

Brief Life Sketch of Shrimad Adi Jagadguru Shankaracharya

Request to Lord Shiva

About 2500 years ago, when the spiritualization of the people greatly reduced, all the Gods and the Rishis went to Kailash and pleaded with Lord Shiva to revive the world. Lord Shiva agreed with their request and informed that he will be born in this world. Lord Brahma, Indra and others also agreed to be born in this world to help Lord Shiva.



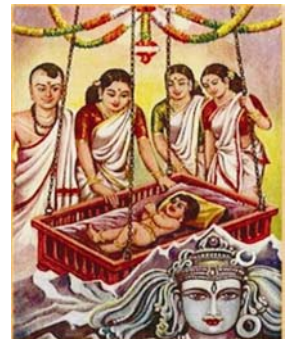
Lord Shiva Blessed for a Son



Kaladi Sivaguru, Aryambal In , Kerala, a learned Brahmin, by the name of and his wife, Aryambal, spent their life in pooja and in giving alms to poor and in other good deeds. This childless couple went to Trichur and performed puja for 48 days to Lord Shiva (Lord Vadakkunathan) and prayed for a son. Lord Shiva melted in their devotion and appeared before them and blessed them a son who is extremely intelligent.

Shankar is born ...

And Shankara was born on Vaishakh Shukla Panchami in Punarvasu Nakshatra, Yudhishtir Samvat 2631, Kali Samvat 2593, that is 16 April 509 B.C. at Kaladi village in Kerala.



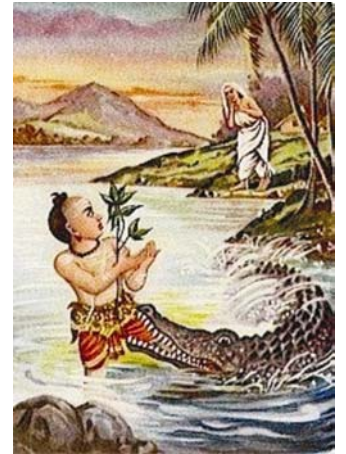
Kanaka Dhara Stotram



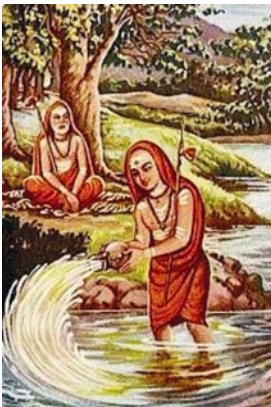
On a Dwadasi day Sankara happened to go to the house of a very poor lady for alms for his guru. She gave the only Amla fruit she had to Sankara as she could not send a Brahmachari empty handed. Sankara was moved by her selflessness and prayed to Goddess Lakshmi in a sloka called On completion of this stotram, Goddess Lakshmi appeared in person and showered gold coins on the poor lady's house.

Sanyasa at age of 8

To complete his mission, Sankara wanted to become Sanyasi, but mother did not allow him. One day when Sankara was taking bath, a crocodile caught hold of his leg. Sankara called out to his mother. Aryambal came running and she cried for help. Sri Sankara told his mother that his life was nearing to an end, but if he became a Sanyasi, he could start a new life as a sannyasi. Thus Sri Sankara took Sanyasa when he was only eight years old on Kartik Shukla Ekadashi 2639 i.e. 16 October 502 B.C.



Became Shishya of Govinda Pada



Sri Sankara went in the search of a Guru to be formally initiated as a Sanyasi. At the banks of the river Narmada, he found the river gushing forth into floods. By using his powers, he encapsulated the river in his Kamandal and released it in the banks of the river. Sri Govinda Pada saw this, marveled at Sri Sankara doing, took him on as a Shishya on Phalgun Shukla 2, 2640, i.e. 23 January, 500 B.C.

Learns Principle of Oneness

Sri Govinda Pada taught various Vedas to Sri Sankara. He also taught about Advaita, the principle that every one in this world is the manifestation of God and that God and Atman are one and the same. He advises Sri Sankara to go out in the world and spread this truth throughout the country.



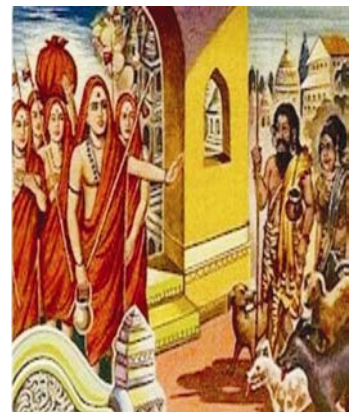
Padma Pada Real Disciple of Sri Sankara



Sri Sankara went to Kasi and by that time, he had a lot of disciples. One of them, Sanandhyaya, was drying the clothes of his Guru and suddenly Sri Sankara called him to the other bank of the river as he needed the clothes urgently. Sanandhyaya, little realising that he would drown, starts walking into the river. However, the Grace of his Guru resulted in a lotus materializing wherever he was keeping his foot. When asked as to how did he cross the river, he says that when his Guru calls, he is not to worry about anything. Sri Sankara named

