CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEMPORARIES OF PADMAPĀDA

Sāṅkara - Suresvara - Hastāmalaka - Toṭaka -
Mandanamisra - Vacaspatimiśra -
Padmapāda who belongs to the 9th century A.D. is one of the four great disciples of Sankara. The other three are Śureśvara, Hastāmalaka and Tōtaka. Besides them Mandanamiśra and Vācaspatimiśra are also believed to have been the contemporaries of Padmapāda. Here it is proposed to point out the main critical contributions of each of them. From this, Padmapāda is excluded, because the present dissertation is concerned mainly with him. As Śaṅkara was the Paramaguru of Padmapāda, a note on Śaṅkara's contribution won't be out of place here.

1. Śaṅkara

The contribution of Śaṅkara falls into three main divisions: (1) commentaries (2) Śtotras (hymns of praise) and (3) Prakaraṇagranthas (miscellaneous, religio-philosophic - particularly Vedāntic tracts). The most important among the commentaries are the commentary on the Brahmāsūtra, the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavatgītā. As mentioned earlier these three are known as the Prasṭhānatraya of the Advaita Vedānta. It constitutes the
bed rock of Indian Philosophy. It stands to the credit of Śaṅkara that he is the first well-known commentator on the basic treatises of Indian Philosophy.

Śivānandalahari, Saundaryalahari, Govindāstaka, Daksināmūrtistotra, Daśāsloki, Dwādasapāñcarika, Bhaja-govindam, Visnusatpadi etc., are the most important among the Stotragranthas. The fifteen stotras composed in the Bhujāṅgaprayātā metre are also supposed to have been authored by him. These are addressed to gods like Ganeśa, Devi, Rāma, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Subrahmanya, Hanuman etc.

Next is the Prakaraṇagranthas or shorter philosophical works, that can be confidently put down as the genuine works of Śaṅkara. The most important among them are:

1. Aparokṣānubhavaḥ
2. Ātmabodham
3. Upadeśasāhasri
4. Paṃcikaraṇam
5. Daśāsloki

1. Usually known as the Mohamudgaram in twelve stanzas beginning with "Mūdhajahīhidhanāgamatṛṣṇām".
2. "Bhujāṅgaprayātām bhavet yayih caturbhiḥ."
6. Vivekacūḍāmaṇi

7. Sarvavedāntasiddhānta saṃgraha

In all these works Śaṅkara has in crisp simple language and in subtle logic elucidated the realization of the Self and the Brahman - the Supreme Reality.

In evaluating the philosophy of Śaṅkara we will base our arguments mainly on those works which have been undisputedly attributed to him. Śaṅkara's main objective was to project the Vivartavāda doctrine as against the Parināmavāda. The Vivartavāda has been looked upon in two different ways by thinkers of his own school, who came after him. Thus arose two subschools called the Vivaraṇa school and the Bhāmati school. Śaṅkara introduces the theory of adhyāsa and the idea of Saguṇa and Nirguṇa Brahman. Śaṅkarabhāṣya upholds Suddhapara- Brahman or the Supreme Self of the Upaniṣads as something superior to other divine beings. It propounds a unique philosophy and declares emphatically that the individual soul is identical with the Supreme Self. He explains Brahman as attributeless, immutable, pure intelligence, etc.
Brahman is the cause of the origination, sustance and dissolution of the world. The world extant in names and forms consists of many agents and enjoyers. Ultimate reality, according to him, is pure intelligence or Cinmātra, devoid of all forms and qualities. Such differences as the knower, the known and the knowledge are only imposed on it due to avidyā or ignorance. When the real Brahman is known, the ignorance of Brahman will be destroyed and the differences also will disappear.

In Śaṅkara, the divine personality, the unflinching logician, the spiritual revivalist, the reformer, the great writer, the subtle metaphysician and the mystic get blended into one, in so fitting a manner that he stands unsurpassed among the galaxy of seers of the world and has become the object of admiration and adoration of the vast millions of his countrymen and of scholars from distant corners of the world. He is the first and foremost among those who unravelled the philosophic truths contained in the Upaniṣads and in the Śrutis, which, prior to his age, remained in the form of aphorisms. The philosophy of Advaita or undiluted Monism, though it is

the quintessence of the Upaniṣads has been expounded in a clear perspective by Śaṅkara in a cogent and logical manner. The salient and notable feature of Śaṅkara's philosophy is his conception of the Supreme Reality as Nirgunabhraham or the 'One' without any kind of attribute whatsoever.

