



The Date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya and Emergence of Śaivism as a Popular Religion in South India

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Abstract

The date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has been one of the unsolved problems of Indian Philosophy. He is generally accepted to have lived from 788 to 820 CE and is thus assigned from the end of the eighth century to the beginning of the ninth century. So far scholars who have worked on this problem have consulted his hagiographies and his works to determine his date. However, they have not studied the date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya by placing him in the context of the development of religion in South India. Nor have they consulted South Indian sources, especially Tamil texts, to see if there are any references to his philosophy. In this paper, I study the problem of the date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya by consulting Tamil sources and the hitherto less consulted epic *Śivarahasya*. I also connect his date with the emergence of Śaivism as a popular religion in South India. Based on my study, I place Ādi Śaṅkarācārya in the fifth century BCE and as a result, I emphasize the importance of redating Hindu scriptures, especially the *Vedas*, as Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is the earliest commentator.

Keywords Śaṅkara · Date · Advaita Vedānta · Śaivism · Tamil · South India

The date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya has been one of the unsolved problems of Indian Philosophy. So far the following dates have been proposed:

- (1) 788–820 CE: This date was proposed by Pathak in 1882 (Mayeda, 1992: 3). This is accepted by the lineage of Śaṅkarācāryas at Śringerī. According to an old

Dedication: This article which is a result of twenty-seven years of research is dedicated to Sri. K. Sundararaman and Srimati. Aruna Sankaran for their dedicated services towards the preservation and propagation of Advaita Vedānta of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.

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- tradition prevalent in Śringerī, however, Śaṅkara is assigned to 1 BCE (Aiyer & Sastri, 1992: 53).
- (2) 700–750 CE: This date was proposed by Hajime Nakamura in 1950. This is accepted by Karl Potter (Bader, 2000: 18), Renou, and D. H. H. Ingalls (Mayeda, 1992: 3).
 - (3) 650–800 CE: This date was proposed by Tilmam Vetter (Bader, 2000: 19).
 - (4) 509–477 BCE: This date is accepted by the lineage of Śaṅkarācāryas at Kāñcī (Aiyer & Sastri, 1992: 143).
 - (5) 507–475 BCE: This date is accepted by the lineage of Śaṅkarācāryas at Purī <https://govardhanpeeth.org/en/about-us-en/adi-shankaracharya>.
 - (6) 471 BCE: This date is accepted by the lineage of Śaṅkarācāryas at Dvārka (Sastri, 1971: 236). Bader (2000: 19) mentions that the Dvārka Śaṅkarācāryas accept 509 BCE.

There is uncertainty not only about the date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, referred to hereafter as Śaṅkara, but about his activities as well. More than three hundred works in various genres, the establishment of *maṭhas* in various parts of the country, and the organization of various sects of Hinduism are all attributed to him. It is clear that the activities of various persons who are generally referred to as Śaṅkarācāryas have been attributed to one person who has been unanimously accepted to have lived for only up to thirty-two years from the end of the eighth century to the beginning of the ninth century, i.e., from 788 to 820 CE. His major compositions are his commentaries on the *prasthānatraya*—ten *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtras*, and the *Bhagavadgītā*—and on the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda. Through these commentaries, Śaṅkara establishes Vedāntic Absolutism. Sengaku Mayeda thinks that Śaṅkara should be defined as the author of *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, and that it should be used as the yardstick against which to measure the authenticity of other works ascribed to him. Besides the commentaries on the ten *Upaniṣads* including the *Gauḍapādakārikās*, commentary on the *Adhyātmapaṭala* of *Āpastambadharmasūtra*, *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivarāṇa*, and *Upadeśasāhasrī* are attributed to Śaṅkara (Mayeda, 1992: 6). In this research, I confine Śaṅkara to the authorship of commentaries on the ten *Upaniṣads* of *Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Tattirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Brahmasūtras*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda.

Many hagiographies deal with the life of Śaṅkara (Sarasvati, 1982: 1–13). These hagiographies are compilations of oral traditions and were written centuries after Śaṅkara. The most popular hagiography is the work *Śaṅkaradigvijaya* by Mādhava, dated between the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries (Bader, 2000: 55). Thus to decide the date of Śaṅkara, scholars have to rely upon various other methods of research. While doing so, scholars have always gone through the various works ascribed to Śaṅkara and have compared his works with the development of Buddhism. So far, scholars have not analyzed Śaṅkara by placing him in the context of the development of religion and philosophy in South India; likewise, scholars have not consulted Tamiḷ sources to check if there are any references to the Advaita philosophy. In my discussion on the date of Śaṅkara, I primarily depend upon these two latter methods.

Tamiḷ has a group of preserved ancient texts called the *Caṅkam* literature (pronounced *Saṅgam*). The word *Caṅkam* refers to the assembly of scholars and

according to tradition, there were three such *Caṅkams*, the first, middle, and the last, that convened at Maturai, Kapāṭapuram (near Maturai), and northern Maturai. The works composed by poets, presented at and eventually accepted at these academies are referred to as *Caṅkam* texts. These are the oldest surviving literature in Tamil. These texts have been dated from 1 BCE to 2 CE (Zvelebil, 1973: 7; Nagaswamy, 2019: 90). These poems have been compiled later. These *Caṅkam* texts are eighteen in number: 1. *Tirumurukārruppaṭai*; 2. *Porunarārruppaṭai*; 3. *Cirupānārruppaṭai*; 4. *Perumpānārruppaṭai*; 5. *Mullaippāṭṭu*; 6. *Maturaikkāñci*; 7. *Neṭunalvātai*; 8. *Kuṟiñcippāṭṭu*; 9. *Paṭṭiṇappālai*; 10. *Malaipaṭukaṭām*; 11. *Narrinai*; 12. *Kuṟuntokai*; 13. *Aiṅkuṟunūru*; 14. *Paṭiṟruppattu*; 15. *Paripāṭal*; 16. *Kalittokai*; 17. *Akanāñṇūru*; and 18. *Puṟanāñṇūru* (Suppiramanian, 2010). *Caṅkam* texts deal with two kinds of genres: *akam* and *puṟam*. *Akam* means inside, mind, sexual pleasure, earth, self, egotism, and home. *Akam* poems deal with love and separation. *Puṟam* means outside, extraneous, body, village or town in agricultural tract and fortification (Tamil Lexicon, 1924–1936). *Puṟam* poems deal with war, heroism, detachment, the transience of worldly life and death. Tamils divide landscapes into five types: mountains, forest and pasture, cultivated countryside, seashore, and wasteland. These are respectively called *kuriñci*, *mullai*, *marutam*, *neital*, and *pālai*. The poems are also composed in the background of a particular landscape, varying according to the themes. This is called *tiṇai*. The themes for the five *tiṇais* pertaining to *akam* are lovers' union, patient waiting, lovers' unfaithfulness, anxious waiting, and elopement or separation. The presiding deities for these five *tiṇais* are Murukaṅ, Māyoṅ (Viṣṇu), Intiraṅ (Indra), Varuṅ (Varuṇa) and Korraṅvai (Kālī) (Zvelebil, 1973: 100). The Tamil grammatical text *Tolkāppiyam*, dated to 1 CE, is also classified as a *Caṅkam* text.

Tamil has five major *kāvya*s (*kāppiyam*), and of these, *Cilappatikāram* and *Maṇimēkalai*, the twin epics, are important. The former is authored by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ a Jain, and the latter by Cāttaṅār a Buddhist. *Cilappatikāram* is the story of the courageous Kaṅṅaki who proves in the court of the Pāṅṅiya king that her husband Kōvalaṅ who was executed as a criminal for stealing the queen's anklet, is actually innocent and that Kōvalaṅ was trying to sell her anklet instead to start his new business. The daughter of Kōvalaṅ and the dancer Mātavi, Maṇimēkalai, is the heroine of the latter, and the epic deals with the trials and meritorious deeds of this Buddhist nun.

Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava poets enriched Tamil literature through their poems filled with *bhakti*. The Śaiva saints, called Nāyaṅārs, are sixty-three in number, including three women, Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār, Maṅkaiyarkkaraciṅār, and Icaiṅāṅiyār. Of the Śaiva saints Tiruñāṅacampantar (Campantar in short), Appar, Cuntarar, and Māṅikkavācakar are important. Kāraikkāl Ammaiṅār is among the twenty-seven Nāyaṅārs who composed poems. The poems have been compiled by Nampī Āṅṅṅar Nampī and have been grouped into eleven books. The compositions of Campantar occupy the first three books, those of Appar the next three, those of Cuntarar the seventh, and those of Māṅikkavācakar the eighth. The ninth and the eleventh are collections of various poets, and the tenth is the philosophical text *Tirumanṭiram* by Tirumūlar. The hagiography of the Nāyaṅārs—*Tiruttoṅṅarpuṟāṅam* popularly known as *Periyapurāṅam*—by Cēkkiḷār was added as the twelfth (Cekkilar, 1975). These twelve books are called the *Tirumuṟais*. The total hymns available today amount to 937 consisting of 18, 497 verses (Vaittiyanadan, 1995: 7, 8). The compositions of Campantar, Appar, and

Cuntarar are popularly referred to as *Tēvāram*. Vaiṣṇava saints, called Āḷvārs are twelve in number including one woman saint Āṅṅāḷ, and their poems consisting of four thousand verses are referred to as *Nālāyirativyapirapantam*.

Śivarahasya is an understudied epic consisting of more than one lakh verse. The epic deals with the development of Śaiva philosophy and *bhakti* and the lives of Śiva devotees over various centuries. This huge epic could not have come from the pen of a single author. The authors are anonymous. The *Śivarahasya* has twelve books (*amśas*) (*Śivarahasyam*, 1983, 1992, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009). In the eighth chapter of the first *amśa* itself, the text clearly states that it is an *itihāsa* and maintains that position throughout. A few manuscripts of the epic describe it as a portion of the *Himavat Kāṇḍa* of the *Skanda Mahā Purāṇa* (Sastri, 1971: 285). The ninth *amśa* gives a brief description of Śaṅkara, which is popularly consulted by scholars. It also contains the hagiography of the sixty-three Nāyaṅars much ahead of the popular Cēkkiḷār's *Periyapurāṇam* in Tamil. The twelfth *amśa* ends with the marriage of Śiva and Pārvaṭī and the birth of Kumāra and his exploits. *Śivarahasya* is quoted as an authority in the dharmaśāstric work *Nirṇaya-sindhu* (Veezhinathan, 1971: iv).

The Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja is a theistic philosophy formulated against the Absolutism of Śaṅkara. Rāmānuja is assigned to the eleventh century. Śaṅkara's Advaita should have dominated the Indian philosophical scene for quite a few centuries before Rāmānuja postulated his Viśiṣṭādvaita against Śaṅkara Advaita. Hence Śaṅkara could not have lived just two centuries before Rāmānuja. K.A.N. Sastri (Sastri, 1955: 630–631) mentions a Vaiṣṇava institution in the period of Rajendra I (1012–1044 CE) that taught Viśiṣṭādvaita as a subject of study long before the great *bhāṣya* of Rāmānuja came into existence. Since Viśiṣṭādvaita had become a prominent Vedānta by the eleventh century, it is too late to place Śaṅkara in the late eighth century and at the beginning of the ninth century.

Āṛāyirappaṭi Kuruparamparāprapāvam of Piṅṇaḷakiya Perumāljiyar (Perumaljiyar, 1927), which is the hagiography of the Vaiṣṇava saints beginning with the Āḷvārs, is dated to the thirteenth century (Ramanujam, 1973: 49) and the language of this text is Maṇipravāḷa, which is a hybrid of Sanskrit and Tamil. The portion of the text containing the hagiography of the Āḷvārs contains verses in Sanskrit followed by the prose explanation in Maṇipravāḷa and the hagiography of others beginning from Nātamuṇi—the compiler of the hymns—is in Maṇipravāḷa. While referring to the woman saint Āṅṅāḷ, called Godā in Sanskrit, who had the practice of wearing the garland before offering it to god, the text mentions

*devasyamahīṣṇīndiviyāmādaugodāmupāsmahel
yanmaulimālikāmprītyā svīkarotisvayāmprabhuḥll*

Translation: We first worship the divine Godā, the queen of the lord. The lord in turn accepts the garland she has worn on her head with affection. [Translation mine].

The text mentions in the present tense that the lord accepts the garland worn by her (*svīkaroti*) and mentions that we salute Godā first. This means that these Sanskrit verses dealing with the hagiography of the Āḷvārs should have been composed during the time of Āṅṅāḷ starting from her. Later on, these verses should have been incorporated into the larger text and the text should have gradually evolved until the thirteenth century taking materials from other texts. Given that Āḷvārs and

Nāyaṅars were contemporaries there is no reason to hold that the Vaiṣṇavas were lagging when the Śaivas were aggressively developing their system. The first full-fledged hagiographies of both the Āḷvārs and the Nāyaṅars were written in Sanskrit so that the knowledge could spread beyond the Tamiḷ region. The very fact that the hagiography of the Āḷvārs has started appearing shows the well-established Vaiṣṇavism. In his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* Śāṅkara devotes a whole *adhikaraṇa*, the *utpatyasambhavādhikaraṇa* (2. 2. 8. 42–45), to criticize the Vaiṣṇava Bhāgavatas and this shows that they were a very popular sect at that time. Śāṅkara refutes the *Bhāgavata mata* and not the popular Vaiṣṇavism. Hence he cannot be placed in the ninth century.

Scholars date the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, which combines *bhakti* with Advaita Vedānta to the ninth century. Given that Advaita Vedānta is absolutism, it should have taken a considerable number of centuries for the fusion of Advaita Vedānta and *bhakti* to take place. Hence Śāṅkara could not have lived at the same time as the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

A study of Śāṅkara's commentaries on the *prasthānatraya* reveals that his philosophy is Vedāntic Absolutism, revolving around the Brahman of the *Upaniṣads*. He gives importance to knowledge (*jñāna*) as the means to liberation and stresses the importance of asceticism. Ādi Śāṅkarācārya's main rivals were the Sāṅkhyas, who hold that the insentient matter (*pradhāna*) is the independent cause of the world. Much of his effort is directed at establishing an absolute, intelligent, and conscious Brahman as the cause of the universe as against the insentient *pradhāna* of the Sāṅkhyas. *Bhakti* is possible only when god the intelligent principle is accepted. Because of this, we find a suppressed position of *bhakti* in his works. In most of the places in his *Gītābhāṣya*, he does not elaborate on *bhakti* at all.

788–820 CE is a period in which *bhakti* has been fully established. The *bhakti* tradition in Tamiḷ traces its roots to the *Caṅkam* texts dated from 1 BCE to 2 CE and has its fullest development by the Nāyaṅars and Āḷvārs who are generally said to have lived between the fifth and the ninth centuries. The end of the eighth century and early ninth century is a period in which *bhakti* has been well established as a means to liberation pushing *jñāna* to the background. It is not possible that Śāṅkara proposed his theory, in which he gives a low position to *bhakti* in opposition to *jñāna*, in a *bhakti* period. If he had done so, he would have been a failure. Śāṅkara, however, was a tremendous success. Thus he could not have lived from 788 to 820 CE. Moreover, during the times of Śāṅkara, the Vedic religion faced a lot of troubles and Śāṅkara is considered responsible for the revival of the Vedic religion.

Campantar, the Śaiva saint and poet, was a brahmin who lived for sixteen years and is assigned between 650 and 670 CE (Nagaswamy, 2019: 171). He owes his poetic skill to the milk of the goddess which he is said to have drunk at the age of three. 385 of his hymns consisting of 4169 verses are extant (Natarajan, 2016a: 2). Defeating the Jains in arguments, and performing many miracles, including bringing back to life a girl, Pūmpāvai, from her ashes, he merges into the *śivajyoti* immediately after his marriage. Along with him, his wife, his devotees, those who came to his marriage, those who served him, and even those who decorated him for his wedding merge into the *śivajyoti* along with their “wives.” Thus this is an instance of *sarvamukti* given by Campantar without any discrimination whatsoever. In short,

people got *mokṣa* as a return gift for attending the wedding of Campantar. If Śaṅkara had proposed his philosophy in which he gives importance to asceticism, after this miracle of Campantar, he would not have been a success.

In his poems, Campantar portrays the society in which Vedic sacrifices flourished and brahmins who were well versed in the *Vedas* performed the sacrifices. Than Campantar, what is striking is the praise of Vedic sacrifices, brahmins, and Śiva as a personification of *Vedas* by Appar or Tirunāvukkaracar who was a *śūdra* (Tamiḷ *vēḷālar*) by birth. Campantar and Appar were contemporaries and the latter is said to have lived for eighty years and is assigned from 590 to 670 CE (Nagaswamy, 2019:171). From the poems of these two saints, it is clear that in the sixth and seventh centuries, Vedic religion had permeated every stratum of society and had flourished, and brahmins were held in very high esteem. So Śaṅkara who is considered responsible for the resurgence of the Vedic religion could not have lived after Campantar and Appar.

Śaṅkara under the *Brahmasūtra patyurasāmañjasyāt* (2. 2. 7. 37) mentions that those schools of thought including the Māheśvaras are contrary to the *Vedas*. This is quite different from the representation of Śaivism as a Vedic religion in the hymns of Campantar and Appar. While Campantar engaged in debate with the Jains at Maturai, one of the trials was to cast the poems of both the parties in the river, and the author of the poem that swam across the tide was declared the winner. In this trial, Campantar composed the poem beginning with the words *vālka antaṅgar* (3. 54). The meaning of the first verse in this popular decade can be briefly explained as follows: Long live the brahmins, long live the *devas*, long live the cows, may rain shower, may the king prosper, may the wicked perish, may the name of Hara fill the world and may the world be free from misery. This is very similar to the Vedic prayer chanted even today beginning with *svasti prajābhyaḥ*. Thus by the time of Campantar Śaivism had developed into a Vedic religion contrary to its description by Śaṅkara. Hence Śaṅkara could not have lived after Campantar.

Tirumūlar, the author of *Tirumantiram*, is dated to 5 CE. In *Tirumantiram* he praises the Vedāntic school and the Vedic way of life. He praises the brahmins who chant the *gāyatrī mantra* and reach god by pursuing Vētānta (1. 12, verses 225 and 226). He mentions that the Vētāntins (*vētāntaṅ kaṅṭōr*) realize *piramam* (Brahman) (5. 3, verse 1435) (Natarajan, 1991). Thus by the time of Tirumūlar Vedānta had become a well-established and popular school. Likewise, the poems of Kāraikkāl Ammaiḷ (5 CE) such as *Tiruirāṅṅai Maṅimālai* and *Arputa Tiruvantāti* (Natarajan, 2016b) are filled with themes such as detachment and impermanence of the world. In verse 81 of the latter, she speaks of the annihilation of the *āgami* and *sañcita karmas*. These show a strong Vedāntic environment during 5 CE. It is true that there existed pre-Śaṅkara Advaitins such as Kāśakṛtsna. The rich Vedāntic environment portrayed in the poems of Tirumūlar and Kāraikkāl Ammaiḷ shows that the Indian philosophical scene should have been dominated by a strong personality like Śaṅkara rather than his other predecessors whose works are not even extant. Hence Śaṅkara could not be placed in the fifth century CE.

While describing the various religious faiths at that time, the *Śukhamahimnastotra* in the fourth *aṃśa* of the epic *Śivarahasya* (4. 20. 43) describes,

*kecinmuṇḍāḥ kuṭilajaṭilāścakrataptāstathānye nagnā bauddhāḥ śramaṇanicayās
tuṅgaliṅgam vahantaḥ
viprā varṇāśramavarabharā hīmsayā svargakāmāḥ kāmārātau vimukhaḥṛdayā
jñānahīnā bhramanti*

Translation: Some are of shaven heads, some have matted hair, some others brand their bodies with *cakra*, some are naked, some are Buddhists, some belong to the assembly of the Jains, some carry the *liṅga* (on their heads), and some brahmins who are attached to *varṇa* and *āśrama* classifications are desirous of reaching heaven by sacrificing animals. All these people have turned their minds away from the enemy of Kāma, and wander without knowledge. [Translation mine].

