I. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ŚANKARA

There are many works which profess to be biographies of Śan-kara. The most famous of all is the Śankaradigvijaya, written by Vidyāranya in the fourteenth century. All these biographies were composed hundreds of years after Śankara's death and are filled with legendary stories and incredible anecdotes, some of which are mutually contradictory. Today there are no extant materials from which to reconstruct his life with certainty.

Setting the date of Śaṅkara's birth is probably one of the most controversial problems in the history of Indian philosophy, not only because he is one of the greatest Indian philosophers but also because a solution is inseparable from the correct understanding of one of the most important and critical periods of the history of Indian thought. It has been customary to adopt the birth and death dates asserted by K. B. Pathak in 1882,³ 788 and 820, but these dates have no firm basis. After reviewing and criticizing all the conflicting opinions, Hajime Nakamura proposed in 1950 that the dates should be shifted to 700–750.⁴ This view has been accepted by such scholars as L. Renou⁵ and D. H. H. Ingalls.⁶

During the fifth and sixth centuries the Huns invaded India from the central Asian steppes, and the political system of the Gupta empire, under which India had enjoyed her golden age of classical culture, was completely broken up in the sixth century. In the seventh century King Harşa restored peace in North India, but after his death India fell into chaos again. Thus Śańkara was active in composing his works and propagating his teachings dur-

ing an era of political division and social unrest in India; Buddhism was on the wane and Hinduism on the rise.

Tradition says that Śaṅkara was born into a pious Nambūdiri Brahmin family⁷ in a quiet village called Kālaḍi on the banks of the Cūrṇā (or Pūrṇā, Periyāṛu) River in Kerala, South India.⁸ He is said to have lost his father, Śivaguru, early in his life. Śaṅkara renounced the world and became a saṃnyāsin (ascetic) against his mother's will, and went to Govinda (670–720)⁹ to receive instruction. No reliable information about Govinda is available,¹⁰ but he is traditionally said to have been a pupil of Gauḍapāda (640–690).¹¹ Gauḍapāda is notable as the author of an important Vedānta work, Gauḍapādīyakārikā, in which the influence of Mahāyāna Buddhism is evident and, especially in its last chapter, even dominant.¹²

It is said that Śiva, one of the principal gods in Hindusim, was Śaṅkara's family deity and also that he was, by birth, a Śākta, or worshipper of Śakti, the consort of Śiva and female personification of divine energy. Later he came to be regarded as a worshipper of Śiva and even as an incarnation of Śiva himself. But his doctrine is very far removed from Śaivism and Śāktism. It can be ascertained from his works that he had some faith in, or was favorable to, Vaiṣṇavism. It is likely that he was familiar with Yoga, since he is the author of the Yogasūtrabhāṣ yavivaraṇa, the exposition of Vyāsa's commentary on the Yogasūtra, a basic text of the Yoga school. A recent study, though not fully acceptable, has suggested that he was first an adherent of Yoga and later became an Advaitin. 15

Biographers narrate that Śańkara first went to Kāśī (Vārāṇasī), a city celebrated for learning and spirituality, and then travelled all over India, holding discussions with philosophers of different creeds. His heated debate with Maṇḍanamiśra, a philosopher of the Mīmāṃsā school, whose wife served as an arbiter, is perhaps the most interesting of the episodes reported in his biography¹6 and may reflect a historical fact: keen conflict between Śaṅkara, who regarded the knowledge of Brahman as the only means to final release, and the Mīmāṃsā school, which emphasized the performance of ordained duty and the Vedic rituals, and to which belonged eminent philosophers such as Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, Prabhākara, and Maṇḍanamiśra. It is traditionally believed that Kumārila was Śaṅkara's senior contemporary and that Prabhākara was

Kumārila's pupil, though he later established the Prabhākara school in opposition to his teacher. Maṇḍanamiśra was another contemporary who held Advaitic views different from Śaṅkara's. It has been remarked that "during the age of Śaṃkara and for some centuries following it, Maṇḍana's authority on questions relating to Advaita was recognized to be at least as high and important as that of Śaṃkara himself." 18

Śaṅkara would not teach his doctrine to city dwellers. In cities the power of Buddhism was still strong, though already declining, and Jainism prevailed among the merchants and manufacturers. Popular Hinduism occupied the minds of ordinary people while city dwellers pursued ease and pleasure. There were also hedonists in cities, 19 and it was difficult for Śaṅkara to communicate Vedānta philosophy to these people. Consequently he propagated his teachings chiefly among saṃnyāsins, who had renounced the world, and intellectuals in the villages, and he gradually won the respect of Brahmins and feudal lords. 20 He made enthusiastic efforts to restore the orthodox Brahmanical tradition, without paying attention to the bhakti (devotional) movement, which had made a deep impression on ordinary Hindus in his age.

