

KAIVALYANAVANĪTAM OF ŚAṆKUKAVI

Edited with *Kṛṣṇapriyā* commentary

Introduction

The *Kaivalyanavanītam*, written by Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ (15th - 16th centuries CE) in Tamil is a well known work on Advaita Vedānta. The author calls the work “the cream¹ of (the discipline dealing with) the ABSOLUTE”. By the title, he suggests that his work is the quintessence, where nothing is to be eliminated; nothing to be removed or discarded; nothing to be thrown away after extracting the essence. It is ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE, ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUSNESS and ABSOLUTE BLISS, given in its fullest concentration. In one of the prefatory verses, the author makes it further explicit through a metaphor. He says: “The great sages of ancient lore, have filled the ocean of the science of Vedānta (milk) in their pitchers. I have boiled them on the fire of the Master’s words, churned them with the enquiry into the self (churn-stick). And after extracting the cream, here I am presenting to every seeker”².

The work couched in beautiful Tamil verses, numbering less than 300, is divided into two *paṭala*-s (sections). It is very popular. Several editions, commentaries, and studies on it have come and are continuing. The work, written in the beginning of the 16th century CE, got translated into many languages like Malayalam³, Sanskrit, Telugu, German and English⁴ within a few centuries.

1. Literal meaning of the Sanskrit word *navanīta* is butter.
2. Verse No. 6, Pāyiraṃ verses, *Kaivalyanavanītam*.
3. In Malayalam, there is a well known translation in Kiḷippāṭṭu form written by Kaṭiyaṅkuḷaṃ Śuppu Menon, which has been referred to by Ullur S. Parameswara Iyer in his *Kerala Sāhitya Caritram*. Apart from this there are metrical renderings in Malayalam by Thiruvallam Bhaskaran Nair, and Ettumanur S. Hariharan (for the first section alone).
4. It was translated into English for the first time by a German, Dr. Charles Graul in the year 1855. The objective of the work was to introduce Tamil language and literature with a special focus on grammar. It is available in the site <https://archive.org/details/KaivalyaNavanita1855/page/n7/mode/1up>. Charles Graul has translated the work into German too.

And it has been rigorously studied, deliberated, and subjected to contemplation, by spiritual seekers, in many a monastery in Tamil Nadu.

The work differs from many other works on Advaita Vedānta for the very reason that it is not polemic in nature. It is in the form of plain dialogue between a genuine seeker and the realized Master. The Master clarifies the practical doubts and helps the aspirant to overcome difficulties that are confronted. While being based on the Advaita Vedānta expounded by Śaṅkarācārya, it clearly emphasizes on the fact that “being as one is” (Be as you are) and “enquiry into self” are the means for attaining “Realization”. That is why the work is intimately associated with Shri Ramana Maharshi. Maharshi, a realized soul well known for his reticence and the advocacy of *ko’hamvicāra* (Question the questioner – Ask ‘Who am I?’), used to reverentially cite this work often, whenever he chose to talk⁵. Once, when asked about a real Master he says :

“There is a stanza in the Kaivalya: ‘My lord! You had remained as my Self within, protecting me in all my past incarnations. Now, by your Grace, you have manifested yourself as my master and revealed yourself as the Self’”.⁶

This beautiful Tamil work was translated into Sanskrit by Śaṅkukavi. He retains the same title, *Kaivalyanavanītam* for his translation⁷. In the first ever edition of this Sanskrit translation, which came in 1933, the editor, Sri Govinda Iyer⁸ gives the name of the author as Śaṅkukavi. When “R. S. Vadhyar & Sons” brought out their edition in 1940, they name the author as Śaṅkukavi. They have titled their work as “śaṅkukaviviracitaṃ kaivalyanavanītam”.

5. See Talks with *Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, 1994, pp. 89-91, 96, 123, 145, 392, 499, 587 and 612.

6. Ibid, p.330. The stanza cited is this one: *aiyanē enatuḷē ninranantacenmaṅkaḷāṅṅameyyanē yupadēcikka veḷi vanta guruvē pōrri/uyyavē mutti nalkumutavikkōrutavi nāyēceyya vēronru kāṅēn tiruvaṭi pōrri pōrri//* (Tattuva viḷakkap paṭalam 86)

7. Cf. कैवल्यपूर्वनवनीतसमाह्वयं तच्छास्त्रं द्विधा हि पटलं रचयामि चैकम्। तत्त्वप्रदीपमपरं किल संशयान्धकारदीपमिति सद्गुरुपादभक्त्या।। (प्रस्तावना ७)

(Herewith I, equipped with faithful devotion to my teacher, propose to write a work *Kaivalyanavanītam*, designed to be having two parts, viz. Tattvapradīpa and Saṃśayāndhakārapradīpa.)

8. He gives his name as Govindar in the Title page of the book. However, in all the appreciations authored by various scholars that are given in the book, he is referred to as Govinda Iyer.

This work, which has got, in all, five editions so far, has a very interesting story to tell. No further details regarding the author, except this name, Śāṅkukavi, is known. Based on two manuscripts available in the Adyar Library and Research Centre (ALRC), Chennai, the *New Catalogus Catalogorum (NCC)* and R. Thangaswami (*Advaita-Vedānta Literature : A Bibliographical Survey*⁹) mention that the author is Kṛṣṇa. Further, the name of the work is given as *Kaivalyadīpikā* in the Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts (in the ALRC). The manuscript contains a Sanskrit commentary also. It is named *Prabhā*. This commentary is taken to be authored by same person, Kṛṣṇa, by scholars, again based on the colophon entry in the manuscript.

It is little known that R. S. Vadhyar & Sons, Palakkad, brought out two editions of this work in same year, 1940 – one with Sanskrit version alone and another with the original Tamil text. Again it is not widely known that there is another Sanskrit translation, *Prabodhāmṛtam* by name, for the Tamil work. Now when the present editor proposes to bring out a new edition with a new Sanskrit commentary, he is expected to justify his endeavour. Hence a brief description and evaluation of the previous editions are carried out here under, which will be followed by a discussion of some pertinent issues.

Kumbhakonam Fascicule Edition

Govinda Iyer's edition of *Kaivalyanavanītam* (hereafter referred to as *Kumbha*), though incomplete, is very important from many angles. Iyer envisaged a project to publish the original Tamil work with his own Tamil commentary, lucid but elaborate, named *Tātparyadīpikai*. He expresses his intention to cite profusely from Vedānta works such as *Upaniṣad-s*, *Brahmasūtra*, *Bhagavadgītā*, *Prasthānatrayabhāṣya* of Śāṅkarācārya, *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, *Pañcadaśī* and *Yogavāsiṣṭha* in his commentary. He intended to elucidate these citations in Tamil. Moreover he promises to illustrate his views and explanations with Tamil classics as well. He even names the great saint-philosophers like Tattuvārāyar and Tāyumānavar whose passages he wanted to cite. He wanted to include the Sanskrit translation of Śāṅkukavi also along with the Tamil original. He has disclosed all these facts in a publication notification prefixed to his introduction. He further states that for want of funds he intended to publish the work in 12 quarterly fascicules, during the span of three years. He makes an appeal to the general public to support his publication venture.

9. *Advaita-Vedānta Literature : A Bibliographical Survey*, R. Thangaswami, University of Madras, 1980.

Unfortunately, it seems that he could publish only the first fascicule. The available copy of this fascicule ends abruptly in the middle of the commentary on the sixth verse (एषोऽधिकारी सुतदारवित्त) of the Tattvapradīpa-prakaraṇa¹⁰.

The first fascicule, which runs into 83 pages, contains valuable information in the prologue part. This contains a detailed description by Govinda Iyer, regarding the Tamil work, Sanskrit translation, and their authors. He narrates how he happened to know about the work of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ, how he was attracted to it and after studying it for years, somehow or other how the thought that there would be a Sanskrit version for it came to his mind, and how he happened to get two Sanskrit versions for the work. Moreover, comments, commendations and appreciations offered by six eminent personalities regarding Govinda Iyer's new venture have been included.¹¹

His presentation of the text and his commentary are designed as follows. There are five components. They are

1) *Mūlam*, the text. Here the original Tamil stanza is given followed by Śāṅkukavi's translation in the Grantha script. Then the same Sanskrit text is reproduced in Devanagari script.

2) *Avatārikai*, wherein a brief introduction is given for the text.

3) *Pozippurai*, a paraphrase giving a summary of the substance in Tamil

4) *Padapporuḷ*, the interpretation or commentary proper which goes into minute technical details. As is promised, the commentary contains profuse citations from many seminal works in Sanskrit and Tamil. It is really interesting to note that each Sanskrit passage cited is given both in Grantha and Devanagari scripts.

5) *Tātparyam*, which contains the gist of the elaborate exposition.

10. It is available in the internet. cf. <https://archive.org/details/KaivalyaNavaneethamTamilThandavarayaSwamigal1933/page/n79/mode/1up>

11. The personages are

- i. Advocate R. Krishnaswami Iyer, Thirunelveli,
- ii. Brahmasri Ramananda Saraswathi Swamikal, a sanyāsin from Devagiri,
- iii. Brahmasri S. V. Subramania Sastrigal from Sirugamani,
- iv. Brahmasri Yajnaswami Sastri from Kumbakonam,
- v. Mahamahopadhyaya Karunkolam Krishna Sastri, Principal, Madras Sanskrit College, and
- vi. Brahmasri Kadalangudi Natesa Sastrigal.

In his detailed introduction, Govinda Iyer deals with, among many other notable aspects, the issue as to which is the original text and which is translation – whether Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ's Tamil is the original or it is the Sanskrit text of Śāṅkukavi. He has clearly stated his considered opinion that the Tamil version is the original and Sanskrit version is a translation. The most important of the valuable information he has recorded is the fact that there is another Sanskrit translation apart from that of Śāṅkukavi. He reports that he had transcribed it and studied as well. Unlike the translation of Śāṅkukavi, the other contains only 204 verses. But in these 204 verses, the author has translated all the topics dealt with in the original work without omitting any aspect. Śāṅkukavi, on the other hand made 'stanza for stanza translation' for all the 293 verses of the original Tamil¹². Govinda Iyer reports that the name of the second translation is *Prabodhāmṛtam*. It is sad that the work is not traced so far. Govinda Iyer makes it clear that the Sanskrit text given immediately after the original Tamil in his edition is that of Śāṅkukavi. He states that he has followed the other translation (*Prabodhāmṛtam*) also as a 'pramāṇa' (valid authority) in his interpretations.