II. Sureswara

Different names have been given to this most famous disciple of Śaṅkara in different works such as Viśvarūpa, Maṇḍana and Brahmaśwarūpācārya. Some historians take the view that Maṇḍana Miśra is a different person and not Sureswara who also got the nick-name Vārtikakāra.

Sureswara having been initiated into Sanyāsa after he had led a family life and he being the most learned and capable of his disciples, Śaṅkara must have thought it fit to appoint him a sort of supervising authority over all the Mathas.

According to Sureswara Brahman is the only
reality of the world. Pure Brahman is the material cause of the world. But as Brahman is unchangeable it is through maya that such world appearance or such transformation of Brahman has been made possible. Maya is thus only a secondary or mediate cause of the world. Sureśwara repudiates the necessity of meditation as a means of producing immediacy (aparokṣatva). This view of Sureśwara is called "Sabdarokṣavāda". From the standpoint of experience, the world and Maya exist; from the standpoint of Brahman there is no world or Maya but only pure Sat, Cit and Ānanda. Maya is the same as avidyā and it veils the true nature of Brahman and makes it appear as the world. It is only through the Vedic texts that avidyā disappears and the knowledge of Brahman dawns. Thus, Sureśwara holds more to the Vivaraṇa school of Padmapāda.

Maya for Sureśwara is only an instrument (dvāra) through which the one Brahman appears as many. It is positive but not substance. It is like a veil which hangs
on Brahman and covers up the one and draws attention away from it. Thus Sureśwara's māyāvāda itself has no new element. Sureśwara introduces a new concept when this theory is transposed into a theory of error, viz., anirvacanīyakhyāti. This has paved the way for the future development of Advaita in Indian Philosophy.

Authorship of the following books has been attributed to Sureśwara:

1. Naiskarmyasiddhiḥ
2. Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttikāṁ
3. Mānasollāsām
4. Pañcīkaranavārttikāṁ
5. Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttikāṁ
6. Mokṣanirṇayaṁ
7. Praṇavārthakārika
8. Vedāntasārvāvarttikarājasamgrahaṁ and
9. Leghuvārttikāṁ.

Of these the first two are important and hence need more than a passing mention.
1. Naiskarmyasiddhih

The Naiskarmyasiddhih is an elucidatory text of Advaita Vedānta. The cardinal problem dealt within this tract is the interpretation of the Śruti "That thou art". Sureśwara epitomises in the Śruti, all the central teachings of the Upaniṣads. Naiskarmyasiddhih is an independent exposition of Advaita in 423 stanzas strung together by a prose commentaries. It is divided into four chapters or 'books' of about 100 stanzas each. Alston points out that Sureśwara here follows the Upadeśasāhasri of Śaṅkara very closely and suggests that this work also contains clear echoes of Śaṅkara's Gītābhāṣya.

In this Naiskarmyasiddhih Sureśwara deals first with the relation of Vedic duties to the attainment of knowledge of Brahman. He argues against the mīmāṃsā view which maintains that emancipation takes place through Vedic duties. He holds that emancipation has nothing

to do with the performance of action and it is not acquired by a combination of knowledge and performance of duties (Jñanakarmasamuccaya).

The second chapter of Naiṣkarmyasiddhiḥ deals with the relation of Self-realization to the proper interpretation of the Upanisads. When self-knowledge dawns, the experience of ego and what is included in the make up of the ego vanishes. Duality is caused by the effects of antahkarana; knowledge breaks the bond of objectivity and illusory appearances. The world-appearance is seen as a product of nescience (ajñāna).

