

outset of Sankara's *tour de triumphe*. Anandagiri on the otherhand makes Sankara go from Ruddhapura where Bhatta ended his life 'northwards and reaching Vidyalaya lying at the south-east of Hastinapura, now called Vijil bindu, where lived Mandana then.

Sankara repaired to Mandana Misra's residence and met him in controversy there. The account of the meeting narrated by Madhava seems to be untrustworthy. We can only infer from his description that Mandana, reared in the Karma Mimamsa ideology had an innate hatred for 'Maskarins' (ascetics) as a class of people, whom he thought were unfit for entertainment. We are told by Anandagiri that Mandana was performing a 'Sraddha' ceremony, at the time, when Sankara somehow 'dropped down in front of him' and desired Mandana to let him have the honour of a wordy bout with him. Now it so happened that Mandana had a worthy spouse named Bharati whose erudition and accomplishments were many. The polemical champions accordingly pitched upon her as their umpire. It was stipulated that the defeated party would become the adherent of the victor. In another words, Sankara if vanquished would become a *grihasta*,—the worst transgression which an ascetic could commit. Mandana in his turn agreed to become an anchorite and take to the *kāshaya vāstra* (red-robe) from the hands of his own wife. On this rigid condition they met in argument which waxed day by day without a break. Bharati according to Madhava Sankara Vijaya did not sit and listen, but was attending to her own household duties. At the commencement of the dispute, she gave two garlands one for each of the disputants with a clear injunction that he whose garland begins to fade first, should consider himself outdone.

After a protracted period, Mandana's garland showed signs of fading first. Accordingly he owned defeat though in a sullen mood; while his wife knowing now that her husband was no more a husband to her, prepared to leave the home. But Sankara did not allow her to do so. Mandana gracefully acquiesced in his fall and accordingly adopted the Sanyasa Dharma.

Later on, we hear of the very thrilling story about Sankara and Bharati. Bharati intervened and challenged Sankara to a controversy with her. The King of Saints objected to arguing with women but she showed precedents. She passed from one science to another and in all of them she was thrown overboard. Finding that she could not overcome her formidable opponent in any argument, she resolved to humble him by calling him to speak on the lore of Love or *Kama Sastra*. Sankara was antipathic to things erotic and if he failed to answer queries on this subject, he found that his reputation would be at stake. So he begged of her a month's time to consider the question. He went to the bank of Narmada and in the hole of a tree in a forest there, he left his body to be watched over by his disciples while his soul was away from its case. His Yogic experience helped him to metamorphose himself into the deadbody of a King called Amaruka which was about to be cremated. The dead King woke up as if from sleep and resumed his mundane existence.

The ministers and the queen consorts of the King found in him something extraordinary and suspected that the soul of some blessed being had taken a fancy to live in the royal body to enjoy life. Messengers were secretly sent to search for a human body hidden in forest or cavern and to burn it when apprehended, so that the great soul might stay with

them and the King continue to live long. Meanwhile Sankara in the corporal case of the King was gathering varied erotic experiences which, it is said, have come to posterity under the title <sup>139</sup> *Amarusataka*—one hundred pieces of amatory verses depicting the infinite erotic moods and situations. The amorous surroundings had for some-time even made the great Sankara to forget the purpose for which he had taken so much pain of leaving his own body and living in an alien atmosphere. His disciples went searching for him as the time-limit for his return had

