

## The Age of Sri Sankaracharya by N. Bhashyacharya

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OUR readers are no doubt aware of the important position assigned to Shrî Sankarâchârya in the history of Indian Philosophy. If the name of Sâkyamuni (Buddha) is known to all the civilized nations of the earth, the name of Shrî Sankarâchârya stands second only to his. His system of philosophy is considered by several *Sanskritists* to be superior in every way to those of Berkeley, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Hartmann. The period when he lived is, therefore, of the utmost importance to the history of Indian Philosophy. His date is also useful for fixing those of several other Indian philosophers and writers, The discussions of several Orientalists, and their new theories based on untrustworthy records, have only tended to make confusion worse confounded, and have resulted in this historical problem remaining as remote from a solution as ever. Our present purpose is, therefore, to find out what date can possibly be fixed for him with the aid of materials before us, [Page 2] although they are scanty and some of them can hardly be trustworthy; to examine the nature of those materials and the soundness of the theories based thereon by several writers. We divide the subject of this paper into four sections:

- 1) — An examination of the traditions, oral and recorded, current in various times.
- 2) — An examination of the external evidence we possess, which goes to fix the period in which he lived.
- 3) — An examination of the internal evidence we have from his works.
- 4) — Summary and conclusion, and an attempt towards a brief biographical sketch of the great philosopher.

### 1. — TRADITIONS

1. The popular idea [This tradition is current in Southern India and is perhaps exclusively its own. The name of the father of Vikramâditya is given by some as Chandragupta! ] is that there was a Brâhmin called Gôvindabhatta. He married four wives, one from each of the four Indian castes, viz., Brâhmin, Kshattriya, Vaishya, and Shûdra. Through these he had respectively Âchârya Vararuchi, Vikramâditya, King of Ujjain in Central India, Bhatti, and Bhartrihari. This Govindabhatta subsequently became a *Sannyâsî* (ascetic) and went by the name of Gôvindayôgi. Shrî Sankarâchârya, who was born in Malabar according to some accounts and, according to others at Chidambaram, became a disciple of his. [Page 3] Vikramâditya is supposed to have lived about 56 B.C., and Shrî Sankarâchârya, too, must have lived about that time, being his father's disciple.

2. In *Kêralôtpaththi* [This is a work of the Malayâlam language and professes to be a history of the ancient province of Kêrala, comprising the modern divisions of Malabâr, Chochin and Travancore] it is said that he was born in the month of August under the constellation Ârdrâ, in the year 3501 of Kaliyuga

(A.D. 400) in the town Kaipalle, in the tract called Kāladī, south of Aluvōy, Kērala province, and that within thirty-eight years he established the Smārta sect. It is also said that he was born during a war in the time of one King Chêrumān Perumāl, who embraced the faith of Islam and set out for Mecca.

3. A tradition recorded in Kongudêsarājākkal says that he lived in the time of one King Trivikramadêva I, whom he converted to Shaivism.

4. From Tāranāthā's *Tibetan History of Buddhism*, [Known to us through Schiefner's German translation] we learn that he lived before Kumārila, a famous follower of the Mimāmsa School, who did a great deal to check the progress of Buddhism in India.

5. A tradition recorded in a Samskrit manuscript of three pages in the possession of one Gōvindabhata Yerlakara of Belgaum, says that Shrī Sankarāchārya was born in Kaliyuga 3889 (or A.D. 788) and attained Mōksha in the year 3921 (A.D. 820). [Vide: *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xi, pages 174-175] [Page 4]

6. A tradition in Nepaul that Shrī Sankarāchārya went to that province from the south during the reign of King Vrishadêvavarma, a Buddhist, converted him to Brahminism and subverted Buddhism. [ First brought to the notice of the South Indian public by the late Pandit Bhagavanlal Indrajī in *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xiii, page 412]

7. The Dābistān [Vol ii, p 141] brings his date down to the year 1349 after Christ.

8. The *Sankaravijayas* or the *Victories of Sankara*. At present, three works bearing this title, and purporting to have been written by Ānandagiri, Chidvilāsayati, and Mādhavāchārya, are in existence. None of them gives the year of his birth in terms of any of the Eras. [Besides the above traditions there are others which are still important: viz (i) Kavali Ramaswamy's *Deccan Poets* (p.6) which places him in the 8th century A.D (ii) *Aryavidyasudhakara* of Yagnesvarasastri, which also places him the same period; (iii) Janardan Ramachenderji's *Lives of Eminent Hindu Authors*, which places him 610 years B.C. All these are 19th century traditions, and hence cannot be relied upon. Kāvālī Rāmaswāmī's book is condemned as *worthless* by Dr. Burnell in his *Elements of South Indian Palaeography* (p 86).

To proceed to an examination of these traditions in the order they were mentioned:

1. The tradition that Gōvindabhata was the father of Vikramāditya does not rest on any evidence. Further, Bhatti and Bhartrihari, [Page 5] who are said to be brothers, are really unrelated persons and lived in different times, as can be found from their own works. [The last verse of Bhatti Kavya tells us that Bhatti lived at the Court of King Sridharasēna at Vallabhi, about the middle of the 4th century A.D.. According to Dr Rajendralal Mitra (*Notices of Sanskrit MSS*, Vol vi, p 148) Professor Max Müller, however, places him in the 7th century A.D. (*India, etc.*, pp 348-53). Bhartrihari, the author of *Vakyapadiya*, a commentary on the *Māhābhāshya* of Patanjali, and other works, was a disciple of one Vasurāta, as he himself says in *Vākyapādiya*. This Vasurāta was a contemporary of, if not identical with, the famous Chandrachārya, who introduced the study of the *Māhābhāshya* into Kashmir, and who lived

in the Court of Abhimanyu, who is found on numismatic evidence to have reigned about A.D 40. Bhartrihari therefore lived in the first century A.D; Max Müller erroneously places him in the 7th century A.D. (*India, What Can It Teach Us!* p 348]. Even if we suppose that one Gövindabhatta was the father of Vikramāditya, there is no evidence to show that he afterwards became an ascetic, and was called Gövindayōgi. This tradition, I think, prevails exclusively in Southern India, and its followers have sometimes made certain additions and modifications, viz., (i) that Shrī Sankarāchārya argued with, and defeated Bhattapāda, one of the *Nine Gems* at the Court of Vikramāditya, hence a contemporary of that king, and flourished therefore about 56 B.C.; [This tradition has been put forward as correct by G Ramamurti Pantulu, author of a pamphlet entitled *Notes on Antiquities*, recently published in the Godavari District ] (ii) that Vignānēsvara, author of *Mithākshara*, a Commentary [Page 6] on *Yāgnavalkya Smṛiti*, was an Advaitī (Idealist) and a follower of Shrī Sankarāchārya's School. This Vignānēsvara dedicated his work to one Vikramāditya and therefore lived at his Court. Hence Shrī Sankarāchārya lived before Vikramāditya.

With reference to the former modification it must be said that the tradition of *Nine Gems* is mentioned in the *Jyōtirividābharana*. This work — the authorship of which is generally attributed to Kālidāsa, the famous poet — is found from its style and internal evidence to be written in the 16th century, and has therefore nothing to do with the famous Kālidāsa who lived several centuries before that time. [The *Nine Gems* mentioned by Ramamurthi Pantulu are — Dhanvantari, Kshapanaka, Amarasimha, Sanka, Vētāla, Bhattapāda, Karpara, Kālidāsa, Varāhamihira. Varāhamihira is found from the Brihat Samhita to have written it at the end of the 6th century A.D. It is not, however, known whence Ramamurthi Pantulu got this verse. The verse which certain Orientalists take from *Jyōtiridhābharana* to enumerate the *Nine Gems* mentions one Vētalabhatta, and not Bhattapāda who is mentioned in Pantulu's Pamphlet ] The *Nine Gems*, a name given to nine authors and poets who are supposed to have lived at the Court of Vikramāditya, are nowhere else mentioned except in an inscription translated by Charles Wilkins and published in the First Volume of the Asiatic Researches. [First London Edition, p 284. It mentions "Amaradēva and the *Nine Gems*" at the court of Vikramāditya". The date of the inscription is Samvat 1015 or A.D. 959] Also Bhattapāda, i.e., Kumārila, is [Page 7] now found to have lived in the 3rd or 4th century B.C. ; and there is no evidence to show that he was a contemporary of Shrī Sankarāchārya; but, on the other hand, the frequent references to Kumārila by him in his *Vēdānta Sūtra Bhāshya* are enough to show that he lived after him. [Vide for example, his *Vēdānta Sūtrā Bhāshya* I, Adhyāya, 1st Pāda, 3rd Sūtra. Kumārila was a famous follower of the Mimāmsa School: and from the fact that he mentions Kālidāsā in his *Tantravārtika* (*Slōkavārtika*), we should infer that he lived after the poet] In reference to the latter modification there can be no doubt that Vignānēsvara was a follower of the School of Shrī Sankarāchārya; [ In the last page of *Mithākshara* (Madras ed) he calls himself a disciple of Uttamātma, who was one in the long line of the disciples of Shrī Sankarāchārya. His description of *Atma* in the chapter on *Expiations* will convince the reader that he lived subsequently to the time of the philosopher.] but he mentions Bhōja, King of Dhār, Asahāya, Aparārka, and Bhāruchi [Vide pp. 127-129 for Dhārēsvara and p. 117 for others] as having lived before him. This Bhōja was also called Dhārēsvara and reigned about 862 A.D. [Archaeological Survey Reports, Volume x, page 101] Vignānēsvara in the last verse of his *Mithākshara* tells us that Kalyānapura was the capital of Vikramāditya, at whose Court he lived. Kalyānapura, which is identified with Kalyān, was the capital of the Chālūkyā dynasty, in which several Vikramādityas reigned. [Page 8]

