the Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, the Epigraphia Indica, and various journals devoted to the study of Indian antiquities. The rise in the study of epigraphy during the last twenty years has, indeed, already yielded some direct information of importance about the literary and religious history of India, by fixing the date of some of the later poets as well as by throwing light on religious systems and whole classes of literature……

Writting

Owing to the perishability of the material on which they are written, Sanskrit MSS. older than the fourteenth century A.D. are rare. The two ancient materials used in India were strips of birch bark and palm leaves. The employment of the former, beginning in the North-West of India, where extensive birch forests clothe the slopes of the Himālaya, gradually spread to Central, Eastern, and Western India. The oldest known Sanskrit MS. written on birch bark dates from the fifth century A.D., and a Pāli MS. in Kharoshṭhī, which became known in 1897, is still older, but the use of this material doubtless goes back to far earlier days. Thus we have the statement of Quintus Curtius that the Indians employed it for writing on at the time of Alexander. The testimony of classical Sanskrit authors, as well as of Albērūnī, shows that leaves of birch bark (bhūrja-pattra) were also regularly used for letter-writing in early mediæval India.

The first example of a palm leaf Sanskrit MS. belongs to the sixth century A.D. It is preserved in Japan, but there is a facsimile of it in the Bodleian Library. According to the Chinese pilgrim Hiouen Thsang, the use of the palm leaf was common all over India in the seventh century; but that it was known many centuries earlier is proved by the fact that an inscribed copper-plate, dating from the first century A.D. at the latest, imitates a palm leaf in shape.
Paper was introduced by the Muhammadan conquest, and has been very extensively used since that time for the writing of MSS. The oldest known example of a paper Sanskrit MS. written in India is one from Gujarat, belonging to the early part of the thirteenth century. In Northern India, where ink was employed for writing, palm leaves went out of use after the introduction of paper. But in the South, where a stilus has always been employed for scratching in the character, palm leaves are still common for writing both MSS. and letters. The birch bark and palm leaf MSS. are held together by a cord drawn through a single hole in the middle, or through two placed some distance apart. This explains how the Sanskrit word for "knot," grantha, came to acquire the sense of "book."

Leather or parchment has never been utilised in India for MSS., owing to the ritual impurity of animal materials. For inscriptions copper-plates were early and frequently employed. They regularly imitate the shape of either palm leaves or strips of birch bark.

The actual use of ink (the oldest Indian name of which is mashi) is proved for the second century B.C. by an inscription from a Buddhist reliquary mound, and is rendered very probable for the fourth century B.C. by the statements of Nearchos and Quintus Curtius.

All the old palm leaf, birch bark, and paper Sanskrit MSS. have been written with ink and a reed pen, usually called kalama (a term borrowed from the Greek kalamos). In Southern India, on the other hand, it has always been the practice to scratch the writing on palm leaves with a stilus, the characters being subsequently blackened by soot or charcoal being rubbed into them......
Testimony of Inscriptions

The testimony of the inscriptions is instructive in showing the gradual encroachment of Sanskrit on the popular dialects used by the two non-Brahmanical religions. Thus in the Jain inscriptions of Mathurā (now Muttra), an almost pure Prākrit prevails down to the first century A.D. After that Sanskritisms become more and more frequent, till at last simple Sanskrit is written. Similarly in Buddhist inscriptions pure Prākrit is relieved by the mixed dialect, the latter by Sanskrit. Thus in the inscriptions of Nāsik, in Western India, the mixed dialect extends into the third, while Sanskrit first begins in the second century A.D. From the sixth century onwards Sanskrit prevails exclusively (except among the Jains) in inscriptions, though Prākritisms often occur in them. Even in the literature of Buddhism the mixed dialect was gradually supplanted by Sanskrit. Hence most of the Northern Buddhist texts have come down to us in Sanskrit, which, however, diverges widely in vocabulary from that of the sacred texts of the Brahmans, as well as from that of the classical literature, since they are full of Prākrit words. It is expressly attested by the Chinese pilgrim, Hiouen Thsang, that in the seventh century the Buddhists used Sanskrit even in oral theological discussions. The Jains finally did the same, though without entirely giving up Prākrit. Thus by the time of the Muhammadan conquest Sanskrit was almost the only written language of India.

Classical Sanskrit Literature:

Poems

1. Asvaghosa (2nd C AD): Buddha charita
2. Kalidasa (C. 400 A.d.): Raghuvamsa, Kumara Sambhava
3. Vishnusharma (c.300-500?): Panchatantra Stories
4. Pravarasena (550-600 A.D.): Ravanavaho or Setubandha
5. Bhatti : (500-650 A.D.) : Ravanavadha
6. Vishakadatta (6th century AD): Mudrarakshasa( The Demon and the Signet Ring). Devichandragupta and Abhisarikavancitaka
7. Kumaradasa : (c: 800 A.D.) : Janakiharana
8. Abhinanda (9th cent.) Ramacarita
9. Ksemendra (11th cent.)Ramayanamanjanari, Dasavatara-carita
10. Soacakalyamalla (12th cent.) : Udararaghava
11. Cakra Kavi (17th cent.) : Janakiparinaya
12. Advaita kavi (17th cent.) Ramalingamrta
13. Mohana svami : (1608 A.D. Roac(a,)=marahasya or Roac(a,)=ma Carita (India Office MS. of 1970 A.D.)

Drama

(1) Bhasa, (2nd cent. A.d.) (a) Pratima (b) Abhiseka
(2) Bhavabhuti (8th cent.) (a) mahaviracarita (b) Uttararamacarita
(3) Dinnaga (9th cent.) Kundamala
(4) Murari (900 A.D.) Anargharaghava
(5) Rajesekhara : (10th cent.) Balaramayana
(6) Hanuman: Hanumannataka or Mahanataka
(7) Saktibhadra (9th cent.) Ascaryacudamani
(8) Yasovarman (8th cent.) : Ramabhudaya
(9) Mayuraja : Udattaraghava
(10) Anonymous : (a) Chalit RM (b) Krtya RM (c) Mayapuspaka (d) Svapnadarsana
(11) Ksirasvami : Abhinavaraghava
(12) Ramachandra (12 cent AD) (a) Raghuvilasa (b) Raghavabhyudaya
(13)Jayadeva : Prasanna-Raghava (12 cent.)
(14) Hastimalla : Maithikalyana (1290 A.D.)
(15) Subhata : Dutangada (13 cent.)
(16) Bhaskara Bhatta : Unmattaraghava (14 cent.)
(17) Tryasamisradeva : Ramabhudaya (15 cent.)
(18) Mahadeva : Adbhutaramayana (17 cent.)
(19) Ramabhadra Diksita : Janakiparinaya

Miscellaneous Poems

(i) Slesakavyas

(1) Dharnanjaya : Raghavapandaviya (12 cent.)
(2) Madhava Bhatta : Raghavapandaviya
(3) haradatta Suri : Radhava-Naisadhiya
(4) Cidambara : Radhavapandaviya-Yadaviya (1600 A.D.)
(5) Gangadhara Mahadevakavi : (18 cent.) Sankatanasanastotra
(6) Tulsidas. (17th century AD) : Sri Ramacharita Manasa (Poetry)

(ii) Vilomakavyas:
1. Suryadevi : Ramakrishna-viloma-Kavya (1540 A.D.)

(iii) Citrakavyas:
1. Krsna Mohana: Ramalilamrta
2. Venkatesa : Citrabandha RM

(iv) Amorous Khandakavyas:
1. Venkatadesika : Hamsasandesa or Hamsaduta
2. Rudra Vacaspati : Bhramaraaduta
3. Vasudeva : Bhrama-sandesa
4. Anonymous : Kapiduta
5. Venkatacarya : Kokilasandesa
6. Jayadeva Ramagita-Govinda
7. Krsnacandra : Candraduta
8. Harisankara : Gitaraghava
9. Prabakara : Gitaraghava
10. Haryacarya : Janakigita
11. Harinatha : Ramavilasa
12. Visvanathasimha Sangita Raghunandana
13. Visvanatha : Raghavvilasa
14. Somesvara : Ramasataka

Prose Romance and Campus
1. Banabhatta. (7th century AD) Kadambari and Harsha Charita (Ornate prose)
2. Ksemendra : Brhatkathamanjari
3. Somadeva : Kathasaritasagara
4. Bhoja : Campu RM (Many other campus such as Uttararamayana Campu, etc. based on Uttarakhanda of RM)
5. Vasudeva : Ramakatha

Others
Dandin. (7th century AD): Kavyadarsa

Somadeva Bhatta. (12th century AD) : Katha Sarit Sagara (collection of stories)

Again well established writers of Sanskrit all fall after the first century AD which fits the archeological time frame.

Yet we have the Hindu scholars fooling the public with such statements as the one that follows:
SIGNIFICANCE OF SANSKRIT: M. M. NINAN

Sanskrit, the language of Hindu scriptures, is the oldest and the most systematic language in the world. It originated several thousand years ago, yet is still used in India.

Swami Prakashanand Saraswati

If you look to the history of the languages of the world you will find that they went through a number of stages of their development. But the Sanskrit language was absolutely perfect by all means from the very beginning. Is it not enough evidence to understand that it is not man-made and it is a Divine gift?

Because. Its root system of forming a word and its detailed grammar have no comparison with any of the languages of the world, and because it is the original language, so it is very likely that some of its daily spoken words could have been adopted by the other languages which itself is the evidence that Sanskrit is the mother language of the world.

Vedavyasa Reveals the Vedic Chronology of Srimad Bhagavad-Gita Showing great compassion for all living entities Lord Krishna’s lila avatar and literary incarnation Krishna Dvaipayana Vedavyasa composed the authentic historical treatise known throughout creation as the Mahabharata. The eighteen chapters of the Bhagavad-Gita are found in the Bhisma-parva, chapters 25 to 42 of the Mahabharata and they are the exact words that Lord Krishna spoke in Sanskrit on the battlefield of Kuruksetra, India over five thousand years ago in 3137 B.C. The proof that the Mahabharata is definitely an authentic historical treatise and not allegorical or mythological is verified in the Srimad Bhagavatam, Canto 1, chapter 4, verse 25

But Bhagvata Purana was written in 6/7th C. AD Bhagavat gita is written in Sanskrit which came into existence only by 150 AD. So if Krishna lived in 3137 BC he could not have delivered it in Sanskrit.

The perfection of the pronunciation (of the consonants and the vowels) and the uniqueness of the grammar that stays the same in all the ages from the very beginning of human civilization and up till today are such features which prove that Sanskrit is not manmade; it is a Divine gift to the people of this world.

This will bring us to the subject of the date of the Upanishads. All Hindu Scriptures other than the Rig Veda are written in Sanskrit. Essentially therefore they were written down after the second century AD. The backdating of Sanskrit Upanishads is a common form of deceit and is taken by many historians without asking questions and is repeated as though it is a truth. Here are some examples:

"The Upanishads (basic scriptures of Hinduism proper)--records of teachings and discussions of forest
hermits, holy men who accomplished the task of transforming Vedism into Hinduism during and after the 6th century B.C.E. The earliest Upanishads date from 900 to 600 B.C.E., and represent the first development of philosophical reflections in Sanskrit literature. According to a widespread tradition the oldest Upanishads are the Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brhadaranyaka, Svetasvatara, Kaushitaki, and Maitri Upanishads."

"Upanishads Vedic texts, circa seventh-fifth century B.C.
INTRODUCTION

The Upanishads are ancient texts written in Sanskrit, representing the religious and philosophical tradition of Hinduism and India. Together with the Aranyakas the Upanishads are found at the end of the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of Hinduism, and thus called Vedantas."

"Some Western scholars have fixed the age of the Upanishads as B.C. 600, or so. They regard that all of them belong to the pre-Buddhistic period. This is a sad mistake indeed. The Upanishads are the knowledge portion, or Jnana-Kanda, of the Vedas. They are eternal. They came out of the mouth of Hiranyagarbha, or Brahman. How can one fix the date of the Upanishads? They existed even before the creation of this world." Sri Swami Sivananda

"As per the Indian tradition Sanskrit Language has no beginning and no ending. It is eternal. Self-born God has created it. It is divine. It is everlasting. It was first used in Vedas and thereafter it has been the means of expression in other fields."

Here is the last straw:
Thus every literature that we have in Sanskrit must invariably fall after the first century.

We cannot refute the claims that there were literature in India long before that time. But no body can substantiate any existence of Sanskrit literature before 150 AD. This is therefore definitely applicable to all Upanishads wherein we have the new concept of Brahman, Atman and Iswara

None of the Upanishads could have been written in Sanskrit any time before the first century AD is certain. The concepts themselves are embedded in the vocabulary of Sanskrit.
These are written in Sanskrit and are of recent origin.
Buddhism was started by Siddhārtha Gautama a prince of Nepal. The earliest full biography, is an epic poem written by the poet Aśvaghoṣa, dating around the beginning of the 2nd century AD. (Next biography Lalitavistara Sūtra, a Mahāyāna/ Sarvāstivāda date 3rd century AD. And Mahāvastu from the Mahāsāṃghika Lokottaravāda sect date 4th century AD.) The character of the Buddha in these traditional biographies is often reminiscent of the birth and life of Jesus. This is not the picture painted by the earliest canonical sources. These were obviously written after 2nd C AD and therefore shows the influence of the presence of Christianity in India. This influence is seen not only in the stories but also in the doctrines as the history of buddhism show. Buddhism changed over from Atheistic to Theistic under the influence of Christianity.

Buddhism did not start as a religion, but as a reaction to the rise of Brahminic dominance and superstition in Vedism. Buddhi actually means “Rational Thinking”. It started as part of scientific approach to realities known as nastika darsanas; or atheistic view point. This then was one of the earliest Rationalistic Movements based on the then known science. Rationalist movement is a philosophical doctrine that asserts that the truth can best be discovered by reason and factual analysis, rather than faith, dogma or religious teaching. Seeing that Buddah lived 200 years before Aristotle, Buddhism was the beginning of modern
Rationalism. Buddha was an atheist and lived in the fifth century BC. (Most early 20th-century historians dated his lifetime as 563 BCE to 483 BCE, but more recent opinion dates his death to between to between 486 and 483 BCE. He lived 80 years) He was just trying to explain the universe in scientific terms. In Buddhist thought, there is no supreme being, no Creator, no omnipotent omnipresent God, no loving Lord.

Buddhi


Buddhi (Sanskrit, "intellect") in Sanskrit (Hindu) literature is the higher mental faculty, the instrument of knowledge, discernment, and decision. Buddhi is comprehended slightly different in different philosophical systems. On the whole, it contrasts with manas, mind, whose province is ordinary consciousness and the connection of atman with the senses. Buddhi, however, is a higher faculty that acts in sense percepts organized by manas and furnishes intellectual discrimination, determination, reason, and will. As such buddhi is at the very core of one's being, as sentient creatures, and the closest mental faculty to the atman, real Self or spirit.

In Samkhya-yoga philosophy, buddhi (or mahat, "the great one") plays a key role. Buddhi is the first principle derived from unmanifest, prakrti (and predominant in sattva guna, "intellectual stuff"), virtually transparent reflector for pure consciousness (purusa), with which buddhi mistakenly identifies. With this mistaken identification with the conscious principle, a fall into ignorance, buddhi produces the next principle, ahamkara, which in turn produces manas. The three together make up the "internal instrument," or antahkarana. For salvation, buddhi must attain the discriminative discernment between itself as unconscious matter, prahrti, and the independent and transcendent principle of pure consciousness, purusa.

Based on the Buddhist principles, the assumption of existence of God is equivalent to saying that the void (nothingness) exists. Saying that God is loving and desires relationship causing attachment implying God has desire which comes from ignorance. Saying that God created us and has a purpose for our lives is saying that God is karma, the cause and effect of our existence. Thus, in Buddhist thought, the concept of God is most closely equated to the void, ignorance, and karma.

Of course Buddha acknowledged other spheres of existence.

The Theravada school, which claims to have guarded the unaltered message of its founder, teaches that there is neither a personal god, nor a spiritual or material substance that exists by itself as Ultimate Reality. The world as we know it does not have its origin in a Primordial Being. It exists only as a mental construction within the mind of sentients shaped by the senses. What we see is only a product of transitory factors of existence, which depend functionally upon each other. The Buddha said:
“The world exists because of causal actions, all things are produced by causal actions and all beings are governed and bound by causal actions. They are fixed like the rolling wheel of a cart, fixed by the pin of its axle shaft.” (Sutta-Nipata 654)

There are many realms of existence. Gods exist, but they are only temporal beings in other dimensions of existence just like beings here on earth and as such are subject to cause and effect of the realms in which they live in themselves. Gods are not exempt from the law of decay and death. In some dimensions their lives may last for eons depending on the worldm but they eventually die. But the materials that built the body and mind survive and form part of new birth. It does not reborn in the same personality. Gods are not to be worshipped, and they do not represent the basis for morality. Thus there are no moral absolutes except that are developed by the cosmic sentients by mutual consents for the survival.

No God, no Brahma can be found. No matter, this wheel of life, just a bare phenomena which roll dependent on conditions, for all. (Visuddhimagga)

According to Buddhism, ultimate reality is samsara, endless existence, but it is also impermanent, ever in flux, ever changing. It is empty, yet full. That is, form is always a temporary state of being. Some forms last long, others are brief. Elements come together to create a particular form, but eventually those elements will break apart again and the object will cease to exist. Even the reincarnation is not re-entering of the personal soul in another form. It is a new form and combination from the junkyard of cosmos recycled from cosmic parts in all the worlds.

In bhavacakra, the Wheel of Life and Death, the universe is depicted as a series of concentric circles all within the grasp of Mara, the lord of death. Several realms for gods of different types and several different hells, as well as an animal realm and a realm for humans are contained within the wheel.
The realms
Buddhism has six realms into which a soul can be reborn. From most to least pleasant, these are:

- Heaven, the home of the gods (*devas*): this is a realm of enjoyment inhabited by blissful, long-lived beings. It is subdivided by later sources into 26 levels of increasing happiness.
- The realm of humanity: although humans suffer, this is considered the most fortunate state because humans have the greatest chance of enlightenment.
- The realm of the Titans or angry gods (*asuras*): these are warlike beings who are at the mercy of angry impulses.
• The realm of the hungry ghosts (pretas): these unhappy beings are bound to the fringes of human existence, unable to leave because of particularly strong attachments. They are unable to satisfy their craving, symbolised by their depiction with huge bellies and tiny mouths
• The animal realm: this is undesirable because animals are exploited by human beings, and do not have the necessary self-awareness to achieve liberation
• Hell realms: people here are horribly tortured in many creative ways, but not for ever - only until their bad karma is worked off

What started as a rationalistic scientific movement soon gave way to institutionalization and canons and legalities.
Soon after the death of Buddha schism began to appear.

"1st Buddhist council (5th c. BCE)
The first Buddhist council was held soon after the death of the Buddha (within three months) under the patronage of king Ajatasatru of the Magadha empire, and presided by a monk named Mahakasyapa, at Rajagriha (today's Rajgir). The objective of the council was to record the Buddha's sayings (sutra) and codify monastic rules (vinaya): Ananda, one of the Buddha's main disciples and his cousin, was called upon to recite the discourses of the Buddha, and Upali, another disciple, recited the rules of the vinaya. These became the basis of the Pali Canon, which has been the orthodox text of reference throughout the history of
Buddhism.

[The initial cause for this council, according to one source, was the overhearing of a conversation by Mahakassapa, chief disciple of the Buddha, in which an aged monk Subhadda openly said to other monks:

"Do not grieve, do not lament. We are happily rid of the Great Sramana (Buddha). We used to be annoyed by being told: 'This beseems you, this beseems you not.' But now we shall be able to do whatever we like, and what we do not like, we shall not have to do."


These became the two Pitakas or "baskets" (so named because manuscripts were later carried around in baskets), the Suttanta-Pitaka, consisting of the sermons of the Buddha, and the Vinaya-Pitaka, or the rules of discipline. However the accounts of the council in the scriptures of the schools differ as to what was actually recited there. Since it was transmitted only orally.

The logic of science was lost and gave way to institutionalized religion. Soon institutionalization took over and arhants began to fight over minor things reminiscent of the jewish legalism and Pharisaism which led to the second Buddhist council.

2nd Buddhist council (383 BCE)
The second Buddhist council was convened by King Kalasoka and held at Vaisali

1. The dispute arose on “Ten Points”. The ten points were:

   1. Storing salt in a horn.
   2. Eating after midday.
   3. Eating once and then going again to a village for alms.
   4. Holding the Uposatha Ceremony with monks dwelling in the same locality.
   5. Carrying out official acts when the assembly was incomplete.
   6. Following a certain practice because it was done by one's tutor or teacher.
   7. Eating sour milk after one had his midday meal.
   8. Consuming strong drink before it had been fermented.
   9. Using a rug which was not the proper size.
   10. Using gold and silver.

The Third Council was called by the Emperor Ashoka and held at Pataliputra. The content of the Pâli Tripitaka, "Three Baskets," is supposed to have been settled at this Council.
The Fourth Council was called under the Emperor Kanishka I and held at Jalandhara (or Purushpura, Peshawar, Kanishka's capital). The Council supervised the translation of the Tripitaka into Sanskrit. The Canon apparently had not only existed in Pâli, but in other Prakrits, which were all consulted for a standard Sanskrit version. It appears to be the Sanskrit texts that were subsequently spread to China. The sutras of the Mahâyâna may have existed only in Sanskrit from the beginning.

Theravâda ("Teaching of the Elders") Buddhism (called "Hînayâna," the "Lesser Vehicle," by the Mahâyâna): In India, 5th century BC to 1st century AD.

They believed that Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama, Shakyamuni) is gone, and individual practitioners must work out their salvation on their own. Individual practitioners cannot become Buddhas, only arhats ("saints") can. There will be a future Buddha, Maitreya, but not for thousands of years. Samsâra is suffering and Nirvân.a is liberation from death and rebirth but is rational understanding.

The Theravadins eventually split into sixteen sects, by the end of the second century B.C. (The term “Hinayana”, or the “lesser vehicle”, was coined by the Mahayanists later as a derogatory term.)

The conversion of Ashoka the Great, in the 3rd BC was the most important turning point in the history of Buddhism. Ashoka convened the third Buddhist council at Pataliputra (modern Patna) and he launched a vigorous campaign to preach and propagate the message of the Buddha. He took Buddhism from caves and monasteries and made it a national religion. He send his own son and daughters to Sri Lanka, on a Buddhist Mission. It became a powerful common religion of India during the period 200 BC to 700 AD.

So far Buddhism remained essentially atheistic. However by the second half of the first century it came across the new way – The Thomas Way - brought in by the foreigners. Within a century it became the dominant religion of the Southern India. He brought in the concept of a Supreme Person of God who is Love and who created the universe which was alien to all Indian religious thought of the period. The new doctrine of a compassionate and loving God transformed the atheistic Buddhism giving the moral values a more rigid foundation.
Sanskrit word “Buddha” is usually translated as "awakened one." (In the Buddhist doctrine there is no such thing as a Soul. Thus as as Sidharta arose from the slumbers of ignorance he is called a Buddha. It could as well be translated as the “Annointed one”, the Christ, if there is an Awakener and an Annointer. Jesus became Christ, as Goutama became Buddha.

Early 3rd-4th century Christian writers such as Hippolytus of Rome and Epiphanius write about a Scythianus, who visited India around 50 AD from where he brought "the doctrine of the Two Principles". According to these writers, Scythianus' pupil Terebinthus presented himself as a "Buddha" ("he called himself Buddas" Cyril of Jerusalem). Terebinthus went to Palestine and Judaea where he met the Apostles ("becoming known and condemned" Isaia), and ultimately settled in Babylon, where he transmitted his teachings to Mani, thereby creating the foundation of what could be called Persian syncretic Buddhism, Manicheism. Mani is many times referred to as Buddha Mani. Mani came to India and evangelized even down to Kerala. Later Hinduism deified him as Subhra Manium.

The coming of the Gnostics gave impetus to the thought pattern of comparing Christ and Buddha. Gnostics believe that Jesus got his annointing and election as Christ during his 40 days of meditation in the desert, which parallels Buddhas mediation under the Pepul Tree. By 2nd Century A.D.the Christian influence was so great that Nagarjuna developed the Mahayana philosophy of Sunyata. Under the influence of Christianity Mahayana Buddhism introduced a God who created the world and Buddha himself became the first "god" of Buddhism.

**Mahâyâna** ("Great Vehicle") Buddhism:

In India, this new way began to blossom from 1st century AD to 6th century AD.

1. The Gautama Buddha is **not** gone, and individual practitioners are **not** on their own. Instead, the Buddha taught the dharma out of compassion, and his compassion would prevent him from being unavailable to practitioners now. Indeed, to emulate the compassion of the Buddha, practitioners become bodhisattvas, who vow to carry all beings with them into salvation. Bodhisattvas are also available, like the Buddhas, to help people work out their salvation. Maitreya is presently a bodhisattva, but the most important bodhisattva is probably Avalokiteshvara, who developed into the Chinese goddess of Mercy, **Guan Yin** (*Kwan-in* in Wade-Giles, **Kannon** in Japan).

2. The Buddha was **not** unique, and individual practitioners who have become bodhisattvas **can** become Buddhas. There are already multiple Buddhas besides Shakyamuni. Most important are Mahâvairocana and Amitâbha. Amitâbha is famous for his Western Paradise, or Pure Land, where he has Vowed to cause anyone who calls on him for help to be born, so they will be free of the world of suffering to work out their ultimate liberation. In Japan Amitâbha is known as **Amida** and Mahâvairocana as **Dainichi**. Most of the famous Buddha statues in Japan are **not** Shakyamuni: the great outdoor bronze Buddha at Kamakura is Amida, and the Buddha enshrined in the **Tôdaiji** ("Great Eastern") Temple in Nara (the largest wooden building in the world), is another Buddha named Locana.

3. Nirvân.a and samsâra are **no longer** definitely different. The "Fourfold Negation" is applied to the relationship between the two. **Samsâra** and **nirvân.a** are thus neither the same, nor different, nor both the same and different, nor neither the same nor different. This allows some room for maneuver, which may have made Buddhism more palatable in China, where Confucianism never did approve either of the world-denying metaphysics or the monasticism of Buddhism. Distinctively Chinese schools of
Buddhism developed, like T'ien-t'ai (Tendai in Japan) and Ch'an (Seon [Son] in Korea, Thien in Vietnam, Zen in Japan), for whom samsâra and nirvân.a were virtually identical, so that enlightenment and nirvân.a transformed the world rather than eliminated it. The paradoxical metaphysics of Buddhism could be assimilated to the similar paradoxical doctrines of the native Chinese philosophical school of Taoism.

There are no representations of the Buddha in human form until around the 1st century CE.

4. Mahâyâna Buddhism is presently practiced in China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan.

**Vajrayâna** ("Thunderbolt Vehicle") Buddhism: In India, 6th to 11th century.

Vajrayâna Buddhism is Tantric Buddhism, which evolved as a result of syncretization of local witchcraft and magic of the local culture. Tantric magic is performed through man.d.alas, sacred diagrams, mantras, sacred formulas for recitation (the most famous one being, "Om, mane padme hum" -- "The jewel is in the lotus"), and mudrâs, sacred gestures. While Buddhas tend to be regarded as male in all branches of Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism supplies female figures corresponding to each Buddha, like the "savioresses" Green Târâ, White Târâ, and Mâmâkî, who actually vow to always be reborn as women in the process of leading all beings to salvation.
Vajrayâna Buddhism most importantly spread to Tibet and then Mongolia. In Tibet it is usually called *Lamaism*. The present Dalai Lamas form successive incarnations of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.

The influence of Christianity is clearly found in various concepts found only in Mahayana. Here are a few excerpts from authorities.

"Hermann says that a theory the Buddha differs radically from a theistic God, in religious practice however he admits that within the realm of sentiments on which the 'Lotus Sutra' is based, he obviously shares some features with a gracious "Father in Heaven" who is the protector of men in need". Hermann Von Glasenapp, Buddhism-A Non Theistic Religion, P.77

"In the Saddharma Pundarika Gantama Buddha is described as the loving father of all creatures, and all pious Buddhists are exhorted to worship and adore him".

"Buddha claims a very personal relationship with his devotees in chapter III of Saddharma Pundarika..................... I the great seer, am the protector and father of all being and all the creatures who childlike are captivated by the pleasures of the triple world are my sons........ I am the Tathagata, the Lord who has no superior, who appears in this world to save".

Different virtues of Buddha were personified as Bodhisattvas.
Garbhadhatu mandala, 
representing Vairocana Buddha surrounded by eight Buddhas and bodhisattvas 
(clockwise from top: Ratnaketu, Samantabhadra, Samkusumitaraja, Manjusri, Amitabha, Avalokitesvara, 
Dundubhininghosa, Maitreya).

"The two chief bodhisattvas, Manjusri and Aralokitesvara, are personifications of wisdom (prajna) and 
Mercy (Karuna) respectively".

"The Karanda-Vyuha explains that Avalokiteswara is so called, because he regards with compassion all 
beings suffering from the evils of existence". He is also regarded as an emanation of that Buddha. As a 
bodhisattva, Avalokitesvara is the personification of Mercy".

Vajradhraja Sutra Quoted in Santideva's Siksasamuccaya, (tr. Bendall and Rouse) goes even further to 
identify Buddha to the status of Christ

`I take upon myself... the deeds of all beings, I take their suffering upon me ................. I must bear the 
burden of all beings, for I have vowed to save all things living..... I think not of my own salvation, but 
strive to bestow on all beings the royalty of supreme wisdom. So I take upon myself all the sorrows of all 
beings. I resolve to bear every torment in every purgatory of the universe. For it is better that I alone suffer 
than the multitude of living beings. I give myself in exchange........ I agree to suffer as a ransom for all 
beings, for the sake of all beings......" 