The third chapter explains the nature of ajñāna. It produces the non-self which gives rise to apparent objective things. Ajñāna has its support in the self which is the same as Brahman. It is the ignorance of the real nature of the self that transforms itself into all that is subjective and objective, the intellect and its objects. It is thus clear that, according to Sureśwara, avidyā is based not upon pure intelligence itself. It is this ignorance
which, being connected and based upon the pure Self, produces the appearances of individual persons and their subjective and objective experience. Thus Sureśvara deals with the concept of avidyā in this chapter.

In the fourth and final chapter he summarises what has been expounded in the preceding three chapters.

The Naiskarmyasiddhiḥ has at least five commentaries. They are Vivaraṇa by Akhilatma, Candrika by Jñānottama, Vidyasurabhi by Jñānāmṛtayati, Bhāvatattvaprakāśika by Citsukha and Sambandhoktiḥ of which the author is anonymous. The earliest of them are Candrika by Jñānottama and Bhāvatattvaprakāśika by Citsukha.

2. Brhadāranyakopaniṣadbhāṣyavārttika

It is a commentary on Śaṅkara’s Brhadāranyakopaniṣadbhāṣyam. It is a great independent work though written as an interpretation of the Śaṅkarabhaṣya on the
In it he emphatically rejects the anyathākhyāti theory regarding the nature of error, and has established the theory of anirvacanīyakhyāti, which was accepted by all the later Advaitins. This is one of the longest works of Indian Philosophy, running to some 11,151 stanzas—half the length of the Rāmāyaṇa.

There are five commentaries available for this work. They are: Śāstrādīpīka by Ānandagīrī, Nyāyakalpalatikā by Ānandapūrṇa, Nyāyatatttvavivarana by Nṛsimhāśrama, Vārttikasara by Vidyāraṇya and Sambandhokti by Viśvamībhava.

III. Hastamalaka

Hastamalaka was the son of a Brāhmin by name Prabhakara Mīśra, the founder and leading exponent of one of the schools of Mīmāṃsā known as gurumata. He was born a deaf-mute in the village of Śrībāli. He seemed to be a burden to his parents. He was about thirteen years old.}

old when Śāṅkara visited the village in the course of his travels. Prabhākara had heard of the greatness of Śāṅkara and thought that his son might get better by the Guru's grace. So he took the boy to Śāṅkara and prayed for his blessings. The boy fell at the feet of the Ācārya. When he refused to get up, Śāṅkara asked "who art thou Jāda?" The boy rose and began his reply in melodious verses. It was a great wonder to the parents when they heard the boy beginning to speak. The boy's reply was couched in excellent poetry full of Advaitic philosophy. The reply ran into thirteen verses. The first verse began with the words "Naham jañāh". This verse struck Śāṅkara with great pleasure. He admired the deep knowledge of "the deaf and dumb" boy and his great ability to bring out the philosophic truth in a nut-shell, as perceptible and clear as an āmalaka placed in the palm. Hence he was called Hastamalaka by Śāṅkara. The name is significant. It means that one who has immediate and direct experience of the highest Reality. Then Śāṅkara
asked the parents to leave the boy in his care. The boy followed the great guru after taking leave of his parents. He was initiated into Sanyasa later, and ordained to be the first acarya of the Dwaraka Math.

Hastamalaka's first and the foremost work is the Hastamalakastotra, constituting his reply to Sankara's question - "who art thou"? All the thirteen verses in it ending with the line "Sa hityapalabhisvarupamahamatma".

Hastamalakastotra

The poem describes the nature of Atman or the Self as Pure, unconditioned Consciousness. This is the Advaitic Absolute. The poem thus deals with a grand theme in a garland style. It is one of the priceless gems of the Advaitic literature. Even if this poem were his only contribution to Advaitic thought, he would have still earned an abiding place for himself in the philosophic

annals of India. He states that he is the Atman which is of the nature of permanent cognition: \textit{Nityopalabdhī svarūpo aham ātma}. The mind and the sense organs have no light of their own. They are insentient like pots and jugs. If they seem to reveal pots and jugs, it is not by their own light but by the light of the Atman. Just as the light of the Sun is the necessary condition for all our actions and perceptions, even so the Atman is the necessary condition for the functioning of the mind and the sense organs. Even the sun is not a self-luminous body. It shines in the borrowed light of the Atman. Just as the eye is enlivened by the Sun, even so the sun is enlivened by the Atman. Atman being of the very stuff of consciousness, is self luminous, and therefore does not require to be enlivened by any other source.