This verse clearly describes the followers of various schools. The description of those who branded their bodies with *cakra* refers to Vaiṣṇavas and those of shaven heads may be interpreted as referring to ascetics apart from Buddhists and Jains, and probably the Vedāntins.

Maturaikkāñci (lines 468–474), a *Caṅkam* text, mentions the Advaitic way of *jīvanmukti* as practiced by the brahmins. It praises that the brahmins recited the four *Vedas* comprehending their meaning. They followed the Vedic way of life, followed the path of *dharma*, and experienced *mukti* here itself (*uyarnilai ulakam ivaiṅṅuru eytum*). They were exemplary in character and loved everyone. Hence in the period between 1 BCE and 2 CE, the Advaitic way of attaining *jīvanmukti* had become very popular.

Nagaswamy points out that poem 18 of the *Caṅkam* text *Puranāṅṅuru* sung by the poet Kuṭapulaviyaṅār in praise of the Pāṇṭiya king Neṭuñceḷiyaṅ is a translation of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* passage 3, 7–9 beginning with *annaṁ na nindyāt* (Nagaswamy, 2019: 29–38). Nagaswamy further mentions that this is the earliest translation of *Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhṛguvallī* in any regional language. This shows how the Vedic religion had permeated every stratum of society and had amalgamated into the Tamiḷ language during the *Caṅkam* period. Nagaswamy cites *Puranāṅṅuru* verse 166 sung by poet Āvūr Mūlam Kiḷār, who sings the praise of a brahmin, Viṅṇantāyaṅ (Viṣṇudāsa), of the Cōḷa country (*cōḷanāṭṭu pūñcārrup pārppāṅ kauṇiyaṅ*) of *kaunḍiṅya gotra*. The poet praises the brahmin as belonging to a scholarly family of Caturvedis, who performed twenty-one kinds of Vedic sacrifices consisting of seven *soma yajñas*, seven *havir yajñas*, and seven *pāka yajñas*. He further mentions that the ancestors of Viṅṇantāyaṅ studied non-Vedic schools and defeated their falsehood by performing these twenty-one kinds of Vedic sacrifices expounding proper arguments through 21 stages of logic (Nagaswamy, 2019: 24–29). Likewise, poem 367 of *Puranāṅṅuru* sung by poetess Auvaiyār gives a graphic description of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice performed by the Cōḷa king Perunaṅkiḷi and which was attended by the Cēra king Māriveṅkō and the Pāṇṭiya king Ukkirap Peruvaḷuti. She praises the kings for gifting the brahmins abundantly and for witnessing their daily performance of the three-fold fire sacrifices (Nagaswamy, 2019: 289–290). Thus, it is clear that in the *Caṅkam* period, the Vedic religion was flourishing and was patronized by the kings.

The *Caṅkam* texts do not use any specific word for an ascetic and they are referred to as brahmins (*antaṅar*, *pārppaṅar*). While commenting on *Mullaippāṭṭu* (lines 37–43) Somasundaranar identifies four references to ascetics in the *Caṅkam*

texts: *Mullaippāṭṭu* (37–43 *karroyt tuṭutta*), *Tolkāppiyam* (*mara*, 20 *ṅūlē karakam*), *Kalittokai* (9 *erittaru katirtānki*), and *Kuṟuntokai* 156 (Somasundaranar, 2008). Of these, the first three describe the ascetics as having three staffs (*mukkōl*). These descriptions match Vaiṣṇava ascetics. Ascetics in the Śāṅkara tradition hold a single staff. *Kuṟuntokai* 156 composed by Pāṇṭiyāṅ Ḙṅāṭinetuṅkannaṅ refers to an ascetic with a single staff. The full text is as follows:

pārppaṅa makaṅē! pārppaṅa makaṅē!
cempū murukkiṅ nalnār kaḷaintu,
taṅṭoṭu piṭitta tāḷkamaṅ talattup
paṭiva uṅṭip pārppaṅa makaṅē!
eḷutāk karpiṅ niṅco luḷḷum
pirintōrp puṅarkkum paṅpiṅ
maruntum uṅṭō? mayalō ituvē.

Translation: Oh, son of a brahmin! Oh, son of a brahmin! Having removed the bark of the *murukku* tree (Butea Frondosa, Tamil *puraca*, Sanskrit *palāśa*) consisting of red flowers, you are holding the stem as a staff. With a water jug (*kamaṅṭala*), you observed a fast and had your meal. Do your *Vedas* which are not written and only recited prescribe any medicine for unifying lovers in separation? Or is this a state worth decrying? [Translation mine].

The cited text's underlying theme (*tiṅai*) is *kuriṅci*, union of lovers. While interpreting this theme in philosophy as union of self with god, the ascetic refers to detachment (*vairāgya*) which is required for such a union.

The above-mentioned passage from *Kuṟuntokai* requires some analysis. A *brahmacārī* (Vedic student) should wear a deerskin and a girdle (*mekhalā*), should offer fuel sticks (*samidh*) into the fire, should carry a staff (*daṅḍa*), and should beg and lead a life of hard work and restraint. Most of the *Dharmasūtras* mention that the staff for a brahmin is *palāśa* (Kane, 1941a: 270, 279). At the same time, this verse from *Kuṟuntokai* mentions that the person carries a *kamaṅṭala* (Sanskrit *kamaṅḍala*) and has observed a fast. *Kamaṅḍala* is the sign of an ascetic and according to the *Dharmasūtras*, a *brahmacārī* can eat an unlimited quantity of food. A staff, begging and a life of hard work and restraint are common to both a *brahmacārī* and an ascetic and hence it is easy for a *brahmacārī* to espouse asceticism. Thus this passage from *Kuṟuntokai* can be cited as referring to a brahmin celibate who has recently taken up asceticism and is holding a single staff (*ekadaṅḍasannyāsī*). The *Dharmasūtras* I refer to later on in this paper prescribe bamboo staff for ascetics. This passage from *Kuṟuntokai* gives the additional information that *palāśa* too had been used for the staff by ascetics.

The *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini is a Sanskrit grammatical treatise in the form of aphorisms (*sūtras*). Pāṇini's grammar is based on fourteen *māheśvara sūtras* that emanated from the drum of Śiva. A number of grammarians commented upon the *sūtras* of Pāṇini. Their works are called *Vārtikas*. Patañjali in his *Mahābhāṣya* commented upon the *sūtras* of Pāṇini and also on the *Vārtikas*. Śāṅkara argues against the concept of *sphoṭa* arising from the word (*śabda*) in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (1. 3. 8. 28, 29). The *Mahābhāṣya* quotes the work of an earlier grammarian, Vyāḍi, who engages in a detailed discussion of whether word (*śabda*) is eternal (*nitya*) or not (*kārya*). The *Mahābhāṣya* emphasizes that

in either case grammar has to be written. Sastri (Sastri, 1944: 49) clarifies that if *śabda* refers to *sphoṭa* (that which, when manifested, enables the hearer to have a clear knowledge of the object of the word uttered) it is *nitya* and if it refers to *dhvani*, the sound that is produced by the vocal organs, it is *kārya*. Moreover, under the *māheśvara sūtra nā ma nā na na nam* the *Mahābhāṣya* engages in discussion as to why knowledge of *varṇas* (*akṣara*) is necessary and mentions that the *śāstra* through which the knowledge of *varṇa* is attained has for its subject *vāk* where resides Brahman. For its sake, for knowing the needed ones, and for the sake of simplicity this knowledge of *varṇas* is necessary. The collection of letters is Brahman (*brahmarāśi*) and its knowledge leads one to realize the fruits obtained by the study of *Vedas* and his parents will thrive well in heaven (Sastri, 1944: 174, 175). *Pradīpa* while commenting on *brahmarāśi* clarifies that it is Brahman that appears as the word (*brahmatattvameva śabdārūpatayā pratibhātīyarthah*). It further points out that when an aspirant commits the *Vedas* by rote, he acquires *puṇya* and as a result of this *puṇya*, he gets mental purification (*cittaśuddhi*). This *cittaśuddhi* is easily attained by the mere study of grammar (*sarvavedādhyayanakṛtasya puṇyasya yatphalam sarvavedādhyayanajanya puṇyarūpaphalasya cittaśuddhirūpasya prāptirasya jñāne'adhyayanamātre bhavati*) (Shastri, 1998). Thus this is the response of *Mahābhāṣya* to Śāṅkara.

Subrahmanya Sastri dates Pāṇini to 550 BCE (Sastri, 1944: lxxv). *Mahābhāṣya* is dated to the second century BCE. Patrick Olivelle mentions that Pāṇini is assigned to 4 BCE (Olivelle, 1995: 5). Śāṅkara refers to Pāṇini while commenting on *Brahmasūtra* 1. 1. 3 and hence Pāṇini must be dated before Śāṅkara.

The reference to the *ekadaṇḍasannyāsī* in *Kuruntokai*, the reference to *jīvanmuktas* in *Maturaikkāñci*, and the discussion of Brahman found in the *Mahābhāṣya* favors the placement of Śāṅkara earlier than 2 BCE.

Thus the date of Ādi Śāṅkarācārya can be fixed as fifth century BCE.

In this research, I confine Śāṅkara to the authorship of commentaries on the ten *Upaniṣads* of *Īśa*, *Kena*, *Kaṭha*, *Praśna*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Tattirīya*, *Aitareya*, *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Brahmasūtras*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda. A study of his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* with Gauḍapāda's *kārikās* deserves observation here. All the available texts present the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* with the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda. *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* consists of only twelve *mantras* and Gauḍapāda's *kārikās* are spread into four *prakaraṇas*: *āgama prakaraṇa*, *vaitathya prakaraṇa*, *advaita prakaraṇa* and *alātaśānti prakaraṇa*. The number of *kārikās* in these four *prakaraṇas* are 29, 38, 48, and 100. The *kārikās* of *āgama prakaraṇa* are interspersed with the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. After the sixth *mantra* of the *Upaniṣad*, we find *kārikās* 1–9. Before the *kārikās* begin, we find the statement, “Here are these verses” (*atraithe ślokā bhavanti*). After the seventh *mantra*, we find *kārikās* 10–18. After *mantras* 8–11, we find *kārikās* 19–23 and after the twelfth and final *mantra* of the *Upaniṣad*, we find the rest of the *kārikās* of the *āgama prakaraṇa* i.e., 24–29. After this, the rest three *prakaraṇas* follow thus completing the full text of the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda.

It is generally thought that the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda are his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. *Kārikās* are memorial verses whose purpose is to expound in a metrical form an aspect of a subject or a particular doctrine so that it would be easy

to memorize it (Mahadevan, 1954: 29). In other words, *kārikās* constitute philosophical texts in verse form. A *vārtika*, on the other hand, is a commentary of a text in prose or verse form. For example, Śāṅkara begins his commentary on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* with discussions of *nitya* and *kāmya karmas*, and Sureśvara comments on this in verse 4 of his *vārtika*, and in verses 2 and 3 he explicitly mentions that he is commenting on the *bhāṣya* on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. Nowhere in his *kārikās* does Gauḍapāda mention that he is commenting on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. Had it been a commentary he should have mentioned it in the *āgama prakaraṇa*. Although the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda are popularly referred to as *Māṇḍūkyakārikās* the text is also called *Āgamaśāstra* (Bhattacharya, 1943: vii, Wood, 1992: viii).

While starting his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, Śāṅkara mentions that this text consisting of four *prakaraṇas*, which are the essence of *Vedānta*, begins with the word *Om*. It may be pointed out that it is the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* that commences with the word *Om* and not Gauḍapāda's *kārikās*. They commence with the words *bahiṣprajñō vibhurviśvo hyantaḥ prajñastu taijasaḥ* describing the three states of the self. Likewise, *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* consists of only twelve mantras whereas Gauḍapāda's *kārikās* are spread into four *prakaraṇas*. Śāṅkara, however, mentions that the text consisting of four *prakaraṇas* starts with the word *Om*. Thus it is Śāṅkara who connects Gauḍapāda's *kārikās* with the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. It may be pointed out in this connection that Madhvācārya considers that the 29 *kārikās* in the first *prakaraṇa* are included in the *Upaniṣad* and comments upon them. Raṅgarāmānuja, the commentator of the Rāmānuja tradition, does not comment upon the *kārikās*. Krūrānārāyaṇa of the same tradition comments upon the *kārikās* in the first *prakaraṇa* and considers them as part of the *Upaniṣad* (Shastri, 2011: 207, Bhattacharya, 1943: xxxi-xxxix). This adds strength to the arguments that Gauḍapāda's *kārikās* are independent of the *Upaniṣad* and that there is a huge time gap between Śāṅkara and Rāmānuja.

A *prakaraṇa* is a kind of text in which the author, having studied the entire branch of literature, takes one or two concepts and explains them in his own words. In this sense, it is possible that Gauḍapāda took the concepts from the *Āgamas* and wrote his text consisting of four *prakaraṇas*, and hence the text is referred to as *Āgamaśāstra*.

Scholars who have studied Gauḍapāda observe that his ideas are closer to non-dual Śāivism and in this connection Isayeva (Isayeva, 1995: 2) holds that Gauḍapāda and Bhartṛhari should be regarded as predecessors of certain schools of non-dualistic Kashmir Śāivism, which proved to be quite theistic in their essence, rather than immediate forerunners of Śāṅkara's Vedānta. She further maintains that the link between Gauḍapāda and Bhartṛhari, on the one hand, and the Kashmir Śāivites, on the other, is certainly much more evident and natural than any links [*sic*] that might exist between these early Vedāntins and Śāṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. The closest parallels to Gauḍapāda and Bhartṛhari's ideas are to be found mainly within the field of so-called non-dualist Śāivism (Isayeva, 1995: 135). The following observation by Mahadevan (Mahadevan, 1954: 15–16) may be relevant to this discussion:

There is an old manual of Advaita called *Paramārthasāra* which is attributed to the authorship of Bhagavān Ādi Śeṣa. Who the author was and when he

lived are questions which have not been settled. What can be asserted beyond doubt is that he must have lived before Abhinavagupta (11th century A.D.) who adapted and expanded Ādi Śeṣa's work to form a handbook of the Pratyabhijñā system, and gave it the same name. Between the *Paramārthasāra* of Śeṣa and the *Māṇḍūkya-kārikā* there are some significant points of resemblance. Neither quotes *verbatim* from the other. This is probably because of the difference in metre. But the similarity in doctrines between the two works is unmistakable. The following doctrinal identities may be noted: (1) The three forms of self, Viśva, Tajasa and Prājña, belonging to the three states, waking, dream, and sleep, are but phenomenal. The fourth which transcends them, viz. Turīya is alone the real. (2) Māyā is the power (śakti) or energy (vibhūti) of the Lord. It constitutes his nature (svabhāva). By māyā the Lord appears to delude himself as it were. The endless diverse forms such as prāṇa are illusorily posited. (3) In truth, however, there is neither origination nor destruction, neither bondage nor release. (4) The one who has realized the truth is free to live as he wills. The ethical standards do not apply to him, because he has transcended the realm of morals. In this respect he is comparable to non-conscious beings or ignoramuses. (5) With no system of thought is Advaita in conflict. The different schools contradict one another. But they are not inconsistent with Advaita, since all of them proclaim the self of all. Besides these doctrinal similarities, one who reads the two works closely will notice that many of the key terms and phrases are the same in both and that both make use of the rope-snake, shell-silver, and the ether analogies.

Āgamas are liturgical texts. They are also called *Tantras*. There existed *Āgamas* for all the six faiths of Gāṇāpatya, Saura, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Śākta, Kaumāra, and also for Brahmā. Currently, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Śaiva*, *Śākta*, and *Kaumāra Āgamas* are available. The main topic of the *Āgamas* is the worship of deities and especially the image worship in temples and other matters related to the temples. They also deal with civil and moral codes, initiation, purificatory ceremonies, consecration, and daily routines of the practitioners and philosophy. These topics are dealt with in the four *pādas* of the *Āgamas*: *Vidyā* or *Jñānapāda* (philosophy), *Kriyāpāda* (rituals), *Yogapāda* and *Caryāpāda* (moral codes) (Bhatt, 2008: 22). *Āgama* means “a revealed text”. The word *āgama* has been used to refer to both the *Vedas* and the *Āgamas*. Medhātithi, while commenting on *Manusmṛti* 1. 82, refers to the *Vedas* with the word *āgama*. However, Pāṇini, in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (7. 2. 64, 7. 4. 74), uses the word *niḡama* to refer to the *Vedas*. Patañjali refers to the *Vedas* as *āgama* (Sastri, 1944: 23). Anubhūtiśvarūpācārya while commenting on *Gauḍapāda kārikā* 2. 23 uses the word *āgamika* to refer to the followers of *Śivāgamas* (*mūrtastriśūlādīdhārī paramārtha ityāgamikāḥ*). Nīlakaṇṭha Śivācārya, in the first verse of his text *Kriyāsāra*, refers to the *Vedas* as *niḡama* and asserts that the *niḡama* and the *āgama* do not contradict each other (Dwivedi: 1996, 7). Thus the word *niḡama* popularly refers to the *Vedas* and the word *āgama* to the *Āgamic* literature. Many ideas dealt with by *Gauḍapāda* for instance can be found in the *Āgamas*.

S.No	Concept	Reference in the Āgama
1	<i>Māyā</i> is indeed the cause of everything <i>Mūlaprakṛti</i> is also called <i>māyā</i>	<i>prādurbhūtaṃ jagatkṛtsnaṃ māyātassacarācaram/ jagataḥ kāraṇaṃ māyā māyāyāḥ kāraṇaṃ munell Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, māyāpaṭala, verse 120</i> <i>yā mūlaprakṛtiḥ proktā sā māyā parikṛtitā/ Viśvasātantra, paṭala 1 (Chatterji, Pre-1900)</i>
2	Lord has <i>māyā</i> under his control	<i>svatantrassarvakartṛtve tasya kiṃ pravicyāryatel māyā'pi tadvaśā yasmānnityaṃ prasavadharmiṇiḥ/ Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, māyāpaṭala, verse 64 (Kṛsna- sastri: 1924)</i>
3	Creation is a sport of the lord	<i>māyāmantreśvarasyaiśā kṛṭḍanāya visarpitā/ nānārūpadharā viśvā viśvasya jagatoraṇiḥ/ Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, māyāpaṭala, verse 94 ahaṅkāratmakam sarvaṃ jagat sthāvarajaṅgamam/ kṛṭḍayā sakalaṃ viśvaṃ saṃsrjejjagadīśvaraḥ/ Viśvasātantra, paṭala 1</i>
4	Creation is for enjoyment and is also a sport	<i>bhogārthaṃ racitā dhātrī kṛṭḍanāya sukhodaya/ prahlādanavinodāḍhyabhuvanairdaśabhiścītā/ Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, kalātatvapaṭala, verse 37</i>
5	There is neither bondage nor liberation	<i>pradhānasyeṣyate sargassa ca sarvatra saṃsthithā/ na kaścūbadhyate loke na ca kaścīdvimucyate // Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, pumpradhāneśvarasādhanapaṭala, verse 63 Cf: na nirodho na cotpattirna baddho na ca sādhaḥ/ na mumukṣurna vai mukta ityeṣā paramārthatāḥ Kārikā 2. 32</i>
6	There is neither creation nor destruction	<i>ahameva paro devaḥ sarvamantramayaḥ śivaḥ/ sarvamantravyaṭītaśca sṛṣṭisamhāravarjitāḥ/ Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verse 8 (Sarvajñānottara, 2011) Cf: na kaścijāyate jīvaḥ saṃbhavo'sya na vidyate/ etattaduttamaṃ satyaṃ yatra kiñcīna jāyateḥ Kārikā 3. 48</i>
7	Meditation on <i>advaitabhāvanā</i> Meditation on union of <i>jīvātmā</i> and <i>paramātmā</i>	<i>ahamātmā śivohyanyaḥ paramātmēti yaḥ smṛtaḥ/ evamupāśayenmohānna śivatvamavāpnuyātā/ śivonyanyastvahamevānyaḥ pṛthagbhāvaṃ vivarjayet / yaḥ śivaḥ sohameveti advaitaṃ bhāvayet sadā/ advaitabhāvanāyuktaḥ sarvatrātmani saṃsthithā/ sarvagaṃ sarvadehasthaṃ paśyate nātrasaṃśayaḥ/ Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verses 12–14</i> <i>jīvātmaparamātmanoraikyaṃ sañcintayeddhīyā/ samādhīḥ paramaṃ yogaṃ sarvatantrasamanvitam/ Viśvasātantra, paṭala 2, page 74 Cf: tasmādevaṃ viditvainamadvaite yojayetsmṛtim/ advaitam samanuprāpya jaḍavallokaṃācareḥ Kārikā 2. 36</i>
8	Example of pot conditioned ether	<i>ghaṭa saṃvṛtamākāśaṃ nīyamāne yathā ghaṭel ghaṭo nīyatinākāśamākāśatvaṃ prapadyate/ Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verse 52 Cf: ghaṭādiṣu pralīneṣu ghaṭākāśādayo yathā/ ākāśe saṃpralīyante tadvajjīva ihātmanil Kārikā 3. 4</i>
9	Self is non-changing and reference to <i>cit</i> and <i>acit</i>	<i>ātmanaścāvikāritvādvicitraṃ karmaṇaḥ phalam/ cidacittattvayoryasmāt svabhāvasya viparyayaḥ/ Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, māyāpaṭala, verse 116</i>