It is very likely that Śankara had many pupils, but we know only four from their writings: Padmapāda, Sureśvara, Totaka (or Trotaka), and Hastāmalaka.²¹ Padmapāda wrote a commentary on Sankara's commentary on the first four sūtras (aphorisms) of the Brahmasūtra, called Pañcabādikā, on which in the middle of the tenth century A.D.²² Prakāśātman composed a commentary entitled Pañcapādikāvivarana. The Vivarana school which Padmapāda started was the most influential among the later Advaitins until it was overshadowed by the Bhāmatī school. Sureśvara is known as the commentator on Sankara's commentaries on the Brhadāranyaka Upanisad and the Taittirīya Upanisad. His independent work Naiskarmyasiddhi is "intended to reiterate the views embodied in the *Upadeśasāhasrī*" of Śankara.²³ Totaka and Hastāmalaka are the authors of the Śrutisārasamuddharana and the Hastāmalakaślokāh, respectively, but their influence upon the development of the Advaita Vedanta seems to be negligible.

It is also traditionally believed that Śańkara founded four monasteries (matha), at Śrńgeri (Śrńgerimatha, South), Purī

(Govardhanamațha, East), Dvārakā (Śāradāmaṭha, West), and Badarīnātha (Jyotirmaṭha, North). The most important of the four is the one at Śṛṅgeri in Mysore Province. In founding monasteries he was probably inspired by the Buddhist vihāra (monastery) system.²⁴ In any case, the monasteries must have played a significant role in the development of his teachings into the leading philosophy of India.

More than three hundred works-commentaries, expositions, and poetry—are attributed to him.25 Most of them are not accepted as authentic.26 His masterpiece is the Brahmasūtrabhāsya, the commentary on the Brahmasūtra, which is the fundamental text of the Vedanta school. In fact, we should define Sankara as the author of the Brahmasūtrabhāsya, and use it as the yardstick against which to measure the authenticity of other works ascribed to him. 27 Sankara also wrote commentaries on the Brhadāranyaka, Chāndogya, Aitareya, Taittirīya, Kena,28 Īśā, Katha, Muṇḍaka, Praśna, and Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad.29 Those commentaries are probably all genuine, but the commentary on the Śvetāśvatara Upanisad, which is traditionally ascribed to him, may be spurious.30 The commentaries on the Gaudapādīvakārikā and the Adhvātmapatala of \bar{A} pastamba-Dharmas \bar{u} tra seem to have been written by Śańkara himself.³¹ As I have already mentioned, he is probably the author of the Yogasūtrabhās yavivaraņa. 32 These works are all commentaries on one or another text. The Upadeśasāhasrī, which is translated here, is the only non-commentarial work whose authenticity has been conclusively demonstrated.33

Penetrating insight, analytical skill, and lucid style characterize Śaṅkara's works. He cannot be called a particularly original philosopher,³⁴ but it has to be remembered that in India it is not originality but fidelity to tradition which is the great virtue. He was an excellent exegete, with an approach to truth which was psychological and religious rather than philosophical.³⁵ He was really not so much a philosopher as a pre-eminent religious leader and a most successful religious teacher. His works show him to have been not only versed in the orthodox Brahmanical traditions but also well acquainted with Mahāyāna Buddhism, so much so that he was often criticized as a "crypto-Buddhist" (pracchannabauddha) by his opponents because of the similarity between his doctrine and Buddhism. Against this criticism, it

should be noted that he made full use of his knowledge of Buddhism to attack Buddhist doctrines vigorously, or to assimilate them into his own Vedāntic nondualism, and he made great exertions to "revedanticize" the Vedānta philosophy, which had been made extremely Buddhistic by his predecessors. The basic structure of his philosophy is nearer to Sāṃkhya, a philosophic system of nontheistic dualism, and to the Yoga school, than to Buddhism.

It is said that Śańkara died at Kedārnātha in the Himalayas. The Advaita Vedānta school he founded has always been preeminent in the learned circles of India. His doctrine has been the source from which the main currents of modern Indian thought are derived.

