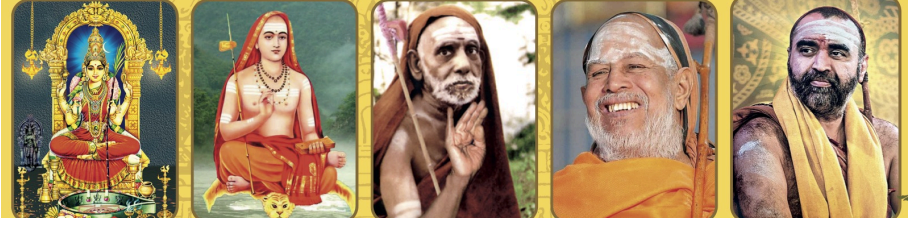




Chitra Ādiśhaṅkara Charitam

Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam

Śhāṅkara-kṣhetra-darśhanam



श्रीमद्-आद्यशङ्करभगवत्पाद-परम्परागत-
मूलाम्नाय-सर्वज्ञपीठ-श्री-काञ्ची-कामकोटि-पीठं
जगद्गुरु-शङ्कराचार्यस्वामि-श्रीमठ-संस्थानम्

Śhrīmad-Ādyaśhaṅkarabhagavatpāda-
Paramparāgata-Mūlāmnāya-Sarvajñapīṭha-
Śrī-Kāñchī-Kāmakōṭi-Pīṭham
Jagadguru-Śhaṅkarāchāryasvāmi-Śhrīmaṭha-
Samsthānam

Website : www.kamakoti.org.
email : kanchimutt@gmail.com



ॐ
II Sri Chandramouleeswaraya Nama: ||
Sri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya Paramparagatha Moolamnaya Sarvajnapeeta

Contact : 044-27222115
Acts : 044-27224236
Cell : 9445421115

His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi

JAGADGURU SRI SANKARACHARYA SWAMIGAL Srimatam Samsthanam

No. 1, Salai Street, Kancheepuram - 631 502, Tamilnadu State, INDIA.



गुरुर्नाम्ना महिम्ना च शंकरो यो विराजते।

तदीयांभिगलद्रेणुकणायस्तु नमो मम ॥

My fervent devotions to the holy dust of divine feet of Shankara, the Jagadguru, who shines effulgently with divine name and divine greatness.

The greatness of Adi Shankara can be known by this shloka wherein the foot dust of the great Guru is being venerated by the devout. Why has it been described in this manner? During the incarnation of Jagadguru, our country a homeland for Vedic religion was smitten by the waves of Nastikavada, Shunyavada, Bhuktivada (materialism), Agnyana (ignorance) & Virodha Gnyana (wrong understanding). This wrong trend had penetrated so deep in to the vitals of society that the tenets of Vedic religion of Oneness, Harmony, Knowledge, Rationality, Scientific approach, Conversation, Enlightenment were altered and facing serious consequence for humanity. While the earlier Avatars were for destruction of evil and establishment of Dharma, this was a complex situation.

ज्ञानमिच्छेत् महेश्वरात् so say our Shastras. *Gnana* or Enlightenment destructs ignorance and paves way for liberation. This *Adhyatmika Gnana* or Enlightenment is blessed by Maheshwara. Hence शंकरः शंकरः साक्षात्, Lord Shiva took form of Shankara and re-established Sanatana Vaidika Dharma.

In the *Swasti Birudavali* of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, we find the following attributes for the Jagadguru:

“ निखिलपाषण्डषण्डकण्टकोत्पाटनेन विशदीकृतवेदवेदान्तमार्गं षण्मतप्रतिष्ठापकाचार्याणाम् ”

'By removing all thorns of wrong practices, the path of Veda & Vedanta was widened and Shanmata worship was established'

Website : www.kamakoti.org
email : kanchimutt@gmail.com



|| Sri Chandramouleeswaraya Nama: ||
Sri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya Paramparagatha Moolamnaya Sarvajnapeta

Contact : 044-2722211
Acts : 044-2722423
Cell : 9445421115

His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi

JAGADGURU SRI SANKARACHARYA SWAMIGAL **Srimatam Samsthanam**

No. 1, Salai Street, Kancheepuram - 631 502, Tamilnadu State, INDIA.

A divine tribute to Adi Shankara capsuling the Avatara's purpose. This was indeed the most significant achievement of the Jagadguru. This was achieved with a lot of effort, supreme sacrifice, determination, knowledge, austerity, blessings of divinity and spiritual bliss. But for the Acharya's efforts our civilisation would have been in jeopardy. His efforts paved way for our country to continue as *Punya Bhumi*, *Dharma Bhumi* & *Veda Bhumi*. For this great *Krupa* of Shankara on humanity and the giant work he did for *Bharata Bhumi*, we venerate his footdust - *Bhagavatpada Renukana*. We need to be eternally grateful to Jagadguru Shankarabagavatpada.

In a treatise known as Acharya Prashasti- the Glory of Jagadguru, a dedicated collection of Shlokas on Jagadguru & his work by various successive Acharyas, philosophers, Advaita Granthakarthis and Advaitins has been compiled by Kanchi Math. It is the bounden duty of one & all to know the Divya Charitra of the Jagadguru with all his Mahimas. There are several treatises in the form of Shankara Vijayas, Ashtottara Namavalis and other such literature throwing light on the life of Acharya. We should be ever obliged to our Guru Parampara for ensuring that, over the course of the 2533 years since Jagadguru's Avatara, His life, His work, and His Sampradaya have been kept alive amidst challenging circumstances.

This book, Chitra Ādiśankara Charitam, Śhankaropadesharatnam, Śhānkara kṣhetradarśhanam has captured the Divine Life of the Jagadguru and beautifully interwoven it with his Yatras & Upadesha. This comprehensive approach with simple pictorial depiction would definitely impress & invite one & all especially children to read and understand the great life of Adi Shankara. In present day situation, this is very important as children need to be imparted with positive, genuine and spiritually uplifting Charitras of Divya Avatara.

His Holiness Pujya Shri Shankara Vijayendra Saraswathi Shankaracharya Swamigal is very pleased with the efforts of Smt. Vidya Jayaraman and her team in bringing out this special publication and conveys blessings for more such Sevas in the future.

Jaya Jaya Shankara

Hara Hara Shankara

Date: Krodhi-Bhadrapada-Shukla-Chaturthi(Vinayaka Chaturthi)

Shankara Samvatsaram_ 2533

Yatrasthan: Shri Chandramouleeshwara Swamy Puja Mandapam, Mani Mandapam, Orikkai

श्रीमद्-आद्यशङ्करभगवत्पाद-परम्परागत-मूलाम्नाय-सर्वज्ञपीठ-

श्री-काञ्ची-कामकोटि-पीठं

जगद्गुरु-शङ्कराचार्यस्वामि-श्रीमठसंस्थानम्

स्वस्तिवचनम्

स्वस्ति श्रीमद्-अखिल-भूमण्डलालङ्कार-त्रयस्त्रिंशत्-कोटि-देवता-
सेवित-श्री-कामाक्षी-देवी-सनाथ-श्रीमद्-एकाम्रनाथ-श्री-महादेवी-
सनाथ-श्री-हस्तिगिरिनाथ-साक्षात्कार-परमाधिष्ठान-सत्यव्रत-नामाङ्कित-
काञ्ची-दिव्य-क्षेत्रे शारदामठ-सुस्थितानाम् अतुलित-सुधारस-माधुर्य-
कमलासन-कामिनी-धम्मिल्ल-सम्फुल्ल-मल्लिका-मालिका-निःष्यन्द-
मकरन्द-झरी-सौवस्तिक-वाङ्मिगुम्फ-विजृम्भणानन्द-तुन्दिलित-
मनीषि-मण्डलानाम् अनवरताद्वैत-विद्या-विनोद-रसिकानां
निरन्तरालङ्कृतीकृत-शान्ति-दान्ति-भूमाम् सकल-भुवन-चक्र-
प्रतिष्ठापक-श्रीचक्र-प्रतिष्ठा-विख्यात-यशोऽलङ्कृतानाम्
निखिल-पाषण्ड-षण्ड-कण्टकोत्पाटनेन विशदीकृत-वेद-वेदान्त-मार्ग-
षण्मत-प्रतिष्ठापकाचार्याणाम् परमहंस-परिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य-जगद्गुरु-
श्रीमत्-शङ्करभगवत्पादाचार्याणाम् अधिष्ठाने सिंहासनाभिषिक्त-श्रीमत्-
चन्द्रशेखरेन्द्र-सरस्वती-श्रीपादानाम् अन्तेवासिवर्य-श्रीमद्-जयेन्द्र-
सरस्वती-श्रीपादानाम् अन्तेवासिवर्य-श्रीमत्-शङ्कर-विजयेन्द्र-सरस्वती-
श्रीपादानां चरण-नलिनयोः सप्रश्रयं साञ्जलिबन्धं च नमस्कुर्मः ॥



यदालम्बोदरं हन्ति सतां प्रत्यूहसम्भवम् ।
तदालम्बे दयालम्बं लम्बोदरपदाम्बुजम् ॥

-- सर्ववेदान्तसिद्धान्तसारसङ्ग्रहः

yadāmbodaraṃ hanti satāṃ pratyūha-sambhavam ।
tadālambe dayālambaṃ lambodara-padāmbujam ॥

-- Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-saṅgrahaḥ

I seek refuge in the lotus feet of Lambodara. He is compassionate. and his support destroys the fear of obstacles among the good.

Chitra Ādiśhaṅkara Charitam
Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam
Śhāṅkara kṣhetradarśhanam

As per the ājñā of Jagadguru Śhrī Śhaṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Shankarāchārya Swāmigal of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham, this book narrates the charitam of Śhrī Śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda along with gems from His upadeśha and highlights the sacred places associated with Him.

The content is divided into three sections, marked by the use of three colours. The first section narrates Śhrī śhaṅkara Bhagavatpādāchārya's charitam. The second section explains the valuable gems from Śhaṅkaropadeśha-ratna-mañjūṣhā - treasure chest of His upadeśhas. The third section Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam offers an overview of the sacred kṣhetras and tīrthas associated with Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya in the sacred land of Bhārata varṣha. These sacred kṣhetras become even more sacred to devotees as we see them through the indelible memorials to śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda constructed with the vision of Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham. Many are the flowers that were gathered to compile this text - The nectar-filled words of Bhagavatpāda, the profound anugraha bhāṣhaṇams of the Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham, works of vidvāns and scholars, narratives of devotees who have received the grace of the Jagadgurus, and published books. These word-flowers are gathered, strung as words and offered to the sacred feet of the Mahāsannidhānam.

Art work: Smt. Sowmya Murali, Bengaluru

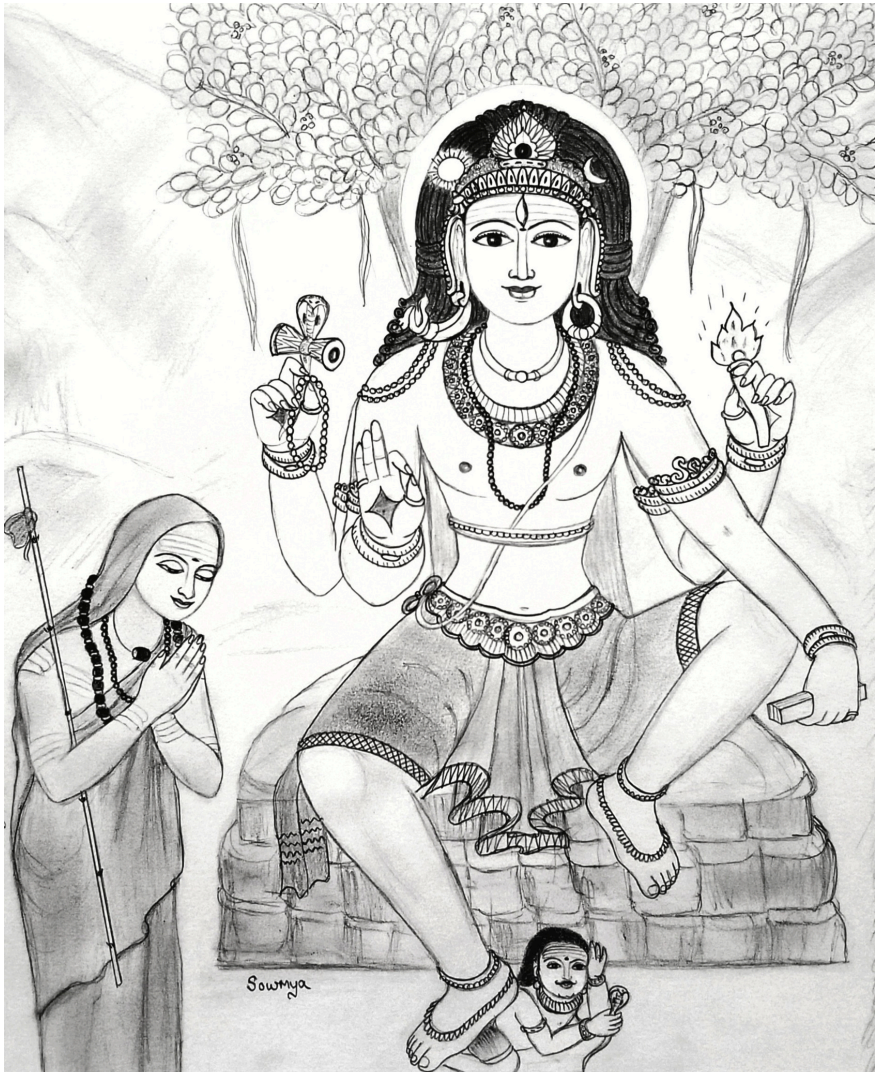


Dakṣhiṇāmūrti is a form of Śhiva. He is the embodiment of wisdom and gazes towards the South. He is youthful. Despite his youthful appearance, He is surrounded by aged sages who seek wisdom from him. Dakṣhiṇāmūrti teaches through eloquent silence. The gesture of chinmudrā (the thumb and index finger touching each other and the three other fingers extended together) speaks volumes without a single word being uttered, communicating profound wisdom. Bhagavān Śhiva in this seated form imparting knowledge is Dakṣhiṇāmūrti and represents the origin of the Advaita-guru-paramparā - the lineage of gurus and śhiṣhyas.

Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śhiva represent different facets of the same supreme power. These divine beings each play a role in the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the world. Bhagavān Viṣṇu manifests in different avatāras and comes down to earth in every yuga for our well-being. In Kaliyuga, an aspect of Bhagavān Śhiva took a special avatāra as Śhaṅkarāchārya to impart knowledge.

Śhaṅkarāchārya mastered the Veda by the time he was eight. Unlike Dakṣhiṇāmūrti, who remained seated under the tree and taught by silence, Śhaṅkarāchārya travelled all over Bhāratam and taught with words. He wrote works ranging from elaborate commentaries to poems with one stanza. He also wrote many devotional poems. He left behind not only these writings but also a living guru paramparā of Śhaṅkarāchāryas who travel all over Bhāratam, impart wisdom, and instruct people on the path of dharma.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti - The first guru of
Advaita-guru-paramparā





Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Dakṣhiṇāmūrti - The first guru of Advaita-guru-paramparā

मौनव्याख्याप्रकटितपरब्रह्मतत्त्वं युवानं वर्षिष्ठान्तेवसद्विगणैरावृतं ब्रह्मनिष्ठैः ।
आचार्येन्द्रं करकलितचिन्मुद्रमानन्दरूपं स्वात्मारामं मुदितवदनं दक्षिणामूर्तिमीडे ॥

mauna-vyākhyā-prakaṭita-para-brahma-tattvaṃ yuvānaṃ
varṣhiṣṭhāntevasad-ṛṣhi-gaṇair-āvṛtaṃ brahma-niṣṭhaiḥ ।
ācāryendraṃ kara-kalita-cinmudraṃ ānandarūpaṃ
svātmārāmaṃ mudita-vādanaṃ dakṣhiṇāmūrtim īde ॥

I praise the youthful Dakṣhiṇāmūrti, who expounds the truth of non-duality through eloquent silence. He is surrounded by a group of disciples consisting of aged sages who are absorbed in the contemplation. He is the foremost among preceptors. Displaying the chinmudra – the union of thumb and index finger symbolizing the identity of individual and supreme self – He embodies bliss, takes joy in the self, and wears a charming countenance.

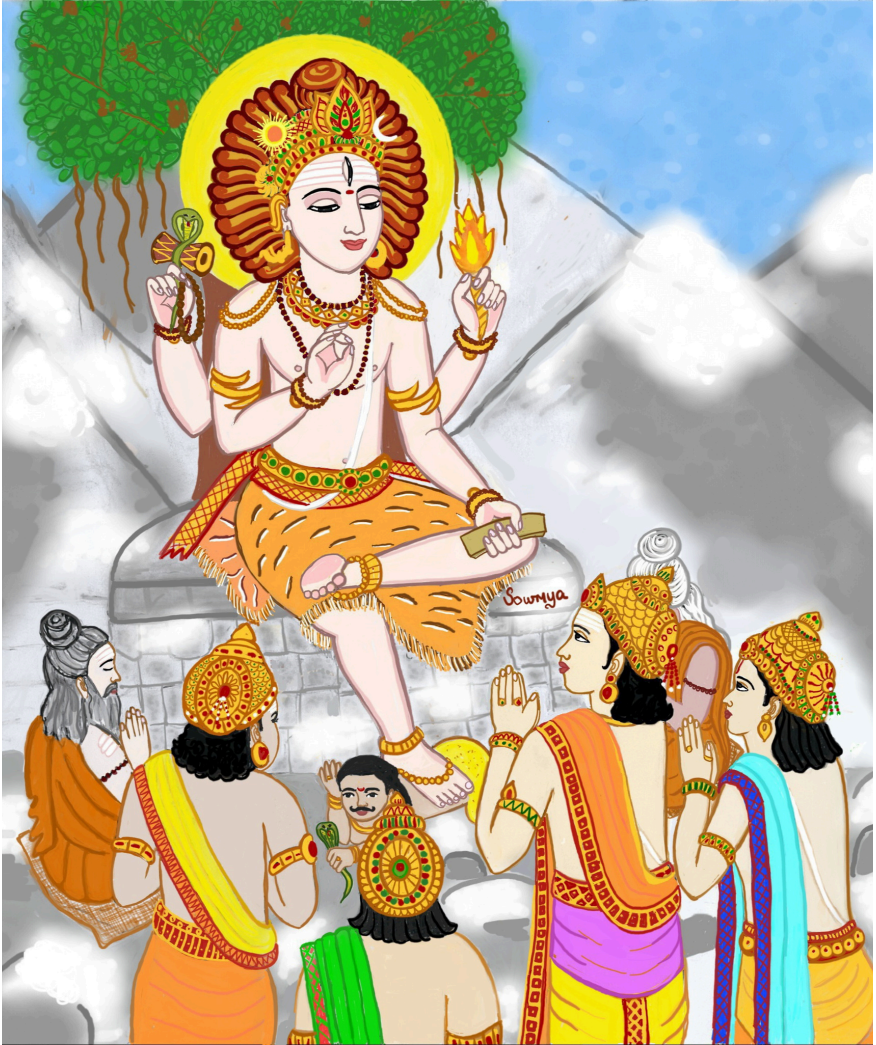
चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धाः शिष्या गुरुर्युवा ।
गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

citraṃ vaṭataror mūle vṛddhāḥ śhiṣyā gurur yuvā ।
gurostu maunaṃ vyākhyānaṃ śhiṣyāstu chhinna-saṃśhayāḥ ॥

Under the banyan tree is a wondrous sight! The disciples are aged but the guru is youthful. The guru teaches them by silence. Yet the doubts of the śhiṣhyas are dispelled.

Adi Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed Dakṣhiṇāmūrti stotram and Dakṣhiṇāmūrti varṇamālā stotram.

Devas praying to Dakṣhiṇāmūrti



Why did Dakṣhiṇāmūrti come down to earth? About two thousand and five hundred years ago (Elapsed Kali 2593 = 509 BCE), the world was going through a challenging time. People had lost touch with Vedic wisdom. They were no longer following the teachings of the Veda. People were not doing the karmas that were prescribed by the Veda. Instead, they were following many different faiths that had sprung up. Nāstikya (lack of belief in the teachings of the Veda) was on the rise and confusion prevailed everywhere. There was no unity among the followers as each path claimed supremacy over the others.

During this period, all the devatas and revered sages came together. They first went to Brahmāloka. Brahma took them to Kailāsa. Bhagavān Dakṣhiṇāmūrti, the form of Śhiva, and the embodiment of wisdom, sat at the sacred mountain of Kailāsa. They explained the state of the earth to him and expressed their deep desire to regain wisdom and clarity. They beseeched him to find a way to restore faith in the Vedic path.

The merciful Dakṣhiṇāmūrti, after hearing the plea of the devatas, agreed to incarnate on the earth. He promised that he would be born as Śhaṅkara in Kerala (who would go on to become Śhaṅkarāchārya), in the village of Kālaḍi in Kerala. Brahma, Sarasvati and other devatas agreed to come down to the world along with Śhiva to fulfil their respective roles.

Brahma would be born as Sureśhvarāchārya, Sarasvati as Sarasavāṇī. Indra was born as King Sudhanva. Padmapāda was an amśha of Bhagavān Viṣhṇu, Hastāmalaka an amśha of Vāyu and Toṭakāchārya the amśha of Agni. Subrahmaṇya the youthful devata would be born as Kumārila Bhaṭṭapāda.

The devas and ṛshis were pleased with the grace of Śhiva and returned to their respective dwellings.

☀️ Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam ☀️

Śhivanāmāvali Aṣṭakam of Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya



Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed many Śhiva stotras - Śhivabhujāṅgam, Śhivānandalaharī, Śhivanāmāvali aṣṭakam, Śhivapādadikeśhānta varṇana stotram, Śhivakeśhādipādānta varṇana stotram, Śhivapañchakshara stotram, Śhivapañchākṣhakshara nakṣhatramālika, Suvarṇamālā stuti, Śhiva aparādhakṣhamāpana stotram, Śhiva mānasapūja



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhivanāmāvali aṣṭakam of Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya

हे चन्द्रचूड मदनान्तक शूलपाणे
स्थाणो गिरीश गिरिजेश महेश शम्भो ।
भूतेश भीतभयसूदन मामनाथं
संसारदुःखगहनाज्जगदीश रक्ष ॥१॥

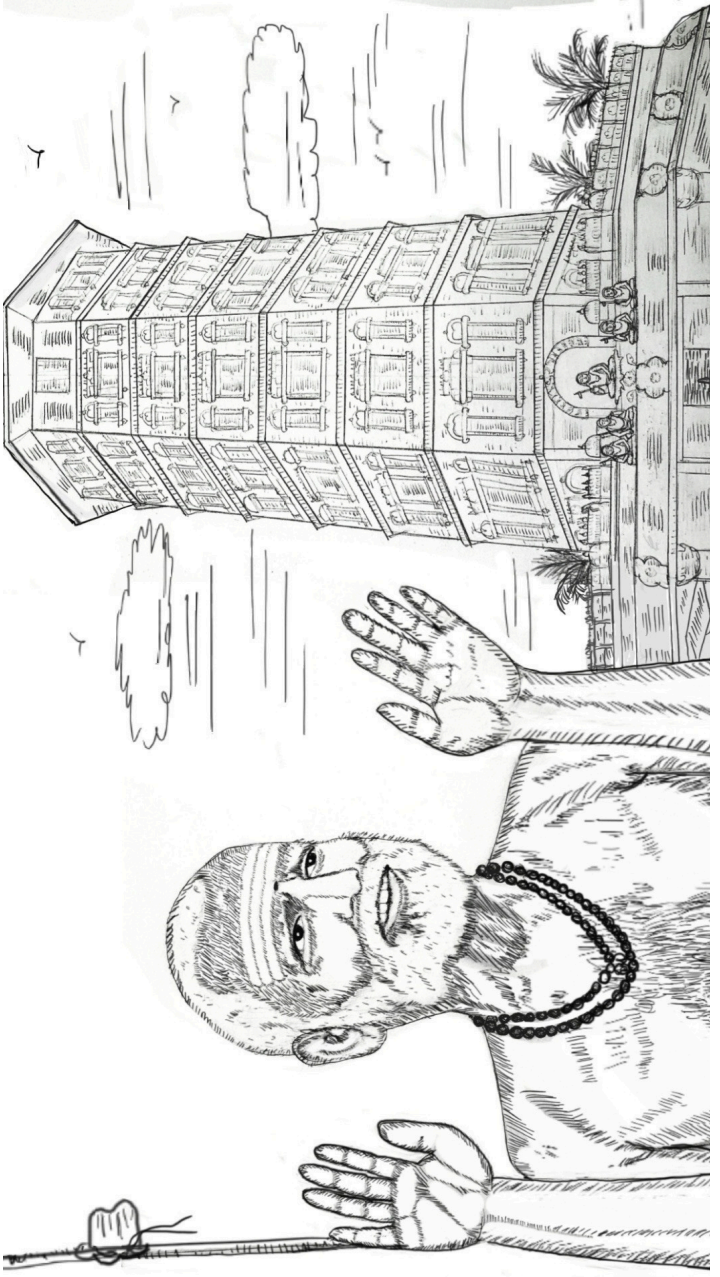
he candracūḍa madanāntaka śhūlapāṇe
sthāṇo girīśha girijeśha maheśha śhambho ।
bhūteśha bhītabhayasūdana māmanāthaṃ
saṃsāra-duḥkha-gahanājagadīśha rakṣha ॥1॥

O Śhambhu! Wearer of the crescent moon. Destroyer of Manmatha! Bearer of the trident! The firm and great Lord of the mountains and the consort of Pārvatī! The Lord of all living beings who destroys all fear! O Bhagavān! Save me the helpless devotee from the sorrows of saṃsāra - the cycles of births and deaths!

Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam

Kālaḍi, Kerala

The stūpi at Kālaḍi - the birth place of śhaṅkarāchārya





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Kālaḍi, Kerala



Kālaḍi is a town located between Angamaly and Perumbavoor, east of the Periyar river, near to Malayattoor in Ernakulam district of Kerala. There is a Kṛṣṇa temple that is the ancestral temple of the family of Śhaṅkarāchārya in this village.

The idea of building a commemorative stūpi was conceived in the mind of Jagadguru Śhaṅkarāchārya Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Saraswati Swāmigal. The construction was started under His guidance and consecrated by Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Saraswati Swāmigal in the year 1978. It contains a depiction of various events from the life of Śhaṅkarāchārya in sculptural form as the visitor ascends it. The stūpi was dedicated to the nation by Śhrī Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, President of India on 12th May 1978.

Śhaṅkarāchārya's parents praying to Vṛṣhāchaleśhvara for a child



Pūrṇā river (Periya āru) flows gracefully through the enchanting land of Kerala, its banks adorned with magnificent temples dedicated to Śhiva and Viṣṇu. Nestled on the northern shores of this sacred river is the village of Kālaḍi (Śhaśhala grāma in Samskr̥tam). In that village, lived Vidyādhirāja of Kaippalli house. He had a son named Śhivaguru. Vidyādhirāja got Śhivaguru married to Āryāmbā of Melpalur house. The devoted couple were immersed in performing yajñas, worshipping Bhagavān, and were leading a dharmic life. There are three debts or obligations a married couple fulfils - debt to ṛṣhis, debt to devatas and debt to ancestors. Their unwavering dedication to their duties allowed them to fulfill their debts to the ṛṣhis and the devatas. Their hearts, however, carried a deep longing for a child - for this would enable them to honor their ancestors, the final remaining debt. They decided to go to the temple of Vṛṣhāchaleśhvara at Thrissur, Kerala and pray to Bhagavān Śhiva to fulfil their wish. Āryāmbā and Śhivaguru stayed there for a period of 48 days (a maṇḍala). Immersed in devotion (bhakti), they prayed fervently to Bhagavān Śhiva to bless them with a child. Their devotion touched Vṛṣhāchaleśhvara, whose heart melted like the ghee that covers him.

Śhiva appeared before them in a dream and presented them with a choice. He said, "I am pleased with your devotion. I grant you the boon of having many children who will live long but lack wisdom, or you can have one wise son with a shorter lifespan." Being noble and wise, the couple replied, "You are all-knowing. We desire one wise son, even if he is short-lived. Please grant us whatever you deem best." Śhiva assured them that their wish would be fulfilled, and a son who carried his essence would be born to them with an allotted lifespan of 8 years. Overjoyed, the couple returned to Kālaḍi.

Śhiva appearing in the dream of Śhivaguru and Āryāmbā

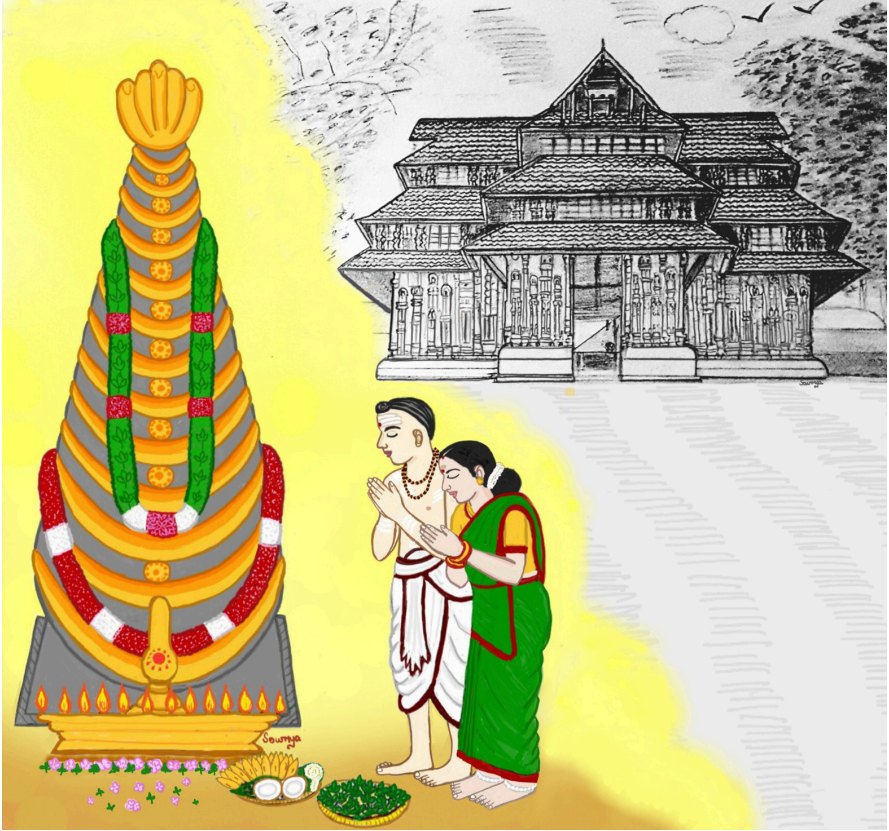




Śhānkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Vṛṣhāchaleśhvara kṣhetram, Thrissur Kerala





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Vr̥ṣhāchaleśhvara kṣhetram Thrissur Kerala

Vr̥ṣhāchaleśhvara temple or Vaḍakkunāthan temple is a Śhiva kṣhetra in Thrissur district, Kerala. Śhiva is called Vaḍakkunāthan and was installed by Paraśhurāma. Śhiva is in the form of a liṅgam and the shrine is known as Śhrī mūlasthānam.