S.No	Concept	Reference in the Āgama
10	No bondage for the <i>jīvanmukta</i>	<i>jīvanapi vimuktātmā yo virakto bhavārṇavāt/</i> <i>sthityarthaṃ vartatastasya na bandho munisattamaḥ</i> <i>Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, vidyāpaṭala, verse 35</i>
11	<i>Avidyā</i> is the cause of all bondage and knowledge removes bondage and makes one realise as Śiva	<i>caryā yeyamavidyākyā sarvabandhasya kāraṇam/</i> <i>bandhapradhvāṃsintī vidyā śivatvonmīlane kṣamāḥ</i> <i>Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda, vidyāpaṭala, verse 36</i>
12	Definition of Brahman	<i>bṛhatvād bṛhṇaṇatvācca brahmeti parikīrtitam/</i> <i>Vātulāgama, 7.1b (Dwivedi, 2004)</i>
	Śiva is <i>saguṇa</i> and <i>nirguṇa</i>	<i>śivastu dvividhaḥ proktaḥ saguṇo nirguṇastathā/</i> <i>nirguṇaḥ prakṛteranyaḥ saguṇaḥ sakalātmakaḥ</i> <i>Viśvasāratantra, paṭala 1</i>
	Five kinds of Brahman	<i>mūrtibrahma bhavet pūrvaṃ tattva brahmadvityakam/</i> <i>bhūtābrahma trītyaṃ syāt piṇḍābrahma caturthakam/</i> <i>pañcamaṃ ca kalābrahma brahmapañcakamīritam/</i> <i>Vātulāgama, 7. 4, 5a</i>
	Being established in Brahman one becomes omniscient	<i>yasmāt sarvagataṃ brahma vyāpakaṃ sarvato mukham/</i> <i>tasmādbrahmaṇisamsthāne digdeśānna vicārayet/</i> <i>sarvabandhādvīnirmuktassarvajñāḥ sarvago bhavet/</i> <i>sarvajñatā trīptiranādibodhaḥ svatantratā nityamaluptasaktiḥ/</i> <i>anantaśaktiśca nirāmayātmā viśuddhadehassa śivatvameti/</i> <i>Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verses 43, 54, 57</i>
	I am Brahman	<i>ahameva paraṃbrahma ahaṃ jñeya mataparam/</i> <i>sarve vināśakābhāvāṃ mana eva pṛthagvidhāḥ/</i> <i>Sarvajñānottarāgama, jñānapāda, chapter following</i> <i>bhūtātmādirprakaraṇa, verse 36</i>
13	Self and realized person	<i>evaṃ vadanti munayo hyātmā śuddhassadaiva tul</i> <i>virāgī siddhimuktātmā na ca tasmātparam kvacit/</i> <i>Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, jñānapāda,</i> <i>pumpradhāneśvarasādhanapaṭala, verse 62</i> <i>ahiṃsā nāma yadduḥkhaṃ parebhyo nopapadyate/</i> <i>ātmavatsarvabhūtāni yaḥ paśyati sa ātmavān/</i> <i>Mataṅgapārameśvarāgama, vidyāpāda, buddhipaṭala, verse 32</i> <i>evamekātmabhāvena saṃsthitasya tu yogīnaḥ/</i> <i>sarvajñatvaṃ pravarteta vikalparahitasya ca/</i> <i>Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verse 15</i> <i>tasmādātmā sadāvedyaḥ suvicāryaḥ vicakṣaṇaiḥ/</i> <i>parāparavibhāgena sthūla sūkṣma vibhāgaśaḥ/</i> <i>ātmalābhātparolābhāḥ kvacidanyo na vidyate/</i> <i>tathātmānamupāsita yoyamātmāparastu saḥ/</i> <i>Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verses 18, 26</i>
14	Three states of the self	<i>jāgrajāgrajāgrasvapnaṃ tathā jāgrasusuptikam/</i> <i>jāgraturyaṃ kālaparamaḥ paradarśanam/</i> <i>viśvāgrasvopasāntaśca śivadarśanameva ca/</i> <i>Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmasākṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verses 63–64</i> <i>jāgrat svapna susuptiśca turīyaṃ sarvasammataḥ/</i> <i>parāparavibhāgena śivaśaktirīyam matāḥ/</i> <i>Viśvasāratantra, paṭala 1</i>

S.No	Concept	Reference in the Āgama
15	Reference to <i>śūnyatā</i>	<i>naiva śūnyaṃ ca cāśūnyamaśūnyaṃ śūnyameva ca pakṣapāta vinirmuktamātmānaṃ paryupāsayet Sarvajñānottarāgama, yogapāda, svātmakṣātkāraprakaraṇa, verse 30.</i>

The similarity of ideas in Gauḍapāda and the Śaiva Āgamas and the naming of the text as *Āgamaśāstra* supports the view that Gauḍapāda wrote his text as an exposition of Āgamic Śaiva non-dualism. This has no connection with the assigned dates of the textual rendering of the Āgamas.

A close observation of Gauḍapāda's *kārikās* and Śaṅkara's commentary on the *kārikās* reveals that there is a difference of opinion between them. One striking example of this difference is Śaṅkara's commentary on *kārikā* 1. 9 *devasyeṣa svabhāvoya'māptakāmasya kā sprhā*. Gauḍapāda mentions that it is the nature (*svabhāva*) of god to create and not his desire that is responsible for creation as he is the one whose wishes are fulfilled (*āptakāma*). Thus Gauḍapāda hints at the five-fold cosmic activities of god highlighted in the Āgamas consisting of creation, maintenance, destruction, concealment, and blessing. Śaṅkara while commenting on this *kārikā* mentions that creation has to be explained just as the serpent appears in a rope. Likewise, in *kārikā* 2. 12, Gauḍapāda mentions that the lord creates himself out of his *māyā* and Śaṅkara interprets this as similar to the serpent in a rope. In 2. 13 Gauḍapāda describes that it is lord (*prabhu*) who creates everything and Śaṅkara interprets this as referring to the self. In *kārikā* 1. 16 Gauḍapāda mentions that when the *jīva* wakes up from the beginningless *māyā*, he realizes Advaita. Śaṅkara interprets the word *māyā* as dreamlike notions such as one is happy, one is sorrowful, one is successful, etc. In *kārikā* 1. 17 Gauḍapāda describes the world of duality as *māyāmātraṃ* and Śaṅkara interprets this as similar to the serpent in a rope. Thus there is a sharp difference between Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara.

In his *āgama prakaraṇa*, Gauḍapāda describes the three states of self and prescribes *omkāra upāsanā* as a way to realize the self. In *vaitathya prakaraṇa* he discusses the falsity of the world and according to him, objects in both the dream and waking state are unreal. *At the ultimate level, there is no dissolution, no origination, none in bondage, none striving or aspiring for salvation, and none liberated.* This is the highest truth (2. 32). He mentions that the realized person should become identified with reality (*tattva*), should have his delight in reality, and should not deviate from reality (2. 38). The self is imagined to be the infinite objects like *prāṇa* etc., and this is the *māyā* of the self-effulgent one by which he himself is deluded (2. 19). In the *advaita prakaraṇa*, he draws support for his views from the *Upaniṣads*. Through the illustration of the pot-conditioned ether, he maintains that the individual is neither a transformation nor a part of the supreme self (3. 7). The self without being born appears to be born on account of his *māyā* (3. 24). He emphasizes mind control and holds that when the mind neither gets lost nor is scattered and when it is motionless and does not appear in the form of objects, then it becomes Brahman (3. 46). In the *alātaśānti prakaraṇa* Gauḍapāda speaks of the vibration (*spanda*) of consciousness. *This duality, possessed of subject and object is a mere vibration of consciousness (citta spanditamevedam)* (4. 72). To explain the process by which the vibration of consciousness appears as the knower and the known, he utilizes the

example of the firebrand (*alāta*). When the firebrand is not in motion it becomes free from appearances and birth. In the same way, consciousness when not in vibration will be free from appearances and birth (4. 48). As in a dream consciousness (*citta*) vibrates as though having a dual function, so in the waking state, consciousness vibrates as though with two facets (4. 61) (Gambhirananda, 1996).

Regarding the fourth *prakaraṇa*, some scholars express the view that Gauḍapāda and following him Śāṅkara, have borrowed largely from the Buddhist writers. Mahadevan (Mahadevan, 1954: 218, 214, 216, 203) responds to these views with the following:

It will be in place here to point out that though the fourth *prakaraṇa* makes a free use of Buddhistic terminology, some of the terms occur in the earlier *prakaraṇas* also. Nor is the *Alātaśāntiprakaraṇa* void of Upaniṣadic expressions, for they can be seen in IV, 78, 80, 85 and 92. And while we are on the question of terminology, it would be well to make it clear that the Bauddhas themselves borrowed most of their terms from the earlier orthodox writers. Some of the terms, for instance, which have acquired specifically Buddhistic [*sic*] meanings can all be traced to the Upaniṣads: *nāmarūpa*, *karmavipāka*, *avidyā*, *upādāna*, *arhat*, *śramaṇa*, *buddha*, *nirvāṇa*, *prakṛti*, *ātman*, *nivṛtti* etc. When the exponents of rival schools of thought have to speak the same language and employ the same canons of reasoning, mutual loans of words are but natural and inevitable...Towards the close of the *Alātaśānti-prakaraṇa* Gauḍapāda declares, *naitad buddhena bhāṣitam* (not this was spoken by the Buddha). This statement has been interpreted in several ways...Now according to both the interpretations the Buddha did not say anything; his speech was non-speech. But Gauḍapāda's statement is not to that effect. He does not say that the Buddha did not declare *anything*, but only that this was not spoken by him. By the *this* he means the supra-relational state of the wise one which is celebrated in the penultimate verse of the *prakaraṇa*, as also the general teaching of the *Kārikā* taken as a whole. He has purposely employed Buddhist terminology in the *Alātaśāntiprakaraṇa*, and there is every chance of the unwary student mistaking what is taught there for the Bauddha doctrine. And so, to safeguard himself against such a possible misconception, Gauḍapāda says 'Not *this* was spoken by the Buddha'... The author of the *Khaṇḍana-khaṇḍa-khāḍya* put the difference between the two schools thus: this is the difference between the Bauddhas and the Brahmvādins-while the former declare the indeterminability of all, the latter hold that the entire universe, with the exception of consciousness (*vijñāna*), is other than either what is real or what is unreal. Thus in Advaita-Vedānta the Self which is of the nature of pure consciousness is recognized as the sole reality. And Gauḍapāda as a staunch Vedāntin holds steadfastly to the doctrine of the non-dual Absolute, and does not subscribe to the Mādhyamika view of total unreality.

In the same light, Mahadevan points out that the simile of the fire-brand circle occurs in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, IV. 24 and hence this simile has a pre-Buddhist origin (Mahadevan, 1954: 197, 198).

This concept of vibration of consciousness has been evidently well developed by the Spanda school of Śaiva non-dualism of Kashmir. As Dycowski puts it (Dycowski, 1987: 20, 21):

“The philosophy of the Pratyabhijñā focuses on the liberating recognition of the soul’s authentic identity as Śiva while the Doctrine of Vibration stresses instead the importance of experiencing Spanda, the vibration or pulse of consciousness. The mainstay of the Doctrine of Vibration is the contemplative experience the awakened yogī has of his true nature as the universal perceiving and acting consciousness. Every activity in the universe, as well as every perception, notion, sensation or emotion in the microcosm, ebbs and flows as part of the universal rhythm of the one reality, which is Śiva, the one God Who is the pure conscious agent and perceiver. According to the Doctrine of Vibration, man can realise his true nature to be Śiva by experiencing Spanda, the dynamic recurrent and creative activity of the absolute.”

It is interesting to note that the word *citta* is used for consciousness by both Gauḍapāda and the followers of the Spanda school. According to the latter, consciousness is not a passive witness (*sākṣin*), but is full of the conscious activity (*citikriyā*) through which it generates the universe and reabsorbs it into itself at the end of each cycle of creation (Dycowski, 1987: 45). The view that consciousness itself is the knower and the known is also maintained by this school. In the cognitive sphere, the dynamic character of the light of consciousness is represented by the flux of cognitions. This is the pulsation—Spanda—of its noetic activity (*jñānātmakakriyā*) of which it is itself the conscious agent (*kartr*) as well as perceiver. Knowledge cannot exist independently of the knower. The object is grounded in knowledge and knowledge is the subject which thus connects them together like a powerful glue. Ultimately, these three are identical (Dycowski, 1987: 63).

And it is this *spanda* that is personified as the beautiful Naṭarāja of Cidambaram. Thus, in short, the first exposition of Śaiva non-dualism is provided by Gauḍapāda and it is befitting that his work is called the *Āgamaśāstra*. This research places Śaṅkara in 5 BCE and hence Gauḍapāda should have lived before that. Scholars point out that there is striking parallelism between Gauḍapāda and Buddhist writers such as Nāgārjuna and his disciple Āryadeva who flourished between 2 and 4 CE (Mahadevan, 1954: 13, 14). Gauḍapāda and the Buddhist writers could have borrowed their ideas from the same source that was available before Gauḍapāda. At the same time Buddhist writers such as Bhāvaviveka of 6 CE quote from Gauḍapāda (Mahadevan, 1954: 12).

The most popular school at the time of Śaṅkara was that of the Sāṅkhyas. The Sāṅkhya, who as Svāmī Paramārthānanda (personal communication) mentions can be compared to a physicist who holds that the insentient matter *pradhāna* is the independent cause of the world. Because of his scientific approach to life, he condemns Vedic sacrifices. Śaṅkara fights against these “physicists” to establish an intelligent principle as the cause of the world, and also to establish the Vedic *dharma* or Vedic way of life in which an individual’s life is divided into *varṇas* and *āśramas* and that following the paths prescribed in the *Vedas*, individuals attain *mokṣa* through self-realization.

The *Vedas* are the foundation of Hindu society. Deriving from the verb *vid*, “to know,” the *Vedas* covered all the branches of knowledge. The four *Vedas*, *Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*, deal with sacrifices and philosophical inquiries for the benefit of humanity and pave the way for self-realization. Every branch of knowledge needed for individuals is also classified under various divisions of the *Vedas*. The Vedic ancillaries (*vedāṅgas*) are *Śikṣā* (Euphony, Pronunciation, and Phonetics), *Vyākaraṇa* (Grammar), *Chandas* (Prosody), *Nirukta* (Etymology), *Jyotiṣa* (Astronomy and Astrology), and *Kalpa* (Liturgy). *Mīmāṃsā* (Vedic rituals and their interpretation), *Nyāya* (Logic), *Purāṇa* (History and Mythology), and *Dharmaśāstra* (Law) are subsidiary limbs (*upāṅgas*) of the *Vedas*. *Āyurveda* (Medicine), *Arthaveda* or *Arthaśāstra* (Politics and Economy), *Dhanurveda* (Military Science), and *Gāndharvaveda* (Music and Fine Arts) are considered subsidiary *Vedas* (*upavedas*). Of these *Āyurveda* belongs to both *Rgveda* and *Atharvaveda*, *Dhanurveda* to *Yajurveda*, *Gāndharvaveda* to *Sāmaveda* and *Arthaveda* to *Atharvaveda* (Joshi, 1992). Thus it is clear that every branch of knowledge and science needed for the society comes from the *Vedas*.

The Vedic sages organized society based on the professions and qualities of individuals. Any society in the world should consist of teachers, a government represented by kings, merchants, and laborers and farmers. These four classes of people represented the *varṇa* system and were called *brāhmaṇas*, *kṣatriyas*, *vaiśyas*, and *śūdras*. The Tamiḷ equivalents for these four classes were *antaṇar* or *pārppaṇar*, *aracar*, *vaṇikar*, and *vēlāḷar*. The duties assigned to these four classes are teaching and doing penance and sacrifice for the benefit of society, protecting the society, promoting the economic well-being of the society, and supplying food and other necessities and services needed for the society. These four people were defined as the knower of Brahman (*brahmavid brāhmaṇaḥ*), one who protects from destruction (*kṣatāt khila trāyata iti kṣatriyaḥ*), one who enters everywhere (*sarvatra viśatīti vaiśyaḥ*) and one who drives away the sorrow (*śucaṁ drāvayatīti śūdraḥ*).

Various professions such as carpentry, sculpting, masonry, etc., were reserved for individual communities under these *varṇas* and these communities formed the *jāti* system. The *jāti* system ensured job security, support, protection, and faster justice for individuals from their respective communities. Because every branch of knowledge originated from the *Vedas*, in addition to providing the education needed for every community, the *Vedas* prescribed religious practices for their spiritual well-being as well. Performing these *karmas* as prescribed in the *Vedas* as an offering to god brings mental purity which is highlighted as the *karmayoga* in the *Gītā*. The *Gītā* (18. 46) clarifies this as people attain the Supreme by performing their allotted duties (*svakarmanā tamabhyarcya siddhiṁ vindanti mānavāḥ*). The sages further classified knowledge into two categories: *parāvidyā*, the supreme knowledge, and *aparāvidyā* the knowledge needed for empirical livelihood. Knowledge of the self is *parāvidyā* and all other knowledge *aparāvidyā*. Such an arrangement ensured that people pursued their spiritual practices while following their allotted duties. *Pursuing their profession for their livelihood by staying within the fold of religion and spirituality enabled people to secure their livelihood and also attain mental purification and liberation*. People from all classes and *jātis* attained the same spiritual excellence and thus at the highest level, there was no difference among people. Of

the Nāyaṅārs, Tirukkurippuṭṭu Toṅṭar was a washerman and Tirunāḷaiṭṭōvār was an untouchable.

The division of life of an individual into four *āśramas*—that of a celibate (*brahmacarya*), that of a householder (*gṛhastha*), that of a forest dweller (*vānaprastha*), and that of an ascetic (*sannyāsa*)—enabled individuals to lead a good worldly life, and then to slowly detach themselves from family and the world and eventually attain liberation. *Thus the Vedic way of life enabled people to make their lives complete (pūrṇa)*. This provides the advantage that people do not have to devote separate time for the practice of religion. Permeation of religion in medicine, in particular, is a strength, because it contributes to the healing process, and *karma* theory gives the mental strength to accept one's diseases when medicines have failed to provide a cure. When the Vedic *dharma* declines, religion, which delivers strength to people, also declines. Accepting a sentient principle called god will enable people to share their sorrows with that compassionate one, face their problems in life with courage and eventually be at peace even when they face failures in life. On a lighter note chanting *Viṣṇusahasranāma* secures all benefits to an individual and of what use is a *Pradhānasahasranāma*? An insentient *pradhāna* cannot respond to the prayers of the people. Thus by creating a false serpent in the rope, Śāṅkara was able to secure the importance of religion in the society. The decline of the Vedic religion leads to a society deprived of spirituality and dominated only by science. Accepting Vedic religion also ensures harmonious allotment of duties of the society to various communities. Thus there is peace at both the individual and the collective level. Acceptance of Vedic religion leads to the performance of *karmas* prescribed in the *Vedas*. And to do *karma*, men need the support of women. This is because a man cannot do any *karma* prescribed in the *Vedas* without his wife by his side. Thus women are protected and the continuance of society is assured.

