Chapter - III  
SRI ADI SANKARA AND  
HIS ADVAITA PHILOSOPHY  
Part - I  

1.0 Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada  

Lord Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita says “whenever righteousness declines and adharma spreads. I will make an avatar”.

_Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānirbhavathi bhārata,  
abhyuthānam adharmasya tadātmānam Srīmyaham /  
parithranāya sadhoonām vināśāya cha dhushkrutām  
Dharma samsthapanārthāya Sambhavāmi yuge yuge || 1_

True to his words, to counteract adharma the Lord has made several avatars in the four yugas. In Kritayuga he incarnated himself as Matsyavatāra, Kurmāvatāra, Varāhavatāra, Nṛsimhavatāra and Vamanavatāra. In the next yuga Tretayuga, the lord incarnated himself as Sri Rama and Sri Parasurama. The Lord then took an incarnation as Sri Krishna and Sri Balarama in the Dvāparayuga. The final avatāra of the Lord as Kalki is yet to take place in the Kaliyuga. 2
At the beginning of the Kaliyuga unrighteousness had been spreading in full form and righteousness was in the path of destruction. There arose 72 evil cults, which threatened to wipe away dharma. To put an end to this and to restore dharma Lord Siva or Lord Dakshinamurthi came down to earth and took an avatar as Sri Sankara one of the greatest philosopher of all times. The Lord incarnated himself as a teacher or Guru this time because he wanted to bring people into the right path by imparting knowledge. The avatāra of Sankara took place about two thousand years after the beginning of Kali.³

Evidences of the avatāra of Lord Siva as Sri Sankara are given in various Itihasas and Puranas. For example, the Sivarahasya a voluminous work comprising of 50,000 verses speaks of the avatāra of Sankara as:

\[
\text{केरले शशलग्रामे विप्रपत्यां मंडशत: ।}
\]
\[
\text{भविष्यति महादेवि शक्तराख्यो द्विजोतम: ॥}^4
\]

**Meaning:** In the village of Sasala at Kerala there will be a great Brahmana born from a part of my soul to a Brahmin lady.

The Lingapurana mentions the avatāra of Sri Sankara as:

\[
\text{कलै श्च क्रो महादेव: शक्तरो नीललोहित: ।}
\]
\[
\text{प्रकाशते प्रतिष्ठायर्ध्मिर्याविवकृताकृति: ॥}^5
\]

**Meaning:** In the Kaliyuga, Rudra (Lord Siva or Sankara) will shine to establish dharma.
The Kurmapurana mentions the Sankara avatāra as:

करिष्यत्वारं स्वं श्रद्धरो नीलोहित: ।
श्रोतस्मार्त प्रतिच्छार्य भक्तानां हितकाम्या ॥१॥

which means, “Neelakanta as Sankara will make an avatāra to establish the srutis and smritis to do good to his devotees”.

The Vayupurana also gives an evidence

कल्याणे द्विसहस्तते लोकानुग्रह काम्या ।
चतुर्थिः सह शिश्यैस्तु श्रद्धरोववतिरियति ॥७॥

According to this, “after 2000 years of Kaliyuga Sri Sankara will make an avatāra with four disciples to do good to the world.

1.1 Birth and Early life of Sri Sankara

The village of Kaladi is situated about six miles from Alwaye station in Malabar in Kerala. In this village lived Sivaguru and Aryamba a brahmin couple who led a pious and religious life. The couple did not have any children for a long time, hence they went to Thiruchirapuram (modern Trichur) or Vrushachalesvaram to pray to Lord Vrushachalesvara for the boon of a child.

Due to their penance Lord Vrushachalesvara appeared in both of their dreams and asked whether they wanted hundred children with long life but with little knowledge or one child who will be a Sarvagna but will live only for a short time. The couple not knowing what to say left the choice to the Lord
himself. The Lord told the couple that he himself will be born as their son but will live only for a short period.

When the lord decides to incarnate himself in Kaliyuga he should select a place where the rituals and customs are being practiced according to dharma sastra, where Vedas are encouraged and practiced and each one disposes his duties as laid down by Sanata Dharma. Hence the Lord chose Kerala as his place of incarnation as Sankara, because during that time, the rituals and customs of Hinduism functioned very well at Kerala, when compared to other places.

After returning to Kaladi Aryamba gave birth to a boy in the year Nandana in the month of Vaisakha on the Panchami day of sukla paksha with the star as Arudhra. The child was born on fifth ‘Thithi’, second month and first paksha and five represents ‘san’, ‘ka’ represents one and ‘ra’ represents two according to a system of numeration. Hence the child was named Sankara.

At the age of three Sankara mastered several languages showing signs of a genius. He then learnt Sanskrit when he was five. Sri Sankara lost his father when he was very young. His mother performed his Upanayanam (initiation into bachelorhood or brahmacharya) when he was five years old, with the help of relatives. He mastered all the Vedas at the age of eight. While worshipping Sri Sankara the most popular word used is “Ashta Varsha-Caturvedi nenamaha.”

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Ancient customs and tradition has it that when a boy is initiated into brahmacharya, he has to procure his food only by ‘biksha’. He has to go to the house of ‘grihasthas’ or family people saying “bhavathi bikshan dehi” meaning “please give me some food.” One day while going around asking for food Sri Sankara came to the house of a very poor Brahmin family. The lady of the house looking at the face of Sri Sankara felt that if she could offer anything to this young boy who reflected divinity it would be as if she offered food to the Lord himself but, she could not find anything at home. At last she found an amalaka (which was rotten) and dropped it into Sri Sankara’s bowl. Sri Sankara realizing the state of poverty of the family prayed to Goddess Mahalakshmi to show her grace on this family by singing ‘Kanakadhara Stotram’ the very first composition by him. Pleased with this goddess Lakshmi showered the house with gold. From then on the place has been referred to as ‘Suvarnakottu mana or Ponnumottu mana’ and the succeeding generations of the family have been living in prosperity and wealth.¹⁴

1.2 Sri Sankara’s initiation into Sanyasa

After mastering the Vedas Sri Sankara returned home when he was eight years old. Sri Sankara wanted to become an ascetic and serve the world while his mother wanted him to get married.

Meanwhile one day Aryamba was not feeling well, she wanted to bathe in the river that flowed quite a long distance away from Sri Sankara’s Pūrṇa house. She was not strong enough to go to the river, hence Sri Sankara prayed
that the river should change its course. It so happened that the river did change and flowed by the side of his house. After Aryamba took bath in the river, Sri Sankara too entered it. At that time a Crocodile caught his leg. Sri Sankara asked his mother to permit him to take Sanyasa to escape death.

The Chidvilaseeya Sankara Vijayam gives an account of how Sri Sankara convinced his mother to permit him to take up sanyasa.

ग्रहितस्तोत्रे नक्षेत्र पादे सर्वविदं वरः ।
अन्यायं मे ग्रहितयमि यत्तथे भवत्यलम् ॥

इति निःशिर्यः मनसा सन्यासं कर्तुमुत्तुकः ॥15

The Vyasachala Sankara Vijayam also mentions about the way in which Sri Sankara took permission from his mother to join the ascetic order.

नक्षोभम्बं मां नवति तीव्रत्वं तुरादशः
सन्यासवेष्टकरणं मं जीवितं स्थात् ॥16

Because according to sastras if a person takes up sanyasa he takes a new birth and his previous birth is referred to as ‘purvasrama’. Sri Sankara convinced his mother that if she permitted him to take up sanyasa atleast he would be alive, otherwise would be killed by the Crocodile and also by taking up sanyasa he would realise Moksha and twenty-one generations of their family would reach heaven after death. Sri Sankara also promised that despite taking sanyasa he would perform the last rites for her. She told Sri Sankara to do whichever was proper for him. Sri Sankara decided to take up sanyasa,
immediately the crocodile left his leg and transformed itself into a ‘gandharva’ and prostrated before him.\textsuperscript{17}

Gandharvas are celestial beings who are pleasure seekers enjoying music and drinks. The Gandharva told his story to Sri Sankara. Once when he (gandharva) was drunk and listening to music sage Dhurvasa had come along. The Gandharva did not notice him. The sage considered this as an insult and cursed the gandharva to be born as a crocodile. After realising his mistake the gandharva fell at the feet of the sage and asked for pardon. Dhurvasa told him that he could not escape the curse but will regain his old form once he catches hold of Lord Shiva who will be born as Sri Sankara at Kaladi, hence the sage asked the gandharva to go to Kaladi and remain there to get released from his curse. After narrating this story the gandharva thanked Sri Sankara and disappeared.\textsuperscript{18}

Sri Sankara left the river much to the joy of his mother who asked him to come back home. But he refused saying that he no longer belonged to a particular home but he belonged to the whole world, and that whoever gave him ‘biksha’ (food) was his mother and whoever gave him knowledge was his father (in other words Guru), saying this he started wandering in search of a guru.\textsuperscript{19}

1.3 Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada

Govinda Bhagavatpada was the preceptor of Sri Sankara. The Guru-Parampara of our Acharya goes back to as early as Narayana. Narayana was
the first Guru followed by Brahma, Vasishta, Sakthi, Parasara, Vyasa and Suka. Till Suka, the succession was ‘Putra-parampara’ (father-son lineage). After Suka, the succession became Guru-sishya parampara.²⁰

Suka’s successor was Gaudapada, the preceptor of Govinda Bhagavatpada. The story of Gaudapada and Govinda Bhagavatpada is very interesting.

Patanjali was an incarnation of Adi-Sesha the serpent bed of Lord Narayana. Patanjali has written several works including the great commentary on grammar (Mahabhashya). He used to explain his work and clear the doubts of his students at Chidambaram. There were around one thousand disciples gathered to learn the Mahabhashya. To teach all the thousand students at the same time and to clear their doubts individually Patanjali decided to take the form of thousand mouthed Adi Sesha. But the condition laid down was that he would teach behind a screen (because the air that emanates from the mouth of Adi Sesha will turn people into ashes) and that no one should leave the hall during the time of the discourse. If anyone disobeys the order and leaves the place he would turn into a Brahma Rakshas. Gaudapada was one among the one thousand disciples.

One day while the discourse was going on, Gaudapada forgetting the condition of his master left the hall. In the meantime one of the student who became inquisitive and wanted to know how Patanjali could teach all the one thousand students at the same time and clear their doubts individually,
removed the screen. The poisonous gas that came out from the mouth of Adi
Sesha reduced all the 999 students into ashes.

दधुर सदृशीस्ततः: स्मरेण निपुरिपोरलिकाधिलकितेन।
अपि दश विदुषां शतानि पुंसो गुरुवचम्यतिलहन्यं ह्यानार्थम्।।

Patanjali became very sad. When Gaudapada returned, Patanjali was
happy to see atleast one student survive but since he (Gaudapada) had
disobeyed the orders, Patanjali told him that he would be born as Brahma
Rakshasa Gaudapada fell at the feet of Patanjali and begged for forgiveness.
Patanjali told him that he would regain his human form when he finds a fit
disciple and teaches him the Maha bashya.

Gaudapada in the form of Brahma Rakshasa wandered restlessly in
search of a disciple. He then came to the banks of river Narmada and sat
under a banyan tree. He used to question the passer by and when they are
defeated in debate would swallow them. One day a handsome Brahmin boy
by name Chandrasarma passed by the place where Brahma Rakshasa was
sitting. He (Chandrasarma) was called for debate by the Brahma Rakshasa.
Unlike the others Chandrasarma was very brilliant and answered the questions
correctly. Brahma Rakshasa was overjoyed that he found the right disciple. He
taught Chandrasarma all the lessons on one condition that he (Chandrasarma)
should not get down from the tree till the lessons were over. Obeying the
orders of his master Chandrasarma learnt the Mahabashya day and night
without food or sleep. He wrote down the lessons on the leaves of the tree
with the help of twig broken from the tree and from the blood in his thigh.
Brahma Rakshasa got released from his curse took the form of Gaudapada blessed his disciple and left for Himalayas.

Chandrasarma got down from the tree and tied the leaves into a bundle and walked to the nearest village. He decided to take rest for a while since he was exhausted having been without food or sleep for several days. While he was sleeping a sheep ate a portion of the leaves. Hence the Mahabashya that is available today is the leftover and the portion unavailable is called ‘Ajabhakshita Bhashya’.23

Chandrasarma then came to the house of a vaisya and slept there on account of exhaustion. He became unconscious. The treatment given to him by a girl of the house made him regain consciousness. Chandrasarma wanted to continue on his journey, but the owner of the house wanted him to get married to his daughter. The matter reached the court of the king. Struck by the handsomeness of the young man the king and the minister wanted their daughters to get married to the man. Having no other way Chandrasarma married all the three and had a son.