Traditionally abhiṣheka is done to Śhiva with ghee in this temple and the liṅga is always covered in ghee. This ghee taken as prasādam has the power to cure many diseases.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Bhakti according to Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya

अङ्गोलं निजबीजसन्ततिरयस्कान्तोपलं सूचिका

साध्वी नैजविभुं लता क्षितिरुहं सिन्धुः सरिद्वल्लभम् ।

प्राप्नोतीह यथा तथा पशुपतेः पादारविन्दद्वयं

चेतोवृत्तिरुपेत्य तिष्ठति सदा सा भक्तिरित्युच्यते ॥ 61 ॥

aṅkolaṃ nija-bīja-santatir-ayaskāntopalaṃ sūchikā

sādhvī naija-vibhuṃ latā kṣhitiruhaṃ sindhuḥ sarid-vallabham ।

prāpnotīha yathā tathā paśhupateḥ pādāravinda-dvayaṃ

ceto-vṛttirupetya tiṣṭhati sadā sā bhaktirityuchyate ॥ 61 ॥

(Śhivānandalaharī)

What exactly is bhakti? Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya in the Vivekachūḍāmaṇi says bhakti is knowing the true nature of the self (sva-svarūpa-anusandhānam). However this realization is not easily attainable. Until that realization dawns, the path of saṅga upāsana or bhakti towards devatas with names and forms is prescribed. Bhakti is an intense desire and mental longing for Bhagavān. It is also the foremost among the means of attaining moksha (mokṣhasādhanasāmāgryām bhaktireva garīyasi).

How should that relationship between a devotee (bhakta) and bhagavān be? Śhaṅkarāchārya illustrates it with the help of the Aṅkola tree (the genus Alangium, Alinjil in Tamil). The seeds of this tree fall away from the tree but immediately move and attach themselves back to the tree. He says: Like its own seeds seeks the mother ankola tree, like the iron needle seeks for the lodestone (magnet), like the lady seeks her husband, like the tender creeper seeks (to wind itself) on trees, like the river travels towards the sea, if the mind, seeks the lotus feet of Paśhupati, and stays there always, that is known as bhakti.

Birth of Śhaṅkarāchārya



Nandana - 509 BCE
Vaishakha Shukla
Panchami

The bhakti of Śhivaguru and Āryāmbā bore fruit. Soon Āryāmbā conceived. This brought immense happiness to the couple as their prayers for a child were fulfilled. Months passed by.

The divine event of the child Śhaṅkara's birth happened during an auspicious time. It was Vasantakāla (spring time) and nature was teeming with life. The Sun was in Aries (Meṣha), and the lunar month was Vaiśhākha and the tithi was śhukla pakṣha pañchamī (fifth tithi in the bright lunar fortnight).

Śhrī Śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda was born in 509 BCE - 2631 years after the beginning of Yudhiṣṭhira śhaka and 2593 years after the beginning of Kaliyuga. Yudhiṣṭhira śhaka is the time frame of reference denoting the paṭṭābhiṣheka of Dharmaputra that happened 37 years before Kaliyuga. Kaliyuga began 3102 years before the common era. Traditional accounts say that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya's birth was in the 26th era of Yudhiṣṭhira, in the 31st year named Nandana.

During that auspicious abhijit muhūrta (at noon) at an auspicious hour, like Aditi the mother of the devatas giving birth to Indra, Āryāmbā welcomed her son into the world. The baby had large eyes and was a delight to his parents. The infant's face was radiant as the moon and on his hands and feet were auspicious signs that showed the marks of greatness and glory. Śhivaguru and Āryāmbā rejoiced.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Pravṛtti and nivṛtti dharma

Śhaṅkarāchārya says in his introductory commentary on the Bhagavad-gītā , “Bhagavān created the world and to sustain it, he created Marīchi and other prajāpatis and taught them pravṛtti dharma as per the Veda. Then He created the sages like Sanaka and Sanandana and taught them nivṛtti dharma. Thus, there are two paths that the Veda speaks of”

द्विविधो हि वेदोक्तो धर्मः, प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो निवृत्तिलक्षणश्च, जगतः
स्थितिकारणम्

**dvividho hi vedokto dharmah , pravṛttilakṣhaṇo
nivṛttilakṣhaṇaśhca jagataḥ stithikāraṇam**

Pravṛtti mārga is the path of performing the ritual acts as prescribed in the Veda and leading the life of a householder. Nivṛtti mārga is renunciation or the life of a sannyāsī. According to the Śhaṅkara-sampradāya, karmānuṣṭhāna that we undertake purify our minds and make us fit for obtaining jñāna which then liberates us. Among the rituals that a householder has to perform are the samskāras.

Samskāras

'Samskāra' means refining or purifying. Samskāras are ritual actions that remove impurities, take away all the bad or evil elements, and impart good qualities to the performer. A sacred act involving mantras is known as 'samskāra'. Our sages have described 40 samskāras from a human being's birth till the end of his life. Any samskāra must be performed at the right time for it to have an effect.

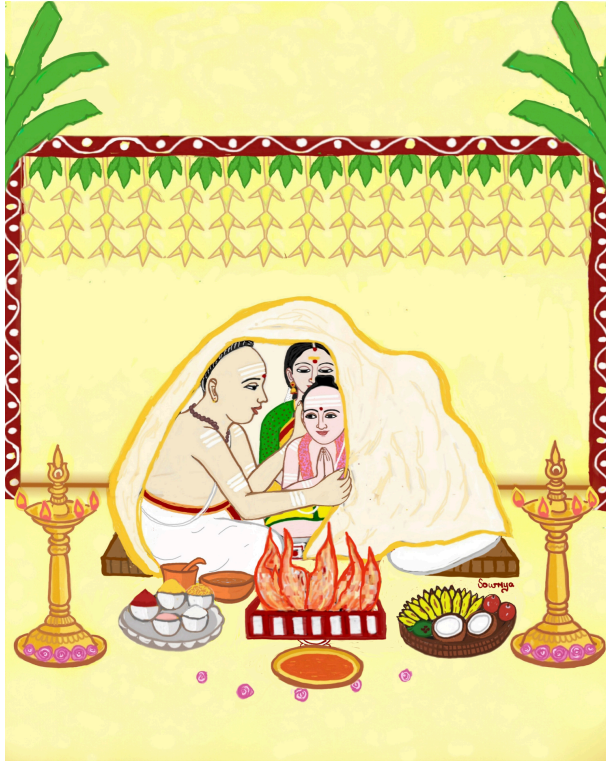
Garbhādhāna, pumsavana and śimantonnayana are performed before the child is born and the parents-to-be pray for the birth of a noble and healthy child. Jātakarma must be performed when the child is born. Ritual gifts must be given away. Nāmakaraṇa or the naming ceremony is performed on the eleventh day.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



When the child is six months old, annaprāśhana is done and the child is given solid food. Chaula comes after annaprāśhana. A portion of the boy's hair is shaved off and the remaining portion is meant for the "śhikhā" the tuft of hair which is essential for conducting all religious rites. Upanayanam comes after chaula. It is the first samskāra where boy chants mantras. He is invested with the sacred thread and the Gāyatrī mantra. After upanayanam, he would go to a gurukula and live and study Veda with a teacher. The student leads a simple life and lives on bhikṣhā (food accepted from other householders). Until the end of the graduation or samāvartana, the student is in brahmachārya āśhrama - the lifestage of studenthood.



Śhivaguru performed the jātakarma and nāmakaraṇa samskāras for the newborn child. The child was given the name Śhaṅkara - meaning He who gives happiness/well-being. (śham karoti iti śhaṅkaraḥ).

Śhivaguru and Āryāmbā gave away the ritual dānam to brahmaṇas and others as prescribed in the śhāstras. Dānam in the context of rituals refers to the act of making offerings to brāhmaṇas as part of the rituals and seeking their blessings. In other contexts, dānam can be understood as charity.

When the child was three years old, he performed the chaula samskāra for Śhaṅkara. The child Śhaṅkara mastered bhāṣhā and lipi (language and script).

When Śhaṅkara was five years old, Śhivaguru performed his upanayanam and made him receive the Gāyatri mantra (upadeśham). Soon after that Śhivaguru passed away. Śhaṅkara began his study of the Veda in the gurukulam under a guru.

(Some accounts of His life say that Śhivaguru passed away before his son's Upanayanam)



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



अपरोक्षानुभूतिः (Aparokṣhānubhūtiḥ)

स्ववर्णाश्रमधर्मेण तपसा हरितोषणात् ।

साधनं प्रभवेत्पुंसां वैराग्यादि चतुष्टयम् ॥३॥

निगमाचार्यवाक्येषु भक्तिः श्रद्धेति विश्रुता ।

चित्तैकाग्र्यं तु सल्लक्ष्ये समाधानमिति स्मृतम् ॥ ८ ॥

sva-varṇāśhrama-dharmeṇa tapasā hari-toṣaṇāt ।
sādhanam prabhavet puṁsāṃ vairāgyādi chatuṣṭayam ॥ 3 ॥
nigamācārya-vākyeṣu bhaktiḥ śhraddheti viśhrutā ।
cittaikāgryam tu sallakṣhye samādhānam iti smṛtam ॥ 8 ॥

Aparokṣhānubhūtiḥ is one of the introductory works on Vedānta composed by Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya. He says in this work that that one must perform the duties appropriate to one's āśhrama and varṇa and by means of worshipping Bhagavān Hari and by tapas (penance), a person has to strive towards obtaining the prerequisites for attaining mokṣha.

In addition to obtaining the prerequisites, there is the role of the guru. The guru teaches the student the sentences from the upaniṣhads that talk of the identity of individual ātmā with the supreme. The student with great sincerity and devotion listens to the words of the guru. This is called śhraddhā. With śhraddha comes single-minded focus (chitta ekāgratā) towards the goal and this is called samādhāna.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam

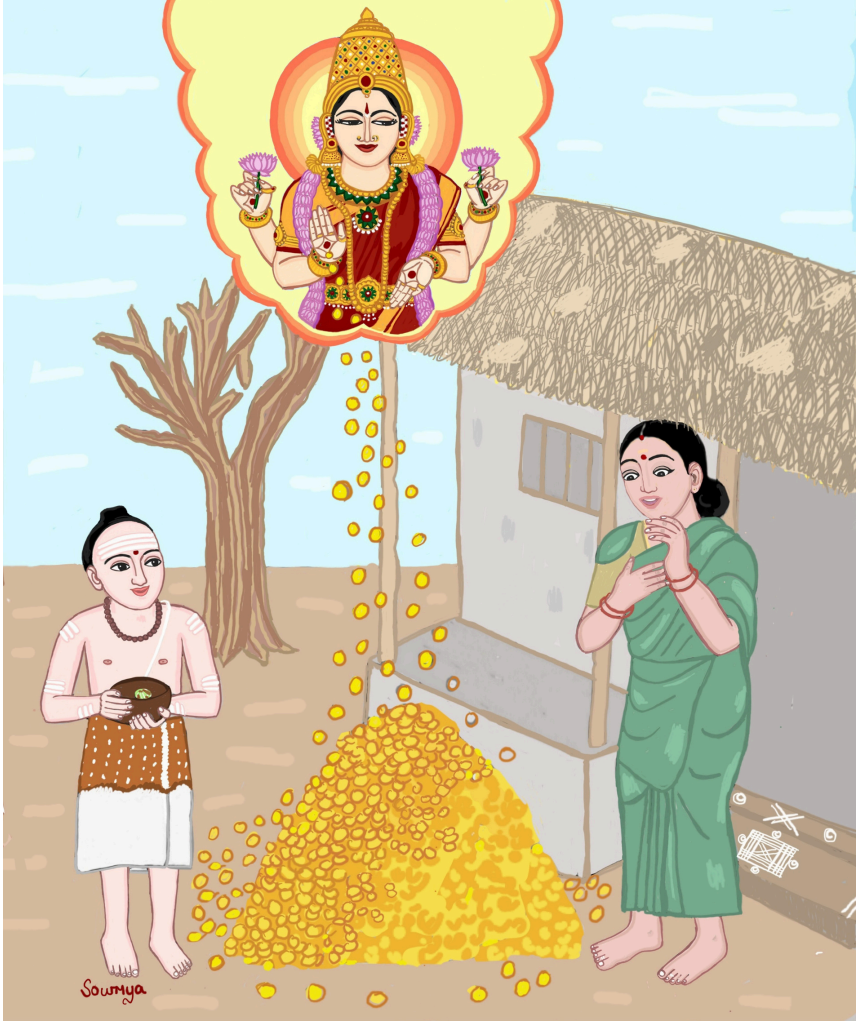


Gurukulavāsam

A brahmachārī, after upanayanam does gurukulavāsam at the residence of the guru. The guru teaches the student Veda and śhāstra and the significance and the importance of various ritual acts. The duties include sandhyāvandana (thrice every day at morning, noon and before sunset), Veda adhyayanam (study of Veda from the guru), seeking bhikṣhā and guru-śhuśhrūṣha (service to the guru). This is in addition to the many mental attitudes expected of a student such as - modesty, simplicity, frugality and reverence for the guru.

To instill these values in a student, the act of seeking alms or bhikṣhā from other householders was practiced. Householders considered it a matter of great honor to give alms to the brahmachārīs and sustain Vedic learning.

Composing Kanakadhārā stotram



On a dvādaśhī day, the young brahmachārī Śhaṅkara, along with his fellow-students reached the house of a poor brāhmaṇa to receive bhikṣhā. He entreated from outside, “bhavati bhikṣhām dehi”.

The wife of the brāhmaṇa saw this lustrous young brahmachārī. She looked for something to offer and found that there was nothing else in the house other than a dry āmla (Indian gooseberry) fruit. Yet, she did not want to send the child empty-handed, even if it meant that they had nothing to eat. Her head bent with regret, she offered the āmla fruit - her only possession.

Śhaṅkara, the compassionate saw the pain in her expression. He worshipped the goddess Lakṣhmī the consort of Nārāyaṇa and composed the Kanakadhārā stotram. He appealed to her saying, “This āmla fruit was offered to me by the brāhmaṇa’s patnī as her sole possession. If you are compassionate towards me, please bless her with the fortune deserving of the devas.” Lakṣhmidevi heard Śhaṅkara’s request and was pleased by it. She showered and filled the home with golden āmla fruits.

There is a house called “svarṇattu mana” near Kālaḍi which according to the residents of the area is the home that was blessed by Śhaṅkarāchārya with the shower of gold.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Kanakadhārā stotram

अङ्गं हरेः पुलकभूषणमाश्रयन्ती
भृङ्गाङ्गनेव मुकुलाभरणं तमालम् ।
अङ्गीकृताखिलविभूतिरपाङ्गलीला
माङ्गल्यदास्तु मम मङ्गलदेवतायाः ॥ १ ॥

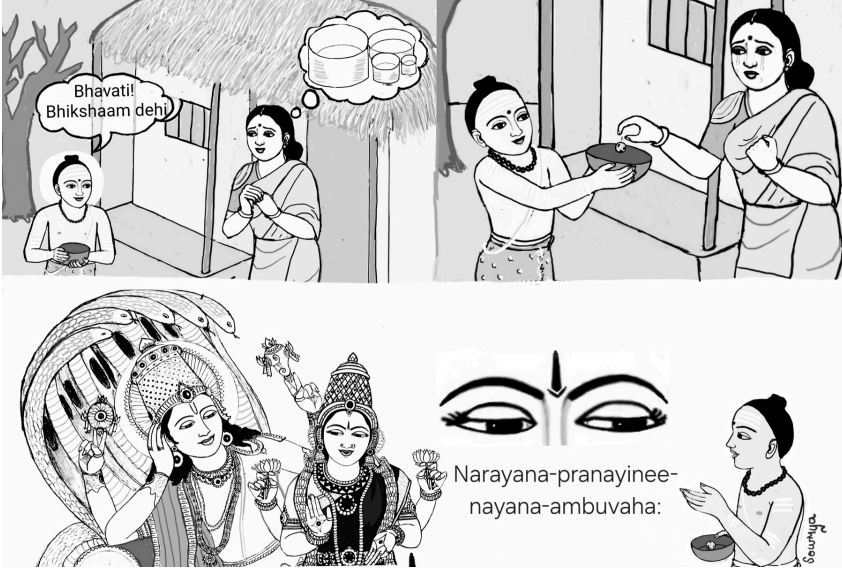
aṅgaṃ hareḥ pulakabhūṣhaṇam āśhrayantī
bhṛṅgāṅganeva mukulābharaṇaṃ tamālam ।
aṅgīkṛtākhilavibhūtirapāṅgalilā
maṅgalyadāstu mama maṅgaladevatāyāḥ ॥

May the glances of the auspicious devatā (Lakṣhmī), which have all the riches bestow auspiciousness upon me. Resting on the body of Bhagavān Hari adorning him with delight, she is like the bee resting on the Tamāla tree that is adorned with buds.

Bhagavān Hari is poetically compared to the dark Tamāla tree and Devi Lakṣhmī is compared to the bee that rests on the tree. The tree has buds that adorn it. Similarly Bhagavān Viṣṇu's body is adorned by the ecstatic bristling of hair due to Lakṣhmī's resting on it. May this devatā whose mere glance is enough to give all riches, bestow auspiciousness upon me.

Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam

Kanakadhārā stotram



दद्याद्दयानुपवनो द्रविणाम्बुधाराम्
अस्मिन्नकिञ्चनविहङ्गशिशौ विषण्णे ।
दुष्कर्मघर्ममपनीय चिराय दूरं
नारायणप्रणयिनीनयनाम्बुवाहः ॥ ९ ॥

dadyāddayānupavano draviṇāmbudhārām
asminnakiñcanavihaṅgaśhiśhau viṣhaṅṅe ।
duṣhkarmagharmamapaniya cirāya dūraṃ
nārāyaṇapraṇayinīnayanāmbuvāhaḥ ॥

Let the clouds, the eyes of the consort of Nārāyaṇa, together with the breeze of Her grace, remove completely the heat of bad deeds and shower the rains of riches over this grief-stricken, poor little bird.

Changing the course of Pūrṇā river



The divine child Śhaṅkara completed his study of Veda, vedāṅga (auxillary branches to the Veda) and kāvya (literature) by the time he was eight. After completing gurukulavāsam, he returned home. He spent time taking care of his mother and performing the anuṣṭhānam prescribed for a brahmachārī.

His mother Āryāmbā was growing old and weak. She could not walk to the river Pūrṇā to take her bath. Śhaṅkarāchārya to relieve the pain of his mother prayed to river Pūrṇā (alt. Chūrna). The power of his prayer brought the river close to his home so that his mother could comfortably walk to the river.

One day the seven sages (saptaṛṣhis) appeared before him and prayed to him and reminded him of the divine mission he set out to complete. He promised them that he will begin his destined task soon and the saptaṛṣhis were pleased.

Śhaṅkara was eight years old. He had now reached the stage in life where he had to set out in search of his guru seeking to know the true nature of the self.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Sādhana-pañcakam

वेदो नित्यमधीयतां तदुदितं कर्म स्वनुष्ठीयतां
तेनेशस्य विधीयतामपचितिः काम्ये मतिस्त्यज्यताम् ।

पापौघः परिधूयतां भवसुखे दोषोऽनुसन्धीयता-

मात्मेच्छा व्यवसीयतां निजगृहात्तूर्णं विनिर्गम्यताम् ॥ १ ॥

**vedo nityam-adhīyatām taduditam karma svanuṣṭhīyatām
teneśhasya vidhīyatām apacitiḥ kāmye matistyajyatām ।
pāpaughaḥ paridhūyatām bhava-sukhe doṣho'nusandhīyatām
ātmecchā vyavasīyatām nijagrḥāt-tūrṇam vinirgamyatām ॥ 1 ॥**

In the Sādhana pañchakam, Śhrī Śhaṅkarabhagavatpāda expounds in a set of five verses the systematic steps to attain mokṣha.

"May you study the Veda daily. Perform the duties ordained by the Veda. Dedicate all the karmas as the worship of Bhagavān. Give up the kāmya karmas (acts performed with a desire to attain something). Uproot the numerous pāpams. Reflect and think about the impermanence and other faults in the material things of this world. Have a desire to know the self. As soon as the desire to know the self arises, leave home.

Seek the company of the wise. Stay steadily devoted to Bhagavān. Cultivate the qualities of śhānti (serenity) and renounce karmas quickly and firmly. (ie. applicable to sannyāsa) Seek refuge under a good vidvān (a teacher), pay respects to their sacred feet every day. Reflect on the aumkāra the single syllable denoting the supreme and repeatedly do śhravaṇa or listening to the sentences in the upaniṣhads."

Śhankara taking sannyāsa at age eight



One morning as the young Śhaṅkara and his mother went to Pūrṇā river to bathe, his mother was resting on the bank. Suddenly a crocodile appeared and got hold of Śhaṅkara's feet. Śhaṅkara called out to his mother who was shocked and asked for her permission to take up sannyāsa.

Sannyāsa is equivalent to taking a second birth and helps the person who takes up sannyāsa in dire circumstances (āpat sannyāsa) attain sadgati. Śhaṅkara told his mother that the only way of saving his life was to become a sannyāsī. Āryāmbā not knowing what else to do gave her permission. This was the best solution in the present circumstance. Śhaṅkara recited the praiṣha mantra that marked his initiation into sannyāsa. Śhaṅkara was now a sannyāsī. The crocodile, released its grip on the divine feet. It disappeared and in its place appeared a gandharva. The gandharva was released from his erstwhile curse.

Āryāmbā relieved that her son was alive, now asked him to come home with her. Śhaṅkarāchārya reminded her that he was now a sannyāsī and how his change of āśhrama gave him another 8 years to live and that it was not possible for him to go home with her.

Āryāmbā was anguished and he consoled her. She was also concerned that she had no one to perform her last rites in her final days. Śhaṅkarāchārya promised his mother and assured her that no matter where he was, he would arrive in the last moments of her life and perform the duties and the last rites that are expected of a son. The distraught mother agreed and gave him permission to leave.

Śhaṅkarāchārya leaves home and goes in search of his guru



Even though he had taken āpat sannyāsa (sannyāsa in a critical situation), seeking a guru was essential to formally to take up sannyāsa. Being the incarnation of the omniscient Śhiva, He was omniscient. What then was the need for a guru?

Sanātana-vaidika-dharma and advaita-sampradāya place great emphasis on the role and importance of a guru. A student approaches a guru earnestly with samit in his hands and listens to the vedānta vākya from the guru (śhravaṇam), internalises it (mananam) and reflects upon it (nidhidyāsanam) in the path towards attaining wisdom. Thus to show the importance of a guru paramparā and to demonstrate the right path, true to the definition of the word Āchārya (one who not only professes the purport of śhāstra but shows them in practice) he sought a guru. The actions of great men become role models to follow for the rest of humanity. Hence, he sought permission from his mother to travel towards North in search of his guru.

Days and nights passed. Śhaṅkarāchārya walked by the light of the Sun and the Moon and slept with only the sky for his cover. He knew who his guru was and where to find him. Led by the inner light of the self, Āchārya Śhaṅkara proceeded towards the North and made his way through cities, villages, hills, jungles and rivers to finally reach the banks of river Narmada also known as Indubhava and Reva.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



॥ एकश्लोकी ॥

॥ ekaśhlokī ॥

किं ज्योतिस्तव भानुमानहनि मे रात्रौ प्रदीपादिकं
स्यादेवं रविदीपदर्शनविधौ किं ज्योतिराख्याहि मे ।
चक्षुस्तस्य निमीलनादिसमये किं धीर्धियो दर्शने
किं तत्राहमतो भवान्परमकं ज्योतिस्तदस्मि प्रभो ॥

**kiṃ jyotistavabhānumānahani me rātrau pradīpādikaṃ
syādevaṃ ravidīpadarśhanavidhau kiṃ jyotirākhyāhi me ।
cakṣhustasya nimīlanādisamaye kiṃ dhīrdhiyo darśhane
kiṃ tatrāhamato bhavānparamakaṃ jyotistadasmi prabho॥**

The ekaśhlokī is a short work of Śhaṅkarāchārya. It illustrates the light of the inner self and is set in the form of a dialog between a guru and a śhiṣya and how the student is progressively led to see the light of the self and realize their true nature by the guru through the process of dialogues. Dialogues and questions and answers were one of the fundamental ways of transmitting knowledge in Indian knowledge systems.

Guru: What provides you with light?

Śhiṣya: The Sun, during the day and a lamp at night

Guru: So be it! What is the light that helps you see these two?

Śhiṣya: (The light of) the eye

Guru: When that eye is closed, what is it that illumines?

Śhiṣya: The mind/intellect.

Guru: What is it that knows or is aware of this mind/intellect?

Śhiṣya: It is that self (I) O Bhagavān!



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Nivṛtti dharma is applicable for those who renounce the world. Those who renounce the world are called sannyāsīs. A person seeks sannyāsa after completing the proper course of study of Veda as a brahmachārī and then approaches a guru. The guru accepts Him as the disciple. The student serves the guru and studies there. The guru imparts the mahāvākyas from the upaniṣhads to the disciple. Mahāvākyas are sentences that speak about the oneness of the individual jīva and the brahman. The student is then given formal renunciation and a sannyāsa nāma to the sannyāsī. The Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham bear the sannyāsa nama “Indrasarasvati”. Śhaṅkarāchārya defines what sannyāsa is in his short text Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-sangraha. Śhaṅkarāchārya says, according to wise, renunciation means the abandonment of all actions - those that give us happiness here or in svargaloka. Thus, a person seeking sannyāsa, leaves their family, goes in search of a guru, stays as antevāsī sitting near by and hearing and pondering on the wise words of the guru.

साधनत्वेन दृष्टानां सर्वेषामपि कर्मणाम् ।

विधिना यः परित्यागः स संन्यासः सतां मतः ॥ १५१ ॥

sādhanatvena dṛṣṭānāṃ sarveṣhāmapī karmaṇām ।

vidhinā yaḥ parityāgaḥ sa saṃnyāsaḥ satāṃ mataḥ ॥ 151 ॥

There is no other karma prescribed for a sannyāsī except the service to His guru. The service to the guru removes the ego or ahamkāra.

नैवान्यसाधनापेक्षा शुश्रूषोस्तु गुरुं विना ।

उपर्युपर्यहंकारो वर्धते कर्मणा भृशम् ।।१८१

naivānyasādhanāpekṣhā śhuśhrūṣhostu guruṃ vinā ।

uparyuparyahaṃkāro vardhate karmaṇā bhṛṣham ॥ 181 ॥

Narmadā river surged beyond its banks, inundating nearby villages and towns, bringing distress to the people. Touched by compassion at the sight of their suffering, Śhaṅkarāchārya earnestly prayed to Narmadā nadī. In response to his plea, the river gently flowed into his kamaṇḍalu. (a small water-vessel carried by sannyāsīs) As Narmada entered this sacred vessel, her once tumultuous waters transformed into a calm and serene flow, bringing relief to the inundated regions. The stotra that was composed by Śhaṅkarāchārya is known as Narmadāṣṭakam.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



॥ नर्मदाष्टकम् ॥ Narmadāṣṭakam

सबिन्दुसिन्धुसुस्खलत्तरङ्गभङ्गरञ्जितं

द्विषत्सु पापजातजातकादिवारिसंयुतम् ।

कृतान्तदूतकालभूतभीतिहारिवर्मदे

त्वदीयपादपङ्कजं नमामि देवि नर्मदे ॥१॥

sabindusindhususkhalattaraṅgabhaṅgarañjitaṃ

dviṣhatsu pāpa-jāta-jātakādi-vāri-saṃyutam ।

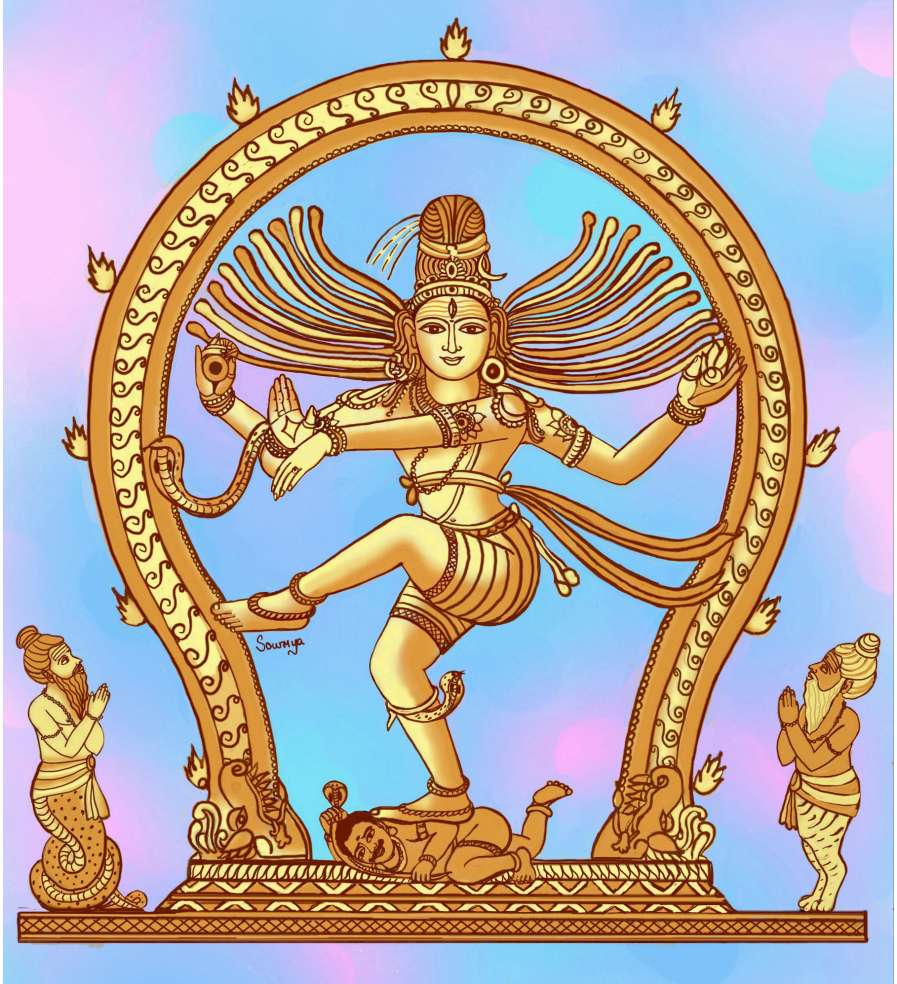
kṛtānta-dūta-kāla-bhūta-bhīti-hāri-varmade

tvadiya-pāda-paṅkajaṃ namāmi devi narmade ॥1॥

The nadīs (sacred rivers) of Bhāratadeśha are not mere bodies of water but are worshipped as devatas. Festivals such as puṣhkarams, Kumbha mela and Āḍi perukku are celebrated to honor these nadīs. Śhaṅkarāchārya composed stotras on various nadīs. River Narmada is the longest West-flowing river in Bhāratam. It flows through the states of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. In this stotra, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya offers His salutations to Narmada with each verse ending with “I offer salutations to your holy feet O Devi Narmada!”. He also says that the river is capable of removing the fear of death and is home to fish, tortoises, geese, crocodiles, and chakravāla birds (an aquatic goose-like bird) and was home to great ṛṣhis and celestials.