<sup>139</sup> No trace of this strange story can be found in any of the Sankara Vijayas. But Madhava in his biography of Sankara in the 9th and 10th Sargas has written that when Sankara was about to take his seat on the Sarvajna pitha, Goddess Sarada had put him this question 'कला कियत्यो वद पुष्पधन्वनः किमात्मिका किञ्च पदं समाश्रिताः। पूर्वे च पक्षे कथमन्यथा स्थितिः कथं युवत्यां कथमेव पुरुषे ॥' In reply to her, the great Samyamindra, traversed all the sexologies, met her in all the arguments and triumphed. 'वात्स्यायनप्रोदित सूत्र जातं तदीय भाष्यं च विलोक्य सम्यक्। स्वयं व्यधत्ताभिनवार्थगर्भं निबन्धमेकं नृपवेषधारी ॥' from this we learn, that the Teacher could have written some treatise on the erotic Science and decidedly he could not be the author of the *Amaru Sataka* now extant. 'न तु अमरुशतक निर्माण सूचनमात्रमपि शंकरदिग्विजये समुपलभ्यते; न अपि अमरुशतके शारदा प्रश्नोत्तरानरूपं किमपि अस्ति तस्माद् एवं विधा निर्मूला जनश्रुतयः कथं प्रमाणत्वेन स्वीकर्तुमर्हाः?' (See introduction to *Amaru Sataka* by Narayana Rama Acharya Kavaya Tirtha). Sankara was a born rationalist; he would never have stooped down to perform this sort of miracle. Some inferior scribe, to give his imagination 'a local habitation and a name' might have woven this tissue of fancy and pure lie. Hence this strong romantic tale has to be dismissed as worthless and unfounded.

expired. They came to know of the miraculous resurrection of Amaru; they went to his city and sought his audience. They sang the cryptic song—" *Tatvamasi Râjan* " which at once stirred Sankara back to his realities. But, by this time the denizens of the King had found the body of Sankara and were just setting fire to it. The metamorphosed soul of Sankara fled back to its original habitat.

It is said that he prayed to God Nrisimha for succour, with whose benign grace his charred body regained its original lustre. His invocation to god Nrisimha is in the form of *Sankashtanaśana Lakshmi Nrisimha Stotra* <sup>140</sup>.

Sankara established his supremacy in every phase of knowledge. According to Madhava Sankara Vijaya, Bharati returned back to her heavenly abode as she was the Goddess Sarasvati incarnate on earth due to a curse of the rishi Durvasas. But Chidvilasa and other biographers say that she accompanied Sankara to Sringeri, where he caused a shrine to be built, which he dedicated to her.

<sup>140</sup> *Sankashtanaśana Lakshmi Nrisimha Stotra* is a beautiful poem of 12 stanzas breathing fervour and resignation to God's will. It begins with !

श्रीमत्पयोनिधिनिकेतन चक्रपाणे  
भोगीन्द्र भोगमणिरञ्जित पुण्यमूर्ते ।  
योगीश शाश्वत शरण्य भवाब्धिपोत  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलंबम् ॥

It concludes with the Phala-sruti.

यन्माययोजितवपुः प्रचुरप्रवाहमस्तं शरण्य वितरोरु करावलंबम् ।  
लक्ष्मीनृसिंहचरणान्तमधुव्रतेन स्तोत्रं कृतं सुखकरं भुवि शंकरेण ॥

This hymn finds a place in the stotra pustakas.

Mandana offered all his possessions as gift to Sankara and became his ardent devotee. He is the author of numerous works on Vedanta and Mimamsa (1) *Naishkarmya Siddhi*, (2) *Tattiriya Upanishad Bhāshya Vārtika*, (3) *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad Bhāshya Vārtika*, (4) *Manasollāsa*, a commentary on Sankara's Dakshināmurti Stotra, (5) *Panchākarana Vārtika*, (6) *Brahma Siddhi*, (7) *Vidhi Viveka*. (8) *Vibhrama Vilāsa*. Undoubtedly he was the most illustrious of Sankara's pupils and was held in high esteem by his followers. This honour seemed to have provoked the jealousy of others which was the cause for the split among the disciples of the Acharya. A squabble arose over the writing of the Brahma Sutra bhashya, as reported by Madhava in his Sankara Vijaya, though much evidence cannot be attached to it. Sri Sankara wanted Suresvaracharya to write the Vartika (poetical commentary) on the Sutra bhashya but Chitsukha and other friends of Padmapada objected to this, saying that Suresvaracharya might not have been a sincere convert to Sankara's system of philosophy and if he was allowed to write a Vartika on the Acharya's *magnum opus* he might try to colour it by his own doctrines of Karma-Marga. Upon this, Sankara gave a testwork for his pupil and the latter fully came up to the mark by writing the *Naishkarmya Siddhi*; but the oppositio- nist would not yield and Sankara vowed that his Sutra Bhashya should remain *sans Vārtika* rather than it be written by anyone else but Suresvaracharya. Padmapada during his tour, estranged from his Guru wrote a large commentary on the Sutra Bhashya. Unfortunately this work was burnt by his uncle who was a staunch Mimamsaka of the Prabha- kara School. The repentent Padmapada returned to his master who came to know of the pathetic news, and by whose grace he re-wrote a part of the lost work, now known