Notes to Introduction, I

- ¹ For example, (1) Anantānandagiri, Guruvijaya; (2) Ānandagiri, Śaṅkaravijaya [ed. by Jayanārāyaṇa Tarkapañcānana. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1868; ed. by Pandit Jibananda Vidyasagara. Calcutta: Sarasudhanidhi Press, 1881]; (3) Govindanātha, Śaṅkarācāryacarita [Trichur: The Kerala Publishing House, 1926]; (4) Citsukhācārya, Bṛhatśaṅkaravijaya; (5) Cidvilāsa, Śaṅkaravijayavilāsa; (6) Parameśvara, Ācāryavijayacampū; (7) Rājacūḍāmaṇidīkṣita, Śaṅkarābhyudaya; (8) Vallīsahāya, Śaṅkaravijaya; (9) Vidyāśaṅkara, Śaṅkaravijaya; (10) Vidvadbālakakāśilakṣmaṇa Śāstri, Guruwaṃśakāvya [Śrīraṅgam: Śrī Vāṇi Vilās Press, n.d.]; (11) Vyāsācala, Śaṅkaravijaya; (12) Sadānanda, Śaṅkaravijayasāra; (13) Sadāśivabrahmendra, Gururatnamālā; and (14) Sarvajña Sadāśivabodha, Punyaślokamañjarī, and its Pariśiṣṭa by Ātmabodha.
- ² Editions: (1) Bombay: Ganpat Kṛṣṇājī's Press, 1864; (2)Ānadāśrama Sanskrit Series, vol. 22 (Poona), 1891; (3) Hardvār: Śrī Śravaṇanātha Jñānamandir, 1943 this edition contains a Hindi translation by P. Baladeva Upādhyāya; and (4) Sringeri: The Sringeri Matha, 1956. The first chapter of the Śankaradigvijaya was translated into German by P. Deussen in his Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie, I, 3 (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1908), pp. 181 189.
 - ³ Indian Antiquary, XI (1882), pp. 174-175.
- ⁴ Nakamura I, pp. 63–121. In opposition to this view K. K. Raja published an article, "On the Date of Śaṃkarācārya and Allied Problems," in the Adyar Library Bulletin (vol. XXIV, pts. 3–4, 1960, pp. 125–148) suggesting that the works of Śaṅkara were composed toward the close of the eighth century. P. Hacher places him before or around 700 A.D. (Orientalistische Literaturzeitung 59, 1964, p. 235–236). Cf. Giuseppe Morichini's review of Nakamura's book, East and West, 1960, pp. 33–39.
 - ⁵ Journal Asiatique, Vol. CCXLIII (1955), no. 2, pp. 249-251.
 - 6 Philosophy East and West, Vol. 3 (1954), p. 292, n. 2.
- ⁷ The Nambūdiris are the only original Brahmins of Kerala, whose origins cannot be traced back outside Kerala. Even today they form a unique community among the many kinds of Brahmins in India, preserving some of the ancient Vedic and early

post-Vedic traditions and rites which are extinct elsewhere. It is of interest to note that insofar as they adhered to any philosophical system at all, it was to the Bhāṭṭa school of Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, which Śaṅkara severely attacked in his works. It is said that Advaita was adopted by many Nambūdiris only after having become quite popular in other parts of India. See J. F. Staal, "Notes on Some Brahmin Communities of South India," Art and Letters, India, Pakistan, Ceylon, vol. XXXII (1958), no. 1, pp. 1–7.