Two Editions from R. S. Vadhyar & Sons

R. S. Vadhyar & Sons, leading publishers (of yesteryears) of Kalpathy (Palghat, Kerala), brought out two editions of the Sanskrit version of *Kaivalyanavanītam*

12. Here is the English translation of excerpts from Govinda Iyer's Introduction (Mukhavurai):

... Then somehow or other the thought whether I would come across a versified Sanskrit rendering of this beautiful śāstra work, *Kaivalyanavanītam*, entered into my mind. And I had been praying for that. Then I got, by the grace of god, a manuscript of a Sanskrit version from a Brahmin of Vattalkuṇḍu Agrahāram of Madurai District. It contained stanza for stanza translation for all the 293 verses of the original Tamil work. I made a transcript of the same.

Then I studied both the Tamil and the Sanskrit version. As nothing was known about the author of the Sanskrit version, I was wondering which of the two was the original and which the translation. With these thoughts in mind I was again, as was my wont, wandering. Then it happened that I got another Sanskrit version for this work from a Brahmin of Seergazhi Taluq. It contained the whole purport of 293 stanzas (of the Tamil version) rendered in 204 Sanskrit verses. I prepared a transcript of the same too. After studying all the three works closely I came to the conclusion that Tamil text is the original and Sanskrit versions are translations.

(authored by Śaṅkukavi) in the year 1940. One edition contains Śaṅkukavi's Sanskrit text only. The other one contains the Tamil text as well. After the Sanskrit version for every verse, its Tamil original of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ is given. But for this inclusion of the Tamil original, both the editions are identical.

It is rather surprising that two publications have been brought out by the same publishers, without giving any justification in the latter (whichever be it). It is even more surprising that no scholar has reported the Sanskrit-only-edition while the other one has been noted by *New Catalogus Catalogorum* (Vol. V, 1969), R. Thangaswami¹³ (1980), and others¹⁴. However, I had seen only the Sanskrit-only-edition and knew of this alone till I started thinking seriously of bringing a new edition with my own commentary and began my search. In the year 1996, I happened to get a copy of this from the Kalpathy bookshop of R.S. Vadhyar & Sons themselves¹⁵.

Both the editions contain a foreword (titled *bhūmikā*) in Sanskrit by Mahamahopadhyaya N. S. Ananthakrishna Sastri, Professor of Sanskrit, University of Calcutta. The title page of Sanskrit-only-edition has the following as the matter:

13. See *Advaita-Vedānta Literature : A Bibliographical Survey*, R. Thangaswami, University of Madras, 1980.

14. Dr. K. Srinivasan also makes a mention, in his edition of *Kaivalyanavanītam*, about the Sanskrit-Tamil edition of R.S. Vadhyar & Sons.

15. A scanned copy of the title page and some pages of this edition are given as Appendix II.

श्री शङ्कुकवि विरचितम्
॥ कैवल्यनवनीतम् ॥

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

Mahamahopadhyaya

Sri. N. S. Ananthakrishna Sastriar
of the Calcutta University.

Published by R. Subrahmanya Vadhyar & Sons,

BOOK-SELLERS & PUBLISHERS,
KALPATHI PALGHAT

Price]

[As. 8

There is a “Publisher’s note” in both the editions. In the Sanskrit-only-edition (hereafter referred to as *RSV I*), which seems to be the former, this contains two paragraphs in English. The same is reproduced hereunder for the benefit of the readers.

Publishers’ Note

Kaivalya Navaneetham is a very popular Vedanta work in Tamil-Poetry. The fact that this precious work is available in Sanskrit in manuscript, was very recently brought to our notice by one of our esteemed and revered friends, who chooses to remain anonymous. Due to his courtesy to handing over the manuscript to us we have now immense pleasure in presenting the edition to the public.

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Our thanks are due to Sriyuta Mimamsa Siromani Somasundara Deekshitar of the Chittur Veda Sastra Pathasala for his untiring efforts to carry the book through the press and to Mahamahopadhyaya N.S. Ananthakrishna Sastriar of the Calcutta University for his generous response to our request to furnish a

foreword which has added to the value of the book.

In the other edition, one paragraph is inserted, in between, to suit the inclusion of Tamil version. It runs as:

From a perusal of the Sanskrit and Tamil Verses [sic] it will be difficult to judge as to which preceded the other. Both the Sanskrit and Tamil Verses [sic] are very typical and each appears as if a commentary on the other. It was thought, therefore that it would be of great advantage to combine both the Sanskrit and Tamil Verses [sic] in one book. We are sure that this Edition [sic] will be very much appreciated and the unearthing of such a splendid work will be considered a distinct gain to Sanskrit Vedanta Literature.

It can be seen that no mention of the other edition is made anywhere. The matter of the title page of this ‘combined’ edition (hereafter referred to as **RSV 2**) is reproduced hereunder.

श्री शङ्कुकवि विरचितम्

॥ कैवल्यनवनीतम् ॥

தாண்டவமூர்த்தி சுவாமிகள் செய்த
கைவல்யநவநீத செய்யுள்களுடன்

With an Introduction by
Mahamahopadhyaya

Sri. N. S. Ananthakrishna Sastriar
of the Calcutta University.

Published by **R. Subrahmanya Vadhyar & Sons,**
BOOK SELLERS & PUBLISHERS,
KALPATHI PALGHAT

1940

Price]

[As. 12

It may be noticed that price has been altered from ‘eight Annas’ to ‘twelve Annas’. Another thing which attracts our attention is the mention of the year of publication as 1940.

The foreword by Ananthakrishna Sastri, in both the editions, ends with the mention of place and date as ‘CALCUTTA, 4-6-40’. It may be noticed that the foreword is reproduced as such, in the later edition¹⁶.

A matter of further interest is that the publishers refer to the debate as to which of the two versions, viz. Sanskrit and Tamil, is the original. In his ‘foreword’, Sri Ananthakrishna Sastri also discusses this.

The Sanskrit translation of Śaṅkukavi, as presented in these editions, comprises a total of 294 verses. Under the main title ॥ कैवल्यनवनीतम् ॥, four verses are given without numbering. The first one is an obeisance to the preceptor (*śrīgurucarāṇadvandvaṃ...*). The second one is praise for the *ātmatattva* (absolute consciousness) which is very familiar to everyone, but pitifully unnoticed (*ekāntasannihitam...*). The next verse is a praise for a preceptor Śaṅkara, who may be Śaṅkarācārya himself (*yadīyavāksūrya...*). The fourth verse is again a prayer (*amṛtamatulanityānanda...*). It is meant for the preceptor named Kṛṣṇa, a sanyāsin (referred to as *yatīndra*). These four verses stand clearly outside the text proper. That is why they are given without any subtitle.

16. Sri Ananthakrishna Sastri’s foreword is reproduced by us as Appendix III.

After this, seven verses are given under a title प्रस्तावना. These seven verses are equivalent to the seven *pāyiram* songs given in the Tamil version authored by Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ. *Pāyiram*-s are prefatory verses, which act as a sort of prologue, usually seen in the beginning of some classical Tamil works. In **RSV 2**, the title *pāyiram* is given just before the first Tamil stanza.

The next section bears the title तत्त्वप्रदीपः (The Tamil version is *Tattuvaviḷakkam*). There are 101 verses in this section. But there is an error in numbering. The last verse bears the number 100. The error in numbering starts from the 38th verse (*kalpanāgama* etc.). It is numbered as 37. The error is carried down in the second edition also. This error is unnoticed by Ananthakrishna Sastri, who states in his foreword that the section contains 100 verses¹⁷.

The next section, which is titled as सन्देहप्रशमनम्, has 182 verses. Here also there is an error in numbering. Both **RSV1** and **RSV 2** have the number 180 given to the penultimate verse. It should have been 181. Here the error in numbering starts from the tenth verse (*āsārvabhaumaṃ* etc.). The ninth and tenth verses are both numbered 9.

Of these 182 verses, the first one (*yasyāṅghripadma* etc.) is an obeisance to the preceptor. It does not have an equivalent in the Tamil version.

It may be noticed that these 294 verses are not the ‘stanza for stanza’ translation of the Tamil version. The four verses in the beginning portion are added by the translator or somebody else. They do not have equivalent ones in Tamil. So also, the first verse in the सन्देहप्रशमनम् section, as we have noticed just now, do not have Tamil original. The Tamil original has a total of 293 verses spread in three sections as follows. Seven *pāyiram* (given as प्रस्तावना in the Sanskrit translation) songs, 101 songs in the *Tattuvaviḷakkappaṭalam* (तत्त्वप्रदीपः) section and 185 songs in the *Sandeham telitarpaṭalam* (सन्देहप्रशमनम्)

17. अत्र हि ग्रन्थे प्रकरणद्वयं वर्तते - तत्त्वप्रदीपः, संशयान्धकारप्रदीप इति च। प्रथमे प्रकरणे शतं (१००) श्लोकाः, द्वितीये त्वेकाशीत्युत्तरशतं (१८१) श्लोकाः सन्ति।

It is very interesting to see how an error is inadvertently propagated by scholars. K. Srinivasan, in the ‘Preface’ to his edition, notes that **RSV 2** has 100 verses in this section. He writes: “The first is titled Tattuva-viakkap-patalam and has 101 verses (the printed edition has got the number as 100)”. By the printed edition, he refers to **RSV 2**. He has even tampered with the text of Ananthakrishna Sastri’s preface, which he has reproduced in his edition as प्रथमे प्रकरणे एकोत्तरशतं (१०१) श्लोकाः, द्वितीये तु एकाशीत्युत्तरशतं (१८१) श्लोकाः सन्ति।

section. As noted earlier, the Sanskrit version given in both **RSV 1** and **RSV 2** have only 181 original verses translated (leaving out the first one out of 182, as it is a later addition).