Jagadguru Jayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal, the 69th Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham was instrumental in reviving the festivals of puṣhkarams in various nadīs.

**Bhagavān Naṭarāja giving darśhanam to sages
Patañjali and Vyāghrapāda in Chidambaram**

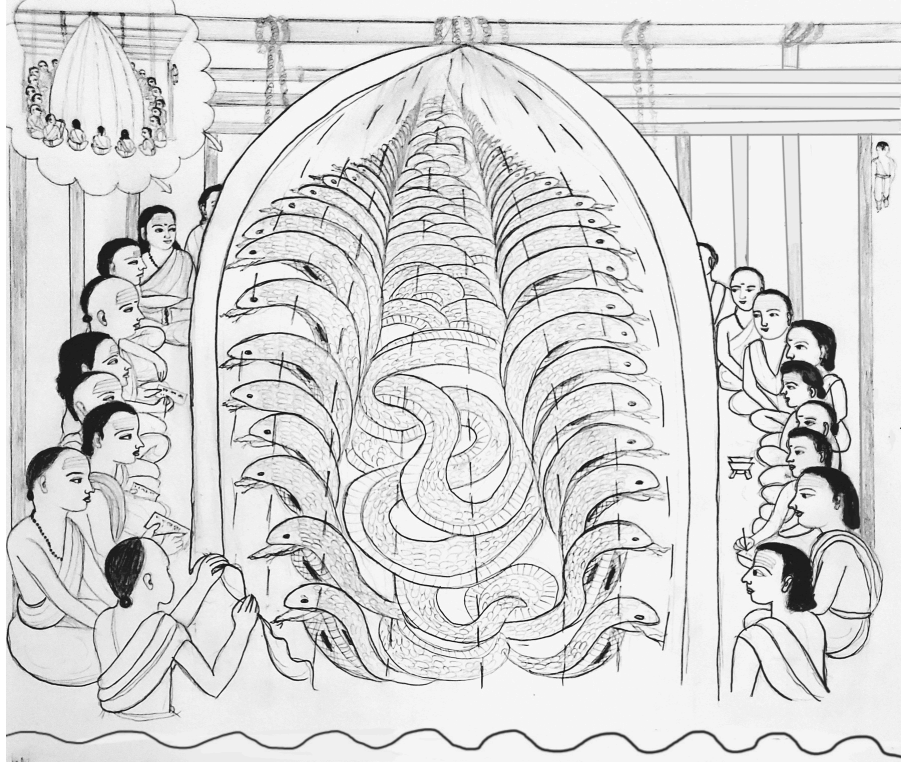


Śhaṅkarāchārya then proceeded towards the cave where Govinda Bhagavatpāda the great yogi lived. Who was Govinda Bhagavatpāda? The story takes us back to Vaikuṅṭha - the abode of Mahāviṣṇu.

Once Bhagavān Mahāviṣṇu was reclining on the serpent Ādiśeṣha in his abode Vaikuntha. Ādiśeṣha perceived that Mahāviṣṇu's body was heavier than usual and asked him the reason. Viṣṇu explained that the reason for this change was the euphoria caused by the divine darśhanam of Bhagavān Śhiva dancing as Naṭarāja in Chidambaram. Ādiśeṣha desired to have darshan of this divine dance as well. With Viṣṇu's blessings, Ādiśeṣha was born on earth. He fell into the palm of a nāga woman named Goṅikā, who was praying for a child and offering arghyam to Sūrya. 'pata' in Samskr̥tam means 'fall' and 'añjali' refers to 'hands folded in prayer'. Hence the child was named Patañjali. Bhagavān Patañjali prayed to Śhiva who then promised to give him darśhanam in Chidambaram. At Chidambaram, Patañjali had darshan of Naṭarāja and composed his commentary on vyākaraṇa (grammar) sūtras of Mahaṛṣhi Pāṇiṇi and the vārttikas of Kātyāyana. This commentary is called as the 'great commentary' or Mahābhāṣyam. Bhagavān Patañjali also composed the Yogasūtra and a commentary to the AyurVeda text Charakasamhita. He is hence praised as someone who offered solutions to the body, mind and words through these three compositions.

Disciples from all over came to learn from him. Patañjali taught them simultaneously in his fierce form with a thousand heads. As his breath was poisonous, he sat behind a curtain and taught under two conditions - that no student should leave the room and that no one should look behind the curtain.

Bhagavān Patañjali teaching Vyākaraṇa Mahābhāṣyam to students in Chidambaram



A student from Gauḍadeśha was among the disciples. One day, as the guru was teaching, he went out to answer the call of nature. Meanwhile, another student out of curiosity, looked behind the curtain. The poisonous breath from the thousand heads of Ādiśheṣha killed all the students. Gauḍa not knowing what happened came back. Patañjali cursed Gauḍa (since he had left without permission) that he would become a brahmarākṣhasa. Patañjali felt sorry for him. He then gave him a redemption from the curse. He told him that he would impart his knowledge to Gauḍa and that Gauḍa would be released of this curse once he teaches Mahābhāṣyam to a fit student.

Gauḍa learnt the Mahābhāṣyam from his guru and waited under a tree searching for a fit student. Patañjali now that the purpose of his avatāra was complete, went back to his abode. Gauḍa waited for a long time and could not find an appropriate student. Ādiśheṣha realizing that his work had to be propagated, incarnated again as a young man Chandraśharma. The young brahmachārī Chandraśharma then went to the tree where Gauḍa lived as a Brahmarākṣhasa. The brahmarākṣhasa asked him what the niṣṭhā (past participle) form of the verbal root (पच् - pach - cook) was. Chandraśharma correctly answered that it was pakvam. Pleased by this response, Gauḍa taught the Mahābhāṣyam to Chandraśharma. Later on, Gauḍa took sannyāsa and became Gauḍapāda.

Chandraśharma married and then later on took up sannyāsa. He continued his way to Badarikāśhrama, and was known by the name Govinda Bhagavatpāda. He later lived in a cave near Omkāreśhvara.

Śhaṅkarāchārya meets his guru Govindabhagavatpāda



Śhaṅkarāchārya reached this cave of Śhrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda. As he entered inside, he saw the pādukas of His guru. He felt a deep sense of reverence as he approached the sacred sandals, knowing that they symbolized the presence of his revered guru. He composed the gurupādukā stotram. The sacred sandals that are worn on the feet of the guru represent the Guru Himself and a student first offers worship to the feet of the Guru.

Govinda Bhagavatpāda stirred from His samādhi and was delighted to meet the radiant young sannyāsī brimming with wisdom and asked him who He was.

Śhaṅkarāchārya said, “I am the neither made of the five elements such as earth, water, fire, air and space, nor of the sense organs or the mind as these are not eternal and decay. I am that pure undying ātmā.” Govinda Bhagavatpāda was delighted to welcome the wise young boy and accepted Him as a disciple.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Guru pādukā stotram

जगज्जनि-स्थेम-लयालयाभ्याम् अगण्य-पुण्योदय-भाविताभ्याम् ।
 त्रयी-शिरोजात-निवेदिताभ्यां नमोनमः श्रीगुरु-पादुकाभ्याम् ॥ १ ॥
 विपत्-तमः-स्तोम-विकर्तनाभ्यां विशिष्ट-सम्पत्ति-विवर्धनाभ्याम् ।
 नमज्जना-शेष-विशेष-दाभ्यां नमोनमः श्रीगुरु-पादुकाभ्याम् ॥ २ ॥
 समस्त-दुस्तर्क-कलङ्क-पङ्कपनोदन-प्रौढ-जलाशयाभ्याम् ।
 निराश्रयाभ्यां निखिलाश्रयाभ्यां नमोनमः श्रीगुरु-पादुकाभ्याम् ॥ ३ ॥
 ताप-त्रयादित्य-करार्दितानां छाया-मयीभ्यामतिशीतलाभ्याम् ।
 आपन्न-संरक्षण-दीक्षिताभ्यां नमोनमः श्रीगुरु-पादुकाभ्याम् ॥ ४ ॥
 यतो गिरोऽप्राप्य धिया समस्ताहिया निवृत्ताः सममेव नित्याः ।
 ताभ्यामजे-शा-च्युत-भाविताभ्यां नमोनमः श्रीगुरु-पादुकाभ्याम् ॥ ५ ॥
 ये पादुका-पञ्चकमादरेण पठन्ति नित्यं प्रयताः प्रभाते ।
 तेषां गृहे नित्य-निवास-शीला श्री-देशिकेन्द्रस्य कटाक्ष-लक्ष्मीः ॥ ६ ॥

jagajjani-sthema-layaālayābhyām aṅaṅya-puṅyaoḍaya-bhāvitābhyām ।
 trayī-śīrojāta-niveditābhyām namo namaḥ śrīguru-pādukābhyām ॥ 1 ॥
 vipat-tamaḥ-stoma-vikartanābhyām viśiṣṭa-sampatti-vivardhanābhyām ।
 namajjanāśeṣa-viśeṣadābhyām namo namaḥ śrīguru-pādukābhyām ॥ 2 ॥
 samasta-dustarka-kalaṅka-paṅkāpanodana-prauḍha-jalāśayābhyām ।
 nirāśrayābhyām nikhilāśrayābhyām namo namaḥ śrīguru-pādukābhyām ॥ 3 ॥
 tāpa-trayaāditya-karaārditānām chāyā-mayībhyām atīśītalābhyām ।
 āpanna-saṁrakṣaṅa-dikṣitābhyām namo namaḥ śrīguru-pādukābhyām ॥ 4 ॥
 yatogiro'prāpya dhiyā samastā hriyā nivṛttāḥ samameva nityāḥ ।
 tābhyām ajaeścyuta-bhāvitābhyām namo namaḥ śrīguru-pādukābhyām ॥ 5 ॥
 ye pādukā-pañcakam ādareṅa paṭhanti nityam prayatāḥ prabhāte ।
 teṣām gr̥he nitya-nivāsa-śīlā śrī-deśikendrasya kaṭākṣa-lakṣmīḥ ॥ 6 ॥

This śhloka pays homage to the sacred feet of the guru that removes all the sorrow of the world. Those that recite this śhloka would be blessed by the wealth that is the grace of the guru in their homes.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Daśhaśhlokī

The śhloka that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya recited in response to His guru asking who he was is called Daśhaśhlokī. It is made up of ten verses and each verse in this text ends with "तदेकोवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोहम्" - "tadekovaśhiṣṭaḥ śhivaḥ kevaloham" - "I am that pure blissful self that remains even in deep sleep". Even though it is a short introductory work and it was composed by the Āchārya at the time of the first meeting of His guru, it is very profound. Śhrī Madhusūdāna Sarasvatī has written a commentary on this work named Siddhāntabindu.

न भूमिर्न तोयं न तेजो न वायुर्न खं नेन्द्रियं वा न तेषां समूहः ।
अनैकान्तिकत्वात्सुषुप्त्येकसिद्धस्तदेकोऽवशिष्टः शिवः केवलोऽहम् ॥ १ ॥

na bhūmirna toyam na tejo na vāyur-
na kham nendriyam vā na teṣhām samūhaḥ ।
anaikāntikatvāt suṣhuptyekasiddhas
tadeko'vaśhiṣṭaḥ śhivaḥ kevalo'ham ॥ 1 ॥

I am not the earth , nor am I water
Nor am I the fire or the air or space,
I am not the senses or their combination
Because they change and are not eternal
I am the pure self, that remains even in deep sleep

The five elements and their combinations make up all creation. The five senses (indriyas) and mind (manas) enable us to feel and experience objects around us. However, these five senses or the mind are changing and subject to decay. The ātmā on the other hand which is a witness to all this, and remains even in the state of deep sleep (suṣhupti) remains undecayed and eternal.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



The importance of guru in Śhaṅkarāchārya's words

A guru is the pratyakṣha or visible form of Īśhvara. The tradition stresses that the Guru and Īśhvara are one. The upaniṣhads say, “आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद” (one who has a Guru attains jñāna). Śhaṅkarāchārya, who is known with the epithet Jagadguru stresses the importance of the guru in all his works. He has also composed Guru aṣṭakam.

He describes the lakṣhana or characteristics of a guru as one who is magnanimous (Mahāntah), serene (Śhāntah) controlled and engages with the world doing good spreading joy like the spring season. (Vasantavat lokahitam charanti). The magnanimity of the guru is such that they remove the sorrows due to their natural state of compassion (ayam svabhāvaḥ mahātmānām) , much like the moon (sudhāmśhuh) with its cool rays by its very nature saves the earth that is tormented by the heat of the Sun.

In Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sāra-sangraha, he says that when Bhagavān is worshipped devotedly across several janmas, as per the method outlined in the Veda, Īśhvara himself takes the form of a guru and teaches the truth and helps the devotee cross the ocean of saṁsāra.

जन्मानेकशतैः सदादरयुजा भक्त्या समाराधितो
भक्तैर्वैदिकलक्षणेन विधिना सन्तुष्ट ईशः स्वयम् ।
साक्षाच्छ्रीगुरुरूपमेत्य कृपया दृग्गोचरः सन्प्रभुः
तत्त्वं साधु विबोध्य तारयति तान् संसारदुःखार्णवात् ॥ २५४ ॥

janmāneka-śhataiḥ sadādarayujā bhaktyā samārādhito
bhaktair vaidika-lakṣhaṇena vidhinā santuṣṭa īśhaḥ svayam ।
sākṣhācchrī-guru-rūpam etya kṛpayā dṛg-gocaraḥ san prabhuḥ
tattvaṁ sādhu vibodhya tārayati tān saṁsāra-duḥkhārṇavāt ॥ 254 ॥



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Gurubhakti as shown by Śhaṅkarāchārya

In the Yogatārāvali, he pays obeisance to the sacred feet of the Guru that grants the upadeśha of the bliss of the self and it is that which becomes the succour from the deadly poison of samsāra.

वन्दे गुरूणां चरणारविन्दे
सन्दर्शित-स्वात्म-सुखावबोधे ।
जनस्य ये जाङ्गलिकायमाने
संसार-हालाहल-मोह-शान्त्यै ॥

- (योगतारावलि: (1) शङ्करभगवत्पादकृता)

vande gurūṇaṃ caraṇāravinde
sandarśhita-svātmā-sukhāvabodhe ।
janasya ye jāṅgalikāyamāne
saṃsāra-hālāhala-moha-śhāntyai ॥

- (yogatārāvaliḥ (1) śhaṅkarabhagavatpādakṛtā)

In Svātmānirūpaṇam, he pays obeisance to the dust of the sacred feet of the Guru which removes the dualities (such as happiness and sorrow) that are difficult to bear. The specks of dust of the Guru's feet gives rest to the confusions prevailing in the mind.

श्रीगुरुचरणद्वन्द्वं वन्देऽहं मथितदुस्सहद्वन्द्वम् ।
भ्रान्तिग्रहोपशान्तिं पांसुमयं यस्य भसितमातनुते ॥

śhrī-guru-caraṇa-dvandvaṃ vande'haṃ mathita-dussaha-dvandvam ।
bhrāntigrhopaśhāntiṃ pāṃsumayaṃ yasya bhasitamātanute ॥ 1.1



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



How should one approach a guru? Śhaṅkarāchārya shows the way in Vivekachūḍāmaṇi. A disciple must be learned and reflect and with discernment between the real and unreal and must have longing for liberation. Such a disciple must approach a good guru with devotion and serve them. When the guru is pleased, the disciple must seek knowledge.

तमाराध्यं गुरुं भक्त्या प्रह्वप्रश्रयसेवनैः ।

प्रसन्नं तमनुप्राप्य पृच्छेज्ज्ञातव्यमात्मनः ॥ ३४ ॥

**tam ārādhya guruṃ bhaktyā prahva-praśhraya-sevanaiḥ ।
prasannaṃ tam anuprāpya pṛcchejjñātavyamātmānaḥ ॥ 34 ॥**

The disciple then humbly prostrates to the guru. He then asks the merciful guru to help him cross the ocean of the cycle of births and deaths and ask him to grace him with compassion.

स्वामिन्नमस्ते नतलोकबन्धो

कारुण्यसिन्धो पतितं भवाब्धौ ।

मामुद्धरात्मीयकटाक्षदृष्ट्या

ऋज्व्यातिकारुण्यसुधाभिवृष्ट्या ॥ ३५ ॥

**svāmin namaste nata-loka-bandho
kāruṇya-sindho patitaṃ bhavābdhau ।
māmuddharātmīya-kaṭākṣha-dṛṣṭyā
rjvyāti-kāruṇya-sudhābhi-vṛṣṭyā ॥ 35 ॥**



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Advaita-guru-paramparā

नारायणं पद्मभुवं वसिष्ठं शक्तिं च तत्पुत्रं पराशरं च
व्यासं शुकं गौडपदं महान्तं गोविन्दयोगीन्द्रम् अथास्य शिष्यम् ।
श्रीशङ्कराचार्यम् अथास्य पद्मपादं च हस्तामलकं च शिष्यम्
तं तोटकं वार्त्तिककारमन्यान् अस्मद् गुरून् सन्ततमानतोऽस्मि ॥

nārāyaṇaṃ padmabhuvam vasiṣṭhaṃ śaktiṃ ca tatputraṃ parāśharaṃ ca
vyāsaṃ śhukaṃ gauḍapadaṃ mahāntaṃ govindayogīndraṃ athāsya śhiṣhyam ।
śhrīśhaṅkarācāryaṃ athāsya padmapādaṃ ca hastāmalakaṃ ca śhiṣhyam
taṃ toṭakaṃ vārttikakāraṃ anyān asmad gurūn santatam ānato'smi ॥

Advaita is the central tenet in the Veda that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya expanded, and clarified in his texts. Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya was not the founder of Advaita. He established what was sanātana and stated in the Veda and promulgated by teachers before him. It is for this reason that we find Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya repeatedly states in his commentaries the importance of being a “sampradāyavit” - knower of sampradāya. A sampradāya is one which has a series of gurus beginning with Bhagavān Himself and this is called a “guru paramparā”. The advaita guru paramparā begins with Śhiva as Dakṣhiṇāmūrti and with Nārāyaṇa.

Nārāyaṇa imparted it to Brahma (Padmabhūḥ - lotus-born). Brahma imparted it to ṛṣhi Vasiṣṭha. Vasiṣṭha taught it to his son Mahārṣhi śhakti. Mahārṣhi śhakti taught this knowledge to ṛṣhi Parāśhara.

Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa was the son of ṛṣhi Parāśhara and Satyavati (a gandharva woman brought up as a fisherwoman). Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa organized the Veda into four and taught it to his four disciples. He composed the Purāṇas, Mahābhārata and the Brahmasūtra.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Advaita-guru-paramparā

Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya salutes Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa in his commentary to the Viṣṇu sahasranāma praising him as compassionate to all beings, as the abode of the qualities such as restraint and as sun that caused the lotus of the Veda to bloom

कृष्णद्वैपायनं व्यासं सर्वभूतहिते रतम् ।

वेदाब्जभास्करं वन्दे शमादिनिलयं मुनिम् ॥

kṛṣṇadvaiपायanaṃ vyāsaṃ sarva-bhūta-hite-ratam ।
vedābja-bhāskaraṃ vande śhamādi-nilayaṃ munim ॥

Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa transmitted the learning to his son Shuka. Gauḍapāda learnt from Śhuka in Badarikāśhrama. Gauḍapāda had written the Māṇḍūkya kārīkās on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣhad. Govinda Bhagavatpāda Śhaṅkarāchārya's was a disciple of Gauḍapāda. With his blessings, Śhaṅkarāchārya wrote a bhāṣhyam on these kārīkās. Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya salutes his guru Govinda Bhagavatpāda in the Vivekachūḍāmaṇi.

Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya touches upon this unity of guru and Govinda in the verse. He says he bows down to Govinda, the sadguru whose nature is bliss and who is the import of all Vedānta and is beyond word and mind.

सर्व-वेदान्त-सिद्धान्त-गोचरं तमगोचरम् ।

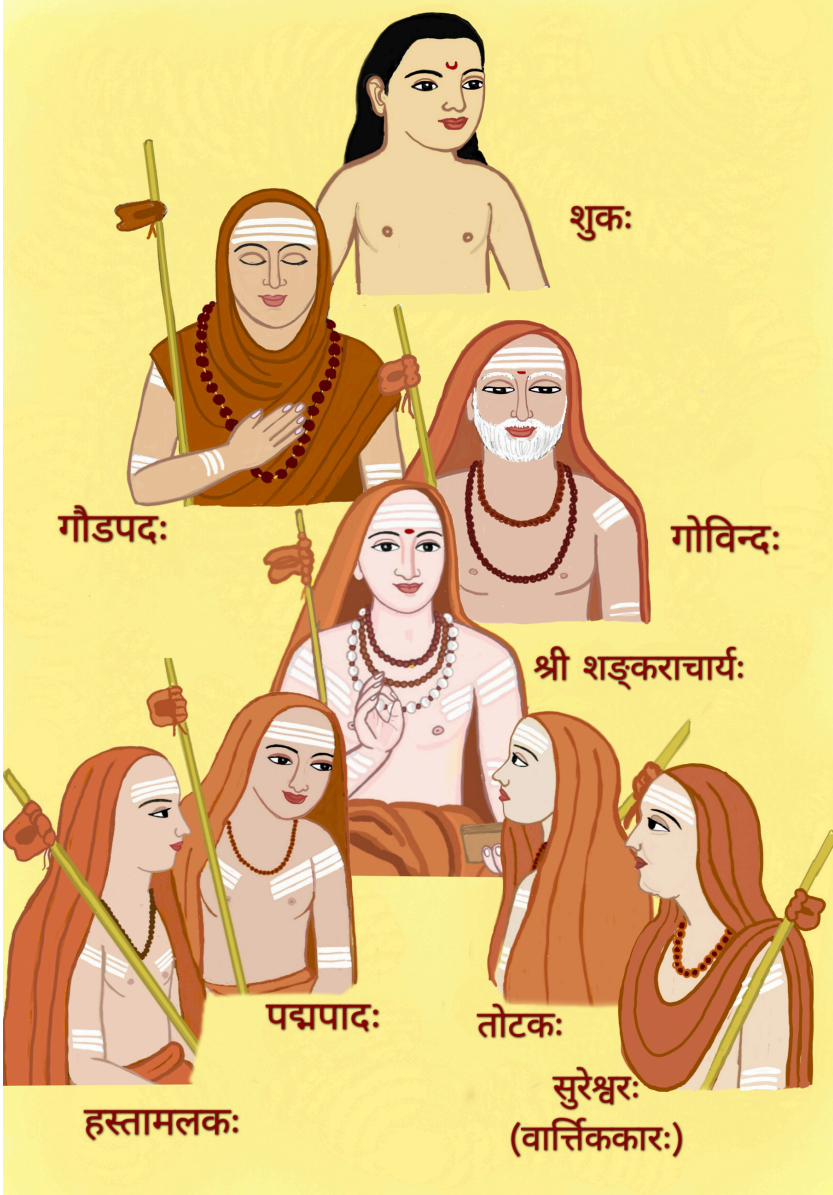
गोविन्दं परमानन्दं सद्गुरुं प्रणतोऽस्म्यहम् ॥ १ ॥

sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-gocaraṃ tamagocaram ।
govindaṃ paramānandaṃ sadguruṃ praṇato'smyaham ॥ 1 ॥

Advaita-guru-paramarā



Advaita-guru-paramarā



Śhaṅkarāchārya obtained formal sannyāsa and received the traditional Advaitic mahāvākyas - several sentences from the upaniṣhads such as "tat tvam asi" that teach the identity of the individual jīva with the supreme. The Guru imparted them to the young disciple at the time of taking sannyāsa.

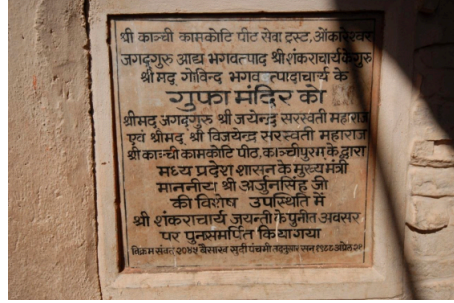
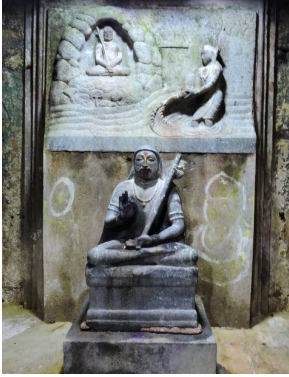
Govinda Bhagavatpāda then taught Him the upaniṣhads and Brahma sūtra of Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



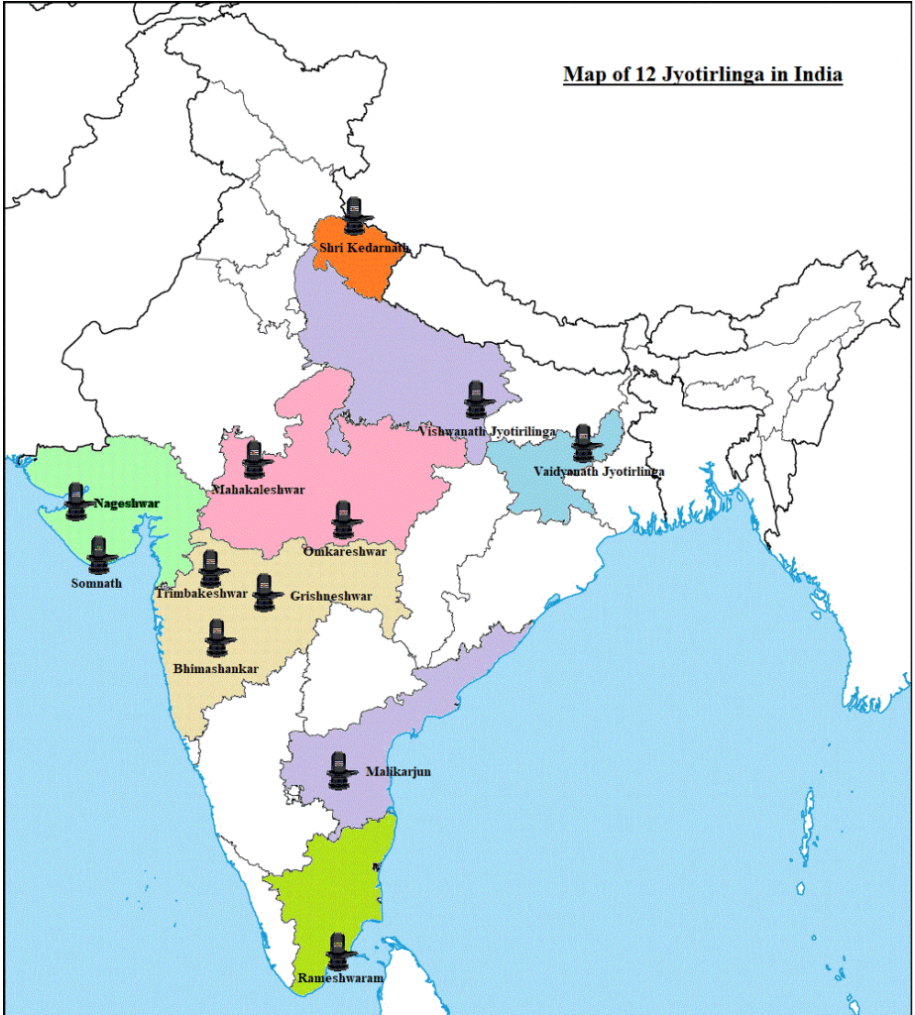
Omkāreśhvar - The cave of Śhrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda



Govinda Bhagavatpāda guhā (cave) is on the banks of Omkāreśhvar in Madhya Pradesh. The location was first identified due to the divine vision of Jagadguru Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmīgal, the 68th Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlamnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham. The souvenir of the Śhāṅkara and śhaṅmata conference (1969) mentioned the spot named “Śhāṅkaragaṅga”. This prompted the search. When efforts were under way to locate the cave, further guidance of the Āchārya was sought which led to the discovery of the cave.

His successor, the 69th Āchārya , Śhrī Jayendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmīgal visited Omkāreśhvara and established the “Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Seva Trust” in 1987, renovated the place and named it the “Guhāmandir”.