- ⁸ At present there is a walled enclosure overlooking the ghat in Kālaḍi which contains sites known traditionally as Śaṅkara's birthplace, the place where his house stood, and the place on which the remains of his mother were cremated. This compound also contains two shrines, the Śāradā and the Śaṅkara, and a pāṭhaśālā which offers instruction in Veda and Vedānta in a traditional way.
 - 9 Nakamura III, p. 244.
- ¹⁰ Tradition has it that Govinda was the author of the commentaries on the Chānd. Up., Devatākāṇḍa, and BS, though they are not extant. He is also reported to have written the Yogatārāvali, which is unpublished. See M. Raṅgācārya, The Sarva-Siddhānta-Saṅgraha of Śaṅkarācārya (Madras: Government Press, 1909), p. viii; Nakamura III, pp. 244-247.
- 11 In his paper (Adyar Library Bulletin, vol. XXIV, pts. 3-4, pp. 125-148) K. K. Raja assigns Gaudapāda to the fifth century A.D. and denies the tradition that makes him a paramaguru of Śańkara, interpreting the Sanskrit term as "supreme preceptor" instead of the more usual "teacher's teacher." See T.M.P. Mahadevan, Gaudapāda: A Study in Early Advaita (Madras: University of Madras, 1960), pp. 15-16. Nakamura, on the other hand, regards him as an editor of the Kārikā rather than its author and accepts the tradition that he was Śańkara's teacher's teacher. See Nakamura III, pp. 589-602.
- ¹² See Introduction, II, p. 13. The Gaudapādīyakārikā is also called Māndūkyakārikā, Māndūkyopaniṣatkārikā, and Āgamaśāstra (cf. Nakamura III, pp. 520-523).
- 13 See Nakamura III, p. 531; P. Hacker, "Relations of Early Advaitins to Vaiṣṇavism", WZKSO, vol. IX (1965), pp. 147–154. This may be related to the fact that Śaṅkara pays the highest regard to the BhG among the non-Vedic texts (see S. Mayeda, "The Authenticity of the Upadeśasāhasrī Ascribed to Śaṅkara," JAOS, vol. 85, No. 2, 1965, pp. 187–188; Mayeda Upad, p. 44). It should be noted here that a large percentage of the present Nambūdiris (see note 7) have Nārāyaṇan for their individual name, that the name Nārāyaṇa is very sacred to them, and that the most famous temple of Kerala is the Guruvāyur temple where Kṛṣṇa is worshipped and whose priests are drawn only from particular Nambūdiri families. Cf. J. F. Staal, Art and Letters, India, Pakistan, vol. XXXII (1958), no. 1, p. 5.
 - ¹⁴ See note 32, below, and Introduction, III, B, note 63, pp. 64-65.
- ¹⁵ See P. Hacker, "Śańkara der Yogin und Śańkara der Advaitin," WZKSO, vol. XII-XIII (1968/1969), p. 119–148. It may, however, be necessary to reexamine his opinion. Cf. H. Nakamura, "Notes to Śańkara's *Yogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa* [I]" (*Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, Vol. XXV, no. 1, 1976, p. 77).
- 16 Mādhava, Śaṅkaradigvijaya VIII. Cf. T.M.P. Mahadevan, Homage to Śaṅkara (Jayanti Series no. 4. Madras: Ganesh and Co., 1959), pp. 18–23. Tradition says that Maṇḍanamiśra, converted to the Vedānta, was named Sureśvara by Śaṅkara. This tradition seems to be baseless, though the question may have not yet been settled. See M. Hiriyanna, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (1923), pp. 259–263; (1924), pp. 96–97; M. Hiriyanna, The Naişkarmya-Siddhi of Sureśvarācārya with the Candrikā of Jñānottama (Bombay Sanskrit and Prakrit Series no. XXXVIII. Bom-

bay, 1925), p. xxxii; S. Kuppuswami Sastri, The Brahmasiddhi by Ācārya Maṇḍanamiśra with Commentary by Śaṅkhapāṇi, Edited with Introduction, Appendices and Indexes (Madras Government Oriental Manuscripts Series no. 4. Madras, 1937), pp. xxiv f.; Dinesh Chandra Bhattacharya, Indian Historical Quarterly, vol. VII (1931), pp. 301-308; Amarnath Roy, ibid., vol. VII (1931), p. 632; J. M. Van Boetzelear, Sureśvara's Taittiryopaniṣadbhāṣyavārtikam (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1971), p. 1.