Establishing Brahman enables Śāṅkara to post a sentient principle as the cause of the world against an insentient *pradhāna*. To convince the “Sāṅkhya physicist” of an intelligent principle as the cause of the world, Śāṅkara promotes the idea that the world is nothing but an illusion similar to a rope snake. As Mahāmahopādhyāya Dr. R. Krishnamurti Sastrigal (personal communication) explains, an illusion cannot occur without a substratum (*niradhiṣṭhāno bhramo na sambhavati*), and an illusion cannot happen without a cause (*nirnimitto bhramo na udbhavati*). Therefore, when the illusory object is negated, something should remain, which means it is impossible to negate an illusory object without allowing something to remain (*niravadhikaḥ bhramah na niṣidyate*). Thus the illusion of the snake appears in the rope (substratum) because there is ignorance of the rope (cause), and when the snake is negated, the rope remains. Likewise, when the world is described as an illusion, it has to occur in a substratum, the illusion should occur because of ignorance (*avidyā*) of the substratum, and when the world is negated that substratum should remain. Because we see an order in the universe such as seasonal changes and varieties of flora and fauna it can be said that unless that substratum is a sentient being such organization or order cannot be justified. It is because insentient matter cannot function on its own. It is important to establish an intelligent principle as the cause of the universe first and then practice *bhakti* towards it. It may be observed that he does not offer much explanation for those places which refer to *bhakti* in his *Gītābhāṣya*.

Hence while commenting on Gauḍapāda's view that creation is god's nature Śāṅkara adopts the view that creation is nothing but an illusion like the serpent in a rope. And he attributes ignorance (*avidyā*) as the cause of that illusion. It is in the same light I find that Śāṅkara interprets the word *māyā* that Gauḍapāda uses, as *avidyā*. In the *Āgamas māyā* refers to the power of god. *Avidyā* on the other hand is ignorance, which can be named as the cause of the illusory rope snake. And such an experience and explanation are agreeable even to the physicist. Moreover, accepting *avidyā* enables him to provide a reason for the superimposition of the body-mind complex on the self. The emphasis that notions such as "I am happy," and "I am sorrowful," are false provides the impetus for the aspirant to develop detachment and experience the blissful self. Self-realization gives a practical benefit which is the cessation of sorrow and can be realized here itself. That self, which is Brahman, must be admitted as non-dual and ubiquitous. Just as the spider is both the efficient and material cause of its web, Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the world. Brahman is existence, consciousness, and bliss and hence of the nature of non-violence. Practical proof of this non-violence can be given only by an ascetic because it is his *viśeṣa dharma*. Recommending asceticism right from the state of celibacy will ensure the purity of asceticism and is not challenging for a student who is used to begging. Avoiding *gr̥hasthāśrama* ensures avoiding violence, which can be incurred by cutting vegetables and killing flies. Accepting the world as an illusion enables Śāṅkara to establish one substratum which is a conscious being as against the theory of Sāṅkhyas. Because his intention is to establish the Vedic religion, he is opposed to Buddhism as well which is a heterodox religion. Hence he interprets *dvīpadām varam* in *kārikā* 4. 1, which in all possibilities Gauḍapāda has used to refer to the Buddha, as Nārāyaṇa, and *buddhāḥ* (4.19) as *paṇḍitāḥ*.

It is in this light that Śāṅkara pushes the Śaiva absolutism promoted by Gauḍapāda aside because *Śaivāgamas* are sectarian and do not cover all the sections of society and knowledge. This approach of Śāṅkara can be noticed when he comments under the *Brahmasūtra patyurasāmañjasyāt* (2. 2. 7. 37). He mentions that those schools of thought, including the Māheśvaras, are contrary to the *Vedas* and some of them follow Sāṅkhya and Yoga tenets. He points out that there are many schools among them (*sā ceyam vedabāhyeśvarakalpanānekaprakāra*).

Of his ten commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, I think Śāṅkara starts with the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* and ends with the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. He starts his commentary on the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* with the word *atha*. He deals elaborately with the definition of the word *Upaniṣad* and mentions the *anubandha catuṣṭaya* which is comprised of the qualified aspirant (*adhikārī*), subject matter (*viśaya*), result (*prayojana*), and relationship (*sambandha*). While beginning his commentary on the *Māṇḍūkya*, he mentions that these four *prakaraṇas*, starting with *om*, are the essence of Vedānta and hence relationship etc., need not be mentioned. However, they need to be briefly dealt with by the person desirous of commenting upon the *prakaraṇas*. Incorporating the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda, he merges the independent *Āgamaśāstra* with the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*. In this process, he interprets the Śaiva Absolutism of Gauḍapāda in the light of Vedāntic Absolutism. Śāṅkara had carefully selected the ten *Upaniṣads*, which are absolutistic in content, to establish Vedāntic Absolutism.

However, he quotes from *Upaniṣads* such as *Śvetāśvatara*, *Nārada Parivrājaka*, *Jābāla*, and *Kauṣītaki*.

A good picture of the early history of Śaivism as provided by Bhatt (Bhatt, 2008: 70–147) is summarized here:

“Rudra is a minor god in the *Ṛgveda*. *Ṛgveda* II. 33, I. 114 and VII. 46 are devoted to Rudra. He is mentioned seventy times in the *Ṛgveda*. He is described as having a dazzling appearance and his brilliance engages the attention of the Vedic poet. He is armed with bows and arrows; he is fierce and destructive, yet kind and benign, is the strongest of the strong, is unassailable and unsurpassed in might, is intelligent, wise and beneficent. He rules over the heroes, and is the lord of the world. He is called the bountiful god. He is depicted as red and is called by names *Īśāna* and *Śiva* the auspicious. Malevolence is frequently assigned to Rudra in the *Ṛgveda*. Rudra is also described as benevolent as he is sought to pacify the anger and evil that come from the gods. He is prayed for the sake of protection and for bestowing blessings. He is requested not to slay or injure his worshippers, their children or their cattle. In the tenth *maṇḍala* Rudra is depicted as being associated with *munis* who follow the course of the wind and have attained divinity. They have occult and superhuman powers attainable through *yoga*. Rudra is associated with them and shares a cup of poison with them.

The concept of Rudra becomes more dynamic in the *Atharvaveda*, possibly through its amalgamation with that of Bhava and Śarva the eminent archer. Originally different from Rudra, the identity of Rudra, Bhava and Śarva finally gets established. Bhava and Śarva are fierce gods and prayers are offered to them for safe delivery from calamity. They launch their lightning against the wicked and also against those who practice sorcery. In the *Atharvaveda*, Rudra (Bhava and Śarva) is called Paśupati many times with five animals—kine, horses, men, goat and sheep—within his domain. The fifteenth book of the *Atharvaveda* contains the *vrātya* hymns in which Rudra in his various aspects as Bhava, Śarva, Ugra, Rudra, Mahādeva and *Īśāna* is ascribed to the various regions as the archer to guard the *vrātya*. He is called through epithets such as Paśupati, Mahādeva, and *Īśāna*.

In the *Yajurveda*, the *Śatarudrīya* hymn included in the *Vājasaneyi* and *Taittirīya Samhitas* glorifies the elevated position of Rudra. It contains the various names of Rudra and he is frequently saluted using the dative *namas*. Rudra's blessed body is auspicious. It is not terrible, nor does it betoken harm. Red is the distinctive colour of this god. He wears the *yajñopavīta*. Of all the weapons borne by Rudra, it is the bow and arrow that are dreaded most. However, it may be noted that the *triśūla*, a prominent weapon of the Epic Śiva, is not mentioned in this *Veda*. He is glorified in this *Veda* as a bringer of prosperity and happiness and also as the most gracious one. He is auspicious and therefore called Śiva. He is the bringer of prosperity and is therefore named Śaṅkara. Names such as Rudra, Ugra, Bhīma, Śarva, Paśupati, Nīlagṛīva and Śṛīkaṅṭha occur prominently in the *Yajurveda*, and persist to this day as appellations of Śiva frequently employed in the rituals.

In the *Brāhmaṇas* Rudra is represented to have overpowered Prajāpati. The *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* ascribes a very high place to Rudra. The *Kauśītaki* also adds to the greatness of the god that Rudra is definitely raised above the other gods in the *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* mentions Rudra as hundred-headed, thousand-eyed, and hundred-quivered. He is most kindly yet was originally called *manyu* (angry). Often he is identified with Agni. The *Śatapatha* and *Śāṅkhāyana Brāhmaṇas* describe how the god was called Rudra as he began to weep as he had no name. Because he wept (*arodīt*) Prājāpati gave him the name Rudra. Rudra persistently insisted on getting more names, and received eight in all. These are Bhava, Śarva, Paśupati, Ugra, Mahādeva, Īśāna and Aśani. The *Śāṅkhāyana-Brāhmaṇa* associated these eight names respectively with the eight elements, namely, water, Agni, Vāyu, the planets, trees, *āditya*, the moon, food and Indra. We may discern in this eightfold nomenclature a forerunner of the later eight forms of Śiva which are said to constitute his divine body. The *Brāhmaṇas* hail him as Paśupati and assign North as his region. Even the gods are afraid of his strung bow and the arrows, for he is powerful enough to destroy them.

The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* is the earliest of the Śaiva *Upaniṣads*. Rudra-Śiva is hailed as creator, preserver, and destructor of the universe. He creates Brahmā and gives him the *Vedas*. He is the author of existence and non-existence. He is the creator of everything. He is the lord of the two-footed and the four-footed beings. He is the cause of the wordly existence, of liberation, of continuance and of bondage. He is the protector of the world in critical time. He is the guardian of the world. He rules the world for ever. He, the great seer, is implored to endow the beings with clear understanding. He is the author of time, the knower, the witness. He is the controller of many. He alone embraces the universe, and by him this whole world is enveloped.

A special characteristic ascribed to Rudra in *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* is his ruling power. This function is so frequently ascribed to him that he becomes the ruler par excellence. This brings him the appellation such as Īśa, Īśvara and Īśāna. The *Upaniṣad* describes him as one that rules with his ruling powers. He is the ruler of all. He is the lord of the world, he is the supreme master of masters, and the lord of all. Being the highest deity of deities, he rules over all forms, and all sources. He rules over whatever creatures are born of a womb. He exercises his lordship over all and is the one ruler over the whole world. Of him there is no master in the world, no ruler. Of him there is neither progenitor nor lord.

This ruling power of Rudra, which he wields unrivalled, having no equals or superiors, indicates the monotheistic trend of Śaivism—a trend which is greatly emphasized in the Purāṇic and post-Purāṇic texts. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* this idea is expressed most unequivocally with the words: “He is the ruler over this whole earth. Rudra is one, and there is no place for a second.”

Many are the abodes that the *Upaniṣads* ascribe to Rudra. He is, first of all, all-pervading. He is omnipresent. He is hidden in all things, and dwells in all beings. The wise who perceive him as abiding in their selves, to them belongs happiness. He is in fire and in water. He has entered into the whole world. He is framed in the heart of the thought and by the mind. Those who know him thus become

immortal. He dwells in the cave (heart) of all beings. He is a dweller of the mountains. It is perhaps this idea which gained stronger grounds in the Epics and the *Purāṇas*, which speak of the mountain abode of Śiva.

Attention may be drawn to the characteristics which are attributed to Rudra for the first time herein. The most noteworthy characteristic attributed to him is omnipresence. He is the one embracer of everything, the one embracer of the universe. He is hidden in all things like the exceedingly fine oil that comes out of clarified butter. He is the inner self of all beings. He is the firstborn. He is both born and yet to be born. With the thought that he is unborn, he is approached in fear. He is the source and origin of the gods. In him all the worlds rest. He is hidden in all beings, and is the origin of all. This auspicious one is without blemish, irreproachable and tranquil. He is adorable, divine and imperishable. He is devoid of beginning and end. He is the possessor of all knowledge, and is to be seen beyond the three kinds of time, the past, the present, and the future. He is eternal among the eternal, and intelligent among the intelligences. He is the beginning. He is the lord of qualities and at the same time devoid of them.

The *Śrauta* and *Gr̥hya sūtras*, which for the most part form the manuals of scriptural and domestic rituals, present a very particular treatment of Rudra. While in the *Śrauta-sūtras* the priestly hierarchy isolate Rudra from the generality of the official Vedic gods in a very marked manner, the *Gr̥hya-sūtras*, which derive many of their rites from popular practices, assign to him a prominent place, at least in some cases. In the *Gr̥hya-sūtras* Rudra continues to be glorified as Mahādeva, Hara, and so on. Rudra's consort in her various aspects as Rudrānī, Bhavānī, etc., is mentioned in the *sūtras*. He is connected with serpents. Rudra is associated with the cardinal directions. Whenever a sacrifice is offered to him, the quarters are to be worshipped. He is offered oblations specially to remove and prevent diseases etc. Through sacrifices to Rudra, one procures wealth, wide space, purity, sons, cattle, long life and splendour. When an offering is to be made to Rudra, or when a Vedic verse or formula is to be recited for him, the sacrificer is asked to touch water.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* Śiva is presented as a powerful god, second to none in importance. For instance, Viṣṇu, finding himself in a desperate situation, approaches Śiva in all humility, and addressing him as the most senior among the gods, implores him to accept the poison which was otherwise likely to prove fatal to all gods and men. The episode of Śiva crushing Rāvaṇa and then granting boons to him is described. The episodes of Śiva destroying the god of love, receiving the river Gaṅgā on his matted hair and the birth of Kārttikeya received quite a detailed treatment. Moreover, the appellations and attributes of Śiva used in the various parts of the *Rāmāyaṇa* seem to suggest that the exploits of the god that they imply, though not actually recounted in this Epic, were quite current among people. The *Rāmāyaṇa* refers to Śiva as the punisher of the demon Andhaka, and the destroyer of the three cities of the demons. He asserts his superiority by punishing Dakṣa's sacrifice and punishing all his participants. References are found in the *Rāmāyaṇa* to *Maheśvara-yajña* which seems to have enjoyed parity with every Vedic sacrifice. Indrajit is said to have

performed this sacrifice, invoking the favor of Śiva. Lakṣmaṇa also mentions such a sacrifice to Rāma. In addition to sacrifice, *tapas* is employed to propitiate Śiva.

The *Mahābhārata* also portrays Śiva as the great god who is not subordinate to any other. The great Epic recounts many of Śiva's exploits. His giving the Pāśupata weapon to Arjuna must be regarded as one of the more important episodes of the Epic. Śiva bestowing favour on Bagīratha, the destruction of the three cities and the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice are described in the Epic. In the *Mahābhārata* practising *tapas* with a view to propitiating Śiva is frequently mentioned. Arjuna performs penance to obtain his divine weapon. Āmbā and Aśvatthāma perform penance to get boons from him. Śiva himself performed *tapas* for the welfare of the beings. Only those who performed severe *tapas* could behold Śiva. The daily offerings of *tryāmbakabali* is once mentioned. Jarāsandha worshipped Śiva in a sacrifice. *Pūjā* or the worship of Śiva is fairly frequent, and one often comes across statements like *pūjyate tatra śaṅkaraḥ*. Viṣṇu worshipped Śiva and obtained boons and Brahmā is also represented as having worshipped him. *Tīrthas* held sacred to this god and pilgrimages to these places where the god's immediate presence is emphatically assumed (*mahādevasya sānnidhyaṁ tatraiva bhāratarṣabha*) is mentioned. All beings in the universe, without any distinction, are described to be worshipping Śiva (*brahmādayaḥ piśācāntāḥ yaṁ hi devā upāsate*).

Viṣṇu also rose to a similar position in a more or less similar manner. His status is represented as being even superior to that of Brahmā, insofar as he is the Rāma of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the Kṛṣṇa of the *Mahābhārata*. However, the position achieved by Śiva must be regarded as quite unique in more senses than one. Having no direct connections whatsoever with the main theme of the Epics, he figures in them as an especially important god. This clearly indicates how firmly the Śaiva religion had established itself during this period. Great is his prowess and mighty his achievements which the Epics proclaim with such *gusto*. Even Viṣṇu glorifies him as the first among the gods and as one who deserved the foremost rank among them. In the *Purāṇas* we find the trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva rising to eminence. Extensive treatment of Śiva including his physical features, his functions, his achievements, his worship etc., are found in the *Purāṇas*."

There are a few references to Śiva in the *Caṅkam* texts (e.g., *Kalittokai* 38, *Puṛaṇāṅūru* 55). It may be observed that Śiva is not one of the presiding gods of the *tiṇai*. Murukaṅ is the Tamiḷ god and Śaivism is taken to the masses mainly due to the Nāyaṅārs. When Śaivism spreads it does so by holding on to Murukaṅ and Śakti. Murukaṅ is the lord of *kuriñci tiṇai* and goddess Kālī called Korṛavai is the presiding deity of *pālai tiṇai* and there are abundant references to both in *Caṅkam* texts. Campantar, for instance, is considered an incarnation of Murukaṅ. *Tirumurukāṅruppaṭai*, a *Caṅkam* text devoted to Murukaṅ, was added to the *Tirumuṛai* corpus. The ninth *Tirumuṛai* contains a hymn on the Murukaṅ of Tiruvitaikkalī composed by Cētaṅār. Throughout his hymns, Campantar sings the androgynous lord and the *Tirumuṛai* begins with the word *tōṭu*, the earrings of the goddess, and ends with

tōtu as classified by Nampi Āṅṭār Nampi. In every eighth verse of his hymns, Campantar sings the episode of Śiva crushing Rāvaṇa, and in the ninth verse, he sings the episode of Viṣṇu and Brahmā attempting to seek the feet and head of Śiva. His poems are filled with anecdotes from *purāṇas* and local oral traditions about Śiva, and many of the descriptions of Śiva found in the *Vedas*, *sūtras*, and epics are found in his hymns. Thus Campantar sang the essence of Śaivism.

Likewise, Campantar's father Śivapādaḥṛdaya wanted to perform a sacrifice to propitiate Śiva and needed financial assistance. Campantar sang the song (3. 4) in praise of Śiva at Tiruvāvaṭuturai. In this episode, Campantar prays to Śiva the brahmin (*vēṭiyāṇ*)—who drank the poison and held it in his throat, who wears the Ganges and the crescent moon on his head, who wears the fragrant *konrai* and other flowers and holds the fire in his hand, who is trustworthy and is loved by all, who burnt the three cities using the *meru* mountain as his bow and *agni* as the arrow, who wears the five-headed snake and has smeared his body with the fragrant sacred ash, who burnt Manmatha, who crushed Rāvaṇa, who cannot be understood even by Viṣṇu and Brahmā, who blesses his devotees even though the Buddhists and Jains criticize him, and one who holds the *triśūla*—that he will continue worshipping Śiva, the father of all beings, in every moment of his life: at times of difficulty, in his old age, when he is afflicted by diseases, when he enjoys pleasure as a result of his *puṇya*, when he suffers as a result of his *pāpa*, when he sways away from *dharma* and treads in the path of *adharmā*, when he is going to die, when he is awake, when he is dreaming, when he is afflicted by symptoms such as sneezing and cough, when he is in a state of poverty, when he is humiliated by others, when he is afraid, when he is burnt by miseries, when he is eating, when he is hungry, and even when he becomes unconscious as a result of disease of bile (*pitta nōy*). In the final stanza, he mentions that those who sing this hymn composed by Nāṇacampantaṅ, who is desirous of the welfare of the world, in praise of Śiva at Tiruvāvaṭuturai will be free from their *karmas* and will not be born again (Pillai & Gomathi, 2018). When he completes the song, a *śivagaṇa* places a bag of gold coins for Campantar. It may be observed that this hymn of Campantar is the essence of Śaiva non-dualism. This mental state can be achieved only when a devotee experiences his identity with Śiva. Campantar and other Nāyaṇārs passed on their inner experience of Śiva through music, as music transcends all boundaries.

