

Coloring Tradition: Appayyadīkṣita's Invention of Śrīkaṇṭha's Vedānta

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Apart from his voluminous, immensely learned, and spectacularly successful contributions to the fields of Hermeneutics (Mīmāṃsā), non-dualist Metaphysics (Advaita Vedānta), and poetics, the 16th century South Indian polymath Appayyadīkṣita is famed for reviving from obscurity the moribund Śaivite Vedānta tradition represented by the (12th century?) *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* of Śrīkaṇṭha. Appayya's voluminous commentary on this work, his *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā*, not only reconstitutes Śrīkaṇṭha's system, but radically transforms it, making into a springboard for Appayya's own highly original critiques of standard views of Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. Appayya addresses long sections of his commentary to matters dealt with glancingly or not at all in the root text, drawing conclusions which Śrīkaṇṭha nowhere endorses. Furthermore, the distinctive positions Appayya develops in the *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā* feed into Appayya's other works in ways that have so far been largely ignored by modern scholars. For example, most or all the discussions Appayya's *Pūrvottaramīmāṃsāvādanakṣatramālā*, twenty-seven essays on scattered topics in Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta, build on arguments first advanced in the *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā*. I will specifically examine Appayya's totally original theory of the signification of adjectives—first developed in the *Śivārkamaṇidīpikā*—the full elaboration and defense of which takes up fully sixteen of the twenty-seven essays that make up the *Pūrvottaramīmāṃsāvādanakṣatramālā*.