Excepting the tradition handed down to the present day that one King Vikramārka, or Vikramāditya, reigned about 56 B.C., no king of that name seems to have actually reigned before the 6th century A.D. ; and this conclusion gains additional strength from the fact that no inscription before the 11th century A.D.

adopted the Samvat (Vikramāditya) era. [Dr. Bhaudādi in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Vol viii, p 242. General Cunningham, however, thinks (*Archaeological Survey Reports*, Vol ii, p 266. Note) that the era was adopted in the 9th century, and hence reads an inscription dated Samvat 747 as A.D. 825. *Vide* also Burnell's *South Indian Palaeography*, page 55. This question of Samvat and other Indian Eras has recently been discussed by me in "The Hindu" of 10th April 1889, to which the reader may be referred.] In addition to this the question of identification of Vikramāditya has not yet been settled. Certain scholars, such as Mr. Fergusson and Prof. Max Müller, argue that Vikramāditya Harsha of Ujjain, who reigned about A.D., 550 and who is found by inscriptions to have defeated the Sakas and Mlêchhas in A.D. 554 in the battle of Korur, must be identical with that Vikramāditya, and that the year 56 B.C. was obtained by jumping back to 600 years before the event. [*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1880, page 273; Max Müller's *India, What Can It Teach Us?* P 282] But this argument is not approved of by other Oriental scholars. [Dr. Buhler among others (*vide* Max Müller's *India, What Can It Teach Us?* P 285). I may also mention Dr E Hultzsch, Epigraphist, Archaeological Department, who in one of his letters to me calls it "a baseless theory"] [Page 9] Another significant fact is that in none of the Purānas is Vikramāditya mentioned among the kings of the *future dynasties* in Kaliyuga. Thus in all probability the tradition is entirely based on a misconception.

2. The tradition recorded in *Kêralôtpaththi* is also an improbable one, for it says that Shrî Sankarâchârya subdivided the four castes into seventy-two, and effected certain reforms in that part of the country — for which no evidence is forthcoming either from the natives of Malabar, in the shape of tradition, or from other writings. This work also represents Bhattapâda as having argued with the Buddhists in that country. This is absurd, for it is well known that he lived and died in Northern India. [*Vide*, for example, the Sankaravijayas of Chidvilâsayati and Mâdhavâchârya, which say that he lived in Northern India and died in a town called Ruththa]

The date of Shrî Sankarâchârya's birth, A.D., 400 and the length, of his life (38 years) are exclusively its own. No other work or tradition gives it. The story that he was born during the time of Chêrumân Perumâl cannot belong to the 5th century A.D. ; for [Mr W Logan in *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xvi, p 160. We also learn here that the name given to Chêrumân Perumân, after his conversion was Abdul Rahiman Sameri. *Vide* also *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xi, p 116] on Chêrumân Perumâl's tomb in Mecca the date of his death is given as Hegira 216 or 838 A.D. That this [Page 10] date is too modern for Shrî Sankarâchârya we shall be able to show further on. This *Kêralôtpaththi* also contains the fable that our philosopher was the son of a widow: and to crown all these untruths it says that he wrote a history of Kêraladêsa in twenty-four thousand *grandhas* of thirty-two syllables each, in obedience to the orders of his guru Gôvindayôgi ! [This work is condemned by Mr Kasinath Trimbak Telang (*The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xiii, p 95 *et seq*) Mr Sewell (*Sketch of the Dynasties of Southern India*, p 57) and Mr Subba Rao (*The Theosophist*, Vol iv p 308) or *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp 295-296.

3. Trivikramadêva I, is stated to have been king of Skandapura and to have lived about 178 A.D. Professor Dowson found in 1848 that there were two kings of that name, the first of whom lived in the 6th and the second in the 8th century A.D. Professor Bhândarkar has found out from certain inscriptions that the first king of that name reigned in the 4th, and the second in the 6th, century A.D. [*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol x, p 89] Mr. Fleet, however, considers them forgeries. [*The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xii, page 111] Altogether this tradition carries with it a degree of uncertainty.

4. Târânâtha's *History of Buddhism* was completed in A.D. 1608 when the author was hardly aged thirty,

and the inevitable errors, owing to want of a proper study on his part, are (1) that Shrî Sankarâchârya lived before Kumârila, and (2) the latter is distinguished from [Page 11] Bhatta, who is called a disciple of Shrî Sankarâchârya. We have already shown that Kumârila lived before the great Vêdântic doctor. Kumârila and Bhatta are not only identical, but Kumârila is also called Bhattapâda and Tutâta. The Mimâmsâ philosophy is called after this great man Bhatta Tantra, and his work *Tantra-Vârtika* is also called *Bhatta-Vârtika*.

It is in such a work as Târânatha's that Dr. Burnell had great faith, and fixed the date of Shrî Sankarâchârya as A.D. 650-700. [*Elements of South Indian Palaeography*, p. 37. In p. III, however, we are told that his date is A.D. 700. In the preface to his edition of *Sâmaividhâna Brâhmana*, page vi, we read: "Taranatha states that Kumâralila (Kumârila) lived at the same time as Dharmakriti, the great Buddhistic writer on Nyaya. . . Now Dharmakriti is stated by the Tibetans to have lived in the time of Srongsangampo, King of Yarlang, who was born A.D. 617 and reigned from A.D. 629-698. About this date there can be no doubt, for the king married a Chinese princess, whose date is certain. As Hioun Thsang left India in A.D. 645 and there is mention in his work of the great and dangerous Brahmin enemy of the Buddhists, Kumârila cannot have lived before that date and for many reasons he cannot have been later than A.D. 700". Thus he makes Kumârila and Shrî Sankarâchârya contemporaries, which is absurd; and the date is too modern as will be seen further on] Professor Max Müller's opinion of this work is also valuable. [*India, What Can It Teach Us?* P.303. "This is no doubt a very modern compilation and in many cases quite untrustworthy, still it may come in as confirmatory evidence]

5. Professor Max Müller tells us that it is finally settled by Mr K. B Pathak, that Shrî Sankarâchârya was born in A.D. 788 and refers us to his contribution [Page 12] in pp. 174-5 of the volume XI of *The Indian Antiquary*. The authority on which Mr. Pathak bases his conclusion is a Samskrit MS. of three pages written in Bâlabôdh characters, and containing about twenty-four lines in all. It says, as we stated before, that Shrî Sankarâchârya was born in the year Vibhava (Kali 3889) on the full moon day in Visâkha month (May-June). This corresponds to A.D. 788. But it carries a fiction along with it — that Shrî Madhvâcharya was the son of a demon called Madhu ! This clearly shows that the MS. in question was written in the 12th century A.D., and that the writer was an enemy of the Dwaitis, followers of Shrî Madhvâchârya. If a work of only three pages and twenty-four lines, two of which contain a fiction and the rest uncertainty, is to be seriously considered as an authority, we cannot see any reason why the *Manimanjari* [A work of the 15th century A.D.] of the Dwaitis, which speaks of Shrî Sankarâchârya as a Râkshasa (or demon) of Kaliyuga, should not be considered so too. Yet that worthless MS. is seriously considered, and the date of Shrî Sankarâchârya deduced from it, by Professor Max Müller, [*India, What Can It Teach Us?* page 360] Dr. C. P. Tiele, [*Outlines of History of Religions*, translated from the Dutch by E. Carpenter] and M. Barth. [*The Religions of India*, page 89. He says (page 88) that Shrî Sankarâchârya was an incarnation of Vishnu, (fresh news indeed !), whereas there is no tradition current in India to that effect; on the contrary all the traditions invariably make him an incarnation of Siva] [Page 13]

