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## Nīlakaṇṭha's Teachers and Gurus, Part 1: Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita\*

The Sanskrit author Nīlakaṇṭha Caturdhara lived in Banaras in the latter half of the seventeenth century. He is most remembered for his commentary on the Mahābhārata, the Bhāratabhāvadīpa (henceforth Dīpa). As readers of the Dīpa will have noticed, the commentary's general plan of interpretation is to read the Mahābhārata as an Advaita text. Nīlakaṇṭha carried out this plan in an innovative way.<sup>1</sup> Readers of the Dīpa will also have noticed that it has idiosyncratic features by comparison with earlier commentaries on the epic: glossing with anachronistic or vernacular terms, a penchant for bringing in verses from the Ṛgveda to justify unexpected interpretations, and so on.<sup>2</sup>

How is it that Nīlakaṇṭha came to write his commentary in this novel and idiosyncratic way? Part of finding the answer to that question lies in recovering what we can of Nīlakaṇṭha's intellectual and social context. In doing so, it would be useful to know about the teachers and *gurus* Nīlakaṇṭha mentioned in his works, for obvious reasons. At least three of Nīlakaṇṭha's teachers are known to us from other sources. In his works, Nīlakaṇṭha called them Lakṣmaṇa or Lakṣmaṇārya, Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha, and Dhīreśa Mīśra from Hammīrapura.<sup>3</sup> In this study I will focus on Lakṣmaṇa.<sup>4</sup> Judging by what Nīlakaṇṭha said about him in every work he wrote, Lakṣmaṇa was his most important intellectual influence; he was also his Advaitin *guru*.

In an article published in 1946, P.K. Gode proposed that the *guru* whom Nīlakaṇṭha called Lakṣmaṇārya was to be identified with the mid-seventeenth century Banarsi figure, Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita, who is perhaps best known for an

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<sup>1</sup> See Minkowski 2005a.

<sup>2</sup> See Minkowski 2004a, Printz 1911, and Minkowski 2005b.

<sup>3</sup> The other teachers and *gurus* Nīlakaṇṭha mentions are: his father, Govinda, his uncle, Śiva or Sāmbaśiva, Gaṅgādhara Pola, Cintāmaṇi, and Gopāla. Other than what Nīlakaṇṭha tells us, very little is known about these figures, who will be discussed elsewhere. Nīlakaṇṭha also mentions a *sannyāsin* called Uttamaśloka Tīrtha, about whom see below (p. 41ff.).

<sup>4</sup> Dhīreśa and Nārāyaṇa will be treated in a companion article.

Ayurvedic treatise he wrote, the *Yogacandrikā*.<sup>5</sup> As I will show in what follows, Gode was quite right to make this identification, but there are more reasons to think so than Gode provided in his brief study.

Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita wrote on topics other than Āyurveda; among other things, he composed a poem on Advaita themes and commentaries on two works of *kāvya*. His Advaitin approach to the two *kāvya*s was influential on Nīlakaṇṭha, and his choice of texts on which to comment reveals something about Nīlakaṇṭha's own hermeneutic approach to the Vedic and Vedantic canon of works. Furthermore, Lakṣmaṇa's version of nondualism helps us to understand Nīlakaṇṭha's predominating intellectual commitment to a peculiar sort of Advaita.

In what follows, I shall show the importance that Nīlakaṇṭha attached to his *guru*, and consider the sources that we have for learning about Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita other than from Nīlakaṇṭha's statements. These sources consist especially in passages from Lakṣmaṇa's own writings. From them we can confirm Gode's identification, and trace Lakṣmaṇa's background and placement in the scholarly and religious world of Banaras at mid-century. I shall consider several elements of Lakṣmaṇa's works that are relevant for understanding Nīlakaṇṭha, and devote particular attention to an unpublished work, a commentary on the *Raghuvamśa* called the *Advaitasudhā*. From these considerations, the ways in which Lakṣmaṇa influenced Nīlakaṇṭha become clear.

#### NĪLAKAṆṬHA ON HIS GURU, LAKṢMAṆĀRYA

Nīlakaṇṭha pays homage to Lakṣmaṇa in the *maṅgala* or *ādivākya* verses of almost all of his known compositions. He also pays homage to Lakṣmaṇa in the *puṣpikā* or concluding verses, and there are other renderings of tribute elsewhere. As there are quite a few of these verses, I shall confine myself to discussing a selection.

Nīlakaṇṭha variously calls his teacher Lakṣmaṇa, Lakṣmaṇārya, i.e., the revered Lakṣmaṇa, and Gurulakṣmaṇa or Lakṣmaṇaguru. He is the only teacher whom Nīlakaṇṭha regularly singles out as his *guru*. When Lakṣmaṇa is mentioned in a verse that gives a list of teachers, he tends to be afforded a place of honour, usually as early in the verse as the metrical shape will allow. When there are a string of verses of *namaskāra* to the teachers, as there are at the beginning of the *Dīpa* on the *Ādiparvan* and on the *Harivamśa*, Lakṣmaṇa's mention takes

<sup>5</sup> Gode 1946.

up an entire verse, comes immediately after the opening verse to Gopāla the deity, and is sometimes returned to later in the string. When on the other hand, Nīlakaṅṭha mentions only one *guru* in his *ādivākya* or *puṣpikā*, it is invariably Lakṣmaṇa.

It is most useful to begin with a verse in which Nīlakaṅṭha describes the subjects he learned from his various teachers. A version of this verse appears at the conclusion of the Dīpa on the Mokṣadharmā section of the Śāntiparvan.<sup>6</sup>

*vedānte lakṣmaṇāryaṃ kratuvidhivivṛtau tīrthanārāyaṇāryaṃ  
tarke dhīreśamiśrān phaṇipatibhaṇitau polagaṅgādharāryam /  
vede sāṅge pitṛvyam śivam atha pītaraṇḍakṣiṇāmūrtyupāstau  
śraute cintāmaṇiṃ yaḥ śaraṇam upagato bhūmni gopāladevam //*

In this verse, Nīlakaṅṭha says that he learned Vedānta from Lakṣmaṇārya, who is mentioned first.<sup>7</sup> He also learned Mīmāṃsā from Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha, Nyāya from Dhīreśa Miśra, the Yogaśāstra from Gaṅgādhara Pola, the Veda with its ancillary sciences from his uncle, Śiva, and the worship of Dakṣiṇāmūrti (i.e., Śiva) from his father (Govinda). He learned Śrauta ritual practice from Cintāmaṇi, and was supported in all subjects by Gopāla, who in this context is probably both the deity and a human teacher.<sup>8</sup> There are verses elsewhere in which Nīlakaṅṭha reproduces this list, or parts of it, though without specifying the subjects that the various teachers taught him.<sup>9</sup>

The verses of homage to Lakṣmaṇa describe him in metaphysical terms. For Nīlakaṅṭha, Lakṣmaṇārya is the Self; he is *brahman*. He is the referent of the Upaniṣads, the goal of *yajñas* and yogic practice alike. The second *maṅgala* verse in the Dīpa on the Vanaparvan says this in the most straightforward terms: desire to learn about him is gained from the performance of ritual practices, with *yajñas* chief among them; one-pointed mental focus on him is sought

<sup>6</sup> A variant version is found in Nīlakaṅṭha's commentary on the Rudrasārasaṃgraha. See Appendix A, 1a. On this verse, see Gode 1946: 5-6.

<sup>7</sup> *vedānte lakṣmaṇāryam*. Syntactically the verse is a relative clause describing Nīlakaṅṭha, who took refuge in teacher x (in the accusative) for subject y (in the locative).

<sup>8</sup> In the variant version, he learned the Veda, the worship of Śiva as well as *ācāra* from his uncle, Śiva, and does not mention his father. The *ādivākya* for the Dīpa on the Āpaddharmaparvan devotes its first verse to Gopāla, as the deity, but then mentions him again in a list of *gurus* in the second verse, where Gopāla is probably a human teacher: *gopālanārāyaṇalakṣmaṇāryān, dhīreśagaṅgādharaṇilakaṅṭhān / cintāmaṇiṃ sām̐baśivam ca natvā, vivṛṇma āpadgatarājadharmān //*. See further Appendix A, 1c. Thus it is possible that Nīlakaṅṭha is exploiting ambiguity in this verse, and refers simultaneously to a polymathic teacher here.