In Jataka mala, nature of bodhisattva is described as follows.

"By the merit of my charitable deed, May I become the guide and saviour of the world, which is lost in the 
wilderness of mundane existence. I wish to accomplish the good of other". Jataka Mala 4.24; 11.2; 204.3 

"Monks, there is one person whose birth into this world is for the welfare and happiness of many, out of 
compassion for the world, for the gain and welfare and happiness of gods and humanity. Who is this one 
person? It is the Tathâgata, who is a Worthy One, a Fully Enlightened One ~ Anguttara Nikaya

A.L. Basham in his book 'The Wonder That Was India' writes,
The Bodhisattva was thought of as a spirit not only of compassion but also of suffering. In more than one source we read the vow or resolve of the Bodhisattva, which is sometimes expressed in almost Christian terms:

"I take upon myself... the deeds of all beings, even of those in the hells, in other worlds, in the realms of punishment... I take their suffering upon me,... I bear it, I do not draw back from it, I do not tremble at it ... I have no fear of it,... I do not lose heart... I must bear the burden of all beings, for I have vowed to save all things living, to bring them safe through the forest of birth, age, disease, death and rebirth. I think not of my own salvation, but strive to bestow on all beings the royalty of supreme wisdom. So I take upon myself all the sorrows of all beings. I resolve to bear every torment in every purgatory of the universe. For it is better that I alone suffer than the multitude of living beings. I give myself in exchange. I redeem the universe from the forest of purgatory, from the womb of flesh, from the realm of death. I agree to suffer as a ransom for all beings, for the sake of all beings. Truly I will not abandon them. For I have resolved to gain supreme wisdom for the sake of all that lives, to save the world."

Romila Thapar in her book "A History of India," (Volume 1, pages 131-134) writes,

There were other aspects of Mahayana Buddhism, which appear to have had their origin outside India. Among these is the idea of the coming of the Maitreya Buddha to save the world, with which was connected the concept of ‘the suffering savior’ - the bodhisattva who redeems humanity through his own suffering: evidently the new beliefs current in Palestine were known to the Buddhists by this time.

"Vishnu assumes various forms or incarnations and enters the world of men in order to save them from evil. The tenth and final incarnation has yet to come, and on this occasion he will come in the form of Kalkin riding a white horse, which suggests a connection with the idea of the Messiah and the coming of the Maitreya Buddha in Mahayana Buddhism."

Nagarujana, (150 – 250 CE) who was a friend and contemporary of the Satavahana king-propounded the Madhyamika school of Buddhist philosophy, popularly known as Sunyavada.

He is credited with developing the philosophy of the Prajnaparamita sutras, and was closely associated with the Buddhist university of Nalanda. In the Jodo Shinshu branch of Buddhism, he is considered the First Patriarch.
The first Buddhist monastic university, Nalanda, was built near Rajagrha at the beginning of the second century C.E. [some say 450 CE]. Nagarjuna, was one of the major teachers of Nalanda School. He lived most of his life in southern India when South India was Christian. Much of the Tibetan Mahayanist influence came from Nalanda.

Reality, according to Mahayana Buddhism, has three levels of perception, known also as the three bodies (trikaya) of Buddha: nirmanakaya, the physical body of the founder, that is subject to change; sambhogakaya, the body of the bodhisattvas; and dharma kaya, the ultimate nature of all things. The dharma kaya state is also called suchness or emptiness (devoid of attributes).

"The Great Vehicle was not content with creating the pantheon of noble and beneficent Bodhisattvas. Probably developing from the old heresy of the Mahasanghika school (P.263) the idea arose that Gautama Buddha had not been a mere man, but the earthly expression of a mighty spiritual being. This being has three bodies; a body of essence (Dharma kaya), a Body of bliss (Sambhogakaya), and a created Body (Nirmanakaya) and of these only the last was seen on earth. The Body of essence eternally penetrates and permeates the universe; it is the ultimate Buddha, of which the other two bodies are emanations.................................................... The created Body was a mere emanation of he Body of Bliss. This reminds us of the docetic heresy in Christianity, and it is possible that docetism and the doctrine of the Three Bodies owe much to a common gnostic source in the middle east".17
"The Buddha's Body of Bliss is the presiding deity of the most important Mahayana heaven, Sukhavati, the "Happy Land !................. this divine Buddha is usually called Amitabha (immeasurable Glory) or Amitayas (Immeasurable Age)........ All are emanations of the primal Body of essence, which is no other than the Brahman, the world soul or absolute of the Upanishads, in different guise.\textsuperscript{18}

"B.L. Suzuki compares the idea of trikaya to the philosophy of trinity in Christianity. The dharmakaya thus corresponds to Godhead in Christianity the source of all, realized only through mystical experiences. This being becomes God as usually know to all as Sambhogakaya. But ordinary people need something more tangible and require a living personality-hence nirmanakaya. In other words, the three Kayas stand for Godhead, God and Christ or she says, we might compare the dharmakaya to parabrahma, Sambhogakaya to Isvara and nirmanakaya to the avatars".

The Mahayana Buddhist literature are in Sanskrit and the period of Sanskrit is post-Christian era. Eventhough Ashoka's inscriptions are in Pali, Greek, Aramaic etc., none of them are in Sanskrit and the occurrence of Sanskrit inscription is from 2nd c.A.D. alone. Hence, the period of Sanskrit literature are after 2nd c.A.D.

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Evidently something happened to Buddhism during the second century AD as it came into confrontation with Thomas Christianity in India.
The French artist Paul Ranson's *Christ et Buddha* (1880) juxtaposes the Christ and Buddha

In the 3rd century AD, the concept of Maitreya Buddha, a future Buddha was developed who presently a bodhisattva residing in the Tuṣita heaven, will descend to earth to preach anew dharma – an obvious reflection of the second coming of Jesus.

The name Maitreya is derived from the Sanskrit maitri ("friendliness"); in Pali, Metteyya; in Chinese Mi-lo-fo, in Japanese Miroku, and in Mongolian Maidari; and in Tibetan the bodhisattva is known as Byams-pa ("kind," or "loving"). His worship was popular during the 4th to 7th century

Romila Thapar in her book "A History of India," (Volume 1, pages 131-134) writes,

There were other aspects of Mahayana Buddhism, which appear to have had their origin outside India. Among these is the idea of the coming of the Maitreya Buddha to save the world, with which was connected the concept of ‘the suffering savior’ - the bodhisattva who redeems humanity through his own suffering: evidently the new beliefs current in Palestine were known to the Buddhists by this time.

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Our conclusions regarding the intense influence of Christianity on Buddhism is again supported by the linguistic evidence. While Hinayana scriptures are in Pali, the early Mahayana writings are in Sanskrit. Since Sanskrit existed only from 2nd c. A.D., the concept of a divine savior is seen in Mahayana Buddhism it came clearly from Christianity.

According to the tradition, Pure Land Buddhism (also known as Shin Buddhism and Amidism) is based upon the Pure Land sutras that were first brought to China around 150 CE by the monks An Shih Kao and Lokaksema from India. By the seventh century AD it was confronted with the ancient Nestorian Churches there. This confrontation led to syncretism and produced the Pure Land Buddhism. Pure Land Buddhism entered Japan and became a powerful presence there by the 13th century AD. Pure and eventually became an independent school in its own right as can be seen in the Japanese Jōdo Shū and Jōdo Shinshū schools.

**Pure Land Buddhism**

The Pure Land sutras center on the figure of Amitabha (Amida in Japanese), one of the Five Wisdom Buddhas, and his Pure Land paradise, called Sukhavati.

The Pure Land school first came to prominence with the founding of a monastery on Mount Lushan by Hui-yuan in 402 CE. It quickly spread throughout China and was later systematized by Shantao (613-681). Pure Land Buddhism spread to Japan, where it grew in prominence until Honen Shonin (1133-1212) established Pure Land Buddhism as an independent sect in Japan, known as Jodo Shu. Today Pure Land is the dominant form of Buddhism in Japan.

Amida is one of the loftiest savior figures in Japanese Buddhism, and Amida faith is concerned primarily with the life to come, the life in the beyond. Amida is described in the Amitābha Sūtra, the Sutra of Infinite Life, and many other Mahayana texts. Amida is the central deity of Japan’s popular Pure Land (Jōdo) sects and the ruler of the Western Paradise of Ultimate Bliss (Gokuraku; Sukhāvatī). To followers of Japan’s Pure Land sects, Amida has eclipsed the Historical Buddha as the most popular divinity in Japan's Mahayana traditions. Even today, the Pure Land sects of Japan are among the nation’s largest and most popular.
Pure Land goal is eternal after death paradise, called the "Pure Land of the West"

The central teaching of Pure Land Buddhism is that nirvana is no longer practical nor possible to attain in this age. Instead, one should focus on devotion to Amida, which will gain one enough karmic merit to go to the Pure Land (a Heaven or Paradise). This is essentially the Christian teaching of salvation through faith in Christ. The Pure Land (Paradise) is not an eternal destination, but a pleasant place in which all karma disappears (a place of rest) and nirvana is simple to attain. Most Pure Land Buddhists focus on chanting or repeating a mantra of devotion to Amida, "Namu Amida Butsu," as often as possible to reinforce a proper and sincere state of mind and gain admission to the Pure Land at death.

The dwellers of this heaven include many Buddhas and other divine beings, some called Bodhisattvas, some called Dhyani Buddhas who were never human but dwelt in heaven and help humans in their journey to this land. Amitabha is most famous Dhyani Buddha and presides over the western paradise called the Pure Land and by meditating and uttering his name sufficient to carry one to the end. In this organized church, priests can marry, have children, eat meat, live in the world. They also have Sunday schools and regular sermons and prayers in their church.

Buddhism Timeline

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Standing Buddha with a halo, Gandhāra 1st-2nd century AD.
History of Vaishnavism is difficult to trace because of the complicated syncretization with several tribal cultures and movements through the ages.

It can not be traced back to the Vedic period nor has it in anyway connected to Vedism. Evidently Vishnu of Vedas did not give rise to Vaishnavism. The name “Vishnu” is mentioned in the Rig Veda as a minor god – a younger brother of Indra or deputy of Indra -Upendara.

They worshipped minor gods and goddesses of patheism, henotheism and the forces of nature. Even then they were never worshipped as gods but as creatures who could trade and barter with material things. They were praised as Kings were praised by people to get favors.

Vaishnavism actually started, elaborated and developed in Upanishads, the Puranas, the Agamas and the epics of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana all of which are written in Sanskrit in the Post Christian Period.

Tamil Bhakti movement had given birth to the origin and development of Sixfold religion which includes Saivism and Vaishnavism. Tamil Bhakti Movement was the outcome of the propagation of the doctrine of avatar and salvific message of Christ by St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ.

**Vishnu – Derivation**

The name Vishnu is derived from the Tamil word “Vin” meaning the sky. The letter ‘U’ is suffixed with the primary word “Vin” and normally pronounced as “Vinnu” in the spoken
This word was pronounced with the Sanskrit sound and the outcome is “Vishnu”. This type of phonological development have been pointed out by linguists like Devaneyan (Paavaanar)

Vin > Vinnu > Vindu > Vishnu

The early possible starting point of Vaishanavism probably was due to an attempt to represent the Trinity in new understanding. Here is how Dr. Devakala explain it.

“After Christianity started developing in India, the doctrine of trinity was envisioned in different angles in myths. When the trinity was explained as Father, Holy Spirit and Son, some envisioned the Holy Spirit in a female form. According to this group, in a family, if there is a father and a son, naturally there would be a mother in between them. So, they envisioned the Holy Spirit as mother or Sakthi or Power and they explained the trinity as Appan (father), Ammai (mother-Sakthi) and Makan (Son). They also explained Siva (which means love), Sakthi and Kumarakkadavul (son of God) as Somaskanda. Somaskanda is a Sanskrit word (Sa+Uma+Skanda) which means God who is with Uma (Mother) and Skanda (Son). This is known as Saivism.
When the Holy Spirit was envisioned in female form by a school of thought, naturally there would be opposition and another school of thought emerged. According to it, since a virgin gave birth to a Son by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit must be a male form, and it was envisioned in a male form. They explained all the three in the trinity in male forms. (Father in male form, Holy spirit in male form and Son in male form). This is developed as Mummoorthy in Vaishnavism.

While Saivism denoted Holy Spirit as Sakthi (female form); Vaishnavism denoted Holy Spirit as Vishnu (male form). The root word for Vishnu is Vinn. Vinn and Vaan to the sky or firmament. The word 'Vishnu' is the Sanskritised form of Vinn. Trinity is explained in Vaishnavism as Siva, Vishnu and Brahma that is Mummoorthy. This is known as Vaishnavism. Both the Saivite and Vaishnavite mythical explanations refer to God the father as one and the same person, Siva. God the Holy Spirit is in two forms, one is in female form that is Sakthi (Saivism) and the other is in male form that is Vishnu (Vaishnavism).

If the left half of Siva's body is portrayed in female form (Sakthi), it is known as 'Arthanarieswara' and if the same left half of Siva's body is portrayed in male form (Vishnu), it is known as 'Harihara'.

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Since the left half of Siva's body is portrayed in male form as well as in female form, it clearly shows that the left half of Siva's (God the father) body is the metaphorism of Holy Spirit in two different angles.

The envisioning of the Holy Spirit in a female form has developed into Saivism and the envisioning of the Holy Spirit in a male form has developed into Vaishnavism.”

However after its inception several movements got syncretised. Among them were the Bhagavata Cult, Tantric cult and several Hero worshipping tribal cults. These brought in several occult factors such as Magic, Mantra, Tantra and Yantra. This developed a corrupt society as seen in Gita and a corrupt society based on Porn. This led to the formation of the Kingdom of Krishna in Dwaraka. The sin of the Yadavas led them to self destruction and finally a tsunami swallowed the whole Island Kingdom of Krishan.

“The Yadavas, then, with their wives, proceeded to Prabhasa and took up their residence there, each in the (temporary) habitation that was assigned to him, and all having an abundance of provisions consisting of edibles and drink. The Vrishnis, mixing with wine the food that had been cooked for high-souled Brahmanas, gave it away unto monkeys and apes. Those heroes of fierce energy then began their high revels, of which drinking formed the chief feature, at Prabhasa. Then a dispute arose between Satyaki and Kritavarman on the wrongs they did in the Kurukshetra War. This dispute turned into a great massacre, in which all the Yadava heroes were slain. (Megasthenes: Indika I FRAGM. I.B.Diod. III. 63. Concerning Dionusos.16,3)

In Mahabharata, there is a specific account about the submerging of Dwaraka by the sea, which reads thus:

“The sea, which had been beating against the shores, suddenly broke the boundary that was imposed on it by nature. The sea rushed into the city. It coursed through the streets of the beautiful city. The sea covered up everything in the city. Even as they were all looking, Arjuna saw the beautiful buildings becoming submerged one by one. Arjuna took a last look at the mansion of Krishna. It was soon covered by the sea. In a matter of a few moments it was all over. The sea had now become as placid as a lake. There was no trace of the beautiful city which had been the favourite haunt of all the Pandavas. Dwaraka was just a name; just a memory.”

Arjuna took the surviving Yadavas men and women to Hastinapur. A number of Ahiras, armed only with lathis, attacked his party. But Arjuna lost the power of his mighty arm and his unrivalled skill as an archer which killed his teachers and brothers in Kurushetra and could not defend Yadavas who were left in his care by Krishna. Ahiras carried off many of the men, women, and children as slaves. He reached Hastinapur only with a small remnant.”

But the cult of Vaishnavism became very strong and conquered as far as Kerala and practically destroyed all Thomas Churches from the Northern India.
Modern Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism as we know today emerged more recently between the 6th and 9th centuries. The sexual and tantric connections were removed and an attempt was made to reform it based on the Bhakthi towards God as primacy factor. The twelve Alvars (poet-mystics) laid the foundations for the Shri Vaishnavas based in Shri Rangam, South India. Their founder-theologian is Ramanuja (1017–1137). After him emerged three other sampradayas headed by Nimbarka (1125–1162), Vishnuswami (1200–1250) and Madhva (1238–1317). From the twelfth century onwards a bhakti renaissance swept across India, bringing waves of devotional sentiment.

'The Puranas, which were originally bardic compilations, were recast in the Kusana and Gupta periods as veritable popular expositions seeking to present a Syncretic and theistic religion. The doctrine of Trimurti was one of their greatest triumphs and the idea of incarnation was taken up and further developed'. Susmita Pande.

Since Saivism and Vaishnavism are the offshoots of Early Indian Christianity, many scholars find similarities between these religions (Early Indian Christianity) and Christianity (Europeanised Indian Christianity). The following statements of different scholars would enlighten this idea.

Susmita Pande in her thesis 'Birth of Bhakti in Indian Religions and Art' says; "It has even been held that the development of the true religion of the heart of bhakti really belongs to Medieval India, presumably owing its effervescence to the fertilizing influences of Islam, if not Christianity" ….."that the concept of BHAKTI and God's grace in the above account (Vaishnavism) shows the influence of Christian doctrines".

Monier Williams states: "Vaishnavism has more common ground with Christianity than any other form of non-Christian faith"

'Pandita Ramabai felt that by becoming a follower of Christ, she had not betrayed her ancient culture and tradition. But on the other hand, she learnt that her ancient religion become more meaningful and enriched only with her experience in Christ. …..

'Christ of the history has reincarnated in the mythological India and He has become the Nishkalank Avatar (Sinless incarnation), Jivanmuktha, Sachidananda and Karmayogi'

Fr. Reymond Panickar in his commentary on the Brahma Sutras says; "That from which the world comes forth and to which it returns and by which it is sustained, that "that" is Christ". Raymond Panikkar, The Unknown Christ of Hinduism, Darton, Longman and Todd, P.131

Development of Vaishnavism by Nathamuni, Yamunacharya and Ramanuja, the three eminent acharyas of Vaishnavism saw a major upheaval in the belief and practice of Vaishnavism.
Therefore, in order to uphold the teachings of Vaishnavism as against other rival religious creeds, there was felt the need to consolidate and systematise the Vaishnavite thoughts found in the various religious works. There was an urgent need to propagate the religion. This task was fulfilled to a large extent by Ramanuja and his forerunners, Nathamuni and Yamunacharya. Though all the three acharyas are the exponents of Vaishnavism, major credit goes to Ramanuja in terms of the contribution made by written works and propagation of the religion through a large number of well qualified apostles.

Nathamuni, the first pontiff of Srivaishnavism, was born in AD 824. He wrote two works, namely Nyayatattva and Yogarahasya.

Yamunacharya, also known as Alavandar, was the grandson of Nathamuni. He was born in A.D. 916.

All these have helped Ramanuja to systematise Visistadvaita Religion and Philosophy. Ramanuja was born in AD 1017,
The history as we see through archealogy and documentals can be explained through the struggle between Christians of Thomas and the Gnostic heresies which came from Syria (Aryan – Persian) by the second century AD.

Mani was said to have travelled to the Kushan Empire at the beginning of his proselytizing career (several religious paintings in Bamiyan are attributed to him), and several have postulated Buddhist influences in Manichaeism:

“Buddhist influences were significant in the formation of Mani's religious thought. The transmigration of souls became a Manichaean belief, and the quadripartite structure of the Manichaean community, divided between male and female monks (the "Elect") and lay followers (the "Hearers") who supported them, appears to be based on that of the Buddhist sangha.” (Richard Foltz, Religions of the Silk Road)
From the 3rd century on, both Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity moved east, spreading their teachings into Central Asia. (Mani himself was executed in 274 or 277.) (FOM Silk Road Study Tour, September 2009, Manichaeism & Nestorian Christianity, p. 1) Manichaeism thrived between the third and seventh centuries.

Manichaeism claimed to present the complete version of teachings that were corrupted and misinterpreted by the followers of its predecessors Adam, Zoroaster, Buddha and Jesus. Accordingly, as it spread, it adapted new deities from other religions into forms it could use for its scriptures. Its original Aramaic texts already contained stories of Jesus. When they moved eastward and were translated into other languages, the names of the deities (or angels) were often transformed into local names.
Mani came to India and China, taking the Silk route; and hence his ministry was concentrated initially in the North India. In the North India this conflict easily resulted in the destruction of Christian churches soon after the fall of Taxila kingdom. Most Christian Churches went underground as a result of persecution and others fled to Syria where the Syrian churches gave them refuge. In the South India the story was different. All the three regions of Dravidia – the Chola, Chera and Pandya were ruled by Christians – in the Indian myth - by an Asura King called Maha Bali (The Great Sacrifice people). It is this period when Maha Bali ruled that came to be the Dark Ages of South India which will explain all known facts. All information on this period was wilfully destroyed by the new religious leaders of India. We will be able to identify them from history that followed this period.

‘History is always written by the victors and whoever controls the writing of history books control the past.” George Orwell ’1984’.

MUNDA LEGEND

“The Cheras of the Chotanagpur region, the ancestors of Keralites, had a great king called Bali who governed the Dinajpur area; he was an asur, who did not worship Vishnu, the Aryan God. He continued to worship the native Munda god, Lord Shiva. After being defeated by the Vaishnavites the Mundas were forced to settle down in Kerala. The Mahabali-story of the Keralites, in the Munda-Chera tradition, indicates the triumph of the Vaishnavite brand of Aryans over the Shiva-worshipping Munda-Cheras. Bali/Balia is a common personal name among the Mundas.”

“In Tamil Sangam-work, Puram, Maveli appears as the Vellala chief of Milalaikurram. There are documentary evidenADthat there was a Christian Church among them.” Dr. Zacharias Thundy, Northern Michigan University.
Mahabali’s Christian Kingdom, *Caelobothras*, covered the three worlds – Chola, Chera and Pandya at the first century. You only have to compare the Kalabhra region with that of the Mahabali’s Kingdom.

Even though history was blanked out, the Christians lived on with a great heritage of traditions which still lingered.

**Bhakti Period  600 A.D. to 1200 A. D.**

This is the period when the Brahmins having defeated the Kalabhras (Kerala Putras) took over the country. Realizing the power of devotion to a personal monistic God the Vaishnavites took over that aspect and restated Brahmanism in Hinduism as we know today in terms of Bakthi. Vedas were artificially introduced as the base as though Hinduism was a continuous outgrowth of the teachings of Vedas and exhaustive mythical Puranas were written as real history. Myths were taught and taken as reality.

Thus it is evident that Brahminism took every advantage of the Christian teachings and deliberately distorted or rewrote them into Gnostic Hinduism. In order to cover up this gross reality- even history was wiped out. We can still see these tendencies in today’s Brahminism where an active process of rewriting history is in process. Sankara united everything in his Advaita where man became God himself. Any surprise that it was done by Adi Sankara in the eighth century AD, by a teen ager? Attempts of writers to regain faith not only failed its intent but were absorbed as part of the Hinduism.

**Onam and Mahabali Connection**

The earliest record of Onam is found during time of Kulasekhara Perumals around A.D 800, soon after the Kalabhras Interregnum of Kerala History. Until the eighth century the political history is mostly unknown and is usually known as the Kalabhras Interregnum. Kalabhras were supposed to have been ruling Kerala until at least the sixth century. Kalabhras probably refers to Keralaputras. Who were they?. Remember Kerala was practically ruled by the Christians by the third century AD. Thus Kalabhras were most probably the people of Mahabali.
The story of King Mahabali is found in the Bhagavata Purana (also known as Srimad Bhagavatam), the most sacred Hindu text. According to it, long long ago there lived King Mahabali, a powerful demon who ruled the nether world (underworld). King Mahabali, was very strong and extremely pious. Powered by a boon granted to him by Lord Brahma, Bali was invincible and even gods failed to defeat him in battles. He had conquered the whole earth and became its master.

Onam has two specific significance. First it is the communal memory and celebration of past history as enunciated in the Mahabali Legend. A story of how paradise was lost

Kashyapa had two wives, Diti and Aditi, who were the parents of demons and demigods (Asuras and Devas) respectively. As the common practice in those days, for a King invading another kingdom to acquire additional territory, Indra, the king of demigods went on war with the king of Asuras. Mahabali, the King of Asuras defeated Indra and proceeded to occupy Indra's territory. Kashyapa, who had gone to the Himalayas to do penance, on his return, found Aditi weeping over the defeat of her son, Indra. By divine insight, Kashyapa recognised the cause of grief. Kashyapa tried to console Aditi who was wailing in grief, saying that nothing happens in the world without God's will and people should go on doing their duties. Kashyapa asked Aditi to pray to Lord Narayana and taught her Payovrata, ritual that has to be observed from the twelfth day of the bright half Karthika (Sukla-paksha Dwaadasi). Since Aditi carried out the Vrata with a pious heart, Lord Narayana appeared before her and informed her that he would himself take birth in her womb and help Indra. Later, on the twelfth day of the bright half of the month of Bhadrapada, Aditi gave birth to a son of uncommon effulgence. That child, "Vamana-murti", demonstrated His divine powers by doing marvelous deeds even when he was a child.

Balichakravarthi (Bali, The Emperor) or Mahabali, was the grandson of Prahlad, the son of Hiranyakasipu who was slain by Vishnu in his Narasimha Avatar. Hiranyaksha the brother of Hiranya Kasipu was slain by Vishnu in his Varaha Avatar earlier. Prahalad being an Asura had great faith in Vishnu but his father, who was a devotee of Lord Brahma was very angry and hated all other devas but Lord Brahma. One cannot miss the series of warfare between Vishnu and the Asuras - those born of the breath of God. [citation needed] Asuras did not acknowledge Vishnu as God. Bali Maharaj, sat in Prahlad's lap as a child and learnt love and devotion of Lord Vishnu from Prahlad. As a result the Hindus of Kerala, are very devoted to Lord Vishnu to this day and Vishnu in turn is said to love the Keralites very much. The Keralites perform the Mohiniattam Dance, a dance dedicated to the female form of Vishnu, Mohini. There is also the dance Krishnanaattam. Many Keralites also worship Narayani. Sri Narayani Peedam and Sri Bangaru Adigalar of Kerala and their followers claim that these two figures are a forms or avatars of the goddess Sri Narayani.

Mahabali's rule was the golden era of India

Mahabali who was performing the sacrificial rite of Viswajith at the banks of Narmada River, (Central India) and declared that he would give anything that anyone sought from him during this Yagna. At this the gods were very annoyed. Bali was the ruler of all the three worlds having defeated the devas. The gods approached Vishnu and asked for his help to dethrone Mahabali. Vishnu, incarnated in the form of Vamana, a dwarf to defeat the Daityas.
Vamana came to the Yaga-shala. As he was approaching them, the sages assembled there perceived the extraordinary effulgence form of the young lad. Mahabali went forth to receive the Brahmin boy with all traditional honours and gave him an eminent seat befitting the status of a holy person. Bali with the usual courtesy given to the people who come to ask for help told him Master! It is my good fortune that you have chosen to honour me with your presence. Whatever you desire, I am here ready to fulfil the same. Vamana smiled and said: "You need not give me anything great. It is enough if you give me that extend of land covered by three footsteps of mine".

On hearing him, Bali's preceptor, Shukracharya a Daitya priest, who could have vision of the future told Bali that the one, who had come to seed a gift from Bali was not an ordinary Brahmin but Lord Narayana Himself who had assumed this form. He advised Bali not to promise the lad anything. But Bali was a king who would never go back on his word and told his Guru that he would never break his promise. He was determined to give Vamana whatever he wanted since breaking one's word was a sin and he had to keep his pledge Shukracharya insisted that he should not fulfil the demand of Vamana as he had come to deprive Bali of all His possessions.

Bali, however, was determined to honour the word given to Vamana, begged pardon of his Guru for disregarding his advice. Earlier, while Bali was embarking on the war with Indra, he had prostrated at the feet of his preceptor, Shukracharya, and on his advice he performed the Vishwajit Yagna from which he secured very powerful weapons. It was only because of Shukracharya's help that he was able to conquer Indra. On this occasion, Bali was not prepared to heed the advice of the same preceptor. Shukracharya cursed Bali, saying: 'As you have not heeded your Guru's words, you will be reduced to ashes'. Bali was firm and replied: 'I am prepared to face any consequence but will not go back on my word'.

Saying so, he asked Vamana to measure the three feet of land as desired by him. All attempts of Shukracharya to dissuade Bali from offering the land desired by Vamana proved futile. Bali considered everyone who came to him as god himself and never refused anyone anything that they have asked. Bali told his Guru: "Prana (life) and Maana (honour) are the two eyes of a person. Even if life goes, honour should be protected."

Vamana grew in size until he towered above the heavens. With one foot, he measured all of the earth. With the other, he claimed all of heaven. There was still one foot of territory that Bali owed him. Bali offered his head to be measured as the third step of land which Lord Vamana had asked for as alms. The story is that Vamana grew enormously in size and Mahabali realized that this is a divine being. For the devotion of this Daitya Mahabali, Lord Vishnu (Vamana) granted him rule over Patala. As a last wish Mahabali was granted the permission to visit his subjects once a year. Thus, Keralites celebrate Onam festival to commemorate the memory of a Great King Mahabali who would keep his promise. Mahabali fulfilled his name as the great martyr for the sake of Truth ("Satya"). The name "Mahabali" itself means Great Sacrifice. Thus Onam celebrates a series of martyrdom of the devoted Daityas.
During Onam, the feast and festive mood of the people, dressed in their best, is considered reminiscent of the prosperous and truthful life of the subjects during Bali's flawless reign. People wear new clothes (Vastra) during Onam. The 'Vastra' also stands for heart. Thus the significance of wearing new clothes is about making the heart new by removing all bad thoughts and feelings. People forgetting their sectarian outlooks, join together to welcome the auspicious 'Thiruvonam' day. This is the only festival which is celebrated by the Thomas Christians of Kerala along with the Hindus.
The Story of Kerala.