Jyotirlinga kṣhetras of Bhāratam





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Omkāreśhvara - Jyotirliṅga

सौराष्ट्रे सोमनाथञ्च श्रीशैले मल्लिकार्जुनम् ।
 उज्जयिन्यां महाकालम् ओङ्कारेत्वमलेश्वरम् ॥
 परलर्या वैद्यनाथञ्च डाकिन्यां भीमाशङ्करम् ।
 सेतुबन्धे तु रामेशं नागेशं दारुकावने ॥
 वाराणस्यां तु विश्वेशं त्र्यंबकं गौतमीतटे ।
 हिमालयेतु केदारं घृष्णेशन्तु विशालके ॥

**saurāṣṭhre sōmanāthaṅca śhrīśhaile mallikārjunam ।
 ujjayinyāṃ mahākālam oṅkāretvamaleśhvaram ॥
 paralyāṃ vaidyanāthaṅcha ḍākinyāṃ bhīmāśhaṅkaram ।
 setubandhe tu rāmeshāṃ nāgēśhaṃ dārukāvane ॥
 vārāṇasyāṃ tu viśhveśhaṃ tryambakaṃ gautamītaṭe ।
 himālaye tu kedāraṃ ghrṣhṇeśhantu viśhālake ॥**

Omkāreśhvar is one amongst the 12 jyotirliṅga kṣhetras in Bhāratam. Jyotiḥ means light and Bhagavān Śhiva is found in these places in His radiant liṅgasvarūpa with different names and forms. Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed the dvādaśha jyotirliṅga stotra on all the 12 jyotirliṅgas. (1) Somanātha and (2) Nāgēśhvara in Gujarat (3) Mahākaleśhvara Ujjain and (4) Omkāreśhvara in Madhya Pradesh (5) Kedāreśhvara in Himālayas (6) Viśhvanātha in Vārāṇasī (7) Vaidyanātha in Jhārkand (8) Bhīmāśhaṅkara (9) Tryambakeśhvara (10) Gṛṣhṇeśhvar in Mahārashtra(11) Mallikārjuna in Śhrīśhailam, Andhra Pradesh, (12) Rameśhvara in Tamilnadu. Pujiyaśhrī Jayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal has undertaken yātrā to all the jyotirliṅga kṣhetras and has also installed the vigraham of Śhrī Śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda at all the jyotirliṅga kṣhetras.

Omkāreśhvar is located in the banks of Narmada on an island known as Māndhāta, in the present day state of Madhyapadesh. The name Māndhāta comes from the famous ancestor of Bhagavān Śhrī Rāma of Ikṣhvāku vamśha who worshipped Śhiva here.

Śhaṅkarāchārya writing Bhāṣhyam



Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya spent a few years studying the Upaniṣhads and Brahma sūtras of Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa at the feet of His revered guru. The Sūtras of Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa are very terse and their advaitic import is not easily understood without a bhāṣhya (commentary). Śhrī Govinda Bhagavatpāda had requested Bhagavān Vyāsa Himself to compose a commentary and Bhagavān Vyāsa blessed Him saying that “You (Govinda Bhagavatpāda) will get such a śhiṣhya who can gather a mighty river into his kamaṇḍalu and that śhiṣhya would write the Bhāṣhya”. Govinda Bhagavatpāda thus narrated to śhaṅkarāchārya the purpose of his birth and bade him to go to Vārānasi or Kāśhī to write commentaries on the Upaniṣhads and the Brahmasūtra of Bhagavān Bādarāyaṇa (Vyāsa).

Śhrī Śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda took the blessings of the Guru and went to Vārānasī - the most sacred of Bhārata’s cities and began writing the commentaries, in deference to the order of his guru.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Vārāṇasī

सानन्दमानन्द-वने वसन्तं आनन्द-कन्दं हत-पाप-वृन्दम् ।

वाराणसी-नाथमनाथ-नाथं श्रीविश्वनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥

sānandamānanda-vane vasantaṃ
ānanda-kandaṃ hata-pāpa-vṛndam ।
vārāṇasī-nāthamanātha-nāthaṃ
śhrīviśhvanāthaṃ śharaṇaṃ prapadye ॥

Vārāṇasī known as Kāshī, Avimuktakṣhetra and Ānandavana is an ancient city mentioned in the purāṇas. It is part of the group of seven cities known as sapta-mokṣhapuri , the seven centres for attaining mokṣha - liberation from cycle of birth and death. The seven mokṣhapuris are Ayodhya, Mathura, Māyā (Māyāpuri or Haridvār), Kāshī (Vārāṇasī), Kāñchī (Kāñchīpuram), Avantikā (Ujjain) and Dvāravati (Dvāraka). According to tradition, birth in Tiruvārūr or Kamalālaya, guarantees liberation. Contemplation on Tiruvaṇṇāmalai or Aruṇāchala also grants enlightenment. Likewise passing away in Kāshī also bestows ultimate liberation. Thus, Vārāṇasī holds a special place in the hearts of sanātānis. It is a city of perennial wisdom, permeated by knowledge and learning in the śhāstras. It has also been the center and confluence of mystics, saints and yogis. It is the city of Viśhveśhvara, the Lord of the Universe along with Kālabhairava as the kotwāl guarding the city. The city has many ghāts, and the river Gaṅga flowing through it as silent witness to the passage of time.

Notable are the Kāshī Viśhvanātha Mandir of Bhagavān Viśhveśhvara and Ambā Viśhālākṣhī, and the temple of Devi Annapūrṇā. Among the 84 ghāts of Vārāṇasī, the Maṇikarṇikā ghāt is well-known. Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed many stotras in Kāshī. Notable among them are the Annapūrṇā stuti, Maṇikarṇikā aṣṭakam, Kāshīpañcakam, Kālabhairavāṣṭakam, Maṇishāpañcakam, Bhajagovindam and Gaṅgāṣṭakam.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Vārāṇasī



The 68th Jagadguru's
Kāśhī Vijayam in 1934



Kamakoṭīśhvara temple
constructed during the 69th
Acharya's Kāśhī Vijayam



The 70th Acharya's Kāśhī Vijayam and Chāturmāsya Śhobhana
varṣham (2023)





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Kāśhī and Kāñchī - The divine connection

Kāśhī and Kāñchīpuram are both part of the sapta mokṣhapuris. In addition, Kāñchīpuram being ghātikāsthānas (an ancient center of learning) shares this similarity with Kāśhī. Śhrī Bodhendra Sarasvati the 59th Jagadguru met his guru the 58th Jagadguru Vishvādhikendra Sarasvati in Kāśhī.

In 1934, Jagadguru Śhaṅkarāchārya Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati arrived in Kāśhī. During his stay there met with many pandits and sannnyāsīs of Kāśhī. His address at the Benares Hindu University is also well-known. His successor Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Sarasvati established a Kāñchī Kāmakoṭīśhvāra Mandir in Kāśhī's Hanumān ghāt area. The temple showcases the concept of śhaṅmata established by Bhagavatpāda. Due to His efforts a golden argha was installed around Kāśhī Viśhvānātha. Jagadguru also gave the vision for carrying out Kāśhī Viśhvānāth kalaśha yātrā. Vāgdevi temple in Sampūrṇānand Samskr̥ta University was built, due to the blessings of Kāñchī Āchāryas in 1987. There is a branch of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭī Pīṭham at Hanumān ghāt in Vārāṇasī.

Vārāṇasī was also the location of Śhrī śhaṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal's chāturmāsya during śhobhana varṣham (2023) of It became a site of gathering of scholars in various fields. A sadas or gathering of scholars were conducted to discuss Vedic commentaries, Vedāṅga, Śhāstra, Agnihotra, and Pañchāṅgam. In addition, it was during the Āchārya's stay in Vārāṇasī that a team was sent to Ayodhya with the Āchārya's anugraha for the historical consecration of the temple of Rām Lalla at Ayodhya.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Annapūrṇa stuti

Food or annam is considered sacred in sanātana dharma. Once Śhiva and Pārvati had an argument in Kailāsa and Śhiva made a remark about the futility of food. Pārvatī was upset and disappeared. With the disappearance of Pārvatī, there was no food in the world. Śhiva and His gaṇas learnt that there was only one place in the entire world where food was available and it was Vārāṇasī. They saw Pārvatī there in the form of Annapūrṇa nourishing and removing the world's hunger. She sat with a pot of pāyasam / kheer and a golden spoon. She offered alms to Śhiva making Him realize the importance of annam. “annam na nindyāt tad vratam” says the Veda, reminding us of the respectful attitude we must acquire towards food. Śhaṅkarāchārya composed the Annapūrṇa Stuti where each verse ends with “Oh Annapūrṇa! You are the mother who supports with compassion! Offer alms” What alms is Bhagavatpāda seeking here? He asks Annapūrṇeśhvari the bhikṣhā of jñāna and vairāgya - knowledge and dispassion. The following verse of this stotra is chanted before every meal.

अन्नपूर्णे सदापूर्णे शङ्करप्राणवल्लभे ।

ज्ञानवैराग्यसिद्धयर्थं भिक्षां देही च पार्वती ॥

annapūrṇe sadāpūrṇe śhaṅkaraprāṇavallabhe ।

jñānavairāgyasiddhyartham bhikṣhām dehī ca pārvatī ॥

Annapūrṇā! She is ever-complete! She is the life-breath of Śhiva. Offer me bhikṣhā so that I may attain knowledge and desirelessness



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Kāśhīpañcakam

Our dharma considers different aspects of practice. For many, tīrtha yātrā is a prescribed way to get rid of their pāpam and acquire puṇyam. However, along with external practices, internal attitudes are also stressed. In Kāśhī Pañcakam, a stotra with five verses Bhagavatpāda says that the city of Kāśhī is inside one's own self. It is the shining awareness of one's own divine self that one finds in Vārāṇasī watered by the Gaṅgā of one's own consciousness.

मनोनिवृत्तिः परमोपशान्तिः सा तीर्थवर्या मणिकर्णिका च ।

ज्ञानप्रवाहा विमलादिगङ्गा सा काशिकाऽहं निजबोधरूपा ॥१॥

manonivṛttiḥ paramopashāntiḥ, sā tīrthavaryā maṇikarṇikā ca ।
jñānapravāhā vimalādigaṅgā, sā kāśhikā'haṃ nijabodharūpā ॥1॥

I am that city of Kāśhī in the form of my own pure awareness. The supreme peace that is the serenity of the mind is that Maṇikarṇikā ghāt, the holiest of the holy. The flow of the waking consciousness is the divine Gaṅgā.

काश्यां हि काशते काशी, काशी सर्वप्रकाशिका ।

सा काशी विदिता येन, तेन प्राप्ता हि काशिका ॥४॥

kāśhyāṃ hi kāśhate kāśhī, kāśhī sarvaprakāśhikā ।
sā kāśhī viditā yena, tena prāptā hi kāśhikā ॥4॥

The city of Kāśhī is indeed shining in the awareness that is ātmā. Kāśhī illuminates all. Kāśhī is attained by him who realises Kāśhī.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Gaṅgāṣṭakam

There are two stotras on Gaṅgā "devi sureśhvari bhagavati" and "bhagavati bhavalilāmaulimāle" composed by Śhaṅkarāchārya.

भगवति भवलीलामौलिमाले तवाम्भः

कणमणुपरिमाणं प्राणिनो ये स्पृशन्ति ।

अमरनगरनारीचामरग्राहिणीनां

विगतकलिकलङ्कातङ्कमङ्के लुठन्ति ॥

**bhagavati bhavalilāmaulimāle tavāmbhaḥ
kaṇamaṇuparimāṇaṃ prāṇino ye spr̥shanti ।
amaranagaranāricāmaragrāhiṇināṃ
vigatakalikalāṅkātaṅkamaṅke luṭhanti ॥**

Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya addresses Gaṅgā nadī and says, "O Devi (Gaṅgā). You are the playful garland that decorates Parameśhvara's matted hair. Those who touch a drop of your water will attain the bliss of devaloka and will not be affected by the evils of Kaliyuga. A similar idea is expressed in Bhaja Govindam where Bhagavatpāda says, "One who has learnt a little bit of Bhagavadgītā or has drunk a mouthful of the water of Gaṅgā or has worshipped Kṛṣṇa atleast once, Yama the God of death will never argue with Him."

This stotra also talks about how Gaṅgā was once the sacred water in the pūja vessel of Brahma and flowed at the feet of Viṣṇu and was held on the matted locks of Śhiva. She was born as ṛshi Janhu's daughter (Jānhavī) and was again brought down to earth by Bhagiratha as Bhāgīrathī.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Kāśhīpañcakam

Śhaṅkarāchārya in this stotra suggests that the journey to sacred sites must be accompanied by the quest for inner reflection and an attitude of bhakti. Both are essential in the pursuit of wisdom. He connects the city of Kāśhīkā with one's own self. Śhiva is the ruler of both these places and the intellect that powers us is His consort śhakti. Just as the city provides seekers with knowledge, one can attain wisdom through the illumination of one's own self.

काशीक्षेत्रं शरीरं त्रिभुवनजननी व्यापिनी ज्ञानगङ्गा
 भक्तिः श्रद्धा गयेयं निजगुरुचरणध्यानयोगः प्रयागः ।
 विश्वेशोऽयं तुरीयं सकलाजनमनस्साक्षिभूतोऽन्तरात्मा
 देहे सर्वं मदीये यदि वसति पुनः तीर्थमन्यत्किमस्ति ॥५॥

kāśhīkṣhetraṃ śharīraṃ tribhuvana-jananī vyāpini jñānagaṅgā
 bhaktiḥ śhraddhā gayeyaṃ nija-guru-caraṇa-dhyāna-yogaḥ prayāgaḥ ।
 viśhveśho'yaṃ turiyassakalājanamanassākṣhi-bhūto'ntarātmā
 dehe sarvaṃ madiye yadi vasati punaḥ tīrthamanyat kimasti ॥ 5 ॥

The body is the pilgrimage center of Kāśhī. The pervading flow of knowledge is the Gaṅgā - who is the mother of the three worlds. Bhakti and śhraddhā are the city of Gayā. Viśhveśhvara is the ātmā within, the one beyond the three states of waking, sleeping and dreaming and who is the witness to all. Meditation and the union with the feet of one's guru is the city of Prayāga. All of these exist within myself, what then is an external kṣhetraṃ? By asking this rhetorical question, Śhaṅkarāchārya simply stresses that both the external idea of tīrtha yātrā for Bhagavān's grace and devotion and internal purity for knowing one's self are essential.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Maṅikarṇikā aṣṭakam

Maṅikarṇikā is one of the most important among the ghāts in Vārāṇasī. Cremation of bodies happens here and spending the last days here leads a person towards mokṣha. Śhaṅkarāchārya says here that Kāśhī in itself is a puṇya kṣhetra and made more sacred by Gaṅgā nadī which is even more sanctified by the presence of Maṅikarṇikā ghāt.

त्वत्तीरे मणिकर्णिके हरिहरौ सायुज्यमुक्तिप्रदौ
वादन्तौ कुरुतः परस्परमुभौ जन्तोः प्रयाणोत्सवे ।
मद्रूपो मनुजोऽयमस्तु हरिणा प्रोक्तः शिवस्तत्क्षणात्
तन्मध्याद्भृगुलाञ्छनो गरुडगः पीताम्बरो निर्गतः ॥ १ ॥

tvattīre maṅikarṇike hariharau sāyujya-mukti-pradau
vādantau kurutaḥ parasparam ubhau jantoḥ prayāṇotsave ।
madrūpo manujo'yam astu hariṇā proktaḥ śhivas tatkṣhaṇāt
tanmadhyād-bhṛgu-lāñchano garuḍagaḥ pītāmbaro nirgataḥ ॥ 1 ॥

The first verse explains two important aspects of vedānta in very beautiful manner, couched in poetic expression using the idea that those whose who leave their mortal body in Maṅikarṇikā attain mokṣha.

O Maṅikarṇikā! On your banks Śhiva and Viṣṇu - the bestowers of mokṣha are having a discussion, when the life of a living being is departing, Viṣṇu says “May this human being take my form”.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Maṅikarṇikā aṣṭakam

As soon as Hari says that, Śhiva takes the form of Hari and departs from that human being's body in the form of Viṣṇu wearing yellow silk, and riding on top of Garuda.”

A fundamental tenet of advaita is that there is no distinction of grade made between the forms Śhiva and Viṣṇu. Thus we have the idea of Śhiva-Viṣṇu-abheda (Harihara-abheda). The one changeless brahman takes these various forms and names. This is why Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed many stotras on Viṣṇu and Śhiva. An individual devotee may have an iṣṭa devata according to their nature, preferences in method of upāsana but there is no distinction between Śhiva and Viṣṇu. He also clearly explains their nature as “devatas who are capable of providing sāyujya mukti - liberation from the cycle of birth and death and being one with a devata”.

Another aspect of Śhaṅkarāchārya's Siddhānta is alluded when saying “Śhiva leaves the śharīra (body)” - ie the individual jīva and the supreme brahman are one and the same. This is called jīva-iśhvara aikya. In this manner, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya extols Maṅikarṇikā as providing an easy way for people to cross the worldly existence.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāśhī - Kālabhairavaṣṭakam



Kālabhairava is the kotwal or the guardian of the city of Kāśhī. His temple is situated close to the Town Hall in Viśheśhvarganj, the northern part of Vārāṇasī. He is a manifestation of Śhiva. The word kāla denotes time and death. Kālabhairava removes the fear in devotees. He wears a yajñopavīta made of snakes and removes the papam of his devotees. Śhaṅkarāchārya addresses him as “The ruler of the city of Kāśhī”

देवराज-सेव्यमान-पावनाङ्घ्रि-पाङ्कजं
व्यालयज्ञ-सूत्रमिन्दुशेखरं कृपाकरम् ।
नारदादि-योगिवृन्द-वन्दितं दिगम्बरं
काशिकापुराधिनाथकालभैरवं भजे ॥ 1 ॥

dēvarāja-sēvyamāna-pāvanāṅghri-pañkajaṃ
vyāḷa-yajña-sūtram indu-śhēkharaṃ kṛpā-karam ।
nāradādi-yōgi-bṛnda-vanditaṃ digambaram
kāśhikā-purādhi-nātha-kālabhairavaṃ bhajē ॥ 1 ॥

Maniṣhā pañcakam



One morning Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya accompanied by His disciples was walking on the banks of the river Gaṅgā. A person who worked in the cremation ground cremating corpses was passing by. He was drunk and was accompanied by his wife and four dogs. In keeping with the conventions of cleanliness and ritual purity, he was asked to step aside by the people.

He looked at Bhagavatpāda and asked, "The same sun is reflected in the water of the Gaṅgā as well as the water in the muddy puddle. Similarly, the same divine self shines within you as well as me. Are you asking that self to move or are you asking that physical body made up of matter to move aside?"

Śhaṅkarāchārya prostrated to the him saying, "Whether he is one who eats dog-meat and works at cremation ground or whether he is a brāhmaṇa, the one who understands and realizes the self is my guru" He composed a set of five verses named Manīṣhā pañcakam.

The man revealed Himself to be Bhagavān Śhiva Himself accompanied by Pārvatī and the four dogs were the four Vedas. Bhagavān Viśhveśhvara blessed Śhaṅkarāchārya.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras in Kāshī - Maniṣhāpañcakam

Maniṣhāpañcakam is a set of five verses. Each verse ends with “एषा मनीषा मम” eshā manīshā mama - This is my definite understanding. Āchārya stresses that it is the same universal consciousness (chaitanya) that pervades and is reflected in every being.

जागृत्स्वमसुषुप्तिषु स्फुटतरा या संविदुज्जृम्भते
या ब्रह्मादिपिपीलिकान्ततनुषु प्रोता जगत्साक्षिणी ।
सैवाहं न च दृश्यवस्त्विति दृढप्रज्ञापि यस्यास्ति चे-
च्चाण्डालोऽस्तु स तु द्विजोऽस्तु गुरुरित्येषा मनीषा मम ॥ १ ॥

jāgrt-svapna-suṣhuptiṣhu sphuṭa-tarā yā saṁvid ujjrmbhate
yā brahmādi-pipilikānta-tanuṣhu protā jagat-sākṣhiṇī ।
saivāhaṁ na ca dṛśhyavastviti dṛḍha-prajñāpi yasyāsti cet
cāṇḍālo'stu sa tu dvijo'stu gururityeṣhā manīshā mama ॥ 1 ॥

The realized person has attained the clear knowledge that he is not an object of perception and is pure consciousness. It shines clearly in the states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is the witness to this universe. It is inside every body from that of the creator Brahma to an ant. A person who realizes this great truth is my guru, irrespective of who he is. This is my conviction.

This state is to be understood only for the enlightened. For those who transact in the world of reality, the differences in the transactional plane with rights and duties and duality exists. It is in this context that the verses in Maniṣhā pañcakam must be understood. The significance of Maniṣhā pañcakam can be understood from the fact that there are many commentaries on it. The great yogi Śhrī Sadāśhiva Brahmendra Sarasvatī (Sadāśhiva Brahmendra), disciple of the 57th Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham, Śhrī Paramaśhivendra Sarasvatī Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal has composed a commentary on this work. This was published in the magazine Brahmavidya of Advaitasabha.

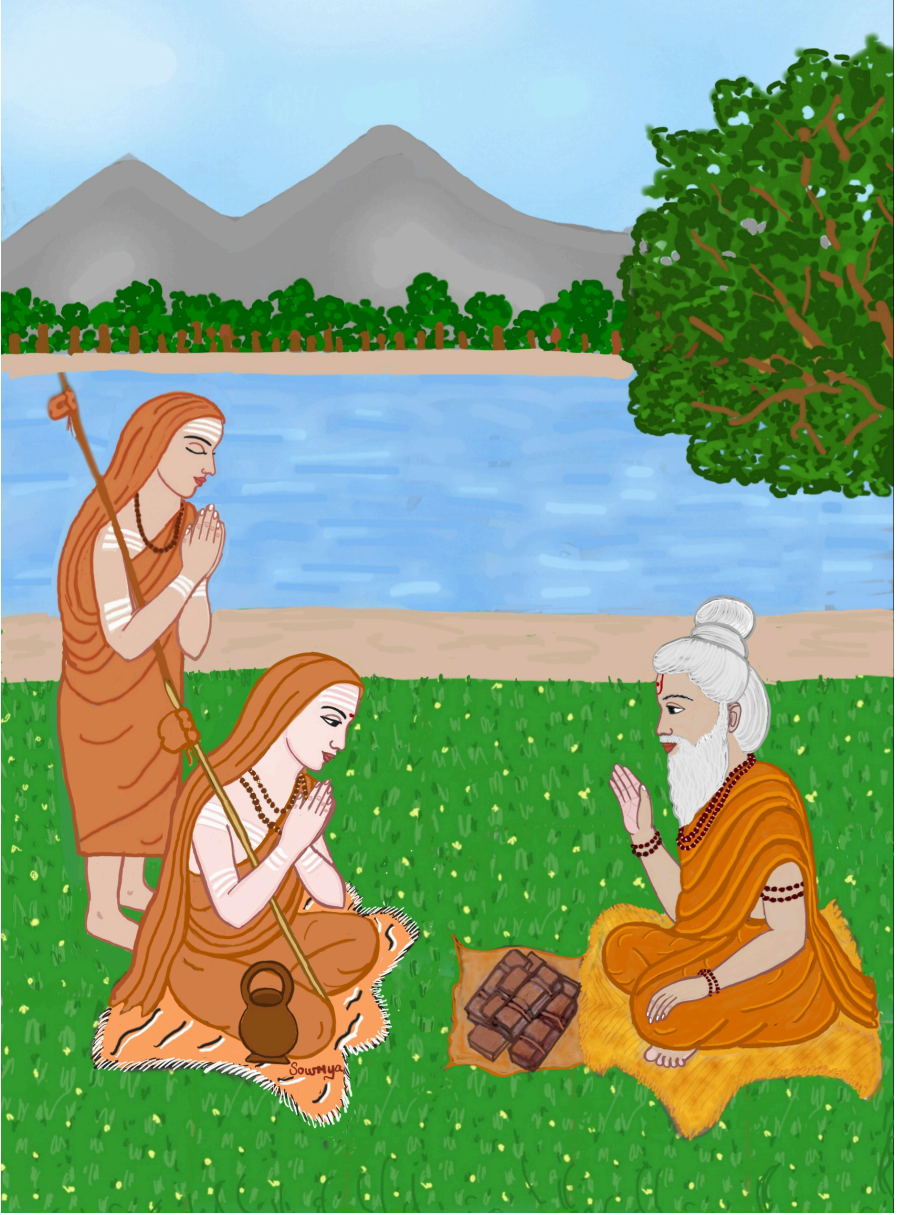
Padmapadāchārya crossing the river to see His guru



People from all over the country sought out Kāshī as it was the centre of learning. A young man named Viṣṇu śharma from Choladeśha became the disciple of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya. His name was Sanandana and he was a great devotee of Bhagavān Narasimha. Once, while Śhaṅkarāchārya was seated on the banks of the Gaṅgā, Sanandana was on the other bank, immersed in the task of drying his guru's clothes. Hearing Śhaṅkarāchārya called out to him, Sanandana wanted to reach his guru without any delay and ran across the Gaṅgā. Śhāstras prescribe this as the right attitude towards a Guru.

As though to mark the appreciation of his devotion to the guru, a lotus sprouted with every step He took and Sanandana placed His feet on the lotuses and reached His guru without any delay. The Guru asked Sanandana, "How did you cross the Gaṅgā?". Sanandana replied, "O Jagadguru! The ocean of birth and death (samsāra) becomes easy to cross when we think of you. Crossing the Gaṅgā is not surprising". Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya blessed the disciple and from then on Sanandana was known by the name Padmapāda - 'padma' meaning lotus and 'pāda' meaning feet.

Vyāsa Sandarśhanam - Meeting Bhagavān Vedavyāsa



Śhaṅkarāchārya was expounding on the Brahma sūtra bhāṣhya on the banks of the Gaṅgā at the Maṅikarṇikā ghāt. An old man walked in and expressed a wish to debate (vāda) Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya on his commentary on the Brahma sūtras. Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya agreed and the vāda began. Bhagavān Vedavyāsa asked Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya on his understanding of a sūtra from the Brahmasūtra, "तदन्तरप्रतिपत्तौ रंहति सम्परिष्वक्तः प्रश्ननिरूपणाभ्याम् - tadantarapratipattau raṁhati sampariṣhvaktaḥ praśṇa nirūpaṇābhyām". Vyāsa asked him about whether the jīva when it leaves the body takes along with it the subtle elements. Śhaṅkarāchārya gave a masterly elaboration providing proof from the śhruti (Veda ie the upaniṣhads) and the smṛti (works like Mahābharata) that it goes taking the elements in the subtle form.

The debate went on for days together which each participant engaging the other in a battle of the intellect. Padmapāda who was observing this divine debate, wondered and realized it was Bhagavān Vyāsa himself. He prostrated to both of them saying "Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya is indeed Śhiva's avatāra and Bhagavān Vyāsa (who has come in the guise of an old man) is Bhagavān Nārāyaṇa Himself. In the face of such a divine debate between the two, what will this humble devotee do?" This put an end to the debate.

Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya prostrated before Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa and sought his blessings. Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa was very pleased with the work and blessed Śhaṅkarāchārya and extended his life span to thirty two years and asked him to propagate Advaitam across Bhāratam.

Kailāsa and Pañchalinga



Śhaṅkarāchārya first went to Badari kṣhetra where he had darśhanam of his guru Govinda bhagavatpāda and paramaguru Gauḍapāda. He rendered service to them and received their blessings for his works. He also composed the commentary for the kārīkās composed by Gauḍapādāchārya on the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣhad. In Alakananda, Mahāviṣṇu appeared before him and said, “My murti is buried in the river bed. Take it out and install it for worship”. Śhaṅkarāchārya installed Badarīnārāyaṇa and had a temple constructed. He also standardised the temple worship in some of the kṣhetras there and brought in some nambūdiri brāhmaṇas from Kerala. From there, Śhaṅkarāchārya went to Kailāsa to have darshan of Śhiva and Pārvatī. He took a yogic body and went to Kailāsa where he had darśhanam of the divine couple. Bhagavān Śhiva gave him a set of sphaṭika liṅgas and asked him to worship them thrice every day. They are named Yoga, Bhoga, Vara, Siddhi and Mukti / Mokṣha. Because of the yogic journey which involved leaving the physical body , some people assume that Śhaṅkarāchārya attained mukti in Kedāra and others believe that he attained mukti in Badarikāśhrama.

In Kailāsa, Śhaṅkarāchārya also received the sacred grantha Saundaryalaharī. However Nandikeśhvara did not want the grantha to leave Kailāsa and grabbed some of the leaves from Śhaṅkarāchārya. He was able to bring back only part of the text that contained 41 śhlokas. He completed the remaining part composing 59 śhlokas and this section is called Ānandalaharī. Saundaryalaharī and Ānandalaharī are stotras in praise of the Devi. He also wrote the Śhivapādādikeśhānta stotra and the Śhiva-keśhādi-pādānta stotras there. He installed the Siddhi-liṅga in Kedāram and He also went to Paśhupatināth (in the country of Nepal) and regulated the worship there. and the Varaliṅga in Nilakaṅṭha kṣhetra in Nepal. From there, Śhaṅkarāchārya came back to the plains of the Gaṅgā where He spent time expounding the principles of Vedānta to disciples.

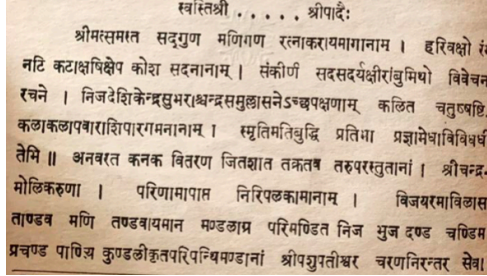


Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Nepal and Kāñchī - Timeless Traditions

According to the history of Nepal, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya visited Nepal during the reign of King Vr̥shadevavarma (Kali 2615-2554). In keeping with the tradition of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya's Nepal visit, the kings of Nepal revere the Āchāryas of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham. It has been a long-standing tradition where a detailed Śhrīmukham is sent to the Mahārāja of Nepal from the Śhrīmatham. This includes the blessings and chandanam, vibhūti and mantrākṣhata prasādam of Śhrī Āchārya and information about the Āchārya's itinerary and two individual emissaries were sent to deliver this.