<sup>9</sup> *śrīnārāyaṇalakṣmaṇau tatapadaṃ dhīreśagaṅgādharaṇi, gopālaṃ ca nidhāya cetasi śivam cintāmaṇiṃ cādadat / parvasv āśramavāsikādiṣu caturṣv ārabhyate bhārate, pūrvācāryamatānugena viduṣā bhāvapradīpo 'dbhutaḥ //*. See similarly Appendix A, 1c.

through (yogic) mental practices such as *saṃyama*. Nīlakaṇṭha serves Lakṣmaṇārya, the *sadguru*, *brahman*, the adornment of a family of knowers of *brahman*.<sup>10</sup>

The significance of Lakṣmaṇārya for Nīlakaṇṭha is made clearest in the second verse with which he opens the commentary on the Ādiparvan and the Harivaṃśa. The verse comes after one devoted to the deity Gopāla as the inner reality, so fine as to be invisible even to the inner sight.<sup>11</sup> In the second verse, Lakṣmaṇa is the treasure kept guarded in the mansion of Nīlakaṇṭha's being. Logic, says Nīlakaṇṭha, is the unreliable, outcaste watchman who protects the dwelling from outside, accosting thieves. Mīmāṃsā is the doorman. Sāṅkhya (the treasurer) counts the multitude of (the fortune's) good qualities. This ultimate fortune has been deposited on the (throne) of Nīlakaṇṭha's heart by the Upaniṣads, who are the team of porters (*vāhavrnda*), while the throne has been cleansed by Yoga. Śrī Lakṣmaṇārya rules the world. Śiva and the rest are only particles of him.<sup>12</sup>

Elsewhere, the characterization of Lakṣmaṇa in these ultimate terms can include the points of doctrine or Vedantic textual practice that occupy Nīlakaṇṭha in the body of the text which the verses introduce. In Nīlakaṇṭha's treatise on Vedānta, the Vedāntakataka, at the beginning of the commentary on Brahmasūtra I.3, Lakṣmaṇa is described as the one *brahman*, the subject of the Brahmasūtra, to which the various Upaniṣadic passages discussed in the *adhikaraṇas* of that *pāda* and the following one uniformly refer.<sup>13</sup> In the second

<sup>10</sup> Dīpa on the Vanaparvan, *maṅgala* vs. 2: *yajjijñāsā labhyate yajñamukhyair, yatraikāgryam prārthyate saṃyamādyaiḥ / taṃ seve 'haṃ sadgurum lakṣmaṇāryam, brahma brahmajñānivaṃśāvatamsam //*. See further Appendix A, 1d. The last phrase in the verse, *brahmajñānivaṃśāvatamsa*, can be read another way, as giving the name of Lakṣmaṇa's family, *Brahmajñānin*. This family name (or epithet) appears in Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita's writings, as we shall see (p. 40).

<sup>11</sup> Dīpa on the Ādiparvan, *maṅgala* vs. 1, *pāda* c: *taṃ pratyagdṛgadṛśyam akṣaram aṇum*.

<sup>12</sup> Dīpa on the Ādiparvan, vs. 2: *bāhyaḥ stenābhībhāṣī bahir udavasitaṃ pāti tarko 'pratiṣṭho, mīmāṃsā prātihāryam bhajati gunagaṇam yasya saṃkhyāti sāmkhyaḥ / hṛtpīṭhe yogaśuddhe nihitam upaniṣadvāhavrndaiḥ param me, bhāgyam śrīlakṣmaṇāryo jagati vijayate yasya leśaḥ śivādyāḥ //*. See further Appendix A, 1e.

<sup>13</sup> Vedāntakataka, *maṅgala* vs. on *samanvaya* section, part three: *dyubhvādyādharabhūmākṣaraparadaharo bhāsako 'ṅuṣṭhamātro, devaiḥ śravyo na śūdrair dhavanakaraparajyotirākāśadhīsthaḥ / avyakte 'gnyādyajotte vapuṣi sa nṛtamāḥ[?] sarvathā khādihetuḥ, puṃkartā vākya-mṛgyaḥ prakṛtir iti girāṃ gocaro lakṣmaṇo 'vyāt //*. A great deal is compressed into this verse, with which Nīlakaṇṭha opens his commentary on BrSū I.3 and I.4. These two sections of the Brahmasūtra are devoted to showing that *brahman*, and not the Sāṅkhya principle of *pradhāna*, is the referent of numerous passages of the Upaniṣads and other Vedic literature, in which various functions, entities, beings are extolled. The verse follows the order of the *adhikaraṇas* of these two sections of the Brahmasūtra, as enumerated by Śaṅkara, which, together with their traditional titles, is as follows: *dyubhvādi* (I.3.1), *bhūman* (I.3.2), *akṣara* (I.3.3), *īkṣati* (I.3.4), *dahara* (I.3.5),

*maṅgala* verse for the Sabhāparvan, Lakṣmaṇa is the Ātman, which is also the Lord, as experienced by individual minds.<sup>14</sup>

Nīlakaṇṭha also implies that Lakṣmaṇa is the inspiration for the more ingenious textual moves that he makes in the Dīpa. The final *maṅgala* verse in the Dīpa for the Ādiparvan, for the Mokṣadharmā section of the Śāntiparvan, and for the Harivaṃśa is a *dvisandhāna* verse, that is, designed to be read on two levels:

*uttāneṣv iha kośavigrahabalaṃ padyeṣu naivāsṛitam  
gambhīreṣu na setavo na vihitāḥ kūtānanasphoṭitāḥ /  
na chinnā na tamaścarānanatātir bhaktānanāhlāditā  
no dīnā na vibhīṣaṇāś ca vihitāḥ śrīlakṣmaṇāryaśritaiḥ //*<sup>15</sup>

*anukṛti* (I.3.6), *pramīta* (I.3.7), *devatā* (I.3.8), *apaśūdra* (I.3.9), *kampana* (I.3.10), *jyotis* (I.3.11), *arthāntaravyapadeśa* (I.3.12), *suṣuptyutkrānti* (I.3.13), *ānumānika* (I.4.1), *camasa* (I.4.2), *saṃkhyopasaṃgraha* (I.4.3), *kāraṇatva* (I.4.4), *bālāki* (I.4.5), *vākyānvaya* (I.4.6), *prakṛti* (I.4.7), and the last, to which Nīlakaṇṭha does not refer, *sarvavyākhyāna* (I.4.8). The traditional titles of the *adhikaraṇas* are often derived from the first word of each *sūtra*, sometimes from the term in the *śruti* which is under consideration, and sometimes from the topic more generally conceived. In this verse Nīlakaṇṭha alludes to each of the *adhikaraṇas* in order, in one of these three ways, following Śāṅkara's interpretation. A translation of the verse (with annotations that coordinate it with the traditional titles) would then be: "May Lakṣmaṇa provide aid, who (as *brahman*) is the subject of the (Upaniṣadic) statements (discussed in the *adhikaraṇas* of Brahmasūtra I.3 and I.4, viz.) as the substrate of heaven, earth and the rest (*dyubhvādyādihāra*); as the abundance (*bhūman*); as the imperishable (*akṣara*); as the higher (being as the object of meditative seeing) (*para*); as the small (space in the heart) (*dahara*); as the shining one (in imitation of whom other lights shine) (*bhāsaka*); as the one who is (measured to be) the size of the thumb (*aṅguṣṭhamātra*); as fit to be studied by the gods (*devaiḥ śravyah*); but not by the Śūdras (*na śūdraiḥ*); as the one who causes beings to tremble (*dhavanakara*); as the higher light (*parajyotis*); as the (higher) ether (for the Upaniṣads refer to it as something different from the material element and the soul) (*ākāśa*); as located in the sentience (for the Upaniṣads describe it as different from the body in sleep and at death) (*dhīstha*); as the highest Man (*nṛtama*) present in the unmanifest (despite the Sāṅkhya view that this is the *pradhāna*) (*avyakta*); in what arises from the unborn (mentioned in the Upaniṣads as consisting of) fire (water, and food) (*agnyādyajottha*); and in the body (in the form of the five principles enumerated in the Upaniṣads as beginning with breath) (*vapus*); as in every way the cause of the spatial element and the rest of creation (*sarvathā khādihetuh*); as the creator of persons (whose creation is the world, as expressed in the Upaniṣads) (*pumkarṭṛ*); who is to be sought through study of the Upaniṣadic statements (as their connected meaning) (*vākyamṛgya*); and who is the material cause of the creation (*prakṛti*)."<sup>15</sup> See further Appendix A, 1f. For further explanation of the content of these *adhikaraṇas*, see Ghate 1960: 59-68.