After some years leaving behind his family Chandrasarma went to Badri in search of his guru Gaudapada. He met his guru there took up sanyasa and became Govinda Bhagavatpada.

Govinda Bhagavatpada is none other than the incarnation of Adi Sesha himself.24

At the time Govinda Bhagavatpada met sage Vyasa. Vyasa instructed Bhagavatpada that he should go to the banks of river Narmada and await the
arrival of an incarnation of Lord Siva himself who will write commentaries on Brahma Sutras. Vyasa also told him that he (Govinda Bhagavatpada) would be the preceptor of the avatar of Iswara. As per the instructions of Vyasa, Bhagavatpada left for Narmada.²⁵

1.4 Sri Sankara meets his guru

Sri Sankara reached the banks of river Narmada. He learnt about a yogi residing in the nearby cave. The yogi was none other than Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada awaiting his disciple as per the instructions of Vyasa. Govinda Bhagavatpada asked Sankara, who he was. In reply Sri Sankara sang ten verses called ‘Dasasloki’. The first verse goes as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{न भूमिर्न तोयं न तेजो न वायु-} \\
\text{नैं नोद्रियं वा न तेषां समूहः : ।} \\
\text{अनैकान्तिकत्वात सुषुप्त्यैकसिद्ध-} \\
\text{सत्देशकद्विषिष्ठ: शिवः केवलोहम् ॥}²⁶
\end{align*}
\]

*Meaning*: “I am not the earth, nor I am water, nor light, nor the wind, not even the sky, nor the senses, nor a combination of all these, but merely Siva, the residual factor. ²⁷

Immensely pleased with the answer Sri Govinda Bhagavatpada accepted Sri Sankara as his disciple. Sri Sankara lived with his guru for a long time learning all that had to be mastered by a Sanyasi. After some time as per the instructions of Govinda Bhagavatpada Sri Sankara left for Kasi to preach the Advaita philosophy and write commentaries on Brahma Sutras.
1.5 Sri Sankara’s Yatra to Kasi

Sri Sankara reached Kasi and preached the Advaita philosophy to everybody there. He also wrote commentary on the Brahmasutras. While the Acharya was at Kasi four important incidents took place.

The first writing commentaries for Upanishads, Gita and Brahmasutras.

The second, One day while Sri Sankara was preaching his disciples, a young Brahmin boy by the name Sanandana came there with the purpose of learning advaita philosophy from him. But Sri Sankara was sitting on the other side of the river and called Sanandana to come forward. Sanandana had to cross the river and Ganges was overflowing with floods. But Sanandana without any hesitation started crossing the river obeying the orders of his master. Because of such greatness of faith on his guru mother Ganges paved way and each step Sanandana took, a lotus sprouted at each foot creating a bridge of flowers for him to walk across to his master. After this incident he came to be known as Padmapada or lotus-footed.28 He was one of the foremost disciples of Sri Sankara and travelled with him throughout the country.

The third incident is Sri Sankara meeting Chandala or an out caste that prompts him to write Manisapanchakam. One day while Sri Sankara was returning with his disciples from a bath in the Ganges a Chandala with four
dogs appeared before him. Sri Sankara asked him to clear away from the path, to this the Chandala replied:

“अश्मयातु अश्मयं अथवा चैतन्यमेव चैतन्यातु ।
द्रिजवर दूरीकर्तु वाज्ञ्चसि किं ब्रूहि गच्च गच्चेरि ||”

Meaning: “you are asking something to get away. What should get away from what? Is it your intention that the body made of flesh and bones etc. Which is a product of food should get away? What is your view, oh, the best among Brahmins, please give me a reply.

Sri Sankara was dumb struck at this question and immediately realised the Lord himself had come in this form to check whether he had realised in himself what he was preaching others.

Sri Sankara uttered a sloka in five verses called Manisapanchakam whereby he declares that whoever teaches him the oneness of Brahman, he who teaches him the concept of self-realisation is fit to be his guru irrespective of whether he is a Brahmin or a Chandala by birth.

जागत्रच्चापुरसिदृश्य शुद्धतरा यो संभितज्ञम्भते ।
या ब्रह्मादिपिसिद्धान्तततं स्पर्श जगत्सादविनी ।
सैवाहं न च दृश्यवर्तमात्र वृद्धिप्रज्ञासनि यस्यास्ति चेत- ।
ज्ञाणालोकस्य स तु द्विजोद्भस्तु गुहित्येषा मनीषा मम ||$^{29}$

The fourth incident is Sri Sankara meeting sage Veda Vyasa. While Sri Sankara was completing his 16th year an old Brahmin came to him professing
to know the meaning of commentaries on Brahma Sutras. Hence a debate opened up. During the course of the discussion Padmapada recognized the disguise and bowed both of them. Sage Vyasa blessed both of them and invoked Brahma to grant another 16 years of life to Sri Sankara so that he may travel all over the country and propagate the philosophy of Advaita.

1.6 Sri Sankara at Prayag

After leaving Kasi Sri Sankara reached Prayag, modern Allahabad. It is here that he met Kumarila Bhatta. When Lord Paramesvara took an avatar as Sri Sankara the other gods also decided to take avatars just like in earlier puranas and epics. Brahma became Mandana-Misra, his consort Sarasvatı became Mandana’s wife Sarasavani, Indra became king Sudhavana Mahavishnu took the avatāra of Padmapada one of the chief disciples of Sri Sankara and likewise Kumarila Bhatta was an incarnation of Lord Subrahmanya.30

Lord Subrahmanya took the avatāra of Jnana Sambandhar and overthrew the Jains in Southern country likewise he again took an avatar of Kumarila Bhatta in North India to put down Buddhism.

When Sri Sankara came to Prayag he learnt that Kumarila was about to end his life by self-immolation by entering into a fire fed paddy-husk. Sri Sankara rushed to meet Kumarila Bhatta and asked him, the reason for this self-inflicted punishment. Buddhism was becoming powerful at that time, Buddhists critised Vedas and converted people to the path of atheism. Kumarila wanted to change this situation hence he decided to learn the secrets of Buddhism. He joined a Buddhist Vihara as a Buddhist student and learnt
every aspect of Buddhism. But during the course of his stay the other students somehow came to know that Kumarila was not a Buddhist and started regarding him as a spy and decided to kill him. One day while Kumarila Bhatta was sitting on top of the seven storeyed building the students pushed him from the top. While falling he uttered a sloka saying, “If the Vedas are Pramāṇa (authority) I should not suffer any harm from this fall.”

After he fell he realised that he did not suffer any damage at all except that one of his eye was injured by a stone. Kumarila got angry that the Vedas failed to save him from injury. He heard a voice at that time which said the injury to his eye was caused because of his doubting the Vedas in his statement. The ‘If’ in his statement indicates an iota of doubt. Kumarila realised his mistake.

Since then he propogated against Buddhist tenets and indulged in reviving his teachings.

Kumarila Bhatta told Sri Sankara that by self immolation he was paying for the sins he had committed viz, lying to the Buddhist teachers that he was a Buddhist and learning their doctrines. By teaching him the doctrines the Buddhist scholars have become Kumarila’s guru. Cheating one’s guru is a greatest sin according to Dharma Sastras. Since Kumarila belonged to Mimamsa School that lays importance to Karma, he decided to burn himself as a punishment. Kumarila also told Sri Sankara to meet Mandana Misra his disciple who lived in Mahismati and convince him of the excellence of Vendanta and bring him to the path of Advaita. After saying this Kumarila left his body.31
Sri Sankara told the followers of Kumarila Bhatta that from then onwards any action they performed should be done as an offering to god.

The practice of taking a resolution saying ‘Parameswara prithiyartham’ - to please Paramesvara while performing any ritual of yaga came into vogue only after Sri Sankara. This practice was not there before his time.\textsuperscript{32}

1.7 Sri Sankara meeting Mandana Misra

As per the instructions of Kumarila Bhatta, Sri Sankara went in search of Mandana Misra’s house in the city of Mahismati. The people in that city were well versed in philosophy and sastras. Reaching the place Sri Sankara saw some women bringing water from river, he enquired them where Mandana Misra’s house was situated. They replied “it is that house where even parrots on the porch would be discussing Sastras.”


dvārasyādante saṁnīyamabheda jañanahit tattvapāṇīdhatvā ।

dvārasyādante।

The philosophy of Mandana Misra was Purvamimamsa. According to this theory irrespective of whether there is god or not one’s Karma should be performed without fail. If one performs his duty correctly, that karma itself will yield fruit. Karma is more important than anything else. Refraining from doing one’s karma is wrong and becoming a sanyasin is also wrong. In order to change this view of Mandana Misra and make him realise the importance of eternal bliss and to relieve him of the cycle of birth and death Sri Sankara decided to meet Mandana Misra.
On that day when Sri Sankara reached Mandana Misra’s house he was performing Srarddha (annual ceremony) ceremony of his father. The entrance door to the house was shut and bolted from within. Sri Sankara used a secret art learnt from toddy-tappers to enter into the house of Mandana Misra. Sri Sankara stood under coconut palm tree outside Mandana Misra’s house. He uttered a Mantra, the tree bent Sri Sankara climbed on it again he uttered another Mantra the tree bent inside the house and left Sri Sankara there. Mandana Misra became wild when he saw a Sanyasin come into the house without permission. Vyasa and Jaimini were also present in the Srarddha ceremony for Brahmanartha (feeding brahmins during the ceremony). Mandana Misra asked Sri Sankara “Wherefrom are you, shaven-headed one?” To this Sri Sankara replied humorously “I am shaven-headed from my neck.” Vyasa and Jaimini understood the situation and pacified Mandana Misra. They asked him to request Sri Sankara to take the place of Vishnu for Brahmanartha in the Srarddha ceremony. Obeying them Mandana Misra did so. But Sri Sankara told him that he had come for Vāda-biksha (debate) and not for food. Mandana Misra consented to this and told Sri Sankara that they could have debate after Srarddha ceremony was over and biksha (food) was taken. Later the debate began.

Sri Sankara and Mandana Misra sat for debate. Sarasavani, wife of Mandana Misra was appointed the judge. She was put in a difficult situation as she had to judge between a sanyasin on one side and her husband on the other. She put a garland on each of them and told that one whose garland begin to show signs of fading would be declared the loser. And also it was
agreed that the defeated in the debate would take up the asrama of the victor. The debate began and continued for twenty one days.

Mandana Misra’s garland started showing signs of fading. Sri Sankara was the victor and Mandana Misra took up Sanyasa. He was given the name Suresvara by Sri Sankara. From that day onwards Suresvara became one of the foremost disciples of Sri Sankara and travelled with him throughout the country.

Sarasavani decided to leave for Brahmaloka. But Sri Sankara stopped her by chanting the Vana Durga Mantra, entered into debate with her won over her and told her that she must stay back and remain as goddess Saradha. He established Saradha peeta and invoked her presence there.

1.8 Sri Sankara’s Vijaya Yatra

Sri Sankara started his Vijaya Yatra along with his disciples with the aim of spreading advaita philosophy throughout the country. He came Southwards and reached Srisailam in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh. He worshipped the sacred shine of Mallikärjuna with a Swayambulinga.

Sri Sankara mentions about Lord Mallikarjuna in the Dvadasalinga Stotram:

श्रीशैलशुङ्के विनिध्यप्रसारः शेषाधिब्रुक्षेण शिपिं सदा वसन्तम् ।
तमज्ञुं मल्लिकापूर्वमिं नमामि संसारसमुद्रसेतुम् ॥

_Meaning_ : I offer my obeisance to Lord Mallikärjuna, a bridge to cross over the vast ocean of the cycle of births and deaths, who ever dwells on the
peak of Srisaila a place of many holy associations as well as on the peak of Seshadri.

