

SAÑJIVANAMAÑI. The jewel in the head of serpents. There is a tradition among the poets that this jewel is the basis of the serpent's life. There is a story in Mahābhārata, Aśvamedhika Parva, Chapter 30, Verse 42, stating how Babhruvāhana brought Arjuna to life by Sañjivanamañi. (For details see under Babhruvāhana).

SAÑKALPA. One of the sons born to Dharmadeva by his wife Sañkalpā. (Bhāgavata, Skandha 6).

SAÑKALPĀ. A daughter of Dakṣa. Dharmadeva married the following ten daughters of Dakṣa, i.e. Arundhatī, Vasu, Yamī, Lambā, Bhānū, Marutvatī, Sañkalpā, Muhūrtā, Sādhyā and Viśvā.

ŚAÑKARA I. A synonym of Śiva.

ŚAÑKARA II. A simpleton, who was killed by his wife. This brahmin had a very mean wife called Kalipriyā. After killing her husband she left the place with her paramour. But, wild animals killed him on their way in the forest. In all repentance Kalipriyā returned home and after worshipping the corpse of her husband she observed Kārttika vrata at the instance of certain women. Thereby she got absolution from sin and attained heaven. (Padma Purāṇa, Brahmakhaṇḍa, Chapter 10).

ŚAÑKARĀCĀRYA.

1) *General.* The spiritual and philosophical preceptor of India. Śrī Śaṅkara was born in the village of Kālāṭi on the banks of the holy river Periyār, also called Cūrṇā and Pūrṇā. According to certain scholars he was born in 509 B.C. while certain others contend that he saw the light of day in 84 A.D. Yet others place his date of birth in various periods between 509 B.C. and 84 A. D. Whatever that may be, the great ācārya is believed to have lived only for 32 years.

2) *Birth.* The name of Śaṅkara's father was Śivaguru and that of his mother Āryāmbā. This nambūdiri couple had no issues for a long time. So they went to Tṛṣṣivaperūr (Trichur) to worship Śiva in the famous Śiva temple there. The idol in that temple is known as Vṛṣācaleśvara and Vaṭakkunnātha also. Ere long Lord Śiva blessed them with a son. The belief is still held that, pleased with the prayer of Śivaguru and Āryāmbā Śiva himself was born as their son. The child began exhibiting extraordinary intellectual powers. At the age of five the boy Śaṅkara was invested with the sacred thread. By the time he was eight years old he had earned deep erudition in the Vedas, Sāstras, Purāṇas, epics (itihāsas) etc. His father was no more by then and on the mother devolved the duty of bringing the child up.

3) *Crocodile-attack.* The boy showed no taste for or interest in childish plays, but evinced a tendency towards a life of renunciation. This attitude of the son pained the mother much and she wanted her son to get married. But, the boy did not like the idea. As fate would have it, an incident which proved to be a turning point in the boy's life occurred soon. One day the mother and her son were bathing in the Periyār, when a crocodile caught hold of the boy. He cried aloud, and the mother got greatly alarmed. There was a custom for one to take to sannyāsa, irrespective of circumstances, when danger or death threatened one, and that is called āpatsannyāsa. Śaṅkara prayed to his mother for permission to take to sannyāsa at that moment when his end was near, and willynilly the mother granted permission. All at once the crocodile, which had so unex-

pectedly attacked him, disappeared equally unexpectedly. The boy came out of the river absolutely unhurt. The decision to take to sannyāsa was taken once for all. Śaṅkara assured his mother, before he started on a tour of the country, that he would be present at her bedside during her last days and also that he would duly perform her obsequies.

4) *In the presence of the preceptor.* Śaṅkara, who then was not even seven years old, started for the north in quest of a preceptor, and on the banks of the Narmadā he saw Govinda - bhagavatpāda, the disciple of Śrī Gauḍapāda. The Bhagavatpāda was sitting in a cave surrounded by many wise people. Śaṅkara approached and requested him to admit him as a disciple and grant him sannyāsa. Śaṅkara's prayer was granted.

5) *Controlled flood.* A wonderful thing happened while Śaṅkara was living at the āśrama. The Narmadā was in spate and the huts on its banks were about to be submerged in water. People got alarmed. Then Śaṅkara put his kamaṇḍalu (vessel which sannyāsins keep with them for water) and chanted the Jalākarṣaṇa Mantra. (hymn to attract water). At once the water which had flooded the banks flowed back into the river. People and their huts were saved. Afterwards his Guru asked Śaṅkara to go to and live in Kāśī and write Bhāṣyas (commentaries) on the Prasthānatrayam, i.e. the Brahmasūtras, the Upaniṣads and the Gītā.

6) *Padmapāda.* Accordingly Śaṅkara went to Kāśī. It was there that he took as his first disciple Viṣṇuśarman, a young man from the Cola region of the country. Śaṅkara called him Sanandana. Afterwards other disciples also came in. But, gradually jealousies cropped up in the ranks of the disciples. The other disciples of Śaṅkara thought that the latter was partial towards Sanandana and showed special affection and regards to him. Śaṅkara then decided to prove to the others that Sanandana was a disciple of exceptional talents and merits. One day Śaṅkara was bathing with his other disciples in the Gaṅgā, and he called Sanandana who was on the other side of the river to go to him. Sanandana walked on the surface of the water to his Guru, and as he took each step a lotus flower appeared beneath and held him up from sinking into the water. From that day onwards he came to be called Padmapāda, and his colleagues also realised his greatness.

7) *Hastāmalaka.* Hastāmalaka was one of the best disciples of Śaṅkara. There is a story about his becoming Śaṅkara's disciple. He was born dumb. His father, Divākara took Hastāmalaka to Śaṅkara believing that due to the blessing of the great Guru his son would gain powers of speech. Śaṅkara asked the dumb boy, 'who are you?' and the boy answered, 'I am the soul, which has no relationship with the parts and attributes of body and mind and which is also entirely different from them'. There were certain verses, which the boy recited as answer to Śaṅkara's question and each verse ended with 'nityopalabdhisvarūpohamāt(mā)' (I am the ātman and eternal knowledge, consciousness, is its characteristic). The boy's answer pleased Śaṅkara, who took him as a disciple of his. The boy was given sannyāsa under the name Hastāmalaka the meaning of which word is he who is in possession of knowledge like the gooseberry in one's palm.