Campantar visualized that the three thousand brahmins of Cidambaram were indeed *śivagaṇas* (*Periyapurāṇam* 2068). One of the Nāyaṇārs, Pacupati had the practice of reciting the *Śatarudrīya* every day by standing in the water of the tank up to his neck and folding his hands in reverence above his head. Hence he was called Uruttira Pacupati Nāyaṇār (Sanskrit Rudra Paśupati). In addition, the Śaivas localized every Purāṇic episode of Śiva in various Śiva temples that enabled the permeation of Śaivism.

Thus it can be seen that by the time of the *Mahābhārata* Śiva had become the great god. Śaiva philosophy also had started developing. In the *Vāyupurāṇa* and in the *Līṅgapurāṇa*, Śiva is represented as having declared that, at the time of Viṣṇu's incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, he himself would be born as a bachelor, by name Nakulin (or Lakulin), after entering into a dead body in the burial ground of Kāyārohaṇa, and that he would have four pupils who would be duly initiated into *Maheśvarayoga* (Mahadevan, 1982: 308–309). The *Śaivāgamas* contain the most elaborate details about Śaiva philosophy and worship. Pāṇini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* refers to Śaiva Bhāgavatas, and

describes the Śaivas as those who carry iron tridents (Agrawala, 1963: 383). Patañjali also refers to this under V-2-76 and it is suggested that Patañjali was an Advaitin and a worshipper of Śiva (Sastri, 1944: lxiii).

The *Pāśupatasūtras* (Sastri, 1940), consisting of one hundred and sixty-eight *sūtras* spread out in five *adhyāyas*, are ascribed to Śaivism. The text begins by describing the *Pāśupata* system as a Yogic system (*athātaḥ paśupateḥ pāśupatam yogavidhim vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*). It lays down strict restrictions for practitioners and eulogizes a *śivayogī* as eternally existent in himself and having been born as commanded by Rudra (*rudraḥ provāca tāvat* 5. 8). After every *adhyāya*, the text insists on reciting a Vedic passage (*atredam brahma japeṭ*) and these texts are mostly from the *Śatarudrīya*.

Some key concepts from the *Pāśupatasūtras* are as follows: The first *adhyāya* insists that the follower wear the sacred ash and sleep on it (1. 3); he should wear the *liṅga* (1. 6); he should live in the temple (*āyatanavāstī*) (1. 7) of Lord Mahādeva who is Dakṣiṇāmūrti (1. 9) and worship him through music, dance, *japa*, etc. (1. 8); the aspirant should not look at urine or feces (1. 12); he should not talk to women and *śūdras* (1. 13); he should take a bath (1.15) and having done *prāṇāyāma* (1. 16) should chant the *mantras* of *raudrī*, *gāyatrī* or *bahurūpī* (1. 17); he is of pure mind (1. 18); he is a *yogī* (1. 20); and he develops qualities such as clairvoyance and omniscience (1. 21, 22). The second *adhyāya* introduces the names of the lord—Vāma, Deva, Jyeṣṭha and Rudra— and praises that in his presence, even the inauspicious becomes auspicious (2. 7) and states that: the lord has to be circumambulated towards the right (2. 8) and Rudra has to be invoked in the sacrifice (2. 9), like the *devas* and *pitṛs* (2. 10), and one should do *tapas* (2. 19) and should have one-pointed devotion to Śaṅkara (2. 20). The third *adhyāya* speaks about the greatness of the devotee and that he is free from sins (3. 6) and those who speak ill of him take his sins (3. 8) and he takes their *puṇya* in return (3. 9). It states that he should conduct himself like a corpse devoid of all *saṃskāras* (3. 11) and continue to do *tapas* even when he is humiliated (3. 19). The fourth *adhyāya* eulogizes the *tapas* that has to be performed in secret (4. 1) and maintains that the person should conduct himself as a madman (4. 6) and that people will think of him as crazy and a fool (4. 8). The text mentions that Indra practiced Pāśupata (4. 10) and this path is the best of all (4. 16). It is a good path (*satpathaḥ*) (4. 17), and the others are bad (4. 18). A brahmin who goes near Rudra by this method does not return back to this world (4. 19, 20). The fifth *adhyāya* starts praising the *yogī* who is unattached (5. 1); is eternally existent in his self (5. 3); is birthless (5. 4); is friendly (5. 5); and is born (5. 6) as commanded by Rudra (*rudraḥ provāca tāvat* 5. 8). He lives in a cave or emptied place (5. 9); he has mastered his sense organs (5. 11); he lives on alms (*bhāikṣyam* 5. 14) and eats what he gets in his vessel (5. 15). This *siddha yogī* is not touched by *karmas* or sins (5. 20); he studies the *Vedas*, performs sacrifices, and chants the *gāyatrī* (5. 21); he meditates on the *om* (5. 24) and retains it in his heart (5. 25); he is a *ṛṣi* and a brahmin and a great soul (5. 26); his speech is pure (5.27); he is Maheśvara (5. 28) and lives in the crematory ground (5. 30). He is a righteous person (5. 31); he lives with what he gets (5. 32) and attains *sāyujya* with Rudra (5. 33). The text concludes by mentioning that one who places his mind on Rudra (5. 37, 38) is free from all sorrows (5. 39); he is free from ego and he transcends his sorrows by the *prasāda* of Īśa (5. 40). After every *adhyāya*, the text insists on reciting a Vedic passage (*atredam*

brahma jāpet). These are: *sadyo'jātam prapadyāmi* (1. 40); *sadyo'jātāya vai namaḥ* (1. 41); *bhave bhava nātibhave* (1. 42); *bhajasva mām* (1. 43); *bhavodbhavaḥ* (1. 44); *vāmadevāya namo jyeṣṭhāya namo rudrāya namaḥ* (2. 22); *kālāya namaḥ* (2. 23); *kalavikaraṇāya namaḥ* (2. 24); *balapramathanāya namaḥ* (2. 25); *sarvabhūtadamanāya namaḥ* (2. 26); *mano'manāya namaḥ* (2. 27); *aghorebhyaḥ* (3. 21); *atha ghorebhyaḥ* (3. 22); *ghoraghoratarebhyaśca* (3. 23); *sarvebhyaḥ* (3. 24); *śarvasarvebhyaḥ* (3. 25); *namaste astu rudrarūpebhyaḥ* (3. 26); *tatpuruṣāya vidmahe* (4. 22); *mahādevāya dhīmahi* (4. 23); *tanno rudraḥ pracodayāt* (4. 24); *tīśānaḥ sarvidyānām* (5. 42); *tīśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānām* (5. 43) *brahmaṇo'dhipatirbrahmā* (5. 44); *śivo me astu* (5. 45); *sadā* (5. 46); and *śivaḥ* (5. 47). From the *Pāśupatasūtras* we learn how Śaiva philosophy had become popular and had started developing as a Vedic religion.

Numerous schools of Śaivism started developing and *Sarvadarśanasāṅgraha*, the fourteenth-century text, mentions Raseśvara Śaivas and lists Govindabagavatpāda—the preceptor of Śāṅkara—as an important preceptor of this school. He is the author of the text *Rasa Hr̥daya* (Pandey, 1986: 53). Māheśvaras are of many kinds and Raseśvara Śaivas are classified under them. They admit the union of self with Parameśvara and hold the view that liberation is possible through the acquisition of a stable body and hence laude the virtues of mercury or quicksilver as a means of strengthening the system. Govindabagavatpāda in his *Rasa Hr̥daya* recommends that without quitting his body, the ascetic should inhabit a new body created by Hara and Gaurī which is perfected by mercury. Mercury is produced by the creative conjunction of Hara and Gaurī. Mica is produced from Gaurī, and mercury and mica are identified with Hara and Gaurī. In the Raseśvarasiddhānta many among the gods, the *dāityas*, the *munis* and the mankind, are declared to have attained to liberation in this life by acquiring a divine body through the efficacy of quicksilver (Cowell & Gough, 1908: 140).

It may be pointed out that Śāṅkara was a Śākta. Even today the Śāṅkarācāryas are mainly worshippers of the goddess. Gauḍapāda is the author of *Śrividyaśāstrasūtras*, the *sūtra* text of Śrividya. Gauḍapāda and Govindabagavatpāda were promoters of Śaivism. However, Śāṅkara gave prominence to Vedānta. At the same time, it has to be noted that of the many schools of Śaivism some of them followed some practices which are termed as non-vedic.

In this connection, Pandey (1986: 5–6) observes that the Vedic philosophy reached a happy blend with Śaivism practiced in most parts of the country:

“Whatever may have been the Brahmanic antagonism towards Śaivism in the early Vedic period, as some hold on the basis of reference to its followers as “Phallus worshippers”, etc., this antagonism died out with the passage of time; and Brahmanism and Śaivism got more and more reconciled, as testified by the inclusion of the hundred names of Śiva in the Śukla and the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda, numerous references to him in the Atharvaveda and change in the conception of the god from “terrific” under the name “Rudra” to “the protector of the cattle” under the name “Paśupati”. Towards the end of the Vedic period, in the tenth book of the Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, we find the five Mantras, on which the Lakulīśa Pāśupata system is based...A careful study of the works on the

various Śaiva systems shows that the attitude of the Śaiva Philosophy as a whole towards the Veda was not that of condemnation...nor that of opposition. It was rather like that of a step-daughter, whose agreements and differences with the father are those which the mother has with him. Thus Śaivism owes its allegiance to, acknowledges the authority of the Veda only in so as the Veda agrees with the Śaivāgamas, some of which assert that the Śaivāgama is the essence of the Veda (*Vedasārah Śivāgamaḥ*). It may, however, be noted here that some systems of the Śaiva Philosophy agree with the Veda more than others.”

So far scholars who have consulted the *Śivarahasya* quote the brief description of Śaṅkara found in the ninth *aṁśa*, where he is praised as a great devotee of Śiva. However, the first *aṁśa* of the epic contains a reference to Śaṅkara who is heavily criticized. The verse is as follows:

*durmāyālasitena pāpamatibhāgāyātyaho saṁsṛtiṁ
tyaktvā śaṅkaranāma bodhitakathāpṛtyūṣapānojjhitaḥ |
kāmakrodhajarā vipattimaraṇaiḥ saurim vrajedduḥkhitāḥ
svasyāsyāntaravartipāyasavaram tyaktvā”khumūtram pibet // Śivarahasya (1. 2. 7)*

Translation: Alas! That person who is fed with the nectar of stories of one called Śaṅkara, shines with bad *māyā* and abandoning the good conduct, becomes evil-minded. May the sorrowful one being afflicted by desire, anger, old age, adversity, and death, reach Yama. Having abandoned the supreme *pāyasa*, which is present inside, let him drink rat’s urine. [Translation mine].

The same epic in the ninth *aṁśa* praises Śaṅkara that with *danḍa* in his hand, and his body smeared with *bhasma* and decorated by *rudrākṣa*, he worships the *śivaliṅga* chanting the *Śatarudrīya*. Thus the epic records hatred towards Śaṅkara in the first *aṁśa* and appreciation for him in the ninth. Hatred of Śaṅkara is found in *Padmapurāna* as well; Śiva is said to have declared to Pārvatī, “the doctrine of *māyā* which is a false teaching and is said to be a disguised form of Buddhism was taught by me alone, O devi, having assumed the form of a Brahmin in the *Kali* age” (Mahadevan, 1954: 183).

Thus this provides us the ground for the tension that existed between the Śaivas and the Advaitins and the reconciliation they had to undergo to effectively succeed in the polemical Indian philosophical scene. *Given that the classification of a school of Indian Philosophy as orthodox or heterodox depends upon their acceptance or rejection of the Vedas, the Śaivas focussed on developing Śaivism as a Vedic religion and non-dual Śaivism so that their system could be accepted at par with the strong Advaita.*

The *Śivarahasya* is a huge effort of the Śaivas in this regard. Consisting of more than one lakh verse, the epic is devoted to developing Śaivism and Śiva worship. The *Śivarahasya* has twelve books (*aṁśas*). These twelve *aṁśas* are: *Māheśa*, *Bhava*, *Hara*, *Śiva*, *Bharga*, *Śaṅkara*, *Ugra*, *Bhīma*, *Sadāśiva*, *Īśvara*, *Mahādeva* and *Īśa*. There is no single connected story. The epic documents many episodes related to the supremacy of Śiva, the greatness of Śaiva pilgrimage sites, and the greatness of sacred ash. It also contains many *stotras*, the hagiography of the sixty-three

Nāyanārs, and ends with the marriage of Śiva and Pārvaṭī and the birth and exploits of Kumāra. Some of the key ideas can be described as follows:

The first *aṃśa* mentions that Parameśvara can be known through *Vedānta* alone by those who aspire for liberation (*mumukṣus*), and that the four *Vedas* are his breath (1. 3. 1) and he is the creator of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Rudra, and Sun (1. 3. 3). He is the cause of everything, and he does not have a cause and is worshipped by brahmins through sacrifices and utterances of *mantras* (1. 3. 4). The eleventh chapter provides the names of the twelve *aṃśas* and outlines the plan of the *itihāsa*. This *aṃśa* contains a detailed description of *kailāsa*. The second *aṃśa* deals with the description of *maṇidvīpa*, and the goddess is described as Kāmeśvarī seated on the lap of Kāmeśvara. The goddess takes the form of the mistress of the three cities (*tripurākhyā maheśvarī*) and she is served by the goddesses representing the fifteen days (*tithi nityās* 2. 17. 26).

The third *aṃśa* describes Gāyatrī's penance and a conversation between Janaka and Yājñavalkya is recorded. The third *aṃśa* records a good amount of *Namaka* alone from the *Śatarudrīya*. The fourth *aṃśa* contains the *Śukamahimnastotra* composed by Śuka. This hymn is filled with Upaniṣadic sentences and quotes the examples of rope snake, shell silver, and *vācārambhana śruti* (4. 20. 19). Śuka addresses Śiva: "Just as people run falsely towards a mirage, in the same way, these people not realizing you who is in the heart run towards *samsāra* (4. 20. 44). There is no I and You. There is no difference. There is no effect and means. By looking at you there results neither liberation nor bondage (4. 20. 46). Only by constantly meditating on you who is inside and by enquiring who am I (4. 20. 48) and what this world is does one become fit for liberation. One should constantly meditate thinking about the peaceful, eternal, and non-destructive beloved of Umā who is within him. By that can bliss be ensured (4. 20. 49)."

The fifth *aṃśa* deals with the greatness of the twelve *vyotirliṅgas*. The sixth *aṃśa* contains the popular *Ṛbhu Gītā*. The *Jābālopaniṣad* (6) while describing the state of *paramahamsas* enumerates Ṛbhu with other sages such as Jaḍabharata and Dattātreya (Kane, 1941b: 941). Śiva narrates the *Gītā* to Ṛbhu so that the latter can become free from his *pāśas* (6. 1. 28). The second chapter mentions that Vyāsas are born in every *yugas* and having got the *sūtras* from the beloved of Umā from *kailāsa*, they give them to the world (6. 2. 2) and contains many *brahmasūtras* such as *janmādyasya yataḥ, yoniḥ śāstrasya, heyatvācanācca* etc. Thus the *Ṛbhu Gītā* deals with interpreting Advaita in the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Brahmasūtras* in the light of Śaiva non-dualism. The intention is to present Vedāntic absolutism and convert it into Śaiva absolutism. The text is critical of those who torture their bodies by observing various fasts prescribed in the *Vedas* with the notion of difference and stresses that they can get *mokṣa* only by devotion to the feet of Śiva (6. 11. 65). Brahman is Śiva, and the text extolls *liṅga* worship and mentions that brahmins can easily attain knowledge by worshipping the *liṅga* (6. 22. 58). As there exists only consciousness, there is no difference between man and woman (6. 23. 54); even rocks can be induced into the spiritual path (6. 23. 56); and there is no bondage, no liberation, no female, no male, no *stotras* and no *śāstras* (6. 26. 21–22). The text describes Śiva as both the efficient and material cause of the world by praising that just as the cobweb is in the spider, the world is also in *Īśvara* and emanates from him (6. 32. 52). The text also

brings in the discussion about primary and secondary meanings (*jahad* and *ajahad lakṣaṇā* 6. 40. 27–28).

The seventh *amśa* deals with the greatness of places such as Kāśī, Aruṇācala, Cidambaram, Kumbhakoṇam and Tiruvīṭaimarutūr. The eighth *amśa* deals with the greatness of *bilva* leaves, *rudrākṣa* and *śatarudrīya* and describes the worship of Śiva by Garuḍa, serpents and elephants.

The ninth *amśa* is in the form of a conversation between Śiva and Pārvaṭī. The sixteenth chapter contains information about Śaṅkara. To restore the people into various *varṇas* and *āśramas* and to fight against various philosophers such as Jains, Buddhists, and Mimāṃsakas, who contend that *karma* alone is capable of giving result and god (*tīśa*) is not needed, Śaṅkara, the best among brahmins, is born out of Śiva's *amśa* in the *Śalalagrāma* of Kerala (9. 16. 15). Being invested with the sacred thread by his mother, he masters the *Vedas* with all the *aṅgas* at the age of six. After consulting with his mother he becomes an ascetic. With *danḍa* in his hand, and his body smeared with *bhasma* and decorated by *rudrākṣa*, he worships the *śivaliṅga* chanting the *Śatarudrīya*. With the knowledge given by Śiva, he shines like a moon. He writes a *bhāṣya* in *kaliyuga* for the sake of people whose intellect is tough with logic (*tarkakarkaṣabuddhayaḥ* 9. 16. 24). He interprets the statements of Vyāsa, which are dualistic, as Advaitic and then praises Śiva. Śiva manifests himself out of the *liṅga* and speaks to Śaṅkara, who is endowed with four disciples, "You are born of my *amśa*. You are born to establish Advaita (*advaitasiddhaye*) among Jains and Buddhists. You are destined to live only up to thirty-two years and come to *kailāsa* soon. Take these five *sphaṭika liṅgas* and wearing *bhasma* and *rudrākṣa* and chanting the *Śatarudra* perform *pūjā* to these *liṅgas* and be successful." Śaṅkara took those *yoga*, *bhoga*, *vara*, *mukti* and *mokṣa liṅgas* and doing *arcana* to those *liṅgas* he was victorious over Buddhists and Jains. He then attained *siddhi* at Kāñcī (9. 16. 47). The text does not mention the names of Śaṅkara's parents. This *amśa* also contains information about sixty-three of Śiva's devotees.

The tenth *amśa* describes the greatness of the sacred ash, *rudrākṣa*, and how *Śatarudrīya* has to be used in the context of *homas*. The eleventh *amśa* deals with elaboration on *śivapūjā*. The final *amśa* begins with the episode of Dakṣa's sacrifice. Satī asks Dakṣa why Mahādeva was not invited to the sacrifice. Dakṣa replies that the *Vedas* mention that Viṣṇu has to be worshipped during the sacrifice and hence he has not invited Rudra. Satī then asks the *Vedas* to reveal the greatness of Śiva. The four *Vedas* praise the glory of Mahādeva. The epic ends with the episode of the goddess being born as Pārvaṭī, her marriage with Śiva, and the birth of Kumāra and his slaying of Tārakāsura and other demons. The epic describes the *phalaśruti* and praises the various places of Śaiva pilgrimage, especially Kāśī, and concludes with a prayer for the welfare of all (12. 40. 73).

The authors completed the twelve *amśas* as planned and added materials as they proceeded with the epic. The hagiography of the Nāyaṅārs, who lived from the fifth century to the ninth, occurs only in the ninth *amśa* and the epic does not mention Nampī Āṅṅār Nampī (early tenth century), the compiler of the *Tirumūrais*. Hence this epic can be dated from 1 to 9 CE. Anantānandagiri's *Śaṅkaravijaya* (AŚV) mentions Pratipakṣacaṇḍabhairava who argues with Śaṅkara citing the

Atharvaśiropaniṣad and the *Śivarahasya* (Bader, 2000: 221). Thus this epic should have been very popular by the fourteenth century.