One day while Sri Sankara was sitting under a tree in deep meditation a Kapalika came across him. Kapalika are those sects of people who believed in sacrificing human beings to propitiate Siva in the form of Kapali. On seeing Sri Sankara the Kapalika decided that he (Sankara) was the fittest person to be given as sacrifice. The Kapalika woke Sri Sankara from his meditation and told him that in order to invoke Lord Kapali he was going to sever his head off as sacrifice. Sri Sankara told him that he was willing to be offered to God but before that the Kapalika should get rid of his disciples as they may be of hindrance to him. The Kapalika agreed to this and while he was about to cut Sri Sankara’s head, Padmapada who was having his bath in the Ganges felt that his guru was in danger came running towards his guru uttering a mantra on Lord Narasimha. Immediately Lord Narasimha appeared and tore the Kapalika into pieces. When Sri Sankara opened his eyes the Kapalika was lying torn into pieces and beside him was standing Padmapada. The Acharya realized that it was Lord Narasimha who had come to save him by entering into Padmapada’s body. Sri Sankara continued his travel along with his disciples he reached Chidambaram, the Akasakshetra where he had the darshan of Sri Nataraja. It is here that Lord Shiva in the form of Nataraja performed his cosmic dance to the prayers of sages such as Vyagrapada and Patanjali. From Chidambaram Sri Sankara proceeded to Madhyarjuna, it is also know as Thiruvidaimarudur in tamil and is situated in Tanjore district. It is here that Sri Sankara propounded the Advaitic doctrine “Sathyam Advaitam” (Advaita is the truth). When Sri Sankara entered the temple of
Lord Mahalinga at Madhyarjuna, people were very doubtful of the doctrine of Advaita. Sri Sankara prayed to Lord Mahalinga to clear their doubts by adjudging whether dvaita (dualism) or Advaita, (Monism) is the meaning of vedic sayings. The Lord immediately appeared raised his right hand and uttered thrice. “Satyam Advaitam” and disappeared. The people there fell at the feet of Sri Sankara. Sri Sankara from there proceeded to Rameswaram. He offered obeisance to Ramanathaswamy bathed in the sacred conjunction of Bay of Bengal and Arabian sea.

Sri Sankara in his Dvadasalinga stotra sings in praise of Sri Ramanathaswamy at Ramesvaram as thus.

श्रीतामपर्णीजलराक्षिणे निबद्ध्य सेतुः निषिद्द्विव्यपने:।
श्रीरामचन्द्रेण समर्पिंतं तं रामेश्वरायं सततं नममिः।

Meaning: I offer my salutations to Lord Ramesvara at all times. He was worshipped by Sri Ramachandra at night with bilva leaves after constructing the bridge at the confluence of the river Tamraparani and the ocean.

It is also here that Sri Sankara consecrated the Panchakshara Yantra. An Yantra with five letters inscribed - Namasivaya.38

Sri Sankara and his disciples went to Gokarna and then to Harihar in Mysore.

Harihar was a Vaishnavite stronghold and the entrance of Sri Sankara was strongly objected because he was a Saivite. He tried to convince the authorities that Shiva and Vishnu were one and the same. After lot of persuasion when Sri Sankara entered the sanctum sanctorum everybody
around was surprised to find that the god there had been transformed into half Siva and half Vishnu. From there Sri Sankara went to Mookambi, the goddes there is Mookambika. She was very ferocious and Sri Sankara pacified her ferocity by consecrating the ‘Sri Chakra’ yantra in front of her. From here he proceeded to Srivali. An interesting incident took place here.

In this place of Srivali a learned Brahmin had a son who was a deaf mute. He brought his son to Sri Sankara with the hope that his boy might get the power of speech. Sri Sankara looked at the boy infront of him and asked, ‘who art thou, jada?’ To the surprise and joy of his parents the boy replied to Sri Sankara in excellent poetry with full of philosophical truths. The reply was in twelve verses, the first beginning with the words ‘Naaham Jada’ meaning ‘I am not an idiot’. Sri Sankara initiated the boy into ascetic order and named him Hastamalaka. From then on Hastamalaka travelled along with his master in propagating advaita.

Sri Sankara also travelled to Parandhpur, Triambak and Somanath. Sri Sankara has mentioned in his Dvadasalinga Stotra about the Siva linga temple at Triambak and Somnath.

\[
\text{सिहातिरिप्राधेयं तते रसंतं गोदावरीतीर्पविश्रेष्ठेः।}
\text{विद्वानात्मकजातानाशं प्रजायते ध्येयमवकमीश्चिमः॥}^{40}
\]

*Meaning* I praise the glory of Triambaka who exults in the holy spot on the bank of the river Godavari adjoining the slopes of the Simhadri Mountain. On seeing him all the sins are destroyed.


Meaning: I seek refuge at the feet of Lord Somanatha who is seen in this vast earth in the Saurashtra country. He is at once in the form of a luminous object as well as one with the crest jewel in the form of a digit of the moon. He has come down (on earth) to instill a sense of devotion in us.

As Sri Sankara’s teaching grew popular he attracted many disciples during his travels. One among them was Anandagiri. Unlike others he was dull-headed and ranked below all others. As a result he became the subject of ridicule for this classmates. Despite this Anandagiri was devoted to Sri Sankara and his teachings. One day while Sri Sankara was about to begin classes he noticed the absence of Anandagiri and decided to wait for him to commence classes. Padmapada remarked that it was a waste of time waiting for a student like Anandagiri. But Sri Sankara insisted that he would wait. Anandagiri entered the class. Much to the surprise and shock of others he entered the class by singing the praise of his master in eight stanzas in the ‘Totaka Metre’. The poem was couched with excellent words and beautiful meaning. From that day he came to be known as Totakacharya and his work was called Totakashtakam. Totakashtakam runs as thus.\(^{42}\)

\[
\text{विदितिविलिष्कास्त्रणसुधाजलांगुर्जिमहितोपिष्कार्यिताधिनिधिः}
\]

\[
\text{हृदये कलये विमलं चरणं भवं शंकर देशिके मे शरणं} \ 
\]

\[(1)\]

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कहानावहुगालय पालय मां भवसागरदुःखविदूतत्तुदाम् ।
रचयाखिलदर्शनतत्त्वविदं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(2)

भवता जनंता सुहिता भविता निजबोधविचारार्चासमते ।
कल्येष्वरजीवविवेकविदं भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(3)

भव एव भवानिति मे निततं समजायत चेतसि कौटुकिता ।
सम वारण मोहमहाजलघि भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(4)

सुकुटेष्वधिकृतेः बहुधा भवतो भविता समदर्शनलालस्ता ।
अतिदीनमिम परिपालय मां भवशंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(5)

जगतीमवितुं कलिताकृत्यो विचरर्नति महामहसरङ्गलं ।
अहिमांशुरिवाच्च विभासि गुरो भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(6)

गुरुपुंमाव पुंगवकेतन ते समतामयतां नहि कोंपि सुधी: ।
शरणागतवत्सल तत्वसिद्धे भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(7)

विदिता न मया विशेषकला न च किंचन काधानमस्ति गुरो ।
दुमेव विद्येहि कृपां सहजां भव शंकर देशिक मे शरणम् ।।
(8)

1.9 Aryamba's Death

While Sri Sankara was touring the area of Tungabhadra, he intuitively felt that his mother was nearing her end. Leaving all his disciples behind and accompanied by Padmapada, Sri Sankara reached Kaladi. Aryamba was overjoyed to see her son.
Sri Sankara prayed Lord Shiva to take his mother to Kailas by chanting the ‘Shiva Bhujanga Stotram’. Immediately the Siva Ganas appeared but Aryamba was terrified to even look at them. Sri Sankara then prayed Lord Vishnu in his famous ‘Vishnu Bhujanga Stotra’ to send his Dutas to come and take his mother to Vaikuntha. Sri Sankara prayed as thus:

त्रिदंशं विषुं निर्मलं निविकल्पं निरीहं निराकारमोकारगम्यम् ।
गुणातीतमवितमेकं तुरीयं परं ब्रह्मं यं वेद तस्मै नमस्ते ॥

In compliance to the word given to his mother Sri Sankara decided to perform the funeral rites of Aryamba and requested relatives and friends to help him. But they refrained by doing so saying that a Sanyasin should not perform the obsequies and they would not co-operate with him. Sri Sankara did not deter. He placed his mother on the pyre he had constructed in the garden behind his house. He prayed to Lord Agni Deva. His prayer was answered and thus his mother was cremated.

1.10 Sri Sankara’s Vijaya Yatra Continues

Sri Sankara had a darshan of Lord Venkateswara in the famous hill shrine of Tirupati. Here Sir Sankara sang the Vishnu Padadikesanta Stotram in praise of the Lord in 52 verses. He also consecrated the ‘Dhanākarshana Yantra’ or wealth attracting Yantra. Sri Sankara also went to Tondi the famous Vinayaka Kshetra. From Tondi he proceeded towards Madurai. He had the darshan of Goddess Meenakshi and sang the Meenakshi Pancharatna Stotram in five verses. In one of the verses Sri Sankara Sings:

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Meaning: I remain everbowing to that (goddess) Minakshi a manifestation of the sacred knowledge (Srividya), who always remains on the left side of Lord Siva and is shining in the sacred syllable of Him, residing in the small circle in the Middle of the sacred circle (Srī Chakra), the queen gracing the Court of the Lord (Sundaresa) and is also the mother of the six faced one (Shanmuka) and of remover of obstacles (Vignaraja) and also who enchants the world.

From Madurai Sri Sankara went to Trivandrum to darshan Lord Anantapadmanabhaswami. He is said to have stayed there for a fortnight and preached the importance of Advaita to everyone.

During Sri Sankara’s pilgrimage to the North, he visited Dwaraka had darshan of Lord Krishna. He stayed there for long time and established ‘Kalika Peetam’. He instigated Hastamalaka as the First pontiff of the peetam to propagate doctrines of Advaita. Sri Sankara went to Ujjain from there, Ujjain being one of the Dvadasalinga Kshetra. Sri Sankara sang in praise of Lord Mahakaleshvara as follows:

abhunatikayāṁ vihitaśātāram muṣṭirpādānay a c sañjñanānam |
akālavānyaḥ: pārākṣaṇyāḥ vandे mahākālamह सुरेśām ||

Meaning: I offer my obeisance to Mahakala, the Lord of gods who has descended on Ujjain with a view to confer liberations to the good people and to protect people from untimely death.
Sri Sankara travelled to all the Mokshapuris in North India. Sri Sankara reached as far as Kashmir to propagate advaitic faith. It is said that there is a hill called Sankaracharya Hill in Kashmir. A mention has been made about it in Kalhana’s Rajatharangini.

Sri Sankara with his disciples proceeded to Badrinath from Kashmir. According to Madhaveeya, Sri Sankara consecrated the idol of Lord Narayana which was immersed in the river Alakananda. It is said that the Lord appeared in his dream and asked him to do so.

Sri Sankara established the JyotirMutt at Badrinath and ordained Sri Totakacharya as the first pontiff of the Mutt. Chidvilaseeya Sankara Vijayam states as:

कौबेयां दिशि तत्र अनंत अद्वेयमारमयः
तन्मेह तोतकाचार्यवर्ण चायानुविनितं म ॥ ४६ ॥

Also at Badrinath Sri Sankara had darshan of his Guru Govinda Bhagavatpada and offered him obeisance by chanting the Dakshinamurthi Ashtakam

मौनम्याक्ष्याप्रकटितप्रभासां युवायां
वर्षिष्ठस्य वसृष्टिगणेऽरुतं प्रभाणिष्ठे
आचार्यान्द्रेत्तकरकाचित्विन्मुद्रमान्त्रभुपम्
स्वात्माराम मुदितवदनं दक्षिणासूर्यिमोऽहे ॥ ४७ ॥

on his way also darshaned Paramaguru Gaudapada. From there Sri Sankara proceeded towards Kailas.
1.11 Sri Sankara’s Kailasa Yatra

Sri Sankara’s Yatra to Kailas deserves special mention. All the biographies of Sri Sankara have given an account of his travel to Kailas.

It is said that Sri Sankara reached Kailas through his yogic powers. He had darshan of Lord Paramesvara and Devi Parvati. Sri Sankara sang two hymns in praise of Lord Siva, Shiva-Padadikesanta stotram meaning praising Shiva from toe to head and Shiva-Kesadipadanta stotram meaning hymns praising Lord Shiva from head to toe. The former has been sung in 41 verses and the latter in 29 verses. Pleased with Sri Sankara Lord Siva gave him five Sphatika Lingas (Crystal Lingas) and instructed him to arrange for worshipping them for the welfare of the world. He also gave instruction on the mode of worship. 48

His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Swamigal the 68th pontiff of the Kamakoti Peetam gives an explanation to the Acharya receiving the sphatika lingas from Iswara. He says: “The Acharya himself is an avatāra of Lord Shiva, the sphatika lingas are manifestation of Lord Shiva the given is Parameswara himself. Hence here, the giver, the receiver and the given all the three are one and the same. In Vedanta there is a philosophy ‘Tripooti’ which says the vision, the person who sees it and what he sees all are one and the same. Likewise the thought, the person who thinks and what he thinks are the same. It is the same Paramatma that transforms into three. By receiving the Lingas from Isvara he has proved this philosophy correct. 49
The Markandeya Samhita gives a detailed account of this episode as follows:

गला कैलासश्रैलं जगद्धिरुग्सङ्करकाराचार्ययोगी
दूष्टवा साम्भं शिवं तथा स्वयमतिसुचिर चिन्तयतन्तरजः I
पवनश्च श्रीतमलिंढं अमलतरंसुधालिंक्षितानम्भाजाम्
भूते सौन्दर्यसारं हिंसणिरुद्विहितं: प्राप्यन् गाम्यसारीत् I 50

Lord Iswara also gave Sri Sankara a manuscript of Soundaryalahiri which is his (Lord Shiva's) own praise of his consort Devi Parvati.