As mentioned earlier Malabar Churches developed independent of the rest of the Indian Churches. Kerala remained unconquered by any outside forces because of its geographical position. Recent Archeological and documentary studies by Prof. George Menacheril, indicates that Aryans came to prominence in Kerala, only by 4th century or later and Hinduism only by 8th century.

“In spite of the many statements in Keralolpathy most historians today believe that the Parasurama story is only a legend and Brahmins arrived in Kerala for all practical purposes only in the 4th century or later, and the Brahmins or Nambooridis established dominance only around the end of the first millennium C.E”

Parasurama legend says that the seventh incarnation of Vishnu rose up the land of Kerala from Gokarnam to Kanya Kumari and gave them to Sixty-four Brahmin families. This must have been around the 4th century or even later, if the Namboodiri traditions can be trusted. This legend therefore speaks only of the historical situation of the later centuries how the Aryan Brahmins came to dominate Kerala probably as advisers to the Kings of Chera, from the Tulunad. Who were the Kings of Chera is difficult to ascertain. Until the first century till the coming of Thomas, it is certain that Buddhist Kings ruled Chera. But Buddhism disappeared from the Kerala scene altogether. Vaishanavites or Aryan Brahmins came into power only by the 6th century. Islam came into existence only by the 6th century and was never a power in Kerala. Then what was the
religion of the Chera Kings? The only alternative is that they were Christians. It points to the possibility that Mahabali whom the fifth avatar of Vishnu defeated by cheating was none other than the Christian Dravidian King “The Great Sacrifice”. This name evidently fits only Christ and Christians. His Kingdom evidently extended over three regions of India (the three worlds). Most probably the name is a generic name for Christian Kings. (The Chera King Kuru Varman-1 also known as Vyakrasenan who ruled Kerala from 40 AD to 55 AD was a Christian.) It is interesting to note that Mahabali was the grandson of Prahalada who was a staunch Vaishnavite (Brahmin?). Prahalada was the son of King Hiranyakashipu a Dravidian. Hiranyakashipu was killed by the fourth incarnation of Vishnu the Lion-Man. His brother Hiranyaksha was killed by the earlier incarnation of Vishnu, the Boar. Vishnu threw both these brothers out of the heavens where they were the gate keepers of Heaven. We know for certain that Mahabalipuram was Mahabali’s resort since every other attempt to explain the name fails. Mahabalikkara – Mavelikkara is traditionally associated with Mahabali. Incidentally Onam is the only festival, which is celebrated both by the Christians and the Hindus. If the Onam songs handed down to us from the 8th century are true, there was an egalitarian society – virtual Kingdom of God - fashioned out of the early Christian Fellowship Community experiment Jerusalem. The Jerusalem experiment failed with the deceit of Aninias and Saphira and the Kerala experiment with the deceit of Yamana. With the long period of innocence Mahabali could not discern the deceit of Yamana. Kerala, during the Tamil Sangam Age (1-500 AD) was a very egalitarian society. (48) Untouchability was unknown, manual labor was respected and women held in high esteem. The first Brahmin missionaries moved into Kerala through Tulu-nadu (Mangalore area). Thus Chera Kingdom continued as a Christian Kingdom from the first century onwards until the sixth century. Gradually the influence of the Hinduism from Chola and Pandya dislocated the Christian dynasties of Chera. With the cunningness of the Brahmin dominated Vaishnava advisors of other Kingdoms, Chera Kingdom was taken over by the Vaishnava cult finally. However one Christian Dynasty continued till the 15th century – the Villar Vattom Pana.

Even today Christians are respectfully addressed as "Nazarani mappilas", "sons of kings who follow the Nazarene" or "of the first Christian kings". It is actually a direct translation of the word “Israel”. If this is the intent, it means the idea of Kingdom of Priests was introduced most probably by St. Thomas himself. Alternately, such a position came into existence because Christians were Kings in early period. The special position of Nazrani in relation to Hindu temples itself speak of the origins. Even today as a tradition, some old temples cannot open their gates, or open the holy of holies or raise the flag to start a festival without the physical presence of a Nazrani in the temple ground.

The Mahabali myth had created sensation even in the West, during the Middle Ages, as the myth of the Prestor John – a Priest King who ruled a powerful vast kingdom in India,- ruling over 72 countries in three Indias. This legend says that St. Thomas travelled to India and there established a Christian community that retained many of the ideals of the original church, and which blossomed into an almost perfect Christian kingdom, ruled over by this legendary king, Prester John. A second century Peutinger Map indicates a temple not far from Muziris as “Temple Augusti” or “Temple of the Great King”. Around the middle of the 12th century, a series of letters (forged?) found their way to the court of Pope Alexander III. These letters were from the Prester himself. Apparently an emissary was sent to the King Prestor John, but he was never seen again. This mythical (mystical?) figure certainly came from Chera Kingdom as Meir Bar-Ilan points out. India is mentioned several times in these letters and the city of Kalicut is mentioned in one of the letters specifically. It specifies that he was in the land of India where the body of St. Thomas the Apostle was buried and they celebrated the memorial of Thomas on July 3rd. The letter also mentions that it is the land of the pepper and elephants.
When history finally opens, it was with Kulasekara Alwar who ruled Kerala in the 8th century. He became a devotional Vaishnavite poet. The earliest document, which tells us about the Onam festival, comes from this period. A last Perumal, Cheraman Perumal abdicated his throne in 825 AD, (some documents give it as 642-643 AD) converted to Islam and went to Mecca and died in Yemen. He divided the kingdom and gave it to his Nephews.

THE FIRST VAISHNAVATA CONQUEST OF KERALA

You can deliberately obliterate all evidences, but the collective memory of the community could not be suppressed. They are handed down from generation to generation and still exist as myths and legends and festivals of Kerala.

The Politics of Rewriting History in India.

K.N. PANIKKAR

Although elements which constitute myth are not verifiable like historical facts, myths do represent reality even if symbolically and metaphorically. Myths are essentially illusory representations of phenomena and as such do not help discover the historicity of events and by the very nature of representation they tend to mask the reality. Yet, there are no myths in which reality is not embedded in some form, be they origin, explanatory or legitimatory myths. This integral connection between myth and history facilitates the transmutation of the latter into the former and through that change, the existing historical consciousness in society.

http://www.hinduonnet.com/fline/fl1801/18010730.htm

The biggest festival of Kerala is “Onam” which is associated with the myth of Vamana. It tell the story of how Vishnu (the god of Vaishnavites) defeated the Asura King Mahabali and pushed him down to the lower most part of the World – Kerala. This. I believe tells the root story of how the Chola and Pandya areas of the Christian Kingdom of Mahabali was ripped off and taken over my the Pallavas.

The Story Behind the Onam Festival

A long long time ago, an Asura (demon) king called Mahabali ruled Kerala. He was a wise, benevolent and judicious ruler and beloved of his subjects. Soon he conquered all the three worlds. Aditi, the mother of Devas went to Vishnu for help.

Vishnu incarnated in the form of a dwarf called Vamana and approached Mahabali while he was performing a sacrifice (yajn) and asked for alms Mahabali granted him a wish.
The Vamana asked for three paces of land for his living — and the king agreed to it. Vamana grew to great proportions. In the first step, he covered the heavens and with the second, he covered the netherworld. Realizing that Vamana's third step will destroy the earth, Mahabali offered his head as the last step in order to save this world.

Vishnu pushed him to the netherworld, but before banishing him to the underworld, Vishnu granted him a boon. He was allowed to return once a year to visit his people. It is during this day, called Onam, that Kerala pays tribute to the memory of this benign king who gave his life for his people.

There is an expectation that one day Mahabali will return and establish his glorious kingdom once again on the earth.

Onam Celebrates the Christian Rule of Kerala

The name Mahabali literally means the Great Sacrifice. (Maha = Great; Bali = Sacrifice) This epithet does not fit any other person other than Christ. It probably was a name for Christian Kings or the general epithet for Christians in India. It is actually strange that the story is kept still as a legend and myth, in spite of the fact it shows how Vishnu, the great and mighty god of Vaishnavites, had to resort to deception and trickery to kill a King who is described only in superlative terms even in their own Puranas. This cannot be explained in any other terms other than as a story of how Brahmin (Iran - Aryan) dominated Vaishnavism tried to destroy Christianity in South India. Silk route brought in Manichaen missions first into Northern India and it fell victim to the heresy. When Christianity became powerful in South India, the Northern heretics resorted to trickery.

This identification of Mahabali with Christ or Christians is also supported by pre-cosmic myth of Palaazhi Mathanam (the story of churning of the cosmicmilky way to separate the good from the evil.) in which Mahabali was killed and was brought back to life. Here the subtle implication of the sacrifice, death and resurrection of Mahabali is implied.

Mahatma Phule sees this story as an attempt by the Aryans to dominate the rest of India:

“Slavery”
by
Mahatma Jotirao Govindrao Phule.
The chapter : 'Baliraja'

“Baliraja's kingdom, extended from Maharashtra to Srilanka and northwards to Ayodhya and Benares. It was attacked by the Dwija (Aryan), Vamana. Dalit kings such as Hiranyakashyapu had also been attacked by Dwija kings as a racial battle for power zigzagged across the subcontinent. The story of Prahlada is then interpreted as that of the son of the royal Hiranyakashyapu dynasty being subtly influenced by the Machiavellian Dwija, Narasimha, to become a collaborator of an 'invasive' hegemonic discourse.”
Mahatma Jyotirao Phule (1827 – 1890) was an activist and social reformer from Maharashtra, critical of caste relations in Western India and noted for his work in the upliftment of widows and the lower castes in India.

The Period of the King of the Great Sacrifice

When Maha Bali Ruled.

Here is a song which we have been singing through generations during the Onam festival:

"Maveli Nadu Vanidum Kalam
Manusharelarum Onnupole
Amodathode vasikum kalam
apathangarkumottilla thanum
Adhikal Vyadhikal Onnumilla
Bala maranangal Kelkanilla
Kallavumilla Chathivumilla
Ellolamilla Poli Vachanam
Kallaparyum Cheru Nazhiyum
Kallatharangal mattonumilla"

It translates as:
'When Maveli, our King, ruled the land,
All the people were as One.
And people live joyful and merry;
They were all free from harm.
There was neither anxiety nor sickness,
Death of the children were never even heard of,
There were no lies,
There is neither theft nor deceit,
And no one is false in speech either.
Measures and weights were right;
No one cheated or wronged their neighbor.
When Maveli, our King, ruled the land,
All the peoples formed one casteless race.'

The Onam festival lasts for ten-days and falls during the harvest season. It is celebrated with much pomp and gaiety. People decorate their yards with carpets of fresh flowers called 'Pookalam' to welcome the King Mahabali. They wear new dresses and perform communal dances such as Thiruvathirakali and Thumbi Tullal. Thiiruvonam the climax comes on the fourth day of Onam when sumptuous meals are eaten with the whole family sitting together along with those who are less fortunate. The ten days are meant for feasting, singing, dancing and making merry with friends, family, and neighbors. The whole community come together for floral decorations, elephant processions, dance performances, classical and folk music recitals, cultural pageants, and water carnivals.
A veritable Kingdom of God in the fashion of the early Christian community in Jerusalem was in existence under the Christian Kingdom of Mahabali. If we can trust the archeology, it lasted until at least sixth or even to the eighth Century AD. These periods were totally blacked out from history by destroying documents and they survive only in the memory of the community as legends and myth.

Mahabali was a Christian King; and may be dated before 6th century. This Kingdom was at least partially destroyed by deceit by the entry of heresy. In this conquest all territories except Kerala was lost to the Christians.

MAHABALI, THE ASURA KING

Hindu Puranas describe Mahabali as an Asura King. Here is what Madame Blavatsky the great Theosophist Gnostic has to say about the meaning of Asura.

“Mahabali was an Asura King who was defeated by the Suras by trick. In the Rig-Veda, the Asuras are shown as spiritual, divine beings. Their etymology is derived from asu (breath), the "Breath of God," thus, Asuras are those who were created by the breath of God, who has the Holy Spirit within them.
It is later on, after Brahminic domination, they are shown issuing from Brahma's thigh, and that their name began to be derived from “a”, primitive, and sura, god (solar deities), which is interpreted as “not-a-god.” (Madame H. P. Blavatsky in 'The Secret Doctrine', II, 59
Blavatsky was the originator of theosophy.)

The word asura is formed from the word asu with the addition of the suffix ra and means 'one full of ra spiritual life i.e., asu and 'by curious process of semantical change came to mean a demon.’ Pt. Satya Vrat - Ramayana - A Linguistic Study

The Asuras

“The asuras "are the sons of the primeval Creative Breath at the beginning of every new Maha Kalpa, or Manvantara; in the same rank as the Angels who had remained 'faithful.' These were the allies of Soma (the parent of the Esoteric Wisdom) as against Brishaspati (representing ritualistic or ceremonial worship).
Evidently they have been degraded in Space and Time into opposing powers or demons by the ceremonialists, on account of their rebellion against hypocrisy, sham-worship, and the dead-letter form" (Secret Doctrines 2:500). Theosophical Society - Madam Blavinsk

In fact the Puranas give the whole genealogy of Mahabali which is very interesting and instructive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genealogy of Maha Bali</th>
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<tr>
<td>Genealogy of Maha Bali in the puranas also asserts the similar origin. Here Maha Bali is the descendant of the two gate keepers of heaven known as Jaya &amp; Vijaya– (meaning Victor and Great Victor – Those who overcome – The Overcomers) They were forced into incarnation on earth due to the curse of the Sages because they would not allow these sages to enter the presence of god. Jaya was born as Kasyapa.</td>
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</tbody>
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In pre-Vedic times, Kasyapa was a primordial god. He was the father of the Devas (Suras - gods), the Asuras (demons – Breath of God), the Nagas (The Serpentines), and the Mankind. His name means tortoise, and he was connected with the cosmic tortoise which made up the universe. In Vedic times Kasyapa had Aditi as his consort, and he was the father of the Adityas (literally means the Suns). In later times he became equated with Prajapati (Means “Lord of Hosts”) and Brahma (the Creator), and was also named as one of the Rishis (sages). He had two sons Hiranyakshu and Hiranya Kasipu (Meaning the Golden Eye and the Golden Dress). They were Demon (Dravidian) Kings. Both were killed by two incarnations of Vishnu possibly indicating the destruction of Christianity in the North and Middle India. Hiranyaksha was killed by the Boar Incarnation and Hiranya Kasipu by the Lion Man Incarnation of Vishnu. Hiranya Kasipu was killed at the betrayal of his own son Prahalada who became a Vaishnavite. Maha Bali was the great grand son of Hiranya Kasipu. He was also defeated by Vishnu in the Yamana incarnation. So here we have a series of pictures of struggle by the Vaishnavites to destroy the teachings of the Asuras.(Christian?). |

It is on the basis of such vast associations and puranas that I presume that Mahabali was indeed a Christian King, or the generic name for “Christians”, whose Kingdom covered the whole three worlds. What are these three worlds? Were they the three Dravidian Kingdoms of Chola, Chera and Pandya? Were they the whole of south, middle and north Indias? Were they the whole world or cosmos?
This genealogy explains the ongoing mythical history of
The Vaishnavite Struggle with Historic Christianity
over a period of six centuries.

If this conjecture is correct, then the stories of the Boar incarnation and Lion-man incarnation of Vishnu tells the story of how the generations of the Christians before Mahabali were driven out from Northern India. This is exactly what we find in terms of geography and order of Vishnu’s incarnation.
Since the concept of Avatar came with Thomas and absorbed into Brahminic syncretic form, the number of Avatars were being constantly added. There are basically five lists. However we will take only those that are found common in all the traditions since we can assume they are the original basic incarnations. Look at the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HARI VAMSA</th>
<th>NARAYANI AKHYAN</th>
<th>VARAHA PURANA</th>
<th>VAYU PURANA</th>
<th>BHAGAWAT PURANA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 Avatars</td>
<td>10 Avatars</td>
<td>12 Avatars</td>
<td>21 Avatars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) Varaha, 2) Narasimha, 3) Vaman, 4) Parashuram, 5) Rama, 6) Krishna

1) Hansa, 2) Kurma, 3) Matsya, 4) Varaha, 5) Narasimha, 6) Vaman, 7) Parashuram, 8) Rama, 9) Krishna, 10) Kalki

1) Kurma, 2) Matsya, 3) Varaha, 4) Narasimha, 5) Vaman, 6) Parashuram, 7) Rama, 8) Krishna, 9) Buddha, 10) Kalki


So the common basic incarnations of Vishnu were five, Viz.

1) Varaha, 2) Narasimha, 3) Vaman, 4) Parashuram, 5) Rama.
We can actually see the sequence of Vaishanavite conquest in the figure.

**Avatar** | **Dravida Asura King killed**
--- | ---
1. Boar (Varaha) | Hiranyaksha
2. Man-Lion (Narasimha) | HiranyaKasipu (Brother of Hiranyaksha)
3. Dwarf (Vamana) | Maha Bali (King of Dravida) great grandson of HiranyaKasipu
4. Parasu Rama (Rama with the axe) | Lifting Kerala out of the sea and giving to Brahmins
5. Rama | Ravana – The King of Sri Lanka Ravana was a great-grandson of Mahabali.
First of all we notice that all the incarnations were Vishnu incarnations. Hence they are a history connected with the Vaishnavite traditions and, it is the history which tells how Vaishnavism defeated their opponents.

The opponents were all Daityas – who are usually considered as Dravidian Kings and Kingdoms Second all the victims were of one family coming from one lineage.

The placement of the events are also interesting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME OF DAITYA</th>
<th>AVATAR</th>
<th>GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiranyaksha</td>
<td>Boar</td>
<td>no indication given in any Puranas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brother of Hiranyaksha)</td>
<td>(Varaha)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiranya Kasipu</td>
<td>Narasimha</td>
<td>Indus Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Brother of Hiranyaksha)</td>
<td>(Man-Lion)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maha Bali</td>
<td>Vamana</td>
<td>All of South India – Narmada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Great grand son of Hiranya</td>
<td>(Dwarf)</td>
<td>River to Cape Comorin including</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasipu)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chola, Chera and Pandya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keralaputras</td>
<td>Parasu Rama</td>
<td>Kerala (Chera)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(of the Kingdom of Maha Bali)</td>
<td>(Rama with the Axe)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ravana</td>
<td>Rama</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Grand Son of Maha Bali)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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THE MYTH OF PRESTER JOHN

This myth of the Maha Bali is not only found in Indian Puranas (Old Stories) but also in the Western stories as the myth of Prestor John. Prestor John is a legendary medieval Christian priest and king thought to have reigned over a Christian kingdom in the Far East. During the period of Crusades letters arrived in Rome from Prestor John.

The first written record of Prester John is found in 1158 CE in the Chronicles of Otto, Bishop of Freising.. The legend of the Three Holy Kings by Johannes of Hildesheim, (Historia Trium Regum by Johannes of Hildesheim, Sylvia Clare Harris, 1931, pub. London 1954) written in 1378, tells of St. Thomas as the Apostle of India and of the three rulers, Melciur, Balthazar and Gaspar, They and the entire subjects were converted to the Way. After the martyrdom of Thomas, the three kings had their subjects elect a patriarch under the title of Mar Thoma to be their spiritual leader, and a temporal leader with the title of Prester John. Patriarch Thomas and Prester John ruled over India.

The letters, said to have been written by Prester John explains, that Prester John ruled a huge Christian kingdom in the East, comprising the "three Indias." His letters told of his crime-free and vice-free peaceful kingdom, where
"honey flows in our land and milk everywhere abounds." (Kimble, 130) Prester John also "wrote" that he was besieged by infidels and barbarians and he needed the help of Christian European armies. In 1177, Pope Alexander III sent his friend Master Philip to find Prester John; he never did.

THE LETTER OF PRESTOR JOHN

The following letter was presented to Pope Alexander and Emperor Manuel Comnenus of Byzantium in 1165 AD by an Ambassador of Prestor John.

"John the Presbyter, by the grace of God and the strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, king of kings and lord of lord, to his friend Manuel, Governor of the Byzantines, greetings, wishing good health and the continued enjoyment of that divine blessing……..

"Our magnificence dominates the Three Indias, and extends to Farthest India, where the body of St. Thomas the Apostle rests. It reaches through the desert toward the place on the rising of the sun, and continues through the valley of deserted Babylon close by the Tower of Babel. Seventy-two provinces obey us, a few of which are Christian provinces, and each has its own king. And all their kings are our tributaries.

"In our territories are found elephants, dromedaries, and camels, and almost every kind of beast that is under heaven. Honey flows in our land, and milk everywhere abounds. In one of our territories no poison can do harm and no noisy frog croaks, no scorpions are there, and no serpents creep through the grass. No venomous reptiles can exist there or use their deadly power…..

"For gold, silver, precious stones, beasts of every kind, and the numbers of our people, we believe that we are unequaled under heaven. There are no poor among us, we receive all strangers and pilgrims, thieves and robbers are not found in our land, nor do we have adultery or avarice.

"When we ride forth to war, our troops are preceded by thirteen huge and lofty crosses made of gold and ornamented with precious stones, instead of banners, and each of these is followed by ten thousand mounted soldiers and one hundred thousand infantrymen, not counting those who have charge of the baggage and provisions…

"The palace in which our sublimity dwells is built after the pattern of that which the apostle Thomas erected for King Gundafor...The ceilings, pillars, and architecture are of shittimwood. The roof is of ebony, which cannot be inured by fire. …

"...In our hall there dines daily, at our right hand, twelve archbishops, and at our left, twenty bishops, and also the Patriarch of St. Thomas, the Protopapao of Samarkand, and the Archprotopapao of Susa, in which city the throne of our glory and our imperial palace are situated…

"...that the Creator over all things, having made us the most supreme and the most glorious over all immortals, does not give us a higher title than that of presbyter,

The Realm of Prester John, Robert Silverberg, Doubleday & Co., NY 1972

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In a detailed study on the subject, Prester John: Fiction and History, Meir Bar-Ilan comes to the conclusion that:

“Evidence emerging clearly from the text will immediately show that Prester John lived in India, or to be more precise, in Malabar (southern India)”.

Whether fiction, forgery or a memory of history the legend directs to Mahabali type of Kingdom in Kerala. We should remember that there existed a Christian Kingdom of VillarVattom near Cochin until the coming of the Portugese.

Quotes from

Prester John: Fiction and History

Meir Bar-Ilan

It is believed that the historical nucleus of the story is rooted in the coming of one 'John, the Patriarch of the Indians', who came to Rome in the pontificate of Calixtus II in 1122. From the middle of the 12th century onward it was accepted in Europe that Prester John, king and priest, was a ruler over territories in the East, though the area of his reign was not precisely defined. It is not an easy task to separate fiction and history in this legend, …..

I. Where Prester John Resided: India or Ethiopia

The former editors of the letters of Prester John, E. Ullendorff and C. F. Beckingham still wonder where Prester John lived. On page 10 they write:

The Hebrew letters give no indication of identifying Prester John with the ruler of Ethiopia.
Though it is true that Ethiopia is not mentioned in the letters, it will be seen later that this statement is misleading. The editors for their part are consistent: in pp. 32-33 they present a Latin text with its Hebrew translation (and an English text where the Latin is missing) as follows:

Prae te janni invenit tur ascendendo in Kalicut in arida... and this is true proof and well-known knowledge about the Jews who are found there near Prester John...

…… Evidence emerging clearly from the text will immediately show that Prester John lived in India, or to be more precise, in Malabar (southern India).

Connecting Prester John with India is inevitable from the Hebrew text on the one hand, while data from the legend will support the Indian origin on the other.

First of all, **India is mentioned several times in these letters** (pp. 41, 89, 107, 119, and more).

Second, **Kalicut** which was one of the most important port-cities in Malabar in southern India (the place where Vasco da Gama was sent), **is mentioned in one of the letters**.

Third, these facts would definitely suffice but further evidence appears in the form of statement:

“and in **the large India is buried the body of St. Thomas the Apostle**. That is, the author knew that St. Thomas was buried in India, a belief held by the Christians of southern India. Not only that, but the author of the letters knew (p. 133) about ‘St. Thomas holiday’, that is, apparently, **St. Thomas memorial day held by the same Christians on July 3rd.**”

Fourth, the author of the letters mentioned **that pepper grew in his land** (pp. 55, 91, 131), vegetation typical to Malabar in southern India, and not to Ethiopia.

Fifth, there are some stories in the letters concerning warriors riding elephants (pp. 71, 101, 123). It is well known that **unlike the African elephant only the Asian elephant could be trained**. That is to say that the letters include information about India (with which the West is more familiar than it is with Burma or Siam where trained elephants live as well), and has nothing to do with Ethiopia.

Hence, after studying all the features independently and then together it is inevitable to reach the unquestionable conclusion that Prester John hailed from India. That is: the letters of Prester John tell a story about India, not Ethiopia, and it is unfortunate that legendary medieval opinions have survived and can still be found in modern scholarship.

…. the confusion between India and Ethiopia is ancient, … This naive European confusion of two different countries (so far from each other), was enhanced by traders from eastern Africa (Somali and Ethiopia), who sold goods without revealing that they were middlemen only. For example, in Ancient Rome many thought that cinnamon was imported from eastern Africa, though it actually came from India.
Apparently, this confusion persisted as a result of the fact that both in India and Ethiopia, 'eastern' Christians lived in their own kingdom, surrounded by pagans. And, if this is not enough to confuse any medieval man whose geographical knowledge was limited anyhow, there is another fact that adds to the confusion: the letters of Prester John tell about black priests. For example: '...about the Jews... as we have heard all the time from the black priests who have come and are coming daily' (p. 33). Any layman might associate these black priests with Africa, without knowing that a major part of the population in southern India is black. Since Christians lived there, it would not be unreasonable to assume that black priests lived there as well (it should be kept in mind that the Jewish community in Cochin, on the coast of Malabar, was divided into 'white' and 'black' Jews).

However, in the Middle Ages it was not known where Prester John lived, and adventurers went looking for him. In the 13th century Marco Polo identified Prester John with the Khan of the Kereit, a tribe in Mongolia which was then Nestorian Christian. Others continued searching for him in China. In the 15th century the Portuguese looked for Prester John all over Africa, when others were sure that the legendary king was living in Ethiopia. In the middle of the 16th century the King of Ethiopia was nicknamed 'Prester John' by the Europeans, and it should be noted that the description of the search for Prester John reads like a detective story. Apparently, in the 17th century, after the Europeans had learned that there was no one by the name of Prester John living in Ethiopia, the story was abandoned and considered a legend until the beginning of historical research in the 19th century.

Whatever the facts were, it is important to stress that according to the Hebrew letters of Prester John, there is no doubt that he lived in India. If it was not known until then, probably because experts in the subject concentrated on retracing the medieval search for Prester John, thus disregarding the geographical facts appearing in the letters, and failing to analyze the Hebrew letters with the necessary care.

……..Another example of evidence that connects Prester John in India to Italy is seen in the famous Hebrew book Igeret Orhot Olam, written by Abraham Farissol (1452-1528) a few years before his death:

In the library I found in chapter 58 of the second part of the book (F. Montalbodo, Paesi Novamente Retrovati) E Novo Mondo (etc., Milano 1508) that from Lisbon the capital of Portugal to Kalicut in Asia, the beginning of India there are 3800 parasangs... and in that chapter it is explicit that Praeti Jiani (=Prester John) is beyond Kalicut in the land far from the sea. And this is real evidence and famous knowledge concerning the Jews that dwell there near Praeti Jiani as we have already heard all our lives from black brothers that come every day and tell in clarity the presence of many Jews with them. Of these brothers there are in Rome a sect of some thirty of them dwelling in a new stage (monastery) established for them.

That is, in the 16th century a learned Rabbi from Ferrara identified the place of Prester John in the vicinity of Kalicut (Malabar, India), with the help of an Italian book. Whatever were Farissol's ideas concerning identification of the Jews under Prester John with the lost ten tribes, he was right in his conclusion that in the Kalicut area there were Jews, those who are known today as the Jews of Cochin.
http://faculty.biu.ac.il/~barilm/presjohn.html

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After The World Conquest

After his conquest of the world, Bali summoned a meeting of all his ministers and subjects. In the open assembly he worshipped his chief preceptor Shukracharya and said with folded hands, "O Gurudeva, I became the emperor with your guidance. Accept the wealth I have brought as a token of my gratitude."

Shukracharya smiled and said: "O king of the Danavas, this wealth belongs to the subjects. Perform the 'Vishwajit' sacrifice in such a way that the wealth is properly distributed among the subjects. Then I shall ask for two gifts from you."

Bali agreed to his Guru's suggestion and said, 'What is the first dakshina that you wish to ask from me ?'

Shukracharya said: "First establish righteousness among the Danavas."

Bali vowed that his empire would become a place marked by righteous conduct and wanted to know what his Guru's second wish was.

Shukracharya then said: "Practice the virtue of charity and try to reduce poverty in the world. Bali promised to fulfill his second desire also and said: "Giving charity will be my vow from today. I will give away in charity whatever is asked of me without denial from today."