Clumsy insertion of Tamil verses

In **RSV 2**, which, for the reasons being pointed out now, is the later one, the Tamil songs are not numbered, and are inserted carelessly. In the प्रस्तावना section, the Tamil verses are given beneath the corresponding Sanskrit verse. In the तत्त्वप्रदीपः section also the same arrangement is followed. But in the सन्देहप्रशमनम् section, where the number of verses in Tamil and Sanskrit versions differ (185 in Tamil and 181 in Sanskrit), the editors have not taken proper care. Here the Sanskrit verses are given beneath the Tamil songs, unlike the other section. For the first Sanskrit verse, there is no Tamil original (as it is an addition). From the second verse onwards, up to (including) the 136th one (numbering, of the editors) this arrangement can be seen. Before the 137th Sanskrit verse, a verse of the Tamil original is furnished¹⁸, which has not been translated by Śāṅkukavi. Hence from this verse onwards, we get the Tamil original after the Sanskrit translation. In fact one more verse has been left out by Śāṅkukavi. It is the verse in which the author says that in anticipation of his current state of dancing (tāṇḍava) in exhilaration, parents had him named Tāṇḍava¹⁹. This verse is also inserted within brackets immediately after the 175th (numbering, of editors).

Śāṅkukavi has translated one Tamil verse²⁰, which enumerates the seven *jñānabhūmi*-s, in two verses (148th and 149th of **RSV 2**). Therefore from the 149th onwards, the order of Tamil original and Sanskrit translation again gets interchanged (i.e. Tamil songs appear before the Sanskrit verse).

In this fashion Tamil verses are inserted in a careless manner up to the 176th verse (actual number 177). Hence we get 177 Sanskrit verses and 178 Tamil songs. After the 177th Sanskrit verse, five Sanskrit verses are given without Tamil insertion. Beneath the last verse viz., मनोन्मनीध्यानविधूतपाप्मनो महायतीनां पदपद्मसेविनः । महाफलं शङ्कुकेवरियं कृतिर्महात्मनां कर्णवतंसतामियात् ॥, the colophon statement कैवल्यनवनीतं सम्पूर्णम् is given. After this, seven Tamil verses are given without any numbering. At the end we get another colophon statement in Tamil, *kaivalyanavanītaṃ murṛirru*.

18. *acalanirañcanamamirta* etc.

19. *Tattuvañānaṃ vanta cantōṣa aticayattāl* etc.

20. *pulavarpukaṣ mutal pūmi* etc.

RSV2 seems to be the second one

The Sanskrit-Tamil-combined edition (**RSV2**) seems to be second of the two R.S. Vadhyar editions for the following reasons.

1. The inserted paragraph in the “Publisher’s note” of **RSV2** alone is sufficient to show that this is the later one. From even a cursory reading one may notice that this is a later insertion. And the sentence, “It was thought, therefore that it would be of great advantage to combine both the Sanskrit and Tamil verses in one book”, indicates that the inclusion of Tamil verses came as a later thought.

2. Sri Ananthakrishna Sastri does not mention anything about how many sections or how many verses the Tamil work of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ has whereas he clearly states: “The Sanskrit work contains two sections, *Tattvapradīpa* and *Samśayāndhakārapradīpa*. There are 100 verses in the first one and 181 in the second” (अत्र हि ग्रन्थे प्रकरणद्वयं वर्तते - तत्त्वप्रदीपः, संशयान्धकारप्रदीप इति च। प्रथमे प्रकरणे शतं (१००) श्लोकाः, द्वितीये त्वेकाशीत्युत्तरशतं (१८१) श्लोकाः सन्ति।) . Had he been informed of the fact that the edition contained Tamil version also he should have noticed the mismatch in number of verses. Hence it seems that his foreword for **RSV1** was reused, as such, for **RSV 2**.

3. Had **RSV 2** been edited first, the error in numbering in the *Tattvapradīpa* section would not have happened since both the Sanskrit and Tamil versions contain 101 verses.

4. All the errors both in numbering and in printing of the Sanskrit text are repeated in the second edition. Had this (**RSV2**) been the first one, the error in numbering could have been noticed while bringing out **RSV1**. So also the printing errors. Almost all the printing errors are repeated in the second edition. A perusal of the footnotes showing variants and wrong readings given in the present edition will reveal this²¹.

Gnanananda Niketan Publication

Sri Gnanananda Niketan, Thapovanam, Villupram, has brought out a new revised edition of Śāṅkukavi’s Sanskrit version in the year 2017. It contains the Tamil version of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ as well. The work is edited by Dr. K. Srinivasan, Retired Principal, Vivekananda College, Chennai. He informs that the R. S. Vadhyar edition is followed mainly for the Sanskrit version. For the Tamil version, the text followed by Sri Pirayaru Arunachala Swami has been used.

21. Cf. foot note no. 48, 56, 63, 76, 85, 108, and 115, for instance.

Following *RSV* editions, the first four Sanskrit verses are given separately in the beginning. However, these are serially numbered here. Moreover they are presented under a new head मङ्गलाचरणम्. The Sanskrit equivalents for *pāyiram* verses are given under the head प्रस्तावना, as is done in the *RSV* editions. They are also serially numbered, one to seven. In the तत्त्वप्रदीपः and सन्देहप्रशमनम् sections also the verses are properly numbered serially. In all these three sections the Sanskrit verses are given first and beneath them Tamil originals are furnished. Five epilogue songs (*muṭivurai*) in the Tamil version are given separately with distinct numbering. The Sanskrit version contains 294 verses in total, spread as follows: four in *maṅgalācaraṇa*, seven in *prastāvanā*, 101 in *tattvapradīpa*, and 182 (including the benedictory verse in the beginning, not numbered) in the *sandehaprasāmana* sections.

This edition (hereafter referred to as **GN**) contains a foreword by Swami Nityananda Giri of Gnanananda Niketan, a detailed *Preface* by the editor, and two indexes. Sanskrit and Tamil verses are tabularized with references in these indexes.

In the *Preface* Dr. Srinivasan has made a fairly good study of the original Tamil work and different editions and manuscripts of the Sanskrit version of Śaṅkukavi. He subjects to his study, the Kumbhakonam fascicule edition of Govinda Iyer, and **RSV 2** (He does not speak of **RSV1** as it is not known). He cites the references made to Śaṅkukavi's translation, by Dr. R. Thangaswami (in his *Advaita-Vedānta Literature : A Bibliographical Survey*) and *NCC* (Vol V). He refers to the manuscripts of Sanskrit *Kaivalyanavanītam* that are available in the ALRC, Chennai. Based on the colophon references in these manuscripts, *NCC* and Thangaswami, the authorship of the work is ascribed to one Kṛṣṇa, disciple of Kṛṣṇānanda yatīndra / Brahmānanda yatīndra. The manuscripts contain a Sanskrit commentary also. The authorship of this also is ascribed to the same Kṛṣṇa. The name of the work also differs. It is given as *Kaivalyadīpikā / Kaivalyadīpa*. The commentary is called *Prabhā*. The verses are the same as those in the **Kumbha** and **RSV** editions.

Dr. Srinivasan discusses about the authorship of the work. Though the discussion is very brief, conclusions and presumptions made are very fair and justified. He states: “It may be that the author of the work is Krishna and Shanku Kavi may be a popular name and the lineage of preceptor Krishna Yatindra and Brahmananda Yati, *guru* and *parama guru* respectively.” This statement and conclusion thereon as “The question whether Shanku Kavi and Krishna were one or different and whether Prabhaa is the auto commentary,

still need further corroboration” are critical and well balanced, though not couched in good language.

Unlike the **RSV** editions, here, the editor gives an orderly presentation of Tamil verses for Sanskrit translations and also highlights this in the *Preface*.

Ananthakrishna Sastri’s foreword for the **RSV** editions is reproduced after this *Preface*. English and Tamil translations (by the editor K. Srinivasan) for this Sanskrit foreword also are given. As is already noted, the text of the foreword is tampered with (see FN. 16).

Dr. Srinivasan has done a commendable work in fixing a good reading of the Sanskrit text, based on **RSV2** and the Adyar manuscript. Though he follows the **RSV** edition mainly, he has adopted better readings wherever necessary. And he has recorded those alterations recording all variants through footnotes. He has consulted the Adyar manuscript wherever necessary to ascertain the correct reading. He has also acknowledged this properly saying “When we tried to read the text with the commentary, it offered clarity on some tricky points and offered few different readings as well.”

Veraval Edition

A new edition of the Sanskrit version of *Kaivalyanavanītam* with a Sanskrit commentary has been brought out by Dr. Janakisharan Acharya, in 2018, from Shree Somnath Sanskrit University, Veraval, Gujarat (hereafter referred to as **Vera**). This is the publication of his doctoral thesis, which was titled ‘svōpajñāprabhāvīkāśahitāyāḥ [sic] kaivalyadīpikāyāḥ pāṭhasampādanam samīkṣātmakamadhyanāna.’²² And this publication is the first number in the Shree Somnath Sanskrit University Research Grantha Series envisaged by the University.

In this publication, Dr. Janakisharan Acharya has edited the *Kaivalyadīpikā* text with the *Prabhā* commentary based on one transcript copy available in the ALRC. This Sanskrit work titled *Kaivalyadīpikā* has the same verses as those of the *Kaivalyanavanītam* of Śāṅkukavi. As is already noted, from the colophon statement available in the manuscript, the authorship of the work is ascribed to one Kṛṣṇa. There is a verse in the prologue of the commentary where the commentator gives the name of his preceptor as Kṛṣṇayogīndra. And he calls his commentary as *Prabhā*²³. From the references

22. See **Vera**, p.xiv

23. नत्वा श्रीकृष्णयोगीन्द्रपादपङ्केरुहद्वयम् ।

भक्त्या: [sic] कैवल्यदीपस्य कुर्वे व्याख्यां प्रभाभिधाम् ।। **Vera**, p.55

made by Dr. Thangaswami²⁴ and NCC²⁵ the editor Dr. Acharya too states that *Prabhā* is also authored by Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita²⁶. It may be noted that nowhere within the work, is it stated that the author is Kṛṣṇa. And we do not find any explicit or implicit statement by the author that the work is a translation of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ's Tamil work.