8. \textit{Nimittam manasčakṣurādippravṛttam
Nirastakhilopādhirakāśakalpaḥ
Ravirlokaceśṭānimittam yathā yaḥ
Sa nityopalabdhī svarūpo aham ātma.}, (Hastamalakastotra).

9. \textit{Vivaswattprabhātāṁ yathārūpamakṣam
Pragṛñātim nābhātāṁ evam vivaswān
Yadabhātā ābhāsayatyakṣamekaḥ
Sa nityopalabdhī svarūpo ahamātma.}, (HS)
It shines by its own light while it reveals objects, it stands self-revealed in the process. It is pure like ether. It is through our ignorance that we think it is either bound or liberated. It is ever free. Just as it is mere folly to imagine that the sun is without lustre when it is only overlaid with clouds, even so it is wrong to think that the Ātman is bound, by identifying it with the buddhi and transferring to it all the miseries which afflict the buddhi. 10

He states that the Ātman appears as the jīva when it is conditioned by the buddhi. 'Just as the image of the face reflected in the mirror has no reality apart from the original face, even so the jīva, which is a reflection in the medium of the buddhi, has no being apart from the Ātman'. Again he says that 'just as the one Sun appears separately in different pools of water, even so the single infinite consciousness appears differentiated in diverse centres of consciousness'. Thus in this poem

10. ghanaccannadrṣṭirghanaccañnamarkam
    yathā niṣprabham manyate cātimūdhāḥ
    tathā baddhavat bhāti yo muddha drṣṭeh
    sa nityopalabdhi swarūpo aham ātma., (HS)
which goes by his name, Hastāmalaka speaks of the Ātman with sureness.

As a mark of his appreciation for Hastāmalaka, Śaṅkara himself has written a gloss on this stotra. There are two commentaries on the poem, one by Ānandaprabhaśa and another by Śwayamprakāśa. It has been translated into English. 11

IV. Totakācārya

Toṭaka's earlier name was Ānandagiri. He is said to have been an inmate of the Āśrama at Varanasi. He was deeply devoted to his Guru and looked after his personal comforts. It is said that he was the target of ridicule by his fellow disciples. There is a story of how Ānandagiri's innate devotion and scholarship were brought to light by Śaṅkara's grace. One day Ānandagiri did not arrive in time for the bhāṣya lessons. Śaṅkara

12. Kuppuswami, A., Sri Bhagavatpāda Śaṅkarācārya

The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, Vol. LXXXIX, p. 95.
waited for him without commencing his discourse. The pupils looked amongst themselves. They understood that the master was waiting for Ānandagiri. Padmapāda sarcastically told that it mattered little if Ānandagiri was present or absent. Still the guru sat mum, without beginning the bhaṣya. A little later, a musical voice was heard at a distance. Soon the sound became clear. At once the disciples realized that it was Giri singing the praise of Śaṅkara, in an altogether not well-known metre. The poetic diction and the style seemed to them to be of a very high order of excellence. These verses constitute the famous Tōtakāśṭaka. Ānandagiri was thereafter honoured and respected by his compeers. He came to be called Tōtakācārya, and the metre in which the aśṭaka was composed was Tōtaka. Besides Tōtakāśṭaka, he was credited with composing a work called Śrutisāra samuddharaṇa.

Śrutisārasmuddarāṇa

It is a Prakaraṇapagraṇtha consisting of 179
stanzas. All these verses are in Toṭaka metre. The form of Śrutiśarasamuddharana is like that of Gadya-
prabandha or prose section of the Upadesasahasri, a dialogue between the teacher and the pupil. In this,
first of all, Toṭaka pays his homage to Hari. He says that when one realizes that the world is ephemeral and becomes bored with it, one looks for something permanent. This cannot be discovered through ritual acts for the impermanent course of the world is operated by deeds. Therefore the seeker wants to become a Sanyāsin, to abandon all ritualism.