6. The tradition in Nepal is that one Sûryavamsi (Surya or Solar dynasty) began to rule in Nepal at a period corresponding to 1712 B.C. Twenty-three kings in all reigned for 1,409 years. In the reign of the 18th king, Vrishdêvavarma, a Buddhist, son of Rudradêvavarma, the 17th king, *Vihâras* (Buddhist convents) were built, and Buddhism greatly favored. This king, who is said to have reigned from 614 to 553 B.C., was converted to Brahminism by Shrî Sankarâchârya, who came from the south, and subverted Buddhism; and it is also said that the son of this king was called Sankaradêva in honor of the conversions. Pandit Bhagavânlal Indrâji says that the date of Vrishadêvavarma is about A.D., 260 and

would therefore place the philosopher in the 3rd century A.D. [*The Indian Antiquary*, Vol xiii, p 412]. Mr Fleet, however, goes over those inscriptions on which Pandit Bhagavānlāl Indrāji bases his conclusions, and finds that Vrishadēvavarma reigned from A.D. 630 to 655. [*Ibid.* Vol xiv, page 350]

This would place Shrī Sankarāchārya in the 7th century A.D. The uncertainty of these dates and want of a final conclusion, prevent us at present from accepting any of them as authority. But it is on the dates suggested by the foregoing traditions that the western scholars depend, and they accept them as final. [Cowell, 8th century A.D (Translation of *Sarvadar-sanasangrana*, Preface, p. viii); the same date is accepted by Gough (*Philosophy of the Upanishads Preface*, p. viii): by Jacob (Translation of *Vēdantasāra*, p. 28) he is placed in latter part of the 8th century. Monier Williams gives A.D. 650-740. (*Indian Wisdom*, p. 48); Wilson ( *Sanskrit Dictionary*, Preface, p. xvii; *Essays*, Vol. i, page 194) 8th or 9th century. According to Rice (*Mysore Gazetteer*, Vol. i, p. 377, *et seq.*) he “was born in A.D. 677 or 737” in Cranganore (Kodangalur), Malabar, and “died in his fortieth year”. Dr. Rājendralala Mitra also thinks that the date assigned by western writers is “fairly correct” (*Notices of Sanskrit Manuscripts*, Vol. vii, p. 17). Mr. T. Foulkes places him about A.D. 650-670 ( “On the Pallavas”, p. 196 of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. xvii, New Series). Dr. Burnell's, Professor Müller's, and M. Barth's dates have already been given. Professor Weber, like others, places him in the 8th century, but adds that “his date is more accurately determined” (*History of Indian Literature* p. 51, note 38.)] [Page 14]

Let us now speak of *Sankaravijayas*. By our examination we shall be able, by quoting certain important passages, to show their untrustworthy nature, and that they merely contain certain traditions current in the times of their composition; also that at best we can accept only those general statements in these works that are consistent with each other.

Ānandagiri's *Sankaravijaya*, — From this work we learn that it was written by one Ānandagiri, who calls himself a disciple of Shrī Sankarāchārya, and it describes the life of the philosopher. The narrative states that one Sarvagna lived in Chidambaram, a sacred place in South Arcot District, who had a daughter called Visishtā by his wife Kāmāshī. [Page 15] Visishtā was given in marriage to one Visvajit, who, after living with his wife for some time, went away to the forest to perform *tapas* (austerity). Visishtā then became devoted to Chidambarēsvara (the name of the idol [An object of either wood or stone fashioned generally after the form of a human being, and in which certain spiritual force or forces are focused by the will of the Adepts or high Initiates for the purpose of facilitating, and, serving as a means of attaining that stability of mind, required for the contemplation of the ONE-ALL as enjoined by the *Upanishads*. Thus is *idol* defined by the Agamās, which consider it as a means to an end ] in the temple at Chidambaram), and through his favor obtained a son, afterwards known as Shrī Sankarāchārya. [Chapter 2] This author has not given us the year of his birth, either according to the era of Kaliyuga, Samvat, Saka (era of Sālivāhana) or of Prabhavādigatābda (cycle of sixty years beginning with Prabhava), or at least the day, month or Nakshatra (constellation) under which he was born. It is very much to be doubted whether this was written by Ānandagiri, the famous disciple of Shrī Sankarāchārya, for the work is partly in poetry and partly in prose, and the nature of the style, and many grammatical errors, show that the author must have been only a beginner in the study of the Samskrit language. It is stated therein [Chapters 32, 33, 34 and 44] that he refuted certain systems, philosophical and sectarian, such as those of Indra, Kubēra, Yama, or Chandra, which do not seem to [Page 16] have been mentioned in any Samskrit work, and therefore can have existed only in the imagination, of the writer. It is also stated [Chapter 68] that he had two disciples named Lakshmana and Hastāmalaka; the former was afterwards called Shrī Rāmānujāchārya, and he preached the Vaishnava religion and wrote a Bhāshya

(commentary) on the *Védānta Sūtras*, while the latter went to Udipi and preached the Dwaita philosophy. There cannot be a sillier statement. For it is quite certain that Shrī Rāmānujāchārya was born in A.D., 1017 [As can abundantly be shown by inscriptions, various poems, and other writings of his disciples; *all of which* mention one and the same date, A.D. 1017. (Pingala year according to the Cycle of sixty years)] and Shrī Madhvāchārya in A.D. 1119, and that they have disputed in their Bhāshyas the system advocated by Shrī Sankarāchārya. By mentioning these two reformers it is pretty certain that the writer of this *Sankaravijaya* lived after their times, and the work thus bears the stamp of having been written only lately, and not during or immediately after the time of Shrī Shankarāchārya, as we might be led to think, from the writer's statement that he was his disciple. [Mr. Telang, however, thinks (*The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. v, p. 287) that the work was written by Ānandagiri himself (a disciple of Shrī Sankarāchārya): and also that the author of *Sankaravijaya* is only the author of that work. He could not be a disciple of Shrī Sankarāchārya in the light of the arguments above adduced, although perhaps he might be “only the author of that work ” ] [Page 17]

Chidvilāsayati's *Sankaravijaya*. — According to this work we have it that Shrī Sankarāchārya was the son of Sivaguru by his wife Āryāmbā, and was born in Kāladi in Kēraladēsa in the spring season (Yasantaritu) at noon, in the Abhijit Muhūrta (an auspicious time,) and under the constellation Ādrā. It is also added that at the time of his birth five planets were in *uchcha* (ascending position). What these planets are we are not told; nothing either astronomically or astrologically can be done to find out the particular day on which the planets assumed such a position. His *Upanayana* (initiation or thread ceremony) was performed in his fifth year. One day he went to bathe in a river but was caught by a crocodile; but somehow he escaped. Afterwards he became a nominal Sannyāsi and went to Badarikāsrama, [This statement is at variance with that of Mādhavāchārya's work, in which we read that our philosopher met Gōvindayōgī on the banks of the Nerbudda ] or Badrināth, in the Himālayas. There [Chapter ix.] he found Gōvindapāda engaged in *tapas* (austerity) and by him he was made a regular Sannyāsi, and learned all philosophical *secrets* from him. Further on [Chapter xvi] we are told that he met Bhattapāda (Kumārila) and then went to Kashmir to discuss with Mandanamisra This is a mistake, for it is clear that Kumārila lived before Shrī Sankarāchārya, as already shown. [Page 18] Then he established Mutts (monasteries) at Srīngēri and Jagannāth, and placed Surēsvarāchārya and Padmapāda, respectively, in their charge. We are told that he afterwards established a Mutt at Dwārkā, in Guzerat, and placed Hastāmalaka in its charge [ Chapter xxxi. In the previous *Sankaravijaya* we are informed that he sent Hastāmalaka to preach the Dwaita system of philosophy] then went again to Badarikāsrama, founded a Mutt there and placed Thōtakāchārya in its charge. Lastly, in Badarikāsrama, Dattatrēya (an incarnation of Vishnu supposed to be living even now) took him by the hand, entered into a cave, and thence “he went to Kailās to unite himself with Siva”. [ In the *Sankaravijaya* of Ānandagiri (Chapter 74) it is said that he left his mortal body in Conjiveram, and attained Moksha; that his body was buried in that town by his disciples, and the place of internment worshiped.] Not one of the authors, whom the philosopher is said to have defeated in argument, was actually his contemporary; and Chidvilāsayati further exhibits his dogmatism by saying that those who transgress the orders of Sringeri Mutt should be punished.