The whole world was stunned to hear about Bali's vow. The Devas in heaven also were shocked and surprised when they heard the news of Bali's vow.

None of the Daitya kings had performed this kind of Vishwajit sacrifice so far. Bali warned the Daityas thus: "Shed the path of violence and earn good name by following the path of righteousness. The unrighteous will be punished severely. Spread the message that there is no place for injustice and unrighteousness in the empire of Bali."

Man is afraid of poverty and hardship in this world. Being afraid of Danavas (demons), man worships Devas (gods) and prays for heavenly happiness. Bali knew this. Therefore he declared: "O my subjects, your happiness is mine. There will be no room for poverty in Bali's empire in future, You need not go in search of heaven. I shall make a heaven of this earth." He put into practice what he promised his subjects.

Ideal State

Prahlada, Shukracharya, Shambara and other elderly wise men helped Bali to improve the state of affairs in his empire by making necessary laws for the administration of the empire. Bali implemented the laws framed by his advisers to provide enough food and shelter and to give necessary facilities to ensure happiness of his subjects. The ascetics (rishis) who had gone to forests and mountains to practice austerities returned to their way of life and
to perform sacrifices in hermitages without the fear of Danavas. Every one was able to devote him to the performance of religious rites without fear. Peace and plenty prevailed everywhere.

Bali traveled to the nooks and corners of his empire and saw for himself the happiness of his subjects. He was delighted to see green crops everywhere. Every one was heard saying, "Bali is righteous, truth loving, charitable. He is born on earth to make it a heaven." There was no one who prayed to Devas (gods) for the grant of wealth and happiness. Happiness and peace were firmly established on the earth now. Having got rid of poverty, the subjects enjoyed life with happiness.

THE SECOND VAISHNAVITE CONQUEST
THE PARASURAMA MYTH

The Legend of Parasurama

Parasurama was the sixth incarnation of Vishnu.

The word Parasu means 'axe' in Sanskrit and therefore the name Parasuram means 'Ram with Axe'.

The aim of his birth was to deliver the world from the arrogant oppression of the ruling caste, the Kshatriyas. He killed all the male Kshatriyas on earth and filled five lakes with their blood. After destroying the Kshatriya kings, he approached an assembly of learned men to find a way of penitence for his sins. He was advised that, to save his soul from damnation, he must hand over the lands he had conquered to the Brahmins. He did as they advised and sat in meditation at Gokarnam. There, he was blessed by Varuna - the God of the Oceans and Bhumidevi - Goddess of Earth. From Gokarnam he reached Kanyakumari and threw his axe northward across the ocean. All the region from Kanyakumari and Gokarnam emerged from under the sea. He brought in 64 Brahmin families and gave this land of Kerala to them.

The Parasurama-legend is found in the Mahabharata; the Puranas; Kalidasa’s Raghuvamsa (Sanskrit drama canto 4. verse 53); the Thiruvalangad plates of Rajendra Chola (1012-1044) and the 18th century Keralolpati history in Malayalam.

Vamana was able to push down Maha Bali to Patala Loka – the lowest regions of India – to Kerala. The Christian dominion was thus restricted to the region of the Cheras.

The legend of Parasurama explains the final Brahmin conquest of Kerala well after the sixth C AD and speaks of the coming of the Brahmins into Kerala taking over the country. This process was a contrived series of migration from the North to the South along the west coast of India.
The Kerala Government Website gives the following historical note:

“By about the 8th century, a chain of thirty two Brahmin settlements had come up, which eventually paved the way for the social, cultural and political separation of Kerala from the Tamil country, in due course. ….. The revival of the Chera kingdom was actually a byproduct of the Aryan Brahmin settlements and assumption of the socio-political dominance they had established. The Perumal was the Lord of Mahodayapura and the overlord of Kerala (Keraladhinatha). But his sovereignty was constrained by the preexisting power of the Brahmin settlements and the hereditary chieftains.
http://www.kerala.gov.in/history&culture/earlyhistory.htm
Thus the supremacy of Christians began to vane soon after the sixth century when the Brahmins immigrated into Kerala and dominated the country. We are not sure of the social process involved. One of the major reason was the taking up of arms by the Brahmin youth as mentioned in the historical records of the Namboodiri Brahmins. Parasurama himself was a Brahmin who took up the axe – a Brahmin who became a Warrior. It is this heritage that Parasurama Brahmins brought into Kerala. If Yamana conquest used subtle deceit, Parasurama conquest used direct muscle power by secret training of youths into martial arts within the temple. Particular reference is to be made to the Chatters which literally means people meant for death - a suicide squad.

The Suicide Squads of Brahmins

“Known variously as the Chatter or Chattirar, these arms-bearing Brahmanans are seen in records from different parts of India from the post-Gupta period onwards. It is from Kerala that we have the clearest information about them. We hear about the significant institutions called Salais, which imparted military training to these Brahmanan youth in different parts of Kerala - some of them had been looked upon by the neighbouring rulers as a veritable military threat to them..... In any case, Namboothiris had become a significant economic, social and political force by the time the Chera Perumals were ruling over Kerala. This justifies the statement of a modern historian that the polity under the Cheras of Mahodayapuram was in reality a Brahmanan oligarchy and that the Brahmanans constituted the real power behind the throne.

In fact, the statements in Keralolpathi as well as other historical sources, that it was the Brahmanans who put the Chera king on the throne, mean the same thing.” Namboothiri Website Trust

Dr. Kesavan Veluthat : http://www.namboothiri.com/articles/history.htm

The Jihad Training

The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, a 22-year-old elementary school teacher, as an Islamic revivalist movement following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent ban of the caliphate system of government that had united the Muslims for hundreds of years. Al-Banna based his ideas that Islam was not only a religious observance, but a comprehensive way of life, on the tenets of Wahhabism, better known today as "Islamism", and he supplemented the traditional Islamic education for the Society's male students with jihadia training.

http://www.alquedatrainingmanual.com/

Thus we can see that there is great truth in the Parasurama Axe legend. The Brahmins formed a terrorist training ground within the temples inside Chera empire itself (similar to the al-Queda, Hamas and Hezbolla of today with suicide battalions. Techniques has not changed) The Parasu Rama conquest was a subtle military guerilla conquest of Brahminic Army, where Parasu Rama raised the Kerala Coast out of “the sea” and handed it over to the Brahmins.. (Even in modern India this religious based guerilla trainings are organized by the Siva Sena (Army of Siva) in Bombay and the Rashtiya SwayamSeva Sangh (RSS) (Political Self Serving Group) to fight the Christians and the muslims.) By the eighth century, Brahmins came to control villages centered around a
temple taking over large masses of land. They became Land Lords and Priests and the local villagers became Adiyars (Serfs).

The present Brahmin families (gotras) trace their origin only from the sixth century AD the descendants of the families brought in by Parasurama. Until then Brahmins did not exist in Kerala. The small faction of Brahmins who were present at the time when Thomas arrived in the Kerala coast, embraced the Way and they remain as teachers of the Word even to this day.

The Nairs – the warrior caste - as a caste, appear on the scene as late as the 12thC AD. They came from the North is certain. In the later years, Nairs were made the ruling class in Kerala by the Brahmins. Brahmins then relegated to the priesthood profession within the temple controlling the vast landed property. It was from this time onwards that we see the presence of idols and the temples in Kerala. What is interesting is that soon after the eclipse of the Kalbhrs, the Second Chera Empire made its appearance in the annals of Kerala history. Mahodyapuram (modern Kodangallur) was its capital. It was founded by Kulasekhara Alvar (A.D. 800-820), one of the 12 Alvars. Alvars were Tamil saints who composed and sang hymns in praise of Vishnu. They were exponents of the Bhakti (devotional) cult in South India. The Alvars gave a great impetus to the Bhakti cult in South India between the seventh and the tenth centuries. Thus the Gnostic concept of Vishnu swallowed Isa. Instead Vishnu incarnates now and then to destroy the Isanuvadikal (the followers of Isa)
Even though history had been erased soon after the Kalabhra period by the Vaishnavite heretic records of events in the foreign countries and records in copper plates and inscriptions gives us a glimpse vivid enough to rebuild the Christian history in the southern states.

History of India has been inescapably intermingled with the history of Babylon (Persia, Iran, Syria). The Silk Routes (collectively known as the "Silk Road") were important paths for cultural, commercial and technological exchange between traders, merchants, pilgrims, missionaries, soldiers, nomads and urban dwellers from Ancient China, Ancient India, Ancient Tibet, Persia and Mediterranean countries for almost 3,000 years. It gets its name from the lucrative Chinese silk trade, which began during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE). Extending 4,000 miles (6,500 km), the routes enabled people to transport goods, especially luxuries such as slaves, silk, satin and other fine fabrics, musk, other perfumes, spices, medicines, jewels, glassware and even rhubarb, as well as serving as a conduit for the spread of knowledge, ideas, cultures and diseases between different parts of the world (Ancient China, Ancient India (Indus valley, now Pakistan), Asia Minor and the Mediterranean). Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of the great civilizations of China, India, Egypt, Persia, Arabia, and Rome.
By the first century another trade route through the sea also opened up – the Spice route.

Spice route connected the rest of the world directly to Malabar Coast. Thus while the religious and cultural interactions with the Persian Arabian region was along the silk route which came to North India, the discovery of Monsoon and the faster Spice Route make Malabar Coast a center for cultural and religious dialogue. One such major religion that came with the route is Manichaenism.
Mani was born in a Persian village called Mardinu, near the site of the modern city of Baghdad, in 215 or 216 AD. His father Fâtâk Bâbâk was a citizen of Ecbatana, the ancient Median capital and a member of the famous Chascanian Gens. His mother, Maryam, (Mes, Utâchîm, Marmarjam, and Karossa) was of the family of the Kamsaragan, who claimed kingship with the Parthian royal house, the Arsacids. Mani's father as he worshipped in a temple heard a voice urging him to abstain from meat, wine, and women. In obedience to this voice he emigrated to the south and joined the Mughtasilah, or Mandaean Baptists followers of John the Baptist, taking the boy Mani, with him.

Mani, when about twelve received his first revelation when the angel Eltaum (God of the Covenant; Tamiel of Jewish Rabbinical lore) and was called as a prophet. Manes (Manichaeus) began preaching in about 240 AD, at Ctesiphon, near Baghdad, capital of the powerful Sasanian dynasties. His first declaration was on the coronation day of the Sasanian King Shapuhr I in 242 AD.

"As once Buddha came to India,
Zoroaster to Persia, and
Jesus to the lands of the West,
so came in the present time, this prophecy through me, the Mani,
to the land of Babylonia."

Although his preaching seemed to have met with favor for a time in Persia, he was later banished from the Persian realm. During a long period of exile, approximately twenty years, he preached his doctrines in the region of Northern India, Tibet, Chinese Turkistan and Khurastan. Mani, in 272 or 273 returned to Persia, met with royal consideration during the brief reign of Ormazd I (Hurmizd);
He sent his father and a disciple to continue his work in India. Zoroastrian priests, who envied his success had him executed in 273 or 274 AD. He was flayed alive, and the body decapitated.

In his new religion, he consciously sought to reconcile the great religions of redemption, Christianity (Gnostic), Zoroastrianism (Zurvanite) and Buddhism (Mahāyāna), in a new Syncretism which also incorporated elements of Greek philosophy and Indian Jainism; while refuting patriarchal Judaism. He was not, at first, well received, and was forced to flee the country. He travelled to Trans-Oxiana (modern Uzbekistan), India and Western China, making converts wherever he went. He intended that his religion be a world-religion, in fact the first world-religion, and he consciously adapted his teaching to accommodate local beliefs and customs. He was regarded by his Christian adherents as the Paraclete, by his Persian followers as the Zoroastrian redeemer Saoshyant, and by his Buddhist disciples as the Avatar Maitreya.

*Red Flame No. 2 -- Mystery of Mystery: A Primer of Thelemic Ecclesiastical Gnosticism*  
Tau Apiryon and Helena; Berkeley, CA 1995

It is this mixing up of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity by the Gnostic movement of Mani that started the modern form of Hinduism. Hinduism is essentially Manichaenism in Indian context. We will see how this worked out within the Christian context in the following study.

Shapur the Great (309–379 AD) came to power in Babylon in 309 AD.

In 337, Shapur the Great broke the peace with the Roman empire that had been established for 40 years. Christianity was in power in the eastern half of the Roman empire with whom Shapur was dealing, and to many Persians this made Christianity an enemy religion. Shapur championed the Zoroastrian view and began persecuting not only Christians but also Jews and Manichaeans, seeking their conversion to Zoroastrianism. Entire villages of Christians were slaughtered. Under this persecution large number of Suraya Christians looked for an asylum. The choice obviously was the Malabar and it was dominated by the Christians. The Eastern Churches had direct relation with the Malankara Churches on a regular basis by now. The choice of place of refuge was not a chance event. The Christians in Malankara were known as Nazaranikal (One who follow Nazarene) or Issanu Vadikal. They were mostly converted from Jews, Nambudiris and
Royal family and were the rulers of the various states, (The Chera King Kuru Varman-1 also known as Vyakrasenan who ruled Kerala at the time of the arrival of St.Thomas from 40 AD to 55 AD was a Christian).

Thus in AD 340 the Suraya Christians from Persia came to Malabar Coast under the leadership of a bishop by name Dawood. This migration is recorded on the cross they had brought with them, which is preserved in Alangad church in Kerala. These Babylonian Christians settled in the coastal areas of North Kerala and in Ceylon (Known in those days as Thambrobanî). There is also a place called Kalyani on the coastal area between Mangalapuram and Vadakara where they settled. Cosmos (AD520 to 525) had recorded about their presence. Those who came with Dawood included the North Indian Christians who escaped the persecution by moving to the Middle East at the time of destruction of the Indo-Parthian Kingdom.

A second migration took place in AD 345 under the leadership of Thomas of Canaa (Knai Thomman). Knai Thoma and his group sailed in three ships. The leading ship called "Babylonia" had three masts. The main mast flew King David's flag, the second mast flew the Roman flag with the cross, and the third flew the Edessene flag. They included about 400 persons of seventy-two families of seven clans. A bishop named Mar Joseph, four priests and a few deacons were also with them.

They landed in Kodungallur on 7th March, 345 AD. Knai Thoma and his people built a town in Kodungalloor with a church and 72 houses. The present Knananites are the descendents of the around 400 people from 72-Families of the 7-Clans, migrated to the Mahadaver Pattanam (Kodungalloore) on March 07, 345AD.

The 7-Clans are: 1) Bagi, 2) Belkuth, 3) Hadi, 4) Kujalig, 5) Koja, 6) Mugmuth, & 7) Thegmuth.

There are actually two traditions regarding the immigration of Knai Thomman
The story as stated briefly in a letter written by Mar Thoma IV, one of the bishops of the Syrian church in the eighteenth century is as follows: -

"From this date (i.e. St. Thomas's death) the faithful diminished little by little in our country. At that time (4th century) St. Thomas appeared ill a vision to the Metropolitan of the town of Edessa, and said to him: "Wilt thou not help India?" and he also appeared to Abgar, king of Edessa, who was the king of the Syrians; and then by order of the king a nd the bishop three-hundred and thirty-six families composed of children and grown-up people, clerics, men and women, came to India under the leadership of Thomas, the Canaanite, from Canan, which is Jerusalem. All these sailed in the sea and entered Kodungallor (Cranganore) our country. They inhabited it by special permission from the King Cheraman Perumal, who was ruling the country at that time. All this took place in A.D. 345. From that time the church of our country spread in all directions, to the numbers of 72 churches."

Another and a more detailed account of the arrival of Thomas Cana given by a 19th century writer belonging to the Syrian Christian community is given below:

Christians of Malayalam (i.e. Malabar') were in a state of disorder for about 300 years from the time that Apostle Mar Thomas (i.e., St. Thomas) visited Malayalam and established the Faith, as it had neither head nor shepherd. But by the Grace of the Lord, the Episcopa of the Syrian land called Uraha had a vision in his sleep, in which a person appeared to him and said, Grieve ye not for the flock that suitor and collapse in Malayalam, which I won even at the sacrifice of my life?. The Episcopa hereon awoke and at once announced the important tidings to the holy Catholic a of Jerusalem He thereon called together learned real arts (i.e., priests who are theological teachers) and others, and consulted them; and it was resolved that the respected Christian merchant Thomas of Canae residing in Jerusalem should be sent to Mal ayalam and the particulars ascertained through him. And thereon, lie was sent to Malayalam on a trading enterprise,

"This Thomas of Canae arrived at the Cranganore Bar and landed and saw and, from the cross they wore round the neck, recognized the Christians who were brought to follow Christ by the exertions of the apostle Mar Thomas, and who in spite of the oppressions of the heathens and heathen sovereigns continued to remain in the True Faith without any deviation. He struck their acquaintance and asked them about their past particulars and learned that their grievance was very hard on account of the want of priests and that the Church was, owing to that reason, in a tottering condition. On learning these particulars he thought delay was improper and l a ding his ship with the pepper etc., which he then could gather, sailed off, and by the Divine Grace, reached Jerusalem without much delay, and communicated to the Venerable Catholica of Jerusalem in detail all facts he had observed in Malayalam. And thereon, with the sanction of Eustathius Patriarch of Antioch, and odd persons, comprising men, women and boys, with Episcopa Joseph of Uratta and priests and deacons, were placed under the orders of the respectable merchant, Thoma of Canae, and sent off by ship to Malayalam, with blessing. "By the Grace Almighty God all these arrived at Cranganore in Malayalam in the year our Lord, without experiencing any inconvenience of distress on the way. On this, they were received by the people of Kottakkaya I Community .... They acknowledged allegiance to Joseph Episcopa who came from Jerusalem as their metropolitan. And the affairs of the church continued to be regulated by Thoma and others. "Thoma went and obtained and intevent of King Cheraman Perumal,
the then ruling sovereign, who was pleased and said that he, the Lord of the land, would undoubtedly render all help. Not only was command issued to have all aid rendered to the Christians, but privileges of honour were also bestowed under title deeds with sign manual and engrossed on copper plates, the sun and moon bearing witness, to be enjoyed without any demur from any quarter as long as the sun, the moon etc. shall exist.

(quoted by Judge Ormsby in the famous Syrian 'Seminary Case.' It was produced in the Seminary Case as Exhibit)

Second Tradition: Persecution in Persia

King Shapur ruled over Persia during AD 309-379. He wanted to bring back the old Zoroastrian religion into the country. The first order was that the Christians should pay double tax in lieu of services in war. Mar. Shimum, the Catholicos of the time refused to take the order on ground that the Christians were poor and that the Bishop is not a tax collector. Consequently on Good Friday of AD 339 Mar Shimum and five bishops along with 100 clergy were executed at Susa, the capital of Elam. This was followed by severe massacre of christians for forty years. In order to avoid this massacre Thomas of Cana suggested the colonisation of Malabar.

They were received kindly by the Cheraman Perumal who gave him permission to buy land and settle down. The King also offered special privileges to him and his group.

A.D. 346 The deed read as follows:—

"May Cocurangon [personal name of the king] be prosperous, enjoy a long life and live 100,000 years, divine servant of the gods, strong, true, just, full of good deeds, reasonable, powerful over the whole earth, happy, conquering, glorious, rightly prosperous in the service of the gods, in Malabar, in the city of the Mahadeva reigning in the year of Mercury on the seventh day of the month of March before the full moon the same king Cocurangon being in Carnallur there landed Thomas Cana, a chief man who arrived in a ship wishing to see the farthest parts of the East. And some men seeing how he arrived informed the king. The king himself came and saw and sent for the chief man Thomas, and he disembarked and came before the king, who spoke graciously to him. To honour him he gave him his name, styling him Cocurangon Cana, and he went to rest in his place, and the king gave him the city of Mogoderpatanam for ever. And the same king being in his great prosperity went one day to hunt in the forest, and he hastily sent for Thomas, who came and stood before the king in a propitious hour, and the king consulted the astrologer. And afterwards the king spoke to Thomas that he should build a town in that forest, and he made reverence and answered the king: 'I, require this forest for myself, and the king granted it to him for ever. And forthwith another day he cleared the forest and he cast his eyes upon it in the same
year on the eleventh of April, and in a propitious time gave it to Thomas for a heritage in the name of
the king, who laid the first stone of the church and of the house of Thomas Cana, and he built
there a town for all, and he entered the church and prayed there on the same day. After these
things Thomas himself went to the feet of the king and offered his gifts, and after this he asked the
king to give that land to him and his descendants: and he measured out two hundred and sixty-four
elephant cubits and gave them to Thomas and his descendants for ever, and jointly sixty-two
houses which immediately were erected there, and gardens with their enclosures and paths and
boundaries and inner yards. And he granted him seven kinds of musical instruments and all
honours and the right of travelling in a palanquin, and he conferred on him dignity and the
privilege of spreading carpets on the ground and the use of sandals, and to erect a pavilion at his
gate and ride on elephants, and also granted five taxes to Thomas and his companions, both men
and women, for all his relations and to the followers of his law for ever.

Signed by the King

Witness signed

Codaxeri canden
Cherucara protachaten comeren - King's Chief door keeper
Areunden couden - King's counsellor
Amen Atecouden guerulen - Captain of the Army
Chirumalapro taitiriueramen Comeren - Registrar f East side of Malavar
Preu i ualaitiataadi - singer of the King's Court
Perubal atia tacottocoude - Guard of the Gate
Bichremen Chinguen -King's Chamberlain

The 72 Privileges that were given to the knanaya community up on their migration are :

1) Arappura (Treasury) 2) Ambari (Howdah on an elephant) 3) AnkaNam (courtyard)
4) Antholam (palanquin) 5) Ammoolam (a kind or 5ax), 6) Arrppu (cheers)
7) Alavattam (peocock feather fan) 8) Anasavari (elephant riding) 9) Uchipoovu (head turban)
10) Kacha (robes) 11) Kachappuram (overcoat) 12) Kankanam (Bangles)
13) KalthaLa (anklets) 14) Kaalchilamb (anklets) 15) Kurravai (cheers)
16) Kuthira savaari (hose riding) 17) Kuzhal viLi (bugles) 18) Kodi (flag)
19) Kaikara (hand ornament) 20) KaithalLa (bangles) 21) Chelli (a kind of tax)
22) Chenkomb (another tax) 23) ChenDa (drum) 24) Thanberu (big drum)
25) ThazhakuDa (royal umbrella) 26) Nervaal (sword) 27) PaTTuchaTTa (silk coat)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>PaTTurumal</td>
<td>(silken tassal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>PaTTumunD</td>
<td>(silk dothi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Pakal viLakk</td>
<td>(day lamp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>PaDippura</td>
<td>(out house)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Pathakkam</td>
<td>(necklace)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>PanippuDava</td>
<td>(embroidered robes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Paravathani</td>
<td>(carpet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>PavaDa</td>
<td>(royal cloth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Pallakk, ((palanquin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Panchavadyam</td>
<td>(orchestra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Pandhal vithanam</td>
<td>(pandal decoration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Pathinezhu Parishamel</td>
<td>Kathruthwam (control over 17 lower casts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>MadhaLam</td>
<td>(drum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>MaNarkolam</td>
<td>(platform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>MuDi</td>
<td>(crown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>MuDikeezhabharanam</td>
<td>(head ornaments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Mummolom</td>
<td>(tax)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>MathiyaDi</td>
<td>(wooden chapels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Rajavadhymam</td>
<td>(royal orchestra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Rajasamaksham Irippu</td>
<td>(sit before the King)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Rajabhogam</td>
<td>(tax)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Veena</td>
<td>(string instrument)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Thee ve Tti</td>
<td>(fire torch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Thookumanacham</td>
<td>(swinging coat)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Thongal</td>
<td>(decoration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Thoranam</td>
<td>(decoration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>TholvaLa</td>
<td>(armpit bangle)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Theendalakattal</td>
<td>(untouchability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Nada viLi</td>
<td>(cheers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Nayattubhogam</td>
<td>(privilege for hunting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Naikudiparisha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>NeDiya KuDa</td>
<td>(royal umbrella)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Nettur peTTi</td>
<td>(cloth box)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>NattikeTTu</td>
<td>(turban)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>Veeravadhymam</td>
<td>(heroic bangles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>Veeramadhalam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Veera srinkala</td>
<td>(royal chain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Viri pandal</td>
<td>(honour to erect pandal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Venchamaram</td>
<td>(beautified deer-haired tassal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Sankh</td>
<td>(conch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Edam piri sankh</td>
<td>(conch with left screw)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Valam piri sankh</td>
<td>(conch with right screw)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Bhoomi karamozhiv</td>
<td>(land-tax evasion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Nayatt</td>
<td>(hunting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Pala-marangal</td>
<td>(forest trees)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This group kept their social identity and forms the Kananaya Christians. Thomas is said to have married a local woman.

The descendants of Knai Thoma are called Knananaya Christians. Knananites did not intermarry with native Christians and maintained their Jewish tradition originating from Abraham. To this date the Knananites continue as an endogamous community, and were known as Southists (Thekkumbhagor). Thus from then on there were two two branches of Chrisitans: viz, Southists (Thekkumbhagor) and Northists (Vadakkumbhagor). There are several conjectures regarding this terminology.
Those who lived on the south side of Kodungalloor are known as Southists (Thekkumbhagor) and the St, Thomas (native) Christians who lived on the north side of Kodungalloor are known as Northists (Vadakkumbhagor).

Another tradition is that Knananites settled down on the south side of Periyar (river) while the native Christians lived on the north side of the river.

Knananites are called Southists because they came from the southern kingdom of Judah.

Various Customs & Traditions of Knanaya Samudayam:

a) Marriage:
- **Kaipidutham** – Betrothal Ceremony by blessing the hands of the uncles of bride & bridegroom by the priest.
- **Koluvilakku** – Lighted oil-lamp placed near the bride and bridegroom for Mylanchi Ideel & Chamtham Charthal. This lamp is also used to welcome the couple after the Wedding. This lamp signifies the presence of Christ, the light of the world.
- **Chamtham Charthal** – Purification or beautification of the bridegroom by shaving face & bathing with oils, etc on the eve of the marriage.
- **Mylanchi Ideel** – Beautification of the palms and feet of bride by the leaves from “Mylanchi” shrub on the eve of marriage. This signifies the purification of hands and feet from the original sin committed by Adam & Eve.
- **Icha-Pad-Kodukkal** – Ceremony of giving sweet pudding to the bride and to the groom in their home after the beautification ceremony.
- **“Beru Mariam” Song** – A prayer in praise of Jesus as Son of Mary, sung by the priests & the laymen at the end of the marriage ceremony in the church.
- **NaDa Vili** – Cheers (NaDa NaDaaye....NaDa NaDa NaDa) given to the bride & Bridegroom while going home from the church after the marriage (It also serves to Alert the wedding receptionists to complete their final touches).
- **Vazhu Pidutham** – The rite of giving God’s blessing to bride and groom by the mother of the bride by placing her hands in the form of a cross on their heads.
- **Kacha Thazhukal** – A ceremony using a new piece of cloth given to bride’s relatives as a gift by the groom’s party (Usually to bride’s mother, grandmother & maternal uncle/aunt)
- **Nellum Neerum** – Sign of cross done using the blessed palm leaves (from Palm Sunday) wetted in the patty (rice) water, on the forehead of the bride & bridegroom Wishing them God’s blessing and happiness.
- **VeN-PaachoR** – A special sweet rice porridge ceremoniously given to the new couples after marriage.
- **Adachu ThuRa** – Shutting & opening of the bride’s chamber at the end of the marriage festivities at home.
- **Illa-PaNam** – A small amount of money is given to the bride’s party by the groom’s people as
offering to the churches.

b) **Funeral:**

- **Drinking from the blessed Coconut** – To show that the sons and the daughters of the dead should live in fraternal communion.
- **Folding the Plantain Leaf for Meals** – This reminds that King Cheraman Perumal honored Thomas Kinai and party by giving them two plantain leaves for royal dinner.
- **Thazhukal** – Embracing relatives of the dead person in the church after the funeral, to express the condolence.

c) **Other:**

- **Maargam Kali & Patt** – Religious dance (ballad) performed in the connection with joyful religious and social functions. The songs contain accounts of the appostolic work by ST. Thomas and the voyage and migration of Thomas Kinai and his group.
- **Puraathana Pattukal (Ancient Songs)** – Traditional songs sung by the participants and relatives during marriage ceremonies and festivities.

Many of these customs and practices show how the cross cultural contact between local Christians with the new comers formed a new culture which form the special characteristics of Syrian Christians.

The presence of a foreign group with wealth created and emphasised the caste system within the church.

They now began to exchange priests, who brought with them the documents known as the bible, which were only available in Greek and Syriac. They soon incorporated the Persian way of church institution, worship and other ritualism. Kerala Christians as a whole came to be known as Syrian Christians because they followed the liturgy and customs of the Syrian Churches.

**The Syrian Gnostic Heresy**

The place awarded to the immigrants was at "Mahadevar Pattanam" (The City of the Great God). Some of them were actually Mani followers (60) who were also persecuted by the Zoroastrians. These Gnostic migrants settled as a separate village and were known as “Manigrama Nivasikal” This was in Thiruvancode. Manicaenism eventually caused the acceleration of Christian heresies and to the formation of Hinduism. Manigramam, Church
Thiruvithamcode, was the major influence of Mani’s religion which spread into Kancipuram, Mylapore and surrounding areas and culminated into Hindu Saivism.