<sup>14</sup> *jīve bhujih svaparasṛstavapuryujeva, yatreśatāparadhīyā nijamāyayā vā / sṛṣṭair upādhibhir asaṃgacitāv apīṣṭā, tasmīn mamāstu ratir ātmani lakṣmaṇārye //*. "Let my devotion be to Lakṣmaṇārya, who is my own Self, and who as such, though he is without attachment, is believed to have life-experience in a soul as if in conjunction with a body that has been created by himself or by unenlightened souls, due to the limitations that have been created by his own *māyā* or by their thoughts directed to his being Lord." See further Appendix A, 1g. Cf. Sastri 1935: 9-19.

<sup>15</sup> See further Appendix A, 1h. This verse is discussed in more detail in Minkowski 2005a: 239.

On one level, Lakṣmaṇārya is the revered Lakṣmaṇa, without whose help Nīlakaṇṭha would not have been able to complete the commentary, consulting lexicons, dissolving compounds correctly, solving the problems of difficult or intransigent verses, and so on. At the same time, *lakṣmaṇārya* refers to the elder of Lakṣmaṇa, that is, Rāma. On this level the verse can be read to mean that without Rāma the war (against Rāvaṇa), undertaken without army or treasury, would have been unsuccessful. Nor could the bridge have been built over the deep waters, and so on. It might seem odd that Nīlakaṇṭha would turn to the Rāmāyaṇa at this point in a display of poetic virtuosity, but it is probably not simply the coincidence of Lakṣmaṇa's name. The involvement of Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita in the literary juxtaposition of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata will be discussed further below.

It should be noted here that Nīlakaṇṭha's son, Govinda, also wrote a treatise on Vedānta, the *Vedāntatātparyanivedana*.<sup>16</sup> In one of its *maṅgala* verses, Govinda echoes the sentiments of his father, to the effect that he was enlightened by Śrī Guru Lakṣmaṇa.<sup>17</sup>

Nīlakaṇṭha, therefore, made clear that Lakṣmaṇa was his Vedantic *guru*. As such Lakṣmaṇa was for Nīlakaṇṭha the Vedantic *brahman*, Being itself. In that sense he was the goal of Nīlakaṇṭha's studies and philosophical efforts. Nīlakaṇṭha implied, furthermore, that Lakṣmaṇa was the inspiration for some distinctive literary features of his approach to the Mahābhārata.

#### OTHER SOURCES ON LAKṢMAṆA PAṆḌITA: HIS OWN WORKS

The main source for information about Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita is to be found in his own writings. There is also a document from 1657 C.E., which was signed by Lakṣmaṇa in Banaras.<sup>18</sup>

Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita wrote the following independent works that we know of: the *Yogacandrikā*, a treatise on Āyurveda, the *Siddhāntasarvasva*, an Advaita

<sup>16</sup> The work is unpublished, but a manuscript of the text is described as no. 195 in Sastri 1900-1911: 2/175. There is another manuscript in Lahore, accession number 5693, described as catalogue no. 908 in Labhu Ram 1941: 64. The latter manuscript is described as 84 leaves in extent.

<sup>17</sup> *gopālasaṃcintanavīradoṣaḥ prabodhitāḥ śrīgurulakṣmaṇena / vedāntatātparyanivedanena svabodhaśuddhiṃ karavāṇi satsu //*. See further Appendix A, li.

<sup>18</sup> See below, n. 57.

work, and a text called the Paramahamsasamhitā. Of the three, only the first has been published.<sup>19</sup>

Lakṣmaṇa also wrote commentaries on two works of *kāvya*: the Sāracandrikā, on Kavirāja's master work of *dvisandhāna* poetry, the Rāghavapāṇḍavīya, and a commentary on the first chapter of Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa, called the Sārasvatādvaitasudhā or Advaitasudhā. The Sāracandrikā was published long ago. The Advaitasudhā has not been published, but there are extant manuscripts of the work in Alwar,<sup>20</sup> the Bhandarkar Institute (BORI),<sup>21</sup> the Anup Sanskrit Library,<sup>22</sup> and elsewhere.<sup>23</sup> Gode discussed the BORI manuscript and furnished a list of works cited in it, while Peterson provided lengthy passages from the beginning and conclusion of the work in the "Extracts" section of his Alwar catalogue.<sup>24</sup>

#### LAKṢMAṆA PAṆḌITA'S FAMILY

In the above-mentioned works Lakṣmaṇa says quite a bit about his family and his education, and also describes the motivations for his move to Banaras.<sup>25</sup> His father was Datta Sūri, of the Kauṇḍinya *gotra*, son of Viśvanātha, and his mother was Gojā, of the Ātreya *gotra*. Lakṣmaṇa had two elder brothers, Gaṇeśa and Raghunātha, and a younger brother Viṭṭhala. The elder brothers lived in Banaras. His mother's brothers, Nāgeśa and Nārāyaṇa, were his teachers in Āyurveda. The mother's family were traditionally *vaidyas*, and Gojā's father was the *vaidya* Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita.

<sup>19</sup> The Yogacandrikā was edited by Asa Kumari and Premavati Tivari. There is an extant manuscript of the Siddhāntasarvasva in the Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner; see Advaita MS no. 206, serial no. 6575 in Kunhan Raja – Krishna Sarma 1944. The manuscript was owned by Dīkṣita Maṇirāma, Anūpasimha's principal court pandit. It is 58 folios in length. On the text see Sarma 1947. There are several extant copies of the Paramahamsasamhitā; see CC I/325 and NCC XI/174. In the Advaitasudhā, Lakṣmaṇa refers to another work that he wrote called the Sadānanda, though it does not appear to have survived. Cf. BORI MS no. 143 of 1902-07, *kalāpa* 1, f. 57v, l. 2: *upapāditaṃ caitad asmābhiḥ sadānandanāmnī svanibandhe*.

<sup>20</sup> Peterson 1892: 19, no. 484.

<sup>21</sup> BORI MS no. 143 of 1902-07.

<sup>22</sup> Kunhan Raja – Krishna Sarma 1944: 218, Kāvya MS no. 141, serial no. 2922.

<sup>23</sup> Labhu Ram 1941: 264, no. 4541, MS no. 6924.

<sup>24</sup> For some discussion of this work and citation of passages, see Peterson 1892: 19 and 39-41, Sarma 1944, and Gode 1946.

<sup>25</sup> Some of the following information about Lakṣmaṇa has been presented several times, and where it has, I shall summarize without demonstration. See Sarma 1944, Gode 1946, Wujastyk forthcoming, and Kumari – Tivari 1998: xxi-xxix. Whatever additional information is provided is supported by the quoted original sources.



At the conclusion of the Advaitasudhā Lakṣmaṇa mentions that the family's Vedic *śākhā* was the Taittirīya,<sup>26</sup> of the Kṛṣṇayajurveda. More pertinent for our considerations here is that Lakṣmaṇa refers to his father as a devotee of both Śiva and Viṣṇu.<sup>27</sup> The family's name, or distinctive epithet, furthermore, was *brahmajñānin*. In the colophons of the Advaitasudhā, Lakṣmaṇa uses the fixed phrase *brahmajñānivamaśāvatamsa* in referring to members of his family.<sup>28</sup> This fixed phrase also appears toward the end of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā.<sup>29</sup> Alternative poetic forms of the family name appear elsewhere in Lakṣmaṇa's works: *paramatattvavitsantati* and *brahmajñānavamaśajaladhi*.<sup>30</sup> I discuss the family name at some length, for it makes the identification of Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita as Nīlakaṇṭha's *guru* more secure. This is because, as we have seen, Nīlakaṇṭha describes his *guru*, Lakṣmaṇārya, as the adornment of the Brahmajñānin family,<sup>31</sup> using the same fixed phrase that was preferred by Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita.