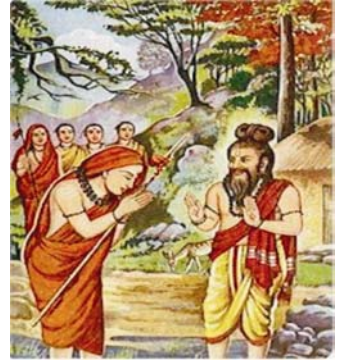
Lord Shiva meets Sri Sankara

Once, in Kasi, when Sri Sankara was going to the Vishwanath Temple, his path was blocked by an "untouchable" who was accompanied by his wife and 4 dogs. The disciples of Sri Sankara shouted at him to make way, and to keep a distance. The untouchable smiled and said, ""According to your principle of Advaita, all the Jivatma are same as God. How am I different from your Paramacharya? How can I go away from myself?" Sri Sankara understood that it was Lord Shiva himself who had come along with His escort and the four Vedas. He prostrated before the Lord and



Meeting with Vyasa Rishi

When Sri Sankara was 16, a very old Brahmin of ill health started arguments with him about Brahmasutra bashyam which Sri Sankara had written. The arguments continued for days together. He understood that the old man was none other than Vyasa Rishi, who was the creator of Brahmasutra. Vyasa Rishi said "I fully agree with your bashyam and I wanted to establish that yours is correct. I bless that you should live another 16 years and you should spread this Advaita throughout the country."



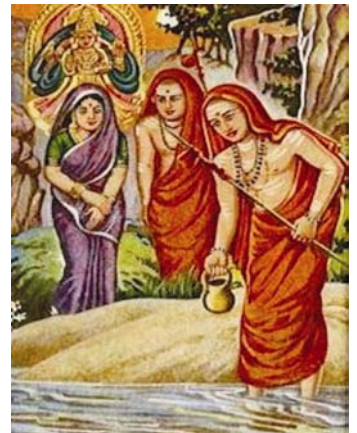
Meeting with Mandana Mishra



Sri Sankara learnt that there was a great learned person by the name Mandana Mishra who lived in Mahishmati and who followed the Karma Mimaamsa method of devotion. Sri Sankara arrived at his house and found his house was closed and Mandana Mishra was carrying out some rituals inside his house. Sri Sankara entered the house by using his powers. Mandana Mishra became very angry and shouted at Sri Sankara. But Sri Sankara smiled and explained the uselessness of such rituals.

Sharda Peeth Formed

In their travels, they reached Sringeri in Karnataka, which is on the banks of Tungabhadra. While Sri Sankara and Mandana Mishra were walking, Sarasawani did not move and stood fixed in the sands of Tungabhadra. Sri Sankara created a seat for her for spreading the Advaita. This seat is today called the or the Seat of Sharada. This was the first Mutt installed on Kartik Krishna 13, 2648 i.e. 25 Sep 493 B.C. by Sri Sankara, with the direction that the head of the Mutt will be called Sankaracharya.



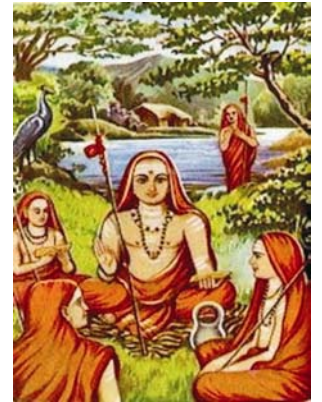
Last rites of mother performed



When Sri Sankara was in Sringeri, he divined by his superior powers that his mother was in her deathbed, and as per his promise while taking Sanyas that he would be by her side while she breathes her last, he reached Kaladi and paid his last respects to the old lady. Sri Sankara prayed to Lord Venkateswara who appeared in person and blessed Aryambal. As per the principles Sanyasi does not have the right to do the last rites, but he carried the body of Aryambal and put her in the pyre himself.

Trotaka Ashtakam

One of the disciples of Sri Sankara, Giri, while listening to the discourses never asked anything. Disciples thought that Giri was a dumb idiot and did not know anything. One day, on Shravan Shukla Saptami, 2653, i.e. 11 Jul 488 B.C., Sri Sankara was waiting for Giri to arrive. Ultimately, Giri turned up and burst forth into eight slokas which had never been heard by the disciples earlier. These were the creation of Giri. These slokas are called "Trotaka ashtakam". Giri was named as Trotak by Sri Sankara.



Hastaamalak



Sankara went all over the country and taught Advaita. He revived a number of temples and established a number of Yantras in these temples to spread the blessings of Para-Shakti. During his travels, he arrived at Mukambi, in Karnataka. A poor Brahmin came to Sri Sankara with his deaf and dumb son Ashwin Shukla Ekadashi 2654, i.e. Sep 1, 487 B.C. on Sri Sankara asked the boy, "who are you?". The dumb and deaf child, for the first time, opened his mouth and explained, "The body is not me, it is the Paramatma who is me." Sri Sankara was pleased with his answer and he gave an amla fruit and named this boy as (Hasta means hand and Amalak means amala). He became one of the principle disciples of Sri Sankara.