The book, which is titled कृष्णपण्डितविरचिता कैवल्यदीपिका (प्रभाव्याख्यासहिता), contains four chapters and a separate conclusion (upasaṃhṛti). In the first chapter, besides an introduction to the Advaita Vedānta literature, the personal details of the author and a description about the content of the work are given. The second chapter contains the edition of the text of *Kaivalyadīpikā* with the *Prabhā* commentary. It is titled 'svōpajñāprabhāvvyākhyāsahitakaivalyadīpikāyāḥ [sic] pāṭhasamīkṣātmakaṃ sampādanam'. The editor has consulted two transcripts available in the Adyar library and Research Centre – one in Grantha script and the other in Devanāgarī script. The first one is incomplete. Hence, in effect, the edition is based only on one transcript.

It may be noted that the editor has not even spoken of the early editions of the *Kaivalyanavanītam* of Śaṅkukavi, here in this chapter.

The third and fourth chapters comprise the critical study on the contents of the two sections (prakaraṇa-s) of the work, respectively. Seven appendices are given. The first six among them are indexes. These enlist, i) the verses of the text, ii) metres employed, iii) cited texts, iv) cited authors, v) passages cited from scriptures, and vi) the nyāya-s cited respectively. The last appendix is a bibliography of works referred to.

24. ब्रह्मानन्दापराभिधानकृष्णानन्दयतेः शिष्योऽयं कृष्णपण्डितः दक्षिणदेशीयस्तमिलभाषायास्साहित्ये च निष्णातस्वोलदेशवासीति च ज्ञायते। एतदीयः ग्रन्थः कैवल्यदीपिकाख्याः [sic] । स च तमिलाभाषायां ताण्डवस्वामिना विरचितस्य कैवल्यनवनीताख्यस्य संस्कृतीकरणरूपः पद्यबद्धो ग्रन्थः।..... कैवल्यदीपिका सव्याख्या.....अस्य व्याख्यापि प्रभाख्या मूलकृतैव कृता। (p.३२७)

25. NCC (Vol V, 1969, p.77) has an entry which reads “कैवल्यदीप (-पिका) adv. Metrical adaptation of Tamil work *Kaivalyanavanītam* by Kṛṣṇa, pupil of Kṛṣṇayatīndra and Brahmānandayati. Adyar II. P. 144b Adyar D. IX . 790. 791. (inc)”.

It can be seen that Thangaswami has simply copied the information, of course with some alterations, of which the most illogical is the one of Kṛṣṇa to Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita. It may be noted that in the title-head, the name is given as Kṛṣṇa only.

26. Dr. Acharya notes that in the Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the ALRC and NCC, the name of the author is given as Kṛṣṇa. He further notes that Thangaswami has both the versions, Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita. However without any critical reasons, he opts to have the name as Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita in his edition.

Prabhā* commentary on *Kaivalyadīpikā

The *Prabhā* commentary edited by Dr. Acharya very helpful in fixing the correct reading of the text of *Kaivalyanavanītam* in many instances, as rightly pointed out by K. Srinivasan. Hence it assumes significance. However, in the same breath, we should add that the editor has miserably failed to notice many such passages which retain the correct reading, and to fix the reading accordingly. On the contrary he has not only retained wrong readings, but also contributed new ones at times.

The *NCC*, the Descriptive Catalogue of ALRC, and scholars following suit, have maintained that the commentary is an auto-exposition by author himself. But facts prove the contrary. The commentary begins with four benedictory verses offering prayers to the preceptor. Then the commentator reveals his resolution to write a commentary on *Kaivalyadīpa*. This is expressed through a versified statement as नत्वा श्रीकृष्णयोगीन्द्रपादपङ्केरुहद्वयम् । भक्त्या कैवल्यदीपस्य कुर्वे व्याख्यां प्रभाभिधाम् ॥. Had he been writing an exposition of his own work, he would have first stated his intention of writing a work after offering prayers to preceptors and personal deities.

Moreover, these salutations are outside the text proper. In the fifth verse of the text, the author after paying obeisance to his preceptor, Kṛṣṇayogīndra, expresses his resolve to write a work on *Ātmavidyā*²⁷. Again, in the seventh verse, he declares that his proposed work, named *Kaivalyanavanīta*, would have two paṭala-s (parts), *Tattvapradīpa* and *Samśayāndhakārapradīpa*²⁸. Had the commentator been identical with the author, he would not have offered salutations to his preceptor twice, one outside the text proper and another inside. Hence it is very clear that the commentator is different from the author.

Again, there is another piece of evidence to substantiate our case. The very first sentence of the commentary runs as इह कश्चित् कविः सम्यग्विदितब्रह्मतत्त्वः स्वयं कृतार्थोऽपि स्वानुभववत् अन्येषामपि मुमुक्षूणां मोक्षसाधनात्मतत्त्वावगमाय वेदान्तसारस्पष्टकथनरूपं किञ्चित् प्रकरणमारभमाणः तस्य निष्प्रत्यूहपरिपूरणादिसिद्धये प्रेक्षावत्प्रवृत्त्यङ्गभूतविषयादिप्रदर्शनाय च स्वकृतं मङ्गलं ग्रन्थतो निबध्नाति - स्वर्णोति । An English rendering of the gist would be “A poet, who has realized the Brahman, wants to write a composition on *Ātmavidyā*, for the benefit of others. At the outset he offers a benediction as part of the essential preliminaries.” It clearly shows that the commentator is

27. आद्यन्तहीनाम्बरवत्सुपूर्णश्रीकृष्णयोगीन्द्रपदं प्रणम्य ।

अनात्मबन्धेतरदर्शिशस्त्रमूढात्मनां वच्म्यपरोक्षतत्त्वम् ॥

28. कैवल्यपूर्वनवनीतसमाह्वयं तच्छास्त्रं द्विधा हि पटलं रचयामि चैकम् ।

तत्त्वप्रदीपमपरं किल संशयान्धकारप्रदीपमिति सद्गुरुपादभक्त्या ॥

different from the author. It may be argued that out of humility, the author is referring to himself as a third person. Then he would not have called himself a realized person. Another interesting point is that the commentator calls the author as a poet. Besides the curiosity it rouses, it is again a pointer to strengthen our stand. Finally, one more point may be added. In the beginning of the second part, *Samśayacchedaparakaraṇa*, there is another salutation to the preceptor. An author is not likely to offer salutations to the preceptor in the middle of the work, that too for the third time.

Now coming to the merits of the commentary, as is already noted, it preserves correct readings (one may peruse our footnotes noting the variants). Another notable feature is the abundance of citations from many śāstra works. It quotes passages profusely from *Upaniṣads*, *Brahmasūtra*, *Bhagavadgītā*, *Prasthānatrayabhāṣya*-s of Śāṅkarācārya, *Purāṇa*-s, other classical works on Philosophy like *Sāṅkhyasūtra*-s, *Yogasūtra*-s etc, not to speak of prakaraṇa works on Advaita Vedānta such as *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, *Pañcadasī* and *Ātmabodha*. However, often, it fails to meet the prime objective of a commentary, viz. elucidating the text. It neither follows a plain *anvayakrama* to construe the text, nor supplies a convincing exposition of it, by connecting the cited texts, or by prefatory or concluding remarks.

The text of the commentary for two verses is reproduced hereunder as an instance for the benefit of the readers.

तत्राप्योमिति वदन्तं पृच्छति — किं वेति ।

किं वा शास्त्रं वदति कुहनां नाथ कारुण्यसिन्धो
नाभुक्तं कर्म नश्येदिति वचनमिदं ज्ञानवह्न्येकनाशयम् ।
सर्वं कर्मेत्यपरमपि मे संशयो वाक्ययुग्मे
क्षीणः कस्माद् भवति हि गुरो सम्यगाख्याहि भूयः ॥ २.५० ॥²⁹

हे नाथ! करुणासागर भगवन्! शास्त्रमृगवेदादि कुहनां वदति वा । तथा प्रतारकवाक्यवदप्रमाणं वाक्यं भवेत् । यतः कुत्रचित् “नाभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म कल्पकोटिशतैरपि” इत्याह । अन्यत्र “ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात्कुरुते”, “सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते” इति चान्यत्र स्मर्यते । तथाविधे वचनद्वयेपि

29. Here is the English translation (by Sri Ramanananda Saraswathi) of the original Tamil song: “Can the scriptures say anything that is not absolutely true? Master, how can I reconcile the two statements: (1) the *karma* of any person wears away only after bestowing its fruits; and (2) the fire of pure wisdom burns away the *karma* which is waiting to bear fruits later on?”