On the Tamiḷ side, Campantar and Appar worked significantly towards developing Śaivism as a Vedic religion. Appar's contribution is noteworthy. Although he was a farmer, *vēḷālar*, by birth, his hymns are filled with Vedic references. Hymns in his sixth *Tirumurai*, for example, are filled with such references thereby bringing out the Vedic nature of Śaivism (Sainath, 2019). Even before Campantar, Tirumūlar was responsible for the development of Śaiva philosophy and Kāraikkāl Ammaiḷ was noteworthy in the development of Śaiva *bhakti*. Campantar mentions different kinds of *phalaśrutis* (*tirukkaṭṭaikkāppu*) in the eleventh verse of his hymns. This shows how Śaivism spread to the masses as it offered the devotees whatever they wished for. It may be stated that Tirumūlar, Kāraikkāl Ammaiḷ, Appar, and Campantar laid down the four strong pillars, the building was constructed by Cuntarar, and it was beautifully painted by Māṅikkavācakar. The other Nāyaṅārs embellished it and Cēkkiḷār constructed its *gopura*. At this juncture, it is extremely important to mention the role played by the Pāṅṅiya queen Maṅkaiyarkkaraciḷār for the establishment of Śaivism as the religion of the Pāṅṅiya country, overthrowing Jainism. It is she who invites Campantar to Maturai and requests that he engage in debate with the Jains. She suggests to her husband, the king who was a Jain, that he should adopt the religion of the winner. She even resolves that she will end her life if some harm befalls the child Campantar in the course of these trials. Her confidence in Campantar worked and Campantar won all the three trials presented to him: to cure the king of his fever and to prove the validity of Śaivism by subjecting his compositions to trials by fire and water. In addition, Campantar cured the Pāṅṅiya king of his hunchback and left Maturai.

After the period of Śāṅkara, the rise of the *bhakti* systems and the efforts of Śaivas to develop their religion as a Vedic religion and to react to the Advaita of Śāṅkara indicates an atmosphere of tension in the Indian philosophical scene. The followers of Śāṅkara should have had a tough time passing on the Vedāntic Absolutism propagated by their most popular teacher. At the same time, under the pressure of *bhakti*, they should have made some accommodations to compose some texts involving Advaita *bhakti* which led to the enrichment of the entire *bhakti* literature in Sanskrit.

The *Maṅimēkalai* refers to *ghana pāṭha* (*nāḷiṭai naṅṅūḷ naṅkaṇam navirri* 13. line 24) and describes the Vedic religion (27. lines 100–105) which was prominent at its times in addition to other schools (Nattar et al., 2011). Dated to the sixth century, it records the views of various philosophical schools at its time and we find the description of Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, Vaidikas, and the Brahmavādins. While describing the Piramavāṭi's (Brahmavādin) view of the world, the *Maṅimēkalai* mentions,

pēruḷa kellām pirama vāṭiyōr
tēva ṅiṭṭa muṭṭai yeṅraṅaṅ (27. lines 96, 97)

Translation: The Piramavāṭi described the big world as the (cosmic) egg of a god (Brahmā). [Translation mine].

The commentator Auvai Duraisami Pillai (Nattar et al., 2011), mentions that this is not the view of the six faiths of Hinduism and this view is found in the *purāṇas*. He further mentions that this view is mentioned in verse 9 of the first

chapter of *Manudharma*. It can be said that this view documented as referring to the Piramavāti can also be interpreted as referring to an Advaitin. When Cāttaṅār took pains to record the views of Aḷavaivāti, Caivavāti, Piramavāti, Vaiṇavavāti, Vētavāti, Ācīvakavāti, Nikaṅṭavāti, Cāṅkiyavāti, Vaiceṭikavāti, and Pūtavāti (Nattar et al., 2011), he would not have excluded the Advaitin. Hence this reference to Piramavāti mentioned in the *Maṇimēkalai* should be interpreted as referring to the follower of Śāṅkara who in the *bhakti* period tries to add a theistic touch to his concept of the world, rather than describing it as an illusion like the serpent in a rope. At the same time it may be pointed out that although in the works of Śāṅkara the world is described as an illusion, his followers offered various explanations within Advaita while they enriched the system without deviating from the three pivotal points: Brahman is real (*brahma satyam*), the world is false (*jaganmithyā*), and the self is non-different from Brahman (*jīvo brahmaiva nāparaḥ*). Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, for example, in his *Vedāntaparibhāṣā* covers many of the views of the Advaitins and while describing the creation of the world, does mention Hiranyagarbha, the first *jīva*, as the originator of beings (*itara nikhīla prapañcotpattau hiranyagarbhādidvāra*) (Adhvarindra, 1883). It is well known that the cosmos is visualized as an egg (*brahmāṇḍa*). Śāṅkara while commenting on *Bhagavadgītā* (7. 4) describes the *mahat tattva* which is the cause of *buddhi* and the translator (Gambhirananda, 1997) mentions that *mahat* is *Hiranyagarbha*. In his commentary on *Bhagavadgītā* 8. 4, Śāṅkara too refers to *Hiranyagarbha* who is present in the sun and sustains the organs of all creatures. Viewed in this light, it can be said that in a tough theistic environment, the Advaitin adds a slight theistic shade so that he can sell his product. Thus, in all ways, the Piramavāti mentioned in the *Maṇimēkalai* refers to the Advaitin.

Of particular importance is that Cāttaṅār devotes considerable time to describing the Mīmāṃsakas and the Vaidikas. This shows that Vedic and Mīmāṃsīc schools were flourishing by the sixth century and renders strength to my initial argument that Śāṅkara would not have been born in the sixth century CE.

Of the various hagiographies of Śāṅkara, two are famous, Mādhava's *Śāṅkaradigvijaya* and AŚV. A majority of the manuscripts of both these hagiographies favor the view that Śāṅkara was born in Kālaṭi in Kerala and his parents were Śivaguru and Āryāmbā. Of these, AŚV dated to the fourteenth century (Bader, 2000: 28) is the oldest of the two. AŚV has two recensions, and according to the first recension Śāṅkara was born in Cidambaram and his parents were Viśvajit and Viśiṣṭhā. According to the second recension, Śāṅkara was born in Kālaṭi in Kerala and his parents were Śivaguru and Āryāmbā. Two Calcutta editions of the AŚV printed in 1868 and 1881 follow the first recension and the Madras edition prepared by Veezhinathan and printed in 1971 follows the second recension. While preparing the Madras edition Veezhinathan adopted the version favoring Śāṅkara's birth in Kālaṭi on the basis of seven manuscripts. Yet the remaining nine manuscripts he utilized cite Cidambaram as the birthplace of Śāṅkara (Bader, 2000: 36).

The *Śivarahasya* mentions that Śāṅkara was born in Kerala and that the Naiyāyikas, Jains, and Buddhists were the opponents of Śāṅkara, whereas from the works of Śāṅkara, we know that the Sāṅkhyas were his main opponents. It can be said that this Śāṅkara that *Śivarahasya* praises as a great devotee of Śiva

should have been a prominent Śaṅkarācārya. And this Śaṅkarācārya could have accommodated Śaivism as both Gauḍapāda and Govindabhagavatpāda were promoters of Śaivism. Given that the Advaitins are always open to various hermetics, portraying themselves as Śaivas enables the Advaitins to accommodate their philosophy in a *bhakti* period. Their open worship of the *śivaliṅga* shows this accommodation as the *sphaṭika liṅga* can be explained as the closest representation of *Nirguṇa Brahman*. And this would have made the authors of *Śivarahasya* mention this prominent Śaṅkarācārya.

The *Śivarahasya* while describing Campantar's mother mentions,
āsīt bhagavatī nāmnā tasya dharmakuṭumbinī /

dharmānuṣṭhānaniṣṭhā sā vaśiṣṭhagrhiṅsamā || Śivarahasya (9. 45. 25)

Translation: There was his *dharmapatnī* (of Śivapādahr̥daya, father of Campantar) called Pakavatiyār (Sanskrit Bhagavatī). She was established in *dharma* and was equivalent to Vaśiṣṭha's wife. [Translation mine].

Vaśiṣṭha's wife can be called Vaśiṣṭhā. This is very close to Śaṅkara's mother Viśiṣṭhā in the Calcutta edition of AŚV which mentions that Viśvajith, Śaṅkara's father went to the forest and Viśiṣṭhā conceived by Śiva's grace. Given that all these hagiographies were written in the *bhakti* period, during which Śaivism had become very popular, it is possible to say that these descriptions were given to portray Śaṅkara as an incarnation of Śiva. Tiruñāṇacampantar is to Śaivas as Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is to Advaitins. When the Śaivas are developing their religion and competing with the Advaitins, it is not surprising that they are comparing Campantar's mother with Śaṅkara's mother. Thus, this gives room to possibly maintain that Śaṅkara's parents were Viśvajit and Viśiṣṭhā.

This also throws light on the similarities of credentials between the systems of Advaita and Śaivism. Both Āryāmbā and Pakavatiyār are respectful epithets. The Madras edition of AŚV while describing the birth of Śaṅkara states that trees were laden with fruit, animals eschewing their enmity were gifted with tranquility, the heart of Veda Vyāsa was filled with joy, and the book fell from the hands of a Buddhist in an assembly and dropped to the ground. We find similar descriptions of Campantar in the *Periyapurāṇam*. When Campantar is born, all people experience happiness, when he goes to Kālahastī the animals meet him leaving their enmity, and when he goes to Maturai to engage in debate with the Jains, the Jains experienced similar omens. Maṇḍana Miśra's house is referred to as having parrots engaging in philosophical discussions (Veezhinathan, 1971: 175–176). A similar description of parrots repeating the Vedic passages uttered by the students is found in Campantar (1. 33. 2). Both Śaṅkara and Campantar are described as being born when the planets were in their exalted positions. Such images, during the birth of a great personality, can be found in Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* and Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* (Bader, 2000: 80). In the words of the *Periyapurāṇam* (1899), Campantar was born to nourish and raise the Vedic path to supremacy, to firmly establish the Śaiva path, and to nourish and promote the beings of the world to welfare. Of special mention is Cēkkiḷār's description of Campantar as the meaning of *Vedas (arumariap poruḷena vanitār 2317)*, his poem as the *Veda* that could be written (*eḷutu māmaraiyām patikkattu icai pōrri 2273*) and so on (Cekkilar, 1975). It may be pointed out that almost fifty percent of the *Periyapurāṇam* deals with the hagiography of Campantar.

The *sthalapurāṇa* of Kāmākṣī Ammaṅ temple at Kāñcīpuram mentions that Ādi Śāṅkarācārya rescued the temple from the Buddhists and having rejuvenated the temple installed the *śrīcakra*. The Annapūraṇī shrine has two entrances, *dharmadvāra* and *bhikṣadvāra* (*Śrī Kāñci Kāmākṣī Ampaḷ Stala Varalāru*, 2008: 13). Cēkkiḷār while describing the hagiography of Campantar mentions that he worshipped the goddess at Kāmakkōṭṭam which is the ancient name of Kāñcīpuram (*kāmak kōṭṭam aṅaintu iraiñciṅār* 2896). It is interesting to note that the commentator (Cekkilar, 1975) mentions that Campantar, the *paramācārya* of Śaivas, who did not accept any other god apart from Śiva, visited only Śiva temples and none others. Given this, his visit to the Kāmakkōṭṭam shows the greatness of this temple. Campantar is known for his refutation of the Jains and the Buddhists. In every tenth verse of his hymns, he criticizes them as false ascetics. Hence when the Advaitins restored Kāmakkōṭṭam, it is not surprising that he visited the temple, as he saw it as a triumph over Buddhists.

Campantar proved the greatness of Śiva and the sacred ash by winning his trials against the Jains and thus establishing the supremacy of Vedic Śaivism against the heterodox religions. During his sacred thread ceremony, he sings that it is the five-syllabled *mantra* of Śiva that appears as *mantras* and *Vedas* and has to be chanted by brahmins during the *sandhyā* periods (3. 22. 2). In the last poem, he composed before merging into the *śivajyoti* (3. 49. 1) he sings that the true import of the four *Vedas* is the sacred name of the lord which is *na ma c ci vā ya* (*na ma śi vā ya*).

The integration of the Advaitins further gave a new shape by portraying Śāṅkara as an *avatāra* of Śiva. Śāṅkara's story is cast within the framework of Śaiva mythology (Bader, 2000: 100) and there was mutual acceptance and exchange by the followers of both these systems. AŚV, for example, mentions Paramatakālānala who accepted the teachings of Śāṅkara, yet maintained his Śaiva orientation. His followers thought that the Advaita proclaimed by Śāṅkara is hard to understand but the Śaivism this *guru* has explained is to their liking and they experience *kailāsa* (Bader, 2000: 255–257). Hence it is the Śaiva accommodation made by the Advaitins that earned them a place in the *Śivarahasya*. Commentary on the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* is attributed to Śāṅkara, which of course must be one of the later Śāṅkarācāryas. In his connection, Bader (Bader, 2000: 254) points out that the hagiographies could scarcely afford to isolate Śāṅkara from the popular *bhakti* cults if they wished to succeed in presenting him to a wider audience as the foremost of religious leaders.

Another question that arises when we discuss the date of Ādi Śāṅkarācārya is the explanation of *Indra Sarasvatī* title maintained by the Kāñcī Śāṅkarācāryas. There are ten titles usually assumed by ascetics: *Tīrtha*, *Āśrama*, *Vana*, *Araṇya*, *Giri*, *Parvata*, *Sāgara*, *Sarasvatī*, *Bhāratī*, and *Purī*. *Indra Sarasvatī* is not one of them. Reference to the *daśanāmī* class of ascetics occurs only after the thirteenth century. Two names *Tīrtha* and *Giri* were prevalent by this time. The prominent ascetic with a *Tīrtha* title is Madhvācārya alias Ānandatīrtha. *It has to be pointed out in this connection that it is Viśveśvara Sarasvatī, the guru of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, in the sixteenth century who in his Yatidharmasaṅgraha lays down the rule that ascetics should choose from any of the ten names* (Bader, 2000: 273).

As far as ascetic names are concerned none of the texts such as *Upaniṣads*, *Mahābhārata*, or the earlier *Dhārmāsūtra* texts of Manu, Gautama, Āpastamba,

Viṣṇu, or the *Purāṇas* such as *Kūrma* and *Agni* that Kane refers to mention that ascetics should take an ascetic name. The only text that refers to the taking of ascetic names is the medieval text *Dharmasindhu* (Kane, 1941a: 960–961):

“In a low, moderate and loud voice the entrant should declare ‘om, bhūḥ, I have given up everything, om bhuvah, I haveom svaḥ, I haveom bhūr bhuvah svaḥ, I have given up everything’ and should discharge water in the reservoir of water with the words, ‘may there be no injury to all creatures from me, svāhā.’ He should pluck out the top knot, take out his sacred thread and hold them in his hand and offer them in water with water with the words ‘water is indeed all deities, I sacrifice (the top-knot and sacred thread) to all gods, svāhā’ and then he should send up a prayer to Vāsudeva. Then he should remove his wearing apparel and walk five steps with his face to the north. Then the ācārya should bow to the entrant and should hand over to the latter a piece of loin cloth and upper garment and a staff. The entrant should wear them and hold the staff with appropriate mantras and also a water jar and an āsana (a seat). He should then hold a fuel-stick in his hand, bow to his guru, sit down in the eagle posture and make a request to the guru in the words ‘Oh teacher, who are like the Lord of the Universe to me, save me who am scorched by the fire of saṃsāra and who am bitten by Death; I have thrown myself on your mercy’ and also repeat the verse ‘yo brahmānam’ (Śvetāśvatara Up. VI. 18...). Having waited upon the guru with these words and placing his right knee on the ground, he should clasp the feet of his guru and should say ‘teach, Sir, *brahma* to me.’ The guru should contemplate on his soul as *brahman*, should recite over a conch full of water the sacred syllable ‘om’ twelve times, should pour the water from the conch on his disciple, should recite the propitiatory verse ‘sām no mitraḥ’ (R̥g. I. 90. 9), then lay his hand on the head of the disciple, should recite the Puruṣa hymn (R̥g. X. 90), should place his hand on the heart of the disciple and mutter the mantra ‘I place thy heart in disciplined obedience to me,’ the guru should then mutter in the right ear of the disciple the syllable ‘om’ and should enlighten him about the significance of ‘om’ and of pañcīkaraṇa; he should then impart to the disciple one of the four great Vedānta sentences (mahāvākya) ‘prajñānam brahma’ (Ait. Up. III. 3), ‘āyam-ātmā brahma’ (Bṛ. Up. II. 5. 19), ‘tat tvam-asi’ (Chān. Up. VI. 8. 7), ‘aham brahmāsmi’ (Bṛ. Up. I. 4. 10) in accordance with the tradition of his school and enlighten him about the meaning thereof. Then he should give to the disciple a name ending in tīrtha, āśrama &c. according to the tradition of his order. Then the guru may bring about what is called paryaṅkaśauca and give to the disciple the *yogaṭṭa*.”

Thus it makes sense that Gauḍapādācārya, Govindabhaḡavatpādācārya, Śaṅkarabhaḡavatpādācārya, Sureśvarācārya, Padmapādācārya, Toṭakācārya, Hastāmalakācārya, Sarvajñātman or even Rāmānujācārya had no ascetic names.

Indra is the most invoked god in the *R̥gveda* (Bhatt, 2008: 71). The Kāñcī Śaṅkarācāryas could have added *Indra* to their ascetic name to show their *R̥gvedic* affiliation. It is because only celibate ascetics born in the family of *R̥gvedic* brahmins

can become pontiffs in the Kāñcī lineage (Veezhinathan, personal communication; Aiyer & Sastri, 1992: 98, 99).

The *Dharmasūtras* refer to both triple-staffed and single-staffed ascetics although the reference to triple-staffed ascetics is more. This is mirrored exactly in the *Caṅkam* texts as well in the ratio of 3:1. The Code of Ethics of Ascetics as provided by Kane (Kane, 1941b: 930–965) may be cited here:

“In the Br. Up (II. 4. 1) we see that Yājñavalkya when about to become a *parivrājaka* (a wandering ascetic) tells his wife Maitreyi that he was going to leave home and that he wanted to divide whatever wealth he had between her and her co-wife Kātyāyanī. This shows that a *parivrājaka* had even then to leave home and wife and to give up all belongings. The same Upaniṣad in another place (III. 5. 1) states ‘those who realize *Ātman* give up the hankering after progeny, possessions and heavenly worlds and practise the beggar’s mode of life; therefore the brāhmaṇa, having completely mastered (and so risen beyond) mere learning, should seek to be like a child (i.e. should not make a parade of his latent capacities or knowledge) and having completed (gone beyond) knowledge and *bālyā* (child-like behaviour) he should attain to the position of a *muni*, and having risen beyond the stage of a *muni* or non-*muni*, should become a real brāhmaṇa (one who has realized *brahman*). Vide also Br. Up. IV. 4. 22 for similar words and sentiments. The Jābālopaniṣad (5) declares that the ascetic (*parivrātī*) wears discoloured (not white) garments, has a tanned head, has no possessions, is pure, hates (or injures) no one, begs for alms and thereby tends to attain non-difference from *brahman*. In the Paramahaṁsa, the Brahma, the Nāradaparivrājaka, and the Sannyāsa Upaniṣads numerous rules are laid down about sannyāsa. But the antiquity and the authenticity of these Upaniṣads is extremely doubtful and therefore passing them over attention will be confined to the dharmasūtras and other ancient smṛtis.

Gaut. III, 10-24, Āp. Dh. S. II. 9. 21. 7-20, Baud. Dh. S. II. 6. 21-27 and II. 10, Vas. Dh. S. X., Manu VI. 33-86, Yāj. III. 56-66, Vaik. IX. 9, Viṣṇu Dh. S. 96, Śāntiparva chap. 246 and 279, Ādiparva chap. 119. 7-21 and Āśvamedhika 46. 18-46, Śaṅkhasmṛti (VII. in verse), Dakṣa VII. 28-38, Kūrmapurāṇa (Uttarārdha, chap. 28), Agnipurāṇa 161 and many other smṛtis and purāṇas dilate upon the characteristics and duties of ascetics (*yatidharma*). Some of the salient features are set out below with a few references.