Many Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham have undertaken yātrās to Nepal. The 53rd Āchārya Pūrṇānanda Sadāśhivendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Svāmīgal is referred by the epithet, “revered by the King of Nepal”. He also removed the famine in Nepal. Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Svāmīgal and Jagadguru Śhrī Śhaṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Svāmīgal visited Nepal in 1988. A welcome arch was built to welcome them and the Āchārya addressed the Hindu religious conference there.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Understanding the purpose of Digvijayam

During the times of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya, there prevailed many different practices. Texts talk of 72 durmatas - or paths with such practices. Why did Āchārya have to undertake a digvijayam and change them?

His goal was not to condemn but ensure that these practices stayed within the ambit of the dharma as stated by the Veda. He reinstated such practices that had the sanction of those Āchāryas who lived before and that which stood the test of tradition and time. His efforts also served to unite a deśha that was divided on account of numerous small differences.

To understand this, using the Jagadguru's own words, we will take by means of the method of sthālī-pulāka-nyāya (the maxim by which we are able to ascertain whether the food is cooked by looking at the softness of one grain of rice), one statement of Bhagavatpādāchārya. In the beginning of the Tarkapāda of Brahmasūtra bhāṣhya, Bhagavatpāda asks a pertinent question, "Is it not enough to simply show the right path to those who desire mokṣha? Why remove or defeat other ideas and practices" He then answers it saying , "This is done to remove the incorrect understanding and avoid confusions".

From this, we can understand the approach of Śhrī Śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda in undertaking debates and the digvijaya (conquest of the directions) is one of unity.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



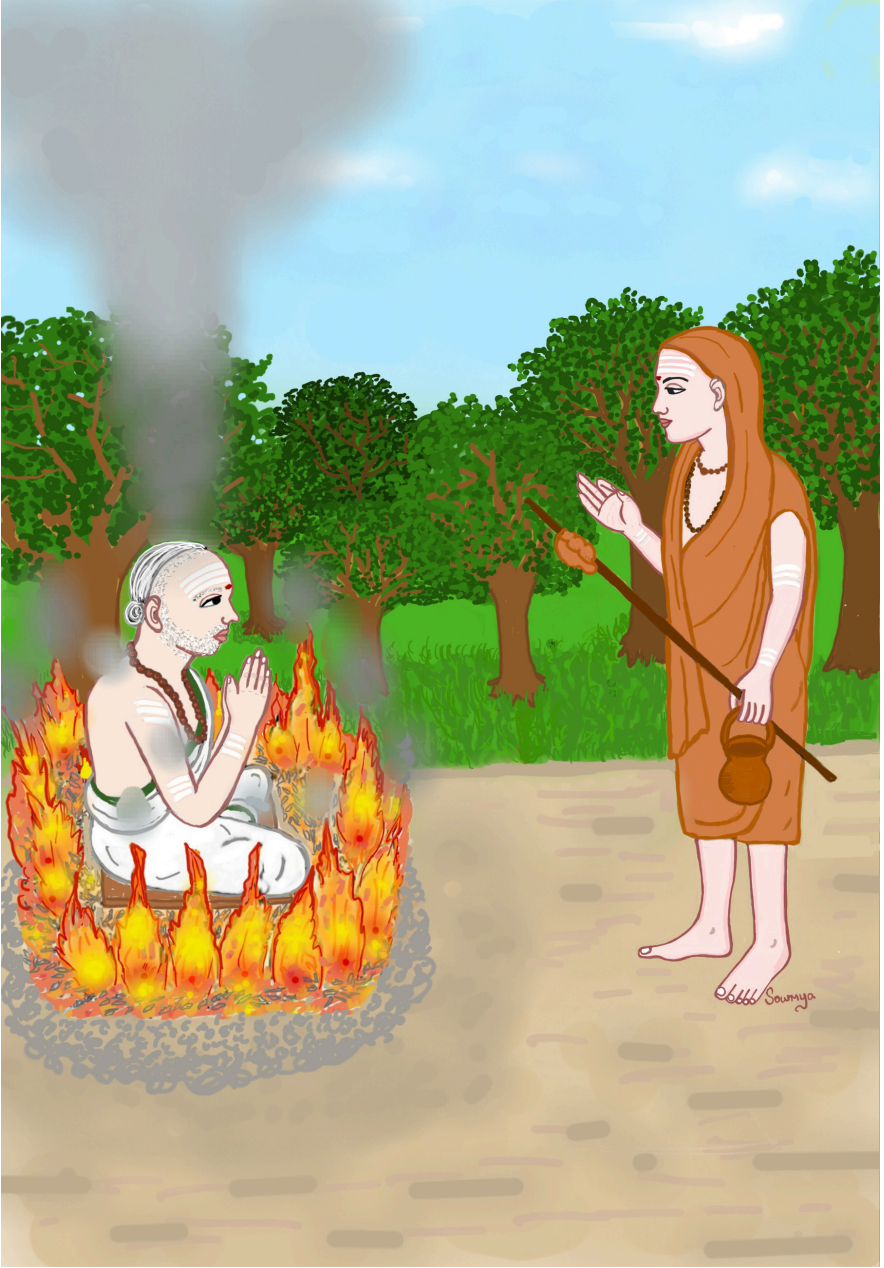
Saundaryalaharī

During Śhaṅkara Jayanti, the 108 names (nāmāvali) of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya are recited. Among these names is "Saundaryalaharī-mukhya-bahu-stotra-vidhāyakāya namah" ie He is the composer of many stotras including Saundaryalaharī.

The first 41 verses of Saundaryalaharī that Bhagavatpāda brought back from Kailāsa are found inscribed on the walls of the temple of Sugandhikuntalāmba, in the temple of Mātrubhuteśhvara on the rock in Tiruchirapalli, in Tamil Nadu. Tradition says that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya had them inscribed there on his way to Rameśvaram. It is a text that extols the dynamic śhakti, aspect of the supreme parabrahman as the divine mother. The second part of the Saundaryalaharī also contains a divine description of Ambā. Śhaṅkarāchārya does the Keśhādi pādānta varṇana of the Devi.

Jagadguru Śhrī Chandrashekhara Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal, the 68th Āchārya, has explained beautifully the reason why Śhaṅkarāchārya, the jñāni who composed sublime works of philosophy also composed divine śhlokas that inspire bhakti and imparts padmatā or softness to the heart of devotees. He says that it is only due to the lila or play of Bhagavān that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya who is non-dualistic internally, appears to do things in the dualistic world for lokasaṅgraha. Jñāna is the effort through self-enquiry and meditation to remove illusion of the mind. The path of bhakti asks us to dedicate ourselves and all our thoughts and actions to that parāśhakti.

Meeting Kumārilabhaṭṭapāda



Śhaṅkarāchārya acting upon the blessings and command of Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa then set out on a digvijaya to expound the truth of the ancient advaita tattva. First he went to Prayāga, the sacred town where the Gaṅgā, Yamuna and the antarvāhini Sarasvati unite. Here was Kumārilabhaṭṭapāda, of great intellect. He was a Mīmāṃsaka who has written works such as Śhlokavārttika and tantravārttika. Mīmāṃsakas subordinated the idea of jñāna to the ritualistic portions of the Veda. Śhaṅkarāchārya's teachings say that karma is the means to chittaśhuddhi which then leads to jñāna. In his early years, Kumārilabhaṭṭa desired to study and understand the doctrine and argumentation techniques of the Jainas (Bauddhas in some sources). Posing as one of them, he approached a teacher and learnt these techniques. Bauddhas and Jainas do not accept the authority of the Veda. One day while the teacher was reviling a Veda vākyam, Bhaṭṭapāda's eyes grew moist unable to tolerate abuse of Veda (Veda-ninda) which gave his disguise away. The angry Jainas pushed him off a cliff. Bhaṭṭapāda took an oath saying that "If the Vedas are an authority, nothing shall happen to me". Because he used the word, "If" indicating a sliver of doubt, he lost one eye.

Upholding exemplary dharmic conduct, Kumārila bhaṭṭapāda inflicted upon himself an appropriate punishment and made a large pit of hot husk to slowly burn himself to death. It was at this moment that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya came to him and requested Kumārilabhaṭṭa to write a vārttika on his bhāṣhya. Kumārilabhaṭṭa explained his story and excused himself as he was nearing the end of his life. He then directed Śhaṅkarāchārya to his disciple Maṅḍanamīśhra in the town of Māhiṣmatī.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Prayāga Vimāna mandiram



Commemorative sculptures depicting Śhāṅkarāchārya meeting Kumārilaḥṭṭa and Maṇḍanamīśhra





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Prayāga

Prayāg is the place of the confluence of the rivers Gaṅgā, Yamuna and Sarasvati as antarvāhini. The city of Prayāgrāj is located in Uttarpradesh. It is mentioned in the purāṇas and is a place of great antiquity. It is also the site of the kumbha mela held once in 12 years.

The construction of the Śhāṅkara vimāna maṇḍapa was started in 1970 and completed in 1986 with the efforts of Pujyaśhrī Jayendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmigal, the 69th Jagadguru of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham. One floor of this maṇḍapa, contains the vigrahams of Śhrī Śhāṅkarāchārya, Maṇḍanamiśhra and Kumārilabhaṭṭa. There is also a sannidhi of Kāmākṣhī surrounded by sculptures of the 51 Śhakti pīṭhas and a Sahasraliṅga. The kumbhābhiṣhekam was performed in 2018.

Jagadguru Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Saraswati Śhāṅkarāchārya Svāmigal had visited Prayāg during Kāśhī yātrā in 1934 and composed the Siddheśhvaraṣṭakam in Prayāgarāj. Jagadguru Jayendra Saraswathi Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmigal visited Prayāg in 1974.

Jagadguru śhāṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Svāmigal conducted the Vyāsa pūja in Śhobhana varṣham (2023 June 06th) in Prayagaraj. He completed the Vyāsapūja at the Śhāṅkara vimāna Maṇḍapam.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Yamunāṣṭakam

Yamuna nadī has a timeless association with Bhagavān Śhrī Kṛṣṇa. She is known as Kālindi or Kalindanandini with her dark waters contrasting with that of the Gaṅgā. There are two stotras on Yamuna nadī by Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya.

मुरारिकायकालिमालामवारिधारिणी
 तृणीकृतत्रिविष्टपा त्रिलोकशोकहारिणी ।
 मनोऽनुकूलकूलकुञ्जपुञ्जधूतदुर्मदा
 धुनोतु मे मनोमलं कलिन्दनन्दिनी सदा ॥१॥

**murāri-kāya-kālimā-lalāma-vāri-dhāriṇī
 tṛṇīkṛta-triviṣṭapā triloka-śhoka-hāriṇī ।
 mano'nukūla-kūla-kuñja-puñja-dhūta-durmadā
 dhunotu me manomalaṃ kalindanandiniṇī sadā ॥1॥**

Her waters are of the same colour as Bhagavān Viṣṇu - the slayer of Mura. She gives such high fruits that make the heavens seem like aere blade of grass and Her banks that please the mind. She is called Kalindanandini - daughter of the Kalinda mountain in the Himālayas (the source of the nadī). May Kalindanandini remove all the impurities of my mind.

कृपापारावारां तपनतनयां तापशमनीं
 मुरारिप्रेयस्यां भवभयदवां भक्तिवरदाम् ।
 वियज्ज्वालान्मुक्तां श्रियमपि सुखासेः परिदिनं
 सदा धीरो नूनं भजति यमुनां नित्यफलदाम् ॥ १ ॥

**kṛpāpārāvārāṃ tapanatanayāṃ tāpaśhamanīm
 murāripreyasyāṃ bhavabhayadavāṃ bhaktivaradām ।
 viyajjvālonmuktāṃ śhriyamapi sukhāpteḥ paridinaṃ
 sadā dhīro nūnaṃ bhajati yamunāṃ nityaphaladām ॥ 1 ॥**

In the second composition, she is praised as “The compassionate one capable of removing pāpam of devotees, companion to Jānhavī (Gaṅgā) and protector of Gokula. She is adorned by Kṛṣṇa. May that Yamuna be victorious and remove our fears and difficulties and purify us.”

Śhaṅkarāchārya set out to meet Maṇḍanamiśhra the student of Kumārilabhaṭṭa. Maṇḍanamiśhra and Sarasavāṇī, the couple with compatible intellect, dharma and beauty were living in the town of Māhiṣmatī practising vaidika dharma. Maṇḍanamiśhra was a performer of yajñas and taught students Veda and śhāstras and lived in a large home with a large courtyard.

Śhaṅkarāchārya reached the town of Māhiṣmatī. He stopped in the outskirts of the town where a few maids were standing and asked them the way to Maṇḍanamiśhra's house. According to the Ānandagirīya Śhaṅkara Vijayam, the maids reply in the form of a song whose philosophical references indicated that the presence of the learnedhousehold of Maṇḍanamiśhra had touched unlettered maids and even parrots, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya reached the home of Maṇḍanamiśhra. An excerpt from the replies given in verse form in the text:

Where the parrots in the courtyard talk of the various
pramāṇas -pratyakṣha (perception) to śhabda, know that as
Maṇḍanamiśhra's home

Where the parrots in the courtyard talk of the various tenets
of identity between jīva and īśhvara, know that as
Maṇḍanamiśhra's home

Where the parrots in the courtyard talk using the suffixes and
verbal roots used in the Veda, know that as Maṇḍana
Miśhra's home

Where the parrots in the courtyard talk of the appropriate
karmas that are done by learned brāhmaṇas beginning with
snāna, know that as Maṇḍanamiśhra's home.

Śhaṅkarāchārya meeting Maṇḍanamiśhra and
Sarasavāṇī in Māhiṣmatī

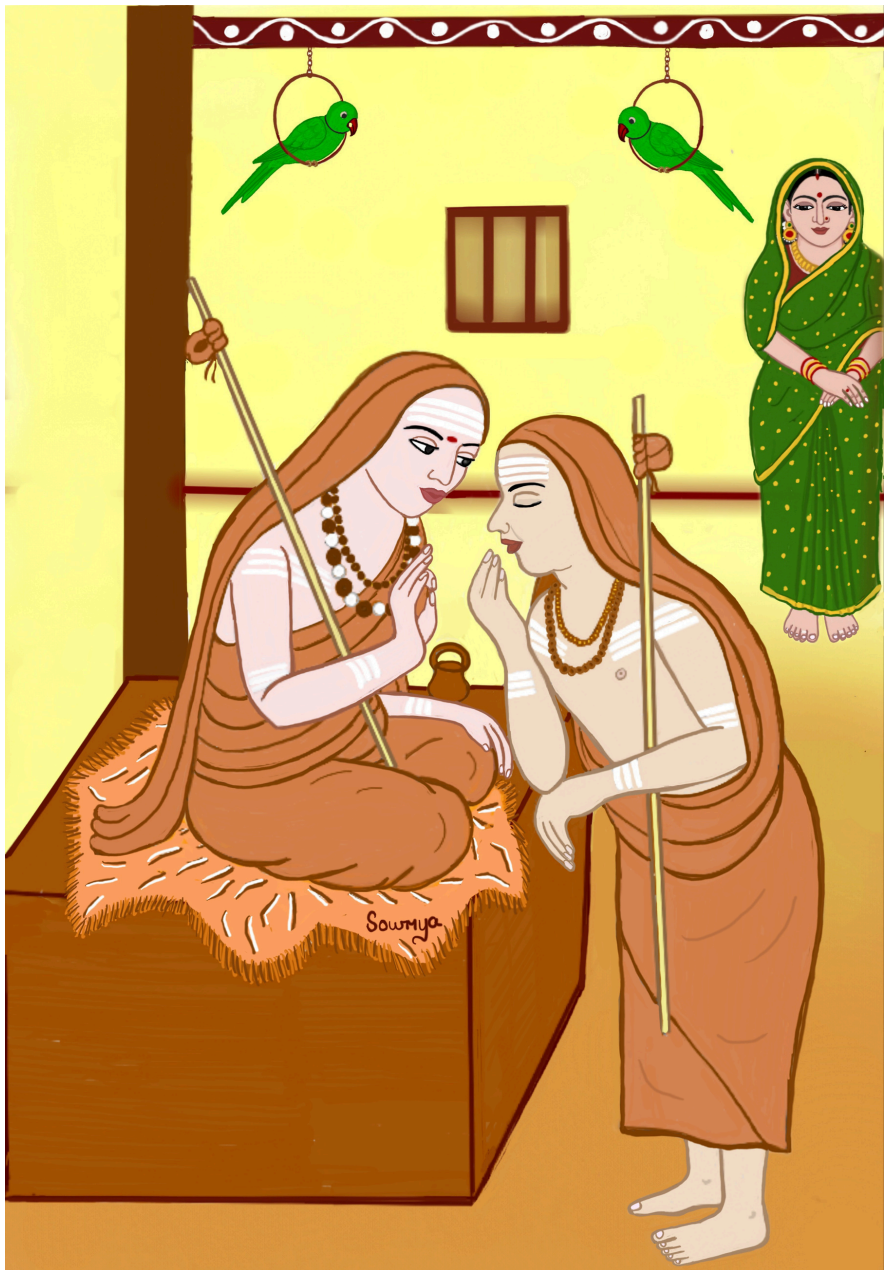


Maṇḍanamiśhra was performing the annual śhrāddha ceremony. These are rituals a householder performs to retain the connection and repay the debt to his ancestors (pitrs). Śhaṅkarāchārya entered the house. The couple completed the śhrāddham as per the procedure. śhāstras ordain that a householder has to receive and serve a sannyāsī and offer bhikṣhā. As was the custom, Maṇḍanamiśhra and Sarasavāṇī paid respects to Śhaṅkarāchārya and offered bhikṣhā. Śhaṅkarāchārya responded that he had come seeking vādabhikṣhā (the bhikṣhā of debate) first. Maṇḍanamiśhra agreed.

A vāda has certain requirements when two parties debate. A judge or a witness (madhyastha) is appointed. The debaters have to debate using a protocol and with proper traditionally-accepted evidence from the śhruti and smṛti. The madhyastha hears both the arguments, and determines who won or lost. Sarasavāṇī being a scholar was appointed the madhyastha. She had the two debaters garlanded. She announced that the person whose garland fades first would be considered as having lost in the debate. The terms of the debate stipulated that the person who lost would accept the āśhrama of the winner. The debate began.

Śhaṅkarāchārya's position was that only ātmajñāna would result in cessation of samsāra and rituals and karma aided in acquiring chittaśhuddhi. Maṇḍanamiśhra was a Mīmāṃsaka and his position was that rituals generated an unseen benefit (apūrva phalam) and they are sufficient in themselves without need for ātmajñāna. The debate went on for days. Finally Sarasavāṇī sensing that her husband's garland was fading, invited both of them to bhikṣhā - thereby indicating that that debate had ended. Maṇḍanamiśhra had to become a sannyāsī.

Maṇḍanamīśhra becoming Sureśhvarāchārya



Maṇḍanamiśhra, upon acknowledging his defeat, embraced sannyāsa and adopted the name Sureśhvarāchārya. Following this, Śhaṅkarāchārya and his disciples resumed their digvijaya yātrā. As the purpose of her incarnation was fulfilled, Sarasavāṇī reverted to her original form as Sarasvatī and decided to depart. Śhaṅkarāchārya used the Vanadurga mantra to entreat her to stay with them. She agreed to accompany them under the condition that they not look back and recognize her presence through the sound of her anklets. They then journeyed southward.

Upon reaching the confluence of the rivers Tuṅga and Bhadra (Tuṅgabhadra Saṅgama) at Kuḍali Śhrīṅgeri in Karṇāṭaka, Śhaṅkarāchārya and his disciples encountered the picturesque setting near the ancient Rāmeśhvara kṣhetra. The environment was harmonious, where even creatures like snakes and mongooses, known for their enmity, coexisted peacefully.

Suddenly the sound of Sarasavāṇī's footsteps ceased, prompting Śhaṅkarāchārya to look back. As decided earlier, Sarasavāṇī chose to stay there. Śhaṅkarāchārya enshrined Sarasvatī in the form of śharada in standing posture at the Tuṅgabhadra Saṅgama. He established the bhogaliṅga that he received from Kailāsa and appointed his disciple Prthvīdharāchārya as the first Pīṭhadipati of the Śhārada Pīṭham in Śhrīṅgeri at Tuṅgabhadra Saṅgama.

Maṭhasthāpana at Tungabhadra-saṅgama



Āryāmbā's Svargagamanam



On his journey, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya received news that his mother was ill and in her final days. He recalled the promise he had made to her before departing Kālaḍi. Utilizing his yogic abilities, Śhaṅkarāchārya swiftly reached her side. Āryāmbā was overjoyed to see her son, and following Śhaṅkarāchārya's guidance on saḡuṇa upāsana (remembering the divine with names, attributes, and forms), she chanted the names of Viṣṇu and reached Viṣṇuloka.

Śhaṅkarāchārya carried out his duties as a son and ensured his mother's final rites were conducted. There were objections from some who believed a sannyāsī should not perform these rites. Śhaṅkarāchārya with his profound knowledge, was aware of certain provisions in the dharmashāstra texts such as Viśveśvara smṛti that permitted the sole son to conduct the rites. With the support of truth and śhāstra, he fulfilled his duties as a son and honored the promise he had made to Āryāmbā.

To teach humanity gratitude to their mother who gave them life, he composed the Mātrpañcakam - a set of five verses which show how a child can never repay the debt to a mother.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Mātrpañcakam

Even though a sannyāsī renounces all relationships and family after taking up sannyāsa, there is still the duty or responsibility towards a parent when he is an only child. This is also borne out by some dharmashāstra texts that grant this specific exception to allow a sannyāsī to do the final rites for the mother. To illustrate the importance of a mother, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya composed the Mātrupañcakam - a set of five verses as a tribute to his mother.

He says that a mother bore the child and suffered pain due to pregnancy, child birth and this is not something an offspring would ever be able to compensate. Saying thus he offers prostrations to her. He laments that this is not a debt that can be repaid and all that he was able to do in return was to offer a handful of dry rice as part of the funeral rites.

मुक्तामणिस्त्वं नयनं ममेति राजेति जीवेति चिरं सुत त्वम् ।

इत्युक्तवत्यास्तववाचि मातः ददाम्यहं तण्डुलमेष शुष्कम् ॥

**muktāmaṇis tvaṃ nayanam mameti rājeti jīveti ciram suta tvam ।
ityuktavatyās tava-vāci mātaḥ dadāmyaham taṇḍulameṣha śhuṣhkam ॥**

Some biographies of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya such as the Vyāsāchaliya-śhaṅkara-vijayam say that Āchārya performed snānam in Prayāg with the disciples, remembering the compassion of his mother who nourished him in spite of difficulties.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Viṣṇu Ṣhaṭpadī

Śhaṅkarāchārya composed many short devotional works. The combination of karma and bhakti with the right qualities will take us one step closer to realization each day. This is why Vedānta stresses on the śhamādi-ṣhaṭka-sampatti - the six mental qualities an aspirant must develop to qualify to seek that knowledge of the self beginning with śhama (serenity) and dama (sense control). Viṣṇu ṣhaṭpadī is one such śhloka that talks about bhakti to Viṣṇu and imbibing the essential values and mental disposition for a seeker. The word ṣhaṭpadī means “that which has six legs” and denotes a bee. It also refers to the stotra composed of six verses written in the āryā metre. Āchārya seeks knowledge and beseechs Mahāviṣṇu to remove the lack of humility, grant control of the sense organs and a serene disposition as ways to stay away from the mirage of sense gratification. He then asks Bhagavān to broaden compassion and protect from the cycle of births and deaths.

अविनयमपनय विष्णो दमय मनः शमय विषयमृगतृष्णाम् ।
भूतदयां विस्तारय तारय संसारसागरतः ॥ 1 ॥

avinayamapanaya viṣṇō damaya manaḥ
śhamaya viṣhaya-mṛga-trṣhṇām ।
bhūta-dayāṃ vistāraya
tāraya saṃsāra-sāgarataḥ ॥ 1 ॥

Bhūta-daya means seeing every living creature as one and the same. Such an outlook automatically instils compassion towards others. In the subsequent verses, he talks about how every being is part of the supreme and He lives in everything just as the waves are a part of the ocean and yet the ocean is not the wave. Likewise is the relationship between the bhakta and bhagavān in the plane of duality.

Toṭakāchārya



Giri was one of the disciples of Śhaṅkarāchārya. He was very devoted to the duties of attending on the Jagadguru. One morning, the disciples gathered before the Jagadguru for the bhāṣhya lesson. Giri was washing the Āchārya's vastram (clothing) and the teacher chose to wait for him. The other disciples became impatient and said to one another, "Why does the teacher wait for the dull Giri who is as good as an inert mountain (giri). Śhaṅkarāchārya understood these thoughts of the students and wanted to impart his grace on Giri, for the grace of the guru can move mountains. A few minutes later, Giri came singing spontaneous inspired verses that he had composed on his preceptor in the Toṭaka metre. The other disciples were wonderstruck and learnt their lesson. From then, Giri was known as Toṭakāchārya. The verse he composed in spontaneous outburst of His guru's blessing is called Toṭakaṣṭakam. Besides the Toṭakaṣṭakam, Toṭakāchārya also composed a vedānta grantha named Śhruti-śāra-samuddharaṇam.

Toṭakaṣṭakam is recited during pujas at the time of offering namaskaras with a namaskara offered at the end of the line "bhava Śhaṅkaradeśhika me śharaṇam" (Śhaṅkara guru is my refuge). In the Toṭakaṣṭakam, Toṭakāchārya declares that Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya was Bhava (Śhiva Himself) and says that there may be many gurus who walked this earth. Yet, Śhaṅkarāchārya who outshone everyone like the jñāna bhāskara (ahimāmśhu ie not moon=sun) who enlightens and energises. The spirit of surrender and devotion in the verses illustrate that it is the guru's grace that can open the floodgates of knowledge.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhamādi-ṣhaṭka-sampatti according to Śhaṅkarāchārya

In Vivekachūḍāmaṇi, Śhaṅkarāchārya, gives the definitions of these six essentials for acquiring wisdom. 1.śhama 2. dama 3. uparati 4. titikṣhā 5. śhraddha 6. samādhāna

विरज्य विषयव्रतादोषदृष्ट्या मुहुर्मुहुः ।

स्वलक्ष्ये नियतावस्था मनसः शम उच्यते ॥ २२ ॥

**virajya viṣhaya-vrātāddoṣha-dṛṣhṭyā muhurmuhuḥ ।
svalakṣhye niyatāvasthā manasaḥ śhama ucyate ॥ 22 ॥**

The resting of the mind steadfastly on its goal (ie Brahman) after detaching itself from the many sense-objects by continually observing their defects, is called śhama or serenity.

विषयेभ्यः परावर्त्य स्थापनं स्वस्वगोलके ।

उभयेषामिन्द्रियाणां स दमः परिकीर्तितः ॥

**viṣhayebhyaḥ parāvartya sthāpanaṃ sva-sva-golake ।
ubhayeṣhāmindriyāṇāṃ sa damaḥ parikīrtitaḥ ॥**

Turning both kinds of sense-organs (external and internal) away from sense-objects and placing them in their respective spheres, is called dama or self-control.

बाह्यानालम्बनं वृत्तेरेषोपरतिरुत्तमा ॥ २३ ॥

bāhyānālambanaṃ vṛttereṣhoparatiruttamā ॥ 23 ॥

Uparati or self-withdrawal consists in ceasing of the function of the mind to react to external objects.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhamādi-ṣaṭka-sampatti according to Śhaṅkarāchārya

सहनं सर्वदुःखानामप्रतीकारपूर्वकम् ।

चिन्ताविलापरहितं सा तितिक्षा निगद्यते ॥ २४ ॥

sahanaṃ sarvaduḥkhānām apratikāra pūrvakam ।
cintāvilāparahitaṃ sā titikṣhā nigadyate ॥ 24 ॥

The bearing of all sorrows without worrying about addressing them, being free from anxiety is called titikṣhā or forbearance.

शास्त्रस्य गुरुवाक्यस्य सत्यबुद्धयवधारणम् ।

सा श्रद्धा कथिता सद्भिर्यथा वस्तूपलभ्यते ॥ २५ ॥

**śhāstrasya guruvākyaśya satyabuddhyavadhāraṇam ।
sā śhraddhā kathitā sadbhir yathā vastūpalabhyate ॥ 25 ॥**

Accepting firmly what the śhāstras and the guru instruct, is called śhraddhā or faith by the wise. It is the means by which the truth is perceived.

सर्वदा स्थापनं बुद्धेः शुद्धे ब्रह्मणि सर्वदा ।

तत्समाधानमित्युक्तं न तु चित्तस्य लालनम् ॥ २६ ॥

**sarvadā sthāpanaṃ buddheḥ śhuddhe brahmaṇi sarvadā ।
tatsamādhānamityuktaṃ na tu cittasya lālanam ॥ 26 ॥**

The constant concentration of the intellect on the ever-pure Brahman, is samādhāna or steadfastness and this is different from merely indulging in thought.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Harim īde

Harim īde stotram starts off with worship of saguṇa brahman (with name and form) and leads the devotee to the highest of Upaniṣhadic truth couched in the language of a stuti.

स्तोष्ये भक्त्या विष्णुमनादिं जगदादिं
यस्मिन्नेतत्संसृतिचक्रं भ्रमतीत्थम् ।
यस्मिन् दृष्टे नश्यति तत्संसृतिचक्रं
तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥ १ ॥

**stoṣhye bhaktyā viṣṇumanādiṃ jagadādiṃ
yasminnetatsamsṛticakraṃ bhramatīttam ।
yasmin dṛṣṭe naśhyati tatsamsṛticakraṃ
taṃ saṃsāradhvāntavināśhaṃ harimīde ॥ 1 ॥**

Harim īde means “I do namaskara to Hari”. What is the nature of Hari? Hari is one who can destroy samsāra or the cycle of birth and death. stoṣhye - means “I shall praise”. Doing namaskāra can be done in the stage of dvaita. Achārya says I worship Hari who is the cause of this universe, the all-pervasive Viṣṇu, that Paramātmā in which this samsāra chakra revolves, and who destroys it.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Harim iḍe

आचार्येभ्यो लब्धसुसूक्ष्माऽच्युततत्त्वा

वैराग्येणाभ्यासबलाच्चैव द्रढिम्ना ।

भक्त्यैकाग्रध्यानपरां यं विदुरीशं

तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥ ५ ॥

**ācāryebhyo labdhasusūkṣhmā'cyutatattvā
vairāgyeṇābhyāsabalāccaiva draḍhimnā ।
bhaktyaikāgradhyānaparāṃ yaṃ vidurīśhaṃ
taṃ saṃsārādhvāntavināśhaṃ harimīḍe ॥ 5 ॥**

Śhaṅkarācārya clearly states that this sublime tattva can only be grasped from an Ācārya and by those who have practised śhravaṇa (hearing), manana (repeated internalization and memorisation), and nididhyāsana (reflection), and the ones who have achieved this with single pointed devotion.