Ananantanganandagiri’s Sankara Vijaya, Srivarahasya and Markandeya Samhita gives the names of the sphetika lingas as Yoga, Bhoga, Vara, Mukti and Moksha. These lingas are commonly known as Chandramouleeswara.

The Markandeya Samhita gives description of the places where Sri Sankara consecrated the five lingas:

शिवलिंढः प्रतिष्ठाय चिदम्बरसमातले I
मोक्षां सर्वजननां शुचनयन्त्रयसन्दर्भः I
मुक्तिलिङ्गतु केवलेन नीलकण्ठे वरेश्वरसः I
प्रतिष्ठाय महायोगी परां प्रीतिमवाप सः: I

काक्षयां श्रीकामकोटी तु योगलिङ्गमन्तरमम् I
प्रतिष्ठाय सुरेशार्य पूजार्य शुवुजने गुहः: I
श्रीश्वरार्ययोगी श्रुवंगिरिस्यानसम्मदविखळेशः I
श्रीशारदाख्यपीठे शिवलिङ्गं भोगनामकं चक्कः I 51

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The Acharya consecrated the Moksha linga at Chidambaram, the Mukthi linga at Kedarnath, Vara linga at Neelakanta Kshetra in Nepal, the Bhoga linga at Saradha Peetha in Karnataka and kept the Yoga linga for his own worship at Kamakoti Peetam at Kanchi.

As regarding the Soundaryalahiri it is a poetical treatise on the beauty of the goddess Uma. There is a legend which says, while coming down from Kailas along with Lingas and Soundaryalahiri the Acharya was stopped by Nandikeswara, the guardian of Kailas who snatched off a part of the manuscript. Sri Sankara was left with the first 41 verses. He then later completed the hymn by adding the rest of the 59 verses.

The first 41 verses consists of the subtle form of the goddess and meditative procedure and the way of worship of Divine Mother. The next 58 verses contains a description of her physical beauty from head to foot. The last verse portrays the humility of the Acharya.52

The first and the 100th verse of Soundaryalahari runs as follows:

शिव: शक्तिः यदि भवति शक्ति: प्रभवितुं
न चेदेवं देवो न खलु कुशलं: स्पन्दितुमयि ।
अतस्तवामाराध्यं हरिहरिविशारादिभिमितपि
प्रणन्तु स्तोतरं वा कथमकृतपुण्य:प्रभवति ॥
1.12 Sri Sankara’s Yatra from Kailas to Kanchi

On returning from Mount Kailas Sri Sankara visited the following places before reaching Kanchi. As mentioned above Acharya consecrated the lingas in the aforesaid places.

While he was in Kedarnath, he had the darshan of Lord Kedareswara and praised him in his Dvadasalinga stotra as:

हिमालिपर्वतं तें रमन्तं सम्पूज्यमानं सततं मुनिन्द्रे: ।
सुराषुश्रृंध्वक्षमहोरागः: केदारसशंशिवमीशमिदे ॥ ॥

From there Sri Sankara left for Kasi, had the darshan of the god and goddess there. It is here that he composed Kasi Panchakam and Annapurnashtakam in praise of the place and the goddess. Sri Sankara also composed another hymn Sri Annapurna Stotram in praise of goddess Annapurni. As the name implies Annapurni is the goddess of food. Hence Sri Sankara in this hymn asks her to remove poverty and bless everyone not only with food but with knowledge and prosperity.
Meaning: Oh! Parvati! Annapurna! Always full, the dear consort of Sankara, grant us alms for the sake of securing knowledge and detachment. Goddess parvati is my mother, Lord Maheswara is my father, the devotees of Lord Shiva are my relatives and the three worlds are my own country.

From Kasi Sri Sankara travelled to Omkar and then to Puri-Jagannath. Here he worshipped Lord Jagannatha and composed the ‘Jagannathashtaka Stotra’ in praise of him. Another significance of this place is that Sri Sankara established Govardhana Peetha the fourth Mutt to propogate Advaita.

Sri Sankara then came down South to the city of Trichinopoly. He visited Sugandhikuntilambika temple and engraved upon the walls of the temple a part of the text of Soundaryalalahiri. The shrine of this goddess is itself in the form of Sri Chakra. Sri Sankara then darshaned Lord Ranganatha at Srirangam and consecrated the Janäkarshana yantra or a yantra that attracts people. Sri Sankara then went to Thiruvanaika got the blessings of Lord Jambukeswara.
At the temple of goddess Akilandeswari, Sri Sankara pacified her wrath by consecrating the ‘Shiva Chakra’ and ‘Sri Chakra’ in both her ears. This is known as ‘Tatanka Pradhishta’. Even today the Tatankas adorn the deity there. Sri Sankara and his successors of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam are authorized to do the repair and renewal of the Tatankas. Sri Sankara also consecrated an idol of Lord Ganesa in front of the deity. After touring other parts of South India Acharya reached Kanchipuram, his last resort.

1.13 Sri Sankara at Kanchi

On reaching Kanchi Sri Sankara visited the temple of Sri Visveswara on the banks of Sarvatheertha. At Vishnu Kanchi he had the darshan of Lord Varadaraja. While Sri Sankara was staying at Vishnu Kanchi, he asked the then king Rajasena to reconstruct remodelify the city of Kanchi in the shape of Sri Chakra. From available historical facts, we can say that king Rajasena must be Chōla ruler of pre-Christian era. Hence we can conclude that the Chōlas were ruling Kanchi at the time of arrival of Acharya. King Rajesena an ardent devotee of the Acharya obeyed his (Acharya’s) orders and reconstructed Kanchi in the shape of Sri Chakra with Devi Kamakshi temple in the Centre.

Sri Sankara visited the Kamakshi temple and consecrated the Sri Chakra Yantra in front of the Devi. He also established Kamakoti Peetam and consecrated the Yoga linga there. The Acharya personally performed the Chandramouleeswara Pooja to the Yoga linga thereby becoming the first Acharya of the Peetam.
The Acharya ascending Sarvajnapeetarohana at Kanchi or the Throne of Omniscience is an important event in the history of the city.

According to Chidvilaseeya Sankaravijayam which describes the event, when the Acharya was about to ascend the pitha an ‘asareeri’ (a celestial voice) told him that he would be fit to do so only after he defeated the scholars in debate, who were assembled there. The scholars who were assembled there had come from the valley of Tamaraparani. They questioned the Acharya on his philosophies. Acharya won over everybody, and ascended the Sarvajnapeetha amidst heavy Celebrations.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{verse}
भीतबादित्रेनिघोंचे: जयवादसमुज्ज्वले: ।
आरूर्हेहार वर्कारपीठे देशिकपुंगव: ॥
पुष्पवृक्ष: पपाताय बचुर्वत्तासुमान्य: ॥\textsuperscript{59}
\end{verse}

Thus having travelled throughout the country and propogating the faith of Advaita Sri Sankara an avatar of Lord Parameswara made Kanchi his last resort and stayed there till his end. In the brief span of 32 years he achieved the herculean task of reinstating Sanatana Dharma which was on the verge of collapse at his time of birth. Sri Sankara shook off his mortal coils at Kanchi and attained eternal bliss at the Sanctum Sanctorum of Devi Kamakshi.

According to N.K. Venkatesa Pantulu in his Sri Sankaracharyya and his Kamakoti Peeta “Sri Sankara attained siddhi in his thirty-second year, in the year Rakthakshi, the 2625\textsuperscript{th} year of Kaliyuga, corresponding to 477.B.C.”\textsuperscript{60}
Fig. (ii) Places Visited by Sri Sankara

Sri Adi Sankara's Digvijaya
Noted Places Visited by Adi Sankara
(This map represents Bharatvarsha of Adi Sankara's times)

Source: Souvenir - Kanchi Kosh
This event has been referred to in the Sivarahasya as

तद्गण्यमवरुणमुक्तिमुग्यायताःप्रसादात्मकः स्वकाधमे ।
तावै विजित्यतस्वसाधाराट्वाद्मिणीनास्त्यायायामय सिद्धिमाप ॥ ६१॥

The Markandeya Samhita refers to this incident as:

काश्यां श्रीकामकोर्तिकलिमलशमनीं कल्पकितवा सुरेशे ।
श्रीविद्याराजपीठार्चनमहितमहराजसाम्राज्यलक्ष्मीम् ।
संवेश्यालीय शिष्ये संकल्पतुत्व संमोद्देहें तंतरहाम ।
निलदुर्मातनुभूति भजति भवमहामोधी सदारामण ॥ ६२॥

1.14 The achievement of Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya

शास्त्रं शारीरीमांसं देवस्तु परमेश्वरः ।
आचार्यं संकराचार्यं सत्यं जन्मनि जन्मनि ॥ ६३॥

The sloka says “if in every future birth the anchor of my faith and understanding in the saareera Meemaamsa, is my study, if the God I worship is Parameswara Himself, if the Guru who will be my refuge is Sri Sankaracharya it does not matter how many janmas, I am to take. May these three be granted to me in life after life.”

This is the prayer of several of the devotees of Acharya for the service he has rendered to humanity.

At the time of advent of Acharya there were as many as 72 schools of thought, the Saankhyas propounded the theory of plurality of aatma and denied the Paramaatman. The Meemamsakas, affirmed the superiority of
observing vedic rituals over Jnana as means to Moksha, according to Baudhas they propagated Soonya vaada, the Jainas on the other hand advanced the Saptabhanginaya the seven fold predication, they are (i) May be it is, (ii) may be it is not, (iii) may be it is and is not, (iv) may be it is indescribable, (v) may be it is and is describable, (vi) may be it is not and is indescribable and, (vii) may be it is, is not and is indescribable. Mostly all these schools of thought were in conflict with one another.

Due credit goes to the Acharya for having liquidated all the heretic sects and establishing the supremacy of Advaita. Acharya propounded the advaita doctrine in such a way that even a common man could understand and follow in the steps. Worshipping Iswara is the first step insisted by Acharya for realization of truth or Brahman. He gave a simple religion which the whole humanity could pursue by following his system devoid of all crude and obscene forms. Our Acharya founded the doctrine of Advaita by preaching the three paths Karma, Bhakthi and Jnana.

The Upanishads give the advaitic teaching and they are called the sruthi, the Acharya is the refuge where reside the sruti for Jnana the Smriti for Karma and the Puranas for bhakthi.

As the following sloka confirms:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{श्रुतिस्मृतिपुराणानामालयः कर्मालयः} & 1 \\
\text{नमामि भगवत्पादश्चूरं लोकश्चूरम्} & 11
\end{align*}
\]
Sri Adi Sankara established the ‘Shanmatas’ or the six schools of worship. He also taught everyone the truth that all deities one worship are manifestation of one supreme Paramatman. He established the worship of Siva-Saivism, Vishnu-Vaishnavism, Ambika-Saktham, Surya-Sauram, Vinayaka-Ganapatyam and Subrahmanya-Kaumaram and came to be known as “Shanmatasthapanacharya”. By this system people can worship any god of his own liking or ‘Ishtadevata’ without offending the other gods. He created the ‘Panchyatana Pooja’ whereby the other five gods will be made companion to his Ishtadevata. By this way the devotee will be made to feel that the other gods are different manifestation of his own Ishtadevata and that there is no difference between the deities.

The festivals that we celebrate in our homes like Sri Ramanavami, Janmastami, Sivaratri, Durga Puja, Vinayaka Chaturthi has been made possible only by Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada. If not for him Hinduism would have perished and atheism would have spread in our country. Hence we are irredeemably indebted to our Acharya for his great service to mankind.

Sri Sankara also stressed the importance of temple worship. He gave a new life to temples by performing Samprokshana Ceremony, installing auspicious Yantras in many places thus converting the harsh and cruel deity into a beneficiary gracious and merciful God. 68

His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal puts forth the following points as the contributions of Sri Adi Sankara to Hinduism, they are:

1. “Acceptance of Saguna-avatāra-murtis for worship at the same time accepting the Nirguna Brahman.
2. Making the Karma Khanda prescribed in the Vedas as a tool to attain the objections of Jnana Khanda.