मे संशयो जातः. तत्कस्मात् क्षीणो नष्टो भवेत्। तथा सम्यङ् निर्णयमाख्याहि भूयः
पुनरपीति॥ ५०॥

उत्सर्गापवादन्यायमाश्रित्य तदुत्तरं विवक्षुः पूर्वकाण्डार्थं सङ्गृह्य कथयति — एत
इति।

एते जीवा असङ्ख्या अपि चरितममीषामसङ्ख्यं समीक्ष्य
श्रुत्या तत्तज्जनानां हृदयपरिणतिं स्वाधिकारं तथोक्तम्।
पुष्पोत्पत्तेस्तु पश्चादपि फलजनित्वत् पूर्वसिद्धान्त एव
काण्डत्रय्या प्रवृत्तिस्तदनु च कथिता सा निवृत्तिः क्रमेण॥ २.५१॥³⁰

एते प्राणानां जीवयितारः जीवाः असङ्ख्याता अनन्ताः अनादौ संसारसागरे परिमग्नाः।
अमीषां चरितं चारित्रं कर्मेति यावत्। तदप्यसङ्ख्यम्। गहना कर्मणो गतिः इति
भगवद्वचनाच्च। समीक्ष्य पर्यालोच्य तेषामेव जनशब्दवाच्यानां हृदयपरिणतिम्।
इष्टं मे भूयादनिष्टं मे मा भूत् इति मनोवृत्तिं स्वाधारं च तत्तद्वर्णाश्रमोचिताधिकारं
च दृष्ट्वा श्रुत्या वेदेनैव तथोक्तः - आचित्तशुद्धि कर्मानुष्ठेयम् आब्रह्मसाक्षात्कारं
विद्याऽभ्यसनीया इत्यादिः। तच्च पुष्पोत्पत्तेः पश्चात्कुसुमोद्गमनानन्तरं फलोत्पत्तिवत्।
तथोक्तश्च पूर्वकाण्डसिद्धान्तः।

यद्वा प्राचीनसम्प्रदायागतः राद्धान्तः। य एष एवमेव काण्डत्रय्या त्रिकाण्डविषयया
श्रुत्या प्रवृत्तिकामिनां प्रकाशिता। तदनु विरक्तानां क्रमेण निवृत्तिश्च कथिता।
“लाकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयाऽनघ। ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां
कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम्” इति भगवद्वचनात्। तथा च भाष्याभिहितम् “नित्यान्यभिहितानि
कर्माण्युपात्तदुरितक्षयार्थानि काम्यानि फलार्थिनां पूर्वस्मिन् ग्रन्थे अथेदानीं
कर्मोपादानहेतुपरिहाराय ब्रह्मविद्या प्रस्तूयते” इति। तथा च व्यासवचनम् —

“द्वाविमावथ पन्थानौ यत्र वेदाः प्रतिष्ठिताः।

प्रवृत्तिलक्षणो धर्मो निवृत्तिश्च विभाषितः॥” इति।

It can be seen that though the commentator cites many passages which
may help a studious reader to go into the intricacies of the concepts hinted at
or discussed, he does not care to connect the citations with the passage at
hand and to give a general purport of it. In many an instance, the reader is left

30. See the English translation (by Sri Ramanananda Saraswathi) : “Master: My son, the
Jivas are unlimited in number, capacity and kind, and their actions also are similarly
unlimited. In three sections the beneficent *Vedas* prescribe according to the aptitude
of seekers, with preliminary views succeeded by final conclusions, like flowers by
fruits”.

in the dark in his quest to get the purport of the text. This assumes more gravity as the present work, *Kaivalyanavanītam*, is a versified translation of a philosophical work. We can see the translator struggling to transform the ideas and expressions of the original text in a different linguistic context, that too within the constraints caused by the metrical composition.

Another significant aspect is that the commentator uses a Malayalam word indicating his Kerala origin. While answering the question as to why Māyā should come into existence, it is described that otherwise, the entire universe will be in a state of utter chaos. “If that were the case, fire would function like water, bitter things would taste sweet, degraded people would monopolise wisdom, mountains would be clouds; and ocean would be clay”, it is described in the text. The Sanskrit rendering of the passage runs as पश्येयात्तोयभावं शुचिरपि कटुकः शर्करात्वं समीयान्नीचा वेदान् पठेयुर्गिरिरपि जलदो वारिधिर्मृत्तिका स्यात्॥. Explaining the phrase कटुकः शर्करात्वं समीयात् the commentator writes कटुको निम्बादिः शर्करात्वं पञ्चसारतां समीयात्. He explains the word *śarkarā* as *pañcasāra*. This word, *pañcasāra*, is a Malayalam word for sugar³¹. This indicates that he might have hailed from some part of Kerala.

Notable features of the Veraval edition

1. This edition contains a total of 284 verses. There are 108 verses in the first part which is named as *Tattvapradīpaprakaraṇa*, including the seven prefatory verses which are given separately under the head Prastāvanā in the **RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN** editions. The second part, named *Samśayacchedapradīpaprakaraṇa* contains 176 verses. There is a separate *guruvandana* verse at the beginning of the second part (prakaraṇa). The same verse with a slight variant reading appears as one of the concluding verses in the **RSV** and **GN** editions.

The editor has not justified the naming of the second section as *Samśayacchedapradīpaprakaraṇa*. In the first verse of the section the text gives the names as *Sandehaprasāmanaprakaraṇa*. In the Prastāvanā verse (7) it is called *Samśayāndhakārapradīpa*.

2. The editor has not looked into how the work came to be known as *Kaivalyadīpikā*. Inside the work, the author calls it *Kaivalyanavanīta* only.

31. In Telugu language the word for sugar is *pañcadāram*. Hence the possibility of the commentator being a native of Andhra region cannot be ruled out as *pañcasāratām* can be a scribal error. The actual word employed by the commentator may be *pañcadāratām*.

3. The edition is valuable from the angle of textual criticism as it has readings that are found better than those of previous editions. Dr. Acharya has done a commendable job by editing the text.

4. The appendices attached, especially the one giving the metres of verses employed in the work, and the list of passages cited in the text from scriptures and classical works, add much research value to the edition.

5. The author has employed more than 18 metres in his work. They include special metres such as āryā, mattakokila, pañcacāmara, pṛthvī apart from popular ones like mālinī, indravajrā, upendravajrā, upajāti, vasantatilakā, śālinī, mandākrāntā, śārdūlavikrīḍita and sragdharā. He is fond of long metres. Most of the verses are written in either śārdūlavikrīḍita or sragdharā. Dr. Acharya has rightly pointed out that the 48th (कैवल्यं ज्ञानयोगाद्यदि भवति गुरो) and 50th verses (किं वा शास्त्रं वदति कुहनां) of the second prakaraṇa bear metrical incongruity.

6. However, six instances where Dr. Acharya points out metrical incongruity, have been caused by his wrong readings³². Had he consulted the previous editions he could have avoided this predicament. In some instances his negligence assumes gravity. With a wrong reading in the text he proceeds to allege this, when the commentary has the correct reading. For instance in the 116th verse of the second prakaraṇa, *andhaṃ pānādi* etc he reads the fourth line as वत्साचक्ष्व त्वदीयं सुखमनुभवति कोस्ति नात्मद्वयं स्यात् and alleges छन्दोभङ्ग (स्रग्धरा). It is the variant reading सुखमनुभवति which causes the incongruity. The commentary which the editor is bringing out along with the text (which he believes to have been written by the author himself) has the reading सुखमनुभविता which nullifies the apprehension. The commentary thereon reads तस्य अनुभविता अन्यस्तस्याप्यन्य इत्यनवस्था च प्रसज्येत।³³.

7. The editor, who refers to the description of *NCC*, the Descriptive Catalogue of ALRC and the *Advaita-Vedānta Literature : A Bibliographical Survey* (R. Thangaswami, 1980) in detail about the transcripts of the text available in the ALRC, never even mentions about the **RSV** edition of the text (not to speak of consulting it for fixing up better readings).

32. These are the six verses : i) ज्ञानं दृष्ट्याऽनुभूतं (२.८४), ii) जडाकारध्यानं कथमिति दिशेद् (2.86), iii) जगत्कर्ता कार्यं विदितमपि (२.९८), iv) अन्नं पानादि सर्वं यदिह सुखतते: (2.116), v) एष स्वप्नो हि भुक्त्वा (२.१४८), vi) श्रीमन् देशिक यत् त्रिभिश्च करणैः (2.81). For Dr. Acharya's apprehensions and discussions see **Vera**, pp. 37-41. And for explanations and correct readings see footnotes in the present edition, pertaining to the said verses.

33. **Vera**, p. 205. Also see p. 39 for the discussions made by Dr. Acharya.

8. There is a plentitude of typographical and grammatical errors which could have been avoided.

9. The editor has not taken proper care to go through the commentary and rectify the wrong readings that have crept into the text. The commentary has preserved the right reading in many instances. But the editor has failed to notice this. This was caused by his not consulting the previous editions of *Kaivalyanavanītam*.³⁴

However his efforts to edit the text which retains good readings of the text should be appreciated.

Tamil version is original

The debate over the relative priority of the Sanskrit and Tamil *Kaivalyanavanītam* is an old one. As we have seen, Govinda Iyer had this doubt was lurking in his mind. After studying the Tamil and the two Sanskrit versions for twenty years, he came to the conclusion that Tamil is the original and Sanskrit versions are its translations. His opinion carries much weight, for, he strongly argues at length in his prefatory statement that Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ was indeed a Brahmin. One would naturally expect of such a person, a bias towards Sanskrit. But he clearly states that Tamil version is the original.

In their ‘Publisher’s note’, R. S. Vadhyar & Sons present the issue as “Both the Sanskrit and Tamil Verses are very typical and each appears as if a commentary on the other”.

Mahamahopadhyaya Ananthakrishna Sastri clearly maintains that Sanskrit is the original, and Tamil version is translation. He writes :

“Some people hold the opinion that the author of both the versions, Tamil and Sanskrit, is the same person. However, it is not valid as we do not get any corroborative evidence, either internal or external, to prove that Tāṇḍavamūrtti Svāmikaḷ and Śaṅkukavi are identical. I believe that Sanskrit version is the original and Tamil, the translation. Arunachala Swami, the commentator of the Tamil *Kaivalyanavanītam*, also maintains this view. In his prefatory statement for the first verse, he states that Tāṇḍavamūrtti Svāmikaḷ was proficient in Sanskrit also. This implies either that the author of both Sanskrit and Tamil versions are the same person or that the Tamil version is based on

34. There are quite a large number of instances. To cite all of these will be cumbersome. Here are some: See our foot notes no. 16, 55, 57, 102, 107, 134, 202, 223, 229, 234, 259, 269, 276, 288, 303, 317, 340, 370 and 384.

the Sanskrit version. The first case is out of question as it is said that Śaṅkukavi is the author of the Sanskrit version. Hence it ends up in the second case (Tamil version is based on the Sanskrit version). If somebody proves that Śaṅkukavi is another name of Tāṇḍavamūrtti Svāmikaḷ, I would accept. I am not rigid on either case”³⁵.