- (1) In order to qualify himself for sannyāsa, a person had to perform a sacrifice to Prajāpati in which whatever he had he distributed to priests and the poor and the helpless (Manu VI. 38, Yāj. III. 56, Viṣṇu Dh. S. 96. 1, Śaṅkha VII.1). The Yatidharmasaṅgraha (p. 13) prescribes that the Prajāpatyeṣṭi should be performed by him who had kept the three vedic fires and the iṣṭi to Agni should be performed by others who kept only the grhya fire. The Jābālopaniṣad 4 adds that the sacrifice should be for Agni (and not for Prajāpati as some hold). The Nṛsimhapurāṇa (60. 2–4) requires that before entering upon this order one should perform eight śrāddhas. The Nṛsimhapurāṇa 58. 36 allows every one who is a vedic student to become an ascetic if his tongue, his sexual emotions,

- his appetite for food and his speech are pure (i.e. under strict control)...Manu is careful to point out (VI. 35–37) that a man should fix his mind on mokṣa after studying the Veda, procreating sons, performing sacrifices i.e. after discharging his debts to the sages, the pitrs and gods. Baud. Dh. S. II. 10. 3–6 and Vaik. IX. 6 state that an householder who has no children or whose wife is dead or who has established his children in the path of dharma or who is over 70 may become an ascetic. Kauṭilya (II. 1) prescribes that if a person embraces the order of ascetics without making proper provision for his wife and sons he shall be punished with the first amercement. He has to deposit his fires in himself and leave home (Manu VI. 38).
- (2) After leaving home, wife, children and possessions, he should dwell outside the villages, should be homeless and stay under a tree or in an un-inhabited house wherever he may be when the sun sets and should always wander from place to place; but he may remain in one place only in the rainy season (Manu VI. 41, 43–44, Vas. Dh. S. X.12–15, Śaṅkha VII. 6). Śaṅkha (quoted by the Mī. on Yāj. III. 58) allows him to stay in one place only for two months in the rains, while Kaṇva says that he may stay one night in a village and five in a town (except in the rains). When he follows the rule of staying four or two months in one place, he should do so from the full moon of Āṣāḍha or an ascetic may always stay on the banks of the Ganges.
 - (3) He should always wander alone without a companion, as by so doing he will be free from attachments and the pangs of separation. Dakṣa (VII. 34–38) emphasizes this point very well ‘the real ascetic always stays alone; if two stay together, they form a pair; if three stay together they are like a village and if more (than three stay together) then it becomes like a town. An ascetic should not form a pair or a village or a town; by doing so he swerves from his *dharma*, since (if two or more stay together) they begin to exchange news about the ruling prince, about the alms obtained and by close contact sentiments of affection, jealousy or wickedness arise between them. Bad ascetics engage in many activities viz. expounding (texts) for securing money or honour and also gathering pupils round them. There are only four proper actions for an ascetic and no fifth viz. contemplation, purity, begging, always staying alone’. Narada says ‘there are six acts which ascetics must do as if ordered by the king under the threat of a penalty viz. begging, *japa*, contemplation, bath (thrice daily), purity and worship of Śiva or Viṣṇu (quoted in Yati-dh. p. 62 and Sm. M. p. 188).
 - (4) He should be celibate, should always be devoted to contemplation and spiritual knowledge and should be unattached to all objects of sense and pleasure (Manu VI. 41 and 49, Gaut. III. 11).
 - (5) He should move about avoiding all trouble or injury to creatures, should make all creatures safe with him, should bear with indifference all disrespect, should entertain no anger towards him who is furious with him, should utter benedictions over him also who runs him down, should never utter an untruth (Manu VI. 40, 47–48, Yāj. III. 61, Gaut. III. 23).

- (6) He should neither kindle śrauta fires nor gṛhya fire nor even ordinary fire for cooking food and should subsist on food obtained by begging (Manu VI. 38 and 43, Āp. Dh. S. I. 9. 21. 10, Ādiparva 91. 12).
- (7) He may enter a village for begging food only once a day, he should not ordinarily stay in a village at night (except in the rains) but if he stays at all he should do so only for one night (Gaut. III. 13 and 20, Manu VI. 43, 55).
- (8) He should beg alms from seven houses without selecting them beforehand (Vas. Dh. S. X. 7, Śāṅkha VII. 3, Ādi, 119. 12 'five or ten houses'). Baud. Dh. S. (II. 10. 57–58) prescribes that he should visit for alms the houses of brāhmaṇa householders of the Śālīna and Yāyāvāra types and should only wait for as much time as would be required for milking a cow. Baud. Dh. S. II. 10. 69 quotes the view of others that an ascetic may take alms from persons of all varṇas or food from only one among dvijātis. Vas. X. 24 also says he should beg of brāhmaṇas only. The Vāyupurāṇa I. 18. 17 prescribes that ascetics should not eat food belonging to one man (but should eat food collected from several houses), or flesh or honey, should not accept āmaśrāddha (i.e. śrāddha with uncooked food), should not use salt directly or by itself (i.e., they may eat vegetables in cooking which salt has been used)...In giving food to an ascetic first water is poured on his hand, then food is given and then again water is poured on his hand (Parāśara I. 53 quoted by Haradatta on Gaut. V. 16). Vide Āp. Dh. S. II. 2. 4.10 and Yāj. I.107.
- (9) He should go out for begging when the smoke from kitchens has ceased to rise and when the noise of pestles has died down and the live coals (in the kitchen) have been extinguished and the plates used for the dining (by the householders) have been kept aside i.e he should beg food in the evening (Manu VI. 56, Yāj. III. 59, Vas. X. 8, Śāṅkha VII. 2). He should not take as alms honey or flesh (Vas. X. 24). He should not endeavour to secure alms by the practice of predicting, interpreting portents and omens or by the practice of describing the consequences indicated by them, nor by astrology nor by expounding the principles of a lore nor by casuistry (or discussion) nor should he approach a house that is already besieged by hermits, brāhmaṇas, birds and dogs, beggars or others (Manu VI. 50–51).
- (10) He should not eat food to satiety, but should eat only as much as is necessary to keep body and soul together and should not feel delight when he gets substantial alms nor feel dejected when he gets little or nothing (Manu VI. 57 and 59, Vas. X. 21, 22 and 25, Yāj. III. 59). There is a famous verse 'an ascetic should take only eight morsels of food, a forest hermit 16, a householder 32 and a vedic student an unlimited number' (Āp. Dh. S. II. 4. 9. 13, Baud. Dh. S. II. 10. 68).
- (11) He should hoard nothing and he should own or possess nothing except his tattered garments, his water jar, begging bowl (Manu VI. 43–44, Gaut. III. 10, Vas. X. 6). Devala quoted by the Mit. on Yāj. III. 58 declares that the ascetic should possess only a water-jar, a pavitra (cloth for straining water), pādukās, an āsana and a kanthā (wallet for protection from extreme cold). The Mahābhārata states that wearing ochre-coloured garments, shaving the head, and keeping a a water jar and three staffs—these are only outward signs meant to secure food and do not lead to mokṣa (dialogue of Janaka and Sulabhā). The Mahābhāṣya

- (vol. I. p. 365) also declares that a man is known to be a parivrājaka on seeing his three staffs. The Vāyupurāṇa I. 8 (quoted by Aparārka pp. 949–950) lays down what he should possess. He should take a staff of bamboo the outward surface of which is intact, which is not formidable and which has the *parvans* (the parts between the joints) of equal length, which is surrounded by a rope of cow's tail hair four aṅgulas in length and has three knots and which he holds in his right hand; he should have a śikya (loop on which to carry his jar or other things) made of kuśa or cotton or hemp threads or strings and of the form of a lotus and six muṣṭis (fists) in length; he should also have a water jar and a pātra (vessel or bowl for begging); he may have a seat (āsana) of wood square or round in size for sitting on or for washing his feet; he should have a loin-cloth to cover his private parts and a kanthā (patched garment or wallet) for protection against cold and he may have two pādūkās (sandals). He should have only these and should not accumulate anything else.
- (12) He should wear garments only for covering his private parts and may wear such garments as were worn by others and are used by him after washing (Gaut. III. 17–18), while Āp. Dh. S. (II. 9. 21. 11–12) states that he should wear clothes thrown away by others and that some say that he may be naked. Vas. (X. 9–11) says that he should cover his body with a piece of cloth (śāṭī) or with deer skin or with grass cut down for cows. Baud. Dh. S. II. 6. 24 requires that his garments should be ochre-coloured (quoted by Aparārka p. 962).
- (13) The begging bowl and the plate from which the ascetic eats should be made of clay or wood or of a gourd, or of bamboo which should be without holes and he should not use metal vessels; and these vessels are to be cleaned with water and scoured with cow's hair (Manu VI. 53–54, Yāj. III. 60 and Laghu-Viṣṇu IV. 29–30).
- (14) He should pare his nails, cut all his hair and beard (Manu VI. 52, Vas. Dh. S. X. 6); but Gaut. III. 21 appears to allow him an option viz. he may tonsure the whole head or keep only a top-knot.
- (15) He should sleep on raised ground (sthaṇḍila), should feel no concern if he suffers from an illness, he should neither welcome death nor should he feel joy for continuing to live, but he should patiently wait till the time of death, as a servant waits till the time he is hired expires (Manu VI. 43 and 46).
- (16) He should generally observe silence except when he repeats the Vedic texts learnt by him (Manu VI. 43, Gaut. III. 16, Baud. Dh. S. II. 10. 79, Āp. Dh. S. II. 9. 21. 10).
- (17) He should be *tridaṇḍī* (carrying three staffs) according to Yāj. III. 58, while Manu VI. 52 simply says he should be *daṇḍī* (i.e. carrying a staff). The word *daṇḍa* is used in two senses, a staff of bamboo or restraint. Baud. Dh. S. II. 10. 53 gives an option that he may be *ekadaṇḍī* or a *tridaṇḍī* and also says that he should not cause harm to creatures by speech, actions and mind (II. 6. 25). Manu XII. 10, which is the same as Dakṣa (VII. 30), declares that that man is called *tridaṇḍī* who has restraint over his speech, mind and body. Dakṣa makes certain apt remarks 'Even gods who pre-eminently possess the *sattvaguna* are carried away by pleasures of sense; what of men? Therefore he who has given up his taste for pleasures should resort to *daṇḍa*; others cannot do it as

- they will be carried away by pleasures. An ascetic is not called *tridaṇḍī* by carrying bamboo staffs; he is *tridaṇḍī* who has the spiritual daṇḍa in him. Many people make their livelihood under the guise of (carrying) three daṇḍas' (VII. 27–31, quoted by Aparāraka p. 953). Restraint of speech requires that he should observe silence, restraint of action that he should cause injury to no creature and restraint of mind that he should engage in prāṇāyāma and other yogic practices. Dakṣa himself says (I. 12–13) that the three staffs are the special outward signs of a yati as the girdle, deer-skin and staff are the outward signs of a vedic student or long nails and beard are *indicia* of a forest hermit. Laghu-Viṣṇu IV.12 says he may be *ekadaṇḍī* or *tridaṇḍī*. The Jīvanmuktiviveka (p. 154) quotes verses to the effect 'he who wields the staff of the knowledge of Reality is called ekadaṇḍī, while he who merely holds a stick in his hand without knowledge and eats everything (or has all sorts of desires) reaches terrible hells'.
- (18) He should recite the vedic texts referring to yajñas or gods or texts of a metaphysical character found in the Vedānta (such as 'satyam jñānam-anantam brahma' in Tai. Up. 2. 1). Vide Manu VI. 83.
 - (19) He should walk after ascertaining with his eye that the ground he trends is pure, should drink water after passing it through a piece of cloth (in order to prevent ants &c. being taken in by him), he should utter words purified by truth and should do what his conscience (inner voice) decides to be right or proper (Manu VI. 46, Śāṅkha VII. 7, Viṣṇu Dh. S. 96. 14–17).
 - (20) In order to generate the feeling of *vairāgya* (desirelessness) and to curb his senses he should make his mind dwell upon the body as liable to disease and old age and as packed full of impurities; and should revolve in his mind the transitory nature of all mundane things, the trouble one has to undergo in body and mind from conception to death, the incessant round of births and deaths (Manu VI. 76–77, Yāj. III. 63–64, Viṣṇu Dh. S. 96. 25–42).
 - (21) Truthfulness, not depriving another of his possessions or his due, absence of wrath (even against one who harms), humility, purity (of body and food &c.), discrimination, steadiness of mind (in sorrow), quiescence (or restraint) of mind, restraint of senses, knowledge (of the self), these are the dharma of all varṇas (or these constitute the essence of dharma). And these have to be acquired most of all by the ascetic, since the outward signs, viz. the scanty clothing, the water jar &c. are not the real means of discharging the real signs of sannyāsa, as anyone can possess these outward signs. Vide Manu VI. 66, 92–94, Yāj. III. 65–66, Vas. X. 30, Baud. Dh. S. II. 10 55–56, Śānti. 111. 13–14, Vāyupurāṇa vol. I. 8. 176–178 (ten characteristics, five called vratas and five upavratas).
 - (22) He should endeavour to purify his mind by prāṇāyāma and other practices of yoga and thereby enable himself gradually to realize the Absolute and secure final release (Manu VI. 70–75, 81, Yāj. III. 62, 64).

In many works ascetics are divided into four classes. The Mahābhārata (Anuśāsana 141. 89) says that ascetics are of four sorts, kuṭīcaka, bahūdaka, haṁsa and paramahaṁsa, each later one being superior to each preceding

one...The kuṭcaka, as the name itself implies, is one who resorts to sannyāsa in his own house or in a hut erected by his sons, begs food of his sons and relatives, wears the top-knot, the sacred thread, has the three staffs, carries a water-jar and stays in the same hut...The bahūdakas have three staffs, the water-jar and wear garments dyed with ochre, beg for food at seven houses of sage-like brāhmaṇas or other well-conducted men but avoid taking flesh, salt and stale food. The haṁsas stay not more than one night in a village and not more than five nights in a town for alms or subsist on cow's urine or dung, or fast for a month or always perform the cāndrāyaṇa penance. Pitāmaha quoted in Sm. M. (varnāśrama p. 184) states that the haṁsas carry only one daṇḍa, enter a village only for alms and otherwise stay under a tree or in a cave or on a river bank.

The Paramahaṁsas always stay under a tree or in an uninhabited house or in a burial place and either wear a garment or are naked; they are beyond the pairs of dharma and adharma, truth and falsehood, purity and impurity. They treat all alike, they regard all as the Self, to them a clod of earth or gold is the same and they beg alms from persons of all varṇas...The Jābālopaniṣad (6) describes the state of paramahaṁsas at great length. There are sages like Saṁvartaka, Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Dūrvāśas, Ṛbhu, Nidhāga, Jaḍabharata, Dattātreya, Raivataka; they do not exhibit any visible signs of their order or any visible rules of conduct; though they are really not mad they behave like one mad; they go out for alms only for keeping body and soul together; they are unaffected by acquisition or absence (of alms), they have no house but wander about and stay in a temple or on a heap of grass, on an ant-hill, or at the foot of a tree or on a river bank or in a cave, they have attachment for nothing, they are centered in contemplation of the One Spirit...The Sannyāsopaniṣad (13) adds two more varieties to the four enumerated above viz. 'turīyātīta' and 'avadhūta' and defines them as follows: 'turīyātīta' (one who is beyond the 4th stage viz. of paramahaṁsa) eats only fruits in the way cows take food (i.e. he does not hold them in his hands), if he takes cooked food then only from three houses, he wears no cloth, his body only continues to live (but he is not conscious of the fact), he deals with his body as if it were dead. The avadhūta is beyond all restrictions, he takes food from all varṇas except those who are charged with mortal sins or are *patita* (outcasts) and eats like an *ajagara* (*a boa constrictor*) i.e. lying down and opening only his mouth without any effort and is solely absorbed in the contemplation of the real nature of the Spirit...One important question on which opinion was sharply divided is whether sannyāsa was allowed to all the three varṇas or only to brāhmaṇas...The first view that only brāhmaṇas can be sannyāsins is affirmed by the great Śaṅkarācārya in his bhāṣya on Br. Up. III. 5. 1 and IV. 5. 15...Most of the medieval writers and works such as Medhātithi on Manu (VI. 97), the Mit., the Madanapārijāta (pp. 365–373), the Smṛtimuktāphala (Varṇāśrama p. 176) uphold the view that only brāhmaṇas can resort to the 4th āśrama, while a few works like the Smṛticandrikā (I. p. 65) support the second view...So far as the smṛti texts and the medieval works are concerned a śūdra could not become a sannyāsini. The Śāntiparva (63. 11–14) is quite clear that a śūdra cannot be a bhikṣu. It also (18. 32) informs us that in its

day many (probably including śūdras) assumed the outward signs of the 4th āśrama, got their heads tonsured and moved about in ochre-coloured garments (kāṣāya) for securing alms and gifts. But there are clear indications that śūdras did assume even in the times of ancient smṛtis the ascetic's garb and mode of life. The Viṣṇu Dh. S. V. 115 and Yāj. II. 241 (as read by Viśvarūpa) prescribe the fine of one hundred *paṇas* for one who gave a dinner to śūdra ascetics in rites for gods and the manes. When the Āśramavāsika-parva 26. 33 states that Vidura was buried as an ascetic, the commentator Nīlakaṇṭha remarks that this indicates that even śūdras can follow the mode of the ascetic life...The most serious inroad, however, on the ideal of sannyāsa was made when people professing to be ascetics were allowed to have wives or concubines. The Vāyupurāṇa (quoted in the Yati-dharmasaṅgraha p. 108) invokes dire consequences on him who after becoming a sannyāsīn has sexual intercourse, viz. he becomes a worm in ordure for 60,000 years, passes through the lives of a rat, a vulture, a dog, a donkey, a pig, a tree without flowers and fruit, a goblin and then he is born as a caṇḍāla...It is interesting to note that Vyāsa quoted in Sm. M. (p. 176) and Yati-dh. (pp 2–3) forbade sannyāsa in the Kali age, though he made an exception to this extent that as long as the division of society into varṇas existed and as long as the Veda was studied so long sannyāsa could be resorted to in the Kali age. Nāgeśa in his Vrātyatāprāyaścitta-nirṇaya (p. 46) makes the curious statement that according to the Sannyāsa-paddhati of Vyāsa a wise brāhmaṇa should not resort to sannyāsa when 4400 years of the Kali age will have expired (i. e. after 1299 A.D.). This dictum was probably due not only to the difficulties of observing to the letter the code of life sketched for sannyāsīns, but also to the fact that about 1299, the whole of India was being harassed by Moslem invaders and adventurers who made the helpless sannyāsīns the first target for their fanatic zeal and persecution. The Nirṇayasindhu (III, pūrvārdha, end) quotes the above verse of Vyāsa and remarks that this prohibition of sannyāsa is meant to apply to sannyāsa with three daṇḍas...An ascetic should bow to gods and to older ascetics who act according to the rules of their order, but should not offer *namaskāra* to an house-holder even if the latter be well-conducted. If another person bows to an ascetic, the latter should not pronounce any benediction but should only utter the word 'Nārāyaṇa.' When an ascetic (even one who has taken samnyāsa on his death-bed) dies, he is to be buried and not cremated. No mourning is to be observed for a *yati* when he dies (Atri 97) and no śrāddhas are to be offered on his death except the pārvaṇa on the 11th day after death (vide Aparāraka p. 538). If an ascetic hears of the death of his son or any other relative, he does not become impure and has not to bathe but on hearing of his mother's or father's death, he has to bathe, though he observes no mourning."

Of all the hagiographies of Śaṅkara, only three refer to the founding of *maṭhas* (Bader, 2000: 75). The *Periyapurāṇam* mentions that both Campantar and Appar served their devotees in their respective *maṭhas* during a famine at Tiruvīlimilalai getting gold coins from Śiva. Thus *maṭhas* should have existed by 7 CE. While describing the life of Śrī Mūla Deva (Tirumūlar), the *Śivarahasya* (9. 52. 24)

mentions that the wife of the cowherd whose body Mūla Deva had entered became suspicious upon hearing the wisdom of her husband and approaching a newly formed *maṭha* (*navam maṭham*) took the case to the elders of the village. This is the textual evidence of the existence of a *maṭha* by 5 CE. However, from the time of *Ṛgveda* and the *Upaniṣads*, *samitis* or *pariṣads* of learned scholars existed where intricate questions were discussed (Kane, 1941b: 965–974). The three Tamiḷ *Caṅkams* were indeed assemblies of scholars. This should have given rise to the concept of *maṭhas*. While it is well known that the Buddhists lived as a community, the formation of *maṭhas* for ascetics is not recommended by Hindu *Dharmaśāstras*. In this connection Kane (1941b: 950–951) quotes from *Jīvanmuktiviveka* and the quotation in it from Medhātithi:

“They should lay to heart the words of the *Jīvanmuktiviveka* and the quotation in it from Medhātithi (pp. 158-159) viz. ‘if an ascetic secures a *maṭha* as a fixed place of residence and thereon a sentiment of ownership arises in him his mind will be disturbed when loss or expansion of the *maṭha* takes place; therefore an ascetic should not possess a *maṭha* nor should he have vessels of gold or silver for his use nor should he gather pupils round himself for securing service from them or in order that they may honour him, or bring money to him, but he may gather disciples only for removing their ignorance.’”