3. Regarding not only our country, the Bharata Desa but also the Rivers, the tanks and the mountain thereon as sacred things worthy of great respect and worship.

4. Establishment of mutual love, sense of service and bhakthi (devotions to the almighty) amongst the people and making them live in peace.

5. Integration of the people in various parts of the country as an unified nation through the system of thought of the higher self.”

The avatāra of Sri Sankara and his teachings provide guideline to later religious institutions and heads and consequently the Acharya came to be regarded as “Jagadguru” (the world teacher).

It is a must that every household today celebrate the birthday of Sri Sankara as Sankara Jayanthe as a mark of gratitude for the greatest service he has rendered to Hindusim.

1.15 The works of Sankara

Sri Sankara has composed several hymns on various deities for the benefit of worship of devotees. They are grouped as follows:

*Lord Vinayaka*:

श्री गणेशपञ्चरत्नम्, गणेशभुजज्ञम्

*Lord Subrahmanyam*:

सुब्रहण्मुजज्ञम्
Lord Shiva

Lord Vishnu:

Others:

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1.16 Memorials to Sri Adi Sankara

In remembrance of the greatness of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada several memorials and Paduka Mantapams have been established in many sacred places. The idea was first conceived by His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi Swamigal, the 68th pontiff of the Kamakoti Peetam.

I. Rameswaram: Has the first one of many memorials of Sri Sankara. The Consecration of the tower was performed by His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal on 28th April 1963. The memorial is situated on the banks of holy Agni Tirtha. It includes Guru-Paduka Mantapam, Sarasvati Mantapam, Dhyana Mantapam and Mani Mantapam. In the top storey of the Vimana is the marble replica of the Bhagavatpada and his disciples. The memorial enshrines the following:
1) Śoḍaśa Gaṇapati, 2) Śoḍaśa Subrahmanya, 3) Sri Sarasvati, 4) Sri Dakshinamurthi (Yantram), 5) Siva Panchayatanam, 6) Dvadasa Jyothir Lingas, 7) Sri Anjaneya, 8) Mani Mantapam depicting the story of Manu Nithi Chōla, 9) Bhajan Mantapam and 10) library. There is also a Veda Patasala and daily Poojas for the deities is being performed.

II. Kaladi: A memorial stupa known as Sri Adi Sankara Smāraka Vimanam or Kirti Stamba with 9 storeys and measuring 152 feet has been consecrated on Sankara Jayanthi day in 1978. There is a relief at the top floor with a statue of Sri Sankara measuring eight feet and his disciples and Sri Dakshinamurthi in the background. The memorial houses a Paduka mantapam with a padma paduka which was also
consecrated on the same day. While ascending the steps to the tower one finds the life story of the Acharya and his places of pilgrimage in cement relief. Besides, there are huge figures of Gitopadesa, Vinayaka, Muruga, Surya, Mahavishnu, Sri Kamakshi and Sivalinga. A library with research facilities has been planned. At present there is a Vidya pitha named ‘Adi Sankara Bhagavatpada Smāraka Sanskrit Vidyapitha.’

III. Tiruvanaikka : Sri Jagadguru Vidyasthanam was established a hundred years ago at Tiruvanaikka near Tiruchirapoly. It is a centre for learning Vedas, Sastras and Vedanta. Daily poojas are performed to the deities of Sri Ganesa, Durga and Panchamukheswara (lingam with five faces) in the Vidyasthanam.

IV. Kumbakonam : This place was the headquarters of Kamakoti Peetam during the Carnatic wars. Fearing muslim atrocities the Bangaru Kamakshi idol (in gold) was brought from Kanchi and installed in Thanjavur. A Mutt was built by Sarabendra Raja of Thanjavur in the year 1881. A Veda Patasala is being run here. Veda parayanam is being conducted in the Acharya’s Sannidhi atleast ten days in a month. A regular feature of this Mutt is holding Vidvat Sadas every Sunday evening. The other important activities include bhajans on Ekadasi days, arranging of cremation of unclaimed bodies, conduct of dharma Upanayana. The Headquarters of the Mutt was shifted back to Kanchipuram in the year 1977.
V. Puri: The memorial of Sri Sankara is on the bank of the sea shore at Swargadvara at Puri-Jaganath. There are three temples here. The centre is the temple of Sri Adi Sankara with his four disciples in the Keralite style of architecture. On the right is the temple of Sri Chaitanya Maha Prabhu in Bengali style and on the left is the temple of Sri Jayadeva, Padmavati and Sri Balakrishna in the Oriyan style. All the three temples stand on the same platform ten feet above the ground level. A Veda patasala is also being run in the same complex. Pujas to the deities is a part of the regular features of the temple.

VI. Haridvar: A memorial has been built here at a place called Harkipadi in such a way that pilgrims taking a holy dip in the Ganges can have the darshan of the replica of Sri Sankara and his disciples. There is also a temple of Sri Maharani Ganga Mahadevi on the banks of Ganges and is maintained by the Kamakoti Peetam.

VII. Varanasi: The Kanchi Kamakoti Pitadhipathi Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swami Mutt at Hanuman Ghat is said to be the most ancient Mutt. It was earlier known as Sri Sukhadeva Mutt as Sri Sukhacharya the son of Vyasa Maharishi had stayed here for sometime. There is a very ancient idol of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya along with Meru, Sri Chakra and Salagramams. Special Poojas are arranged on important days like Somavara, Sukravara and Maha Pradosha. All festivals are celebrated in grand manner. Veda-Bhashya parayanam is a regular feature here.
VIII. Salem : The Sankara Mutt here is called “Sri Kamakoti Kamakshi Asram”. The Padukas of Bhagavatpada have been installed here and His Holiness Sri Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal consecrated the Padukas in the year 1977. Besides Paduka pooja several special homams and poojas are performed here regularly. A Rig veda Patasala is also being run here.

IX. Secunderabad : The Kanchi Kamakoti Sankara Mandir is established at Skandagiri near Secunderabad. Replica of Paduka of Sri Bhagavatpada is enshrined with a silver bilvamala.

Abishekams, archanas, special poojas on pradosham days and Sivarathri days, bhajans, celebration of Maha Sivarathri, Sri Sankara Jayanthi, Jayanthis of Jagadgurus, Dhanurmasa pooja with Bhajans are the features of this Mutt.

X. Trivandrum : A Paduka Mantapam with an annexure named Sri Chandrasekharendra Kirti Mantapam has been established here. Special poojas are performed for the Padukas.

XI. Madurai : The city of Madurai also houses a Paduka Mantapam with the replicas of Padukas of the Acharyas. Special poojas on auspicious days are a regular feature.

XII. Thanjavur : The Sankara Mutt building at Thanjavur once belonged to Maharashtra rulers of Thanjavur. It was then donated to Kanchi
Kamakoti Mutt which was consecrated by Paramacharya. The building enshrines Padukas of Sri Adi Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya.

Training in devotional tamil and sanskrit songs and bhajana sampradayam is given to many children. Special Poojas and bhajans are done regularly. Sri Sankara Jayanthi, Acharya Jayanthi and Anjaneeya Jayanthi are celebrated in a grand manner. Dharmopanayanam is done in the month of Masi under the auspices of Sri Kamakoti Dharmopanayana Samithi.

XIII. Tiruvottiyur : Situated beyond the Northern limits of Madras is a Siva Sthala and is dedicated to Sri Thyagaraja. The memorial enshrines the Padukas of Acharya. Religious discourses are arranged for the benefit of the public.

XIV. West Mambalam : The Sankara Mutt situated near the Kasi Viswanathar Temple was established in the year 1953. The Acharya Padukas were installed and its consecration was performed by His Holiness Paramacharya in the year 1958. Special poojas on festive occasions, Veda Parayanam and religious discourses are regular activities of the Mutt.

Besides the above mentioned places memorials are erected in various places like Thiruvidaimarudur, Kanyakumari, Srisailam, Rishikesh, Kurukshetra, Triambaka, Prayaga, and Badari etc.
2.0 Establishment of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

T.S.N. Sastry in his "Age of Sankara" gives the date of establishment of Sri Kamakoti Peetam as 481 B.C. with Sri Sankara himself as the first Pontiff of the Mutt. He further gives the dates of establishment of the rest of the Mutts as: (i) the Dwaraka Mutt in the year 490 B.C. with Visvarupa, brother of Suresvaracharya as its first Acharya (ii) the Jyotir Mutt at Badrikashrama in 485 B.C. with Totakacharya as its first Acharya (iii) the Govardhan Mutt of Jagannathpuri in the year 484 B.C. with Padmapadacharya as its first Acharya and (iv) the Saradha Mutt at Sringeri with Hasthamalakacharya as its first Acharya. There are contradictions regarding the names of the first pontiffs of Dwaraka, Jagannath and Saradha Mutt. The authors do not agree with one another and hence there is a lot of uncertainty regarding the names of the first pontiffs of these Mutts.

The Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam could be called the "Guru Peetam" and all the others "Sishya Peetam" because Sri Sankara himself was the first peetathipathi.

Sri Suresvaracharya was appointed general head of all the Mutts in India. Even though his name appears in the guru parampara lineage of Acharyas of Kamakoti Peetam, Sri Suresvaracharya was not the second pontiff of the Mutt. The reason is, Sri Suresvara was a Grihastha (married man) before he was initiated into ascetic order, and Sri Sankara desired that his sishyas in the Peetam should take up Sanyasahrama directly from Brahmacharya ashrama.
and perform the pooja to Maha Meru in the form of Maha Tirupurasundari and Yoga linga in the form of Sri Chandramouleeswara. Hence even to this day the Acharyas of Kamakoti Peetam are initiated into ascetic order directly from Brahamacharyam.

The Acharyas of the Kamakoti Peetam have a common title along with their pontifical name. There is a traditional history to this title. It is said that once while Sri Suresvara was seriously ill, Sri Sankara sought the medical aid of Asvins, the doctor of gods. Indra growing wild at this came to earth and aimed his Vajra Ayudha at the Asvins. But due to the power of Sri Sankara the weapon did not move forward. Indra realising the power of Acharya gave his own name to the Jagadguru. Similarly Sarasvati gave her name after being defeated in a debate by Sri Sankara. Hence the pontiffs of the Kamakoti Peetam bear the title “Indra-Sarasvati.”

2.1 Sri Mukham of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam

The Sri Mukham or Svasthivachanam of a Peetam is a string of honorific epithets that comes down from time immemorial with an unknown authorship. It cannot be altered at any point of time. A person by reciting the Srimukham of a Peetam is in a way offering his Pramam’s or salutations to his guru. The Svasthivachanam of Sri Kamakoti Peetam is as follows:

\[
\text{श्रीकाश्री कामकोटि पीठाधिपति जगद्धरस} \\
\text{श्रीश्रीराचार्य श्री चरणयो: प्रणामः} \\
\text{श्रीमहामिपुरसुन्दरी समेत श्री चन्द्रमौलीभ्राय नमः} \\
\]

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There is a line that appears in the above Svasthivachanam which reads "Adhishtane Simhasanabhisiktham" which confirms the fact that the Acharya attained siddhi at Kanchi. Similarly the Acharyas of the Peetam are addressed as "Srimath Paramahamsa Parivrajakacharya varya", the word "parivrajak" meaning wondering monks.

According to Sastras a sanyasin should not stay in the same place for long time. His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Sarasvati Swamigal, the 68th pontiff of Sri Kamakoti Peetam gives an explanation to this. He says "according to the sastras a sanyasin is forbidden from remaining in one place as he would develop "local attachment" (attachment towards people of that area.) This is also one of the reason for Parameswara to take an avatāra as a Sanyasin. Because a monk is devoid of all sentiments and attachments, his only job is to preach people the importance of Santana Dharma by moving from one place to another, that was the need of the time when the avatāra of
Parameswara took place. While we compare the other ashramas, in the case of Brahmacharya the disciple is expected to fulfill the needs of his Guru by staying with him and doing service to him and simultaneously learning the lessons, hence he cannot travel like a monk. The second one Grihasthashrama is full of commitments and moreover a “Grihasthan” would come into lot of criticism and people will not accept him as a teacher calling him a hypocrite. The third ashrama Vanaprastha expects a person to stay in one place and perform Tapas and Anushtanam. Hence unlike the earlier avatars, the sanyasa avatāra in the form of Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada was best suited for Kaliyuga to being people into the path of righteousness in the Ahimsa method and establish the truth of Advaita.” Even to this day the Acharyas of Sri Kamakoti Peetam keep travelling throughout the country without remaining in one place for a long time.