Manigramam

A manigramam in Pumpuhar is a large, influential guild of South Indian merchants. Tamil inscriptions record a tank construction by an important person and the tank is placed under the guard of the local Manigramam members.

On a Sivapuri temple wall, Tiruppattur Taluk, Ramanathapuram District, an inscription records the gift of some land by a merchant of the Manigramam guild for providing an offering to the temple deity.

During the rule of the Western Chalukyas dynasty reigning over most of the western deccan, South India, between the 10th and 12th centuries merchants formed influential guilds, of which manigramam was a prominent one.

Manigramam is a village in Nagapattinam district in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is located 25 km from Mayiladuthurai (Mayuram Peacock villare), 18 km from Sirkali, 5 km from Poompuhar, 2 km from Thiruvengadu. Famous Thirumani Azhagar temple is located in this
village. Other than this, Mariyamman temple, PiraiVeeran temple, Mosque and Church decorate the village.

All what is said about Manigramam, Church in Thiruvithamcode, represent the influence of Mani’s religion as it spread in Kanchipuram, Mylapore and surrounding areas in 200-300 AD. They were converts of Mani, a new religion formed by mixing Christanity, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Mani was known as Subramani meaning one who believed in light as the first existence. His followers finally accepted Christianity or Hinduism later. A good number of them are now members of Syrian Christian Community in Kerala. They were mostly Chettys, trading community who used to keep accounts of the Revenue of Chera Rulers. They used to stay outside the palace called Manigramam so the word Mani gramam chettykal, is referred to in Tharisapally Cheppeds.

Another Gnostic group from Syria also settled in a Manigramam, a village in Nagapattinam district in Tamil Nadu. It is located 25 km from Mayiladuthurai Mayuram, 18 km from Sirkali, 5 km from Poompuhar, 2 km from Thiruvengadu. They were merchants by trade. A similar villages named as Manigram exist also in Nepal, West Bengal and in several other places where these Gnostic groups formed a clan of merchants.

AD 293
Immigration of Cauverypoopatanam Christians at Kollam

By the end of the second century, the new found Gnostic Hindus began to dominate the religious scenario and most of the North Indian Christians were persecuted or forced to convert to Hinduism. This is mythologised in the ten Avatars of Vishnu which progressively appear from North to South. We have documentation at least for the Pumpuhar Christians who were forced to flee their country. They migrated to Malabar. One such mention is given thus in an ancient palm leaf: "The Vallala converts to Christianity in Kaveripoopatanam (The Puhur City of Cavery River) were persecuted by their king. So 72 families embarked on a ship and came to Korakkeni (Kollam), where there were Christians"

(From the Palm-leaf manuscript entitled Keralathil Margam Vazhiyute Avastha, The Affairs of Christianity in Kerala. This copy of the Manuscript is dated around 1806)

AD 315
Reconversion of 72 families to Hinduism by Manikka Vachkar at Kollam

The persecuters followed them and in AD 315 they were caught up and were reconverted to Hinduism.

“A certain sorcerer called Manikka Vachakar came to Kollam and converted back to Hinduism 116 persons belonging to 72 families from Puhur, 4 of about half a dozen families subsequently came from Coromandel Coast (perhaps from Puhur itself) and 20 families of local Christians (presumably from Quilon). “Palm-leaf quotation.
We are not sure who this Manikka Vachakar is. The mention of the term Sorcerer and the name Manikka leads us to identify this person as Manicaen, the prince of Persia and the Gnostic Christian heretic or one of his disciples.
P.E. Easo states:

“The Thiruvithamcode Church in South Kerala is often represented as one founded by St. Thomas. If one goes through the history of Mani’s religion spread in Kanchipuram and surrounding areas and the history of Manigramam people from 200AD, it would be clear that those (Chettys) who migrated to Kerala had constructed a church in Thiruvithamcode. Mani’s religion being a mix of Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism, those people who migrated to Kerala either accepted Hinduism or Christianity after Mani’s religion became extinct in later years. The Chettys (Veluthedathu and Karuthedathu) mostly traders, near Kaveripattanam Quilon and Maliankara near Kodungalloor had established a kingdom called Kanchipuram, centre of silk production. They also traded in peacock feathers, so the name Mylapore.”

“154-276AD Bardaisan of Edessa and Mani

Bardaisan was a Bishop in Edessa. He was removed from that position due to his teaching opposed to Christianity. He traveled in India, China, Tibet etc. But during the last 4 years of his life he came
back to Christianity. But he had a strong follower Mani by name who carried on his new religion. Both were opposed to each other. They met in CheraNadu and South India. When Mani wrote "Manimekalai" in Tamil Bardaisan wrote "Acts of Thuma" in Syriac. Because of the presence of Bardaisan in Chera Nadu, Mani’s religion could not take root there, but Mani had many followers in Tamil Nadu. They were mostly Armenian Merchants and Chettys from Tamilnadu. His followers had their own kingdom, known as Kanchipuram. They had churches and crosses like Christians. Since Mani knew the art of changing himself to peacock and fly his name was associated with peacock. Mani had appointed 12 Apostles, 72 Bishops and 360 Evangelists to spread his religion by mixing the local religions with his faith. His religion was very popular in China, Tibet and other countries. His mother’s name was Mary. All his Apostles including his mother were buried in Kashmir at a place called Barmulla. Those tombs exist till today. This place is being confused that of St. Mary’s and those of disciples of Christ.” (Syrian Christian History by P.E.Easo)

The presence of the Manicaen teachings from within the Christian Churches which were by now formed two denominations within the local Indian Christians – Saivism and Vaishnavism. These were also the period when the Trinitarian controversies were going on in the West. It would be inappropriate to call them heresies since these were honest attempts to understand God and Incarnation. Some of the major doctrinal attempts were:

1. The Circumcisers (1st Century)
   The Circumcision heresy may be summed up in the words of Acts 15:1: "But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brethren, ‘Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.’"

2. Gnosticism (1st and 2nd Centuries) We had discussed this in detail.

3. Montanism (Late 2nd Century)
   Montanus believed that the second coming of Jesus was immanent and he himself was the Paraclete that Jesus had promised would come.

4. Sabellianism (Early 3rd Century)
   The Sabellianists taught that Jesus Christ and God the Father were not distinct persons, but two aspects or offices of one person. According to them, the three persons of the Trinity exist only in God’s relation to man, not in objective reality. This is essentially the Vaishnavite doctrine.

5 Arianism (4th Century)
   Arianism taught that Christ was a creature made by God.

6. Pelagianism (5th Century)
   Pelagius denied that man inherit original sin. Man is born morally neutral and can achieve heaven under his own powers. God’s grace makes it easier an otherwise difficult task.

7. Semi-Pelagianism (5th Century)
Man can reach out to God under their own power, without God’s grace. Once a person has entered a state of grace, he can retain it through one’s efforts, without further grace from God.

8. Nestorianism (5th Century)
Nestorius claimed that Mary only bore Christ’s human nature in her womb, and could not be called Mother of God (Theokotos) and proposed the alternative title Christotokos (Mother of Christ). Nestorianism found its way into the Malankara Churches and it the Churches remained in it till the coming of the Portuguese.

9. Monophysitism (5th Century)
Monophysitism originated as a reaction to Nestorianism. Christ was one person with only one nature (a fusion of human and divine elements). They are thus known as Monophysites because of their claim that Christ had only one nature (Greek: mono = one; physis = nature).

10. Islam (6th Century) This was a movement against the icons and worship of Angels and saints which became predominant in the Arab areas, Mohammed brought in a strict Monotheism akin to Judaism with Jesus given a prophetic status. However because it was a political move Islam became a force and took over most of the Arab areas. The bishops and elders of the Yemeni Christian Churches were forced to walk into fire. As such today Islam is considered a full fledged semitic religion along with Judaism and Christianity.

11. Iconoclasm (7th and 8th Centuries)
They thought it was sinful to make pictures and statues of Christ and the saints since human tendency is to worship these symbols and miss the real object of the Person of Christ.

All these were reflected within the Indian Churches. By now there were three denominations in India.

1. The Issanuvadikal
2. Saivites
3. Vaishanavites

Vaishnavites of North India were already Gnostic.
The active presence and debates on the nature of God led to corresponding developments in Indian Christian community and were reflected strongly in the Vedic Scholars of South India. It is this that led to the Advaitic Theology of Sankara. In the same way as Constantine called for a Council to decide on the creed of faith by King Kulashekara.

The first person to explicitly consolidate the principles of Advaita Vedanta was Adi Shankara, while the first historical proponent was Gaudapada, the guru of Shankara's guru Govinda Bhagavatpada.

According to Adi Shankara, God, the Supreme Cosmic Spirit or Brahman is the One, the whole and the only reality. Other than Brahman, everything else, including the universe, material objects and individuals, are false. According to Adi Shankara, Māyā is the complex illusionary power of Brahman which causes the Brahman to be seen as the material world of separate forms. Maya has two main functions — one is to "hide"
Brahman from ordinary human perception, and the other is to present the material world in its (Brahman) place.

Adi Shankara uses a metaphor that when the "reflection" of the Cosmic Spirit falls upon the mirror of Maya, it appears as the Ishvara or Supreme Lord. The Ishvara is true only in the pragmatic level. God's actual form in the transcendent level is the Cosmic Spirit.

Ishvara can be described as Saguna Brahman or Brahman with attributes that may be regarded to have a personality with human and Godly attributes. This concept of Ishvara is also used to visualize and worship in anthropomorphomic form deities.
present day Kerala state into a united homogeneous political entity that became a force in south India for three centuries from 800 AD to 1102 CE and ruled from the capital city of Mahodayapuram (present Kodungallur).

Mar Abo (Mar Sabor and Mar Proth) came from Middle East on invitation of Kollam King kuleshakara as an Authority for the Doctrine of Trinity. Iyyanadikal Thiruvadikal was the serf King of Quilon at that time. Around 825 AD, Mar Aproth and Mar Sapor, two bishops representing the Persian Catholicos came with the merchant Prince Maruvan Sapir Eso in a ship.

Sketches of Mar Sapor and Mar Aproth
As found in altar of the Quilon Church

Mar Sabor Easow had his head quarters in Quiilon while Mar Porth resided in Kodungalloor. In the year 880AD Mar Sabor Easow and the Christians in Kollam were honored by King with properties and privileges which are still available in two Copper Plate (Chepps). King Kulashekhara granted the copper plate grants called Tarish-a-palli sassnam.
Front and reverse of Tharisapalli plates with Pahlavi, Kufic and Hebrew signatures.

The Udayamperor Church was built by in A.D 510 during the time of Mor Abor and Prodh and Raja of Villarvattom was instrumental in getting it constructed. Sabor Easow established an Aahram in Nilackal known as Chayal Ashram and towards the end of his life

Mar Sabor spent most of his time in meditation in this Ashram, It is from this the name Sabor Mala (Sabari Mala : Hill of Sabor) came. Sabari mala today is a pilgrimage point for the cult of Ayyappan a Gnostic outgrowth of syncretism from Vaishnavism, Saivism, Islam and Buddhism.
Le Quien says that “these bishops were Chaldaeans and had come to Quilon soon after its foundation. They were men illustrious for their sanctity, and their memory was held sacred in the Malabar Church. They constructed many churches and, during their lifetime, the Christian religion flourished especially in the kingdom of Diamper.”
The debate on theology with the Gnostic factions finally resulted in a Major split and the division of Aryan Nambuthiri community and also the consecration of Thevalakara orthodox church with syrian liturgy by Mar Abo. The debate among the Nambuthiri community on their Vedic and Gnostic components and in the St.Thomas component of the tradition of Vaishnavism where Christ was considered as the the Putra (Son) and the only object of sacrifice and the new theology of Advaita Vedanta of Adi Shankara finally led to the seperation of Christian Churches as Syrian Christian Nazareenes and the Syncretic Indian Version of Vaishnavites and Saivites. This was the beginning of Hinduism

The murals of the Quilon Church shows the debate of Mar Sabor with the Brahmins.
Mar Sabor lived his last years at Thevalakkara, and his remains were buried there in the Martha Mariam Orthodox Church.

Details about Churches established by Sabariso and the miracles he performed are found in Thomma parvam which is also called Rambanpaattu. (Nasrani.net)
The Church of Malankara became Nestorian Church and the Gnostics who disowned the historic Jesus separated themselves to form the Hindu denominations from the Christian beginnings of Saivism and Vaishnavism.

Final resting place of Mar Sobor

http://religion.wikia.com/wiki/Mar_Sabor_and_Mar_Proth gives the following regarding the coming of Mar Sabor and Mar Proth in AD 825

Mar Abo (Mar Sabor and Mar Proth) came from Middle East on invitation of Kollam King kuleshakara as an Authority for the Doctrine of Trinity on the Background of a pentecostal shivate Revival (focusing only the Holy spirit) of Advaida vedanta propounded by Adi shankara and were also instrumental in developing christian faith as an independent Religion. The start of the Malayalam era(ME) is associated with [koren[Kollam]]. It is believed that the era was started by these ASyriac Saints who settled in KorukeNi kollam, near to the present Kollam. The ME is also referred as Kollavarsham.

Le Quien says that: "...these bishops were Chaldaeans and had come to Quilon soon after its foundation. They were men illustrious for their sanctity, and their memory was held sacred in the Malabar Church. St. Thomas tradition of Christianity was more Vedic than Thora or Old Testament and were called only as Vaishnavites for their belief in Brahma putra. They constructed many churches in all places of Christian faith which was then a part of Vedic Vaishnavism (Trinity of Brahma, Putra & Shiva) as Christ then was revered only as Brahma putra (the virgin born begotten son of Brahma as the only object of sacrifice for human salvation ) and during their lifetime. Christianity as a religion flourished especially in the kingdom of Diamper..." (Michel Le Quien (1661–1733) was a French historian and theologian)
Kadamattathu Achan was a disciple of Mar Abos (kadamattam is a branch family from the Paklomattam Brahminic community of Palayur who embraced Christ in the first century in the St. Thomas tradition of Vaishnavism and also who founded the famous Guruvayur temple during the 9th century Shivate revival where a section of the community following Adi Sankara joined the Shivite revival) founded more than hundred Devi temples during his life time.

And it is believed that Mar Abo, who is taking his eternal rest in Thevalakara marthamariam church located at Kollam is Mar Sabor. This St. Thomas Traditional Vedic church, which was renewed in Truth &Spirit in 4th century, was built by Mar Sabor with orthodox canon, Liturgy and Rite after receiving the Tarsish-a-pali sasanam ,the earliest Historically available official sanction to built a place of worship in Kerala). The arts of Eye Medicine and witch craft was also two big contributions of Mar Abo to Kerala society. It is noted that Thevlakara where Mar Abo (Mar sabor) is buried is the root of Vaidyan Family.

Malayalam calendar (also known as Malayalam Era or Kollavarsham) is a solar Sidereal calendar used in the state of Kerala in South India. The era started in the year 825 AD. The origin of Kollam Era been dated as being 825 A.D. being the great convention in Kollam at the behest of raja kulshekara. The Malayalam Era named after Quilon began in 825 AD. Malayalam Era is called 'Kolla Varsham' after Kollam, because of the importance of Kollam in the 9th century A.D. It signified the independence of Malabar from the Cheraman Perumals. (Reference Travancore Manual page 244). King Kulasheker of Kollam, granted the copper plate grants in 825 A.D. to Mar S(abo)r Iso whom he invited to Kollam from Assyria (present persia & syria with Constantinople as the spiritual seat( the Byzantine/Eastern Roman Empire ), and transferring to the Tarsish Church and Vaishnavite nambuthiri community at Devalokakara(Thevalakara)at Tarshish near present day Quilon, lands near the city with hereditament of low caste(Tarshish (psalms 48)-a - palli). (Reference Travancore Manual page 244). scholars believe that this conference was called by King Kulsheker for a clarity for the theology on Divinity of the Trinity and which finally resulted in a Major split and the division of Aryan Nambuthiri community and also the consecration of Thevalakara orthodox church with syrian littery by Mar Abo following debate among the nambuthiri community on their belief between Nambuthiri's who believed in the st.thomas tradition of vaishnavism (christ as the putra and the only object of sacrifice) but continued in their vedic tradition including Sun Worship and the other section backing the version put forward by Adi Shankara in Advaita Vedanta in early 9th century that christ(isha) and shiva is one and the difference is only caused between Aramic and Pali language. However it should be particularly noted that kolla varsham resulted in the origin of Christianity in kerala as an individual religion outside vedic Vaishnavism as till that time only four vedic Aryan namboothiri families namely Kaliankal at Nillakal with a branch family at Devalokakara(near the ancient Koreni-Kollam port), paklomattam at palyoor, shankarapuri at niranam and kalli at kokkamangalam were allowed priesthood inside Christianity. The fact remains that the largest proportion of texts recovered are from Assyria, especially from the shattered remains of
Assurbanipal's library at Nineveh, but also from the old Assyrian capital at Assur, principally excavated by German expeditions in the twentieth century. In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that the written medical traditions continued in Babylonia after the fall of Assyria as is evidenced particularly by finds in the far southern city of Uruk and in tablets from the Babylon-Sippar area now in the British Museum (many unpublished).

Kolla Varsham Malayalam Calendar

It is believed that the Malayalam Era (Kolla Varsham) was started in 825 AD by these Asyriac Saints who settled in Korukeni kollam during a convention in Kollam under King Kulashekhara

http://www.enotes.com/topic/Malayalam_calendar

It also signified the independence of Malabar from the Cheraman Perumals. (Reference Travancore Manual page 244).

http://www.thefullwiki.org/Malayalam_calendar
Malayalam calendar (also known as Malayalam Era or Kollavarsham) is a solar Sidereal calendar used in the state of Kerala in South India. The origin of Kollam Era has been dated as 825 A.D when the great convention in Kollam was held at the behest of King Kulashekhara. Kollam was an important town in that period, and Malayalam Era is called 'Kolla Varsham' possibly as a result of the Tarish-a-palli sassnam.

It also signified the independence of Malabar from the Cheraman Perumals. (Reference Travancore Manual page 244). King Kulashekhara granted the copper plate grants in 825 A.D. to Mar S(abo)r Iso whom he invited to Kollam from Assyria (present Persia & Syria with Constantinople as the spiritual seat (the Byzantine/Eastern Roman Empire), and transferring to the Tarasa Church and Vaishnavite Nambuthiri community at Devalokakara (Thevalakara-(Tarsish) in Quilon, lands near the city with hereditament of low caste. (Reference Travancore Manual page 244). It is believed that this conference was called by King Kulshekara to get a clarity on the theology of Divinity of the Trinity. It finally resulted in a major split in the Aryan Nambuthiri community and the consecration of Thevalakara orthodox church with Syrian liturgy by Mar Abo. This followed a debate between Nambuthiris who believed in the St. Thomas tradition of Vaishnavism (Christ as the putra and the only object of sacrifice) but continued in their vedic tradition including Sun Worship, and those who backed Adi Shankara and his Advaita Vedanta in early 9th century (that Christ (isha) and Shiva are one and the difference is only caused between Aramic and Pali language). However it should be particularly noted that Kolla varsham resulted in the origin of Christianity in Kerala as an individual religion outside vedic Vaishnavism as till that time only four vedic Aryan namboothiri families (namely Kaliankal at Nilakal with a branch family at Devalokakara -- near the ancient Koreni-Kollam port -- Paklomattam at Palyoor, Shankarapuri at Niranam and Kalli at Kokkamangalam) were allowed priesthood inside Christianity.
As per Niranam Grandhavari Mar Abo arrived in Kollam in AD 905. Mar Abo was not only a theologian but also a conjurer and herbalist. He stayed in a hut along with a poor old widow and her son Paulose and the place now known as ‘Poyedam’.” Paulose became the disciple of Mar Abo and later ordained him as Kadamattathu Kathanar.

Kadamattathu Kathanar is a legendary luminary. He was not only priest but also a famous magician and a conjurer. Volumes of folklore describes his power over evil forces, using his yantra, tantra and mantra of prayers. These are available today in the book of Kottarathil Shankunni entitled "Aithihya Mala" (Garland of Legends Reddiar Press in Quilon 1909)

There is a clan of Orthodox christians in Chathanoor, Kollam(Quilon) that claims to be direct descendents of Mar Sapor...or it may be from one in his entourage: The clan surname is 'Muthalali'. Another medical family that claims descent from Sabor is “Vaidyas” who are eye doctors by family tradition.
XVIII SURAYA IMMIGRATION : M. M. NINAN

http://www.kadamattomchurch.org/history.html
Kadamattom Church
Manichaenism spread with extraordinary rapidity in both East and West and maintained a sporadic and intermittent existence in the West (Africa, Spain, France, North Italy, the Balkans) for a thousand years, but it flourished mainly in the land of its birth, (Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Turkestan) and even further East in Northern India, Western China, and Tibet, where, c. A.D. 1000, the bulk of the population professed its tenets and where it died out at an uncertain date. Al-Beruni wrote: "The majority of the Eastern Turks, the inhabitants of China and Tibet, and a number in India belong to the religion of Mani". He is said to have send a disciple of his and his father to India to follow up his mission. They traveled both along the silk route and pepper route and brought with them communities of Manichaen Gnostic merchant communities. By the third century Syrian immigration communities of Gnostics settled all over India. To determine the effect of this yeast within the community of faith we need to look into the characteristics of the Gnostic religion. This religion is one of great syncretism, their central elements being gathered from the Hattians, Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Hurrians, Luwians, Judaism and other peoples. As a result it is not possible to define precisely what this religion is. Thus there is a spectrum of latitude in the doctrine. It has been renewed in every age incorporating the understanding of the period. When Christianity came into existence Gnosticism absorbed this also into it. Simon Magnus became the first Gnostic saint. But it did not originate with him.

Gnosticism actually originated with magic and witchcraft. The words “magic” and “witchcraft” are today looked down upon. In the ancient world they were the hard experiential sciences. Modern Science started from them. Modern Chemistry came from Alchemy. The practical aspect of alchemy can be viewed as a protoscience, having generated the basics of modern inorganic chemistry. Up to the 16th century, alchemy was considered serious science in Europe. Isaac Newton devoted considerably more of his writing to the study of alchemy. Other
eminent alchemists of the Western world are Roger Bacon, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Tycho Brahe, Thomas Browne, and Parmigianino. They formed the seed of modern science. The local religions of India were magic and witchcraft woven into the everyday life the people.

Into this scene when Thomas came in, a new dimension was added. What happened eventually was a syncretization of local religions with Christianity. This was hastened by the migration of Syrian gnostics into various parts of India.

It was also used by the philosophers and proto-psychologists. Carl Jung proposes that alchemical symbolism and theory are philosophical attempt in building spiritual dimensions of cosmos. Gnostics were known as Magi and Magicians. The wiziers were advisers to Kings. Medicine and Magic and Witchcrafts were the specialization of Priests. In every culture Priests were also Medicinemen who used various rituals, magic incantations, potions, tantras and yantras to achieve the healing process. These are still part most cultures.

Thus gnosticism is a quasi scientific attempt to interpretation of the world. We can summarise the Gnostic religion in the following way.

1. A theology which provided a monistic as well as pantheistic possibilities.
2. Since consciousness is a higher dimension over matter this must be part of the Divine. Since we do not know of any God other than us, Humanity is Divine. Other beings whether spiritual or material are also gods
3. A salvation system in which the adept or devotee strives to become experientially one with the Divine through meditation or ritual.

This is really the summum bonum of Gnostic holiness:
You are God, and the sooner you realize and achieve it, the better.
4. Gnostics use complicated symbols and images which in India led to the various forms of idols and gods.
5. The final element common to the great majority, if not all neo-Gnostic systems is syncretism, the belief that all religions are really saying the same thing, but in different languages. The focus of attention is often on
Christianity, and frequent attempts are made to point out that Jesus really taught the above Gnostic doctrines. The church’s consistent and historical claim to exclusive truth is usually seen as a threat and/or stumbling block to the unification of world religion.

They believed that they alone truly understood Christ's message, and that other streams of thought within Christianity had misinterpreted Jesus' mission and sayings.

6. A person attains salvation by learning secret knowledge of their spiritual essence: a divine spark of light or spirit. They then have the opportunity to escape from the prison of their bodies at death. Their soul can ascend to be reunited with the Supreme God at the time of their death. Gnostics divided humanity into three groups:
   - The spiritual, who would be saved irrespective of their behavior while on earth.
   - The Soulish, who could be saved if they followed the Gnostic path
   - The carnal who are hopelessly lost.

7. Some Gnostic sects honored the snake. They did not view the snake as a seducer who led the first couple into sinful behavior. Rather, they saw him/it as a liberator who brought knowledge to Adam and Eve by convincing them to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and thus to become fully human.

   Snake Symbol -- the Ouroboros
   "... an ancient symbol depicting a serpent or dragon swallowing its own tail and forming a circle. It has been used to represent many things over the ages, but it most generally symbolizes ideas of cyclicality, unity, or infinity. ... In Gnosticism, this serpent symbolized eternity and the soul of the world."

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XIX SYNERCITIZATION : M. M. NINAN
This teaching Mani set out in an elaborate mythology, harmonized deliberately from different elements.

**The myth:** In the beginning the Paradise of Light stretched unbounded upwards and to left and right (or, northwards and to east and west). Below, or southwards, lay the Hell of Darkness. The land of Paradise is uncreated and eternal. Its substance is the Five Light Elements: Ether, Air, Light, Water, and Fire. It is ruled over by the Father of Greatness, (Vishnu) and is inhabited by countless Aeons. A goddess, the Great Spirit, is as it were the Father’s consort. (Lakshmi)

Hell is divided into five kingdoms, each of the substance of one of the Five Dark Elements. These are sometimes given the same names as the corresponding Light Elements (i.e. Air standing also for Dark Air) or sometimes the exact opposite (i.e. Darkness for Light). Sometimes, however, they are given other names, i.e. instead of Water, Poison, or Brine. The five infernal kingdoms are inhabited by five kinds of devils, two-legged, four-legged, winged, swimming, and crawling. Each kind is divided into two sexes, and lives in perpetual lust and strife. The Devil, or Prince of Darkness, king over all, combines in himself
features of all five species of devil, namely demon, lion, eagle, fish and dragon. He is treated sometimes as the personification of Matter, sometimes as its chief manifestation.

By chance the Devil came to the boundary between hell and heaven, and saw, desired, and invaded the Light. To protect his realm, and to preserve its eternal peace, the Father of Greatness evoked by word Emanations of himself, to do battle with the powers of Darkness. These Emanations are the gods of Manichaeism. Being essentially the same, they are distinguished from one another mainly by their functions.
There are three separate “Creations” of gods. Those of the First Creation are the Mother of Life, who evokes in turn her “son”, the First Man; and he evokes as his “sons” the Five Light Elements, from the substance of the Paradise of Light. With these he goes forth to do battle with the devils, the first warrior of Light. The Light Elements are also called his “armour”, and his “bait”, which, overwhelmed by the powers of Darkness, he is forced to throw them to distract them from Paradise. The devils swallow the Light Elements, are appeased, and cease their invasion. By this act a part of the Light has become absorbed in Darkness. This lost Light is smothered by the Matter which has devoured it, suffers, and forgets its divine nature. Matter itself rejoices in the Light it has obtained, and grows to depend upon it.

The First Man overwhelmed in the deeps of hell, remains unconscious on the battlefield. Recovering his senses, he cries out for help; and his Mother, hearing him, pleads with the Father of Greatness, who evokes the Second Creation of gods for his aid: the Friend of the Lights (whose function is obscure), the Great Builder, and the Living Spirit with his five Sons, the Keeper of Splendour, the King of Honour, the Adams of Light, the King of Glory, and Atlas. The Living Spirit goes to the edge of the abyss and utters a call, and the First Man answers from the depths. Call and Answer themselves are made gods, the Sixth Sons of the Living Spirit and the First Man respectively. They symbolize the yearning of the gods for the defeated Light, and the response of that Light to their summons. The rescue of the first Man is a pattern for the redemption thereafter of all individual souls; for, awakened from his unconsciousness, he rises up from the pit, and is led back to Paradise by the Mother of Life and the Living Spirit.

The creation of the world: The Living Spirit then attacks and defeats the powers of Darkness. From the bodies of the demons he has killed he makes 8 earth, from their skins 10 skies. Other, their chiefs or Archons, he fetters, living, in the firmament. From a portion of the swallowed Light that is still undefiled he makes sun and moon, and from Light that is slightly defiled, the stars, which are set in an eleventh sky, i.e. the one which is seen from this earth. For the redemption of the Light retained by Matter he makes Three Wheels, of Fire, Water and Wind, controlled by the King of Glory. The Keepers of Splendour holds up the 10 heavens from above, and Atlas, standing on the fifth earth, supports on his shoulders the three upper earths.

The process of redemption: The world at this point is motionless and without life, the sun standing still in the sky. The Father then evokes the Third Creation, that of the redeeming gods. The first of these is the Third Messenger; he evokes in turn the Maiden of Light (who sometimes also appears as the Twelve Maidens). The two divinities show themselves naked to the Archons chained in the sky. Beholding them, the males ejaculate, and with their seed there falls to earth the Light in their bodies. Part of the seed falls into the water and becomes a huge sea-monster, which is overcome by the Adams of Light. Part falls on land and forms the trees and plants. The female devils, pregnant from unions in hell, miscarry, and their abortions, containing less Light than the male semen, fall to earth and people it with the five kinds of living creatures, which correspond with the five species of demons.

The Great Builder (from the Second Creation of gods) then makes the New Paradise or New Aeon, which is of the same substance as the Paradise of Light, and also eternal, but which has a separate existence during the time of mixture; its function is to be a home for the gods and for the redeemed Light, so that the Eternal Paradise may remain remote and untroubled during the struggle. The ruler of the New Paradise is the First Man.