- ¹⁷ Cf. S. Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, vol. I (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 370-372.
- 18 K. K. Raja, "On the Date of Śamkarācārya and Allied Problems," pp. 142-143. Cf. S. Kuppuswami Sastri, The Brahmasiddhi, p. lix; L. Schmithausen, Mandanamiśra's Vibhramavivekah mit einer Studie zur Entwicklung der indischen Irrtumslehre (Wien: Kommissionsverlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1965); Tilmann Vetter, Mandanamiśra's Brahmasiddhih, Brahmakāndah, Übersetzung, Einleitung und Anmerkungen (Wien: Kommissionsverlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1969); M. Biardeau, La philosophie de Mandana Miśra vue à partir de la Brahmasiddhi (Publications de l'École française d'extrème-Orient vol. LXXVI. Paris, 1969).
- 19 H. Nakamura, "Śańkara Tetsugaku no Rekishiteki Shakaiteki Tachiba," Dr. Hakuju Ui's Felicitation Volume (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1951), p. 361.
 - 20 See Upad II,1,2 and its notes 3 and 6.
 - ²¹ P. Hacker, Unters.
- ²² See K. Cammann, Das System des Advaita nach der Lehre Prakāśātmans (Münchener Indologische Studies Bd 4. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965), pp. 4-8.
 - ²³ M. Hiriyanna, The Naiskarmya-Siddhi of Sure śvarācārya, p. viii.
- ²⁴ P. V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol. II, Pt. II (Government Oriental Series Class-B, No. 6. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1941), p. 907; K. A. Nilakanta Sastri, *A History of South India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 417.
 - ²⁵ Cf. Th. Aufrecht, Catalogus Catalogorum, 3 vols. Leipzig, 1891 1903.
- ²⁶ In India it has been a common practice to lend a book authenticity by attributing it to a famous author. Besides, all the heads (Jagadguru) of the Śrngerimatha have had the title Śankarācārya, and any literary or philosophical work written by any of these heads could be legitimately called a work of Śankarācārya. Cf. K. K. Raja, Adyar Library Bulletin (vol. XXIV, pts. 3-4), pp. 127-128. It is thus not easy to decide which works were really written by our Śankara. P. Hacker pointed out that Śankara's contemporaries had styled him Bhagavat, Bhagavatpāda, and Bhagavatpūjyapāda and that the BSBh is invariably ascribed to Śankara-Bhagavat, -Bhagavatpāda, or -Bhagavatpujyapāda in the colophons. From this fact he concluded that "we are entitled to regard provisionally as genuine those works that are described in their colophons as productions of the Bhagavat, whereas all the works that are usually attributed to Sankara-Ācārya in the colophons are suspicious of being spurious" (P. Hacker, "Śankarācārya and Šankarabhagavatpāda," New Indian Antiquary, vol. IX, 1947, pp. 182-183). He applied this method and concluded that all the commentaries on the *Prasthānatrayī* are genuine. But he denied the authenticity of the Švetāśvataropanisadbhāsya in its present form. Cf. P. Hacker, WZKSO, vol. XII-XIII (1968/1969), p. 147.
 - ²⁷ Cf. Mayeda Upad, p. 22.
- ²⁸ There are two commentaries on the *Kenopaniṣad* which are ascribed to one and the same author, Śaṅkara; one is entitled *Padabhāṣya* and the other *Vākyabhāṣya*. Both of them seem to be genuine. See S. Mayeda, "On Saṅkara's Authorship of the Kenopaniṣadbhāṣya," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol. X (1967), no. 1, pp. 33–55.

- ²⁹ Cf. S. Mayeda, "On the Author of the Māṇḍūkyopaniṣad- and the Gauḍapādi-ya- Bhāṣya," *Professor V. Raghavan's Felicitation Volume, Adyar Library Bulletin*, vols. 31-32 (1967-68), pp. 73-94.
- ³⁰ See note 26, p. 9; Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series No. 9 (1918), pp. [1]-[2]; S. Mayeda, "Nārāyaṇa's Kenopaniṣaddīpikā," *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, vol. XX (1972), no. 2, p. 97.
 - 31 See note 29 and P. Hacker, WZKSO, Vol. XII-XIII (1968/1969), S. 147.
- 32 T. Chandrasekharan (ed.), Pātañjalayogasūtrabhās yavivaraṇam (Madras Government Oriental Series no. XCIV. Madras, 1952). On Śańkara's authorship of this Vivaraṇa, see Introduction, III, B, note 63, pp. 64–65.
- 33 Mayeda Upad, pp. 22-64. There are many other non-commentarial works ascribed to Śańkara but their authenticity is very doubtful. For example, the following works do not seem to be authentic, though they are widely accepted as Śańkara's works: (1) The Vivekacūdāmani—see D. H. H. Ingalls, "The Study of Śańkarācārya," Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, vol. XXXIII (1952), p. 7; S. Mayeda, "Śańkara's Upadeśasāhasrī: Its Present Form," Journal of the Oriental Institute, vol. XV (1966), nos. 3-4, p. 252, footnote 3; (2) The Saundaryalaharī—see W. Norman Brown, The Saundaryalaharī, or Flood of Beauty traditionally ascribed to Śańkarācārya (Harvard Oriental Series 43. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), pp. 25-30; (3) The Sarvasiddhāntasaṅgraha—see P. Hacker, New Indian Antiquary, vol. IX (1947), pp. 184-185; (4) Vākyavṛtti and Laghwākyavṛtti—see S. Mayeda, "On the Vākyavṛtti," Professor H. Nakamura's Felicitation Volume (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1973), pp. 57-69.
- ³⁴ Nakamura IV, pp. 420–437. Taking up ideas which have generally been regarded as characteristic of Śańkara's teachings, Nakamura has shown that each of those had already been expressed by some of his predecessors and that Śańkara himself was not the originator.
- 35 Cf. Eigen, p. 256; D. H. H. Ingalls, "Samkara on the Question: Whose Is Avidya?" Philosophy East and West, vol. 3 (1953), no. 4, p. 72.