Each Mutt established by the Acharya has its own Characteristics that speak of the nature of the Mutt for example the name of the Peetam, the first pontiff of the Peetam, the veda, the title of the pontifical head of the Mutt etc. N.K. Venkatesa Pantulu in his Sri Sankaracharya and His Kamakoti Peeta gives in detail the characteristics of these Mutt. Again here there is lot of uncertainty regarding the names of the first Acharya (4th column) of Sringeri, Dwarka and Jagannath Mutt. The chart is given in next page.

The Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam is the “Moolamnaya Peetam” for two reasons. One is that Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada himself was the first Acharya and secondly he ascended the Throne of Omniscience or “Sarvajnaapeetam
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Source: N.K. Venkatesa Pantulu, Sri Sankaracharya and His Kamakoti Peetha, Rajamundry, 1931, PP - 20.21
here. Sharadha Mutt and Kamakoti Peetam are respectively the name of the Mutt and seat occupied by the pontiff. There is a lot of difference between Mutt and Peetam. ‘Sharadha’ is just the name given to the Mutt when it was established, like any human being getting his name after his birth, whereas Peetam as mentioned above is the seat of occupation and it gets the name from the goddess who rules the Peetam or who has the authority over the Peetam. In this case “Kamakoti Peetam” is being ruled by “goddess Kamakshi”. The ‘Kshetra’ is the place where the peetam is situated viz. ‘Satyavrata Kanchi’, the god and goddess of the Kshetra are respectively Lord Ekambaranatha and Devi Kamakshi. The sixth column gives the name of the “Thirtham” or the name of the River on the banks of which the Mutt is situated. Here it is given as ‘Kampasara’ because River ‘Kampa’ still flows beneath Ekambaranatha temple as ‘Antharvani’ (invisible). Likewise the Pontiffs of Kamakoti Peetam must come from a family of ‘Rig Vedhis’ and the Brahmacharyam is “Sathya Brahmacaryam.”

The 10th column in the chart gives the name of the “Sampradaya”. In general the word Sampradaya means rules and regulations. All the Mutts have a set of rules and regulations to be followed as laid down by Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada. In the case of Kamakoti Peetam it is called “Mityavara”. The last column is the “Mahavakya.” When a boy is initiated into ascetic order his guru gives him holy orders (sanyasa) and Upadesam. These are given by the guru personally to his successor and to nobody else. This Upadesam is called “Mahavakya”. In the Kamakoti Peetam the Mahavakya is “Om Thattsat”.

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A Jagadguru prays for the well being of the whole universe, preaching the doctrine of “Jnana” and removing ‘ignorance’ in the minds of the people. He is not confined to a particular place or to a particular direction, he belongs to the whole world. Hence the Mahavakya of Kamakoti Peetam is “Om Thattsat”\textsuperscript{75}.

2.2 Sri Maha Tirupurasundari Sametha Sri Chandramouleeswara Pooja

Ever since Sri Bhagavatpada established the Kamakoti Peetam and started the trikala pooja to Sri Chandramouleeswar in the form of Yogalinga, the successors to this Peetam have carried out this tradition uninterruptedly till this day as laid down by the Acharya. The goddess Sri Maha Tirupurasundari is in the form of ‘Mahameru’.

‘Maha Meru’ and ‘Sri Chakram’ are one and the same. The Pyramidal view of ‘Sri Chakram’ is called ‘Maha Meru’. On the top in the form of a small dot lies the ‘Bindhu Mandalam’ or otherwise called ‘Sakthi Mandalam’. Below the ‘Bindhu Mandalam’ the 43\textsuperscript{rd} layer or floor (row) is called ‘Sahasradhalam’, further below lies two more rows each row consisting of 10 triangles, again below that lies 8 more layers, lotus shaped. Below that surrounding this layer lies sixteen petals in the shape of lotus petals. Next to it lies the “Trirekha”, in the form of Circles. Surrounding all these in three rows lies the ‘Bhoopuram’ in the form of square walls. This is the shape of ‘Maha Meru’. Below the ‘Bindhu Sthanam’, the five triangles with the apex downwards is called ‘Sakthibaram’ and the apex facing upwards is called ‘Sivabaram’. These Nine
Fig. 7.1 Sri Maha Meru

Fig. 7.2 His Holiness Sri Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Swamigal performing the Chandramouleswara Pooja
triangles together are known as ‘nine yonis’ or the nine primary causative forces of the Universe. In the midst of this lies the ‘Bindhusthanam’.

The ‘Maha Meru’ has twenty-five outer Prakaras which is made up of various kind of metals and Nine gems (‘Navarathnam’). Along with Sri Maha Tirupurasundari in the Bindhusthanam, there are several Devathas in the Maha Meru like ‘Shyamala’, ‘Varahi’, ‘Vishnu’, ‘Eesan’, ‘Chandran’, ‘Suriyan’, ‘Manmathan’ and so on.

2.3 The Nine Enclosures of Sri Chakra

Sri Maha Meru Navavarnam or enclosures: - The Maha Meru or Sri Chakram is made up of the following:

1. Trailokya Mohanam (Square shaped)
2. Sarvāśaparipūrakam - Sixteen petals
3. Sarvasamkshopanam - Eight petals
4. Sarvasowbhaghyam - Fourteen corners
5. Sarvarthasathakam - Outside ten triangles
6. Sarvarakshakaram - Inside ten triangles
7. Sarvarohanam - Angles pointing eight directions
8. Sarvasiddhi Pradham - Triangle
All these Nine enclosures are guarded by nine Devathas. The four corners are guarded by Kandagarshini, Rasagarshini, Roopagarshini, Sparshagarshini, and the Dwara devathas.

The above list is the names of layers of ‘Maha Meru’ and what it is made up of.76

A description of the nine enclosures in the Sri Chakra as explained by S.K. Ramachandra Rao in his book titled ‘Sri Chakra is given as follows:’77

1. **First Enclosure**: Trailokya - Mohana or Deluder of the three realms.
   This enclosure is in the form of a square (Sarvantra Chaturasra) on which the entire yantra is poised. It has three lines (tri-rekha) like ramparts of a fortress placed one inside the other. The four sides of the squares have four amnayas meant to signify transmitting of esoteric knowledge. It is an authoritative instrument of diffusion of cultic ideas. The four amnayas signifies the four directions East, West, North and South. Sometimes the amnayas are counted as six including above (Urdhva) and below (adhara). Each amnaya is presided over by a deity. Devi Bhuvaneswari presides over the Eastern amnaya signifying the path of mantras (mantra yoga), goddess Dhakshina Kali presides over the Southern amnaya signifying path of devotion (bhakti yoga) the Western amnaya is presided over by Kulijika representing the path of rituals (Karma-yoga) and finally the North is presided over by Guhya-Kali to represent the path of wisdom (jnana-yoga). The other two amnayas, Urdhava or above is presided over by Bala
Tirupurasundari representing path of wisdom and below or adhara amnaya is presided by Tārā representing the path of words (Sabdayoga). All the six amnayas correspond with the chakras in the human body. North amnaya with Visuddha, South with Manipura, East with Svadhisthana, West with Anahata, above with Ājñā and below with Muladhāram.

The outer most line surrounding the square houses the ten spirits accomplishments better known as (Siddhis). Four of them are in the amnayas the other four are in the four corners of the square and two of them are in the above and the below. Siddhis are special powers acquired during the spiritual journey for self-protection. The ten siddhis are spirits representing abilities to become small (Anima), to bloat into huge size (Mahima), become light (Laghima), become heavy (Garima), to lord over (Iśitva), to desire (Icchā), to subjugate (Vaśitva), to attain objects of desire (Prākānya), to get pleasure (bhukti) and to actualize all intentions (Sarva-Kāmasiddhi).

Next we come to the second line surrounding the four amnayas. This line represents the Seven minor mother deities or Sapta matrikās. They are: Brahmi - creatures of passionate longing, Maheswari - creatures of violent anger, Kaumari - creatures of insatiable avarice, Vaishnav - of dazed fascination for the world, Varahi - of piggish obstinacy, Indrani - of tormenting jealously, Chamunda - of sinful disturbances. These minor deities also have their consorts. They are Asitāṅga who is black bodied, Ruru who is indignant, the fierceful Chanda,
Enclosures of Sri Chakra

Fig. 8.1 Enclosure 1

Fig. 8.2 Enclosure 2
thoughtless Krodha, Unmatta who is intoxicated and proud, envious Kapala, and Bhishana respectively.

We come to the innermost line surrounding the square, which represents feminine guards of the ten directions, the Dikpalas. They are Sarva-Samkshobini (agitating all) in the West, Sarvavidrāvinī (Chasing all) in the North, Sarvakarshini (fascinating all) in the East, Sarva-Vasam-Kari (subjugating all) in the South, Sarvonmādinī (driving all mad) in the North-West, Sarvāṅkuśā (goading all) in the North-East, Khechari (moving about in thin air) in South-East, Sarvalīyā (sprouting everything) in South-West, Mahā-yoṇi (the great source of all things) below and Sarveswari (ruling over all) above.

When the Srīchakra is personified as a deity the three lines surrounding the square is taken to represent the feet, knees and thighs of the deity. The divinity presiding this enclosure is Tripura, the enclosure symbolises first part of emanation - chakra (ṛṣeṣṭi-chakra), denoting ‘emanation-emanation (srishti-srishti). The amnaya-nayika is Bhuvaneswari and her consort is Sada-siva. This enclosure stands for materialist philosophy (chārvāka-darśana).

2. Second Enclosure is called Sarvāṣapari-pūraka or Fulfilled of all hopes: This is in the form of lotus of sixteen petals (Shodaṣapatraka), situated immediately within the three concentric circles (Trīvṛtta) and outside the lotus of eight petals. This enclosure is presided by the deity Tripurēsi and her aids are unmanifest (gupta
yogini). The powers of this enclosure are sixteen in number and are represented by the petals of the lotus. They are: attractions pertaining to, Kāmākarshini-desire, Buddhyākarshini-intellect, Ahamkārākarshini-ego, Sabdakarshini-sound, Sparśākarshini-touch, Rupākarshini-form, Rasākarshini-taste, Gandhākarshini-smell, Chittakarshini-thoughts, Dhairyākarshini-fortitude, Smṛtyākarshini-recollections, Nāmākarshini-verbal labels, Bijākarshini-sources of phenomena, Atmakarshini-selfhood, Amṛtākarshini-immortality and Śarirākarshini-body. These powers are indicated in the petals inscribed by vowels in the anticlock direction.

This enclosure represents the Muladhara Chakra in the human body. It symbolizes second part of emanation charka (sṛṣṭi-sthiti) denoting emanations-preservation. The presiding deity of this enclosure is Purnesvari also known as Annapurna and the philosophy represented here is Buddhist.

3. Third Enclosure Sarvasaṅkshobāna or Agitator of all: It is located outside the main portion of the yantra, it is in the form of eight petaled lotus (ashta-dala-padma). The presiding deity is Tirupurasundari whose aids are more hidden than the aids of the previous ones (gupta-Tārā-yogini).

The eight petals represent eight forces which are psychophysical in nature. They are Anaṅga-kusuma (speech and expression-vachana) in the East, Anaṅga-Mekhalā (apprehensions and receptions-ādāna) in the South, Anaṅga-Madanā (locomotions-gamana) in the West,
Enclosures of Sri Chakra

Fig. 9.1 Enclosure 3

Fig. 9.2 Enclosure 4
Anaṅga-Madanāturā (urges of the body and eliminations-visarjana) in the North, Anaṅga-Rekha (pleasurable feelings-ananda) in the South-East, Anaṅga-Veginī (rejections and reactions-hana) in the South West, Anaṅga-Madaṅkuśa (attention-upādana) in the North-West and Anaṅga-Malini (detachment and dispassion-Upeksha) in the North-East. These forces are indicated by eight consonants beginning with ‘ka’.

In the human body this enclosure corresponds to the naval region (nābhi) or the loin (kati).

The enclosure represents the third and final part of emanation-Chakra denoting ‘emanation-absorption’ (ṛṣṭhi-Samhārā). The amnaya-nayika is Bhavana and the philosophy is Ganapatyam.

4. Fourth Enclosure Sarvasoubhagya-dāyikā or provider of all prosperity: It is the first enclosure in the main portion of Sri Chakra formed by fourteen corners or angles (Chaturdaśāra or bhuvana). The presiding deity is Tripura-Vāsini surrounded by her aids who are conditioned by traditions (sampradāya-yoginī).