Mādhavāchārya's *Sankaravijaya*. — Here we are told that Shrī Sankarāchārya was the son of Sivaguru, and was born in Kāladi, Malabar, “on an auspicious day” [ second Canto, v 71.] when the positions of the planets were thus:

	(Aries) The Sun		
(Capricornis) Mars			
		(Libra) Saturn	

[Page 19] [Jupiter is said to be in *Kēndra*; it may mean either that he is in the *lagna* (the sign under which Shrī Sankarāchārya was born) or the 4th, 7th, or 10th house from that sign. The position occupied by the other planets, or the constellation under which he was born, is not given.]

Further on [Fifth Canto] we are told that he went to Northern India, met Gōvindayōgi on the banks of the Nerbudda and addressed him thus: “You were Âdisêsha (the great serpent) at first, then you incarnated yourself as Patanjali (the author of the *Mahābhāshya* and the *Yōga Sūtras*), and now you are Gōvindayōgi”. [Fifth Canto, v. 95. Mr. T. Subba Row (*The Theosophist*, Vol. iv, p. 309, or *Five Years of Theosophy*, p. 302) makes him *identical* with Patanjali, and says that Shrī Sankarācharya was a disciple of Patanjali. We believe he said so on the authority of this verse. In that case, the verse itself and the commentary thereon are quite sufficient to show that he is wrong and that Patanjali himself lived long before the time of Gōvindayōgi] Afterwards [15th Canto, vv. 33, 49, 90.] he saw Nilakantha, [Nikakantha or Shrikanthasivāchārya was the author of a Shaiva Visishtādwaita commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* (*Vedānta Sūtras*) and as he quotes Shrī Rāmānu jāchārya, he must have lived after him, say, in the 12th century A.D. at the earliest — and hence long after the time of Shrī Sankarārya.] Haradatta, [Haradatta was commentator on *Āpastamba*, and *Gautama, Dharma Sūtras*, and author of *Padamanjari*, a commentary on *Kāśikāvritti*. Haradatta must have lived in the 10th century A.D.] and then [Page 20] Bhattabhāskara, [Bhattabhaskara was the author of a commentary called *Gnāna Yagna*, on the Black Yajurveda, from which we infer that he lived in the 10th century A.D.. He also wrote a commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, in which he disputed the arguments used by Shrī Sankarāchārya in his *Bhāshya*] whom he defeated in argument, and whose *Bhāshya* on the *Vedānta Sūtras* he condemned.

He then [15th Canto, v. 141] met Bāna, Dandi, and Mayūra, [Bāna and Mayūra lived at the Court of Shrīharsha as may be seen from *Sārangadharapadhati*. Bāna himself says in *Shrīharshacharita* (2nd Usvāsa) that he visited Shrīharsha at his Court. Mayūra lived about the beginning and Bāna in the middle of the 6th century A.D. Dandi lived about the 8th century A.D.] and taught them his philosophy; [15th Canto, v. 156.] defeated in argument Harsha, author of *Khandanakhanda*, [Ibid., v. 157. This Shrīharsha is different from the one mentioned in note No. 9, and lived about the end of the 9th century



A.D.] *Abhinavagupta*, [*Ibid.*, v. 158 ]. Abhinavagupta lived about A.D. 1000 (Buhler's "Report of a Journey in Kashmir" in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, for 1877, Extra No. p. 80) ]. [Page 21] *Murārimisra*, [*Ibid.*, v 16. Murārimisra was follower of the Mīmāṃsā school and is a different man from his namesake, a famous poet.] *Udayanāchārya* [Author of *Kusumāñjali* (on Nyāya philosophy) and other works; also of a commentary on the *Nyāyatāparyatika* of Vāchaspatimisra, who was the author of *Bhāmati*, a commentary on Shrī Sankarāchārya's Bhāshya on the *Brahma Sūtras*. Dharmagupta may be placed not later than about the 10th century A.D.] and *Dharmagupta*; and he is also said to have seen and defeated in argument Kumārila, [7thCanto. The date of Kumārila was already shown as the 3rd or the 4th century A.D.] Mandanamisra [10thCanto. Mandanamisra may be placed not later than about the 10th century A.D.] and Prābhākara; [12th Canto, v 43. He is quoted by Shrī Sankarāchārya in his *Vēdānta Sūtra Bhāshya*, p 77, Calcutta Edition (*Bibliotheca Indica Series*), and therefore lived probably before the philosopher; but see further on (Section III). The dates of the several authors mentioned in these *Sankaravijayas*, have been determined with special reference to the existing records and are given in these notes to show that they were not contemporaries of Shrī Sankarāchārya.] and at last left the mortal body, and this world for Kailāsa.

This work is said to, have been written by Mādhavāchārya. It cannot be the famous Mādhavāchārya, for it is usual for him to give out, at the beginning or the end of every one of his works, the name of his guru and his genealogy, or some other description regarding himself. Such is not the case with the present writer; and further there is a great difference between [Page 22] the two as regards style. The writer of this work must evidently be some modern author of that name and he must, we think, have belonged to the Srīngēri Mutt, from the fact that he gives undue prominence to that Mutt and extols its importance, while Anandagiri does not to such an extent. The writer says [16th Canto.] that he compiled the work from some previously existing *Sankaravijaya* but does not give its name and nothing is known about it. [The commentator, Dhanapatisūri, however, quotes many verses illustrative of the philosopher's life; but it does not appear quite conclusively whence he quoted them, although the narrative disclosed by them agrees in the main with Anandagiri's version] We even doubt the existence of such a work, for had it really existed nothing would have prevented this writer from quoting from it the date of birth of the philosopher.

## 2 — EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

Under this head I propose to include certain, records and works, more reliable than those already dealt with, and by a reference to the statements which they make about their authors or Shrī Sankarāchārya, the period in which he lived may be more rightly estimated. These are:

- (i) Fahian's, [Fabian visited India about A.D. 400. His accounts are translated by Professor Beal into English ] (ii) Hioun Thsang's [Hioun Thsang came to India from China in the year A.D. 629, and returned to his country about A.D. 645. He came here chiefly to study the Buddhist literature in Samskr̥t. He is one of the most accurate observers, and the accounts he gave of the various parts of the countries he visited, throws a good deal of light on the history of those parts. His *Travels* and his *Life* by two Shamans are now translated into English by Professor S. Beal.] (iii) Itsing's, [ Itsing came to India from China in the last quarter of the 7th century A.D. But his accounts are not yet translated, and it is not known whether he said anything regarding our philosopher ] and (iv) Alberuni's [Alberuni came to India from Arabia, about A.D. 1031. His accounts are now translated by Professor Sachau in two volumes] accounts about India, (v) [Page 23] Shrī Rāmānujachārya's *Bhāshya* on the *Vēdānta Sūtras*, (vi) *Bhāmati*, a commentary on Shrī Sankarāchārya's *Bhāshya* on the *Vēdānta Sūtras*, (vii) *Sankshēpasāriraka*, a condensed commentary on

the *Védānta Sūtras*, in accordance with the previous work, (viii) *Purānas*, and (ix) List of the successors of Shrī Sankarāchārya.