The self is changeless; the internal sense changes according to its different thoughts. The relation between the two is illustrated by the analogies of reflection and limitation. The internal organ cognizes only when it is colored by objects (uparāgam apeksya). But all thought functions require an unchanging consciousness to make them evident.

The internal organ has two practical functions,
as subject and object. First there is the notion 'I see', then the appropriate sense organ faces towards the relevant object, and thus practical affairs are accomplished. The ego sense must be an attribute of the internal organ, standing in the same relation to the self, as does the other functions of that organ. The doctrine of creation of the world by the self is also meant to convey the identity between the individual self and the highest self. Actually the world has no origin, since it is not true, and so teaching about creation called serve no useful purpose if literally intended or understood.

The whole world of elements, objects, organs, etc., is unreal. Totaka appeals inventively to a combination of Brhadaranyaka and Chandogya teachings about the way in which the light of the self sustains the world. Nothing can be really produced. The product (vikṛti) is not separate from the original stuff (Prakṛti), nor does it make any addition. The so called “products” are only forms (akṛti) of the primal matter. Totaka
challenges Śāṃkhyā, which believes in real production, with the following argument: was the specific character of the effect in the causal stuff before production or after? If so, then the notion that by becoming associated with this new specific character a change has taken place in an erroneous notion. But if that character was not there before, then something new has arisen, and it will perish, having a beginning, and the Śāṃkhyā view will not differ from Vaṭeṣeśikas. Toṭaka recapitulating the consequences of this in the manner of Gauḍāpāda. Śrūtisārasamuddharāṇa lastly states that Brahman can only be characterised negatively, except for Its positive nature as consciousness.

Saccidananda Yogi and Purṣātmakṛṣṇa wrote commentaries on Śrūtisārasamuddharāṇa. The commentary of Saccidananda Yogi is called Tattvapraṇāpīka. There is another commentary called Śrūtisārasamuddharāṇasambandhoktiḥ of which the author is anonymous.

V. Mandana Misra

Traditionally Mandana Misra was supposed to be
both the pupil and the brother-in-law of Kumārila. He
certainly follows Kumārila as well as Dharmakīrti and
Prabhakara, all of whom Maṇḍana quotes. Maṇḍana was
evidently a Mīmāmsaka earlier in his career, for he
wrote several Mīmāmsa treatises before he wrote the
Brahmasiddhi.

The false appearance is avidyā or Maya for Maṇḍana.

This avidyā is not a characteristic of Brahman nor is
it different from Brahman which is sat. In fact avidyā
is neither existent nor non-existent. It is indescri-
bable (anirvacaniya), it belongs to the individual soul
(jīva). But if it belongs to the jīva and is neither
existent nor non-existent, there arises an inconsistency.
Maṇḍana points out that these inconstancies are of the
nature of avidyā. They can be formulated thus: (1) the
jīvas are essentially identical with Brahman. (2) the
diversities of jīvas are due to imagination - kalpana.

13. Thomas O’Neil, Maya in Sāṅkara - Measuring the
immeasurable, 1980, p.102.
(3) Brahman is devoid of imagination and (4) the jivas are products of imagination.

Maṇḍana who accepted the theory of śphoṭa advocated by Bhartṛhari and others, tried to harmonise the doctrine of the Śabdādvaita with the Brahmādvaita of Advaitins - "The word is Brahman, the word is all." This is indeed a peculiar feature of Mandana's Advaitism.

Brahmasiddhi

Maṇḍana's main work is called Brahmasiddhi, which is an independent interpretation of Advaita Vedānta. This is his only Advaitic work. He wrote this to promote his own view on Advaita. All of his other known works are either Mīmāṃsa or grammatical works with the possible exception of the Vibhramaviveka, a treatise on theories of error, which appears to come down in favour of a form of the anyathākhyāti theory of Mīmāṃsa. In the Brahmasiddhi he mentions the theory called anirvacaniya-khyāti.