युक्त्यालोड्य व्यासवचांस्यत्र हि लभ्यः

क्षेत्रक्षेत्रज्ञान्तरविद्भिः पुरुषाख्यः ।

योऽहं सोऽसौ सोऽस्म्यहमेवेति विदुर्यं

तं संसारध्वान्तविनाशं हरिमीडे ॥ २८ ॥

**yuktyāloḍya vyāsavacāṃsyātrā hi labhyaḥ
kṣhetrakṣhetrajñāntaravidbhiḥ puruṣhākhyah ।
yo'haṃ so'sau so'smyahameveti viduryaṃ
taṃ saṃsārādhvāntavināśhaṃ harimīḍe ॥ 28 ॥**

Bhagavatpāda here says that, the truth of advaita can be grasped by carefully examining the words of Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa in His Brahmasūtra, and understanding the difference between the body in which the ātmā resides and realizing fully well that the divine is within us and is our nature. In this stotra, Śhrī śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda encapsulates high philosophy of the Brahmasūtra and Bṛhadāraṇyaka upaniṣhad, just as a mother gives bitter medicine mixed with sweet jaggery to a child.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



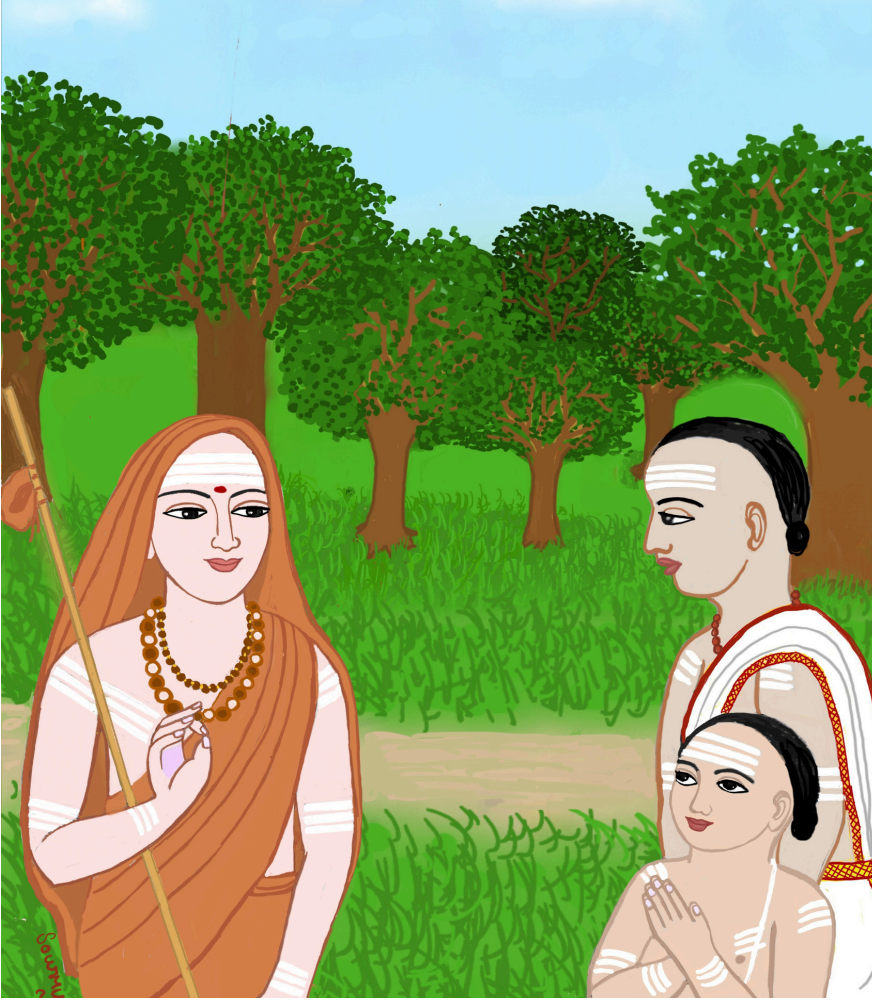
Bhajagovindam

Jagadguru Śhaṅkarāchārya acknowledged and established the three paths - karma, bhakti, and jñāna. One such stuti that is truly a vedānta prakaraṇa grantha and stresses on the need for dispassion and non-attachment to desires is 'mohamudgaram' popularly known as Bhajagovindam. Mudgara means a hammer and this hammer destroys moha or passion.

Śhaṅkarāchārya, was learned and made use of the utility of grammar or vyākaraṇa in his beautiful expositions. Yet, in this stuti he cautions a human being on the need to use the short human lifespan with discretion. Spending enormous amounts of time memorising dhātupāṭha (lists of verbal roots) when it is time to depart the world, is foolish. Thus he says, “Chant the name of Govinda. That is the only thing that will save you when you are ready to depart!”

The rest of the verses stresses on the need to live lightly and dispassionately like water drops on a lotus leaf without becoming a slave to material desires. Family, wealth and all the enjoyment from sense objects are transitory. The way to turn the mind away from attachment to desires is to turn it towards Bhagavān.

Hastāmalakāchārya



Śhaṅkarāchārya visited places such Harihara where he showed the unity of śhaṅkara and Nārāyaṇa. Harihara-abheda (non-difference between Hari and Hara) is one of the fundamental tenets of Advaita. From there, he went to Subrahmaṇya and then to Gokaṛṇa kṣhetra near Mahābaleśhvara and Kollur. At Kollur, he worshipped at the temple of Mūkāmbika. Enroute from there at a place called Sivali (Śhrīvali), a person named Prabhākara came to see the Jagadguru with his young son. The son would not respond to any external stimulus or speak or eat or drink. The father brought the son and placed him before the Jagadguru.

Śhaṅkarāchārya asked the boy, “Who are you? Why are you behaving as though you are an inert object?” To the astonishment of his father and his family and all the people around, the boy began to speak. He said, “I am not an inert object. I am the nature of ananda or bliss, I am free from changes such as birth living growth decay and death.” He continued to expound the Vedantic truth in twelve verses in such a clear manner - as clear and visible as the gooseberry fruit placed on an open palm. This work is called Hastāmalakīyam.

Śhaṅkarāchārya explained to their parents that their son was a realised jñāni and then gave sannyāsa to the boy with the name Hastāmalaka.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya at Gokarṇa kṣhetra

Gokarṇa is a small town located in the state of Karnataka on the West Coast of Bhāratam. It is at the confluence of two rivers Aghanāshinī and Gaṅgāvalli. The word Gokarṇa means cow's ear referring to the origin of the Śhiva here. Commemorating Śhaṅkarāchārya's visit to Gokarṇa, with the blessings of the Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham, an Ādi Śhaṅkara Maṅṭapam was established at the sacred town of Gokarṇa. The vigraham of Śhrī Adi Śhaṅkarāchārya faces the sea at Gokarṇa and is located on the seashore.





Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Hastāmalakīyam

In the case of Toṭakāchārya, the grace of the Jagadguru opened the floodgates of knowledge. Hastāmalakāchārya was another disciple who was blessed with the flow of vāk. He then gave expression to his realized knowledge by means of verse. Hastāmalaka stotra consists of twelve verses. It has the rare distinction that it is accompanied by a commentary of Śhaṅkarāchārya Himself - the guru composing a commentary on a disciple's work. In the first verse the Āchārya asks the boy, "Who are you my child?" In response to the Jagadguru's question, Hastāmalakāchārya explains the true nature of the realized self with each verse ending in "सनित्योपलब्धिस्वरूपोऽहमात्मा" - I am that eternal ātmā, the consciousness that is present in all states - sleeping, dream and waking, the ātmā that is the basis for the functioning of sense organs and mind - just as the sun enables all beings on this earth to function.

The introductory commentary says: इह हि सर्वस्य जन्तोः सुखं मे भूयाद्दुःखं मे मा भूयात् इति स्वरसत एव सुखोपादित्सादुःखजिहासे भवतः ।
iha hi sarvasya jantoḥ sukhaṃ me bhūyādduḥkhaṃ me mā bhūyāt iti svarasata eva sukhopāditsāduḥkhajihāse bhavataḥ”

All living beings wish "May I have happiness. May I not have sorrow. Hence their activities are directed towards achieving this objective ". He continues saying that it is only a rare human being, with a lot of accumulated punya (kaśhchit punyātiśhāli), realizes the transient nature of the sense organs and strives towards the cessation of the cycle of birth and death.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Śhrīśhailam

Śhrīśhailam is one among the twelve jyotirlingas. It is located in the Kurnool district of the Indian state of Andhrapradesh. The name of Śhiva here is Mallikārjuna and Bhramarāmbā is the devi here. Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed Bhramarāmbā stotram on her. A jasmine creeper is spread around an Arjuna tree (*Terminalia Arjuna*) here. Śhiva and Pārvatī are together here just as bee is always near the jasmine flower. There is a sacred śhrīchakra in the temple installed by Śhaṅkarāchārya. It was here that the 100 verses in praise of Śhiva, śhivānandalaharī was composed.

Pārvatī was born as Dakṣha's daughter Satī and married Śhiva. Daksha was very proud and did not like Śhiva. He conducted a yajna and did not invite Bhagavān Śhiva and insulted Śhiva and Pārvatī. Pārvatī (in the form of Dakṣha's daughter) warned Dakṣha and fell into the Agni and died. Śhiva destroyed Dakṣha's yajna. Overcome with sorrow at the loss of Satī, He carried Pārvatī's dead body and danced Tāṇḍava Nṛtyam. Her body parts fell in various places and each place became a famous temple and Pārvatī regained her original form and went back to Kailāsa. The places are called Śhaktipīṭhas. Śhrīśhailam is the place where Pārvatī's neck fell. These places are energy centers or where her Śhakti is present and show us the sacredness of the land of Bhāratam where each place constantly reminds us of the sacred presence of devatas and ṛshis.

Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham has a branch at Śhrīśhailam and the Āchāryas have spent many days here. Recently, the kumbhabhiṣhekam of Śhrīśhailam was done by Jagadguru Śhrī śhaṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmīgal.

Padmapādāchārya and the Bhairava upāsaka



In Hatakeśhvara near Śhrīśhailam, an upāsaka of Bhairava approached Śhaṅkarāchārya. He wanted the head of a great yogi to sacrifice to his devata Bhairava and sought the head of Śhaṅkarāchārya. He served Śhaṅkarāchārya reverentially for sometime. When the Jagadguru was pleased with his service, he made his request. The Āchārya agreed to the Bhairava's proposal and asked him to take him to a remote forest.

There, just as the Bhairava was about to sacrifice him and lifted his axe, Padmapāda came looking for his guru.. Padmapāda was an upāsaka of Narasimha and was possessed by the power of Narasimha. Narasimha's force entered His body and soon caught hold of the Bhairava and tore him into pieces. Padmapāda fell down unconscious. Śhaṅkarāchārya asked Padmapāda whether he had the upadeśha of Narasimha mantra.

Padmapādāchārya narrated that he had been worshipping Narasimha for a very long time. Yet, Narasimha had not appeared before him. One day, as he was seated deep in the forest immersed in the upāsana of Narasimha, a hunter came there. Being a forest dweller, he asked out of naive curiosity, "Sir what is it that you seek so earnestly?". Padmapādāchārya explained to the hunter in a way that he could understand. He said, "I am looking for a strange creature who has a lion's head and a human body. I wish to seek him and see him and I have not been successful in all my attempts so far".

Padmapādāchārya and the hunter



The hunter promised that he would go look for him. After a day or two the hunter returned with Narasimha tied with a rope and brought him before Padmapādāchārya. Padmapādāchārya was stunned and shaken beyond belief. He prostrated to his upāsya devata and asked, “I have been seeking you for many many years. How is it that you easily appeared before the hunter?” Narasimha responded that it was the hunter’s one-pointed focus and devotion in searching for him that caused him to appear. It was the bond of bhakti and one-pointed focus and devotion without thinking any other thought that bound me not the ropes”.

From Śhrīśhailam, Śhaṅkarāchārya and His disciples proceeded to Ahobilam. Śhaṅkarāchārya composed stotras on Narasimha.

From there, he went to Tirupati where he installed the yantras of dhanākarṣhana (the attractor of prosperity) and janākarṣhana (attractor of people). The effects of the yantra are still seen at Tirupati where there is always a continuous pouring of devotees and offerings of wealth. He also composed the Viṣṇu pādādikeśhānta stotram there. From Tirupati, he went to Kālahasti, one among the five Pañchaliṅga kṣhetras dedicated to the five elements - Kālahasti representing vāyu or air.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Ahobilam

Aho balam meaning “What power!” is the abode of Bhagavān Narasimha. It is a kṣhetram in the Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh located in the Eastern ghāts. It is well-known for the episode where Bhagavān Narasimha emerged from a pillar to slay Hiranyakāshīpu and protect his dear devotee Prahlāda. The remnants of the pillar, the place where Hiranyakāshīpu confronted Narasimha, a sacred tīrtham and the place where Prahlāda studied can be seen in Ahobilam.

The 68th Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham Jagadguru Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal visited Ahobilam in 1967. Due to the benevolence of Jagadguru Jayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal, Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Trust collaborated with the Ahobila Maṭham for making a golden chariot for Ahobilam. Jagadguru Śhrī śhaṅkara Vijayendra Saraswathi Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal visited Ahobilam in 2024 as part of the vijaya yātrā.





Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras on Narasimha

Narasimha as a devata is known both for the ferocity of power and vātsalya (tenderness towards devotees). His heart melted for his dear devotee Prahlāda. Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed two stotras on Narasimha - Śhrī Lakṣhmīnarasimha karuṇārāsa stotram (or karāvalamba stotram) and Śhrī Lakṣhmīnarasimha pañcharatna stotram.

तव हितमेकं वचनं वक्ष्ये शृणु सुखकामो यदि सततं
स्वप्ने दृष्टं सकलं हि मृषा जाग्रति च स्मर तद्वदिति ।
चेतोभृङ्ग भ्रमसि वृथा भवमरुभूमौ विरसायां

भज भज लक्ष्मीनरसिंहानघपदसरसिजमकरन्दम् ॥ ५ ॥

**tava hitamekam vacanam vakshye śhrṇu sukhakāmo yadi satatam
svapne dṛṣṭam sakalam hi mrshā jāgrati ca smara tadvaditi ।
ceto-bhṛṅga bhramasi vruthā bbava-maru-bhūmau virasāyām
bhaja bhaja Lakṣhmīnarasimhānaghapada sarsijamakarandam ॥ 5 ॥**

Śhaṅkarāchārya advises the mind-bee to rest on the pristine lotus-feet of Lakṣhmīnarasimha instead of frittering away in futile mundane activities as if like wandering in a desert. He offers well-meaning advice to the jīva stuck in samsāra to listen to this, if he aspires for happiness. All the sensual pleasures enjoyed during the waking stage are transient comparable to the dreaming state. To illustrate this central idea, he gives several analogies and illustrations The futility is compared to someone decorating the image on the mirror rather than the real person. In the second verse, the futility arising out of avidya is said to be akin to mistaking silver for the seashell. In the third, the mind bee being attracted to the color of the śhālmali or the silk cotton flower, devoid of nectar and fragrance forsakes the lotus feet of Lakṣhmīnarasimha. The fourth verse advises the mind-bee to stay clear of the objects that give temporary pleasure to the senses and focus on the permanent happiness of devotion to the lotus feet of Bhagavān Lakṣhmīnarasimha.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya's stotras on Narasimha

The Lakṣhmīnārasimha karuṇārāsa stotram is popularly known as Lakṣhmīnārasimha karāvalamba stotram. In this stotra, the devotee prays to Bhagavān Narasimha to offer the support of His hands for succour.

श्रीमत्पयोनिधिनिकेतनचक्रपाणे
भोगीन्द्रभोगमणिरञ्जितपुण्यमूर्ते ।
योगीश शाश्वतशरण्य भवाब्धिपोत

लक्ष्मीनृसिंह मम देहि करावलम्बम् ॥१॥

**śhrīmat-payonidhi-niketana-cakra-pāṇe
bhogīndra-bhoga-maṇi-rañjita-puṇyamūrte ।
yogīśha śhāśhvata-śharaṇya bhavābdhipota
lakṣhmīnṛsimha mama dehi karāvalambam ॥ 1 ॥**

In this śhloka, Śhaṅkarāchārya says Lakṣhmīnṛsimha is the boat that can transport the seeker across the ocean of samsāra and asks him for refuge and to hold his hand in support. He compares samsāra to a dreadful ocean, a terrible desert, a fierce forest inhabited by wild animals, a deep well of unfathomable depth and a serpent baring its fangs. The devotee has mindlessly climbed this tree of samsāra and consumed the fruit of this tree and accumulated many karmas. He begs the grace of Lakṣhmīnārasimha, the devata whose feet is worshiped by numerous devatas.

The names of His devotees are dear to Him. He praises and lists the names of supreme devotees like Prahlāda, Nārada and asks for the grace of Bhagavān.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Bhramarāmbā stotram

Bhramarāmba stotram of Śhaṅkarāchārya brims with alliterative beauty. It is in praise of Devi Bhramarāmba at Śhrīśhailam. The Devi is praised as the one who dwells in Śhrīshaila kṣhetram and is described as śhivasatī as this is one of the śhaktipīṭhas. Aruṅāsura received a boon that he will not be killed by any creature with two or four legs and śhakti took the form of a bhramarī or bee with six legs.

The bee is also known as ṣhaṭpadī, as seen in the Viṣṇuṣhaṭpadī stotram. Hence one verse of this stotra makes ample references to the number six and praises her as the one dwelling in the middle of the ṣhaṭkona surrounded by six yoginis. She removes the six enemies the ṣhaḍvairis namely kāma (desire), krodha(anger), lobha(greed), moha (delusion), mada (arrogance) and mātsaryam (envy). Her pādukas are in the form of ṣhaṭchakra. She represents the six bhavas - birth, existence, growth, growing old, decay and death that living creatures go through. She is the form of the sixteen lettered mantra known as ṣhoḍaśhī.

षट्-ताराङ्गण-दीपिकां शिव-सतीं षड्वैरि-वर्गापहां
षट्-चक्रान्तर-संस्थितां वर-सुधां षड्योगिनी-वेष्टिताम्
षट्-चक्राञ्चित-पादुकाञ्चित-पदां षड्-भावगां षोडशीं
श्री-शैल-स्थल-वासिनीं भगवतीं श्री-मातरं भावये

ṣhaṭ-tārāṅgaṇa-dīpikāṃ śhiva-satīm ṣhaḍvairi-vargāpahāṃ
ṣhaṭchakrāntara-saṃsthitāṃ vara-sudhāṃ ṣhaḍyoginī-veshṭitām ।
ṣhaṭ-chakrañchita-pādukañchita-padāṃ ṣhaḍ-bhāvagāṃ ṣhoḍaśhīm
śhri-śhaila-sthala-vāsinīm bhagavatīm śhri-mātaram bhāvaye ॥



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Tirupati and Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham

There is a tradition in Tirupati where the Āchāryas of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham are accorded a special customary welcome (istikbal) as the successors of the pīṭham established by Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya. A document in Telugu language records that this respect is accorded to the Āchāryas of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham.



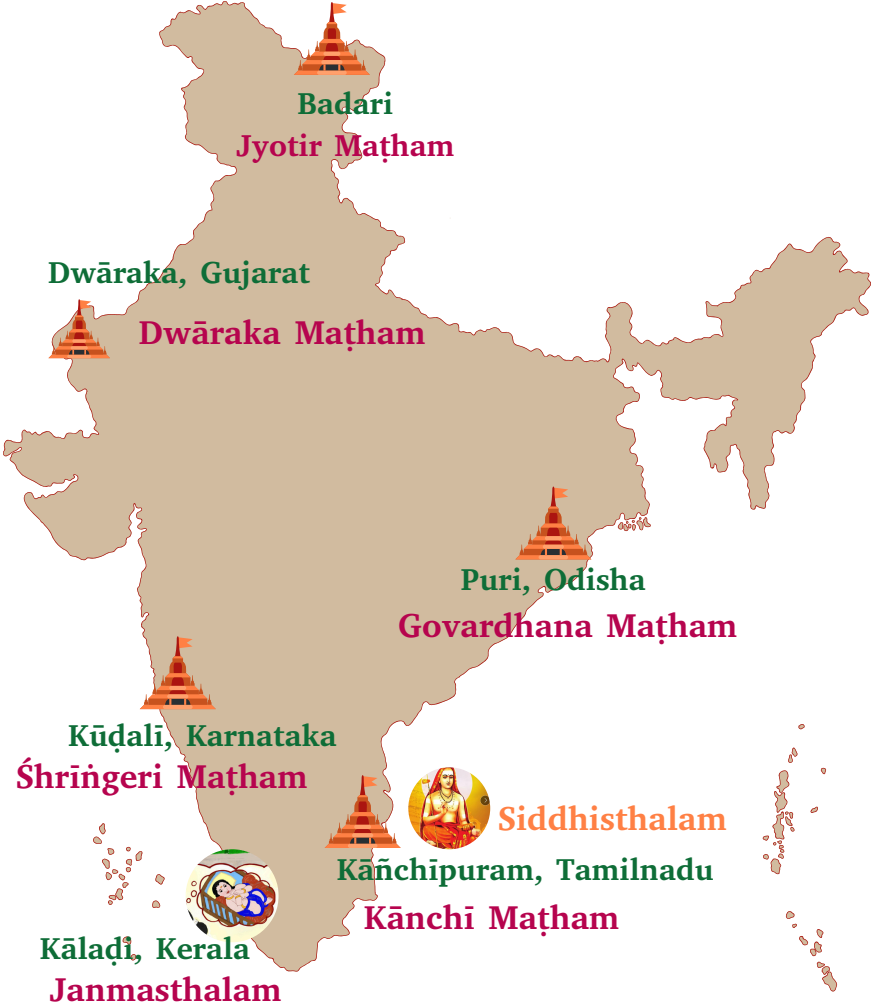
The 68th Jagadguru visited Tirupati in 1932. The 69th and 70th Jagadgurus have also visited Tirupati on many occasions. On the suggestion of Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Saraswathi Śhaṅkarāchārya Svāmigal, the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthānam had conducted Kārīrīṣṭi (yajña for rains) and Varuṇa japam since 1994. The Āchārya also presented a 2,060-diamond studded crown to Śhrī Venkateśhvara Swāmi on October 1, 2004. In 2023, Gaṅgāmma temple Kumbhābhiṣhekam was performed by Jagadguru Śhrī Śhaṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Svāmigal in 2023. With the guidance and blessings of the Jagadguru of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham are run the Sampradāya pāṭhaśhālā and the Śhaṅkara Samskr̥ti Pāṭhaśhālā in Tirupati.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Maṭhasthāpanam





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Maṭha-sthāpanam

The contributions of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya helped in cleansing practices that were not aligned to sanātana vaidika dharma. All of these changes were coeval with his times. To ensure the continuity of such practices for lokasaṅgraha (welfare of the world) Śhaṅkarāchārya established monastic institutions in various parts of the country and appointed his disciples as the heads of these institutions. The disciples are also known as Śhaṅkarāchāryas.

In Kūḍalī śhrīngeri, at the confluence of Tuṅga and Bhadra rivers, Āchārya installed Bhogaliṅga (among the liṅgas he received from Bhagavān Śhiva in Kailāsa) and established Prthvidharāchārya as the first Pīṭhādīpati. In Jagannātha Purī, on the Eastern Coast in the state of Odisha, Bhagavatpāda worshipped Jagannātha. He established the Govardhana maṭha and installed Padmapadāchārya as the first Āchārya. In Dwāraka in the West Coast of Bhāratam, He established the Dwāraka śhārada Pīṭham or Kālīka Pīṭham and installed Hastāmakalāchārya as the first Āchārya.

In Badarī in the North of Bhāratam, He established the Jyotirmaṭham and installed Toṭakāchārya as the first Āchārya. In Kāñchīpuram in the South, He established the Kāñchī Kāmakoṭī Pīṭham for Himself. He then installed Sureśhvarāchārya as the successor and care-taker for the next Āchārya Sarvajñatmendra Sarasvati who was only seven when he became a disciple of Śhaṅkarāchārya.

In addition to this, traditional accounts talk of the establishment of institutions in Kerala, Vārāṇasī etc.

Digvijayam
Tiruviḍaimarudhūr, Chidambaram, Tiruvānaikkāval
and Tirupati

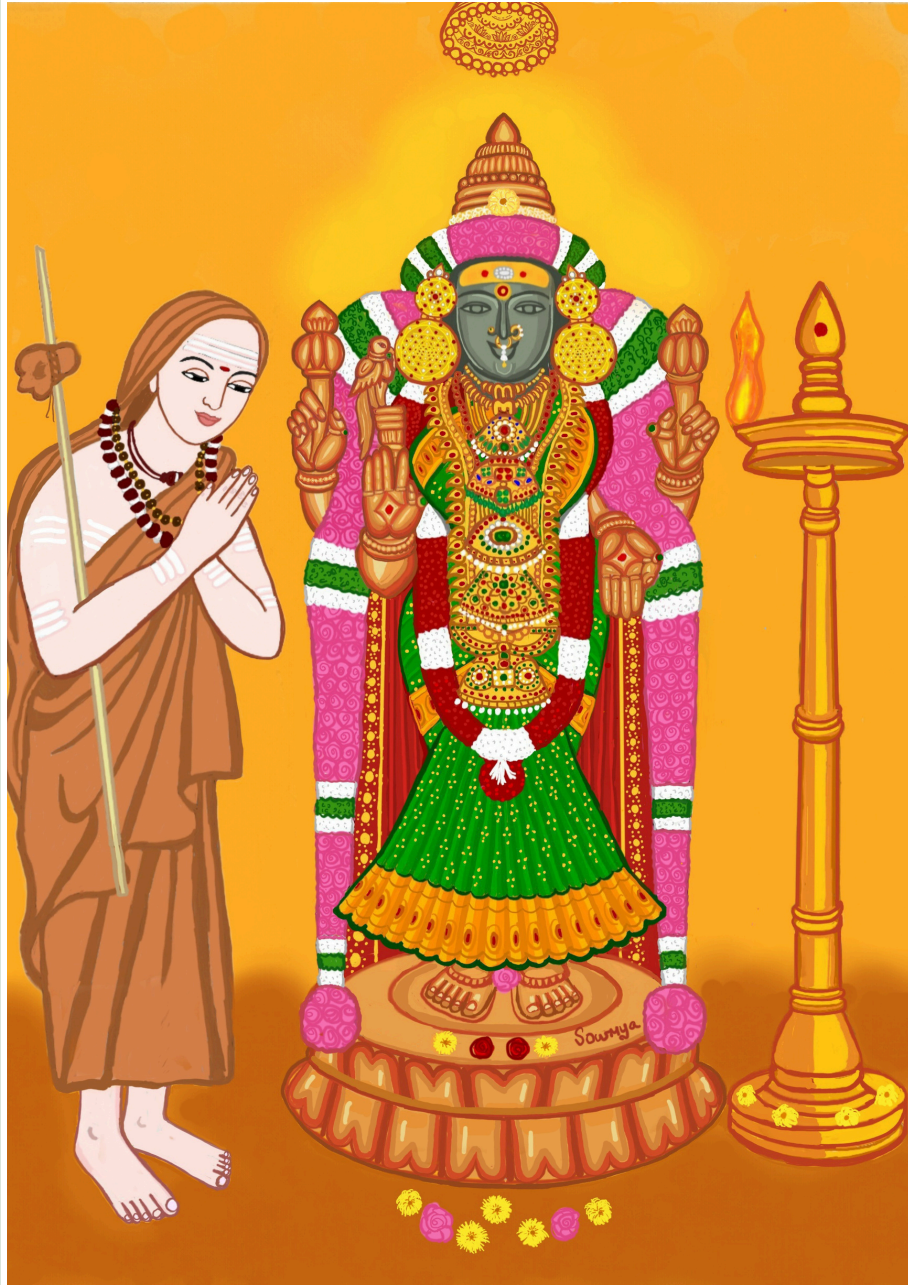


Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya proceeded on his digvijaya and entered the region of Tamilnādu, its heartland traversed by the divine river Kāveri. He reached Tirucchirāppalli and the tiny island of Śhrīraṅgam where Viṣṇu reclines on the serpent śheṣha as Raṅganātha. Here he composed Raṅganāthaṣṭakam and installed a yantra. From here he went to Thiruvanaikkaval or Jambukeśhvaram. In Jambukeśhvaram the pañchabhūta kṣhetra representing the water, dwells Śhiva as Jambukeśhvara and Pārvatī as Akhilāndeśhvari. When Śhaṅkarāchārya arrived at Jambukeśhvara, the Devi was in her fierce and angry form. To enable devotees to easily get her grace and to benefit society, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya installed a divine set of tāṭaṅkas (ear ornaments) in the shape of the śhrīchakra. In addition, He installed a murti of Ganeśha facing her so that seeing her son, the grace of the mother would flow out as compassion to her devotees.

From here, Bhagavatpāda proceeded to the nearby Tiruviḍaimarudhūr - the place where Śhiva resided in his liṅga form as Mahālingeśhvara. A section of devotees practising a specific form of avaidika worship of Śhiva here did not accept his tenets and were not convinced. To convince them, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya prayed to Bhagavān Mahālingeśhvara to proclaim to the world the truth of the Advaita Siddhānta. A hand emerged from the liṅga and averred, “Satyam Advaitam! (Advaita is the truth!) Satyam Advaitam! Satyam Advaitam!” thrice.