One can see that Sastri does not go into the merits of either work and that it is on weak ground that he comes to the conclusion. He bases his argument on a statement made by Sri Arunachala Swami. Further, on the authorship of Sanskrit version, he simply says that ‘it is said’ (शङ्कुकवेः कर्तृत्ववर्णनान्नावतिष्ठत इति). Hence it can be seen that he is not giving a considered conclusion.

If we go into the internal evidences, there are some grounds which prompt us to presume that Sanskrit version is the translation.

1. There are seven verses (*prastāvanā*) given separately outside the two main sections of the Sanskrit work. In Tamil literary tradition, there is a convention of prefixing a work with *pāyiram* verses. However in Sanskrit literary tradition, for a versified work on *śāstric* discipline, such as a *prakaraṇa*, it has never been the practice. Of course some verses as offering of prayers and other benedictory verses are given in the beginning of a work. As in the case of *Harṣacarita*, for certain prose works, prefatory statements are expressed in many verses. But they form a part of the work and are not treated as a separate prologue.

2. Let us have a close look at the very first verse of the *Prastāvanā*. It is an obeisance to the Supreme being - Absolute bliss and Absolute Consciousness - which permeates the whole domain of existence. Here there is a word स्वर्णक्षेत्रवधूसृहासहितहृत्तन्मुक्तचित्तात्मनाम्. It means of those, who are swayed by the craving for gold, lands and women; and those who are not. Here a

35. केचन तु मन्यन्ते द्राविडभाषामयस्य कैवल्यनवनीतस्य संस्कृतभाषामयस्य चास्य कर्तृक एवेति। इदं तु मतमप्रमाणम्। ताण्डवमूर्तिस्वाम्येव शङ्कुकविरप्यासीदित्यत्र हि न किमपि प्रमाणं ग्रन्थमध्यादन्यतो वा वयमधिगच्छामः। निबन्धयोरनयोः संस्कृतभाषामयमेव मूलम्, द्राविडभाषामयं तु तस्यैवानुवादरूपमिति मम प्रतिभाति। इदमेव द्राविडभाषामयस्य कैवल्यनवनीतस्य व्याख्याताऽत्रभवानरुणाचलस्वाम्यपि मन्यन्ते। प्रथमश्लोकोपक्रमणिकायां द्राविडभाषामयकैवल्यनवनीतस्य कर्तारं संस्कृतभाषायामपि विशेषतो निष्णातं वदन्, तद्वर्णनस्य हि प्रयोजनमस्यैवोभयकतृत्वेन वा स्यात्, अथवा संस्कृतभाषामयस्य दर्शनेन द्राविडभाषामयस्य रचनमिति व्यवस्थापनेन वा। आद्यस्तु पक्षः संस्कृतभाषामयोऽत्र शङ्कुकवेः कर्तृत्ववर्णनान्नावतिष्ठत इति द्वितीये पक्षे एव पर्यवसानम्। यदि तु केचन श्री शङ्कुकविरित्यपि श्री ताण्डवमूर्तिस्वामिन एव नामान्तरमिति प्रदर्शयिष्यन्ति प्रमाणजातेन, तर्हि वयमपि तन्मतमेव तत्रानुसरिष्यामः, नास्माकमत्राग्रहविशेषः कस्मिन्नपि मते।

concept deep-rooted in Indian tradition is involved. It is that of ‘eṣaṇātraya’ – the triad of unbreakable attachment, attachment towards women, wealth and son (*dāraiṣaṇā*, *vittaiṣaṇā* and *putraiṣaṇā*). Here in our verse, instead of this triad, which is very popular in Sanskrit tradition, the triad of gold, lands and women is seen. As cited by Govinda Iyer in his *Tātparyadīpikai* commentary³⁶, Tāyumānavar, a great saint philosopher refers to ‘eṣaṇātraya’ as ‘ponnai, mātarai pūmiyai’ (gold, women and lands).

3. Besides, this compound word, स्वर्णक्षेत्रवधूसृहासहि तहत्तन्मुक्तचित्तात्मनाम्, is difficult to construe. No Sanskrit scholar would begin his work with such an indistinct word. It should be explained as स्वर्णे क्षेत्रे वध्वाञ्च या सृहा तत्सहितं येषां हत् तेषाम्, तथा तन्मुक्तौ चित्तात्मनौ च ये तेषाञ्चेत्युभयेषाम्. Here we can see a translator struggling to get a suitable phrase to convey the idea within the frame of chosen metre. But the Tamil version is in a natural flowing style. It runs as

ponnilamātarācaip poruntinar poruntāruḷḷan-
tannilantarattir cīvacākṣi mātīramāy nirkkuṃ /
ennilaṅkaḷinu mikka vezunilamavarṛin mēlām
nannilamaruvum ēkanāyakan pataṅkaḷ pōṛṛī //

4. In this verse, there is beautiful *dvitīyākṣaraprāsa*. The word *nannilam* (meaning the holiest of all holy places as well as the *turīyātīta* state) suggestively refers to author’s native village, *Nannilam*. To rhyme with this only, the author has chosen the word ‘pon’ in the first phrase, denoting gold (instead of wealth or sons, in the triad, *eṣaṇātraya*). He knows quite well what *eṣaṇātraya* comprises of. He refers to them in another verse as ‘manaivi makkaḷartta īṭaṅkaḷ’³⁷.

5. Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ, in the seventh *pāyiram* verse, states that he is designing his work, titled *Kaivalyanavanītam*, in two *paṭala*-s, their names being *Tattuva viḷakkam* and *Candēkaṃ teḷital*. The Sanskrit translator follows suit and states that his work, titled *Kaivalyanavanītam*, would have two *paṭala*-s, *Tattvapradīpa* and *Samśayāndhakārapradīpa*.

कैवल्यपूर्वनवनीतसमाह्वयं तच्छास्त्रं द्विधा हि पटलं रचयामि चैकम् ।
तत्त्वप्रदीपमपरं किल संशयान्धकारप्रदीपमिति सद्गुरुपादभक्त्या ॥

However, forgetting the fact that he has named his sections as *paṭala*, he states

36. [https://archive.org/details/KaivalyaNavaneetham TamilThandava raya Swamigal 1933/page/n79/mode/1up](https://archive.org/details/KaivalyaNavaneetham_TamilThandava_raya_Swamigal_1933/page/n79/mode/1up)

37. *Tattuva viḷakkappaṭalaṃ* 13

in the first verse of second section that he is commencing the *prakaraṇa*, which is named *Sandehaprasāmana*.

Moreover he gives another name for the second section. He has changed *Samśayāndhakārapradīpa* to *Sandehaprasāmana*.

Here we may take note of another fact too. In the *Prastāvanā* verse, the translator, while naming the sections, uses a metaphor. He calls both the sections as *Pradīpa*. This may be the reason that the work, later on got to be called as *Kaivalyadīpa*. To go along with this metaphor, the commentator names his work as *Prabhā*.

Another extension of this is that the second section got to be named as *Samśayacchedapradīpaprakaraṇa*.

Another striking fact is that this metaphor of *pradīpa* has originated from a wrong translation. The name of the first section given by Taṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ is ‘Tattuvaviḷakkam.’ Here ‘viḷakkam’ means explanation. However, taking it wrongly for ‘dīpa’ (*viḷakku*), the Sanskrit translator employs the metaphor of lamp.

6. The Sanskrit composition is generally clear and elegant. However occasionally, it turns out to be ambiguous and clumsy. A comparison with the corresponding Tamil versions clearly points to the prospect of the Sanskrit version being the translation. Let us examine three - four instances.

a. In the fifth *pāyiram* verse Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ states the objective of his work. It is to inculcate the art of self realization to those who are dull-witted to get into the discipline of bondage and liberation. This is the way he expresses it: ‘*pantamum viṭuṅkāṭṭap paranta nūl pārkka māṭṭā maintarumuṇarumāru vastutattuvaṃ colvēnē*’. The Sanskrit rendering for this is a prosaic, word for word translation, the spirit behind being sweepingly drained (अनात्मबन्धेतरदर्शिशास्त्रमूढात्मनां वच्यपरोक्षतत्त्वम्). No Sanskrit scholar would employ the word *anātmabandhetaradarśīsāstram* for Vedānta, unless he is bound by some constraint.

b. In the 42nd verse of the first section, there is a verse which narrates the nature of veiling power (*āvaraṇaśakti*) of *tamogūṇa*. The Sanskrit verse is:

स्वोपमानपरमेश्वरं विना ज्ञानिनं त्वसदभानरूपवत् ।

ज्ञानलोचनपिधानकारि यत् प्रावृणोति सकलं तमो यथा ॥ ४२ ॥

What is intended is this: “It (*āvaraṇaśakti*) veils the eye of wisdom of

everybody except those of Īśvara, who is unequalled, and the realized jñānin-s. Its nature is that of ‘it is not there’ (*nāsti*) and ‘it is unconscious’ (*na bhāti*). It simply covers everything just like a dense darkness of a rainy night.” The *āvaraṇaśakti* is said to veil the nature of ABSOLUTE EXISTENCE and ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUSNESS of *Brahman*.