Given his mother's name, Gojā, and his younger brother's name, Viṭṭhala, it appears likely that the family was Maharashtrian. We are at least certain that they lived in the South. Lakṣmaṇa describes moving from the south to Banaras, leaving behind riches to take up an austere existence in the service of Viśvanātha (the principal form of Śiva in the city), while seeking the bliss of Being.<sup>32</sup>

#### LAKṢMAṆA PAṆḌITA'S TEACHERS AND GURUS

Aside from his education in Āyurveda by his maternal uncles, and in the Veda by his father, Lakṣmaṇa speaks of being numbered among those instructed by

<sup>26</sup> Advaitasudhā, *puṣpikā* vs. 6ab, BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 2-3: *sāṅgopāṅgatvaṃgad-āmnāyamūrteḥ, kauṇḍīnyāntastaittirīyasya tasya putro 'nvarthaḥ śroutaniṣṭhāvasiṣṭhaḥ prā-durbhūto dattanāmā variṣṭhaḥ //*. "To him, who was a Taittirīya(ka) in the Kauṇḍīnya gotra, an embodiment of the tradition of the Vedas brimming with Aṅgas and Upāṅgas, was born an excellent son worthy of him, called Datta, a very Vasiṣṭha in his proficiency in Śrauta" (said of Viśvanātha, Lakṣmaṇa's grandfather).

<sup>27</sup> Advaitasudhā, *puṣpikā* vs. 7a, BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 3: *hariharadṛḍhabhaktiḥ*. Nīlakaṇṭha identifies himself as *hariharapara* at the end of the Vedastutiṭīkā, in its concluding verse; see SB MS no. 15436 (Shukla 1957: 120-121), f. 55v, l. 10.

<sup>28</sup> See Appendix A, 2a. The colophon for the Siddhāntasarvasva is much the same. See Sarma 1947: 40.

<sup>29</sup> *bhāsvadbrahmajñānivamaśāvatamsaśrīmadgojādattasūriprasūteḥ / hṛdyo vidvallakṣmaṇasya prayāso viśveśasya prītaye śāśvad astu //*. "May this charming effort of the learned Lakṣmaṇa be forever pleasing to the Lord of All. Lakṣmaṇa was the son of illustrious Dattasūri and Gojā, adornments of the radiant family of Brahmajñānin." See further Appendix A, 2b.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix A, 2c and 2d.

<sup>31</sup> *brahma brahmajñānivamaśāvatamsam* (Appendix A, 1d, *pāda* d).

<sup>32</sup> *sa lakṣmaṇo dakṣiṇadiśy apāsya śriyaḥ sadānandam amandam icchan / kāśyām udāsīnamatiḥ śārīre viśveśasevī samayākaroti //*. See Appendix A, 2e.



Śukla Dīkṣita, and of learning logic from a teacher called Mādhava. He also says that he learned literature “in another life”, which presumably means that he had a natural talent for composing and enjoying Sanskrit poetry.<sup>33</sup>

Śukla Dīkṣita is difficult to identify, but Karl Potter lists an approximately contemporary author of Nyāya works called Mādhava Bhaṭṭa or Mādhava Deva.<sup>34</sup> Potter assigns him a date at the end of the seventeenth century (approximately 1690), which would be rather late for Lakṣmaṇa's *guru* and may reflect a notice of activity late in the career. We know, meanwhile, that there was a Mādhava Bhaṭṭa, perhaps this one, who contributed a *praśasti* verse to the Kavīndracandrodaya, the anthology in honour of Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī, which was produced by prominent learned figures in Banaras in the early part of the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>35</sup> This Mādhava would thus have been active in Banaras at the time one would expect for a *guru* of Lakṣmaṇa.

We turn now to the three Vedantic *gurus* who are mentioned at the beginning of the Advaitasudhā. They are Nārāyaṇa, Rāmāśrama and, most significantly, Uttamaśloka Tīrtha. Nārāyaṇa is mentioned in one verse, which describes him as the *guru* of all (*sarvaguru*), and as Lakṣmaṇa's friend (*suhṛt*). It seems most likely that this is Lakṣmaṇa's maternal uncle, who taught him Āyurveda.<sup>36</sup>

Rāmāśrama is mentioned by Lakṣmaṇa a number of times in the Advaitasudhā, at one point jointly with Uttamaśloka.<sup>37</sup> P.K. Gode has pointed out that there were several Rāmāśramas active in Banaras in this period.<sup>38</sup> Both Gode and K. Madhav Krishna Sarma<sup>39</sup> suggest that the Rāmāśrama whom Lakṣmaṇa mentions here as his *guru* is the one who before taking *sannyāsa* had been Bhānuji

<sup>33</sup> *yaḥ śukladīkṣitavineyagaṇe gaṇeyaḥ, śrīmādhavākhyavibudhādhiḡatorutarkaḥ / vede pituḥ śrutasudhājaladher adhīṭī, sāhityam anyajanaṣi dhruvam adhyagīṣṭa //*. See Appendix A, 2f.

<sup>34</sup> Potter 1983: 442. His sources are *NCC* III/78 and IV/154. Five works are listed: two independent works, the Nyāyasāra (Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika) and the Pramāṇādīprakāśikā, and three commentaries, the Sāramañjarī on Rāmabhadra Sārvabhauma's Guṇakiraṇāvalīrahasya, a Vivṛti on Gadādhara's Śaktivāda, and a Sāramañjarī on Keśava Miśra's Tarkabhāṣā.

<sup>35</sup> Sharma – Patkar 1939: v and 6.

<sup>36</sup> *yatsaṅgato 'dvaitasudhāsamudre, saṁviśya yadbhāvikatāmitāḥ smaḥ / narasvabhāvāpaha-  
raḥ suhṛn no, nārāyaṇaḥ sarvaguruḥ sa jīyāt //*. “May Nārāyaṇa, the *guru* of all, be triumphant. He is our friend, who removes the faults in human dispositions. From contact with him we are plunged into the sea of the ambrosia of nonduality, and become boundless in our feeling for him.” See further Appendix A, 2g.

<sup>37</sup> *antaḥsantamasadhvaṁse yasya gāvo vikasvarāḥ / śrīrāmāśramam aśrāntaṁ bhāsvantaṁ  
tam samāśraye //*. “I take refuge in Śrī Rāmāśrama, the untiring sun, whose spreading rays destroy mental darkness within me.” See further Appendix A, 2h. See also Appendix A, 2i, *rāmā-  
śramottamaślokamunidvayavinīṭadhīḥ*.

<sup>38</sup> Gode 1944.

<sup>39</sup> See Sarma 1944.

Dīkṣita, the son of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita. As Bhānuji he wrote a commentary on the Amarakośa, while as a *sannyāsin* he wrote an Advaitin treatise, the Tat-tvacandrikā.<sup>40</sup> He was a figure of some prominence in Banaras in his day, and famously wrote a polemical treatise defending the canonicity of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.<sup>41</sup> This Rāmāśrama appears to have been the only one writing Advaita works in Banaras in the seventeenth century. It is most likely, therefore, that this Rāmāśrama was Lakṣmaṇa's *guru*.<sup>42</sup> Through this association with Rāmāśrama, Lakṣmaṇa would have been connected to one of the most prominent *paṇḍit* families in Banaras.