We may leave out (i), (ii) and (iv) as they do not say anything about the philosopher; of the rest we may first examine Shrī Rāmānujchārya's *Bhāshya* and *Bhāmati* together. The *Sāriraka Bhāshya* of Shrī Rāmānujchārya is a Visishtādwaitic Commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* (*Védānta Sūtras*), and is an attempt at refutation of the Adwaitic philosophy as contained in Shri Sankarāchārya's *Bhāshya* and other works, such as *Bhāmati*, *Panchapādikā* and *Vivarana*. Shrī Rāmānujchārya's date is a sure ground to stand. [Page 24] upon [Vide note 5, page 7] He was born in 1017, and began to write his *Bhāshya* probably about A.D. 1050. Thus Vāchaspatimisra, the author of *Bhāmati*, lived *not later than* the last quarter of the 10th century A.D. but as Vāchaspatimisra was only one in the long list of succession of disciples, we may *safely* assume that he lived not earlier than about a century after the philosopher. In other words, the philosopher himself could not have lived except before the middle of the 9th century A.D.. It may be that Vāchaspatimisra lived two or three centuries before the time of Shrī Rāmānujchārya but nothing definite can be deduced as to the period in which he, Vāchaspatimisra, lived, for almost nothing is known of one King Nriga, in whose reign he says he composed the work. [Ibid. P. 766. Calcutta Edition. The passage may be thus translated: "I have compiled this *Bhāmati* during the reign of the famous King Nriga, whose actions many kings try to imitate, but are not successful."]

*Sankshēpasāriraka* (vii) was written by one Sarvagnamuni or Sarvagnātma, who calls himself a grand pupil of Shrī Sankarāchārya. [Ibid, p.1, Benares Edition] There is a certain passage [Ibid p. 522, Benares Edition. The passage may be thus translated: "This *Sankshēpasāriraka*, I have composed during the reign of Âditya, of the race of Manu whose orders are never disobeyed, and who was born in Kshatriya family."] in his work which shows that he lived during the time of one King Aditya. Professor Bhāndarkar in [Page 25] his report on the search for Samskrit MSS. during the year 1882-83 suggests that this king "must be one of the Chālūkyas, and probably one of the four successors of the great Pulakêsi, whose names ended with Âditya"; and holds that "Sankarāchārya must be referred to about the end of the 6th century". Mr. Telang, taking up this suggestion, argues as to who this Âditya might be. He says: [This is from a paper entitled "*The dates of Pûnavarma, and Sankarāchāryā*", read on the 21st April last before a meeting of the Bombay branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, and is intended to be published in the journal of that branch of the Society. As the publication would have taken some time before it came from the Press, Mr Telang kindly sent me a very rough proof, being all that he had in print. This paper is a reply to the criticisms passed by Mr S.P. Pandit, in the preface to his edition of *Gaudarvaha* (a Prakrit poem of Vākpati, written about A.D.800) on Mr Telang's previous article in *The Indian Antiquary* (Vol xiii, p 96 *et seq*) on the date of Shrī Sankarāchārya.]

"Professor Bhāndarkar does not say which of the four is in his opinion to be here understood, and there are, no doubt, hardly enough materials before us to form any very definite opinion. In the absence however, of anything else, it seems to me not unreasonable to hold that the king alluded to, in the passage under consideration, must be the first Vikramāditya; firstly, because Vikrama appears there to have been a powerful and distinguished prince, and secondly, and more especially, because, unless the first of the Âdityas is intended, the description will be [Page 26] too indefinite to serve the presumable purpose of the writer. In default of all other data, therefore, we may provisionally accept the suggestion that a grand pupil of Sankarāchārya flourished in the reign of Pulakêsi's son". Now it is more likely that an author would give the name of the king and not his title. Further Sarvagnātma says that the king was a Kshatriya. We can therefore infer that his full name was something like "Âdityavarma", *varma* being a

termination to show the caste he belonged to. In fact a king of that name reigned immediately after Pulakêsi II — and somewhere between the years A.D. 624-58, [Rice, *Mysore Inscriptions*, p 71] with whom we are inclined to identify the Âditya of *Sankshêpasâiraka*. The interval between the philosopher and his grand pupil being such as can be spanned by the life of a single individual — putting it at the lowest estimate, viz., fifty years — it follows that Shrî Sankârâchârya must have lived before the last quarter of the sixth century A.D.

*Purânas* (viii). — Certain *Purânas* are also said to make mention of the birth of our philosopher; those portions of the *Purânas* which are said to treat of him are not generally known to exist; and further the passages [Such, for example, as “Sivarahasyakhanda” of *Skânda* of *Purâna* ] alleged to contain an account of him, cannot be found in any of the existing editions, or manuscript copies of those *Purânas*. [Page 27]

The *Pâdmôttara Purâna* contains sixty-four chapters. In the forty-second chapter we find Siva telling his wife Pârvatî that several people will be born in the Kaliyuga and preach several doctrines, and that he himself will incarnate as a Brahmin, and will destroy the world by preaching Advaita (Idealism). The MS. in the Adyar Library is not less than three centuries old, and the Telugu translation of the work is in itself more than two centuries old. Vignânabhikshu in his *Sânkhya Sûtra Bhâshya* [ Page 8, Calcutta Edition] quotes the very passage to show that even a work so revered as a *Purâna* tells something against the philosopher. Several followers of Shrî Mâdhavâchârya quoted in their works this particular portion of the *Padmottara Purâna*. There can be no doubt, therefore, that the passages relating to various persons in Kaliyuga must only be a later addition made to the *Purâna*, and those referring to our philosopher, must be by some antagonist of the Advaita philosophy. Similarly we have in the thirty-fourth chapter of one *Bhârgara Purâna* an account of Shrî Râmânujâchârya. The only explanation that can be given for such statements is, that, whenever any follower of a particular system wishes to exalt the glory of the founder of that system, he interpolates a passage or two in favor of the founder, in a *Purâna* or some other sacred work. [Page 28]

*List of successors in the Mutts* (ix).—Sringeri Mutt, which is considered the most ancient of these Mutts, contains the names of only eleven ascetics before *Vidyâranya*, viz., Shrî Sankârâchârya, Visvarûpa, Nityabôdhaghana, Gânanaghana, Gnânôththama, Gnânagiri, Simhagirisvara, Îsvara Tirtha, Nrisimha Tirtha, Vidyâ-Sankara Tirtha, and Bhârati-Krishna Tirtha. [This is from H. H Kristnarjawudayar’s (the late Maharaja of Mysore) *Ashthôthara - satanâmâvali* or the one hundred and eight names of the last Guru of Sringeri Mutt.] *Vidyâranya* became a sannyasi about A.D. 1331, and even granting that he was immediately canonized as a saint, the date of Shrî Sankârâchârya would be about the middle of the 8th century, assigning fifty years — and this is more than unusual — to each saint. On the other hand, the other evidences go to prove that he was at least centuries before this period. The fact that sannyasis cannot have anything to do with worldly objects, such as money, etc., and that *Vidyâranya*, even while a sannyasi discharged the duties of a minister, although such procedure is wholly unwarranted by the Shâstras under pain of expiation, lead us to think that the great philosopher never troubled himself with founding any Mutts, or created any funds for their maintenance. It is, however, very probable that the philosophy he taught his disciples was handed down from one generation of teachers to another, exactly in the same way as is done at present, that is, without a [Page 29] Mutt, or anything else mixed up with the world and its allurements. The most famous sannyasi in the succession of gurus of the Sringeri Mutt was, of course, *Vidyâranya*, and it is very probable that these Mutts arose through the political influence he had exercised. Gradually, however, other sannyasis may have followed this course and established their own several Mutts tracing their line of gurus to the philosopher, who probably did not possess any such

idea. The interval of two centuries above referred to must have been occupied by some of the pupils of the philosopher and their successors, and, in their eagerness to find out who lived in those two centuries, the followers became confused, and the whole attempt stopped. [Mr Rice in the *Gazetteer of Mysore*, Vol i, says he obtained his list from the Sringeri Mutt, and his names, quite agree with mine, except that the immediate successor of the philosopher is in his list *Surêsvarâchârya* and in mine *Visvarûpa*] The final solution seems to have been that *Surêsvarâchârya* lived eight hundred years, while the philosopher lived only thirty two. There may be a mistake of eighty years, and assuming that such was the case, we find that *Shrî Sankarâchârya* flourished about the end of the 7th century A.D.

The other difficulty is that the usual verses of salutation of the Advaites point to *Padmapâda*, *Hâstâmalaka*, *Tantrôtakâchârya*, and *Vârtikakâra* (*Surêsvarâchârya*) as the immediate successors of the [Page 30] philosopher. *Visvarûpâchârya* cannot be identified with the last-named, and is quite a different person.

