

शङ्कर जयन्ती

सर्वधारि वैशाक शुक्ल पञ्चमि
sarvadhāri vaiśāka śukla pañcami

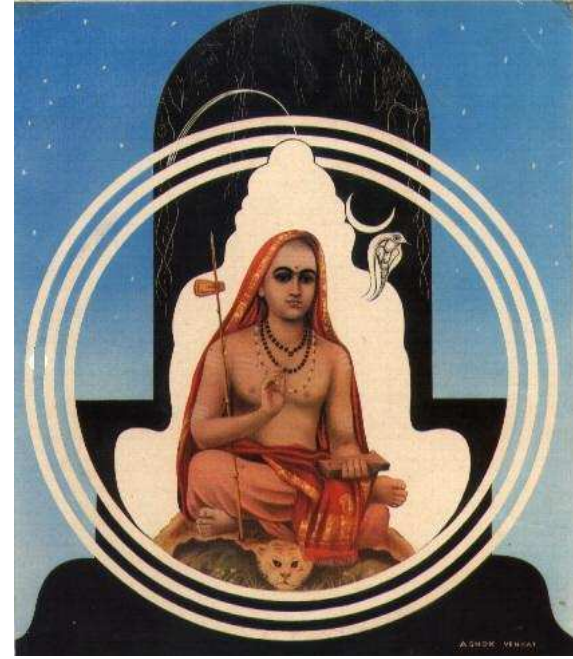
Outline



Sri Sankara, our Acharya, is a multi-faceted personality. He is a world teacher, poet, philosopher, a great commentator, Lord of yogi-s, supreme jnani, and a compassionate guide. This presentation looks at some of this through the names of shankara ashtottara namaavali.

ॐ साक्षाच्छंकररूपभृते नमः

Tradition holds that Sri Sankara is an avatara of Lord Shiva. This sentiment is beautifully reflected in thotakashtakam.



भव एव भवानिति मे नितरां समजायत चेतसि कौतिकिता
मम वारय मोह महाजलधिं भव शंकर देशिकमे शरणम्



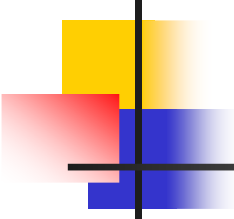
ॐ अद्वैत-स्थापनाचार्याय नमः

Sri Sankara who firmly [re-]established the advaita vedanta. Advaita guru parampara starts with shriman narayana. But it was Sri Sankara who established it firmly through his bhAshyas on upanishads, bhagavad gita and brahmasutra, prakarana granthas and through establishment of mathas



ॐ षण्मत्स्थापनाचार्याय नमः

- Our Acharya established worship of six devata-s who are nothing but different aspects of saguna brahman with the spirit that ultimate reality is non-dual brahman.
- These six are: shiva, shakti, ganesha, shanmukha, aditya and narayana.
- An advaitin worships different forms of Ishvara as the same saguna brahman. This catholic approach enables a modern day advaitin embrace Christ or Allah in the same spirit.



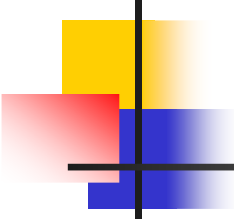
ॐ द्विसप्तति मतोच्छेत्ते नमः

Sri Sankara who through the advaita vedAnta uplifted many forms of religious worship by giving them a proper focus. Dvisaptati is 72, mata means religion and uchChetta means uplifting. Many religious observances can be done with various goals, but if done with earnest intention of knowing the Self, these observances get a proper focus. According to available extracts from the lost Anandagiriya Shankaravijaya (e.g., in the commentaries on the popular madhaviya shankaravijaya) Sri Sankara reformed 72 different cults in the course of his travels in India.



ॐ चतुर्दिक्कुराम्नायप्रतिष्ठात्रे नमः

Sri Sankara established four amnaya mathas at corners of four directions in bharatam. These maTham-s are shringeri (south), purI (East), jyotirmaTh (north), and dvaraka (west). These maTham-s in a sense give the geographic extent of bhAratham, were the sanAtana dharma is practised.