He also visited places in the vicinity such as Swāmimalai and Māyūram. In Chidambaram, the pañchabhūta-kṣhetra representing ākāśha (space) the abode of Naṭarāja and Śhivakāmī, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya installed the mokṣhaliṅga. Chidambaram was also the place where Patañjali worshipped at the feet of Naṭarāja. Śhaṅkarāchārya installed the Annākarṣhana yantra - to bring prosperity of food and grains and the Śhiva pañcākṣhara yantra in that temple. From here, Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya travelled further South and reached the Mokṣhapuri of Kāñchīpuram, the divine abode of Jaganmātā Kāmākṣhī.

Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī at Tiruvānaikkāval





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī and Tāṭaṅkapraṭiṣṭhā

Thiruvānaikkovil or Thiruvānaikkaval (Gahāraṇyam or Jambukeśhvaram) is located in the island of Śhrīraṅgam. Bhagavān Śhiva is known as Jambukeśhvara and the Devi is Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī. It is one of the Pañchalinga kṣhetras representing 'ap lingam' or the water element. The temple owes its origin to Ṛṣhi Jambu's penance. This is the famous shrine where the two Śhivagaṇas (attendants of Śhiva) Mālyavān and Puṣhpadanta cursed each other and took birth as a spider and an elephant and competed in their devotion to Bhagavān Śhiva, eventually returning to Kailāsa.

When Śhaṅkarāchārya came to Jambukeśhvaram, the Devi was in her fierce form. Śhaṅkarāchārya installed a vighraha of Gaṇeśha in front of her so that the mother's eyes would fall on her son when the doors were opened in the morning. This reduced her ferocity. In addition, he installed two Śhrīchakras in the shape of her ear ornaments. These have always been worn by the devata except during the nights and this reduced her ferocity. hence one of names in the Aṣṭottaraśhata (108) nāmāvali of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya is “Śhrīchakrātmāka-tāṭaṅka-poṣhita-ambā-manorathāya namah”. He is the one who protected and adorned amba's ears with the śhrīchakra-shaped ear ornaments.

In continuation with this time-honored tradition, the sthānikas of the shrine of Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī have traditionally sought the guidance of the Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham to refurbish the tāṭaṅkas any time they are in need of repair.



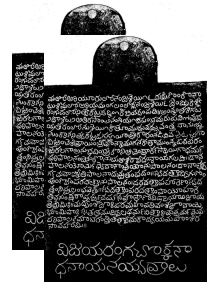
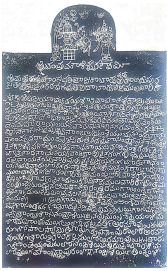
Śhānkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī and Tāṭaṅkapraṭiṣṭhā

As per the archives of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham, the 59th Jagadguru Bodhendra Sarasvati Swamigal did Tāṭaṅka praṭiṣṭha in 1686 akṣaya varṣam. The 62nd Jagadguru Śrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Swamigal also performed tāṭaṅka praṭiṣṭha. Subsequently the 64th Āchārya Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Swamigal did the Tāṭaṅka praṭiṣṭhā of Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī at Tiruvānaikkāval and the King of Thanjavur honored him with kanakābhiṣheka (shower of gold). The 68th Āchārya Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Swamigal also did the Tāṭaṅka praṭiṣṭhā of Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī at Tiruvānaikkāval in 1923. Mahākumbhābhiṣhekam was performed by the Jagadgurus in 1909, 1960, 1970 , 1982 and 2002

This kshetra has long association with Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham. Copper plate grant executed by Vijayarāṅga Chokkanātha, the Nayak King of Madura recording the respectful gift of tracts of lands and right to collect produce on the banks of Kāverī for Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham’s maṭham located at Tiruvānaikkāval and to receive customary honors from Jambukeśhvaram temple. (1710 CE).



Jagadguru Vidyasthanam, a center for traditional learning at Tiruvanaikkovil was the location for the Vyasa Puja of Krodhī Samvatsaram (2024)



Śhānkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Kumbhakonam and Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham

The 1708 CE inscription in Tiruvanaikkāval refers to the 61st Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham Śhrī Mahādevendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Svāmigal as “Śhrīmat paramahāmsa parivrajakāchārya Kāñchīpurasthita śhaṅkarapādāchārya Swāmi”. There was a maṭham built in Chennai in 1742 CE in Thambu Chetty Street by Vajrala Tyāgarāja Nayudu where the Jagadguru had stayed. This Āchārya attained siddhi in Tiruvotriyur near Chennai in 1745 CE.

Kāñchīpuram and the South Arcot district faced war and looting. Haider Ali, the Nawab of Arcot and the British were engaged in war. Temples and temple authorities lived in constant fear that devata vigrahas would be damaged and temples looted. During this time the 62nd Āchārya, Śhrī Chandrashekharendra Sarasvati went on a yātrā to Rameśhvaram. The sthānikas of Kāmākṣhī temple, took the golden vigraham of Baṅgāru Kāmākṣhī and fled in search of safety. From Rameśhvaram the Jagadguru took Chandramaulīshvara and moved to the Kāveri delta region, because many families of bhakta who offered traditional agrasambhāvana to the Jagadgurus lived there. Enroute on this arduous journey, shelter was provided by the Udayārpālayam samsthānam for sometime. Then they moved to Tañjāvūr which was safe due to the presence and patronage of the Hindu Maratha Bhonsle kings who ruled Tañjāvūr. The Āchāryas were welcomed with honors by the then Tañjāvūr king Pratāpa Simha in the period 1747-1750. This temporary shifting of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham to Kumbhakonam happened during 1746-1747- CE. These records exist in the Tañjāvūr Sarasvati Mahāl Library.

During this shift to Tañjāvūr, records of nitya worship that were offered to the adhiṣṭhānam of Śhrī Sureśhvarāchārya in Kāñchīpuram also exist. This points to the presence of some people who stayed back in Kāñchīpuram to maintain these pujas.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhrīraṅganāthāṣṭakam

Śhrīraṅgam is an island formed by the branches of the river Kaveri. There is a temple of Śhrī Raṅganātha reclining on the serpent Adi Shesha here. Śhrīraṅgam Raṅganātha was the kuladevata of the Ikṣhvāku vamśha. Bhagavān Śhrīrāma gave him as a gift to Vibhīṣhaṇa and due to the līlā of Bhagavān, the vigraham stayed at Śhrīraṅgam. Śhaṅkarāchārya visited Śhrīraṅgam and installed a yantra there. He also composed Raṅganāthāṣṭakam worshipping the blissful form of Raṅganātha in yoga nidrā.

आनन्दरूपे निजबोधरूपे

ब्रह्मस्वरूपे श्रुतिमूर्तिरूपे ।

शशाङ्करूपे रमणीयरूपे

श्रीरङ्गरूपे रमतां मनो मे ॥१॥

ānandarūpe nijabodharūpe

brahmasvarūpe śhrutimūrtirūpe ।

śhaśhāṅkarūpe ramaṇīyarūpe

śhrīraṅgarūpe ramatāṃ mano me ॥ 1 ॥

May my mind delight in the divine form of Śhrī Raṅganātha. The form resting on the Ādiśheṣha. The form absorbed in bliss and immersed in his own self. That form that is the essence of brahman. and the personification of the Veda. His form that is as cool as the moon, with exquisite beauty.

Padmapādāchārya and Pañchapādikā

Padmapādāchārya originally belonged to the region around Tiruvānaikkāval. Once He was on a tīrtha yātrā to Rameśhvaram and stopped at his maternal uncle's house. He showed the manuscript of his commentary on Bhagavatpāda's Brahmasūtram to his uncle and gave it to him for safekeeping while he undertook the yātrā. The uncle did not agree with the tenets of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya. He believed that the Veda-mantras and performing these acts by themselves gave results and that it was not īśhvara who gave the phala. Hence he felt that there was no need for devotion to īśhvara or any place for jñāna or wisdom in attaining mokṣha. Jealous and intolerant of the work of his nephew, his uncle burned the manuscript. He told Padmapādāchārya who returned from the yātrā that the work was destroyed accidentally in a fire. Padmapādāchārya was initially distraught. He then decided that he could recall the contents and rewrite the work. While he was doing this, the uncle poisoned him which impacted his memory and he could not recall the work.

Knowing no other recourse, Padmapādāchārya surrendered to the Jagadguru and explained the situation. Śhaṅkarāchārya had heard this work once when Padmapādāchārya read out the work to him. However he had only read out five pādas. He recalled what was read out to him word for word. Padmapādāchārya was able to rewrite the work. This work called Pañchapādikā only exists in part with the commentary on the first four sūtras published and a small fragment of the remaining portion has survived.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Tiruvīḍaimarudhūr - Satyam advaitam

A maṇḍapa was built in the Śhāṅkara maṭham at Tiruvīḍaimarudhūr in commemoration of the episode of Śhiva proclaiming “Satyam advaitam”. With the guidance of Jagadguru Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Swāmigal, a liṅga was installed there in 1963 with a hand stretching out from it. A vigraha of Śhrī Śhāṅkarāchārya in añjali mudrā can be seen installed along with the Ādiśhāṅkara pādukas in marble.



During the five day celebrations, Swāmigal gave anugraha bhāṣhaṇams (lectures) on how Sankarāchārya went around the whole country in a short lifespan of thirty two years, and on his achievements and philosophy of advaita. On each of the five days, a picture of Ādi Śhāṅkarāchārya was kept on a chariot and brought on a procession around the four streets. In the front of the procession there were five elephants which carried Ādi Śhāṅkarāchārya’s pādukas, his pañchaloha vigraham and his bhāṣhyams. Swāmigal walked in the procession along with the princes of Tañjāvūr. Archana was performed using 108 shawls accompanied by the chanting of 108 select proclamations from Śhrī Śhāṅkarāchārya’s bhāṣhyas and Vedānta prakaraṇa granthas. The shawls were then distributed to scholars of vedānta.

The 60th anniversary of this event was celebrated in 2023 with the blessing of Jagadguru Śhrī Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmigal, 70th Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham.

Digvijayam - Madurai



Madurai, Rameśhvaram, Tiruchendūr and Anantaśhayanam

Śhaṅkarāchārya travelled South and visited places such as Madurai, Tiruchendūr, Rameśhvaram, Kanyākumāri, Suchīndram and Anantaśhayanam (Thiruvananthapuram).

In Madurai, he composed stotras on Mīnākṣhī. In Tiruchendūr, is the famous temple of Subrahmaṇya on the seashore. The vibhūti prasada given at this temple wrapped in the panneer leaf (*Guettarda speciosa*) is known for its curative powers. A reference to the patra vibhūti is made in the Subrahmaṇya bhujangam that was composed here. Śhaṅkarāchārya visited Tiruvananthapuram or Anantaśhayanam, the abode of Bhagavān Padmanābha.

From there, he also visited Rameśhvaram - the Jyotirliṅga kṣhetra and the abode of Ramanātha Swāmi and Ambā Parvathavardhani. He bathed in the Mahodadhi and the Ratnākara (the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea), and at various sacred tīrthas there. He performed abhiṣheka with great devotion to Śhrī Ramanātha with Gaṅgā water brought all the way from the North and worshipped Śhrī Ramanātha with Bilva leaves.

He also visited Kanyākumāri the abode of śhakti in penance and Suchīndram where in is located the temple of Sthāṇumālaya. There are sculptures representing Śhaṅkarāchārya and the śhaṇmata in the temple of Sthāṇumālaya in Suchīndram.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Tiruchendūr and Tiruvanantapuram

Śhrī śhaṅkara maṭham and Yātri nivās in Tiruchendūr was inaugurated by Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal on 29 May 2008

Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham śhaṅkara maṭham, Tiruvanantapuram houses a Śhrī śhaṅkara pādukā maṇḍapam and Śhrī Chandraśhekharendra Sarasvati Kīrthi maṇḍapam. It is located at Śhivan Kovil Street, Karamana, Tiruvananthapuram.





Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhrī Subrahmaṇya bhujaṅgam

Śhaṅkarāchārya starts off with prayers to Gaṇeśha, who is always a child but capable of destroying obstacles. He then prays to the Subrahmaṇya who rides on the peacock and refers to him as the son of Śhiva and addresses him as the essence of the Upaniṣhads. The worship of Subrahmaṇya can help the devotee cross the ocean of samsāra. He alludes to the town of Tiruchendūr on the ocean and dwelling on Tiruchendūr, Gandhaśhaila.

महाम्भोधितिरे महापापचोरे

मुनीन्द्रानुकूले सुगन्धारख्यशैले ।

गुहायां वसन्तं स्वभासा लसन्तं

जनार्तिं हरन्तं श्रयामो गुहं तम् ॥७॥

mahāmbhodhitire mahāpāpachore

munīndrānukūle sugandhākhyāśhaile ।

guhāyāṃ vasantaṃ svabhāsā lasantaṃ

janārṭiṃ harantaṃ śhrayāmo guhaṃ tam ॥7॥

I take refuge in Guha who shines by His own light, who removes the afflictions of the people, and who dwells in the cave of the hill, Gandhaśhaila, which is on the shore of the sacred ocean, which destroys the worst sins, and which is congenial to the great sages. (7)

अपस्मारकुष्ठक्षयार्शः प्रमेह

ज्वरोन्मादगुल्मादिरोगा महान्तः ।

पिशाचाश्च सर्वे भवत्पत्रभूतिं

विलोक्य क्षणात्तारकारे द्रवन्ते ॥२५॥

apasmāra-kuṣhṭha-kṣhayārśhaḥ prameha

jvaronmāda-gulmādi-roga mahāntaḥ ।

piśhācāśhca sarve bhavat-patra-bhūtiṃ

vilokya kṣhaṇāt tārakāre dravante ॥ 25॥

Enemy of Tāraka! severe diseases such as epilepsy, leprosy, consumption, lung infection urinary troubles, fever, mental derangement, disorders of the spleen, etc., and also all kinds of evil spirits disappear at the very sight of your vibhūti (sacred ash) kept on the (holy Panneer) leaf. (25)



Śhaṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Kanyākumārī

As a mark of the visit of Śhaṅkarāchārya to Kanyakumārī, an arch was erected with the image of Dakṣhiṇāmūrti at the top. The main shrine contains the marble image of Ādi śhaṅkarāchārya with his disciples. The holy feet of śhaṅkara are also enshrined separately in the eastern side of the main shrīne. The Kumbhabishekam was performed on May 31, 1964 in connection with Śhrī śhaṅkara Jayanti that year. One can also see a shrīne of Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya at the top of the hill at Śhrīnagar in Kaśhmīr. The hill in the name of Śhaṅkarāchārya can be viewed around the town. Thus the memorials of Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya at Kanyākumari and Śhrīnagar adorn the feet and the crown of India.

The Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham were also instrumental in enabling and facilitating the construction of the Swami Vivekananda Kendram in Kanyākumari.





Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Suchīndram

The sthalapurāṇa of Suchīndram mentions the visit of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya and his composition of 21 verses on Sthāṇumālaya, praising Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śhiva. Verses from Sthānustava are chanted in the temple everyday.

नमोऽस्तु वागीशहरीश्वराय नगेन्द्रचापाय नदीधराय ।

नाम्ना शुचीन्द्रेण इति स्तुताय ज्ञानाटवीशाय नमः शिवाय ॥ २१ ॥

namo'stu vāgīśahariśhvarāya nagendracāpāya nadīdharāya ।

nāmnā śhucīndreṣha iti stutāya jñānāṭavīśhāya namaḥ śhivāya ॥ 21 ॥

एवमात्मविदां श्रेष्ठः स्तुत्वाऽऽनन्दपरोऽभवत् ।

सर्वज्ञः शङ्कराचार्यः स्थाणुक्षेत्रे महास्थले ॥ २२ ॥

evamātmavidāṃ śhreṣṭhaḥ stutvā'nandaparo'bhavat ।

sarvajñāḥ śhaṅkarācāryaḥ sthāṇukṣhetre mahāsthale ॥ २२ ॥

Suchīndram is known as jñānaranya and Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya refers to jñānaranya as jñānatavi. The sthalapurāṇa of Suchīndram has a sarga that talks of Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya's visit to the temple. There, Śhaṅkarāchārya is described as one who has mastered the Veda, vedāṅgas, itihāsa and purāṇas and a great tapasvi. Śhaṅkarāchārya reached the temple and worshipped Śhiva. Naṭarāja murti in the temple gave him praṇavopadeśha and Śhaṅkara guru obtained Śhiva's grace in this jñānasabha.

In Kanyākumāri district there is a unique festival śhivālaya oṭṭam that happens during Mahāśhivaratri. Devotees run around twelve śhivālayas starting from Thirumalai to Thirunattalam, uttering the names of Viṣṇu `Govinda, Gopala'. It is said that Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya introduced this parikrama to symbolize Harihara-abheda and foster harmony and unity.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Suchīndram

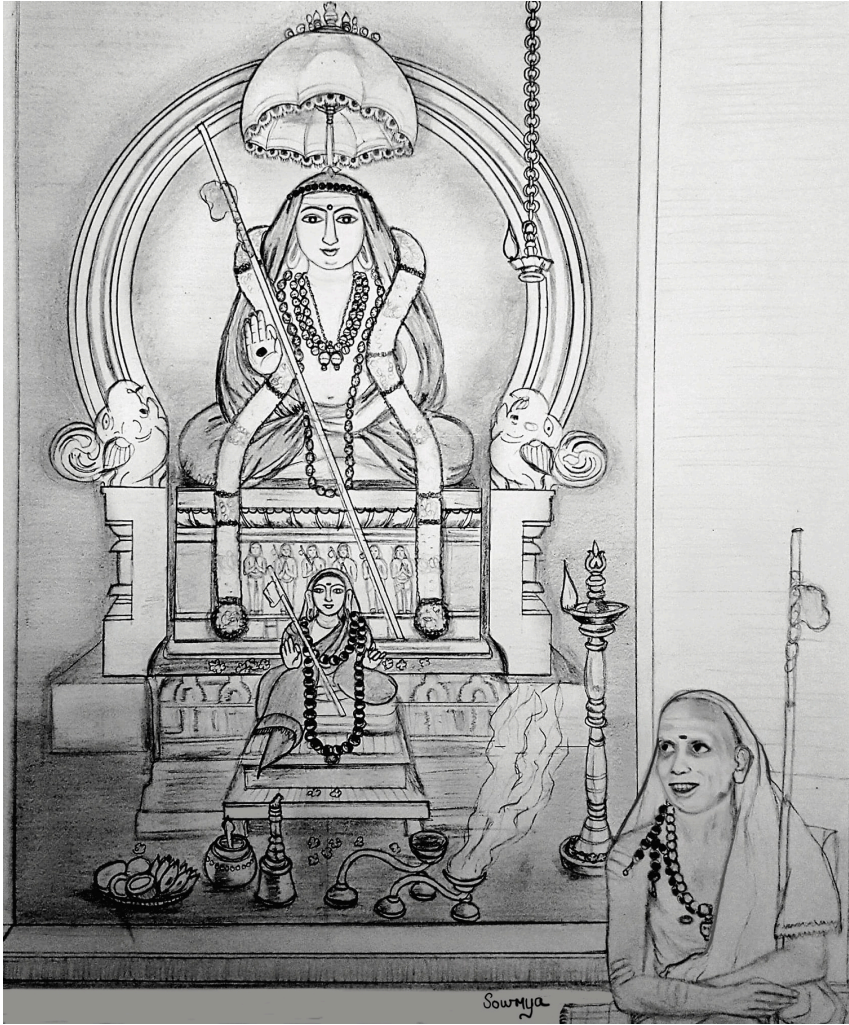
In the Sthāṅumūrti temple, there are twelve images of Śhaṅkarāchārya found on the front face of a tall and massive cubical column. Another column contains the images of the six śhaṅmata devatas. These sculptures give us information about the establishment of śhaṅmata by Śhaṅkarāchārya and the visit of Śhaṅkarāchārya.

The first pillar contains images of ascetics, seated in padmāsana pose. These are stone reliefs of Ādi śhaṅkara Bhagavatpāda with the daṇḍa on the right shoulder. In the ninth image, Śhaṅkarāchārya is shown in añjalihasta and as being in meditation. On the right side of this sculpture, the figure of a boy, standing reverently is seen with both hands raised high above his head. The tenth and eleventh images have a head-dress resembling a crown. On the second pillar are sculpted the śhaṅmata devatas.

One can also see the images of Ādi Śhaṅkarāchārya in the Śhiva temples at Darisanamkoppu, Bhoothapandy and Thirupparappu in Kanyākumāri District.



Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya and his disciples at Kāñchīpuram





Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Pañchāyatana and śhaṅmata sthāpana

A notable nāma in the Aṣṭottaraśhata nāma used to worship Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya is “Śhaṅmatasthapanāchāryāya namaha”. The one who established the six paths - namely gāṇāpatyam, Kaumāram, Sauram, Śhaivam, Vaiṣṇavam and Śhāktam. Just as Advaita existed before him, so too did the worship of devatas. Śhaṅkarāchārya cleansed these practices and made them free of himsa of oneself and of others, and rooted them in the vaidika tradition. The task of propagating the śhaṅmatas and explaining purvapakṣha matas was assigned to six disciples. Commonly found names in texts include Paramatakālānala, Lakṣhmaṇa and Hastāmalaka, Tripurākumāra, Divākara, Girijākumāra and Vatukanātha. The image of Śhaṅkarāchārya in the pūjamaṇḍapa of Śhrī Kāñchimaṭham in Kāñchīpuram has six śhiṣhyas standing beside him.

आदित्यम् अम्बिकां विष्णुं गणनाथं महेश्वरम्

पञ्चायज्ञपरो नित्यं गृहस्थः पञ्च पूजयेत्

**ādityam ambikāṃ viṣṇuṃ gaṇanāthaṃ maheśhvaram
pañcāyajñaparo nityaṃ gṛhasthaḥ pañca pūjayet**

These devatas are also worshipped as part of the Pañchāyatana puja in many homes. In Pañchāyatanapūja, certain naturally occurring stones are used - the reddish stone śhoṇabhadram for Gaṇapati. Sphaṭika, the glass-like, stone denotes Sūrya. The naturally-formed śhālagramam found in river Gaṇḍaki in Nepal, for Viṣṇu, the naturally formed bāṇaliṅgams from Narmada denotes Śhiva. Devi is represented by ambika, a shining stone from the Svarṇamukhi nadī. Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed stotras on each of the these devatas except Surya. On Sūrya, he has composed a dhyāna śhloka as part of the Prapañchasāra tantra. He has also alluded to the worship of Sūrya in the Praśhnottararatnamālikā.

को जगद्धर्ता? सूर्यः (Ko Jagadbhartā? Sūryaḥ) Who is the sustainer of the worlds?" "Sūrya" को ब्राह्मणैरुपास्यः? गायत्र्यर्कग्निगोचरः शम्भुः (ko brāhmaṇair upāsyah? Gāyatriyarkāgni-gocharaḥ śhambhuḥ) "Whom should the enlightened ones worship ?" "Bhagavān who dwells in Gāyatri, the Sun and Agni."

Pañchāyatana and śhaṅmata sthāpna





Śhaṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Rameśhvaram and Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoti Pīṭham



Rāmeśhvaram is one of the dvādaśha jyotirliṅga kṣhetras and is located on the Pamban Island of Tamilnadu. It is also one of the four places of pilgrimage known as Chār dhām (Badarī Dvāraka, Pūri and Rameśhvaram) and people all over Bhāratam aspire to have darśhanam of Kāśhī and Rāmeśhvaram atleast once in their lifetime. They take sand from Rāmeśhvaram and go to Prayāg and dissolve the sand there in the Gaṅgā. Likewise, they bring the waters of Gaṅgā from there and offer to Rāmanātha Swāmi. Samudra snānam is important here.

Jagadguru śhaṅkara Bhagavatpādāchārya's vijayam to Rameśhvaram has been mentioned in many śhaṅkara vijayas. The Śhaṅkarāchāryas who were his successors in the Kāñchī Kāmakoti Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham, have the traditional rights to perform abhiṣhekam to Rāmanātha Svāmi. Many Āchāryas have performed this abhiṣheka. The traditional history of the Kāñchī Kāmakoti Pīṭham records the Vijaya yātrās of Śhrī Ujjvala śhaṅkara , the 16th Āchārya and the Setu yātrā of the 34th Āchārya.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



The 56th Āchārya Śhrī Sarvajña Sadāśhiva Bodhendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmigal attained siddhi in Rāmeśhvaram. The divya pādukas of this Jagadguru are preserved at Rāmeśhvaram and he was honored by Pravīra Setupati. There are also records of the 59th Āchārya Bhagavānna Bodhendra Sarasvati Śhāṅkarāchārya Swāmigal having darśhanam of these pādukas. These were consecrated later during Sivaji's times as can be gathered from the details inscribed in these pādukas in Modi script. The 62nd Āchārya visited Setu prior to his journey to Uḍayārpālayam. The 65th Āchārya Śhrī Sudarśhana Mahādevendra Sarasvati Swāmigal also undertook Setu yātrā, performed abhiṣheka to Rāmanāthaswāmi and performed puja at the adhiṣṭhānam of the 56th Āchārya. In keeping with this glorious tradition, the 68th Āchārya visited Rāmeśhvaram in October 1922, June 1939 and April 1963. During each of these visits, the Āchārya performed puja to Rāmanāthaswāmi. In June 1963 he also performed Gaṅgābhiṣhekham.



Śhrī Jayendra Sarasvati Swāmigal was welcomed with full honours during the Kumbhābhiṣhekam during 1976, 1992 and during the inauguration of the new gopuram in 2000. A nagābharaṇam was offered to Rāmanātha Swāmi by the Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham during the 2016 Kumbhābhiṣhekam. Jagadguru Śhrī Śhāṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Swāmigal's vijaya yātrā to Rāmeśhvaram was in 2021. Krodhī Samvatsaram marked the completion of Kashi Yatra of the Mahāsannidhānam and abhisheka was performed to Rāmanātha Swāmi



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam

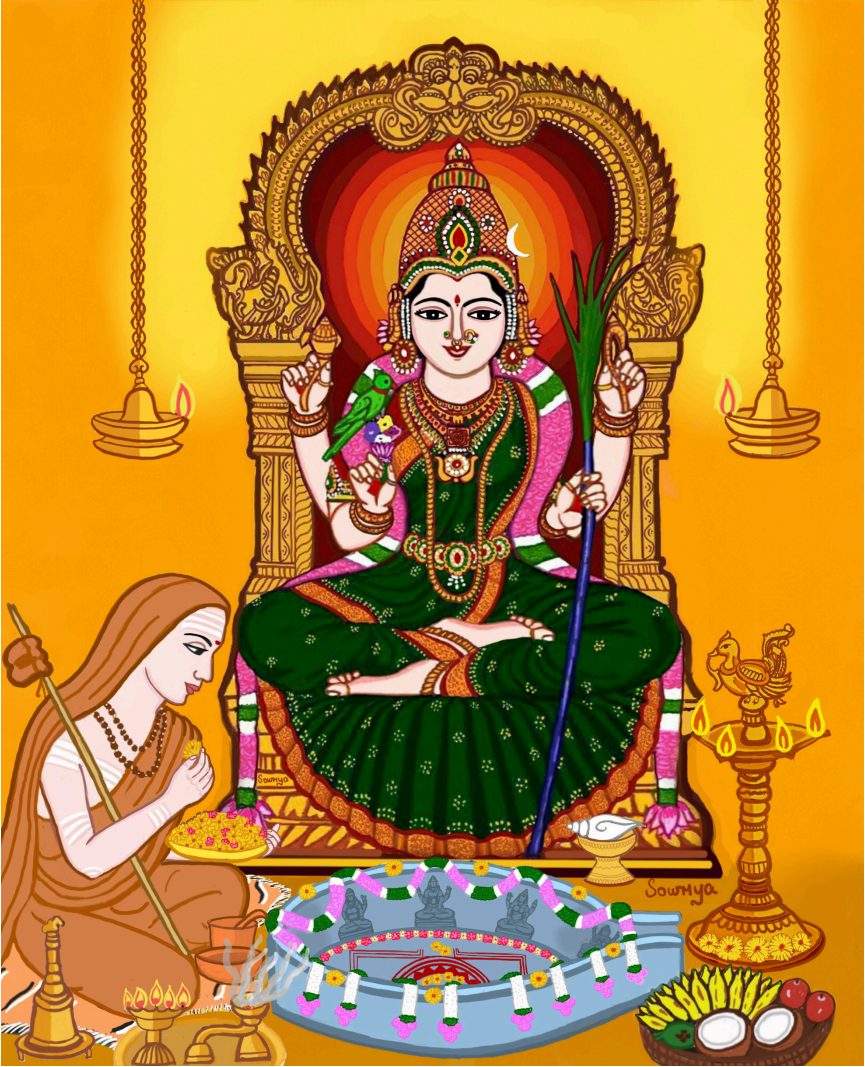


Rāmeśhvaram Śhāṅkara-maṭham

Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham Śhāṅkara Matam, Rāmeśhvaram is located right on the sea-shore at Agni tīrtham, at a short distance from the Ramanāthaswāmi Temple. On the banks of Agnitīrtha, a vimāna maṇḍapam over 50 feet in height houses the images of Śhrī śhāṅkara Bhagavatpāda and his śhiṣhyas. Around this are shrines of Hanumān and for the jyotirlingas.

Around the Ādi śhāṅkara vimāna, are representative sculptures depicting various great personalities of Veda, Purānas and itihāsa such as Janaka, Yājñavalkya, Raikva, vedāntis such as Śhrī Vāchaspati Miśhra and Śhrīmad Appayya Dikshitendra, Madhusudana Sarasvati, Sadāśhiva Brahmendra and bhaktas such as Tyāgarāja, Tulasidasa. Images depicting various illustrious Bharatīya women such as Avvaiyār and Bhāmatī are also depicted.

Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya installing Śhrīchakra at Kāñchī



Kāñchīpuram Kāmākṣhī and Śhrīchakra sthāpanam

Śhaṅkarāchārya arrived at Kāñchīpuram, one of the seven mokṣhapuris and the renowned pṛthvī kṣhetra. The people of Kāñchī, under the leadership of King Rājasena, offered a grand welcome to Śhaṅkarāchārya. The Āchārya stayed at the mukti maṇḍapa in the Viśhveśhvara temple, on the bank of the Sarvatīrtham tank for some time. He established a maṭham for Himself and his śhiṣhyas there.