### 3. — INTERNAL EVIDENCE

Before proceeding to examine the evidence furnished by his works, it may be asked what his works are. This is a pertinent question, seeing that a good many works — more than sixty — are generally ascribed to him. These works, when judged by their style, and the system of philosophy they inculcate, are not all his productions. Very few of them can be his works. These are the *Brahma Sûtra Bhâshya*, the *Upanishad Bhâshya*, the *Gîta Bhâshya*, the *Commentaries on Sanatsujâtiya*, and on *Sahasranâmâdhyâya*. It is doubtful whether he wrote a commentary on *Nrisimhatâpani Upanishad*, as it contains extracts from the *Vârtikas* written after his time. One *Sankârananda* wrote commentaries on several *Minor Upanishads*, such as the *Kaushitaka*, and on comparison of these, in point of style, with the commentary on *Nrisimhatâpani*, it is evident that he alone must have written it. [Some, however, think that even the *Commentaries on Sanatsujâtiya* and *Sahasranâmâdhyâya* are not his own] *Upadêsasahasri* and *Drigdrisyavivêka* claim *Shrî Sankarâchârya* as the author. For the present it is doubtful whether they are his writings. The other works, such as *Apârôkshânubhûti*, *Âtmânatmavivêka*, *Vivêkachodâmani* and *Âtmabôdha* cannot be his works, for they in many [Page 31] respects contradict the philosophical conclusions found in his *Sûtra*, *Upanishad*, and *Gîtâ Bhâshyas*. Even among the commentators on his *Vêdânta Sûtra Bhâshya*, there is a difference of opinion as to the real import of several passages; compare, for example, the interpretations in *Bhâmati* and *Vivarana* and a particular passage in *Aitareyopanishad Bhâshya* which contains several modes of interpretation. [Vide p 29 of Madras Edition] *Siddhântalêsasangraha*, a treatise on *Vêdânta* Philosophy, by *Appiah Dikshitâ*, enumerates many subdivisions among his followers. It is plain, therefore that after the time of *Shrî Sankarâchârya* his school became variously divided, and every individual belonging to a particular division wrote a work, on the basis of his own doctrines, and attributed it to the philosopher. That this was the case will be apparent to any one who has an opportunity to go through *Appiah Dikshitâ's* examination of those systems, and compare his statements with such works as *Vivêkachûdamani*, etc..

Looking, then, into those works that are undoubtedly his own, viz., the three *Bhâshyas*, we find him quoting *Upavarsha*, [*Vêdânta Sûtra Bhâshya* ( *Bibliotheca Indica Series*.) pp 291, 953] *Sabaraswami*, [*Ibid*, pp 58-953] *Bhartiprapancha* [*Bhâdâranyôpanishad Bhâshya* (Madras Edition) pp I, 373, 375] [Page 32] *Dramidâchârya*, [*Chhândôgyôpanishad Bhâshya* (Madras Edition) pp I,87, 89] *Vrithikâra*, [*Vêdânta Sûtra Bhâshya* (*Bibliotheca Indica Series*, pp 57, 343; and *Gîtâ Bhâshya* (Babu Bhuvan Chandar Bysacks's Calcutta Edition, which also contains *Anandagiri's* commentaries thereon, and a Hindi translation), pp 793] *Kumârilabhata*, [*Vêdânta Sûtra Bhâshya* (*Bibliotheca Indica Series*), pp 50, 53]

Prābhākara, [*Ibid* p. 57] Udyôtakara, [*Ibid*. p 57] Prasastapāda, [2nd Adhyāya, 2nd Pāda ] and Īsvara Krishna. [*ibid.*]

We may now try to roughly ascertain the dates of these several authors, and find out which of them was the last in point of time.

Upavarsha. — His name is rendered famous by the *Kathāsāritsāgara* of Sōmadēva and *Kshēmēndra*, which is an abridgment in Sanskrit of Brihatkathā, written by Grunādhyā in the Prakrit tongue, during the reign of Sātavāhana. [As may be learnt from *Kathāsāritsāgara*; Bāna's *Harsha Charita Kuvalāyananda*, *Chandrika*; and *Kavyādarsa of Dandi* ] He was the author of a gloss on Jaimini's *Mimāmsa Sūtras* and the *Védānta Sūtras* of Bādarāyana. He is stated to have lived during the reign of King Yōgananda, and, whoever he might be, there can be no doubt that he lived before [Page 33] the Christian Era.

Sabaraswāmi was the author of a commentary on the *Mimāmsa Sūtras* of *Jaimini*. His date may be between the 4th century B.C. and the 2nd century A.D. [During this period many famous Yagnikās flourished, such as Pagshilaswāmy, Hariswāmy, Dēvaswāmy, Karavindaswāmy, Dhūrtaswāmy, and various others whose names ended with "Swamy". This may rightly be called the "Swamy" Period] He quotes in his work a *vritti* on the *Mimāmsa Sūtras*. Besides, Bhartrihari in his *Vākyapadēya* quotes certain solutions of *Mimāmsa* problems. These solutions are those of Sabaraswāmī and of none else. Bhartrihari's date being the first century A.D., as can be deduced from the *Vākyapadēya* itself, Sabaraswāmi's date may be fixed not later than the beginning of the Christian Era, and at any rate after the third century B.C..

Bhartriprapancha. — He is no doubt identical with Bhartrihari. He appears to have written commentaries on the *Upanishads*, the *Védānta Sūtras*, and the *Bhayavad-Gītā*. From Shrī Sankarāchārya's commentaries and Anandagiri's gloss on the *Brihadāranyakōpanishad* of Kānwasākha, it appears that he commented on the same Upanishad, but belonging to Mādhyandina Sākha. Bhartriprapancha must, no doubt, have been a very famous writer, as he is quoted by several Visishtadwaitic philosophers as well. [He is quoted by Shrī Yāmunāchārya, the Paramaguru of Shrī Rāmānujāchārya in his two Vedāntic works *Sidhitraya* and *Āgamaprāmānya*] [Page 34]

Dramidāchārya (Dravidāchārya) was beyond all doubt a native of Southern India, as his name implies. He was the author of commentaries on the *Védānta Sūtras*, and the *Upanishads*. He is also quoted by Shrī Ramānujāchārya in his *Védānta Sūtra Bhāshya*, and *Védārthasangraha*. His date cannot be fixed with certainty but there can be no doubt that he lived before the Christian Era, for his *Bhāshyas* are quite unsectarian, and must have therefore lived before sectarianism got a hold on the Vedantists. His works are commented upon by one Vāmanāchārya, not the author of *Kāśikāvritti*.

Vrittikāra. — He is, of course, the same as Bōdhāyana. It is an established rule that whenever there are *Sūtras* there must of necessity be a small commentary (*Vritti*) to enable the reader to understand those *Sūtras*, and thus the author of the *Vritti* must be either the author of the *Sūtras* themselves, or a pupil of his. The date of Vrittikāra depends therefore on the date of the *Sūtras*, which is too remote to be definitely settled. Vrittikāra's interpretations are accepted by Shrī Ramanujāchārya in his *Védānta Sūtra Bhāshya*, but not by Shrī Sankarāchārya in several places. His commentary (*Vritti*) consisted of one hundred thousand granthas of thirty-two syllables each; he is followed by Dramidācharya, Brahmanandi, Achāryakapardi, and Āchāryabhāruchi, as may be seen from Shrī Rāmānujāchārya's *Vedārtna-*

sangraha. [Page 35]

Prabhākara. — He was a pupil of the school of Sabaraswāmī, and as he was called guru, his followers were called Prābhākaras, and his school Gurumatha. His school is severely criticized by Kumārilabhatta in his *Tantravārtika*, *Tantraratna*, *Vārtika* (in slokas), and *Tuptika*. The interval between these two authors may be supposed to be about a century.

Kālidāsa. — Since he is mentioned in *Kumāritā's Tantravārtika*, he must have lived after the time of the poet. Unfortunately there is a good deal of difference among Orientalists and Samskritists as to the date of Kālidāsa. Without going deeply into this broad question, we may say that as he is mentioned in one of Pulakēsi II's inscriptions (A.D. 637) [These are the dates of western writers, and only tentatively adopted; they are given as the latest dates that can be assigned to them ] and in Bāna's *Harsha-Charita* (A.D. 550), there is nothing extraordinary in thinking that Kālidāsa must have lived at least three centuries before the time of Pulakēsi II. The date of Kālidāsa may at all events be before the 4th and after the middle of the 2nd century. From *Mēghadūta* (1st canto) we learn that Dignāga was a contemporary of Kālidāsa — Dignāga condemned the Nyāya philosophy, and in reply to those condemnations Udyōtakarāchārya wrote his *Nyāya Vārtika*. This information is from Vāchaspatimisra's *Nyāyatātparyatikā*. Udyōtakarāchārya's date, may be placed in the [Page 36] 4th century A.D., and therefore Kālidāsa's in the 3rd century (roughly), and Kumāri in the beginning of the 4th century.