The third god of the redeeming Creation is the Column of Glory, who is both a god, and the path by which the redeemed Light ascends to the sky (its visible appearance is the Milky Way). By this path the
souls pass to the moon at its time of waxing, and thence to the sun, from which they go to the New
Paradise. The sun and the moon are variously described as “ships” and “chariots”, and also as walled
“fortresses”, containing the thrones of the gods. The other gods of the Third Creation, in order of
evocation, are Jesus the Splendour, the Great Nous (or Great Mind), and the Just Justice. The Great Nous
has as his five “limbs” the five powers of the mind, which make up the being of god, and of the soul:
Mind, Thought, Reflection, Intelligence and Reason.

Compare this to the Introduction to Hinduism by the Hindu Society HSS

“Hinduism has been enriched by the contributions by many sages.
Hinduism is as old as the world itself. Vedas form the basis.
A Way of life that TRANSCENDS Religion
Believes in ‘Truth is one. Paths are many’.
Focuses on personally experiencing the Truth within.”

Until the time of Thomas India never had the concept of a Supreme Godhead nor the concept of incarnation
(Avatar). It was only by the eighth century AD and that in Kerala did India developed the a systematic Gnostic
Advaitic Theology. Until then each village received the christian concept of God mixed up local religion and
local gods. The following is the summary of Sankara’s doctrine which came to be the central core of Hindu
theology.

Concept of God (Brahman)
In Hindu scriptures, the Cosmic Absolute/Absolute Reality is defined as Transcendent (impersonal) and
Immanent (personal).
In the transcendent aspect, the Supreme Reality is called Nirguna Brahman, that is Brahman, without attributes. "Brahman is He whom speech cannot express, and from whom the mind is unable to reach Him, comes away baffled" states the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Nirguna Brahman is not an object of prayer, but of meditation and knowledge. It cannot be described, and It is absolute existence, absolute knowledge, and absolute bliss (sat-chit-ananda). It is unborn, self-existent, all-pervading, and the essence of all things and beings in the universe. It is immeasurable, unapproachable, beyond conception, beyond birth, beyond reasoning, and beyond thought”. God cannot be defined in terms of any specific manifestation, nor indeed in terms of their sum total. He is beyond all possibility of definition.

However, on the personal level, it's up to individuals to create a form/view of the same Supreme Bharman to pray. Hindu accepts only one God, the Supreme. Because of this flexibility in giving a shape or form, it appears as if there are many Hindu Gods/Goddesses to a non-Hindu. Hindus see divinity in all living creatures. Animal deities therefore, occupy an important place in Hindu dharma.

- Atman is uncreated, immortal and divine.
- Atman and Brahman is same. So individual can reach the state of divinity. “Aham Brahmasmi” – I am God.
- In the human body, Atman is deluded by cosmic ignorance, called Maya in Sanskrit.
- In Hindu view, WE ARE CHILDREN OF IMMORTALITY and may commit sin under the influence of Maya. Thus, the purpose of Hindu religious life is to transcend Maya.
- Hinduism believes that there is no one religion that teaches an exclusive way to salvation. All genuine spiritual paths are valid and all great religions are equally true.
Manichaean leaf found in the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, there is an illustrated leaf, in somewhat damaged condition, of a Manichaean manuscript, which shows among other things, four Hindu deities on a This illustrated leaf was found in Qoco, (eastern Turkestan); and on stylistic and other grounds it is ascribable to c. eighth to ninth century A.D. It has been described in detail by A. von Le Coq in his monumental work, Die Manichaecischen Miniaturen, pl.8a. p.50. It has also been reproduced as frontispiece of the book, Painting of Central Asia, by Professor M. Bussagli.

For description see: Hindu Trinity from Central Asia Priyotosh Banerjee http://ignca.nic.in/pb0009.htm

The presence of Ganesha as part of the deities clearly shows the syncretic attempts of Manichaenism.

Influence of Mani on Buddhism

If in India Manichaenism transformed Christianity into Hinduism, in China it transformed Buddhism. Even today Manichaen Shrine is found in the Port of Quanzhou / Chuan Chou.


Since 2000 a research team of Australia-based scholars has systematically collected and analysed finds by Chinese archeologists and scholars relating to the diffusion and cultural adaptation of two religions of Near Eastern origin, Manichaeism and Christianity, which had reached China via the Silk Road in the Middle Ages. The project focuses particularly on Manichaean and Nestorian remains found in the port city of Quanzhou (Ch’üan-chou, viz. the Zayton of Marco Polo) which was a thriving multicultural centre throughout the Middle Ages. The team is led by Professor Sam Lieu FSA, FAHA (Macquarie) and consisting of Dr Ken Parry (Macquarie), Professor Majella Franzmann FAHA (UNE), Associate Professor Iain Gardner FAHA (Sydney) and Dr Lance Eccles (Macquarie) with Ms Michelle Wilson (Macquarie) as project photographer in 2004. The team is supported at an international level by Professor Aloïs van Tongerloo FRAS (Leuven) and Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams FBA (SOAS London and AIIT Cambridge). The project is funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC DP0210152 2003-04 and DP0557098 2005-09) and the Chiang Ching Kuo Foundation of International Scholarly Exchange (2001-08) and operates under the aegis of the UNESCO-sponsored Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum Project.

This site gives a study on the remnants of Manichaenism and Nestorian Christianity.

“The port reached its height of prosperity in the Mongol Yuan dynasty during the 13th century. At that time, the North African traveler Ibn Battuta compared it to the Egyptian port of Alexandria. Marco Polo described it as "one of the largest and most commodious ports of the world". It became a center of the Islamic, Hindu, and Manichean faiths in China, as well as the site of important Buddhist and Taoist temples.

“Quanzhou was so cosmopolitan that its well-established communities of Persian and Arab merchants even maintained their own militias here. After these forces rebelled against the Mongols in the late thirteenth century, however, the city suffered a ferocious backlash against its foreign traders. Then in the fourteenth century, the anti-trade policies of the Ming dynasty sealed the great port’s doom.
The shrine is styled a *cao’an* in Chinese which literally means a “thatched nunnery” and is still used as a place of Buddhist worship by local village folk and staffed by a small number of nuns. It was built against a cliff-face and dominating the back wall is a statue of Mani as the Buddha of Light.

**The modern cult of Moni (Mani/Muni) the Buddha of Light**

“Suni where several thousand local residents are still followers of the cult of Mani the Buddha of Light. However this was not the Manichaeism of old, but a Buddhist revival cult which began in the 1920s but based on the worship of the extraordinarily well preserved statue of Mani in the shrine on Huabiao Hill (see above Fig. 7). The name Mani in China shares the same characters (*moni*) as the *-muni* part of the name of Buddha (*Sakyamuni*). Hence it would have been extremely easy for the propagator of the new cult – a Buddhist monk with unbounded evangelical zeal – to pronounce that the statue of Mani was none other than that of the Buddha – Sakyamuni.”
A.D 510 – 1439
The Christian Dynasty of Villarvattom

By this period, the great Empire of the Chera Kingdom came to ruins and an immense number of small independent Kingdoms came into existence. Their extents were limited. Thus the areas where Christians were in prominence established themselves into Kingdoms. Christians were traditionally good statesmen and warriors. Though there might have been several such centers of strong hold of Christians in Kerala, one particular Villarvattom Kingdom is mentioned often. This Kingdom of Villarvattom Pana extended from the coastal islands of Chennamangalam, Maliankara and others to the north of and south of Udayamperoor. The capital of this kingdom was at mahadevarpattanam in the island of Chennamangalam and later it was shifted to Udayamperoor when the Arab invaders attacked the island. The Udayamperoor Church, which stands even today was built by Raja of Villarvottam in A.D 510. There are several inscriptions in this church that supports this including the mention of one Raja Thomas who ruled in AD 900. Pope John XXII in his letter sent with Friar Jordan address himself to the successor of Raja Thomas in A.D 1330 Later in A.D 43 Pope Eugene IV addresses to Raja Thomas in A.D 1439. The papal record mentions "that there is a Kingdom twenty days journey from Cathay, of which the king and all the inhabitants are Christians, but heretics, being said to be Nestorians." "Historia de Variatate Fortunae, liv. IV, Poggi Bracciolini , Secretary to Pope Eugenius IV) Though there are several traditions in this regards, no details or documentation apart from scattered references and archaeological artifacts can be found.

AD 1498
Arrival of Vasco Da Gama and Roman Catholic Mission

The Arrival of Vasco Da Gama landed in Calicut and started the Colonization process of India by the Western Nations.
Along with this came the religious domination of Roman Catholic Church over the independent churches of Malabar.

Till that time the Thomas Churches were Nestorian in faith. It was ruled by the Arch Deacon who was not only most important priest of the community but was also "the prince and head of the Christians of St. Thomas", He was called under the titles of "Arch Deacon and Gate of All India, Governor of India". The church was ruled by council of elders "Moopenmar".

Portuguese being of Roman Catholic persuasion wanted to bring the Malabar Christians under the pontificate of Rome. According to the Roman concept the Pope of Rome is the heir to the throne of Peter and is the Vicar of the Church Universal all over the world wherever it may be. The Roman Catholicism claimed that Pope of Rome was the supreme head of all the churches of the world and Indian Churches should also submit to this supremacy if they are to remain true as Catholic Church. The first such claim came with Friar John, whom Pope John XXII ordained as Bishop of Quilon in AD 1330 when he was sent him with a letter. Friar John is reported to have come to Quilon and founded a church in Latin rite. However historically there is no evidence that he ever came to Quilon. He is said to have been martyred at Kalyan in Bombay. There were similar visits from other legations from Rome. Though these were received with Christian courtesy it did not lead to acknowledgement of Papal supremacy as expected.

**AD 1599**

*Synod of Diampore*

A Memento for the conduct of the Synod of Diamper is found today at the main entrance. This Memento made of brass was given by the Government to this church according to the order of G. T. Mackenzie, the then Governor. It reads thus: “THE SYNOD OF DIAMPER WAS HELD IN THIS BUILDING ON THE 20TH OF JUNE 1599-

BY ARCHBISHOP MENEZES OF GOA”.

It is preserved in a Shrine designed and constructed by Fr. George Koilparampil on 2002, who was then the vicar of this parish.

The Portuguese became powerful in certain areas of India especially in Goa and Bombay. In Jan. 1599, Alexiyodi Menessis, the Archbishop of Goa came to Cochin. Geevarghese Archdeacon was in charge of the churches in Kerala at that time. Menessis Archbishop with the colonial power behind him used the power to put Geevarghese Archdeacon arrested and put in prison under the orders of the King of Cochin. Then he traveled extensively and influenced the leaders and people. In July 5, 1599, he called the famous Udayam Peror Council (Sunnahadose).
There were 153 leaders and 660 laymen were represented in that council. Under the yoke of the Portuguese Colonial force they, accepted the supremacy of the Pope of Rome. However the sailing was not smooth for Roman church. This domination continued for over five decades. Through political influence the Synod of Diamper (Portuguese name for Udayamperoor) was held in 1599 and most of the St: Thomas Christians were brought under the Pope. During this period the Malabar Church assimilated many of the teachings and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church.

A visual model of the Synod of Diamper constructed from history by Dr. George Koilparampil, is the main attraction in the Synod Museum.

Most of the early records on the faith, liturgy and history of the Malankara Church prior to the arrival of Portuguese were destroyed in a fire soon after the Synod of Diamper. They wanted a fresh new chapter for the Malankara church within the Roman Catholic.

AD 1653
Oath on the Leaning Cross
Koonan Kurisu Sathyam

Those who kept away from the Synod of Diamper continued as a small separate church in Trichur and were called the Chaldean Church. In 1653, the Nestorian church in Persia sent a bishop to Kerala. Knowing this the Portuguese authorities captured the bishop before he could land in Cochin and was imprisoned there where he died in duress. It is assumed that he was burned at stake in accordance with the principles of Inquisition of the Catholic Church. As soon as this was known, the enraged Christians in Malankara gathered under the leadership of Thomas Archdeacon at Mattanchery Church in Kochi and the nearby market on 1653 (Makaram 3rd, Friday). They took an oath proclaiming that "We or our children and their children to all generations to come will have
nothing to do with the Roman Catholic Church nor the Pope of Rome from now on." There were over 2000 Christians at the Church compound. They took the oath touching the cross in the front yard of the Church. Since all the people could not touch the cross, they tied ropes from the church and every one of the 2000 held the rope or touched the cross to take the oath. Since the cross had a slight bent, this historic oath came to be known as the Koonan Kurisu Sathyam. Thus ended the five decades of supremacy of the Roman church in Malabar.

This shaking away of the yoke of Roman Catholicism was accelerated by the fact that Portuguese supremacy in the Indian Ocean was broken by the Dutch. Dutch were Protestants and gave their full support to this change over. As a result Thomas Archdeacon was ordained as the Bishop of Malabar under the name of Mar Thoma I by Mar Gregoroius the Patriarch of Jerusalem on May 22 1653 on the Day of Pentecost. (The Patriarchate of Jerusalem was part of the Patriarchate of Antioch. Mar Gregorious was the last of the Non-Chalcedonian Patriarchs of Jerusalem. He came to Malankara for this ordination. He is still remembered in the first dyptych of the Orthodox Liturgy along with Mar Ignatius, the Patriarch of Antioch, and Mar Baselius the Catholicos of the East.) Since the Antiochian Patriarchate was known to have believed the theology of Jacob Burdhana, the church came to be known as the Jacobite Church of Malabar. A minority faction still remained faithful to the Roman pontiff.
After the Koonen Cross Oath in 1653 it became necessary to appoint a bishop. For this purpose a special chair was made and Mar Thoma I the first bishop of Malankara church was enthroned. This throne, used for the consecration of Mar Thoma I, is now with the Mar Thoma Church and is kept at Tiruvalla. It has been used in the installation of every Mar Thoma Metropolitan, to this day, so that the continuity of the throne of Mar Thoma is ensured. Archdeacon Thomas was ordained, by the laying on of hands of twelve priests, as the first indigenous Metropolitan of Kerala under the name Mar Thoma I.
Tombs of 'Geevarghese Arkadiyokan' and 'Mar Thoma I', in the Jacobite Syrian Church of Angamali

Malankara Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyur

In 1772 Mar Gregorios consecrated Abraham Mar Koorilose as bishop. This was not appreciated by his fellow bishop, who hindered his ministry. Mar Koorilose eventually retired to Thozhiyur where he led a life of prayer. This church continued as an independent church since then. Three time during its life time the main Malankara Syrian Church found themselves without a bishop. The Thozhiyur Independent Church provided bishops for it to maintain its apostolic succession. Later it also provided a bishop for Mar Thoma Church when it found itself without a bishop even though the doctrines of Mar Thoma Church and the Thozhiyur Church are different. In return when the Thozhiyur Church was without a bishop, Mar Thoma Church provided a bishop for it. Thus Thozhiyur church became an instrument of maintaining the apostolic succession without break within the sister Malankara churches.

Until recently Thozhiyur was the only church under this Biashopric. With the increased membership additional churches are being built. Cochin currently has a new church.
AD 1816
Arrival of the British Missionaries
The Malayalam Bible

The next wave of colonizers came in the East India Company. Later when the colonization became wide, the crown took over with Viceroy at New Delhi. This opened up a wave of British missionaries to India. Kerala, which now formed three Kingdoms Thiruvithamcore, Kochi and Malabar also, came under the influence of the British. There was a resident at the capitals of these states. Along with them came the Missionaries. One of the firsts to be involved with the Malabar Churches was Claudius Buchanan. Mar Divanyakos was the Metropolitan of the Jacobite Church at that time. He gave a copy of the Syriac Bible to Buchanan (one of the chaplains of the East India Company employees) who got copies of it reprinted and distributed them mainly among the clergy. Finding the impact of the Bible Mar Divanyakos I translated the gospels into Malayalam which Buchanan got printed in Bombay. William Baily translated the New Testament by 1829 and the whole Bible was available in Malayalam by 1841. The word of God in the hands of the common people made an impact and a surge of revival and reformation took place. This was accelerated by the presence of the British Missionaries. Among those was Dr. Hermen Gundort (Bassel Mission) who studied Malayalam and wrote the first grammar book for Malayalam.

The European Missionaries opened up several Missions fields. They Included the Danish Mission in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Berthealonmese Segan Balgue; Baptist Mission in Calcutta under the leadership of William Carey (who started the Serampore University); London Mission Society (LMS) under the leadership of Tingle Tob in Trivandrum area, Tamil Nadu; and Bengal; Basal Mission (1834) under Samuel Hebic and Gundort in Mangalore and surrounding areas, and in Malabar. Church of Scotland Mission and many others.

AD 1836
Formation of the C.M.S Church

The first wave of Missionary thrust to India was by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in 1816. Though many of the Jacobite theology was at variance with the Protestant theology there was lot of cooperation between the two groups. Among the prominent missionaries were Thomas Norton, Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Fenn and Henry Baker, who were famous among these C.M.S. missionaries. They started the CMS Press in Kottayam in 1821, and began to publish Malayalam Bible and Christian literature for the use of common people. 1825, they published the gospel of Matthew, and in 1828, the New Testament, and in 1841, the complete bible.

The church leaders of Malankara Syrian Christian Church and C.M.S. worked together from 1816 to 1836. The Bishops of Malankara Syrian Christian Church, Pulikkottu Mar Divanyakos (1817-18), Punnatra Mar Divanyakos (1818-27) and Cheppadu Mar Divanyakos (1827-52) along with the CMS missionaries started the Seminary now known as Pazhaya Seminary (Old Seminary) for the training of the clergy in 1818..
theological differences came to surface and in January 16, 1836 there was clear rift between the Missionaries and the Syrian Churches, and CMS and the Church separated. CMS then turned to evangelization among the Hindus.

So the missionaries turned to the non-Christians and started working among them. According to a panchayat court verdict, the properties and schools which were common among the missionaries and the Malankara Syrian Church were divided following the declaration of the church commonly known as Mavelikkara Padiyola. One group of believers and priests who believed in the reformation principles joined with the C.M.S and started the CMS church. Those who came from the Syrian Christian Church retained their identity even within the new church. Another group of believers under the leadership of Palakunnathu Abraham Malpan (1796-1845) decided to stay in Malankara Syrian Church and worked for reformation from within the church.

However as the theological controversy came to a climax, the two leaders, Palakunnathu Abraham Malpaan (Malpaan means Professor of Theology) and Kaithayil Geevarghese Malpaan and their followers were dismissed from the Orthodox-Jacobite church.

Palakunnathu Abraham Malpaan sent his 23 year old nephew who was at that time a deacon, to Syria in 1843 and got him ordained as Bishop Mathews Mar Athanasius by the Patriarch of Antioch. Immediately on return, he was declared the Malankara Metropolitan by the decree of the King.
Following this Pulikott Joseph Ramban of the orthodox tradition went to Antioch and got himself consecrated as bishop with the name Joseph Mar Dionysios. He returned to Kerala with the Patriarch of Antioch Peter III and convened the synod of Mulamthuruthy in 1876. During this synod the church accepted the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch. Mathews Mar Athanasious died in 1877, and was succeeded by, Thomas Mar Athanasious (1879-1889). The struggle between Bishop Athanasius and Bishop Dionysious led to the excommunication of one bishop by the other and resulted in the separation of the Malankara Syrian Church into Jacobite and Marthomite Churches. Those who supported the reformation within the church organised as Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Christian Church as an independent church without any affiliation with any foreign patriarchate. Since the Bible in the hands of the common man in Malayalam and with large number of theologically trained clergy, it was no more necessary to have any Syrian affiliation. The liturgy was translated into Malayalam with necessary changes to reflect the reformation theology.

The changes made by Abraham Malpan in the liturgy of the Holy Communion were as follows:

i. All invocations to the saints were removed.

ii. All prayers for the dead were removed.

iii. In the prayer of consecration of the bread in Holy Communion the prayer, "Thee who holdest the extremities of the universe, I hold in my hand; Thee, who rulest the depths, I grasp with my hand", and the statement at the time of partaking of the bread, "Thee, who are God, I put into my mouth", were deleted.

iv. Instead of the prayer: "We offer into Thee, O Lord, this bloodless sacrifice (referring to the Eucharist) on behalf of Thy Holy Church which is in all the world", the following prayer was inserted: "We offer into Thee, O Lord, this prayer on behalf of Thy Holy Church which is in all the world", leaving out the words "bloodless sacrifice" and inserting instead "this prayer".

v. The declaration that “Living Sacrifice is offered” (the reference is again to the Eucharist), was changed into: "living sacrifice, which is the sacrifice of grace, peace, and praise".

vi. The declaration: "this Eucharist is sacrifice and praise" was deleted.

vii. The declaration that “the Holy Spirit is the sanctifier of the censor” was deleted.

viii. The note that the censor should be sanctified was taken away.

ix. The prayer: “Let Him (Holy Spirit) make this bread the life-giving and saving body of Jesus Christ”, was replaced by: “Let Him (Holy Spirit) come upon and make this bread to those who partake of it, the body of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and life everlasting”. (This clearly teaches the Receptionist Theory.)
x. The prayer: "Thou are the hard rock which was set against the tomb of our Redeemer" (referring to the Eucharist bread), was replaced by: “Thou art that tested and precious hard rock rejected by the builders” (converted it into a reference to Christ).

The following changes were made to the practices of the Church:
- It was decided that the Eucharist should be administered in both kinds.
- The practice of auricular confession and obtaining absolution from the priests was abolished.

The practice of celebrating the Eucharist when there was nobody to partake of it was abolished.

The missionary oriented Marthomite Church though started as a small church grew strong in time. The Sunday school Samajam (The institution of Sunday School) and the Suvisesha Sangham (evangelism board) have played a big role in this reformation. Punchamannil Mammen Upadeshi, Edayaranmula Sadhu Kochu Kunju Upadeshi, Pennamma Sanyasini and several preachers led the revival in Marthoma Church at the dawn of the 20th century, in 1895, the Maramon Convention was started in the sands of Pampa, which became the biggest convention in the world.

AD 1912 – 1972
Malankara Orthodox church
Malankara Jacobite Church
Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

Though the acceptance of the Antiochian supremacy was expedient for those opposing the reformation, not all members of the church were happy with it. This group sent a request to the Patriarch of Syria to ordain a Catholicos for Malankara. Patriarch Abdul Messiah of that time denied the request. Few years later the next Patriarch, Abdulla came to Kerala and wanted Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Dionysios to sign a document declaring that the Patriarch had temporal powers over the Malankara Church. Mar Dionysios refused to sign this document and he was therefore excommunicated by the Patriarch.

The church consequently split into two groups, one group supporting the Patriarch and called themselves the "Bava party" and the group of supporting Mar Dionysios called themselves the "Metran party". Following a request by Mar Dionysios in 1912 to Patriarch Mar Abdul Messiah to come to Kerala and enthrone a Catholicos in 1964 a Catholicos was ordained as Catholicos Augen I. In 1972 the "Bava party" with their own Catholicos and bishops separated themselves and formed the Malankara Orthodox Church. The Other group is known as the Malankara Syrian Church. or commonly called as Jacobite Church.

Malankara Metropolitan had deposited about 3,000 Poovarahan (gold coin currency of Kerala at that time) on 8% interest, with the British government. This desposit money is known as Vatti paanam. As the Church got seperated a raging court case ensued which prolonged over many years in bitterness to both groups.

In the midst of these power struggle in AD 1930 A group of people left the Jacobite church together with Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos to join the Roman Catholic following the Syro-Malankara Rites and Liturgies. This Church is commonly known as Reeth Sabha. Later two other Bishops, Mar Savarios and Thomas Mar Diyascoros also joined with the Syro Malankara Rites.

The Pentecostal Movement
Pentecostal Movement started all over the world in a spectacular way almost simultaneously. The revival of the gifts of the holy spirit and the need for progressive sanctification was the emphasis. This was initially objected to by all churches as they were surprised by the new phenomena. However, as time went on even the most orthodox churches came to terms with the reality of the experience and its power to transform. Because of the objections within the institutional churches in its early days, many Pentecostals separated themselves to form independent churches.

In Kerala the start of this revival came from the MarThoma Church and the CMS Church. Henry Backer (Baker Saip) and many of the CMS missionaries gave impetus and leadership for this movement.

Among the Brahmin converts from Tamil Nadu was one priest of the CMS Church called Yoosthose Joseph. He was a scholar in the Bible and was known as Vidwan Kutty Achen. His chronological studies of the Bible led him to a conclusion that Jesus was going to return before 1871. Since the Church did not support this view he along with another Priest Koodara Pallil Thommen Kathanar started a new church called Kanneettu Revival Church. Since his predictions did not come true the church declined and died out.

The present day structure and independent Pentecostal Churches are the result of American Missions. The first effective mission of the Pentecostal teaching came through the efforts of one George Burg. He came down to Kerala and held several meetings in and around Trikannamangal, Kottarakara, Mavelikkara and Adoor in 1909. His followings were mainly from Mar Thomas Church and C.M.S church. In 1913 Burg returned to Kerala with larger financial support and missionary personal support from the All World Pentecostal Conference held in California (1912). The independent Pentecostal churches arose due to their efforts. In 1914 several independent Pentecostal Churches joined together in America to form the Assemblies of God Church. The new church was able to reach out to India and started several bible schools among them was the Bethel Bible School in Punalur. George Burg was followed by others like Charles Commins, Miss Brownell, Al Dwingle, and Robert Cook.

Robert Cook was one of the missionaries from Assemblies of God who came to Mulakuzha in Chengannur in 1914. Latter he started the Church of God. and in 1928 started the Zion Bible School in Mulakkuzha.
Among those who supported him was Pastor T.M. Varughese. Again the following came from the Syrian Christian stock.

**Brethren Assembly**

This movement is an outgrowth of Pietism - or Holiness Movement of the early 17th Century. It originated in Germany in 1708 and were known at that time as Dunkers. It was led by Alexander Mack (1679-1735) and created such giant revivalists like Darbi, Ironside and Spurgeon. In 1897 Marthoma Church invited the great speaker Grugson as a speaker to the Maramon convention. The next year he returned as a missionary and in collaboration with David and Nagal (Basal Mission) started the Bretheren Assembly in Kunnamkulam. The early converts who gave impetus to Brethren growth were a priest from the Mar Thoma Church one Mammen from Kumbanad and the Poet Laureate in Malayalam (Maha Kavi) K.V.Simon. As again the main stock came from the Mar Thoma Church.

**Indian Pentecostal Church**

As the pentecostal churches grew in number and strength with powerful preachers and theologians, it was time to be independent of the foreign missions. Pastor K.E. Abraham who came from a Jacobite family was the leader for this freedom movement and Southern India Pentecostal Church was formed in 1925. This name was later changed in 1934 to Indian Pentecostal Church as the vision of the church expanded. In 1930 he started the Hebron Bible College in Kumbanad which remained as the main theological training center for Indian Pentecostal Church.

Indian Pentecostal Churches General Council
Indian Pentecostal Churches Kerala Council

**St Thomas Evangelical Church of India**

Mar Thoma Church was the result of Reformation within the Malankara Church after it shook the burden of Rome. But the many teachings of the Roman and other foreign churches still remained dormant within the church. Though there were no intermarriages between "Mar Thomites" and the "Jacobites" time could not keep them separate. Intermarriage brought in the Jacobite teachings into Marthomite laity. Thus within the church an anti-reformist group developed. When Bishop Abraham Mar Thoma passed away in 1947, Bishop Juhanon Mar Thoma became the Metropolitan.

Bishop Juhanon Mar Thoma being brought up by a Jacobite mother directly and indirectly subverted the reformation principles. Mar Thoma laity under the leadership of a prominent scholar and theologian K.N.Daniel opposed these moves within the church.
XX RECENT HISTORY : M. M. NINAN

The main controversy were centered around:

1. Transubstantiation theory of Holy Communion. In his book on "the Holy Quarbana" Juhanon mar Thoma wrote in 1947, "the Receptionist theory accepted by the reformer Abraham Malpan, cannot be justified by the Bible or by patristic writings."
2. Juhanon Mar Thoma prayed for the dead and to the dead in several public occasions against the beliefs of the Mar Thoma Church and reformers.
3. Emphasis on rituals, candles, crosses, censors etc.

Whether the 66 books of the New and the Old Testaments alone are the basis of its faith or does it include rituals and practices of the church. The reformists contended that the rituals and practices couldn’t be given the status as the bible as they have been corrupted through centuries of misuse and syncretism.

The controversy took a serious turn when the opposing groups formed parties which were called Sathyopadesha Samiti (The Group of True Teachings – belonging to those who opposed reformation principles) and Pathoyopadesa Samithi (the Group of Acceptable Teachings – belonging to the reformation group)

In December 1., 1959 Juhanon Mar Thoma excommunicated four priests (Rev.P.I.Mathai, Rev. P. John Varughese, Rev. C.M.Varughese and Rev. K.O.John) along with several (around 300) lay men and women. Among them were my father and mother M.M.Mammen (Press Mammachen- he was a printer and publisher) and Mariamma Mammen.

Mr. & Mrs M.M.Mammen

On the 26th of January 1961 30000 Mar Thomites gathered together in Tiruvalla. There were also ministers of the Mar Thoma church present. Declaration of the formation of the church was read and all the congregation took the oath of allegiance to the declaration and formed the St.Thomas Evangelical Church of India as reconstituted Mar Thoma Church on the principles of reformation held by Abraham Malpan. Following the ancient tradition of the Church of Alexandria (before 328 AD) Rev. P.John Varughese and Rev. K.N.Oommen were consecrated as Bishops by the laying on of hands by the entire body of the ministers of the church.