Lakṣmaṇa devotes the most homage by far to Uttamaśloka, who was more than just a *vidyāguru* for him. Just as Nīlakaṇṭha looked upon Lakṣmaṇa as *brahman* itself, so Lakṣmaṇa describes Uttamaśloka as the highest means that the great Upanishadic statements prescribe for destroying mental delusion. Through his *puṇya*, Lakṣmaṇa says, he came up to Banaras, for the sake of the renunciant Uttamaśloka, who was the embodied form of Śiva.<sup>43</sup> Lakṣmaṇa describes himself as educated by a single sidelong glance from Uttamaśloka, a glance filled with kindness.<sup>44</sup> The transformative effect of this one glance is referred to in the colophons of the Advaitasudhā's chapters as well.<sup>45</sup> It was the effect of this kind glance (*kṛpāloka*) that enabled Lakṣmaṇa to understand the secret of the Raghuvamśa as an Advaita text, more about which below.<sup>46</sup> Lakṣmaṇa closes off his praise of his *guru* by saying that Uttamaśloka's teachings, as made evident in Lakṣmaṇa's discovery of this text, will benefit even the most learned Advaitins, who have crossed the ocean of Vyākaraṇa and before whom the lengthy treatises of the dualists tremble.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Gode also notes the attribution of a Brahmasūtravṛtti to Rāmāśrama.

<sup>41</sup> The Durjanamukhacapeṭikā. See Minkowski 2010.

<sup>42</sup> It is a little odd, however, that his works were not cited by Lakṣmaṇa in his heavily annotated Advaitasudhā, even though Lakṣmaṇa does cite a number of works of Bhaṭṭoji.

<sup>43</sup> *mohāndhakārāpahāraṇaṃ paraṇaṃ yad āhur mahāvedaśirogiro 'tra / yadīyapuṇyair udiyāya kāśyāṃ tad uttamaślokayatiśamūrtyai //*. See further Appendix A, 2j.

<sup>44</sup> *tenottamaślokavapurvṛṣāṅkakṛpākaṭākaśaikānikṣitena / nirmathya sārāsvatasūktisindhūm adyeyam advaitasudhā vyadhāyi //*. See further Appendix A, 2k. On the enlightening effect of compassionate sidelong glances in an earlier layer of Advaita literature, see Galewicz 2010: 262-274.

<sup>45</sup> Lakṣmaṇa describes himself as *kṛpākaṭākaśaikavīkṣita*. See Appendix A, 2a.

<sup>46</sup> *uttamaślokapādeṣu yad vastv adhigataṃ mayā / vaidikaṃ vastu vāgdevyāḥ kathayāmi hitaṃ puraḥ / kaḥ paśyed uttamaślokaḥ kṛpālokaḥ varjitaḥ //*. See further Appendix A, 2l. In another verse, it is the dust from Uttamaśloka's feet that accomplishes this effect. See Appendix A, 2m.

<sup>47</sup> *tīrṇavyākaraṇāṛṇavāḥ sphuraduradvaitiprabandhā api, śrīmacchaṅkarasūnṛtaikarasikā ye ke 'pi lokottarāḥ / teṣāṃ apy upale nīpatya vilasaty āmnāyageyottamaślokaśrīcāraṇoditāmṛta-sarid bhūyād iyaṃ bhūtaye //*. See further Appendix A, 2n. The verse also appears in the introduction to the Advaitasudhā.

Nīlakaṇṭha also mentions Uttamaśloka as an inspiration, though for him the relationship was different. Judging by what Nīlakaṇṭha says, it was not the personal presence that was significant, but rather what Nīlakaṇṭha calls the pearls from the ocean of Uttamaśloka's teachings.<sup>48</sup> Nīlakaṇṭha's connection to Uttamaśloka further confirms the identification of his *guru* as Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita, as has been noted in the past.

### WHO WAS UTTAMAŚLOKA?

In the colophons of his Advaitasudhā, Lakṣmaṇa describes Uttamaśloka as an Advaitin *sannyāsin* of the most advanced stage, a *paramahaṃsaparivrājakācārya*, and as fully proficient in the “trivium” of Sanskrit learning: *vyākaraṇa*, *mīmāṃsā*, and *nyāya*.<sup>49</sup>

Uttamaśloka describes himself as a *paramahaṃsaparivrājakācārya* in colophons to his own works.<sup>50</sup> He also identifies himself as the servant (*kiṃkara*) of his *guru*, Śuddhānanda, who was also a *sannyāsin*.<sup>51</sup> Though he was based in Banaras, there is some reason to suppose that Uttamaśloka came from the south.<sup>52</sup>

We know of one work by Uttamaśloka, a concise versified compendium of the contents of the two Sūtras, the Mīmāṃsāsūtra and the Brahmasūtra, together with a commentary. The aim is lucidity and simplicity, and probably memorability as well. The work was conceived as a single treatise, but the two parts have been transmitted separately in manuscripts.<sup>53</sup> The latter part, on the Brahmasūtra, which has been published, is also called the Śataślokī, since it summarizes the contents of the Brahmasūtra in one hundred verses.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *uttamaślokatīrthābdhilabdhasadyuktimauktikaḥ / khacitā rudrasūktasya dyotatāṃ dhīmatām hr̥dī //*. “May (this *vyākhyā*) of the Rudrasūkta, inlaid with pearls of good reasoning that have been gained from the ocean that is Uttamaśloka Tīrtha, shine in the hearts of the wise.” See further Appendix A, 2o.

<sup>49</sup> *padavākyapramāṇapārāvārapārīṇa*. See Appendix A, 2a.

<sup>50</sup> See Appendix A, 3a.

<sup>51</sup> See Appendix A, 3b.

<sup>52</sup> Bhau Shastri Vajhe, the editor of Uttamaśloka's work, suggests this, noting that in his *maṅgala* verses, Uttamaśloka used epithets of Śiva that were not current in North India: *candra-mauli* and *viśālākṣinātha*. See Vajhe 1915-1920: Bhūmikā, p. 1-2.

<sup>53</sup> It is called the Laghuvārttika with *ṭīkā* Laghunyāyasudhā. Thus it draws its name from Kumārila's Ślokovārttika and Someśvara Bhaṭṭa's Nyāyasudhā, but it extends to the entire Mīmāṃsāsāstra and Vedāntasāstra. A manuscript of the Vedānta part is described as IO 2321 in Eggeling et al. 1887-1935: 1/744. Manuscripts of the *mīmāṃsā* portion are described in Sastri 1931a and Sastri 1932, as 6803 and R4186 respectively.

<sup>54</sup> See Vajhe 1915-1920.

The Brahmasūtra attracted renewed attention in the early modern period. There was a spate of direct commentaries, as well as reworkings and adaptations, of the sort that Lakṣmaṇa attempted, as we shall see.<sup>55</sup> Uttamaśloka's Laghuvārttika was part of a trend, therefore, and is notable in that context for combining the two *mīmāṃsās*, *karma* and *brahma*. Thus Lakṣmaṇa's principal *guru* was a *sannyāsin* who was based in Banaras, who was not only a scholar but a *yati*, that is, a *sādhaka* who had a powerful personal presence. As we have seen, Uttamaśloka had an influence on Nīlakaṇṭha as well.

It only remains in this part of the essay to discuss Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita's date. Gode pointed out that Lakṣmaṇa himself mentioned the date for the completion of the Advaitasudhā as Śaṃvat 1719, which we should fix as 1662 C.E.<sup>56</sup> There is independent confirmation that the mid-century was the period of Lakṣmaṇa's mature years. Lakṣmaṇa's name appears as the signatory of a collective dharmic decision (*nirṇayaṣattra*) that was produced by a council of Brahmins in the Muktimaṇḍapa of the Viśvanātha temple in Banaras, on a question concerning the caste status of Devarukh Brahmins. This *nirṇayaṣattra* was issued in 1657 C.E.<sup>57</sup>

Nīlakaṇṭha, meanwhile, was beginning his own literary activities during these years. The earliest dated manuscript of the Dīpa that we know of was copied by Nīlakaṇṭha's son, Govinda, in 1669.<sup>58</sup> We should note that Nīlakaṇṭha had a personal interest in the caste status of Devarukh Brahmins. The contemporary evidence suggests that his son Govinda was married to a Devarukh Brahmin girl and in 1683 sponsored a feeding of Brahmins of different subcastes in order to ease tensions that had arisen over the caste matter among the Maharashtra Brahmins in Banaras.<sup>59</sup> Whether this might have been what motivated Lakṣmaṇa to participate in the *dharmasabhā* about Devarukhs in 1657, that is, to do so on behalf of his disciple's family, we cannot determine.

#### THEMES IN LAKṢMAṆA'S WRITINGS

Let us now turn to a number of themes in Lakṣmaṇa's writings. I shall not attempt to offer an assessment of all of them, largely for practical reasons. I

<sup>55</sup> See Minkowski 2011: 211.