Īsvara Krishna. — He was the author of Sāṅkhyakārikā, otherwise called *Tatvasangraha*. Shrī Sankarāchārya does not directly give his name or quote from his work, but he gives the substance of what Sāṅkhyakārika says in reference to certain philosophical questions. There can be no doubt that Īsvara Krishna lived before the time of the Advaiti philosopher, for his Paramaguru, Goudapādāchārya, wrote a commentary thereon, which is said to have been translated into Chinese during the reign of the Chang Dynasty A.D. 557-83. [Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol xii (new series)] It is quite probable that Goudapāda lived a century before the date of its translation, and it is possible that he was a contemporary of Udyōtakara in the beginning of the 4th century, granting that this is the earliest date that can be assigned to him, the latest date being a few years before the translation, say about A.D. 550. This would give the earliest date for our philosopher (Shrī Sankarāchārya) as A.D. 350.

*Kanāda Sūtras* are quoted in the *Vēdānta Sūtrabhāshya*, and so also Prasastapādāchārya's gloss thereon; but Prasastapādāchārya and Udyōtakarāchārya were, it is generally known, contemporaries. If the latter lived about the beginning of the 4th century, the former too must have lived about that time. [Page 37]

We also find certain passages in his works which tell us when he lived. They are as below:

1. "Dēvadatta who is (present) at Srughna [Near Mathura in Norther India] (at a given day) cannot be present at Pātaliputra [ Now in ruins, near the modern Patna ] on one and the same day; if (however) a man is present in different (and distant) places, he must possess different personalities, as in the case of Dēvadatta and Yagnadatta, who live at one and the same time at Srughna and Pātaliputra". [Vēdānta Sūtra Bhāshya, p 463 (Bibliotheca Indica Series)]

2. “He who goes from Srughna to Mathura, and thence to Pātaliputra, may be considered as going from Srughna to Pātaliputra”. [*Ibid*, p 1093]

3. “Just as the service of Pûrnavarma will give food and clothing, (so) Rājyavarma's service will be productive of kingly bliss”. [*Chhândōgyōpanishad Bhāshya*, 2nd Prapathaka, 23rd Khanda, or p 71, Madras Edition.]

“Between two entities a relation does exist; but not between an entity and a non-entity; nor between two non-entities — for how can non-entity be described ? To draw out a boundary between the genesis (of an entity) and (its) prenatal condition is utterly impossible. This boundary is visible in the case of entities, but not in the case of non-entities. If it is said that an indescribable son of a barren woman was king before [Page 38] Pûrnavarma's accession to the throne, would it necessarily lead (us) to the conclusion that the son of a barren woman was, is, or will, ever be a king ? ”

From the first and second quotations it will be plain that in his time Srughna and Pātiliputra were in existence.

From history we learn that:

(i) Pātaliputra, once the capital of India, and mentioned by Patanjali, the Grecian and Chinese writers, etc., was washed away about the year A.D. 750 by excessive floods in the Sone and the Ganges, at the junction of which it stood. [*Archaeological Survey Reports*, Vol viii, Notes, pp xii and xiii. This is based on the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1836, and *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol vi.]

(ii) That the modern city of Patna dates only from the time of Shir Shah (A.D. 1541). Popular tradition is said to confirm this account, and that at the present day a masjid of plain massive construction is pointed out as the masjid built by Shir Shah, and it has an inscription of Shir Shah's. [*Archaeological Survey Reports*, Vol. viii, p. 28. It is here said that — with the exception of a few wrecks which are used as steps, a few fragments near a temple, and numerous boulders of stone lying scattered on the banks and built into the river revetments, showing that on this side probably was the old city, with its stone edifices — no other traces of old Pātaliputra exist in modern Patna. It is quite improbable that the Pataliputra of Shrī Sankarāchārya's time would be of this description.] Srughna, also a very ancient city near Thaneswar on the Jumna, is [Page 39] identified with the modern Sugh. [*Archaeological Survey Reports*, Vol ii, p 229.] The modern Sugh is said to contain about two hundred houses, [*Ibid*, p 228] and it is not possible to find out when it came to the degraded condition in which it is now found. We are, however, [*Ibid*, p 230] told that “the discovery of coins of the Tomar and Chohan Rajas of Delhi shows that the place must have been occupied down to the time of the Muhammadan conquest in A.D. 1193 ”. General Cunningham also thinks that there are evidences at least of its partial occupation as late as the reign of Feroz Toglak (A.D. 1320) Hioun Thsang says that the greater part was in ruins, but the foundations still remained. “ It possessed five monasteries containing one thousand monks who discussed clearly and ably the most profound and abstract questions; it also possessed a hundred temples of Brahmins, whose followers were extremely numerous”. [ Hioun Thsang quoted in *Ibid*, p 227]

From Shrî Sankarâcharya's mention of the names of these two cities, it is evident that the fame of the city must have been great and the cities themselves in a flourishing condition to cause him to mention them more than once in his works. We have now found out that Pātaliputra was in a flourishing condition before A.D. 750, and Srughna before Hioun Thsang's visit to the place about A.D. 635. [Page 40] Thus, in all probability, Shrî Sankarâchārya lived before the 7th century A.D.

The credit of first bringing those passages that relate to Purnavarma to the notice of Oriental scholars, and of basing a historical argument thereon, is due to Mr. K. T. Telang of Bombay. [The Indian Antiquary, Vol xiii, p 95] His arguments with regard to the date of Purnavarma found in passages Nos. 3 and 4 are briefly as follows:

(i) Shrî Sankarâchāya must have lived at the time of one, Pûrnavarma, as he mentions his coronation. Pûrnavarma could not have been a fictitious personage, for we are told by the philosopher that his coronation actually took place.

(ii) If we search for the name Pûrnavarma in the various lists of kings of India, such as the Kadambas, Pallavas, Chāndels, Maukharis, Utpalas, etc, only two Pûrnavarmas occur, one of whom is mentioned in the Javanese Inscriptions. [There is a good deal of doubt attached to the Javanese Pûrnavarma. He, too, appears to have been an Indian Prince, although the evidence in favor of such a conclusion is very insufficient.

The inscription in Java is in Samskrit, and the name of the country or town of which he was the ruler is not legible. The character of the inscription is a development of that in use during the reign of the early Pallavas. The Pallavas were the foremost of kings in Central and Southern India and they ruled over the largest of the contemporary Buddhist kingdoms of India (Mr Foulkes on the Pallavas in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, Vol xvii). Mr Foulkes thinks, and so also does Dr. Burnell (*South Indian Palaeography*, p 131), that he must have been a Pallava prince who conquered Java, about A.D. 450, that being the date assigned to the inscription by Professor Kern (*Vide The Indian Antiquary*, Vol iv, p 356, *et seq*). from the fact that Varma is the general surname of Pallava kings. This supposition receives considerable support from the fact that there were also connections between South Indian and Javanese kings, and a king of Java sent, about A.D. 921, his four sons and a daughter to Southern India for education, (*Vide Mr Foulkes' article on the Pallavas*, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, New Series, Vol xvii, p 204, and *Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol xvi, p 133.]