as '*Panchapadika*' (a commentary on the Sutra Bhashya for the first five *padas*, but really covering the first four *sutras*). Suresvaracharya had to satisfy himself with writing *vārtikas* on the Upanishads of which two have seen the light of day viz. those on the Taittiriya and Brihadāranyaka Upanishad Bhashyas. Suresvaracharya lived till his 70th year, in Kanchi and died in a neighbouring village Punyarasā which was also named Mandana Misra agrahara after him.

Once when Sankara was sojourning in Kasi (Varānasi) he happened to be going with his disciples to take his midday dip in the Ganges. A chandala (according to the biographers, it was Shiva himself who appeared in that form to test Sankara's attitude towards the lowliest and the lost) with his dogs was passing by him, when the disciples shouted to him to stand clear of their path. This man, however turned about and asked the great Teacher how he might consistently preach Advaitism and practise such differentia- ting untouchability.—'Does it make any difference in this gem of heaven, the sun, if he is reflected in the waters of the Ganges or in the gutter flowing through the scavenger's street? Does it make any difference in the *Akasa* enclosed in an earthen pot or in a vase of gold? In That thing, the Inner-being of all, the unruffled Ocean of Bliss and Light, what means this great delusion, this chimera of separateness, creating distinctions of Brahmana and Chandala?'<sup>141</sup> The great Sankara was struck aghast at the

<sup>141</sup> किं गङ्गांबुनि विम्बितेऽम्बरमणौ चाण्डालवाटीपयः-

पूरे वान्तरमस्ति काञ्चनघटीमृत्कुम्भयोर्वाम्बरे ।

प्रत्यग्वस्तुनि निस्तरङ्ग सहजानन्दावबोधाम्बुधौ

विप्रोष्यं श्वपचोऽयमित्यपि महान् कोऽयं विभेद भ्रमः ॥

poser. Pertinent to that occasion, the gem of songs *Manīsha Panchakam*<sup>143</sup> gushed forth from him. It reveals to us what a wide sympathy the Acharya had for the commonalty!

Sankara at Sringeri lived for 12 years teaching the Vedānta. We have already referred to Sringeri where the saint had advised Mandana's wife Bharati to stay. She remained a nun and was happy to accompany her converted husband wherever he went. She was perfectly justified in the ways she adopted—donning the *Kāshāya*. Indeed she was very wise in following him and Sankara. Her immaculate life as a recluse and her peaceful end at Sringeri added lustre to her reputation. To place her in the niche of fame and everlasting glory, it is sufficient to know that Sankara considered her to be worthy of adoration and reverential worship.