<sup>56</sup> Gode (1946: 1-2) gives only the year, as 1663. The date given in the verse in the BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 31v, l. 6-7, is as follows: *nandendusvaradharaṇīgaṇeyasaṃvatsampattiṃ gatavati vikrame krameṇa / śukleṣoṣitagirijātithau susiddhā vāgdevikṛtivivṛtir mama prasiddhā*. Thus the year is Vikramasaṃvat (expired) 1719. The tithi is the eighth (*girijā*) spent in the bright half of Āśvina (*iṣa*). This is, in fact, September 20, 1662.

<sup>57</sup> On this *nirṇayaṣattra* see most recently O'Hanlon 2009: 29-34.

<sup>58</sup> Minkowski 2005b: 414.

<sup>59</sup> Gode 1942: 155-156; O'Hanlon 2009: 36-37.

have not been able to acquire a copy of the Paramahaṃsasamhitā.<sup>60</sup> As for the Yogacandrikā, this is an accomplished work on the subject of Ayurvedic remedies, which features especially the recipes that are easier to produce. No Vedantic themes are raised in the work, but the modern editors note its unusually artistic form, filled especially with figures of sound such as *anuprāsa* and *yamaka*.<sup>61</sup>

There is one known manuscript of the Siddhāntasarvasva, held in Bikaner. K.M.K. Sarma wrote a note describing it in 1947, and included the text of thirty-two of its ca. 530 verses.<sup>62</sup> Sarma notes that this Advaita work lays “particular emphasis on Vairāgya and the merits accruing from living at Vārāṇasī on the bank of the Gaṅgā”.<sup>63</sup> He also notes that “though the subject is Virakti, the work reads like a fine *kāvya* in places, and fully shows the author’s mastery of Sanskrit”.<sup>64</sup> The four sections of the work are Pramādapaṅkoddharaṇa, Nārāyaṇadyānasudhābhiṣeka, Advaitapīyūṣanipāna, and Svānandasamveśa. Rather than being a dense or polemical shastric treatise on Advaita, therefore, the work is primarily organized as a description of the stages on the path to enlightenment, with the emphasis on the poetic evocation of the aspirant’s experience. The second chapter, a visualisation of the heavenly world of Kṛṣṇa–Nārāyaṇa, is particularly lush, judging from the excerpts. It is also of some interest for the history of religion, as devotional practices that are broadly speaking Vaiṣṇava are incorporated into the nondualist path.<sup>65</sup> The Siddhāntasarvasva is, therefore, comparable to the Prabodhasudhākara of Sūryadāsa, a work of a century earlier, which in its printed versions is sometimes incorrectly attributed to Ādiśaṅkarācārya.

What we can consider here in particular are Lakṣmaṇa’s Advaitin readings of *kāvya*, for in those we may find foreshadowings of Nīlakaṇṭha’s approach. It is not just specific doctrines of Advaita that are of interest here, but the inspiration to provide an Advaitin treatment. Up until Lakṣmaṇa’s day, *kāvya* texts had ordinarily not been taken to belong to the canonical corpus of Advaita Vedantic texts, or to be thought about as Vedānta. The whole point of Lakṣmaṇa’s

<sup>60</sup> Thanks to the NGMPP in Kathmandu, I acquired a copy of a fragmentary manuscript of a text called the Paramahaṃsasamhitā, from a private collection in Nepal (Running No. E26299). This turns out not to be a manuscript of Lakṣmaṇa’s work, however; it is, rather, a section of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa.

<sup>61</sup> Kumari – Tivari 1998: xxii-xxiv.

<sup>62</sup> See Sarma 1947.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>65</sup> See Minkowski 2011: 222-223.

Advaitasudhā commentary, as we shall see, is that it discovers the Raghuvamśa to be just such a Vedantic text. The commentary on the Rāghavapāṇḍavīya, which was probably composed earlier, gives an indication of Lakṣmaṇa's interest in making a discovery of this sort. It too is self-consciously innovative.

#### THE SĀRACANDRIKĀ ON THE RĀGHAVAPĀṆḌAVĪYA

The Rāghavapāṇḍavīya was composed in the early twelfth century by Kavirāja. It is also called the Dvisandhānakāvya, because in its thirteen cantos it simultaneously narrates the main stories of the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata.<sup>66</sup> It was the first sustained attempt at narrating the double epic in this *dvisandhāna* mode, though it was not the last. Indeed, as Yigal Bronner has shown, it was the first mature work in what went on to become a literary movement. There are a half dozen extant commentaries, most of which, like that of Śāśadhara, follow the format designed for dealing with this genre of poetry, going through one hidden or neglected layer of meaning (*pakṣa*) after the other. That is, they work through each verse explaining its significance according to one line of meaning, in this case the Rāmāyaṇa line, before explaining the verse again according to the other line, here that of the Mahābhārata, through rereading only those words and phrases that require it. In the Sāracandrikā, Lakṣmaṇa sometimes offers instead a juxtaposition of the two lines of meaning, going word by word or phrase by phrase, with the Rāmāyaṇa level of meaning still coming first in each unit of explanation. The commentary is, furthermore, rather abbreviated in some of the later chapters. Aside from this, and from a noticeable tendency to cite the glossaries and the relevant rules of grammar, Lakṣmaṇa for the most part presents a double reading that is consonant with the one set out in other commentaries.

What is of interest for the present inquiry is Lakṣmaṇa's treatment of the first verse of the work, a *maṅgala* verse to Brahmā the creator. The verse is not one of double meaning, and Lakṣmaṇa's comment does not read it in a way to make it so. He is, however, interested in identifying its real or objective meaning (*vastutaḥ*). In doing so he is aware that earlier commentators read it in another way, but this does not deter him.

In the verse, Kavirāja pays homage to Brahmā, whose body has been yellowed by the mass of pollen in the lotus on which he habitually sits, but whose crea-

<sup>66</sup> For an analysis of how Kavirāja accomplished this aim, through the use of more literary techniques than just *śleṣa*, see Bronner 2010: 122-154.

tion of the cosmos depended only on his desire to do so.<sup>67</sup> Lakṣmaṇa points out that past commentators have taken this to be an example of an implied poetic figure of contrast, or *vyatirekāḷaṅkāra*. That is, although Brahmā is like other artisans in that he has been stained by constant contact with artistic materials, the verse implies that he is unlike them in that he requires no effort or objective materials to create; he requires only his desire. By implication, then, the author is further expressing the wish that he too may create the work that follows through his desire to do so alone.<sup>68</sup>

So much for what the predecessors have said of this verse (*iti prāñcaḥ*). In reality, according to Lakṣmaṇa, what the verse sets down is the undivided reality of the Self. This Self only appears in the form of various created things, both sentient and insentient, through the might of the great delusion. The undivided reality of Self, though, is the way of cessation of disagreeable conditioned existence, and in that mode is worthy of reflection.<sup>69</sup> Lakṣmaṇa proceeds to show, through his glossing of the terms and through citation of relevant passages from the Upaniṣads, that the first long compound describing Brahmā as yellowed by pollen in fact implies the term *tvam* in the sense of pure consciousness. By the second compound, about Brahmā's creation through desire, is implied the term *tat* in the sense of the pure Being that serves as the ground from which apparent multiplicity springs, due to nothing but desire. In this way, the verse juxtaposes the two terms and accomplishes the teaching of *brahman*, which is of the form of unbounded bliss, and which is communicated by the Upaniṣadic *mahāvākyas* such as “*tat tvam asi*”.

Lakṣmaṇa does not continue in this vein, however, through the remainder of the text. He makes no attempt to make the two epic stories nondualistic in their meanings. It appears to have been enough for him to demonstrate that the text begins by sounding this Advaitin note, on the principle that the beginning contains the entire text's meaning.

<sup>67</sup> Rāghavapāṇḍavīya 1.1: *svādhiṣṭhānāmbujarajapūñjapīṅjaramūrtaye / icchādihīnajagat-sṛṣṭikarmaṇe brahmaṇe namaḥ //*. See Appendix A, 4a.