Bhagavatpāda blessed King Rājasena and had Kāñchī city remodeled. The king reconstructed the three temples of Kāñchīpuram - the temples of Śhrīmad Ekāmranātha, Devi Kāmākṣhī and Śhrī Varadarāja. The main gopuras of all the temples in Kāñchī stand facing the temple of Kāmākṣhī. The processions of the temples are all routed around the main streets around the Kāmākṣhī temple. The entire city was remodelled to represent the Śhrīchakra.

Śhaṅkarāchārya installed and consecrated the śhrīchakra before Devi Kāmākṣhī and thereby secured her bounteous grace on devotees having her darshan. He also pacified the fierce nature of the Devi and secured her benevolent blessings for the devotees. The śhrīchakra today exists as drawn on a small stone of śhālagrāma. There are several sculptures of Śhaṅkarāchārya in the temples in Kāñchīpuram

Śhaṅkarāchārya also composed a stotra on Kāmākṣhī, embedding the first letters of the 15-syllabled mantra of the Devi.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Kāmākṣhī stotram

कल्पानोकह-पुष्प-जाल-विलसन्नीलालकां मातृकां
 कान्तां कञ्ज-दलेक्षणां कलि-मल-प्रध्वंसिनीं कालिकाम् ।
 काञ्ची-नूपुर-हार-दाम-सुभगां काञ्ची-पुरी-नायिकां
 कामाक्षीं करि-कुम्भ-सन्निभ-कुचां वन्दे महेश-प्रियाम् ॥१॥

**kalpānokaha-puṣṭpa-jāla-vilasannīlālakāṃ mātrkāṃ
 kāntāṃ kañja-dalekṣhaṇāṃ kali-mala-pradhvaṃsinīṃ kālikām ।
 kāñcī-nūpura-hāra-dāma-subhagāṃ kāñcī-purī-nāyikāṃ
 kāmākṣhīm kari-kumbha-sannibha-kučāṃ vande maheśha-priyām ॥1॥**

Kāmākṣhī stotram was first published in the journal of Sarasvati Mahāl library and each stanza begins with a mātrka akṣhara (one syllable of a mantra).

I prostrate before Kāmākṣhī, the dear one of Maheśha, who has Her dark black hair decorated by bunches of flowers from the celestial Kalpavṛkṣha. She is the Mother and has a lovely form. Her eyes are (beautiful) as the petals of a lotus. She destroys the impurity that is adharma. She is dark in colour. She is well-decorated by a golden girdle, anklets, pearl necklaces and garlands of flowers, who is the (only true) ruler of Kāñcīpura. Her breasts are (high) as the projections (on top) of an elephant('s head).

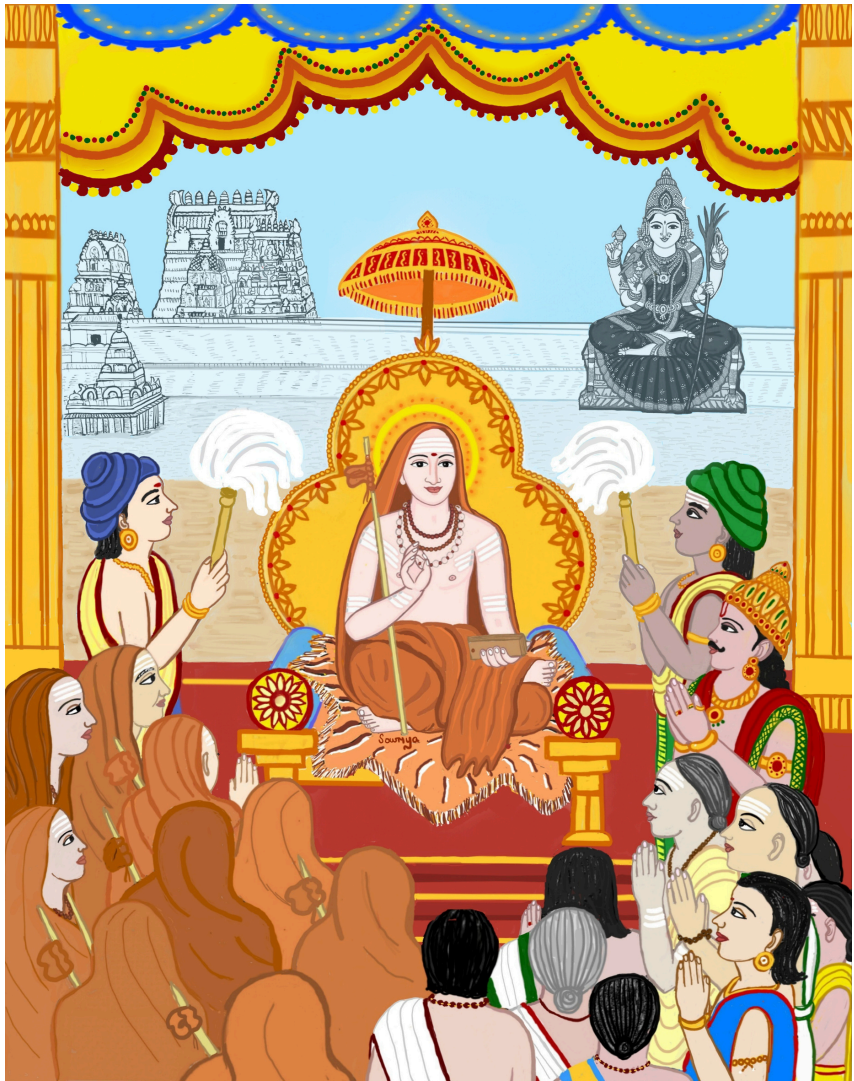
Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya's Sarvajñapīṭharohana at Kāñchī

Śhaṅkarāchārya ascended the Sarvajña pīṭha or the Throne of Omniscience at Kāñchīpuram. An asharīri voice (a divine voice) advised Sankarāchārya when he was about to ascend the pīṭha, that it would be proper for him to ascend after winning in debate, the scholars assembled there. A group of scholars who had come there from some villages of the Tāmraparṇī banks put some questions to Śhaṅkarāchārya. He answered them all and established the truth of Advaita. He won over Sarasvatī and answered her questions as well. Then he ascended the sarvajñapīṭha.

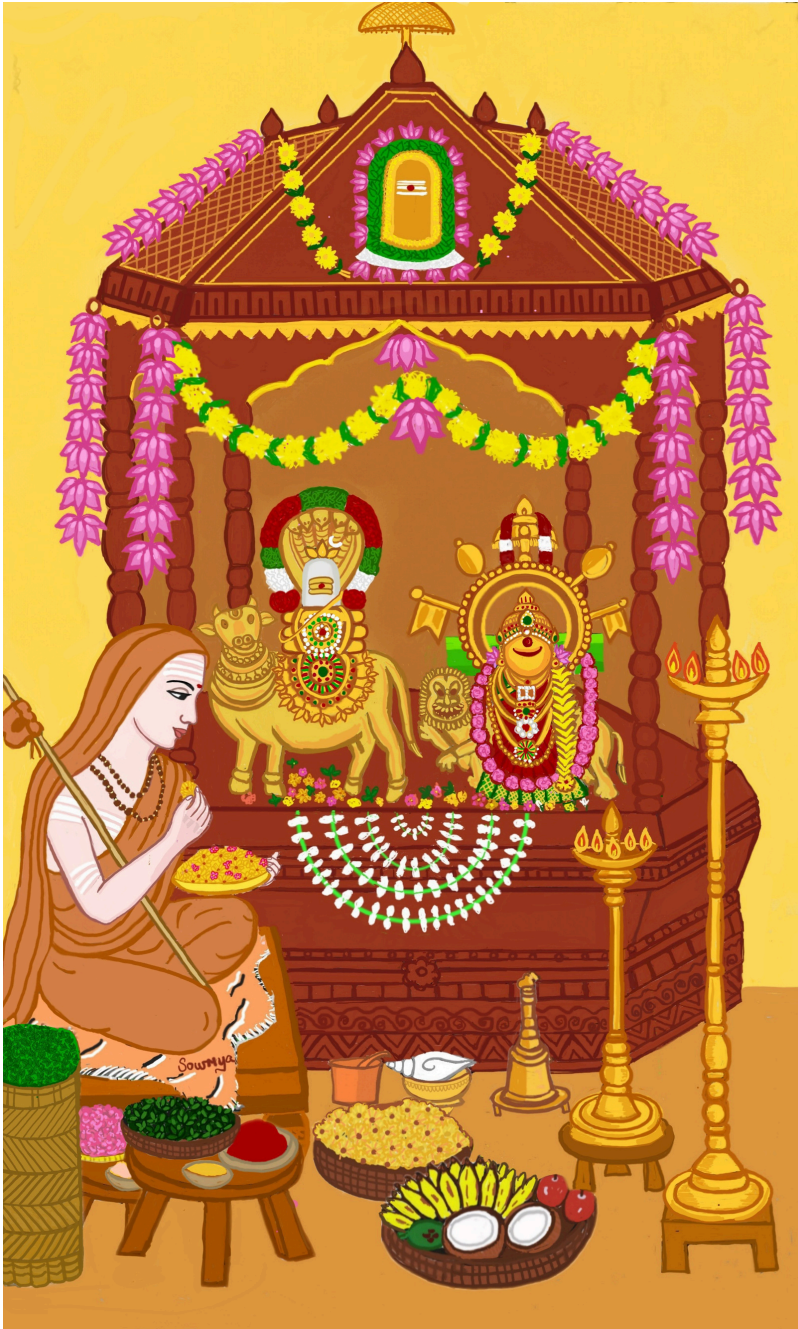
Among those who were defeated were a group of brāhmaṇas from the villages in the Tāmraparṇī area. A young boy accompanied by his father, challenged the Jagadguru to a debate and held him in debate for seven days. After seven days, he surrendered to the Āchārya and requested that he be accepted as a disciple. Śhaṅkarāchārya accepted him as a disciple and gave him sannyāsa with the name Sarvajñatmendra Sarasvatī. He appointed Sureśhvarāchārya as the guardian for the young boy and had him instruct Sarvajñātmā in the worship of the Yoga liṅga installed here.

It is this yogaliṅga known as Śhrī Chandramaulīśhvara that the Jagadgurus of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Mūlāmnāya Sarvajña Pīṭham worship with their own hands three times a day.

Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya's Sarvajñapīṭharohana
at Kāñchī



Chandramaulishvara Puja



Siddhi at Kāñchī

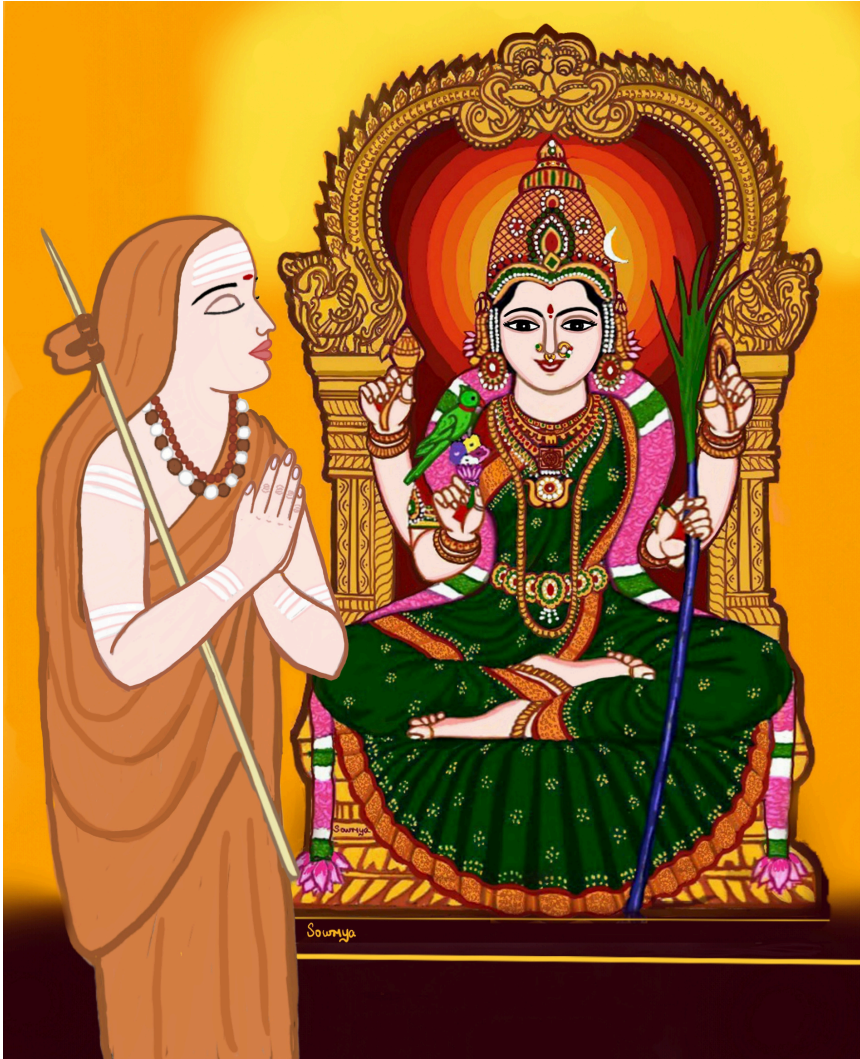
Śhaṅkara Bhagavatpādāchārya was now 32 years of age. His avatāra karyam or the purpose of his incarnation was complete. Kāñchīpuram is one of the seven Mokṣhapuris, a great Ghaṭikāsthāna (place of education) and an ancient city.

Desiring to leave for his own abode, sitting in the Mokṣhapuri of Kāñchī, Śhaṅkarāchārya absorbed his physical body into the subtle one. His presence remains at the all-pervading "chit" (consciousness) to this day. Śhrī Śhaṅkarāchārya's sannidhi exists near the sannidhi of Kāmākṣhī.

His successor Āchāryas continued the tradition of pūja to Chandramaulīśhvara. Sureśhvarāchārya was the second āchārya. Sarvajñatmendra Sarasvati was the third Āchārya of Śhrī Kāñchī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭham who took sannyāsa at a tender age. Hence Sureśhvarāchārya was given the role of guiding him and he too attained siddhi in Kāñchīpuram. An agraharam known as Maṇḍanamiśhra agrahāram exists in Kāñchīpuram named after his pūrvāśhrama name and references to descendants of his pūrvāśhrama family are found.

We are fortunate to have had in this line 70 Jagadgurus with the current Āchārya Śhrī Śhaṅkara Vijayendra Sarasvati Śhaṅkarāchārya Swāmigal.

Siddhi at Kāñchīpuram



The works of Śhaṅkarāchārya

Prasthānatrayī (Upaniṣhads, Brahmasūtras and Bhagavadgītā)

The principal texts of vedānta are the Upaniṣhads, Brahma sūtra and Bhagavadgītā. These three together are known as Prasthānatrayī. Śhaṅkarāchārya wrote profound but elegant bhāṣhyas or commentaries on them. These includes commentaries on the principal upaniṣhads , other upaniṣhads such as Nṛsimhatāpinī upaniṣhads, the commentary on the Maṇḍūkyakārikā of his paramaguru Gauḍapāda. There are many commentaries and sub-commentaries on these bhāṣhyas.

Prakaraṇagranthas and Upadeśhagranthas

He wrote short manuals or introductory works known as prakaraṇa granthas and upadeśha granthas. There are over thirty texts that belong to this category. Some of the upadeśha granthas are structured in the form of questions a śhiṣhya poses to a guru and the guru's clarifications.

These include texts such as Vivekachūḍāmaṇi, Sarva-vedānta-siddhānta-sangraha, Prabodha-sudhākarah, shorter texts like Laghuvākyavṛtti, Prauḍhānubhūti, Anātmā-śhrī-vigarhaṇam. In these, he clearly talks about the essentials such as following one's svadharma, śhiṣṭāchāra, satsangam, bhakti towards devata and guru, importance of ātmā jñāna, belief in the Veda and how these are stepping stones to aquire chittaśhuddhi which in turn enables internal wisdom to dawn.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Wisdom from Praśhnottararatnamālikā

Questions and answers have long served as a means of communicating knowledge in Bhārata. The disciples seek the wisdom of ṛṣhi Pippalāda in the Praśhnopaniṣhad and ask him a series of questions. In continuation of that traditional format, this is a short work of Śhaṅkarāchārya that provides little nuggets of wisdom.

भगवन् ! किं उपादेयम् ? Bhagavān! What is to be taken ?

गुरुवचनम् । The utterances of the Preceptor.

हेयमपि किम् ? And what is to be given up?

अकार्यम् । The forbidden act.

को गुरुः ? Who is a Preceptor ?

अधिगत तत्त्वः ।

शिष्यहिताय उद्यतः सततम् ।

One who has realized the truth and is ever striving for the good of the disciple.

He says dharma is the most beneficial and defines dharma as that which is followed in the family by elders. He also warns students that anabhyāsa or not practising what is learnt is jāḍyam or unintelligence

को धर्मः?

What is righteous?

अभिमतो यः शिष्टानां निजकुलीनानाम् ।

That which has been practised by the virtuous elders of one's family.

He also stresses the importance of satsanga and says that the company of the wise is as cool as the moon. From the values a student must have to the values a householder must have to universal common values such as satyam all the way upto developing vairāgya, Praśhnottararatnamālika has answers to dharmikas in various stages of life.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Wisdom from Prabodhasudhākaṛaḥ

Prabodha-sudhākaṛaḥ is a vedānta prakaraṇa grantha divided into 19 sections. The text outlines in a very clear manner both bhakti and jñāna. It deals with a variety of topics ranging from transitory nature of the body, control of the senses and the mind, the nature of advaita and prabodha (enlightenment). Among these are two very lucid and useful sections the dvidhābhakti prakaraṇam and the anugrahika prakaraṇam that talks of the divine anugraha of Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa. This text clearly enables us to understand that bhakti, karma , upāsana through tantra and mantra all ultimately lead towards jñāna. Bhagavatpāda explains how chittaśuddhi is an essential component and only in the pure mind will there be clear reflection. He says devotion is thus like a seed that produces this fruit of pure awareness.

चित्ते सत्त्वोत्पत्तौ तटिदिव बोधोदयो भवति ।

तर्ह्येव स स्थिरः स्याद्यदि चित्तं शुद्धिमुपयाति ॥ १६६ ॥

**chitte sattvotpattau taṭidiva bodhodayo bhavati ।
tarhyeva sa sthiraḥ syādyadi cittaṃ śuddhimupayāti ॥ 166 ॥**

When there is sattva (goodness) in the mind, awareness occurs like lightning. If the mind becomes pure, only then can awareness be steady. The internal organ of perception does not come pure without devotion to the feet of Kṛṣṇa. Like a piece of cloth, cleansed by the alkaline salt-mixed mud (or soap in today's context), the mind is cleansed by bhakti.

The nature of Bhagavatpāda's words are not only marked by clarity and intellect but accompanied by kindness. For in the next verse, he gets down to the level of simplest devotee and says: Bhakti to Hari is denoted in two ways - gross and subtle. At the beginning, it may be gross and from that subtlety may arise.

स्थूला सूक्ष्मा चेति द्वेधा हरिभक्तिरुद्दिष्टा ।

प्रारम्भे स्थूला स्यात्सूक्ष्मा तस्याः सकाशाच्च ॥ १७१ ॥

**sthūlā sūkṣmā ceti dvedhā haribhaktiruddiṣṭā ।
prārambhe sthūlā syātsūkṣmā tasyāḥ sakāśhācca ॥ 171 ॥**



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



The works of Śhaṅkarāchārya

Stotras

The minds of people may or may not have the ability to grasp and understand vedānta intellectually. However, to internalize these ideas and bring about change through experience takes a very long time.

To aid in mastery of the mind and help it gradually and firmly purify and fix it on the path, Śhaṅkarāchārya has composed many stotras short and long. Long stotras such as Śhiva-pādādi-keśhānta varṇana, Viṣṇu-padādi-keśhānta-varṇana, which extol the saḡuṇa form of the devata from toe to the head. In addition to stotras on Gaṇeśha, Subrahmanya, Viṣṇu and Mahālakṣhmī, Śhiva and Pārvatī there are also stotras on Narasimha, Rama and Kṛṣṇa the avataras.

As a parivrājakāchārya who travelled through most of the ancient 56 janapadas of Bhārata, his insights into the sacred geography of Bhārata can be imbibed through his compositions of stutis on Gaṅgā, Yamuna, Narmada, Kāśhī and Maṅikarṇikā.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



The works of Śhaṅkarāchārya

Tantra and Mantra śhāstra

(Lalita Trishati bhāṣhya, Prapañchasara Tantra, Saundaryalaharī)

Upaniṣhads speak of many forms of Upāsana. Some of these forms are accessible through Purāṇas, tantra and mantra. They are also means to do saguṇa upasana of the iṣṭa devatā. Lalita Trishati bhāṣhya Śhaṅkarāchārya has also written a short commentary on the Lalita Trishati a stotra on Lalita devi with her 15-syllabled mantra embedded in it. The commentary reflects Śhaṅkarāchārya's depiction of the Devi as the svarūpa of Brahmavidya. He mentions that the purpose of this is to easily communicate the essence to a person who is not able to read the various detailed glosses and it was written out of devotion to the feet of Lalitā.

Laghubhāṣhyas

He has written laghubhāṣhyas or smaller commentaries on shorter texts. These include the commentary on Āpastamba dharmasūtra - adhyātmāpaṭalam.

Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa wrote the Brahmaśūtra and the comprehensive Mahābhārata thus covering the domains of both dharma and brahma. Śhaṅkarāchārya chose to illuminate three specific gems from Mahābhārata namely - Bhagavadgita, Viṣṇu Sahasranāma and Sanatsujātiya and wrote commentaries on them.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Laghu bhāṣhyas

Sanatsujātīya bhāṣhya

Mahābhārata contains the section Viduraniti where Vidura teaches dharma. Along the course of it, he mentions Brahavidya. Dhṛtarāṣṭra wishes to know about Brahavidya (knowledge about brahman - its nature etc). Vidura says that Sanatsujāta, one of Brahma's mind-born son in Brahmaloaka is the one qualified to expound on Brahavidya. He then invokes Sanatsujāta who comes to teach the king. The teaching Sanatsujāta imparts to Dhṛtarāṣṭra is called Sanatsujātīya. Śhaṅkarāchārya has written a commentary on the four adhyāyas of Sanatsujātīya that speak of the primacy of jñāna. In the introduction, he says even after anuṣṭhānam of many laukika and vaidika karmas, without jñāna, the cycle of birth and death does not end. Bhagavatpāda says that the only way to learn this is to approach a guru after acquiring qualities such as śhama, and dama. Sanatsujātīya summarizes how the knowledge of realization, "aham brahmāsmi" dawns which is the only way to end this cycle.

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma bhāṣhya

Viṣṇu Sahasranāma begins with the question of Yudhiṣṭhira to Bhīṣma who then reveals the 1000 names of Viṣṇu. The Viṣṇu Sahasranāma bhāṣhya begins with an invocation to Bhagavān Kṛṣṇa and Bhagavān Veda Vyāsa. Here. Śhaṅkarāchārya starts off with an introduction with profuse quotations from śhṛuti, smṛti, purāṇas such as Viṣṇu purāṇa doing justice to his fame as "śhṛuti-smṛti-purāṇānām ālayam". He establishes the goal of bhakti, nāma and japa through the words of devotees such as Prahlāda and then talks of the nature of how this bhakti should be with advaita bhāva. Each nāma is commented upon exquisitely, some given sparkling and unique interpretations to avoid any repetition of meanings.



Śhaṅkaropadeśharatnam



Śhaṅkarāchārya and tantra and mantra śhāstra

The connection between Śhaṅkarāchārya's philosophy and the practices of yoga, tantra, and mantra is often misunderstood. References to yoga and tantra can be found in works such as Yogatārāvali and Aparokṣhānubhūti, which detail various techniques for meditation and self-realization. Sculptures of Śhaṅkarāchārya in Kāñchīpuram depict him as a yogi, further highlighting his connection to these practices. Similarly, we see both in the doctrinal aspects as well as the practical aspects, this relationship of tantra and mantra within śhaṅkara sampradāya.

Vidyāraṇya Swāmīgal in Śhrīvidyārṇava tantra worships Śhaṅkarāchārya as one of the teachers of the tantra paramparā and says “Tantra as a path is not outside of śhānkara sampradāya”. Likewise, Bhāskararāyamakhī the great commentator of Śhrī Lalita Sahasranāma also draws from varied sources including the purāṇas and reverentially talks of Bhagavatpāda. Many of the sādhanas of mantraśhāstra are elaborated by Śhaṅkarāchārya in the Prapañchasāra. All traditional āchāryas and knowers of sampradāya agree that it is a work of Śhaṅkarāchārya. References in the Śhaṅkaracharitam such as his chanting the Vanadurga mantra to make Sarasvatī stay in bhūloka also corroborates his mantrasiddhi. The installation of numerous yantras across temples in Bhārata deśha, the tradition of the śhrīchakra in the ear ornaments of Akhilāṇḍeśhvarī, making benign the fierce forms of devatas - done for the welfare of the people in the region (lokasangraha) throw light on this. Saundaryalaharī is as much mantra śhāstra, when done as a sādhana. Similarly, many of his stotras contain allusions to mantras - His Kāmākṣhī stotram contains the initial syllables of the 15-lettered pañchadaśhī mantra. Accounts of his charitam also say that he consecrated and drew the śhrīchakram in Kāmākṣhī temple with his own hands (svayam ālikhat). We also see evidence of this sādhana in the prevalent practices of many sannyāsīs in the Śhaṅkara sampradāya and they focus both on paramārtha tattva, upāsana and lokasaṅgraha.



Śhāṅkara kṣhetra darśhanam



Other kṣhetras associated with Śhāṅkarāchārya

Śhāṅkarāchārya's digvijayam also includes places such as Mathura, Ayodhya, Kurukṣhetra, Haridwār, Kāmarūpa and Ujjain as per various sources.



Kurukṣhetra is an ancient place revered by all Sanātānīs. With the blessings of Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Saraswathi Śhāṅkarāchārya Swamiji, a shrine for Jagadguru Ādi Śhāṅkarāchārya has been established in this town at Jyotisar, where Bhagavān Śhrī Kṛṣṇa gave gītōpadeśha to Arjuna.



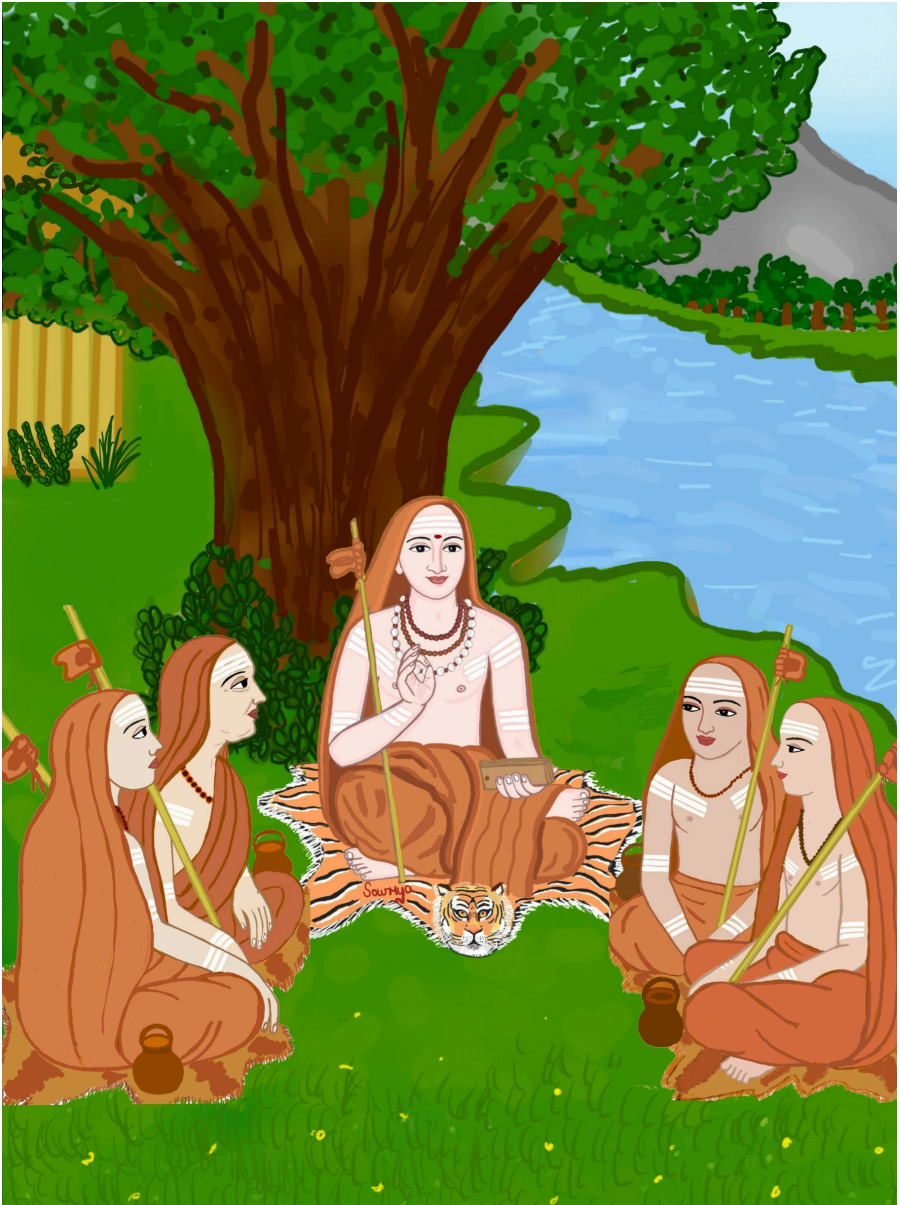
Ayodhya



Haridwar

It is noteworthy to recall the services of Jagadguru Śhrī Jayendra Saraswathi Śhāṅkarāchārya Swamiji, who has established a vigraha, pāduka maṇḍapa or commemorative shrine for Jagadguru Ādi Śhāṅkarāchārya in every place in Bhāratam that the Jagadguru has set foot.

Śhaṅkarāchārya and Shishyas



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