These fourteen corners are represented by fourteen vital channels known as ‘nadi’ in human body. They are: from East in anticlockwise direction, Sarva-saṅkshobini-alaṁbushānādi (agitator of all), Sarva-vidrāvinī-Kuhumbusha nādi (chaser of all), Sarvākarshinī-Visvodarāmbusha nādi (attactor of all), Sarvahlāda-Kārinī-
Varanaṁbusha nādi (delighter of all), Sarvasammohini-hastijihvāṁbusha nādi (deluder of all), Sarvastāṁbhini-yaśo-vatimbusha nādi (arrestor of all), Sarva-jrāṁbhini-payasvinimbusha nādi (releaser of all), Sarva-vaśam-kari-gāṇḍhārīṁbusha nādi (controller of all), Sarvaranjani-pushāṁbusha nādi (delighter of all), Sarvonmādini-Śankhinīṁbusha-nādi (maddener of all), Sarvārthasādhanī-sarasvatimbusha nādi (accomplisher of all objectives), Sarva-sampattipūrani-idāṁbusha nādi (provider of all wealth), Sarvamantramayi also called Sarvadvandva-mayi-Sushumṇāṁbusha nādi (made up of all phenomenal duality). The fourteen nādis are indicated by the first fourteen letters of the alphabet.

The corresponding part in the human body is the anāhata chakra in the heart region. This enclosure signifies the first part of preservation chakra (sthitī) denoting ‘preservation-emanation’ (sthitī-ṛṣṭī). The amnaya-nayika is Adya-kālī and the enclosure represents the sāṃkhya philosophy.

5. **Fifth Enclosure called Sarvārtha-sādhaka or ‘Accomplisher of all objects’**: It is in the form of a ten cornered figure (in angles) it is specified as the outer ten cornered figure (bahir-daśāra). The deity that presides over this enclosure is Tripura-Śri with her aids who are beyond the reach of sensory apprehension (Kulottirṇa-yoginī).
The ten corners of the figure house ten auspicious deities, beginning in the East in anti-clockwise direction they are: Sarva siddhi pradhā (ensuring all attainments), Sarva Saṁpath pradhā (bestowing all wealth), Sarva priyamkārī (doing only the most desirable), Sarva maṅgala-kārinī (beginning all good things), Sarva Kāma pradhā (fulfilling all the desires), Sarva dukha Vimochanī (removing all sufferings), Sarva mṛtyu praśamanī (counteracting all portents of death), Sarva vighna nivārini (overcoming all obstacles), Sarvāṅga Sundari (comely in all the limbs), and Sarva Saubhagya dāyini (gifting all prosperity).

These ten deities are indicated in the enclosure by consonants. First five with ‘ka’ and next five consonants beginning with ‘cha’. The corresponding part in the human body is the visuddha chakra at the throat.

This enclosure signifies part of the preservation chakra denoting preservation-preservation (sthiti-sthiti). The amnaya-nayika is Paramādyā-kāli and the philosophy represented here is Vedic (vaidika-darśana).

6. Sixth Enclosure Sarvarakshākara or ‘Protector of all’: Like the above this enclosure is also in the form of ten-cornered figure (daśāra). The presiding deity of this enclosure is Tripura-mālinī with her aids who are ‘embryonic’ (nigarbha-yogini)
Enclosures of Sri Chakra

Fig. 10.1 Enclosure 5

Fig. 10.2 Enclosure 6

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The ten corners represent ten powers of the Vital fire called Vahinikalā they are: Sarvajñā (‘knowing all’ associated with rechaka or elimination), Sarvasakti pradā (‘bestowing all powers’ pāchaka-digestion), Sarvaiśvarya pradā (‘bestowing all wealth’ śoshana or removing the defects of the stomach fire), Sarva jñāna mayī (‘full of knowledge’, dāhaka or burning), Sarva Vyādhi vināśini (‘undoing all diseases’ pāvaka-flooding with rasa to help the digestive function), Sarvādhāra-Svarūpā (‘Supporting all things’ kṣhāraka or bile secreting), Sarva pāpa harā (‘dispelling all misery’ Kshobhaka or churning food), Sarva rakshā Svarūpinī (‘protecting all beings’, jṛmbhaka-yawning), and finally Sarvepsita-phala-pradā (‘granting the fruits of all that one wants’ Mohaka-causing fainting). Starting from the East in anticlockwise direction they are represented by five letters of ‘ṭa’ group and rest five of ‘ṭa’ group.

In the human body this enclosure corresponds the manipūrachakra which is located between the eyebrows. It represents the third part of preservation Chakra denoting ‘preservation-absorption’ (sthiti-Saṁhārā). This enclosure is described as nature of fire (agni). The amnaya-nayika is Siddhi-kālī-and the philosophy is solar philosophy (Saura-darśana).

7. Seventh Enclosure called Sarva-roga-harā or ‘Remover of all disease’: It is an eight cornered figure known as ‘ashta-kona’. It is
located immediately outside the primary triangle. The deity presiding this figure is ‘Tripura Siddha’ attended by aids who are secret or ‘rahasya-yogini’.

These eight corners represent the powers responsible for the eight fundamental urges. They are also known as vagdevatas or deities of self-expression very close to the mother goddess (Lalita). Starting from the East in anticlockwise direction they are:

Vaśini (‘subjugating’ associated with Śīta-cold), Kāmēsi (‘lording over desires’ associated with Ushna-heat), Mohini (causing confusion or Modini causing happiness, Sukha-happiness), Vimalā (‘purifying’, dukha-pain), Arunā (the colour of ruddy dawn associated with icchā-desire), Jayini (conquering, Sattva-wisdom), Sarvēśi (lording over all, rajas-activity) and Kaulini (‘of the family’ also called Kula-sundarī, tamas-inertia).

The number eight also denotes Lord Siva’s eight forms Rudra, Bhava, Śarva, Isāna, Paśupati, Bhīma, Ugra and Mahādeva). The figures in this enclosure are represented by five letters of the ‘Pa’ group and the rest of the three letters by ‘Sa’, ‘Sha’ and ‘sa’.

This enclosure represents the first part of the third Chakra, ‘absorption’ (Samhārā-Chakra), denoting ‘absorption-emanation’ (Samhārā-ṛṣṣṭi). The corresponding area in the human body is the forehead or Svādhishtana-Chakra. The amnaya-nayika is Samayakubjika and the philosophy is Vaishnavism.
This enclosure also houses four weapon-deities (ayudha-devata) situated in the four directions guarding the primary triangle. They are Bāñini (‘holding the arrow’), Chāpini (‘holding the bow’), Pāsinī (‘holding the noose’) and Aṅkuśinī (‘holding the goad’).

8. Eighth Enclosure called Sarva siddhi pradā or ‘Bestower of all attainments’.

This enclosure is in the form of a single triangle with its apex facing downwards. The direction it points to is East. This is the primary triangle and is situated centrally. It is called Kāma-kalā and it is situated immediately next to the central point or ‘bindhu’. The deity presiding this enclosure is called Tripurāṁbā (‘the mother of the triad’) whose aids are ‘exceeding secrets’ (ati-rahasya-yogini).

The three corners of the triangle represent the three forms of power of the mother goddess. They are, Kāmeśvari who is presiding over the Kāmarūpa-pītha symbolizing moon and representing Vāmā viz., Brahmā’s power of creation and standing for nature-avyakta-Prakṛti to her right is Vajreśvari presiding over Pūrṇāgiri-pītha, symbolizing sun and representing Jyeshṭa or the first-born viz., Vishnu’s power of protection and standing for conciousness or Mahat and to her left is Bhaga-mālinī presiding over the Jālandhara-pītha symbolizing fire and representing Raudrī or Rudra’s power of dissolution and standing for ego or Ahaṁkāra. The three angles also represent three forms of speech-paśyanti, madhyamā and vaikari hence known as speech-born or vāg-bhava.
Enclosures of Sri Chakra

Fig. 11.1 Enclosure 7

Fig. 11.2 Enclosure 8
This enclosure corresponds to the Sahasrara-chakra in the human body because it is regarded as the head or mastaka of the mother goddess. It is believed that in the Central space is situated the ‘Uddiyana-pitha’ the most important. Hence her residence is three folded, ‘Kamarupa’, ‘Pūrṇāgiri’ and ‘Jālandhara’ represented by three dots and the space enclosed by the three is her hidden abode the Uddiyana-pitha. The three dots also represent the fundamental tendencies of existence, iccha-desire, jñāna-knowledge and kriyā-activity.

This enclosure symbolizes the second part of the third Chakra of absorption, denoting ‘absorption-preservation’ (Samhārā-sthiti).

The surrounding eight cornered figure around the central triangle represents the five basic elements of phenomenal existence: earth, water, fire, air and akasa which are symbolized by five arrows of flowers. Pañcha bāna, which is also the symbol of kama. The other three triangles represents passion (rāga) symbolized by noose (pāśa); aversion (dvesha) symbolized by good (aṅkuśa) and mind (manas) symbolized by the sugarcane stalk (ikshu-danda) all of which are held by the deity. The amnaya-nayika is Ghora-kubjika and the philosophy is Sakta.

9. **Ninth Enclosure called Sarvānandamaya or ‘Filled with all bliss’**

This is the most important part in the Sri Chakra, though it has been called an enclosure, it is actually the point otherwise called
'Bindhusthana' which is central to the whole figure. This point is the actual mandala or Uddiyana-pitha in which the mother goddess resides. The Lalita Sahasranamam referring to her place of abode says:

अोड्याणपीठनिलया बिन्दुमण्डलवासिनी (83)

The deity which resides in the bindhusthana is called Tripura-sundari, Lalitā, Kāmakalā, Parā-bhṛttarikā, Mahākameśwari or Śri Vidyā. She is the pivotal force of the Sri Chakra and her aids are 'secret beyond all secrets' (parāpara-rahasya-yogini). The center is red in colour and
it is composed of three dots which comprises of Moon (soma) red in
colour and representing 'idā' channel or left channel of human body,
Sun (surya) white in colour representing 'piṅgala' or right channel and
Fire (agni) mixed colour representing 'Central' channel or sushumṇā.

The center symbolizes the final part of third chakra of 'absorption
denoting 'absorption-absorption' (Saṁhārā-Saṁhārā). In the human
body this center corresponds to Sahasrāra-chakra or crown of the
head. The amnaya nayika is Vīra-Kubjika and the philosophy
represents Saivism.

The above is a description of the nine enclosures in the Sri Chakra
and the names of the deities that form the pattern of Sri Chakra. It is a
brief sketch and not an indepth study of each and every aspect of the
Sri Chakra because that (the Sri Chakra) by itself is a separate topic
of research and does not form a part of this thesis.

2.4 The Rituals at Sri Matam

The Trikala pooja at the Mutt to Sri Maha Tirupurasundari and Sri
Chandramouleeswara in the form of yogalinga is a Siva Panchayathana Pooja.
In this Pooja Sri Chandramouleeswara and Sri Maha Tirupurasundari are
placed in the middle, to the left of Lord Shiva in the front is Lord Vishnu, at
the back is 'Ambika' or Devi, to the right of Lord Siva in the front is Sri Surya
at the back is Lord Ganapathy all depicting Vaishnavism, Saktham, Sauram
and Ganapathyam respectively.78

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The above is being followed while performing the pooja at Sri Matam. At the conclusion of the pooja ‘Theertha Prasadam’ is given to all devotees sometimes by the Acharya.

In addition to the Trikala Pooja special poojas with abhishekam to the yoga lingam are conducted on Fridays, Pournami, Pradosham, Sri Rama Navami, Sankara Jayanthi, Gokulashtami, Vinayaka Chatturthi, Narasimha Jayanthi, Sivarathri, Deepavali, Karthigai Mondays. During Sivarathri abhishekam and Pooja are carried out four times, throughout the night. Navarathiri pooja is carried out with Navāvarna Pooja, Homams and abhishekham. Every Tuesday and Friday Suvasini Pooja is carried out.

Guruvara Sadas known as Veda Sadas introduced by His Holiness Sri Paramacharya with the intention of keeping alive Sastra Vridhi and to provide a source of income to needy scholars and pandits, takes place every Thursday at Sri Matam. Sadas is also conducted on the days on which birth stars fall viz., Anusham, Avitam and Uthiradam of Sri Paramacharya, Sri Periyaval and
Sri Balaperiyaval respectively. During the month of Margazhi ‘Dhanur Masa Pooja’ is conducted throughout the month. The pooja begins at 4.30 a.m. in the morning.