It is most unlikely that the philosopher ever alluded to the Javanese Pûrnavarma. The other Pûrnavarma must therefore be the man mentioned. He is mentioned by Hioun Thsang in his *Travels*, and is found to have reigned [Page 41] about A.D. 590. [This second Purnavarma was King of Western Maghadha, and reigned about A.D. 590. According to General Cunningham (*Archaeological Survey Reports*, Vol i, pp 5, 7, Vol iii, p137), Hioun Thsang writes of him thus “. . . the King of Maghadha, called Pûrnavarma, the last of the race of Asoka-rajā hearing of it (*i.e.* the destruction by Sasānkā of the sacred Bodhi tree at Gaya) sighed and said: ‘The sun of wisdom having set, nothing is left but the tree of Buddha; and this they now have destroyed. What source of spiritual life is there now? He than cast his body on the ground, overcome with pity; with the milk of a thousand cows he again bathed the roots of the tree, and it once more revived and grew to the height of ten feet. Fearing lest it should again be cut down, he surrounded it with a stone wall twenty-four feet high.’ He also speaks of a pavilion of six stages “having been



formerly made” by Pûrnavarma. In his “Life” it is said that “Pûrnavarma Raja Lord of Maghadha, had a great respect for learned men, and that he assigned the revenues of twenty large towns for the respect of Jayasêna (the teacher of Hioun Thsang), which Jayasêna declined to receive.” The narrative then proceeds “After the obsequies of Pûrnavarma, Siladitya raja also invited him to be master (of the country),” and assigned him the revenue of eighty large towns of Orissa, which Jayasêna likewise declined to accept. From that time, we are further told, Jayasêna “has constantly lived on the mountain called Yashnivana, where he takes charge of disciples”. We have, then, four different passages relating to Pûrnavarma in Mr. Beal’s volumes, and taking them all together the following conclusions seem to be fairly deducible from them:

1. Pûrnavarma had been dead some time before Hioun Thsang’s visit to India.
2. Pûrnavarma must have lived at a time sufficiently removed from the date of Hioun Thsang’s pilgrimage, to warrant his speaking of the work done by Pûrnavarma as having been done formerly or “in old days”.
3. The interval of time between Pûrnavarma, and Hioun Thsang must be enough to explain the reduction of about four feet in the height of the wall build round the Bodhi tree.
4. The interval between Pûrnavarma and Hioun Thsang must not be too large to be spanned by the life of Jayasêna who was living in Hioun Thsang’s time, and had acquired renown enough during Pûrnavarma’s reign to be offered the revenues of twenty large towns by that sovereign.

These passages and the foregoing ones from Hioun Thsang’s work in life, are taken from Mr Telang’s paper “On the dates of Pûrnavarma and Sankarâchârya intended for publication in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1890) It is for the foregoing reasons that he places Pûrnavarma about A.D. 590 – the date first given by General Cunningham, but subsequently changed to A.D. 637.]

Sankarâchârya must therefore have lived about that time.

The great objection to this conclusion is that, according to Shrî Sankarâchârya’s fourth passage, one, [Page 42] Râjavarma, must have been a contemporary of Pûrnavarma. In other words, Srî Sankarâchârya was a contemporary of one, Pûrnavarmaraja, who was contemporary with another king called Râjarma. But no [Page 43] king of the name of Râjavarma seems to have been a contemporary of Pûrnavarma of Western Maghada.

Mr Pandit throws out a suggestion that Sasânka, King of Kanuj, might be identical with Râjavarma. And Mr Telang thinks that “this is not very probable, *if* Sasânka’s other name was Narêndraguptâ, as we are told by General Cunningham (*Archaeological Surrey Reports*, Vol i)” nor does he himself try to find out with whom Râjavarma can be identified. There can be no doubt, that Mr Telang’s date, *viz*, the end of the 6th century A.D., is the most acceptable one under the present circumstances, but it would also be better

if the earliest date than can possibly be assigned to the philosopher were taken into consideration, and the intervening period as the *safest* one that can be fixed for him as other considerations such as the literary ones take us back a century or two earlier.

We have previously come to the conclusion that the earliest date that can be assigned for him was the middle of the 4th century, the latest date being the [Page 44] last quarter of the 6th century (about 590 A.D.); and we may not be far from truth if we say that he lived somewhere about the 5th century A.D.

#### **4.—SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: AND A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

In the first part we have examined the various traditions current about Shrī Sankarāchārya, and found that none of the traditions could bear the tests that were applied. The inconsistencies between any two different traditions were too many for any of these to be seriously considered. As the majority of the traditions pointed to Kaladi in Malabar as the philosopher's birthplace, we must accept it.

It is quite probable that, as has already been pointed out, an attempt towards his biography was made in later times; but they could not get the whole truth, and had therefore simply to record the traditions current in their times. The dates of the biographies being several centuries later, it is not to be wondered at that the traditions were different from one another. In addition to this, every biographer seems to have twisted the narrative with a view to giving some sanctity to the particular Mutt he belonged to, or the places he had seen. We have at present no work which can be truly considered as his biography, written during, or immediately after his time. The length of his life is not, however, doubted, although different traditions make it thirty-two and fifty-five, [Page 45] while some western writers even consider thirty-two years as the length of his active life, and thus make forty years the length of his entire life: but we accept thirty-two as the most probable, firstly, because there is nothing very extraordinary in thinking that a man became so profound a thinker and so great a philosopher and writer, within such an early age as thirty-two; and secondly, because the majority of traditions have it.

In the next part we took up external evidence, and from it we found that, by making the date of Shrī Rāmānujācharya the basis of our calculations and going upwards, the date of Shrī Sankarāchārya might be fixed at the last quarter of the 6th century A.D. at the latest.

In the third section (on internal evidence) we divided the subject into two parts; first, to ascertain bibliographically what can be considered as the earliest date, and we came to the conclusion that it must be about the middle of the 4th century A.D. In the second part, certain names of persons and cities, which were mentioned by the philosopher in his works, and which were found to have had a contemporaneous existence, were considered in the light of history; and we concluded that he must have written his works at the time when those cities and persons had an actual existence; and although we, in the main, adopted Mr. Telang's arguments, we pointed out that it would perhaps be [Page 46] not far from truth if we should say that he lived in the middle of the earliest and the latest dates, between the middle of the 4th and the 6th, that is in the 5th century A.D.

The places and persons he mentions in his works are all of Northern India, that is India north of the Vindhya mountains. If he had been a native of South India, it might be said he would naturally be expected to take up for purposes of illustration persons and places of South India such as Chidambaram, Conjiveram, etc. The only way of answering this is to say that he was born in Southern India, but went in his boyhood to Northern India, lived there for a long time, and there alone composed his works.

It is also a matter of doubt whether the slokas, said to have been composed by him in adoration of deities in certain sacred places in Southern India, were really his, for the language and style in which they are written are entirely different from the sweet and exquisite style of our philosopher, as we find it in *his* works. It is probable that they may have been written by his successors who all bore the same name as a title.

To attempt a brief biographical sketch.

He was born in Kāladi, Malabar, became a nominal sannyāsi at the age of eight, and then having studied a great deal, went in search of a really good Guru, and found him in Gōvindayōgī, on the banks of the [Page 47] Nerbudda. He then became a real sannyāsi, and studied the different schools of philosophy under this master: for a long time he argued with several philosophers of antagonistic schools, visited several sacred places such as Badarināth, Dwārka, etc., and composed his three *Bhāshyas* — and probably his *Commentaries* on *Sanatsujātiya* and *Sahasranāmādhyāya* — in Northern India, alone, somewhere on the banks of the Ganges. He never seems to have really persecuted the Buddhists as some of our western writers and Sankaravijayas have it. The extraordinary balance of mind exhibited by his writings forms a striking contrast to those of the other reformers and philosophic writers, and should induce any reader to think that he could have had nothing to do with Buddhist or any other persecutions such as Mr. A. Barth represents when he says that the disciples of Shrī Sankarāchārya “organized into military bands and constituted themselves the rabid (!) defenders of orthodoxy”. With the exception, perhaps, of this single writer, every one else firmly believes that he was too philosophical to have had a hand in those persecutions.

Lastly, towards the end of his life he came to the South, but had to leave his body and this world in Conjiveram, at the early age of thirty-two. We think Conjiveram was the most probable place of his Nirvāna, for at present there is an image of him in the temple of the famous goddess Kāmākshi; and [Page 48] the style of architecture and the local traditions to the effect that his body lies buried underneath the image, which is now worshiped, also point to it.

For Shrī Sankarāchārya and his works we have a very high reverence. The loftiness, calmness, and firmness of his mind, the impartiality with which he deals with various questions, his clearness of expression — all of these make us revere the philosopher, more and more. The object of this paper, written as it is by a Visishtādwaiti, is not in any way to underrate the value of his works, or the merits of their author by fixing his date at a comparatively recent period; and we assure our Adwaiti brethren that we desire simply to see what date may be fixed for him, by impartially and without prejudice examining the different traditions and evidence we have, and to show our western writers that, even according to their recognized canons of examination, the date of this eminent philosopher is at least three centuries earlier than they usually place him.