<sup>68</sup> *vyatirekāḷaṅkāradhvaniḥ. tena saṅkalpamātrasāmagrīkaviśvasṛjaṃ namasyatā mayāpi tanmātrasāmagrīkā kāvyasṛṣṭiḥ sukareti vyajyata iti prāñcaḥ*. From Lakṣmaṇa's commentary on Rāghavapāṇḍavīya 1.1. See Appendix A, 4b.

<sup>69</sup> *vastutas tu saṃsārānarthanivṛttirūpaṃ mahāmohamahimnā cetanācetanānāpapañcātmanāvabhāsamānam akhaṇḍātmatattvam evātra mantavyatvenopanyastam iti mantavyam*. From Lakṣmaṇa's commentary on Rāghavapāṇḍavīya 1.1. See Appendix A, 4c.



## ADVAITASUDHĀ

In the Advaitasudhā, on the other hand, Lakṣmaṇa goes out of his way to sustain his initial assertion that the Raghuvamśa is an Advaita text, through a detailed discussion of every verse of its first *sarga*. For Lakṣmaṇa, the Raghuvamśa communicates the essence of the nondualist teaching, as does indeed all *sāhitya*. The Raghuvamśa is to be taken as Sarasvatī's own enlightening words, produced by Kālidāsa, whom it is appropriate to consider Self-realized.

Although the Advaitasudhā has been briefly discussed a number of times, it has never been published, and beyond notations recording that it is an Advaitin reading of the Raghuvamśa, it has never been assessed for its contents. Given the significance of this work in understanding Nīlakaṇṭha's oeuvre, and given how little has been said about it before, I shall devote some additional space to it here.<sup>70</sup> The relation of this work to Nīlakaṇṭha's own will remain the primary focus, but I note here that the Advaitasudhā deserves more careful treatment in its own right elsewhere.

The Advaitasudhā attempts perhaps to charm the reader into following its author down his unexpected interpretative path. As a text it is finely made, with ornamental features and artistic flourishes; it is the result of a substantial philological effort. It contains many verses of original composition to mark off its sections. There are lengthy passages that are entirely in verse. The Advaitasudhā includes citations from many works, and refers to many more.<sup>71</sup> These include references and citations of grammatical authorities, of lexicons, and of literary theorists, but mostly of a wide range of Advaitin authorities, both ancient and contemporary.

Here let us consider how the Advaitasudhā makes its argument in general terms, and then consider an example of how the argumentation works in particular. In order to do so let us consider the stated rationale for the work, the plan of the commentary, and an example of how that plan is implemented, through looking at one of the briefer and simpler verse commentaries.

<sup>70</sup> The text presented is based largely on BORI MS no. 143 of 1902-07. I have also made use of those portions of the Alwar manuscript cited by Peterson in the Alwar catalogue (Peterson 1892) and those portions of the Bikaner manuscript cited by Sarma in his article on the Sārasvatādvaitasudhā (Sarma 1947).

<sup>71</sup> Gode (1946: 3-4) provides a confessedly cursory list of authors cited, which nevertheless extends to about 250 entries. Fifty titles are drawn from a single folio, as an example of the density of annotation.

## THE ARGUMENT IN GENERAL

The argument in general is made in the introduction, then elaborated and sustained through the framing passages that open and close each section and each passage of commentary. The introduction begins with thirty-nine verses, including both *maṅgala* and *ādivākya* verses, followed by a passage of commentary, not on the Raghuvamśa (Rv), but on the Gāyatrī *mantra* (RV 3.62.10).<sup>72</sup> Since the argument in the opening section is partially autobiographical in approach, some of the verses in the introduction have been discussed above, in the section on Lakṣmaṇa, his family and *gurus*. As we have seen, Lakṣmaṇa's *maṅgala* section is devoted to paying homage to his teachers and family, and in that way describing his intellectual formation at their hands. It was through his teachers and his own history that he came to make his discovery of the objective meaning of the Raghuvamśa. Who could understand Sarasvatī's Vedic object without the kindness of the *gurus*?<sup>73</sup> It is in the fruition of their kindness that Lakṣmaṇa, though dull-witted, has become the Mandara mountain, the churning stick of the ambrosial ocean of Advaitic meaning.<sup>74</sup>

The reason that he decides to comment on the Raghuvamśa, rather than write another Advaitin treatise, is communicative. Not everyone would understand an abstruse Vedantic work, but good people could follow the same teaching in this accessible literary form, just as people without teeth can enjoy cane juice, although they cannot enjoy tough, chewy pieces of raw, peeled sugar cane.<sup>75</sup> In order to inspire other men to turn away from superficial interests and to make their priority the inner divine, Lakṣmaṇa thus decides to use a literary work which, as he expects readers to realize through the *sthālipulāka* principle, stands for all literary works.<sup>76</sup> He therefore proposes to disclose the intention of Kālidāsa, which was to delight people through the story of good men, and

<sup>72</sup> There is a discrepancy in the manuscripts about the inclusion and position of two of the verses (BORI MS vs. 17a and 18a; Alwar MS vs. 20a and 20b in Peterson 1892).

<sup>73</sup> Advaitasudhā, Introduction, vs. 9-10: *uttamaślokapādeṣu yad vastv adhigataṃ mayā / vaidikaṃ vastu vāgdevyāḥ kathayāmi hitaṃ puraḥ / kaḥ paśyed uttamaślokaḥ kṛpālokavivarjitaḥ //*. See further Appendix A, 21.

<sup>74</sup> Advaitasudhā, Introduction, vs. 12: *kṛpāvīpākaḥ padavākyamānasamānabhājām udito gurūṅām / majjan mahādvaitasudhāsamudre mando 'pi yan mandarātām upaimi //*. This is a reference to the *amṛtamanthana* myth, with the sea of milk proleptically turned into Soma.

<sup>75</sup> Vs. 18a in the BORI MS (*kalāpa* 1, f. 2r, l. 6-7), 20b in the Alwar MS according to Peterson 1892: *vītatvagikṣuśakalāni vinīya parvāny, agre kathaṃ daśanahīnajanasya kuryām / ity udgato mama durādhir api vyapeyāt, advaitasārarakā yadi hanta santaḥ //* (Vasantatilaka).

<sup>76</sup> Vs. 17a in the BORI MS (*kalāpa* 1, f. 2r, l. 5-6), 20a in the Alwar MS according to Peterson 1892: *sthālipulākanayato 'khalavāṅmayasya, brahmādvayaikaaparātām avadhārya dhīrāḥ / dhikṛtya dṛśyam anavadyasukhasvarūpapatyañcam īsam anīśaṃ pariśīlayantu //* (Vasantatilaka).

through instruction in the highest good.<sup>77</sup> Lakṣmaṇa makes it clear that his proposed explanation of the poem is something new, which in turn renews the poem.<sup>78</sup>

The thought process of Kālidāsa in deciding to compose the Raghuvamśa is reconstructed. The reality that is the Self, Kālidāsa realized, is nondual being, consciousness, and bliss. Through *avidyā* it becomes a limited soul and gets tied down, as if in a bad dream. But realizing itself to be that consciousness free from karma, which is taught by the *guru* based on such Vedic statements as “*tat tvam asi*”, it gets free.<sup>79</sup> Keeping this total meaning of the Vedas in mind, Kālidāsa, the true poet, began to relate the story of the Raghuvamśa.<sup>80</sup>

Lakṣmaṇa initially argues that this really is the meaning of the Raghuvamśa by citing four verses from the Raghuvamśa itself, from the praise of Brahmā that is uttered by the gods in the tenth *sarga*.<sup>81</sup> These four verses describe Brahmā as the one thing that becomes all other things in creation. As Brahmā is just *brahman* in conditioned form, concludes Lakṣmaṇa, the same nondualist account of existence that the Upaniṣads teach is explicitly stated by Kālidāsa, who therefore understands the truth.<sup>82</sup> Good poets of this sort therefore deserve to be praised as knowers of the Self.