Kerala saw a new revival and the church grew in leaps and bounds. But by 1965 power struggles within the hierarchy broke the growth. Many who were discouraged went back to the Mar Thoma Church and many others joined the Pentecostal Churches. Those who remained grouped into two parts. One group formed a church within...
the church called St. Thomas Evangelical Fellowship of India and even ordained their own bishops. It pained all those who loved the reformation and the evangelical thrust the St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India brought within the Malankara Syrian Christians. After a long series of efforts from the laity these differences were finally ironed out and unity returned within the Church. However the damage done by the power struggle to the early evangelistic thrust of the Church into the various parts of India will take a long time to undo.

The major contribution of the St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India was it emphasis on evangelization of India as a whole.

**Classification of Malankara Syrian Churches**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eastern Syrian</th>
<th>Oriental</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Catholic (Papal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Syro Malankara Church</td>
<td>The Church of the East (Nestorian Church)</td>
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<td>Malankara Syrian Catholic Church</td>
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<td>(Syrian Catholic Church)</td>
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<th>West Syrian Reformed</th>
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<td>Brothren Churches</td>
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<td>Independent Pentecostal Churches</td>
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<td>The Assemblies of God</td>
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<td>The St. Thomas Evangelical Church of India</td>
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<td>The church of South India</td>
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<tr>
<td>The MarThoma Syrian Church</td>
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The reformed churches have been involved in extensive evangelization process throughout India and has non-syrrian components.

<table>
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<th>West Syrian Orthodox</th>
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<td>The Malabar Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyur</td>
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<td>The Indian Orthodox Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church</td>
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Saint Thomas Christians Demography

- Syro Malabar Church: 60%
- Syro Malankara Church: 8%
- Malankara Orthodox & Jacobite: 26%
- Thoziyur Church: 0%
- Chaldean Syrian Church: 0%

Communions / Groups:
- Catholic
- Church of the East
- Oriental Orthodox
- Reformed / Independent

Rites:
- East Syrian Rite / derivative
- West Syrian Rite / derivative

Notes:
* referred to as the Chaldean Syrian Church in Kerala

http://nasrani.net
HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

M.M. NINAN

2005

Souvenir pp 62-79
India Before Christ

In order to understand the History of Indian Christianity it is necessary to look into the environment in which Christianity developed in India. At the time of Jesus, India had a very flourishing civilization. It is normal for any country to claim a civilization, which started from the beginning of creation. But this is just a feature of nationalism. The reality is that there had always been civilizations in regions, which sustained life all over the world. Trade and relations between these civilizations molded the religious atmosphere of every civilization and country. India was no different.

At the time of Jesus, the Aryans were practically all over India. They had a very weak presence in South India where the Dravidians were more concentrated. By the second century BC Aryans must have reached even Sri Lanka. Aryan religion was essentially Vedic Religion. Though for the sake of pushing the date of the origin of Hinduism, Vedic religion is erroneously equated with Hinduism. Vedic religion in fact has nothing to do with Hinduism.

Vedism is a polytheistic religion brought to India around 1500 B.C.E. by the Aryans. It was the faith of nomadic warrior tribes whose gods were heroes of war and this reflected in their Scriptures. Thus, Vedic Religion was essentially a worship of the forces of nature. The famous triad gods are Indra, Agni and Varuna. Indra, the god of thunder was the king of gods. Agni, the fire god was the giver of energy and life. Surya or Varuna was the sun god. There are thirty-three gods mentioned in the Vedas. Today they are relegated to the level of secondary gods. There was no concept of Brahman. This concept of the ultimate God is nowhere found in the Vedas. It would require extreme allegory to impose the later concepts of Para Brahman into Vedic treatments as Swami Aurobindo has done. (1). One will have to manipulate and wrench out the secret meaning and the mystic wisdom couched in allegory and parables if at all they exist. “But all cannot enter into its secret meaning.” At any rate it totally lacked the concepts of karma and reincarnation, which dominate Hinduism, as we know of today. (2)(3)

Vedism came from Persia and is a branch parallel to Zoroastrianism and Mithraism. Vedas are written in a language similar to Old Iranian, the language of Zoroastrianism's scriptures, the Avesta. (4) For lack of writing skills, these were not written down till the 2nd C BC. “The Rig Veda, the oldest of the four Vedas, was composed about 1500 B.C., and codified about 600 B.C. It is unknown when it was finally committed to writing, but this probably was at some point after 300 B.C.” (5) (6) (7)

The Vedic language is often erroneously referred to as Sanskrit. Vedas are written in Vedic language, which is very close to the Iranian languages and is almost identical with the Avestan language in which the scriptures of Zoroastrianism are written. Sanskrit on the other hand has close affinity with the Dravidian
languages and was developed during the early second century AD. All the three religious branches, Vedic, Zoroastrian and Mithraism grew separately after branching out. Vedicism emphasizes, nature worship and rituals involved in offering of sacrifices, magic and witchcraft.

Buddhism and Jainism developed in India around fifth century BC and are atheistic religions. They were essentially materialistic religion of action. The basic teachings of karma and reincarnations or transmigration of souls, brought into India probably by the Greeks, form the background of these religions. Under Emperor Asoka (ca. 273–232 B.C), the third Mauryan emperor, Buddhism spread far and wide; not only in India but also into neighboring countries. The Emperor Asoka built monolithic pillars with carved epigraphs crowned by capitals, rock-cut architecture, and stupas to spread the gospel. By the first century BC, Vedicism, Buddhism and Jainism were the religions of the whole of India. There must have been also the Dravidian religion all over Southern India. We know very little about the nature of this religion. They had the concept of the “God Most High” – “El Elyon” – the Parameshwara or Maheswara. Most scholars believe that the Dravidian Civilization in Moahen-Jodero and Harappa worshipped Siva as the great God who ruled the heavens and the earth. Their religion included animal sacrifice and was very similar to Judaism. Like Judaism under the judges, early Dravidians did not leave any symbols or idols or temples. Almost all sophisticated art and architecture were either Jain or Buddhist origin until 300 AD. Under the influence of other religions, Buddhism developed later into two branches - Theravada or Hinayana (Lower Vehicle) and Mahayana (Higher Vehicle). Hinayana found mostly in Sri Lanka is still atheistic in content, and Mahayana (Higher Vehicle) found in China and neighboring countries is theistic in content. Theravada Buddhism sees Buddha as a man. Gautama never claimed to be deity, but rather a "way shower." Mahayana Buddhism, however, worships Buddha as a manifestation of the divine Buddha essence. The later sect came into existence by the early second century AD and crystallized by the third century. It emphasizes salvation of sentient beings through the assistance of bodhisattvas, which later became the dominant form of Buddhism in most of Asia. (8)

Socio-Political background

Intercontinental trade played a major role in the political, cultural, religious, and artistic exchanges between civilizations. These land routes were in existence for centuries. The trade routes provided much needed luxury and exotic items to other lands. Some areas controlled monopoly of certain goods, like silk by China, Spices by Western coast of India and incense by Northern India and the Arabia. Thus there were Silk routes, Spice (clove, cinnamon, pepper, nutmeg) routes and Incense routes. The ancient port of Muziris was described by the Roman historian Pliny (A.D. 23-79) as the most important port in the East, and Vanji (Thiruvanikulam) was the capital city of the Cera people. While discussing the dealings of the Phoenicians with Muziris, Pliny mentions that every year large sum of money was going to India for silk, pearls, gems and spices. He states that Malabar ships were visiting the Persian Gulf, Aden, the Red Sea and Egypt regularly. Ptolemy's mid-second-century map of India (9)(10) and the apparent third century (11) Tabula Peutingeriana or Peutinger Table. (A.D. 100-160) and the Periplus (the list of ports with distances) (12) of the Erythraean Sea (AD 90) include Malabar and its port Muziris. Diplomatic relations between India and Roman Empire existed even before the Christian era. Conquerors followed these routes to control them. The land routes were dangerous due to the presence of robbers, and later, sea routes became favorites due to its speed of transport and safety. Land transport was incredibly expensive in comparison with the sea routes. (13)
One such route was the spice route connecting Malabar Coast to Yemen, Egypt and to rest of Europe. In A.D. 45 Hippalus discovered the monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean and this discovery reduced the time of transit to less than forty days. It was this route that St. Thomas took. (14) (15)

**Indo-Parthian Kingdom of Takshashila**

Following the Aryans, other invasions came along the same land route. Persian emperor Darius established two provinces in India – Gandara and Hindush. This was followed by the conquest of Alexander the Great (331 BC). The Indo Greek King Meander I established a kingdom in Taxila in 170 BC. Sakas (Scythians), Kushans and Huns came in from Central Asia. In due course, the Parthians ended up controlling all of Bactria and extensive territories in Northern India, after fighting Kushan Emperor Kujula Kadphises, in the Gandhara region. Taxila was the meeting place of the four great civilizations of the time - Greco-Roman, Persian, Indian, and Chinese. At that time it was the capital of Hindus – The Indus Valley.

Around 20 AD, Gondophares, one of the Parthian conquerors, declared his independence from the Parthian empire and established the Indo-Parthian kingdom in the conquered territories. The kingdom barely lasted one century. It started to fragment under Gondophares' successor Abdagases. The northern Indian part of the kingdom was retaken by the Kushans around 75 AD. (9)

**Enter Thomas**

Judas Thomas was one of the disciples of Jesus. He is also known as Didymus, which means the Twin. Thomas means Twin in Aramaic and Didymus means Twin in Greek. He is generally known as the Doubting Thomas since he refused to believe the resurrection unless he has verified it himself. If we apply the criteria of Rom. 10:10 Thomas was the first Christian, since he was the first person to confess that Jesus was indeed God.

His acts are not found in the Acts of the Apostles. But an apocryphal book written around 300 AD called "Acts of Thomas", describes it with embellishments and exaggerations. It was probably written in Greek and was translated in to Syriac. (16). It is also found in Latin, Armenian, Ethiopic (Coptic), and Arabic. These were written by Gnostic writers in Edessa and some scholars ascribe it to Bardaisan (155-223 AD) of Syria. Apart from embellishments and exaggerations typical of these types of writings, the context and historical facts are true. Archeology and Indian traditions substantiate the basic historic and geographic context in this book.

“This Pseudepigraphic text relates the adventures of the apostle Judas Thomas as he preaches an ascetical or encratite form of Christianity on the way to and from India. Like other apocryphal acts combining popular legend and religious propaganda, the work attempts to entertain and instruct. In addition to narratives of Thomas' adventures, its poetic and liturgical elements provide important evidence for early Syrian Christian traditions.” (17)
One of the reasons for doubting the story was the absence of any King by the name of Gondophores in India. During the last few decades a large deposit of coins turned up which clearly showed Gondophores as the Indo-Parthian King with a brother whose name was Gad as mentioned in the Acts of Thomas. The coins from Taxila with the seal and inscription of King Gundophorus read: "Maharaja - rajarajasamahata - drama -devavrata Gundapharase". Rock stone called Takhth-i-Bahi Stone of size 17" long and 14.5" broad has this inscription: "In the twenty-sixth year of the great King Gudaphara in the year three and one hundred, in the month of Vaishakh, on the fifth day" (18)

Kerala traditions are encoded in oral traditions handed down through generations as folklore, music and drama.

- Rambaan Paattu or Thomma Parvom is a song about the Acts of Thomas written around 1600 by Rambaan Thomas. Rambaan Thomas of Malyakal Family descends from the first Bishop whom St. Thomas is said to have ordained. The poem is the oral tradition handed down through generations. It is said to have been originally written by the Rambaan Thomas, the Bishop.
- Margom Kali (Drama about the Way) and Mappila Paattu (The Songs of the Children of the King) are series of songs of the Acts of Thomas and the history of the Malabar Church. They are sung in consonance with dance forms that are typical of the Syrian Christians. Some of them are dance dramas performed in the open as part of the festivals of the church. These have no specific origin, but grew up in the course of history.
- Veeradian Paattu is sung by a local Hindu group (called Veeradians) in accompaniment of Villu - a local instrument (a stringed instrument like the bow) - during Christian festivals. This form of art also dates back to unknown period handed down through generations and modified in that process.

According to Kerala tradition Thomas landed in Cranganore in Mali Island on the present Alwaye coast in Malabar Coast, in 52 AD. It is also called Muchiri – three lips – cleft lips - as the River Periyar splits into three branches before reaching the Sea to form this island. This came to be known Muziris to the seafarers. The ruler of the Chera kingdom at that time was Udayan Cheran Athen I (page 44 of Cochin State Manual). Other names of this port are Kodungaloor, Cranganore and Maliankara. There were Jewish colonies in Malabar in the first century. Here he preached to a Jewish community who accepted Jesus as messia and their synagogue became a Christian church. It is said that Thomas ordained one Prince Peter to be the head of the church of the Jews and left for Takshasila, (Taxila, a University City in the Indus Valley) the capital of Gondaphorus Kingdom. He established a church in that region before he traveled to other areas of India. These churches were annihilated during the invasion of Kushan and Moghol dynasty and the Christians went underground.

He returned to Kerala where he established seven and half churches with 12 Brahmin families as teachers and over 3000 converts from Kshatriyas, Nairs and Chettiar. These new converts were called St: Thomas Christians. This church is one of the most ancient churches in Christendom. The seven churches are at Malankara, Palayur, Paravoor, Kokkamangalam, Niranam, Chayal and Kollam. Apostle Thomas was martyred in Mylapore near Madras. (Tradition calls this place Kalloor - the place of rock) in Tamilnadu State, India.
“There are other facts which seem to indicate a northern locus for St. Thomas’s work. Bardaisan in his Book of Fate (AD 196) speaks of Parthian Christians living among pagans, which might be a result of the destruction of the Indian Parthian empire by Kushan invaders about AD 50. There are also said to be Christian tribes still living in north India, but holding their faith a secret from all others. For example, at Tatta in Sind (the ancient port of Pattiala at the mouth of Indus), there is a fakir community which calls itself by an Aramaic name, something like ‘Bartolmai’ (Beth Thuma), and claims to have been descended from St. Thomas’s converts and to have books and relics to prove it. Unfortunately no outsider has ever been allowed to see this alleged proof.” (19)

The Problem of Brahmin presence in Kerala

One of objections of this traditional story raised recently is the problem of the presence of Brahmins in Kerala who were converted and were given the responsibility of teaching the gospel. The Namboodiri traditions of the present day traces their origins back only to the sixth century AD. That does not mean, there were no Brahmins in the first century in Kerala region. We know for certain that the Aryan conquest reached as far as Sri Lanka long before the Christian era. However the Aryans were never a controlling force economically or even intellectually until eighth century AD. There must have been a few Brahmin families, (as is true even today in the central Travancore area where Christians are concentrated) who were probably small businessmen in various parts of South India. As in all countries, it was the poor and the persecuted communities that came to faith first. I would assume that the Brahminic community of that time accepted Christianity en masse in Kerala. Conversion in early days was in community groups and families. Thus if 12 Brahmin families accepted Christianity in Malabar it cannot be an exaggeration or an impossibility. The tradition says that Thomas met these Brahmins while they were worshipping the Sun in their traditional way. Other than that it does not directly or indirectly ascribe power or prestige to these people. By the third century when the Syrian immigration took place, since Aryans are also of the same ethnicity, their status became more pronounced. Notice that they were not the only people who were converted. The majority of the converts were Dravidians with a Dravid to Aryan ratio of 3000 to 12.

Other References to Thomas Christian Tradition

There are several references to Thomas' acts in India, which corroborates the general validity of the story.

- A Syriac document "Doctrines of the Apostles", (2nd Century AD) states, "India and all its own countries and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the Apostle's Hand of Priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was the Guide and Ruler in the Church which he built there and ministered there."

- St. Gregory of Nazianzen (AD 329-390) refers to Thomas along with other Apostles work in Contra Aranos et de Seipso Oratio

- Ambrose of Milan (AD 333-397) wrote thus: "Even to those Kingdoms which were shout out by rugged mountains became accessible to them as India to Thomas, Persia to Mathew...." Ambrose De Moribus. Brach.
Jerome (AD 342-420) wrote thus: "Jesus dwelt in all places; with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyricum, with Titus in Crete with Andrew in Achaia, with each apostolic man in each and all countries." epistles of Jerome. He mentions the mission of Pantaenus, a Christian philosopher sent by bishop Demetrius of Alexandria, "to preach Christ to the Brahmins and to the philosophers of India" in A.D. 190. Born a Jew, thoroughly trained in Greek philosophy, Pantaenus converted to Christianity, and was the most outstanding Christian scholar of his time. He probably was the first head of the theological college of Alexandria. He was the teacher of the great Clement. (20)

Jacob of Sarug (451 - 521) was a Syriac ecclesiastical writer. He was educated at Edessa and became bishop of Batnae in the year 519. He wrote hymns, - but his principal writing is a series of metrical homilies and his contemporaries gave him the name of honour: "The flute of the Holy Ghost". Two homilies are on the Ministry of Thomas in India and repeats the evangelization of Thomas as in Acts of Thomas.(21)

Gregory, the Bishop of Tours (AD 538-593) in his In Gloria Martyrdom writes: "Thomas, the Apostle, according to the history of passion, is declared to have suffered in India. After a long time his body was taken into a city which they called Edessa in Syria and there buried. Therefore, in that Indian place where he first rested there is a monastery and a church of wonderful size, and carefully adorned and arrayed."

Mar Solomon in 13th C wrote in his Book of the Bee as follows: Thomas was from Jerusalem of the tribe of Juda. He taught the Persians, Medes and the Indians; and because he baptized the daughter of the King of the Indians he stabbed him with a spear and died. Habban the merchant brought his body and laid it in Edessa, the blessed city of our Lord. Others say that he was buried in Mahluph (Mylapore) a city in the land of Indians.

Enter Barthelomew

There is also a tradition that the Apostle Barthemew came to India in AD 55 and preached the Gospel in the area near Kalyan, Bombay and was martyred in AD 62. (22)(23)(24)

Bar Thalomew is not really a full name. Most people think it is Nathaniel bar Thalomew – Nathaniel son of Thalmoi. Tradition makes North India his missionary field and Armenia the place of his martyrdom by flaying. The only references to this effect is found in the writings of Eusebius and Jerome (340-420 AD) where they say that Pantaenus the Philosopher of Alexandrian School was asked to go to India as a teacher in the Third Century and found in India some Christians. They showed him a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel in Hebrew, which had been brought there by St. Bartholomew.

Some scholars strongly believe that the reference of India in terms of Pantaneus is to the generic use of India, which could mean any where between Arabia Felix to Armenia. (25)

Dr. Miguana says: “… the India they refer to is without doubt Arabia Felix. The fact has been recognized by all historians since Assemani and Tillemont, and has been considered as established even by such conservative writer as Medlycott.”
However the second reference of Jerome says:

“Pantaenus, on account of the rumor of his excellent learning, was sent by Demetrius into India, that he might preach Christ among the Brahmins and philosophers of that nation” (26) (27) The mention of Brahmins certainly settles the place as India.

The area of his work is thought to be in Konkan in Maharashtra. Research Historian Mascarenhas in ‘Konkanachem Christaunponn’-1929 - [Apostolic Christianity in Konkan] says: “In Tulunadu, in South Kanara, there is Kallianpur. Here Bartholomew, then popularly known as Bhethal, preached the Gospel........... There are many names and places, words and usages in the coastal Konkan region going up to Bombay and beyond which have originated from his name Bhethal and his preaching and that Barkur which is close to Kallianpur sprung after his name Bartholomew i.e. Bar + Thulami + Ooru = and so BARKURU” (28)

“Christianity has been long established in South Kanara and its adherents are more numerous here, than any other district of India. It is certain that, foreign Christian merchants were visiting the coastal town of Kanara and during that period of commerce some priests also might have accompanied them for evangelical work. According to tradition Kanara had its first missionary the Apostle St.Bartholomew, who landed on the shores of river Swarna at Colombian or Colombo village an ancient maritime port adjacent to Kallianpur, stayed there to preach. He was popularly called Bethel and so the origin of the place Barkur.........” (29) Barkur is located in Udupi Taluk of Karnataka, India.

Bar Thalomew’s ministry extended over several regions including Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Armenia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, and on the shores of the Black Sea. He was martyred in Armenia. So it is possible that Bartholomew’s work was only for a limited time in the Konkan region.

The alternate possibility is that the name of Bar Tholomai is simply an intonational corruption of the tribal memory of Mar Thoma. This is supported by the presence of the fakir community in Sind which calls itself ‘Bartolmai’ and claims to have been descended from St. Thomas’s converts. (30) I would think this is a real possibility.

Possible route of Thomas.

Taking all the traditions and documents into account we can vaguely trace the route of Thomas in India. It covers almost all areas of India as far as China. Thomas must have traveled from Jerusalem to Yemen and must have taken a ship to Muziris in Malabar Coast. After a short initial stay, he must have traveled along the west coast of India to the city of Taxila. Here he must have stayed for at least a year or more and then proceeded to the Northern regions even unto China. At some point he returned to Ephesus to the deathbed of Mary, Mother of Jesus and then returned. I assume that this must have been around this time and so he must have traveled along the spice route from and back to China. He seems to have returned from there to the North India along Ganges area to the Kaveri River area and to Coromandels – the land of Cholas. The capital of Chola Kingdom was Urayar with its port Kaveri and the Capital of Pandian Kingdom was Madurai with its port Korkai. It is during the second visit Thomas converted the local Brahmins and
Dravidians and established seven and a half churches in Chera (Kerala). There was also another minor kingdom known as Ayr (probably the present Ayroor) ruled by Vel (from which we get the word Venad.) where Thomas established his church at Nilackel. Ptolemy mentions this Kingdom as Aioi in the second century. Ayr Kingdom lasted for over a thousand years from the time of Thomas. Even today most people in this area are Christians. (59)  He then returned to Coromandel Area which was probably his head quarters. We have evidence to show that he made trips between Chera, Chola and Pandya regions during this time. Dr. Farquahar gives an alternative probable route: "Apostle St. Thomas, one of the 12 disciples of Jesus sailed from Alexandria to the Indus and reached the Kings capital 'Taxila' (Presently known as Punjab) about A.D 48-49. He left Taxila when the Punjab and its capital were seized by the 'Indo-Scythian Kushans' from China about A.D 50 and went from there to 'Muziri' (Presently known as Kodungallur in Kerala) on the Malabar coast via Socotra, reaching Muziri in AD 51-52.”

Evidently Thomas’ ministry covered the entire land of India over twenty years until his martyrdom in Mylapore. In AD 72 he was speared at Mylapore, Madras. The legend has that spear was inflicted on his side. He did not die instantly but crawled while bleeding through a tunnel and reached Chinnamalai and died there. His followers took his body and buried him in the tombs of the Chiefs. A merchant from Edessa in Syria who visited that region exhumed his body and took it to Syria where it was entombed in about AD 200. We could see these tombs in Mylapore and in Edessa. They were later translated from Edessa to the island of Khios in the Aegean, and from there to Ortona in Italy, where they are now.

**What form of Church did Thomas Institute?**

The question now is, what happened to these churches? Looking at the story of Thomas as a rationalist doubter turned believer, who unhesitatingly declared Jesus as “My Lord, and My God “, we should have no doubt about the theology of the churches he established. He certainly emphasized the God incarnate as the Jesus ben Joseph, the Carpenter, his Lord and Master. He was no Gnostic. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed God and Lord.

The first Council of the Churches at Jerusalem (49 AD) under James set the standards for gentile churches. It was Paul of Tarsus who proposed the model for Gentile Churches. The Council decided that the central core of the Gospel is not to be confused with the cultural forms of worship and life of the Christians. The Church was to interpret the Gospel, which was revealed in the Jewish cultural context to the other cultures in a culturally relevant manner. Paul illustrated the working of the model in transferring the gospel in Greco-Roman culture. This was already in process before Thomas left Jerusalem and Middle East. Thomas therefore knew the Apostolic mission and must have established norms and standards, which were culturally relevant to the Indian context. Hence we should not expect Thomas Churches of India to have the ritualism and structures of Greco-Roman or Asia Minor. There would be no church building with a cross on the top, no altars nor candles and candle stands. We should expect a replication of the events of the early Christian Churches in Jerusalem soon after the resurrection. These emphasized communal living, fellowship, sharing, singing, worship, common meals and symbolic Prasadams as Holy Communion with God and Man. For a very long time Christianity left no artifacts. Institutionalization came most probably after a century of Christian existence. Symbols and temples came into existence as a means of communication. By AD 150 we can see abstract symbols – Siva Lingam and Omkhara etc. Sanskrit came into existence as a liturgical language.
Thomas found a people who were very similar to the Hebrews in the Dravidians who were at that time concentrated in the Southern States. We have reason to believe that at least a part of the blood of Dravidians came from Abraham through his second wife Keturah. They worshipped a God of love who was willing to die for his creation and practiced animal sacrifice for the propitiation of sins. So it was easy for Thomas to preach to the Dravidian population rather than to the Aryans. There are some who believe that one of the wise men who visited baby Jesus was from these people. Compared to the Dravids, Aryans were still pagans, worshipping the elementary forces of nature and involved deep in magic and witchcraft. This shows why Thomas had greater success in supplanting the Buddhism, Jainism and Vedism in the South rather than in the North.

The introduction of Christianity in the Indian religious arena brought forth an explosion of change, which can be easily seen by comparing the religious theology and practice before and after the arrival of St. Thomas. For some strange reason the history of religion is totally erased for the first three centuries except for few stray documents, reports of travelers, archeological and architectural evidences, artifacts and traditions. We have a lot of mythological stories in that place. History then starts only after 3rd century in Chola and Pandya regions and only after 8th century in Chera region. We can check up on any timeline and see silence for this period.

**Original Thomas Christians of Dravids**

In Kerala itself the first Christian Church was established among the Jews. Hence at least for these Jewish Christians, historians are of the opinion, that Thomas established the early liturgy in Aramaic (Syriac) the language spoken by Jesus and the Jews of that period. But for the Churches that he established in his second visit among the Indians he must have used local cultural modes of worship.

**God and Trinity in Indian terms**

How would you translate the concept of God and incarnation into Indian context which never had that concept defined? Except for Dravids, there probably was no name for God. For Dravids the word translated as Isa or Maheswara – El Elyon. That was exactly the experience of Thomas when he said “My God”. How would the Apostle translate the holy Trinity, Father, Spirit and the Son in Dravidian language? Father is evidently Appan. The Aramaic female gender Holy Spirit that gives life is best translated as Amma and Son, evidently as Makan. And the original true Saiva Siddhantha was born. The correlation goes much deeper.

**Siva Kovils – Early Indian Christian Churches**

Those of us who have been collaborating closely with the Bible Translators in Africa know the innuendos of the translation. There are occasional traps in translation. It can go at a tangent and the concept can be misconstrued and misinterpreted. All the places associated with Thomas are Saivite Temples. Those who place “Hinduism” - whatever that means - to have been in existence millions of years has it that this indicate the destruction of Temples and take over of temple sites by Christians. One such series is elaborated in “The Myth of Saint Thomas and the Mylapore Shiva Temple” (31). Mylapore Shiva Temple was most probably one of the Kovils established by Thomas and was probably his seat in the Southern
India. For all probability the Saivite temples were really the original Christian Churches. They flourished for at least three centuries when Gnostics and Brahmans took over these temples and converted them to “Hindu” temples.

In the same way it is not difficult to see the distribution of the Jyotirlingas all over India fall on the route of Thomas and its density proportional to the number of years Thomas labored in those areas. Thus we have a large number of Jyotirlingas near Taxila and Tamil Nadu. All along the route of Thomas schools of theologies developed and major teachers arose from these schools in the years that followed as attempts in revival of original Christian theology.

At any rate after a million years of “Hindu” existence in India, (as is claimed) something happened in Indian religions that drastically changed its content and form during the first century. The concept of God changed completely. The lower nature gods and their worship were replaced with the concept of Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman. Nirguna Brahman is the ultimate God who cannot be comprehended, who resides in the darkness, cannot be seen or known. This God revealed himself as Saguna Brahman, who can be comprehended, seen, heard and touched and is a person, not just a force of nature. He is a person with a purpose and so created the cosmos. The concept of Trinity and the concept of Om – the Logos as the creative force of universe became part of the later Upanishadic theology. Kovils with tripartite separations of Outer Court, Inner Court and the Holies came to be prevalent. It took only two to three generations after the advent of Thomas for these to appear all over India. All these were alien concepts to Indian soil. There can be no doubt that these are the results of efforts of Thomas.

Dr. M. Deivanayagam and Dr. Devakala in their studies on “Hinduism – Dravidian Religion” - The Revival Movement of Dravidian Religion (32) mentions five new doctrines that appeared all of a sudden in the Indian religious scenario in the first century:

- “Doctrine of Avatar - God becoming a man in order to redeem human beings. (Unborn Prime God was born in order to give us eternal pleasure)
- Trinity or Triune doctrine - God in triune stage - Appan, Ammai, Makan (Saivism); Siva, Vishnu, Brahma (Vaishnavism)
- Doctrine of fulfillment of sacrifice - The offering of sacrifice has ceased even though there is sacrificial altar in the temple. People do not offer sacrifice while they worship God.
- Doctrine of forgiveness of sin - There is forgiveness for the sins of human beings by the grace of God and this doctrine is totally controversial to the saying that ‘the actions of one person would definitely yield its fruits’.
- Doctrine of bhakthi - Appreciating the bhakthi which is in ones heart irrespective of one’s appearance, color, culture etc. (Kannappa Nayanar)

The five doctrines mentioned above are the basic doctrines for the religion of the Tamils or the religion of the Dravidians or for the Hindu religion. These doctrines are the Taproots for Hindu religion (Saivism, Vaishnavism).”