It is evident from its content that Brahmāsiddhi is an independent interpretation of the Advaita Vedānta. This is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is known as Brahmakāṇḍa which deals with the nature of Brahman as one and immutable, as pure consciousness and positive bliss. The method which he follows is to abolish the difference between subject-draṣṭṛ and object-dṛṣṭya, because there is something more essential viz., Brahman. This rejection of subject and object is centred on the concept of the Self. The Self does not undergo any change but only appears to transform itself. In reality it is through the Self's reflection in the antahkarāṇa that we have the false appearance of transformation.

The second chapter is called Tarkakāṇḍa. In this Maṇḍana refutes the philosophical concept of the perception of difference as bheda. He begins by stating that bheda is wrongly thought to be revealed in perception. Thus he attempts to prove that bheda is never experienced by perception-pratyakṣa. He proceeds by a dialectical argument against all
who hold that *bheda* is revealed in perception. This dialectic is especially directed against the *Buddhist* and those who hold that things are by their very nature different from one another.

The third chapter is called *Niyogakanda*. In this Mandana refutes the *Mimamsa* view that *Vedantic* texts are to be interpreted in accordance with the *Mimamsa* canon of interpretation which states that *Vedic* texts imply either a command or a prohibition.

The fourth chapter is called *Siddhikanda*. In this Mandana again puts forth the view that the impart of the *Upanisads* is to show that the manifold world is illusion which is due to ignorance of the individual soul.

The *Brahmasiddhi* seems to be chronologically
first among the Siddhīs of Advaita. It declares in utmost confidence the sole Supreme Reality of Brahman.

Mandana's Brahmasiddhi was commented on by not less than four commentators, viz., Vacaspati Miśra Anandapūrṇa, Śāṅkhapañī and Citsukha.

VI. Vacaspati Miśra

The other known contemporary of Padmapāda is Vacaspati Miśra, who is renowned as an independent commentator on all the systems of philosophy. He is the author of Bhamati, the most celebrated commentary on

15. The known other Siddhīs are the following:


(Maheswaran Nair, K., Advaitasiddhi - A Critical Study, 1990; p.13.)
celebrated commentaries on Sāṃkhya-kārika, Yogabhāṣya, Nyāyavārttika, Vidhiviveka etc. another work of his, on Advaita Vedānta is a commentary on Mandana's Brahma-
siddhi, viz., Tattvasamikṣa, the text of which is not available yet. There are certain elements in Vacaspati's view which tend towards some sort of idealism. In his view truth and reality are given as immediate self-
revelation. He holds that there are two different kinds of ajñāna.

For him avidyā is co-existent with Brahman. It hides Brahman and rests on individual persons who are themselves dependent upon Māyā and Māyā on them. The world-appearance is not a mere subjective idea or sensation but has an objective existence, even though its nature is inexplicable and indescribable. At the time of dissolution the constitutive material, both physical and psychical will remain hidden in avidyā until the next creation.
Bhāmatī was Vacaspati's last great work, for in the colophon at the end of the Bhāmatī he says that he had already written his Nyāyakenikā, Tattva-śamīkṣā, Tattvabindu and other works on Nyāya, Yoga and Samkhya. His important Vedantic work is Bhāmatī. In it he points out that according to the Śāṅkara-Vedanta the objects of knowledge are themselves indescribable in their nature and not mere mental ideas.  

The Bhāmatī like the Brahmasūtraśāṅkarabhaṣya is known for its profundity of spirit and subtlety of thought. It represents one of the main streams of Śāṅkarite interpretation. It is known for its vigour of style and clarity of presentation. It gives a clear and careful account of the central ideas of Advaita. It expounds uncompromising non-dualism setting forth its basic principles in cogent terms. In short, his view of Advaita is marked by depth of insight.

The Bhāmati had a number of commentaries. The most important and earliest of them is the Vedānta-kalpataru of Amalānanda, on which Appayyadīksita wrote another commentary called Vedāntakalpataruparimala. The Vedāntakalpataru was also commented on by Lakṣmīnṛsiṃha and it is known as Abhoga.

The above account undoubtedly shows that in addition to his great guru Śrī Śaṅkara, Sureswara, Hastāmalaka, Toṭaka, Mañḍanamiśra and Vācaspatimisra, were the contemporaries of Padmapāda and all of them were the intellectual giants of the Indian Philosophy of all the time.