Satyam is Advaita

Sri Sankara visited Thiruvudaimarudur in Tanjore district of Tamilnadu, which is a great religious place of Lord Shiva. The learned Saivites of the temple informed Sri Sankara that Lord Shiva is the creator, they are his creatures, and that they were not one with the Lord ? They did not agree with the Advaita principle . Sri Sankara asked them to enter the temple. As they entered, there was a thunderous statement "Satyam is Advaita". This was repeated thrice and it was also followed by a hand which came out of the Linga which conformed the truth. All accepted the principle of Advaita. Even today, there is a Sankara Mutt at Thiruvaimarudur and there is a linga with a hand materialising out of it.



Tatankam presented



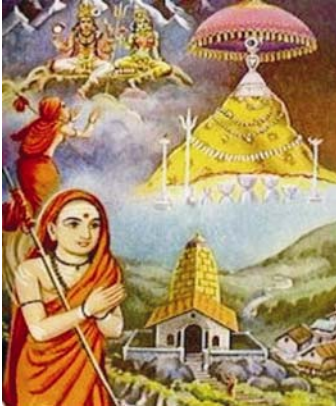
Sri Sankara visited Thiruvanaikar, near Trichy in Tamilnadu. In this temple, the Goddess Akhilandeswari was having a fierce power and people who went to have her darshan could not stand the fierceness of this Goddess. Sri Sankara created two sets of earrings which are called Tatankam and he presented these to the Goddess. The fierceness of the deity reduced. This tatankam, the earrings, has been maintained over time by the Acharyas of the Kanchi Mutt.

Vishnu Pathathi Keshanta Stotra

Sri Sankara visited Tirupathi and recited the Sloka "Vishnu pathathi keshanta stotra" which describes the Lord from his foot to the head. He wanted the people to visit the Lord in great numbers and get his blessings, he established an yantra. From that day the number of followers of the temple increased and is increasing day by day.



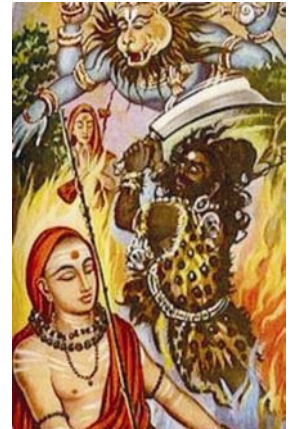
Origin of Sivanandalahiri



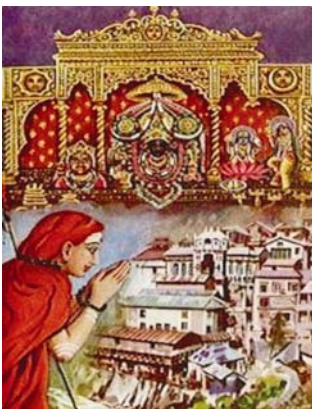
Srisaila, in Andhra, is called Mallikarjunam as Lord Shiva resides under a Marutha Tree which has also got Jasmine creepers on this tree. Sri Sankara visited this tree and became ecstatic on seeing the linga at the foot of this tree. His happiness flowed like the waves of a flood and became a sloka called Sivanandalahiri

Lord Narasimha saves...

Near Srisailam, there is a forest called Hatakeshwaram. Sri Sankara did penance here for many days. During this time, a Kapalika, by name Kirakashan appeared before him. He asked Sri Sankara that he should give his body as a human sacrifice to Lord Shiva. Sri Sankara agreed happily. Kirakashan was about to cut off Sri Sankara's head when Lord Narasimha appeared in the form of a lion and killed Kirakashan.



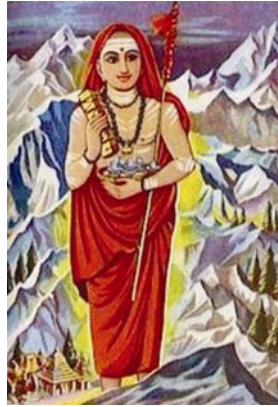
Rejuvenation of Badrinarayan temple (487 B.C)



Sri Sankara completed his travels and went to Badrinath. Lord Vishnu appeared before him and told that his sculpture in Alaknanda river should be taken out and a temple should be built for it. This temple is called Badrinarayan temple and is one of the important religious places for Hindus.

Books written by Adi Sankara

- *A Bhasya on the Brahma Sutra*
- *Bhashyas upon the Eisha, Kena Katha, Prasna, Mundak, Mandookya, Taittireya, Chandogya, Brihadaranyak, Nrsinhatapaneeya Upanishads and also the Shreemad Bhagwadgeeta and Sanatsujateeya commentary on the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*
- *240 works of strotas like Upvansh Strotra, Vivekchudamani, Aparokshanubhuti and 80 contextual works.*



And Shankar, only at the age of 32, on Kartik full moon day in Samvat 2663, i.e. 26 Oct 477 B.C. left for Kailash to merge with the One and only One called Shiva.

Adi Shankar with disciples