He next visited Kanyakumari, at the confluence of the three seas, 'Sandhi' (Thiruchendur) Rameswaram, Gajanya, Venkatachala, and Kalahasti etc. After a *pradakshina* tour, he finally settled at Kanchi, one among the seven great cities of Bharatavarsha—the famous centre of South Indian culture and civilisation. Through the Chola King Rajasena (who was this Chola?) who was reigning

<sup>143</sup> Manīsha Panchakam is a gem of 5 stanzas containing the quintessence of the Advaita philosophy. It begins with:

जाग्रत्स्वप्न सुषुप्तिषु स्फुटतरा या संविदुज्जृम्भते  
या ब्रह्मादि पिपीलिकान्त तनुषु प्रोता जगत्साक्षिणी ।  
सैवाहं न च दृश्यवस्तिवति दृढप्रज्ञाऽपि यस्यास्ति चेत्  
चाण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥

It is translated in many languages for its beauty and truth. A commentary to it, by Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra is also available.

then, the Acharya renovated many ruined temples, extended chiefly the temples of Ekamānatha and Varadaraja and rebuilt the city on a new plan with the shrine of Kamakshi in the centre (*Kamakottam*).<sup>143</sup> There Devi had been living in a cave (*Bila*) as an Ugra-kala (evil spirit), dreaded by the inhabitants. Sankara transformed her into a gentle and more benign form and installed her as the guardian deity of that place.

According to the tradition preserved in the annals of the Kanchi Matha (मौलान्नायः) and endorsed by authoritative biographers, Sankara ascended the 'Sarvajna Pitha' (the Seat of Omniscience). Thus his *Digvijaya* culminated in that grand ascension.

Sankara established a central institution (केन्द्रमठ) with religious jurisdiction over the whole of India. The Kanchi-Matha is known as Sarada Matha (it is not to be confounded with Sarada Pitha at Sringeri), and the seat as the Kamakoti Pitha. So, Sankara was its first incumbent. From this central institution radiated the other Advaita Mathas—

<sup>143</sup> Sankara did not confine himself only to spiritual things, it seems he took keen interest also in the secular welfare of the people. His town-planning, placing Kamakottam in the centre had made Kanchi, a golden city with spacious streets. An old Tamil poem, Perumbanaruppadai (பெரும்பாணற்றுப்படை) gives a correct picture of the city as it flourished in that distant age:—

'பல்லிதழ்த் தாமரைப்பொருட்டின் காண்வரத் தோன்றிச் சுடுமண் ஓங்கிய நெடுநகர் வரைப்பின்; மலர்தலை உலகத்துள்ளும் பலர்தொழ விழவுமேம்பட்ட பழவிறல் முதுர்.....கச்சி.'

Kanchi with its well defined topography was modelled after a full-petalled lotus—i.e. the *padmakosa* pattern of city.

Jyotir Matha (Joshi Mutt) in Badarikasrama, in the North ; Dvaraka Matha (Sourashtra) in the West ; Sringeri, in the South (Mysore) ; Govardhana (Puri) in the East, with Totaka, Padmapāda, Sureswara and Hasthāmalaka as their respective heads. The jurisdiction of these institutions, their traditions and observances, are elaborately treated in the Mathāmnayās, believed to have been framed by Sankara himself.

Having established his divine mission, the incomparable Sankara attained his Brahmābhāva (identity with Brahman) at Kanchi, in the precincts of Sri Kamakshi, in his 32nd year, in 2625 Kali, in the cyclic year Raktākshi, corresponding to 476 B.C.

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APPENDIX—I

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF  
ADI S'ANKARA'S LIFE

	Kali	B.C.
Birth of Sri Sankara at Kalati on Vaisakha Sukla Panchami (cyclic year 'Nandana').	2593	509
Upanayana of Sankara.	2598	504
In the beginning of his 8th year he lost his father <i>Sivaguru</i> .	2601	501
Completed the study of the four Vēdās and Vēdāngās.	2601	501
Got permission of his mother to enter the holy order of Sanyāsa (Kārtika Sukla Ekādasi, cyclic year 'Plava').	2602	500
Initiated by Govinda Bhagavatpādāchārya into <i>Krama Sanyasa</i> at Amarakantha on the banks of the Narmada river. (Phālguna Suddha Dvitīya of the cyclic year 'Subhakrit').	2603	499
Studied philosophical systems under Govinda Bhagavatpadācharya.	2603 to 2605	499 to 497
Visited his Paramaguru, Gaudapādācharya who was aged 120 years by that time at Badarikāsrama on the Himalayas and stayed there for four years to study further, under the direct guidance of the Paramaguru.	2605 to 2609	497 to 493