These form the back bone of the St.Thomas Christianity or Hindu Sanadhana Dharma, the Indian Catholic Church. Thus just as Roman Catholic Church developed in the cultural context of Greco-Roman culture, Indian Catholic Church was developed in the Indian cultural context just as Thomas expected it to be. Just
for the fun of it, if you remove Jesus from the Roman Catholic Church, you will probably be surprised to see the modern Hindu Sanadhana Dharama. Dr. Alexander Harris puts this as follows: (33)

“In its section on the history of the Indian Subcontinent, the Encyclopaedia Britannica (1982 edition) describes major changes in the religions of India. For instance the Vedic religion underwent changes with the gradual fading out of some of the Vedic deities, and further they state that,

"The two major gods were Visnu and Siva, around whom there emerged a monotheistic trend perhaps best expressed in the Bhagavad Gita . . ."

"Sacrificial ritual was beginning to be replaced by the practice of bhakti (personal devotion), positing a personal relationship between the individual and the deity"

Thus we see a new religion arise based on a monotheistic doctrine, and God who is first called Isa.

"The cult of Siva or Saivism emerged first, and the Vishnu-Krishna cult or Vaishnavism came afterwards as an imitation or duplication. The earlier appearance of Siva is indicated in the first instance by the fact that it is he alone who is called Isa or Isvara."

and

"This peculiar character of the cult makes it permissible to infer that Siva was probably the first and only only god of the monotheistic Hinduism which replaced Vedic polytheism as the highest expression of the religious sentiment of the Hindus. That is to say, originally the monotheism was unitary. In fact, even in recent times the Saivas of the south maintained that Siva was the only supreme deity.""

Just as various theological stands produced various denominations and sects in the Western World in the later period, various sects were also developed in India emphasizing one or the other aspect of God and or ritual.

Saivism and Vaishnavism developed as a Bhakti movement around 6th, 7th c. A.D. in South Indian Thomas Churches. Yet in years to come these were disfigured and manipulated by Gnostics and the Aryans from Persia under the influence of Mani. Thus the modern Hinduism is an outgrowth of the Gnostic Christianity, and is a heresy of Christianity.

We can only make guesses regarding the original form of Indian Catholic Church prior to the 3rd century.

Sivlinga – Form of the Formless

The development of the symbols of Sivlinga and the development of Makan as Ganapathy are interesting studies in the concept developments. They also show how symbols can be misinterpreted by later generations and an edifice of myths and legends can come out of something very simple and direct. Today
Sivlinga has been given a sexual interpretation assuming that it represents the penis. However any Saivite will be horrified by such a reference and will tell you that this is a misrepresentation of the concept by people who wanted to denigrate the Saivites. Since the God of creation do not have a form, the best visible representation of Invisible formless form is a formless form - the lingam. All symbols are meant to convey some deep mental and spiritual concept. These may be in sound as in languages and music, or form as in icons, idols and artifacts and architecture. Later in order to represent that this incomprehensible God incarnated in human form a face was added to the lingam. The earliest Ekmukh lingams (Udayagiri, Madhya Pradesh) are still in existence. (34)

Later another interesting representation was the placement of the Tamil Om on top of the lingam, which later led to the form of Ganapathy, the elephant faced. None of these symbolisms are found earlier than the first century AD.

**Om as Logos**

The study of the sacred sound Om indicates that it is the representation of the Logos concept. In fact John 1:1 is replicated in exact form in the later Indian scriptures. Surprisingly the Om is not found directly or indirectly in any document or Vedas before the advent of Thomas. The earliest direct references are found in *Prashna Upanishad* and in *Mandukya Upanishad* which were written after 150 AD. On the other hand Om is inscribed in all Kerala Christian Churches of antiquity at the entrance.

**Development of Sects and Gnostic infiltration – Enter Mani**

As time went on evidently new thought patterns and theologies brought in varying sects emphasizing the various aspects and rituals of the Church. This resulted in competing and practically opposing groups. Gnostic infiltration into Christianity started early - even during the Apostolic era. Simon Magnus who is revered as a saint in the Gnostic Church is referred to in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8:9ff.). While they were thwarted off by collective churches that emphasized the historical Jesus, the Gnostics thrived in many countries, especially in Persia.

*Gnosticism* is a philosophical and religious movement, which started in pre-Christian times. The term is derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, which means "knowledge". It introduced novel beliefs and new gods and goddesses who exist in “divine dimension”. They insisted on universal revelation and insisted on considering all religions as equal and the ultimate salvation being achieved through the inner knowledge or enlightenment. Some of the early Gnostics include, Simon Magnus and Simonians, Nicolaitans, Cerinthus, Marcion, Basilides, (130-150 AD), Theodotus (140-160 AD), Valentinus, (140-160 AD), Heracleon, (170-180AD), and The Sethians. All these were dealt with by the early church. However the idea that Man can become God had always been a tender spot and temptation for man from the beginning with Adam and Eve. The Gnosticism always revived.

The land route to India brought in Gnosticism into India from its home land of Persia and impacted it to the utmost. It transformed Buddhism and Christian Churches of Inner India. Even though Gnosticism practically died out in Persia it still survives in China and India. It is told that Bardaisan came to Kerala during AD 154 – 222. (35). We have no details about this visit. But there are evidences that indicate that
Bardesai met Mani in Kerala. It was after this visit he wrote the Acts of Thomas to present Thomas as a Gnostic. Apparently his labors were not fruitful in Kerala. Since at the end of his life Bardaisen returned to Christian faith, his followers probably returned to faith or merged with Manicheans.

Mission of Bardesai was followed by the ministry of Manichean (Mani or Manes) (c.216-300 AD). “About the year 242, he undertook an extensive journey as an itinerant preacher, proclaiming himself as the "Messenger of Truth," the Paraclete promised by Christ. Traveling throughout the Persian Empire and as far as India, he gathered a considerable following.” (36). Manicheanism was centralized in Kanchipuram Pallava Dynasty of Dravidia with its capital in Kanchi is known to be of the Persian race. Mani is associated with peacock and he is said to have had the ability to fly as a peacock. Probably the city of Mylapore was the headquarters of Mani also. He practically took over Thomas Churches. Some people think that it is probably this concept of Mani the Ambassador of Light, that crystallized later in the Subramaniam myth associated with Saivism.

He called himself the Prophet of Jesus and Jesus was one of the first emanations from godhead. In Mani’s own words: “At the close of King Ardashir’s years I set out to preach. I sailed to the land of the Indians. I preached to them the hope of life and I chose there a good selection.” And what did Mani teach? “The Bride is the Church, the Bride Groom is the Light Mind; the Bride is the soul and Jesus is the bridegroom! If he rise in us, we too shall live in him, if we believe in him, we shall transcend death and come to Life” (37). Mani’s work were in Chola region where he had a great following. He removed the Jesus of Nazareth as an incarnation and replaced him with a teacher who showed the inner path to realization. (38) As a result the historical Jesus was of no consequence nor his life and death and resurrection. Gnostics differentiated Jesus from the Christ. The experience of the divine within each person was only important. As a result Inner Indian Churches became Gnostic Churches and dropped off Jesus as a whole. After returning to Persia, Mani sent his Father and one of his disciples called Thomas to India to continue to evangelize the nation. Mani was executed for heresy in Persia and all his followers in Persia went to the East – to India and China. All his apostles and his mother Mary were buried in Kashmir in a place called Barmulla. It is this last Aryan Brahminic migration that made a great difference in Indian Religious scenario. Mani’s version of the Christianity is still seen in the Gnostic Churches of America and the Church of the East which presents the Yoga of Jesus. Thus Indian Christian Churches took a new form, the form of Sanadhana Dharma, meaning Eternal Religion – Religion that started even before Man. In the process of historic growth it became the “Hinduism” as we know today

The early Gnostic Hidutva unleashed a war on historic Christianity - ideological, social and physical. In the North India the believers went underground as a group of Fakirs, who were sworn in secrecy as to their true identity. These Fakirs surface occasionally. Sadhu Sunder Singh report to have seen them on his journey to the Himalayas. When the poor Indian missionaries need help, they always appear from nowhere. Among the Sindhi’s of the North India there is a group called Tatanagar Fakirs, who venerate Thomas as Thuma Bhagat. (39)

It was probably during this time Pantaneus was sent to India from the School of Alexandria to counter the teachings of Mani. The Manigramakkar, a sect of Hindu Nairs found in Quilon and Mavelikara, still preserve certain Christian customs. They are said to be the descendants of those apostatized early Christians.(40)
When the cloud clears off we have a large number of sects of varying faith and practices all over India. The Inner India Churches became Gnostic (“Hinduism”) since they had little or no contact with the Christian Churches elsewhere. The Malabar Churches however because of its geographic position was in constant contact with other churches in Alexandria, Ethiopia, Rome and Antioch through the sea route. Because of this they remained within the Apostolic traditions – the faith that was handed over once and for all at the shores of India by Apostle Thomas – as was practiced in the rest of the world especially in Alexandria, Ethiopia, Rome and Syria. By the third century while the rest of India became Hindu, Hinduism came to stay in Malabar Coast only by the eighth century. Malabar remained a safe haven for Christians for several centuries.

As a result when the Gnostic (Hindu) persecution broke out in the Chola and Pandya region, many believers fled to Malabar. One such mention is seen in the Palm Leaf documents.

“AD 293. The Vallala converts to Christianity in Kavery poopattanam were persecuted by their King. So 72 families embarked on a ship and came to Korakkeni (Kollam, Quilon) where there were Christians at that time.” (41)

This is followed by another citation, which says:

“AD 315 A certain sorcerer called Manikka Vachakar came (to Kollam) and converted back to Hinduism 116 persons belonging to eight of the 72 families from Puhur”

This story is also cited by other historians such as Moraes (42), White House (43), and Ittup (44).

Another Palm Leaf says:

“A certain sorcerer called Manikka Vachakar came to Kollam and converted back to Hinduism 116 persons belonging to 72 families from Puhur, 4 of about half a dozen families subsequently came from Coromandel Coast (perhaps from Puhur itself) and 20 families of local Christians (presumably from Quilon)” Pam-leaf quotation.

We are not sure who this Manikka Vachakar is. The mention of the term Sorcerer and the name Manikka leads us to identify this person as Gnostic.

The Manichaen cross “was brought to Kerala by Mani himself. Abandoned during the sixth century it surfaced as Marthoma Cross” (45)

The impact of this Persian Gnosticism is seen in the appearance of idols and temples and an endless system of myths and legends and visions. By the end of third century most of the region beyond the Sahya Mountains became “Hindu”. It took at least three centuries more for it to reach Kerala.

The Story of Kerala.
As mentioned earlier Malabar Churches developed independent of the rest of the Indian Churches. Kerala remained unconquered by any outside forces because of its geographical position. Recent Archeological and documentary studies by Prof. George Menacheril, indicates that Aryans came to prominence in Kerala, only by 4th century or later and Hinduism only by 8th century. (46)
“It may even be that the Syriac script and liturgy - surely the Pahlavi script - were in Kerala much before the Devanagari and the Vedas found their foothold here.

In spite of the many statements in Keralolpathy (47) most historians today believe that the Parasurama story is only a legend and Brahmins arrived in Kerala for all practical purposes only in the 4th century or later, and the Brahmins or Namboodiris established dominance only around the end of the first millennium C.E”

Parasurama legend says that the seventh incarnation of Vishnu rose up the land of Kerala from Gokarnam to Kanya Kumari and gave them to Sixty-four Brahmin families. This must have been around the 4th century or even later, if the Namboodiri traditions can be trusted. This legend therefore speaks only of the historical situation of the later centuries how the Aryan Brahmins came to dominate Kerala probably as advisers to the Kings of Chera, from the Tulunad. Who were the Kings of Chera is difficult to ascertain. Until the first century till the coming of Thomas, it is certain that Buddhist Kings ruled Chera. But Buddhism disappeared from the Kerala scene altogether. Vaishnavites or Aryan Brahmins came into power only by the 6th century. Islam came into existence only by the 6th century and was never a power in Kerala. Then what was the religion of the Chera Kings? The only alternative is that they were Christians. It points to the possibility that Mahabali whom the fifth avatar of Vishnu defeated by cheating was none other than the Christian Dravidian King “The Great Sacrifice”. This name evidently fits only Christ and Christians. His Kingdom evidently extended over three regions of India (the three worlds). Most probably the name is a generic name for Christian Kings. (The Chera King Kuru Varman-I also known as Vyakrasenan who ruled Kerala from 40 AD to 55 AD was a Christian.) It is interesting to note that Mahabali was the grandson of Prahalada who was a staunch Vaishnavite (Brahmin?). Prahalada was the son of King Hiranyakashipu a Dravidian. Hiranyakashipu was killed by the fourth incarnation of Vishnu the Lion-Man. His brother Hiranyaksha was killed by the earlier incarnation of Vishnu, the Boar. Vishnu threw both these brothers out of the heavens where they were the gate keepers of Heaven. We know for certain that Mahabalipuram was Mahabali’s resort since every other attempt to explain the name fails. Mahabalikkara – Mavelikkara is traditionally associated with Mahabali. Incidentally Onam is the only festival, which is celebrated both by the Christians and the Hindus. If the Onam songs handed down to us from the 8th century are true, there was an egalitarian society – virtual Kingdom of God - fashioned out of the early Christian Fellowship Community experiment Jerusalem. The Jerusalem experiment failed with the deceit of Aninias and Saphira and the Kerala experiment with the deceit of Vamana. With the long period of innocence Mahabali could not discern the deceit of Vamana. Kerala, during the Tamil Sangam Age (1-500 AD) was a very egalitarian society. (48) Untouchability was unknown, manual labor was respected and women held in high esteem. The first Brahmin missionaries moved into Kerala through Tulunadu (Mangalore area). Thus Chera Kingdom continued as a Christian Kingdom from the first century onwards until the sixth century. Gradually the influence of the Hinduism from Chola and Pandya dislocated the Christian dynasties of Chera. With the cunningness of the Brahmin dominated Vaishnava advisors of other Kingdoms, Chera Kingdom was taken over by the Vaishnava cult finally. However one Christian Dynasty continued till the 15th century – the Villar Vattom Pana.

Even today Christians are respectfully addressed as "Nazarani mappilas", "sons of kings who follow the Nazarene" or "of the first Christian kings" (49) (50) It is actually a direct translation of the word “Israel”. If this is the intent, it means the idea of Kingdom of Priests was introduced most probably by St.Thomas
himself. Alternately, such a position came into existence because Christians were Kings in early period. The special position of Nazrani in relation to Hindu temples itself speak of the origins. Even today as a tradition, some old temples cannot open their gates, or open the holy of holies or raise the flag to start a festival without the physical presence of a Nazrani in the temple ground.

The Mahabali myth had created sensation even in the West, during the Middle Ages, as the myth of the Prester John – a Priest King who ruled a powerful vast kingdom in India, ruling over 72 countries in three Indias. (51) (52) (53) (54). This legend says that St. Thomas travelled to India and there established a Christian community that retained many of the ideals of the original church, and which blossomed into an almost perfect Christian kingdom, ruled over by this legendary king, Prester John. A second century Peutinger Map (11) indicates a temple not far from Muziris as “Temple Augusti” or “Temple of the Great King”. Around the middle of the 12th century, a series of letters (forged?) found their way to the court of Pope Alexander III. These letters were from the Prester himself. Apparently an emissary was sent to the King Prester John, but he was never seen again. This mythical (mystical?) figure certainly came from Chera Kingdom as Meir Bar-Ilan (55) points out. India is mentioned several times in these letters and the city of Kollam is mentioned in one of the letters specifically. It specifies that he was in the land of India where the body of St. Thomas the Apostle was buried and they celebrated the memorial of Thomas on July 3rd. The letter also mentions that it is the land of the pepper and elephants.

When history finally opens, it was with Kulasekara Alwar who ruled Kerala in the 8th century. He became a devotional Vaishnavite poet. The earliest document, which tells us about the Onam festival, comes from this period. A last Perumal, Cheraman Perumal abdicated his throne in 825 AD, (some documents give it as 642-643 AD) converted to Islam and went to Mecca and died in Yemen. (56) He divided the kingdom and gave it to his Nephews.

**AD 325 The Council of Nicea Indian representation through Bishop Johannes**

At this time the Christological discourse and controversies were raging in the West. The Council of Nicea was held to draw up the Nicean Creed in order to establish the cannon of faith. 318 bishops attended it among them was a Bishop Johannes, the Persian, for the churches of the whole of Persia and Greater India.

The Indian Church had ties with the Persian Churches right from early period. It is assumed that Indian Churches invited Persian priests to teach the Bible. The earliest bibles translated from Greek are found in Syriac. Malayalam did not have bible until recently. So it was necessary to have priests from Syria to publicly read, teach and explain the Bible to the believers. However the church administrations were completely controlled by the local elders while the clergy who were brought into the country provided the ecclesiastical services and doctrinal teachings.

**Persian Immigrations**

In AD 340 the Suraya Christians from Persia (now known as Syrian Christians) came to Malabar Coast under the leadership of a bishop by name Dawood. Later a group of immigrants under the leadership of Thomman from Persia landed in Cranganoor in AD 345. They included about 400 persons of seventy-two
families of seven clans. A bishop named Mar Joseph, four priests and a few deacons were also with them. It is assumed that they came because of the Persian persecution under Zoroastrianism. There are scholars who believe that at least some of them were actually Mani followers who came as a result of persecution. Other sources indicate that they were sent by the Catholicos of Jerusalem to get information about the state of the Church in Malabar. Whatever is the reason, they were received kindly by the Cheraman Perumal who gave him permission to buy land and settle down. The King also offered special privileges to him and his group. This group kept their social identity and forms the Kananaya Christians. Thomas is said to have married a local woman and hence had two groups - known as Eastern Group and the Western Group.

These Royal grants given by Cheraman Perumal, who was the ruler of Malabar, were inscribed on copper plates (Knai Thomman Cheppedu), giving Knai Thomman and his descendants seventy-two royal privileges, in AD 345. In some places they are referred to as “Manigrama Nivasikal”. These privileges are all Royal privileges indicating equal status of the Knai Thomman with the Kings of Chera. They include: Royal robes, Royal Crown and head dress and other ornaments, authority to exact all types of taxes and act as judges over several groups of people.

This was followed by several other immigrations from Persia. In 880 AD, some Syrian Christian families led by Sabar Iso, a merchant from Persia, immigrated to Quilon. Two holy men named Mar Sapor and Mar Proth were also with them. They were twin brothers.

The presence and the powers of the new comers from Persia added a new dimension to the local Christians who were already in contact with their counterparts in Persia. These ties were now strengthened. The Aryan Brahminic elements within the church itself got a privileged status within the caste system which began to appear. They now began to exchange priests, who brought with them the documents known as the bible, which were only available in Greek and Syriac. They soon incorporated the Persian way of church institution, worship and other ritualism. This gave them a unique culture under the influence of the Syrian Church - which came to be known as Syrian Christian culture. Kerala Christians came to be known as Syrian Christians not because they are from Syria, but because they followed the liturgy and customs of the Syrian Churches.

**Theophilus, The Indian**

Theophilus was a native of Maldive Islands, off Kerala coast. Emperor Constantine took him as a hostage so that the Maldive people will not plunder Roman ships as it passed that way. In Rome he became a Christian and became a Bishop. He visited India in AD 354 and noted that their worship practices differed considerably from those of other parts of the world. Particularly he noticed that Indians sang, heard the gospel and worshipped sitting down. He thought they were outrageous and ordered it changed. Probably the practice of worship standing was introduced from that time onwards.

**AD 425 Daniel, The Priest, Indian**
It may be assumed that Indians sent their priests for training and studies to Syria. There was one Daniel who translated the commentary on the Epistle to the Romans from Greek to Syriac in Edessa. He signed it as Daniel, the priest, the Indian. Ecclesiastical language of India was probably Greek and Syriac as the teaching of Bible came from there. Greek inscriptions are found on the bells of several churches.

**Cosmos Indicopleustes and Universal Christian Topology**

Around AD 522, Cosmos a rich Christian merchant from Alexandria, visited India and wrote a book called Universal Christian Topology. He describes his visit thus:

"We have found the church not destroyed, but very widely diffused and the whole world filled with the doctrine of Christ, which is being day by day propagated and the Gospel preached over the whole earth. This I have seen with my own eyes in many places and have heard narrated by others. I as a witness of truth relate: In the land of Taprobane (Srilanka), Inner India, where the Indian sea is, there is a church of Christians, with clergy and congregation of believers, though I know not if there be any Christians further in this direction. And such also is the case in the land called Male (Malabar), where the pepper grows. And in the place called Kallia (Kollam) there is a bishop appointed from Persia, as well as in the island called Dioscores (Socotra) in the same Indian Sea. The inhabitants of that island speak Greek, having been originally settled there by Ptolemies, who ruled after Alexander of Macedonia. There are clergy there also ordained and sent from Persia to minister among the people of the island, and the multitude of Christians..."

**A.D. 431 Council of Ephesus  A.D. 451 Council of Chalcedon : Nestorian Schism**

Soon after the formation of the Church, heresy and variations in teachings were in existence in one form or other, all over the world. During the Apostolic Period, they were settled with the mediation of the Apostles and Apostolic Synods and Councils. The first of the council was the council of Jerusalem where the question of gentile inclusion in the church was discussed. However after the apostolic period this continued. Even today we have large number of theological systems varying ever so slightly. These movements arose powerfully around 400 A.D when Christianity became free from oppression and when being a Christian became a prestige. In the year AD 425 Nestorius, a presbyter of the Church of Antioch became the Patriarch of Constantinople. He legitimately objected to the epithet of "Theokotos" or "Mother of God" as applied to Mary; since Mary was only the mother of the incarnation and not the mother who produced a God. This would imply that Mary was a Goddess. In this sense he was indeed right. However he was understood to have propounded the concept that the Logos of God indwelt Jesus the man. Thus there were two natures in Jesus at the same time. If we are to judge by the Nestorian churches of today this was a misunderstanding.

Cyril the Patriarch of Alexandria opposed this dual nature concept and insisted on the unity that Jesus was perfect man and perfect God without inconsistency. The controversy reached a climax when these Patriarchs excommunicated each other. However the conduct of the Ephesus council was totally deplorable that Nestorius was not even given a hearing. By the time Nestorius arrived at Ephesus the council had voted against him and he was excommunicated and exiled. Its decision though universally accepted, the way the
issue was treated is still considered deplorable. Nestorius, a genius theologian of the time was derided without even giving him a hearing.

The fight went on and in AD 451 the Nestorians claimed a victory in the council of Chaldeons. In this council it was declared that in Christ the two natures were hypostatically united, without mixture, confusion and divisibility. Cyril the Patriarch of Alexandria and John the Patriarch of Antioch finally conciliated. Nestorians adopted the name Chaldean Church and the Patriarch took the title of Patriarch of Babylon. These in fights in the Middle East and Europe had its repercussions in India too. There exists a Chaldean church with few followings even today, though majority of the Christian churches remained faithful to the declarations of Nicea and Ephesus. A copy of the pre-Diampur liturgy shows that Thomas churches considered Nestorius as one of their bishops and revered him.

A.D 510 – 1439 The Christian Dynasty of Villarvattom

By this period, the great Empire of the Chera Kingdom came to ruins and an immense number of small independent Kings came into existence. Thus those areas where Christians were in prominence established themselves into Kingdoms. Christians were traditionally good statesmen and warriors. One such Kingdom was the Villarvattom Pana. This Kingdom Villarvattom Pana extended from the coastal islands of Chennamangalam, Maliankara and others to the north of and south of Udayamperoor. The capital of this kingdom was at Mahadevarpattanam (Maha Thevar = Great God = El Elyon) in the island of Chennamangalam and later it was shifted to Udayamperoor when the Arab invaders attacked the island. The Udayamperoor Church - which stands even today - was built by Raja of Villarvattom in A.D 510. There are several inscriptions in this church that supports this including the mention of one Raja Thomas who ruled in AD 900. In A.D 1330, Pope John XXII in a letter sent with Friar Jordan to the king of Vellar Vattom, address him as the successor of Raja Thomas. Pope Eugene IV addresses a Raja Thomas in A.D 1439. The papal record mentions "that there is a Kingdom twenty days journey from Cathay, of which the king and all the inhabitants are Christians, but heretics, being said to be Nestorians." "Historia de Variatate Fortunae, liv. IV, Poggi Bracciolini , Secretary to Pope Eugenius IV). It all indicates that Kerala was predominantly Christian in the First Century and was ruled by Christian Kings.

Reformation and Revival attempts in Inner Indian Churches

In the 8th c A.D, Sankara a Brahmin born of an itinerant Aryan priest, from Kerala became the champion of the philosophical system known as Advaita which became the core of Gnostic Hindu thesis. As Gnosticism took its grip on Indian Christianity, saints from both the Vaishanavite and Saivite sects made several attempts to thwart all syncretization and to bring the God of incarnation and sacrifice back in the culture. The theology presented by Ramanujam (Vishista Advaita – Modified Monism) (1011-1137 AD), Madhava (Dvaita Vada – Dualistic theism) (1197-1273 AD) and all the works of saints of the 7th to 12th century were bold attempts in reformation opposing Sankara. All the sixty three Nayanmars of Saivite persuasion, and twelve Alwars of Vaishnavite persuasion came from the Dravids. But the coming in of the Theosophical Society in the wake of Independence Movement practically took over Hinduism away from the reach of redemption.
However we can still see the worship of Jesus embedded in the temple worship and symbolisms. One such Namavali, worships the one who was born of a virgin, circumcised, died on a cross and resurrected. It was this faith that the Tamil saints were trying to revive. (58) For other embedded mythological symbolism and theological expressions see Deivanayagam and Devakala (59)

AD 1498 Arrival of Vasco Da Gama and Roman Catholic Mission

Vasco Da Gama landed in Calicut in AD 1498 and this started the Colonization process of India by the Western Nations. Along with this came the religious domination of Roman Catholic Church over the independent churches of Malabar. By this time Hinduism has lost Christ. Portuguese being of Roman Catholic persuasion wanted to bring the Malabar Christians under the pontificate of Rome. According to the Roman concept the Pope of Rome is the heir to the throne of Peter and is the Vicar of the Church Universal all over the world wherever it may be. The Roman Catholicism claimed that Pope of Rome was the supreme head of all the churches of the world and Indian Churches should also submit to this supremacy if they are to remain true as Catholic Church. The first such claim came with Friar John, whom Pope John XXII ordained as Bishop of Quilon in AD 1330 when he was sent him with a letter. Friar John is reported to have come to Quilon and founded a church in Latin rite. However historically there is no evidence that he ever came to Quilon. He is said to have been martyred at Kalyan in Bombay. There were similar visits from other legations from Rome. Though these were received with Christian courtesy it did not lead to acknowledgement of Papal supremacy as expected.

AD 1599 Synod of Diamper

The Portuguese became powerful in certain areas of India especially in Goa and Bombay. In Jan. 1599, Alexiyodi Menessis, the Archbishop of Goa came to Cochin. Geevarghese Archdeacon was in charge of the churches in Kerala at that time. Menessis Archbishop with the colonial power behind him used the power to get Geevarghese Archdeacon arrested and put in prison under the orders of the King of Cochin. Then he traveled extensively and influenced the leaders and people. In July 5, 1599, he called the famous Udayam Perror Council (Sunnahadose). There were 153 leaders and 660 laymen were represented in that council. Under the yoke of the Portuguese Colonial force they, accepted the supremacy of the Pope of Rome. However the sailing was not smooth for Roman church. This domination continued for over five decades. Through political influence the Synod of Diamper (Portuguese name for Udayamperoor) was held in 1599 and most of the St: Thomas Christians were brought under the Pope. During this period the Malabar Church assimilated many of the teachings and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. They burnt almost all available documents as heretic.

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See also Prof. Ingrid Shafer: http://www.usao.edu/~usao-ids3313/ids/html/vedism.html

“There are indeed no references to reincarnation in the Rig Veda. Or for that matter in the other Vedas (Sama, Yajur and Atharva).”

(4) Dr. Deen B Chandora: In what language were the Vedas originally written? http://www.geocities.com/vedic_temple/hinducentum/q10.html

(5) Internet Sacred Text Archive: http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/

(6) Richard K. Hines: http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/ANCINDIA/VEDAS.HTM


(10) Ptolemy and the Southeast Coast of India
http://www.nfobase.com/html/ptolemy_and_the_southeast_coas.html
“The great trading post here was Muziris, Ptolemy has it connected by the Psuedostomus River to the Chera capital of Karur. The Cheras controlled the interior of the southern part of the peninsula and the lower West Coast.”

“What is really interesting here is the centrality of Muziris. It is marked with a big red circle. It is, indeed, the most important city east of Antioch. Yet it is not connected to anything in the interior, much less across the peninsula. To the left of Muziris is an "Augustinian temple." Many have taken this to be an old Roman structure. But that would seem odd on this decidedly Christian map.”
Peutinger's Tabula was originally a long parchment map 6.80 metres by 34 centimetres.


(14) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippalus
(15) Influence of Monsoon Winds, Kerala Calling, August, 2003

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(35) http://alackal.conscient.com/SyrianChristians.html]

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