The Aradhana and Jayanthi of Sri Maha Periyaval, the Jayanthi of Sri Periyaval and Sri Bala Periyaval are very important events in the Mutt. During the ‘Aradhana’ veda sadas is conducted with more the 150 vedic pandits, in addition to it Carnatic Music concerts, debates, discourses and special homams as part of the celebrations. 80

2.5 Vyasa Pooja and Chaaturmasyam

Every aashrama has its own dharma or duty to be performed. Likewise, the sanyasa dharma lays down that a sanyasin should not remain in the same place for a long time. There are two reasons for this. One is that, a sanyasin by staying in the same place tends to develop attachment towards people of that town or village. He also tends to get himself involved in the local problems which is against sanyasa dharma. Moreover on the part of the devotees, the enthusiasm to serve the sanyasin deteriorates as days pass by. Secondly, to propogate dharma sastras and Vedas a sanyasin has to travel throughout the country and preach their importance personally because this has more effect than spreading the message through somebody else or by publishing books. Direct contact with people is important for a sanyasin.

Likewise, a sanyasin gets his powers through ‘Tapas, Meditation and Pooja’. By travelling throughout and propogating the dharma sastras a
sanyasin gets little time to concentrate on his tapas & meditations. It is for this purpose that he stays in one place for four months in a year which is called ‘Chaaturmasya Vratam’. During this period of four months a sanyasin concentrates only on Pooja, Tapas, Meditation, Bhashyam, Reading sastras etc.

The ‘Chaaturmasya Vratham’ begins on the Poornima day of the tamil month Aani and continues for four months. There is a reason for selecting this period of time. The above said period is rainy season throughout India and hence several insects spring to life and infest pathway. Sanyasins are ‘Ahimsavadhis’, they are not supposed to harm even the smallest of the living things. This is also one of the reason why they travel by foot. By treading unwillingly on an insect no harm is caused because the feet are shaped in such a way that the insect could wriggle out through the gaps and curves. But any travel during rainy season may cause injury to these insects.

Making the Chaaturmasya Sankalpa, the Sanyasi says:

प्रावेण प्रावृषि प्राणिसंडङ्ककुलं वर्षं दृष्टते
अतस्तेषामहिंसार्थ पक्षा वै श्रृंगचोदनात्
स्थायामब्धतुरो मासान्नैवासित बाधके ॥

**Meaning:** “The season being Pravrt (rainy season), there is every chance of small living things springing into life, in order not to cause any harm to these we have decided to stay here for four months if your permit.”
In reply to this the devotees of that place says:

निवसते सुखेिनात्र गमिष्यामः कृतार्थताम ।
यथाविविहितवशुष्णे करिष्यामो वय मुदा ॥

**Meaning:** "We request you to stay here and promise you that we will serve you to the very best of our limits."

At present the Chaaturmasyam period of four months has been reduced to two months "पक्ष यै मासा:" is a vedic dictum whereby 15 days in a month is a 'Paksha' and is considered as one month.\(^1\)

**Vyasa Pooja**

The Chaaturmasya Vratam begins with Vyasa Pooja. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavat Gita says "Among Sages I am Vyasa". The original name of Vyasa is "Krishna". He was born in an island, hence he was also known as "Krishna Dwaiapayanar" The Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram says:

व्यासाय विष्णुप्राय व्यासर्पाय विष्णवे ।
नमो वै द्रामानिधवेव वासिष्ठाय नमो नमः ॥\(^2\)

**Meaning:** "Salutation to Vyasa that is Vishnu in form, to Vishnu, who is indeed Vyasa himself, salutation to him, the very treasure of Vedic learning and the lineal descendant of Vasishta."

It was sage Vyasa who compiled the different branches of Veda and gave it to us in its present form Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharvana Veda and appointed his disciples Sumandhu, Jaimini, Bhailar and Vaisampayanar to propogate the four Vedas and for this reason he was called 'Veda Vyasa'. He
has also given us 'Mahabarata' which is also referred to as the 'Fifth Veda',
the 'eighteen Puranas' and 'Brahmasuthram.' In order to thank him for his
greatest contributions to Hinduism 'Vyasa Pooja' is being celebrated. It is
compulsory for a sanyasin to do Vyasa Pooja at the commencement of
'Chaaturmasya Vratam.' It is important to note here that the age of a sanyasin
is determined not from his 'year of birth' but is calculated by the "number of
Vyasa Pooja" he has performed. For example, an older sanyasin can pay his
respects by prostrating an younger sanyasin if the latter has performed more
Vyasa Pooja that the former.

The Vyasa Pooja at Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam is performed in the
following way:

During the Vyasa Pooja, Veda Vyasa and all Acharyas are worshipped.
Their presence is invoked in a Lemon fruit. There are six groups each group
having five of the first and foremost Acharyas of that lineage. Each group is
named after its first Acharya and the first Acharya is placed in the centre. The
group of five is called 'Panchakam'. The following are the Panchakams which
are worshipped on Vyasa Pooja day:

1. Krishna Panchakam:
    Lord Krishna, Vasudevar, Pradhyumnar, Aniruddhar and
    Sangharshanar

2. Vyasa Panchakam:
    Vyasa, Bailar, Vaisampayanar, Jaimini and Sumandhu
3. Bhagavatpada Panchakam:

Sri Sankara Bhagavatpadar, Padmapadar, Sureswarar, Hastamalakar and Totakacharyar

4. Sanaka Panchakam:

Sanakar, Sanandhanar, Sanaadhanar, SanathKumārar and Sanathsujadhar

5. Dravida Panchakam:

Dravidachariyar, Sri Gaudapadar, Sri Govinda Bhagavatpadar, Samkshepakāchariyar and Vivaranāchariyar

6. Guru Panchakam:

Guru, Paramaguru, Parameshtiguru, Parathparaguru and the rest of the Acharyas who have adorned the peetam.

Finally Brahmagnani Naradar and Sri Sukar. Durgadevi, Ganapathy, Kshetrabālar, Saraswathi and Devathas incharge of the 10 directions (Sky and earth inclusive) are also worshipped. At the conclusion of Vyasa Pooja "Akshadai" or sacred rice is distributed to the devotees.

A person who takes part in the Vyasa Pooja and gets the 'Akshadai' receives the blessings of all the above mentioned Acharya Parampara.

2.6 Devi Kamakshi at Kanchi:

The history of Sri Kamakoti Peetam is incomplete without mentioning about Devi Kamakshi at Kanchi.
The story of Devi Kamakshi as told by Sri Paramacharya is very interesting.84

Once upon a time when Lord Parameswara was doing penance (in the form of Dakshinamoorthy), Manmada (Lord of Love) earned his wrath by disturbing him, as a result of which his beautiful body was turned into ashes. He then went to goddess Parvati Devi and pleaded for mercy. Taking pity on Manmada, Devi went to Parameswara with the weapons of Manmada (Sugarcane bow and flowered arrow) and stood before him. What followed was the marriage between Parvati and Parameswara and Kumārasambhavam (birth of Lord Subrahmanya). This is how Devi Parvati became ‘Kamakshi’, ‘Kama’ meaning Love and ‘Akshi’ meaning Eyes. Manmada regained his old form, but he was not satisfied. He came to Kanchipuram and pleaded to Devi Kamakshi saying that his pride was hurt because eventhough the Lord had married Devi, he still stood defeated in front of Lord Parameswara, the reason being Lord married Devi by the grace of Goddess herself and not because of the power of Manmada. In order to satiate his ego goddess Kamakshi withdrew the powers of all the goddess around Bharatavarsha and brought it into her and went inside the ‘Bilakasam’ located inside the Garbagriha (sanctum sanctorum) at the Kamakshi temple at Kanchi. After that all the goddesses in temples throughout the country became lifeless without their usual grace and benevolence. The male deities appealed to Manmada to restore life into the goddesses. Lord Parameswara also requested Manmada to do so. Manmada asked Devi Kamakshi to release the powers which she had
brought it into her control. Hence we could say that the original place or the beginning or the pivotal force from where the powers to all goddesses were transmitted was from Kamakshi temple at Kanchi.

Kanchi is also known as ‘Sivajit Kshetra’ to signify the defeat of Lord Parameswara at the hands of Kamakshi and Manmada. To glorify Manmada’s victory goddess Kamakshi gave him another boon. To make his victory everlasting, even till today the female deities of Kanchipuram do not have a separate sanctum sanctorum in any of the Saivite temples in Kanchipuram. The only temple for goddess in Kanchi is for Devi Kamakshi.

Devi Kamakshi is said to have come out of the ‘Bilakasam’ in the tamil month of Ipasi and the star on that day was Pooram. Hence even today in the month of Ipasi the day on which pooram star appears, abiseham is performed with milk to the ‘Bilakasam’ to signify this event.\(^{83}\)

To mark the victory of Manmadha the temple is also known as ‘Kamakoshtam.’ The Vimanam of the sanctum sanctorum of Kamakshi temple is known as ‘Kamakoti Vimanam’ because the one crore Manmadhas that goddess Kamakshi created to help Lord Manmadha, transformed themselves into ‘Stars’ and placed themselves on the Vimanam of the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. The sun and moon while passing over this Vimana will bend a little bit so that they do not cross the path of these Manmadhas as a mark of respect, as a result of which there is a confusion regarding the direction in which the temple and the deity is facing. Even to this day the devotees who
visit the temple will not be able to say as soon as they enter the temple as to which direction the temple and the deity are facing.86

The Mantapa in which the sanctum sanctorum of goddess Kamakshi is situated is called ‘Gayathri Mantapam’. This Mantapam is made up of 24 pillars. The four Vedas constitute the walls of this Mantapam. The goddess sits in the ‘Omkara Peetam’ in the Garbhagriha. Just opposite this Mantapam there is a pillar called ‘Jayasthambam.’ The regular pillar found outside in all temples is called the ‘Dwajasthambam.’ This one is called Jayasthambam to signify her victory. The ‘Bilakasam’ of Kamakshi temple does not cover the Garbagriha of the temple alone, but extends throughout Kanchipuram and because of this there is no ‘sparsa-dosha’ in Kanchi as in Kasi.

एवं कार्योऽप्रविष्ट्र ये मन्यत: स्थूलं संशय:  
तत्सादनं नृणां संघे स्वप्नभावनात्रसूतकम् ।
चण्डालानामयि हेरे स्पृष्ट्वा काज्ञ्यां न सूतकम् ।187

Before turning herself into an idol once for all Devi Kamakshi laid down certain rules as to how the procession of the Goddess should be conducted and that a Sri Chakra be consecrated in front of her by Lord Siva himself which would henceforth be called ‘Kamakoti Peetam’. She also instructed that the daily rituals of the temples be laid down by Lord Siva in the form of Sage Dhurvasa. Hence we find an idol of Sage Dhurvasa opposite the Sanctum of Sri Adi Sankara in this temple.88 It may also be noted here that it was Lord Siva in the form of Sri Bhagavatpada who consecrated the Sri Chakra as ordered by the goddess.
In this context the Paramacharya of Kanchi points out the significance of the word ‘Kamakoti Peetam’. The end of all karmas or attainment of blissful knowledge is ‘Kamakoti’, Devi Kamakshi is none other than Kamakoti. In the form of an idol she is called ‘Kamakshi’ and in the form of Peetam she is called ‘Kamakoti’, hence both are one and the same. ⁸⁹ Since Kamakshi and Kamakoti are the same, the Acharyas of this Peetam and goddess Kamakshi are one and the same. To prove this statement there is a sculpture in the Kamakshi temple outside the Gayathri Mantapam. Here Devi Kamakshi is standing doing Penance and she has along with her the ‘Dhandam’ and ‘Kamandalam’ which are symbols of a Sanyasi. Devi Kamakshi in the form of a sanyasi signifies that she is no different from the Acharyas of this Peetam. ⁹⁰ To substantiate this fact, Sri Mooka Kavi in Mooka Pancha Shati. ⁹¹ says:

कुण्डलि कुमारि कूटिले चण्डि चराचरसंविन्त्रि चामुण्डे ।
गुणिनि गुहारिणि गुहे गुहमूर्तें त्वं नमामि कामाधिक ।

In this sloka Kamakshi is called by the name ‘Gurumurthy’ meaning that the goddess and the Acharya are one and the same.

In this Chapter we have so far seen the incarnation of Sri Bhagavatpadacharya, his service to Hinduism and the salient features of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam established by him. The following Chapter is the study of each of the Acharyas of this Peetam.
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5. Lingapuram - Chapter 40, Part - 1, Sloka 20 - p.39
6. Kurmapuranam - Chapter 28, Sloka No : 33, p.255
7. Vayupuranam - Chapter 32, Sloka 27 - p. 159
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47. Satastotra Ratnakarah, Part I - p.70
48. Sri Sankara Bhagavatpadacharya - p.81
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