	<i>Kali</i>	<i>B.C.</i>
By the order of his Paramaguru, Sankara wrote a Bhāshya on Gaudāpada Karikās and sixteen Bhāshyās on Prastāna traya etc., in this span of four years.	"	"
Initiation of Vishnu Sarma into sanyasa by Sankara. He was his co-student at Kalati and followed him in all his activities. His <i>turiya-asrama</i> name is 'Chitsukhacharya' (He was the author of 'Brihat Sankara Vijaya' the first biography of Sankara, now irretrievably lost.)	"	"
Death of Sankara's mother <i>Aryamba</i> . (cyclic year 'Plavanga')	2608	492
Niryāna of Govinda Bhagavatpadā, the Guru of Sankara (Kartika Pūrṇima, cyclic year 'Plavanga.')	2608	492
Initiation of 'Sanandana' into Sanyasa order. His Sanyasa name is <i>Padma pādācharya</i> .	2608	492
Sankara's visit to Prayaga to propagate the Advaita Philosophy (Magha, Bahula Amavasya).	2609	493
The Brahmin who was suffering from leprosy and cured by Sankara at Prayāga was his third disciple. His name is <i>Udanka</i> .	2609	493

	<i>Kali</i>	<i>B.C.</i>
The fourth disciple, the dumb man was the son of Prabhakarādhavarin, by name Prithvidhara. His sanyasa name given by Sankara is 'Hastāmalāka-charya.	9209	492
Prabhakarādhavarin, father of Prithvidhara also took the order of sanyasa.	"	"
Sankara in his 16th year met Kumarila Bhatta for the first and the last time in Ruddhapura near Prayaga, in the act of self-immolation. Kumarila Bhatta is older than Sankara by 48 years. (cyclic year 'Kṛlaka')	"	"
The Great Pandit Mandana Misra was an independent Brahmin chief. He was a Kanojiya Gauda Brahmin. He was the disciple of Kumarila Bhatta and a staunch adherent of Karma-kanda of the Vēdas. After a great discussion, Mandana Misra became the disciple of Sri Sankara. Leaving his <i>Grihasta Asrama</i> he became a Sanyasin. His sanyasa name is 'Surēsvārāchāry' (cyclic year <i>Sādhārana</i> ).	2611	491
Sri Sankāra founded the 'Dvārakā Math.' (Magha Sukhla Saptamī of the cyclic year <i>Sādhārana</i> with 'Hastāmalaka' as its 1st Adhipati or Head.	2611	491

	<i>Kali</i>	<i>B.C.</i>
Sankara visited Nēpāl and refuted the Buddhists. (vide the Indian Antiquary Vol. XIII. P. 417 ff).	2614 to 2615	488 to 487
Founded 'Jyotir Math' (Joshi Mutt) in the Himalayas; (Pushya Suddha Pūrni- ma, of the cyclic year <i>Rākshasa</i> ) with <i>Totakāchāryā</i> as its 1st Adhipati or Head.	2616	486
Sankara founded the 'Govardhana Matha' of Puri (Jagannath), (Vaisākha Sukla Dasami, of the cyclic year 'Nala') with <i>Padmapādāchārya</i> as its 1st Adhipati or Head.	2617	484
The Sārādā Pitha at 'Sringeri' was founded in Pushya Pūrni- ma of the year 'Pingala' with <i>Sureswarāchārya</i> as its first Pithādhipati.	2618	484
The Kamakoti pītha at 'Kanchi' was founded in Vaisakha Pūrni- ma of the year 'Siddharthin' with Adi Sankara himself as its first Acharya.	2620	482
Brahmibhava of Sri Sankara in his 32nd year at Kanchi, on Vaisākha Sukla Ekādasi. (cyclic year 'Raktākshi').	2625	476