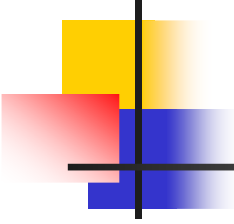
ॐ परिव्राजाश्रमोद्धर्त्रे नमः

Sri Sankara reorganized and strengthened the sannyasa ashrama. The present dashanami sampradayam owes its existence to shrI shankara



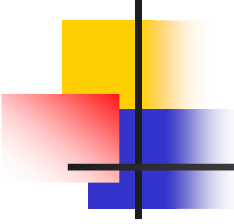
ॐ ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरेश्वराय नमः

Sri Sankara is the lord of Rishyashringapuri (now known as shringeri). Sri Sankara established the first maTham here and nominated Sri sureshvaracharya as its head. It is said that Sri Sankara also stayed here for a very long period(12 years out of his 32 years).



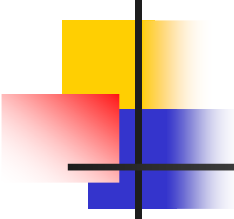
ॐ व्याख्यसिंहासनाधीशाय नमः

Sri Sankara is considered as the lord of vyakhyanam. His commentaries for prasthAna traya are well known and are the best.



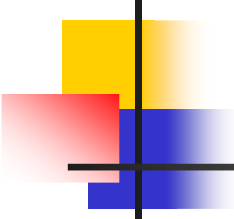
ॐ ब्रह्मसूत्रोपनिषद्भाष्यादिग्रन्थकल्पकाय नमः

Sri Sankara wrote bhashya-s on brahmasutra, upanishad-s, bhagavadgita, and prakarana granthas like vivekachudamani explaining the Ultimate. Without these works it is impossible to understand the Ultimate truth explained in veda-s and upanishad-s.



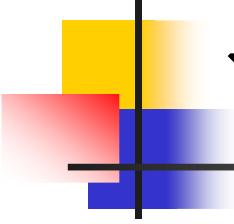
ॐ सौन्दर्यलहरी मुख्य बहुस्तोत्र विधायकाय नमः

Sri Sankara provided us with many stotram-s like Saundaryalahari and Sivanandalahari for worship. Sri Sankara keeping in mind of many sadhaka-s who are not ready for study of vedAnta and Atmavichara composed many works promoting bhakti which will lead them to that state.



ॐ सर्वदिग्विजयप्रभवे नमः

Sri Sankara who is ever victorious (hence the Lord) in all his digvijaya-s. Sri Sankara undertook many digvijaya-s, during which he met many scholars of various religious traditions and debated with them. He always emerged victorious. During his digvijayas he increased the spiritual power of many temples by establishing shrIchakra yantra in them and helped bhaktas by composing hymns on different deities. These digvijayas occupied a central place in his life, hence his biographies are called as digvijaya-s. Of the ten digvijaya texts, only four are extant now.



ॐ कांच्यां श्रीचक्र राजाख्य यन्त्र
स्थापन दीक्षिताय नमः

Sri Sankara established the famous shrIchakra yantra at the kAnchi temple. Among the many yantra-s shrI chakra is the most powerful and it is considered as the king of all yantra-s. Our Acharya also established similar chakra-s in many other temples. This same ashtottara celebrates his adorning Sri Akhilandesvara (at tiruvAnaikka) with ear rings in the form of shrI chakra and made Her happy by fulfilling Her wish.

ॐ श्रीचक्रात्मक ताटङ्क तोषिताम्बा मनोरथाय नमः

ॐ जगत्पूज्याय नमः

ॐ जगद्गुरवे नमः

Sri Sankara is truly a world teacher. Even in India, many other vedanta (uttara mimamsa) sampradayas are quite local to particular communities and region. On the other hand, smarta sampradya is pan-indian. Even in the world stage, underlying principles of advaita vedanta is providing relief/refuge to souls scorched by the heat of samsara.



References

This presentation is based on my translation of Sri Sankara Ashtottara Shata namavali.

http://sanskritdocuments.org/all_pdf/shankara108m.pdf

Pictures in this presentation should not be used for any commercial publication (it is a condition of the artist)