However the Sanskrit verse is not clear at two points. Instead of saying अनुपमम् ईश्वरं ज्ञानिनञ्च विहाय इतरेषां सर्वेषां, it says स्वोपमानपरमेश्वरं विना ज्ञानिनम्. Besides, had the phrases *nāsti* and *na bhāti* been used instead of असदभानरूपवत्, it would have been unambiguous. The Tamil version uses these Sanskrit phrases and the verse is very clear and elegant. Here is the verse:

tānikar tanakkāmīcan tanaiyuṃ taṅkaḷaittām kaṅṭa
ñānikaḷ tamaiyumanṛi nāsti na bhātiyenṛuṃ /
ūnirai uyirkaḷuḷḷilunṛarvizik kuruṭām vaṅṅaṃ
vānilaṃ ticaikaḷ mūṭum maṅṅai niciyirūḷ pōnmūṭum //

c. While explaining the Upaniṣadic wisdom that the Brahman is beyond comprehension and it is the knower himself, the Tamil version has this beautiful expression:

aṛipaṭuṃ poruḷ nīyallai aṛipaṭāpporuḷ nīyallai /
aṛiporuḷ ākum unnai anupavittarivāy nīyē /

The Sanskrit version goes as नाज्ञातस्त्वं ज्ञात एवासि न त्वं ज्ञातारं त्वां स्वानुभूत्यैव विद्धि ॥. This simply states, ‘You are not unknown. Nor you are known. You know the knower by self-experience’. The Tamil version clearly conveys that ‘You cannot be known (न ज्ञेयस्त्वं) and at the same time you are not unknowable’ (नाज्ञेयस्त्वं), which in its subtlety and beauty, is lost in the Sanskrit. The idea behind is that the self cannot be known by mind, intellect, sense organs or any other ordinary means of knowledge. It can only be experienced. One can only ‘BE IT’.

d. To convey the idea that the self is indestructible and it cannot be got rid of, there is a verse. The Sanskrit version runs as :

तप्यत्कोपवशादहं हि मरणं गच्छेयमित्यातुराः
केचित्स्वं स्वयमुत्सृजन्ति यदतः स्वात्यक्तृभावः कुतः ।
एवञ्चेच्छृणु यो वपुस्त्यजति स त्यक्ता न तु स्वं मनाक्
स्वस्मिन् क्वाप्यरुचिर्जनस्य न भवेत् कस्यापि कोपादृते ॥

The intended sense is “One cannot ask ‘In a fit of anger if somebody commits suicide, is he not getting rid of the self?’. What he leaves is not his

self, but the body. Nobody hates his own self unless he is severely agitated”. One can see the clumsiness in the expression, which make us apprehensive that it is a case of ineffective translation. Moreover the usage तप्यत्कोपवशाद् is grammatically incorrect.

e. Regarding *māyā* there is a verse:

अदृश्याऽवाच्याख्याकृतिकलनमाता भगवतो
यदि प्रोक्ता शक्तिः कथमिव च निःशेषविलयम् ।
व्रजेत् साऽभिन्ना चेत् कथमिव परात्मैक्यमयते
विमुक्तिर्नो लभ्या कथय सकलं मे गुणनिधे ॥

No Sanskritist would disagree if I say that it is not a well-crafted expression to convey the idea “How to eradicate *māyā* which is said to be beyond perception and description, and which causes ‘names and forms’? If it is identical with Brahman then ‘Non-dualism’ fails. And if it is different how come one can realize the non-dual Brahman?”.

Such compositions strengthen our apprehension that Sanskrit version is the translation and Tamil is the original. One cannot argue that all this shows author’s incompetence, as there are well-crafted verses in the Sanskrit work that attest the author’s proficiency. See, for instance, the following verses:

वस्त्रतन्तुकिरीटकण्डलनिष्ककाञ्चनकुण्डिका-
मृद्धदेवमुदीक्ष्यतामिह चैकमेव हि वस्तुतः ।
कारणाद् व्यतिरिक्तमस्ति न कार्यवस्तु कदाचने-
त्यात्ममात्रविलोकनं त्वपवादमाहुरमुं बुधाः ॥ १.३९ ॥
विक्षेपावृत्तिसंज्ञयोरतिजडात्सञ्जातयोस्त्वं गुणात्
शक्त्योर्वै तमसस्तु सम्भणितवान्विक्षेपशक्तेः कृतिम् ।
शंसत्वावरणस्य कार्यमखिलं येनैव बन्धो भवे-
दित्याख्यातवति प्रभूतविनये शिष्ये गुरुः प्राह तम् ॥ १.४० ॥
सर्वे जीवास्त्वयमिति गुरो प्रोक्तवानस्य मोक्षे
सर्वे मुक्तिं कथमतितरां नो लभन्ते वदस्व ।
सर्वव्याख्याकुशल कथयस्वैतदप्यात्ममूर्ते ॥ २.३८ ॥
माया मिथ्या तत्प्रसूतानि मिथ्या माता न स्याच्चेत्कृतः पुत्रजन्म ।
निश्चित्येत्थं सर्वमेतन्मृषेति ब्रह्म स्यास्त्वं सच्चिदानन्दरूपम् ॥ २.९१ ॥

7. The Tamil work authored by Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ has been translated into many languages (including Sanskrit). It has also been studied and commented upon in many languages. But the Sanskrit version has not

got such attention. Hence it would not be inappropriate if we presume that the Tamil version is original and the Sanskrit version its translation.

Some observations on the translation and the translator

Now, with this presumption we shall look into some aspects of the Sanskrit text.

1. Had the translator stated plainly that he is translating a celebrated work on Advaita Vedānta originally composed in Tamil language by Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ, all these wrangles could not have emerged.

2. Another fact which adds up to the complication further is that he has not changed the name of the work. He calls it as *kaivalyanavanīta* in the seventh of *prastāvanā* verses. Though he calls it by the terms *kaivalyasarpis* in the sixth verse, it can be seen that it is used as a synonym or equivalent only just to suit the meter. Similarly in the verse no.179 of the second *prakaraṇa* he uses the term *kaivalyaśāstra* in place of *kaivalyanavanītanūl* in the Tamil original. It is just the shortened version of *kaivalyanavanītasamāhvayaṃ tacchāstram* in the *Prastāvanā* verse, where he specifically states that the work is named *kaivalyanavanīta*.

3. He changes the names of the two sections of the original work. The Tamil original has the names *Tattuva viḷakkap paṭala* and *Sandehaṃ teḷital paṭala*. These terms mean ‘the *paṭala* dealing with explanation of reality’ and ‘the *paṭala* dealing with clarification of doubts’ respectively. The translator calls them as two *paṭala*-s which go by the names *Tattvapradīpa* (Lamp of reality) and *Samśayāndhakārapradīpa* (Lamp which dispels the darkness of doubts).

It may be noted that he forgets this metaphor and calls the second section as *prakaraṇa* dealing with *Sandeha praśamana* (Extinguisher of doubt).

4. The translator conveniently leaves out all the personal references made by Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ.

a. In the seventh *Pāyiram* verse Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ pays obeisance to Veṅkaṭēśa Mukunda, whom he calls ‘Liberated (*muttan*) and ‘One who moulded me’ (*kattan*)³⁸. Commentators explain this to mean ‘Salutations to Lord Venṅkaṭācalapati of Tirupati’. The Sanskrit translator omits this salutation completely.

b. Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ refers to his preceptor Nārāyaṇa with due reverence, in a verse wherein he expresses his boundless bliss on ‘Realization’.

38. *muttanai veṅkaṭēcamukundanai enaiyāṭkoṇḍa kattanai vaṇaṅki*

He explicitly states that the bliss is due to the mercy and affection of Nāraṇa (for Nārāyaṇa). The translator not only omits the reference to Nārāyaṇa, but replaces it with a verse in praise of his teacher³⁹. The translation naturally misses the emotional fervor that is experienced in the original. The original Tamil verse and its Sanskrit translations are given hereunder.

“enna puṇṇiyamō ceytēnētu pākkiyamō kāṇē-
 nannilantanilezunta nāraṇan kirupaiyālē/
 tanniyānānē nānuttarīyattai vīcukinrēn
 tanniyāninnunānē tāṇṭavamāṭukinrēn//”
 किं वा भाग्यं न जाने किमु सुकृतमहं नैव जाने प्रकृतं
 कृष्णानन्दाद्यतीन्द्रादपि विपुलकृपां प्राप्य मुक्तो धरण्याम् ।
 ‘धन्यो धन्योऽस्मि धन्यो बत बत नितरां धन्यधन्योऽस्मि भूयो’
 नृत्तं कुर्वे प्रहर्षाद्दुपरि चित्ति मदादाधुनोम्युत्तरीयम् ।।

c. In the next verse, Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ narrates how, his parents anticipated his exhilarated dance on realizing the ABSOLUTE even at his birth itself and named him Tāṇḍava. The translator leaves out the verse untranslated⁴⁰.

d. The translator not only avoids Nārāyaṇa’s name, but also inserts his own preceptor’s name. In the fifth *pāyiram* verse Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ salutes the MASTER PRECEPTOR (Sadguru), the Omnipresent Consciousness. The translator replaces Sadguru by his personal preceptor’s name Kṛṣṇa Yatīndra (here he puts it as Kṛṣṇa Yogīndra).

e. We have seen that in the very first verse, Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ, through a pun, suggestively refers to his native village Nannilam. That too is conspicuously avoided by the translator.

f. In the penultimate verse in the **RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN**, there is a verse offering salutations to one Kṛṣṇānanda yatīśvara. This verse is given in **Vera** as an invocatory verse of the second section. And the name of the preceptor is not Kṛṣṇānanda yatīśvara but Brahmānanda yatīśvara.

39. In another verse in the epilogue (muṭivurai), Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ states that it was Nārāyaṇa, his preceptor, who prompted him to complete the work *Kaivalyanavanītam* to its perfection. It is said that Nārāyaṇa appeared in Tāṇḍavarāya’s dream. This verse has not been translated into Sanskrit.

40. See the English rendering of the Tamil verse by Ramanananda Saraswathi: “How noble have my parents been that they named me Tandava (dancer) as if they even then foresaw that I would be overpowered by the joy of having realized the Self and therefore dance in ecstasy!”

Śaṅkukavi, Kṛṣṇa and the *Prabhā* commentary

The question, who then is the author of the Sanskrit translation, remains unanswered. The fact that the work was well known in the name of Śaṅkukavi is attested by Sri Govinda Iyer and R. S. Vadhyar & Sons. They present the work as ‘authored by Śaṅkukavi’ in their editions. Besides, the edited work contains a verse where Śaṅkukavi is said to be the author (महाफलं शङ्कुकेवरियं कृतिर्महात्मनां कर्णवतंसतामियात्). But the fact is that nobody else has seen the manuscript, which the publishers (R. S. Vadhyar) used, which is said to have been handed over by ‘one of our esteemed and revered friends, who chooses to be anonymous’. So also is the case with Govinda Iyer’s manuscript/transcript.