Thus while reconstructing the life of Śaṅkara, it can be said that he was responsible for the formulation of Advaita Vedānta; he was the disciple of Govindabhagavatpāda and the grand disciple of Gauḍapāda; he is the author of commentaries on *prasthānatraya* and on the *kārikās* of Gauḍapāda; and he should be placed in 5 BCE. In this context, the disputes between the various *maṭhas* are unnecessary as there is no evidence to prove that Ādi Śaṅkarācārya established any of the *maṭhas*.

Because the Vedic religion had become very prominent by the eighth and the ninth century, we find that Sureśvara’s works are directed against the Mīmāṃsakas. I see a huge gap of many centuries between Śaṅkara and Sureśvara. In verse 4. 19 of his *Naiṣkarmyasiddhi* he refers to Śaṅkara as Bhagavatpūjyapāda, in verse 4. 44 he refers to both Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara as Gauḍa and Drāviḍa. In verse 4. 74 he mentions that he obtained the pure knowledge pertaining to the highest ascetics by serving with reverence the lotus feet of Śaṅkara (*śrīmacchaṅkarapādapadmamayugalaṃ saṃsevya*) and in verse 4. 76 he mentions that Śaṅkara acquired through yoga (*śaṅkaro’vāpa yogāt*) this knowledge similar to *Gaṅgā* that emanated from the feet of Viṣṇu. Having served that preceptor with devotion, he obtained this knowledge illumined with Vedānta, and is transmitting it to the world. Thus it is clear that Sureśvara is writing his text in a *bhakti* period. Moreover, because the Mīmāṃsā school was flourishing during his time, he writes his *Saṃbandhavārtika*—which is the introductory part of his *vārtika* on the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* of Śaṅkara—to explain the relationship between the *karma* and *jñāna kāṇḍas* of the *Vedas*. It is also clear that Sureśvara is making a distinction between Bhagavatpūjyapāda, and his teacher whom he refers to as Śaṅkarapāda. In a similar light, I find that when starting his *vārtika* on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad bhāṣya*, in verse 2 of his *vārtika* Sureśvara is referring to the author of the *bhāṣya* as *pūjyatama*, and in verse 3 he mentions that he is writing his commentary

due to the grace of the teacher (*ācāryaprasādataḥ*) (Shastri, 2011). Swami Adidevananda (Raghavachar, 1965: III, IV) points out that Sureśvara quotes seventeen times from the *Upadeśasāhasrī*. Thus *Upadeśasāhasrī* which is considered an essence of Śāṅkara's teaching should have been composed by some prominent Śāṅkarācārya who lived close to Sureśvara. Likewise, in his invocatory verse of *Sambandhavārtika*, he mentions that he bows down to the supreme reality with devotion (Mahadevan, 1958). Thus it is not possible that Sureśvara was a contemporary and disciple of Śāṅkara, the author of *bhāṣyas* on *prasthānatraya*. The ancient tradition of Śrīrgerī has beautifully documented this huge time gap between Śāṅkara and Sureśvara by placing Śāṅkara in the first century BCE and Sureśvara in the eighth century CE (Aiyer & Sastri, 1992: 164). Some prominent Śāṅkarācārya, probably Sureśvara's teacher, should have rejuvenated the works of Śāṅkara and Sureśvara should have enriched the system through his *vārtika* and other works. The *Bṛhatśāṅkarayavijaya* of Citsukhācārya is the oldest of all the hagiographies of Śāṅkara. This work consisting of 224 *prakaraṇas* is divided into three parts: *pūrvācārya satpatha*, *śāṅkarācārya satpatha* and *sureśvarācārya satpatha* (Sastri, 1971: 225–226). Thus Gauḍapāda, Śāṅkara, and Sureśvara are the three milestones in the development of Advaita Vedānta.

In the above pages, I have studied the problem of the date of Ādi Śāṅkarācārya by placing him in the background of the development of religion in South India and have given evidences, especially from Tamil texts to place him in 5 BCE and have also shown how Śaivism develops as a Vedic religion. I have also brought to light the development of Śaiva non-dualism in South India. I have highlighted the importance of the epic *Śivarahasya* in the development of Śaivism, especially as a Vedic religion, and non-dual Śaivism. By not consulting the *Śivarahasya* a huge history of non-dual Śaivism especially in South India has gone unnoticed. Thus, it is not surprising that Sumati the great-grand preceptor of Abhinavagupta came from the South (Pandey, 1963: 145).

This research emphasizes the importance of consulting Tamil texts for any research related to Hinduism and Indian Philosophy. For example, the *Caṅkam* text *Maturaikkāñci* referred to earlier mentions schools or residences of Buddhists (lines 461–467), Brahmins (lines 468–474), and Jains (lines 475–488). This passage elaborates on the crowded Buddhist residence thereby showing the popularity of Buddhism in South India in the *Caṅkam* period. Just as Pāṭaliputra in the north was an important place for Buddhists and Jains, Tiruppātirippuliyūr, near Kaṭalūr in the Tamil region—referred to as Pāṭaliputtiram by Cēkkiḷār—was an important place for Buddhists and Jains as he mentions that Appar joined the Jain school at Pāṭaliputtiram (*pāṭaliput tirameṇṇum patiaṇaintu samaṇpaḷli māṇaṇaintār Periyapurāṇam* 1303). This Pāṭaliputtiram cannot be the Pāṭaliputra in the north because when Appar gets affected by a stomach ache, he leaves the monastery in the middle of the night and reaches his sister Tilakavatiyār who was staying at Tiruvatikai which is in the present Kaṭalūr district. The *Maṇimēkalai* refers to *Piṭaka* texts (26. line 66). It mentions that the Buddha (*pōittalaivan*) who attained enlightenment under a *pōti* tree (Sanskrit *bodhi*) was born on the full moon day in the month of *Vaiśākha* (11. line 43). It also mentions that Kaṇṇaki and Kōvalaṅ will attain liberation when the Buddha will be born in the city of Kapilayampati (Kapilavastu) in the country of Magadha and will address people under a *pōti* tree (*kapilayam patiyiṅ aḷapparum pāramitai yaḷaviṅru*

nīraittu tuḷakkamil putta nāyīru tōṅṅip pōti mūlam poruntivan taruḷi 26. lines 44–47). It looks like the hagiography of Buddha is also mixed and the hagiography of a later Buddha is mixed with that of the original Buddha. Thus Buddhists in Srilanka, Thailand, Burma, and Kampuchea accept 543 BCE as the date of Buddha's *nirvāṇa* and a majority of Indian and Western scholars place the date in 486 BCE based on the information closely linked with events in Aśoka's life (Lamotte, 1988: 13–14).

The *Maṇimēkalai* mentions Buddhist goddesses, *mantras*, Indra and his festival. It can be said that it contains elements of Tantric Buddhism which is popularly known as Vajrayāna Buddhism. Vajrayāna means “the Diamond Way.” It is called Vajrayāna Buddhism because it developed out of the *vajra* of Indra. *Vajra* the thunderbolt of Indra is mentioned in the early Pāli Buddhist texts and is transformed into Buddha's diamond sceptre (Smith, 1991: 139). It looks like Vajrayāna Buddhism had been developed during the time of Śāṅkara. In his commentary on the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8. 12. 1 he mentions that the nihilists have become submerged in this ocean of the ‘annihilation of the Self’ as understood by Indra (Jha, 1942: 476) (*tathā indrasyātmavināśabhayāsāgare eva vaināśikā nyamajjan*). Campantar too refers to six divisions among Buddhists (*aṅṅuvakait tērarum* 1. 128. line 36). Hence, I would like to date the *Maṇimēkalai* to 4 CE, a period in which Buddhism was at its peak, and I would date the *Cilappatikāram* after the *Maṇimēkalai* as Śiva pervades the *Cilappatikāram*.

Alexis Sanderson (Sanderson, A., et al, 1988: 689) mentions that the southerners took the cult of *Tripurasundarī* seriously—it became so powerful that it was adopted, in a purified form, by the orthodox authorities of the Śāṅkarācāryas of Śṛṅgerī and Kāñcīpuram—considered it to be Kashmiri in origin. However, this is quite possibly because they failed to distinguish the scriptural tradition itself from the Kashmiri theological and exegetical system within which they received it from the north and within which they continued to work. Reference to Durgā as Korṛavai is found in *Caṅkam* texts. *Neṅunalvāṭai* (lines 168–169) mentions worshipping Korṛavai to get success in war. *Paṭīrṛupattu* (9, lines 10–13) mentions that the king Kuṭākkō Iḷāñcēral Irumporai had employed a truthful and virtuous minister who worshipped the divine by employing *mantras* and who excelled his priest. Tirumūlar deals elaborately with Śakti in his fourth *adhyaṅya* (*tantra*) of his *Tirumantiram* and chapter 5 of this *tantra* is devoted especially to *tiripurai cakkaram* (*tiripurācakra*). The second *aṁśa* of the *Śivarahasya* deals with the creation of *maṇidvīpa* and *cintāmaṇigr̥ha* and describes the goddess as Kāmeśvarī, holding sugarcane, arrows, *pāśa*, and *aṅkuśa*, and served by *tithi nityā devatās*. *Cilappatikāram* provides good information about the worship of the goddess and in 2. 12. 3 describes Korṛavai as the goddess of *kalās* (*āykalaiṅ pāvai*) and as a young girl (*kumarik kōlatu*) who is worshipped by gods such as Viṣṇu and Brahmā (Iramacuppuramaniyam, 2010). These prove that the various forms of Śakti worship and the worship of *Tripurasundarī* as practiced by the Śāṅkarācāryas and the Śṛīvidyā practitioners trace their roots only to South India and this is not connected to the Tantrism of Kashmir. Alexis Sanderson does not provide any textual evidence or personal conversation to prove that the Śāṅkarācāryas consider that their tradition is Kashmiri in origin.

Indian Philosophy is polemical and it is this polemic nature that has contributed to its success as a living system. Hence the onus is on the scholars to continue to defend and strengthen their traditions. Every Śāṅkarācārya who follows his

tradition keeps alive both the philosophy of Ādi Śāṅkarācārya and also the institution of asceticism. By doing so, they contribute not only to the success of Hinduism but to world's religions as well. This is because the Advaita of Ādi Śāṅkarācārya is the success of religion over science and every religion in this world should always be prepared to defend and withstand the challenges of science to survive the trials of time. If Ādi Śāṅkarācārya had not defended religion against the progress of science, there would not have existed the belief in god or the holistic Vedic way of life, and people would not have been able to perform and enjoy the various rituals associated with their daily lives and temples that allowed them to gain mental strength during their difficulties. India would not have been enriched by the huge developments of various systems of Hindu religion and philosophy and would have "missed" those innumerable saints who attained *mokṣa* by following their prescribed practices. Nor would have India been able to maintain her pride as the mother of four world religions and a land wherein people from various world's religions live in harmony. *Cilappatikāram*, by Iḷaṅkō Aṭikaḷ, a Jain, is among the most popular texts in Tamil. *Maṇimēkalai* which provides so much historical information was authored by Cātṭanār, a Buddhist. Jainism and Buddhism have become minor religions in South India. Still, Hindus have preserved, respected, appreciated, relished, and propagated their epics to the succeeding generations. The first text on Śaiva non-dualism was written by Gauḍapādācārya, the grand preceptor of Śāṅkara. Govindabhagavatpādācārya was an important preceptor of Raseśvara Śaivism. Śāṅkara is worshipped as an incarnation of Śiva. If *Śivarahasya* is available to the world it is thanks to the efforts of Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī Śāṅkarācārya. Every Indian should be proud of the "Wonder that is India".

Hindu sages always accommodated and blended science with religion. The episode of Vyāsa creating the Kauravas can be said to be a much more advanced technique than the modern In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) in which only the fertilization takes place outside the woman's uterus and not the formation of the entire fetus. Moreover, Vyāsa was able to save every fetus that he developed in the pots. In modern times in the process of IVF, many embryos are fertilized and only the healthy one is implanted in the woman's uterus whereas the rest are used for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research without getting the informed consent of those embryos (Sainath, 2018). Campantar brings back to life a girl Pūmpāvai from her ashes. Although the *Periyāpuraṇam* mentions that the girl emerged miraculously from the pot that contained her ashes, Campantar should have constructed her entire body to bring her alive. Gauḍapāda for example makes reference to creatures produced by medicines and also creatures conjured by magic (*kārikā* 4. 70, 69). Furthermore, the array of Xenotransplanted images of gods and goddesses, in which animal parts are transplanted into human bodies, show how skillfully Hindus blended science with religion and yet allowed religion and spirituality to dominate. It deserves to be mentioned that science that came within the purview of religion survived time, as in the case of the birth of the Kauravas. Thus both science and religion are equally important to society.

I would like to mention a narrative one of my professors Dr. N. Veezhinathan (personal communication) used to share with students while I was studying at the University of Madras. Once Veezhinathan was following Candrasekharendra

Sarasvatī Śaṅkarācārya who is called Makāperiyavāḷ to the Ekāmbareśvara Temple in Kāñcīpuram along with others. Suddenly Makāperiyavāḷ lost his way and was wondering which was the right direction to the temple. Seeing this Veezhinathan gossiped with one of his friends, “People say that Makāperiyavāḷ is a self-realized person and hence is omniscient. Still, he is not sure about which direction he has to take to go to the Ekāmbareśvara Temple. Thus he has an erroneous cognition about direction (*dik bhrānti*). What kind of omniscience is this?” Later on that afternoon, Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī summoned him and Veezhinathan rushed to see His Highness. Seeing the stern look on his face Veezhinathan started shivering inside. I give the conversation between them below and in this conversation, CS stands for Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī and NV for Veezhinathan:

CS: “What is the order of creation according to Advaita Vedānta?”

NV: “From the self, space is created, from space, wind, from wind, fire, from fire, water, from water, earth, and from earth, plants are created.”

CS: “Why are direction and time not counted in this list?”

NV: “Direction and time are invalid (*aprāmāṇya*) and hence they are not included in the order of creation.”

CS: “So if someone has an erroneous cognition (*bhrānti*) about an invalid entity (*aprāmāṇya viśaya*) is that a mistake?”

NV: “No.”

CS: “You may go.”

This conversation brings out the fundamental standpoint in Hinduism that knowledge or great seers who gave that knowledge are not brought under the purview of time. At the same time for all practical purposes, some period of origination is maintained. Hence Hindus say that traditions are *anādi* and even attribute a divine origin to the tradition. The term *anādi* can be interpreted as “that for which it is not possible to say when exactly it was produced or started (*na vidyate ādīḥ yasya saḥ*).” Besides, Hindus consider time as cyclic. Clarity cannot be maintained in a cyclic time, which is also represented by sixty cyclic years in the South Indian calendar. Moreover, not subjecting research or knowledge to time has a great advantage because it ensures the continuity and survival of the religion.

As we speak of dating the texts and scholars to various periods, it is well known that the division of time into BCE and CE is based on the birth of Jesus Christ. In the past, this division was indicated as Before Christ and After Death. Nowadays respecting the sentiments of other religions, this has been changed to CE meaning Common Era, and BCE meaning Before Common Era. I suggest Hindus have some marker in 1 CE to date texts and scholars. Given that the *Śivarahasya* is dated to 1CE it can very well serve as a marker. This can be called the Śaiva Era and can function in the same way as the Western way of dating the texts in a descending BCE and an ascending CE. Śiva is always worshipped as androgynous. Hence Śiva can be represented by K and Śakti by E. Thus KE represents time beginning from *Śivarahasya* in an ascending order. In his *Viṣṇutattvaviniṛṇaya* Madhvācārya mentions that A denotes Hari (Pandurangi, 1991: 24) and hence AKE represents the time before *Śivarahasya* in a descending order. The *Ṛgveda* prays to let noble thoughts come to us from every side. Hence Hindus can adopt this new methodological

approach to the study of religion as this helps us solve problems in Indian Philosophy such as the date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.

In this research, I have shown how both the systems of Advaita and Śaivism emerge in a competitive atmosphere. Both Advaitins and Śaivas worked towards the same goal of establishing the supremacy of the Vedic religion and ensuring the permeation of religion to every stratum of society. In this process, they exchanged ideas amongst themselves, offered necessary hermeneutics, and adapted as the situations demanded. The *Tirumūraṅais* thus evolve in a tough polemical and demanding philosophical environment.

As we study the development of Śaivism through the ages, one cannot resist admiring the greatness of Śiva and his devotees. The dedication, passion, commitment, devotion, emotion, and sacrifice of the Śaivas are indeed responsible for the emergence of Śaivism as one of the most popular religions in India. From a god who wept as he did not have a name, this auspicious androgynous lord (*tōṭuṭaiya ceviyan*) has emerged as the great Mahādeva who drank the poison to save the universe, who burns the three cities of *jāgrat*, *svapna*, and *suṣṭi* of his devotees, who is a disciple of his son and slave of his devotees and runs towards those who melt in love and shed tears (*kātalāki kacintu kaṇṇīr malki*) in various forms, including that of a laborer or a bangle vendor, and satisfies their every wish, including acting as a messenger between his devotee and his beloved, helps them win their challenges, plays with them and converts foxes to horses instead of sending real horses, gets beaten by the king and shows himself as the soul of the universe (*viśvātmā*), dances beautifully in the golden hall and in the hearts of his devotees, saves the lives of his devotees even if they are tied to a stone and cast to die in an ocean, never lets his devotees down and shows himself as the cool fire and accepts everyone into *kailāsa*, gives the *Vedas* and *Āgamas*, instructs his devotees as the teacher and frees them from death as easily as a cucumber (*urvārūka*), subjects his devotees to trials but never takes away anything from them, goes out in procession during temple festivals and grants *dīkṣā* to every being in the universe including animals, birds, insects, plants and shrubs, is easily accessible, responds to every need of the society including creating a Śaiva Era for the academic study of texts, has permeated every stratum of the society and thereby steals the hearts of everyone (*uḷḷaṅkavar kaḷvaṅ*). The devotees of Śiva who are responsible for this huge success deserve to be admired and saluted (*mahādevebhya namaḥ*).

I have attempted to solve the problem of the date of Ādi Śaṅkarācārya by consulting Tamil sources; thus, this research stresses the importance of consulting Tamil texts for any research related to Hinduism, India, and Indian Philosophy and also consulting Sanskrit texts for research on Tamil studies. In the foreword to *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest extant text on Tamil grammar, we find the statement that Tolkāppiyar, the author was well versed in *Aintiram*, the grammatical treatise given by Indra, and under *sūtra* 74 of *Collatikāram*, Cēṇāvaraiyar says that the author of *Aintiram* called the vocative case the eight case (*aintiranūlar viḷi vēṛṛumaiyai eṭṭām vēṛṛumaiyāka nēṛntār*). The only reference to Indra being connected with grammar is found in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patañjali where it is said that Indra attempted in vain to make a detailed study in 1000 divine years of all the words current at the feet of the preceptor of the *devas* (Sastri, 1944: 2). Hence, this research stresses

the importance of erasing the Sanskrit-Tamiḷ divide as in the words of Appar it is Śiva who became both Sanskrit and Tamiḷ (Sainath, 2019). At the same time, this research places Ādi Śaṅkarācārya in 5 AKE and I hope it will persuade scholars to redate our Hindu scriptures especially the *Vedas* as Ādi Śaṅkarācārya is the earliest commentator.

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