The Adyar manuscript of the work does not have the cited verse which specifies that the author is Śaṅkukavi. The *Prabhā* commentary furnished therein calls the work *Kaivalyadīpa*. This name does not appear anywhere inside the text. The commentary does not give the name of the author (of the text) either. From external evidences scholars presume that Kṛṣṇa is the author. And the authorship of the translation was ascribed to the commentator, which seems in all probability, to be wrong.

Let us briefly examine the facts which hint at the common authorship. We have seen that the translator mentions his preceptor’s name in three verses inside the work. In the fifth *Prastāvanā* verse, he calls his preceptor as Kṛṣṇayogīndra (in place of Nāraṇa / Nārāyaṇa in the Tamil original). In the 175th verse he refers to him as Kṛṣṇayatīndra (again in place of Nāraṇa / Nārāyaṇa in the Tamil original). And in the penultimate verse (in the **RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN**) he refers to him as Kṛṣṇayatīśvara. *Prabhā* commentary also has a verse (invocatory verse) in which the author offers salutations to his preceptor Kṛṣṇayogīndra. And the very same verse of **RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN**, in which the name Kṛṣṇayatīśvara appears, is given as the invocatory verse for the second section in the *Prabhā* commentary.

There is another verse in which the name of Kṛṣṇayatīndra appears. In the **RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN**, it appears among the four verses given outside the text proper as a separate invocation. **Kumbha** edition also has it in the same place. It runs as

अमृतमतुलनित्यानन्दसान्द्रस्वरूपं
विदितसकलवेदान्तार्थतात्पर्यनिष्ठम् ।
मृदितसकलदोषं मोक्षकामैः सुसेव्यं
गुरुवरमहमीडे कृष्णसंज्ञं यतीन्द्रम् ॥

In the **Vera**, it is one among the three verses given as invocation by the author of *Prabhā* commentary.

Hence this is the core point. The text (Sanskrit translation) and the commentary refer to a same person as the preceptor. Besides, some verses appearing outside the text proper in the work, as well as its commentary, also refer to the same person as the preceptor. How could we account for this? Before going into the issue, let us have a clear picture of the verses that are given outside the text proper. In **Kumbha**, **RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN** we get four prefixed to the text proper. They are

1) *śrīgurucaraṇadvandvaṃ*..... (Obeisance to the *sadguru* – not personal teacher)

2) *ekāntasannihitam*.... (Praise for the *ātmatattva* (absolute consciousness) which is very familiar to everyone, but seldom attended to)

3) *yadīyavāksūrya* .. (Praise for a preceptor Śaṅkara, who may be Śaṅkarācārya) and

4) *amṛtamatulanityānanda* ... (Again a prayer It is meant for the preceptor named Kṛṣṇayatīndra).

Apart from this there is another prayer-verse for guru in the beginning of the second section (**RSV1**, **RSV2** and **GN**). This is *yasyāṅghripadmavigaḷan* etc. It is also intended to the *sadguru* (*Dakṣiṇāmūrti*) and not a personal teacher.

Out of these five, three, viz. *yasyāṅghripadmavigaḷan* ., *yadīyavāksūrya*.., and *amṛtamatulanityānanda*... are given as the invocation in the *Prabhā* commentary.

Now there are two possibilities, when we think of an explanation. Either, the author and the commentator are different persons having a common preceptor, or they are identical. The second case is out of question for reasons shown before. If they are different persons and fellow students, all the verses in praise of common preceptor appearing outside the text can be taken as those of the commentator. But the manuscripts used by RS Vadhyar and Govinda Iyer do not contain the commentary. However these verses were there. Therefore the first case also is ruled out.

Hence to solve the issue, a conjecture is proposed here. The author, Śaṅkukavi, some time after the composition of the translation, might have thought of writing some prefatory verses containing obeisance to his preceptor (since the references and salutations to his teacher appearing inside the text are only substitutes for Nārāyaṇa/ Nāraṇa, the teacher of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmika!).

He might have written some verses. It seems that it is the author's first draft which got circulated, along with these verses, without getting his finishing touch. During the course of migration, some of these verses might have been treated as a part of the composition. In some manuscripts and oral transmissions these might have been treated as additional verses outside the text proper. Our conjecture is supported by the fact that the text travelled through copies of manuscripts. Somewhere in the beginning years of the 20th century, Govinda Iyer gets a copy of it from the Vattalkuṇḍu Agrahāram of Madurai in Tamil Nadu. In the year 1916, a transcript is being prepared from a manuscript belonging to Sri Sundararama Sastri of Madurai⁴¹. And this manuscript contains a commentary (*Prabhā*) which bears the signature of a Keralite authorship⁴². Our conjecture that the first draft of the translation got good circulation even before getting the finishing touch from the author would explain another issue also. The presence of some stylistic improprieties, and grammatical, and metrical incongruities in the work⁴³ would also be accounted by this. It may be recalled that the Adyar transcript of the *Prabhā* commentary retains some correct readings along with several mutilated readings.

Hence, until we get further conclusive evidences or some manuscripts of the Sanskrit translation, it may not be inappropriate to hold that the author of Sanskrit *Kaivalyanavanītam* is Śaṅkukavi and that the author of *Prabhā* commentary on it is one of his fellow students, who might be Kṛṣṇa.

Another point which distinguishes Śaṅkukavi is that he was an ardent *upāsaka* of 'Manonmanī'. He refers to himself as one who has been purified of all his sins, inhibitions, and blockades by the wisdom of 'Manonmanī' (*manonmanījñānavidhūta pāpmanah*). This fact is not even alluded in the Adyar transcript.

Present Edition

The present edition of Sanskrit *Kaivalyanavanīta* contains a new Sanskrit commentary named *Kṛṣṇapriyā*. It is authored by editor himself. Though the

41. See "Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts", ALRC, Vol. IX, pp.790-792.

42. See supra p. 35

43. The following verses have metrical incongruity: कैवल्यं ज्ञानयोगाद्यदि भवति गुरो (2.48), किं वा शास्त्रं वदति कुहनां (2.50), कृत्वा पञ्चैव भूतान्यपि च (1.34), ईशज्ञानगुरुस्वरूप भगवन्नीशेन (2.37) and आद्या सा हि शुभेच्छा (2.150).

And there are solecisms such as शृणुष्व (1.43), प्रोच्य (2.3), वदस्व (2.4), आचरन्ते (2.28), पतन्ते (2.54) and एषैवानन्दकोशः (1.26).

Sanskrit translation of Śaṅkukavi has some shortcomings, it is a worthy composition. And the *Prabhā* commentary on it is not unequivocal and forthright. Hence a simple and forthright commentary is called for. The *Kṛṣṇapriyā* is an attempt to meet this requirement. Each verse is followed by an ‘anvaya’ (prose paraphrase). And then a simple and clear explanation of the purport is furnished. Special care has been taken to keep the exposition straightforward. Every verse is introduced with a brief preface.

Much care has been taken to find and adopt the best of the variants while editing the text. The **RSV** edition has been taken as the main source for the text. We have consulted all the previous editions (except **Kumbha**, which is incomplete) viz. **RSV1**, **RSV 2**, **GN** and **Vera**. The **RSV** editions (both **RSV1** and **RSV 2**) contain many wrong readings. Though Dr Srinivasan has made a good job in fixing better readings utilising the Adyar transcript (when he brought out his edition, **Vera** had not come out), there are many errors in his edition which need correction. And the **Vera**, as has been noted, contains an abundance of typographical errors and wrong readings. However, the commentary is a very good source which has retained correct (or most appropriate) readings. I have consulted all these editions and the Adyar transcript. The original Tamil text of *Kaivalyanavanītam* has also been consulted for understanding the purport of the text properly. In many instances, it has also helped in determining the correct reading. It is the Madurai edition of the text (with Isur Sachchidananda Swami’s commentary)⁴⁴ which I have consulted.

For getting into the intricacies of the philosophical concepts, the metrical Malayalam rendering of Tamil *Kaivalyanavanītam*, brought out with an elaborate exposition by Thiruvallam Bhaskaran Nair (1966)⁴⁵, was of great assistance. Sri Bhaskaran Nair’s exposition contains citations from classical Tamil works on Advaita Vedānta such as those of Tattuvārāyar (*Pāṭuturai*), Tāyumānavar, and Kaṇṇuḍaiya Vaḷḷalār (*Oziviloḍukkam*), apart from Sanskrit works such as *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, *Pañcadaśī*, *Aṣṭāvakraḡītā* and the *Bhagavadḡītā*. The English translation of Sri Ramanananda Swami was also very useful. The **Kumbha** edition of Govinda Iyer, though incomplete, has been of immense help.

44. *Kaivalyanavanītam* of Tāṇḍavarāya Svāmikaḷ, (with Isur Sacchidananda Swami’s Tamil commentary), Sri Meenambikai Press, Madurai, 1988.

45. *Kaivalyanavanītam Metrical malyalam Rendering*, Thiruvallam Bhaskaran Nair, Arulnilayam Publishers, Ambalathara, Thiruvananthapuram, 1966.

I have followed the text of **RSV** editions in the arrangement of the verses. The only alteration made is that the four benedictory verses outside the text are given a separate (common) title, *Guruvandanam*. As to the text, I have adopted the best of the readings from all the four editions noted above, and have given the other variants in the footnote. In some instances I have adopted entirely new reading for some words⁴⁶. And in two instances I have made a conjectural insertion of words, which were dropped in all the previous editions⁴⁷. In all these cases I have recorded the emendations in footnotes with a brief justification wherever necessary.

The edition is not based on all known manuscript witnesses, and may not claim to be a critical edition. However, I hope that the work will be reckoned by scholars as a step ahead in the textual criticism of *Kaivalyanavanītam*.

46. See for instance, our footnotes on verses No. 1.74, 1.85, 2.28, 2.118, 2.134, 2.161 and 2.169.

47. See For instance, our footnotes on verses No. 2.122 and 2.142