Kālidāsa, according to Lakṣmaṇa, therefore settles on relating a *vādakathā*, a story that conveys the Advaitin teaching. In order to indicate the meaning of the work as a whole, however, he begins the Raghuvamśa with a discussion of *brahman* as communicated by the totality of the Veda, through a *maṅgala* on the Gāyatrī *mantra*, the mother of the Veda.<sup>83</sup>

Lakṣmaṇa then gives a demonstration that this understanding of Kālidāsa’s thinking is the correct one. Citing Manu, Lakṣmaṇa argues that the Gāyatrī is

<sup>77</sup> *satkathāparamārthābhyām anurañjayate janān / āśayaṃ kālidāsasya vivarītuṃ yatāmahe* // . See further Appendix A, 5b.

<sup>78</sup> *kāśīgaṅgāṭīkāsv ekā navyā sūktir bhavyālokā* // . See further Appendix A, 5c.

<sup>79</sup> *saccidānandam advaitam ātmātattvam avidyayā / jīvabhāvam ivāpadya duḥsvapnena badhyate // satkarmaśuddhacittam tat tattvamasyādivēdataḥ / gurūpadiṣtam ātmānam avabudhya vimucyate* // . See further Appendix A, 5d.

<sup>80</sup> *ity etac chrutisarvasvam abhisandhāya satkaviḥ / kālidāsaḥ pravavṛte kathām upadiśann iha* // . See further Appendix A, 5e.

<sup>81</sup> He cites Rv 10.17a, 10.17, 10.26, and 10.33. The first verse, *ekaḥ kāraṇas tām* etc., is an old, inserted verse. The reading that Lakṣmaṇa adopts at the end, *te smṛtam*, is that of several of Nandargīkar’s B group, and of three commentators.

<sup>82</sup> *ity advaitāmṛtodgāraḥ sāksād evāsyā dṛśyate / ekaiva mūrtir yā sṛṣṭir vedānteṣv evam ity api* // . See further Appendix A, 5f.

<sup>83</sup> *ato vādakathārūpe prabandhe ’tra mahākaviḥ / vadan vedārtham anvāha vedamātari maṅgalam* // . See further Appendix A, 5g.

the “milk” of the three Vedas; it is all the Veda that a Brahmin needs.<sup>84</sup> He also argues, through a series of textual implications, that the Gāyatrī is expressive primarily of *brahman*. The Taittirīyāraṇyaka's instructions for the *sandhyā* and a verse of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's Tantravārttika are cited to argue that the Gāyatrī refers to the *parabrahman*.<sup>85</sup> Someśvara, the thirteenth-century commentator on Kumārila's Tantravārttika, is also invoked here to the same effect, that the Gāyatrī expresses *parabrahman*.<sup>86</sup> Thus Lakṣmaṇa argues this point out depending on Vedic and Mīmāṃsaka authorities, not Advaitin ones.

That concludes the versified introduction of the work. Lakṣmaṇa then provides a commentary on the Gāyatrī verse which, adapting techniques of grammatical analysis, proposes that the meaning of the Gāyatrī is the following: we worship that accessible *brahman*, which as the inner controller (*antaryāmin*) directs our thoughts toward *dharma*. Lakṣmaṇa concludes his introduction by identifying the first verse of the Raghuvamśa, *vāgarthāv iva samprktau*, etc., as Kālidāsa's version of the Gāyatrī.<sup>87</sup>

In this opening statement, therefore, there have been three steps of cognitive identification of texts: the teaching about nondual *brahman* is fully expressed in the Vedas; *brahman* as expressed in the totality of the Vedas is expressed in the Gāyatrī, and, in the innovative step, this *brahman*-conveying Gāyatrī is communicated by the first verse of the Raghuvamśa.

How can this last step possibly be right? The idea that a single Vedic text, or verse, or even just the *praṇava*, embodies the entirety of the Veda is nothing new for the Vedic tradition. The idea that the Raghuvamśa's first verse embodies the Veda, in its enlightening, Upaniṣadic mode, in the form of the Gāyatrī that conveys *brahman*, certainly is. The Raghuvamśa had ordinarily been read another way, viz. as wholesome literature about, well, the race of Raghu. Lakṣmaṇa is, however, aware that he has not yet secured his point. This opening statement is just the proposition of the argument, which then is to be justified by the commentary that follows. The commentary on the first verse of the Raghuvamśa, its Gāyatrī, as it were, takes up forty-three folios. In order to understand why, let us consider the work's design, both overall and at the local

<sup>84</sup> *parihāyāpi vedāṃs trīṇ karmāṇi vihitāni ca / gāyatrīmātram āsṛitya dvijo bhavati nirbhayaḥ //*. See further Appendix A, 5h.

<sup>85</sup> Taittirīyāraṇyaka 2.2.2 and Tantravārttika on Mīmāṃsāsūtra 3.1.13 (Abhyankar – Joshi 1972: 70).

<sup>86</sup> Nyāyasudhā, p. 1009-1010. Someśvara's Nyāyasudhā served as the basis for Uttamaśloka's summary, mentioned above.

<sup>87</sup> ... *ity āśayenāha – vāgarthāv iva samprktau*, etc.

level, for it is in this structure that Lakṣmaṇa's philological argument for the Advaita meaning of the text is worked out.

#### DESIGN OF THE ADVAITASUDHĀ – LARGE SCALE

The main body of the Advaitasudhā consists in a commentary on the first *sarga* of the Raghuvamśa. The commentary has a double organization. In one it is divided into six *kalāpas* or verse-bundles, each *kalāpa* including sixteen of the first *sarga*'s ninety-six verses.<sup>88</sup> At the same time the Advaitasudhā is divided into four *paricchēdas* or chapters, with the third and fourth *paricchēdas* each further divided into two parts. The first *kalāpa* and the first *paricchēda* begin and end at the same place, as do the second *kalāpa* and the second *paricchēda*. The third *kalāpa* and the first part of the third *paricchēda* coincide, as do the fourth *kalāpa* and the second part of the third *paricchēda*, and so on.<sup>89</sup>

The purpose of this double organization is to juxtapose the first *sarga* of the Raghuvamśa with the Brahmasūtra, the Vedantic text. This is made clear from the names for each of the *paricchēdas*, which are the same as the names of the four chapters (*adhyāyas*) of the Brahmasūtra: *samanvaya*, *avirodha*, *sādhana*, and *phala*. The six *kalāpas*, meanwhile, are called *samanvaya*, *avirodha*, *duryātananiryātana*, *kālavyalānala*, *jīvanmuktisamarthana*, and *videhakai-valya*. Through these names Lakṣmaṇa signals that the last four *kalāpas* present four important topics in the last two *adhyāyas* of the Brahmasūtra, in the same sequence in which they appear there. Through its organization, therefore, the Advaitasudhā presents a conception of the first *sarga* of the Raghuvamśa as communicating the whole of the Brahmasūtra following that text's established sequence.

<sup>88</sup> In the Nandargikar edition there are ninety-five verses in the first *sarga* of the Raghuvamśa. Lakṣmaṇa includes, however, a verse that is found interpolated in many recensions, *gaṅgām bhagīrathenaiva*, as the third verse of the third *kalāpa*, or the thirty-fifth verse of the *sarga*. Thus the six *kalāpas* consist, in Nandargikar's numbering, in 1-16; 17-32; 33-34, 34A, 35-47; 48-63; 64-79; and 80-95. In the BORI MS, however, one verse, Nandargikar's no. 50, *ākīrṇam*, etc., is omitted. There is a misnumbering later in the *kalāpa* that leaves the count at ninety-five.

<sup>89</sup> In the sixth *kalāpa*, after completing the discussion of the first *sarga*'s verses, Lakṣmaṇa goes on to discuss twenty-one verses from the later eighteen *sargas* of the Raghuvamśa, with at least one taken from each *sarga*, so that a sort of sampling of the text as a whole is completed. The topics raised here are supplementary, as Lakṣmaṇa says. The verses chosen are the following, with Nandargikar's numbering in square brackets when this differs: Rv 2.62, 2.63, 3.41 [3.42], 4.1, 5.65, 6.80, 7.26 [7.25], 8.25 [8.24], 9.77 [9.76], 10.69 [10.67], 11.62, 12.60, 12.63, 13.66, 14.33, 15.93, 16.24, 16.42, 17.74, 18.50, and 19.6.

In each *kalāpa*, the commentary attributes to each verse an Advaita meaning, more or less following the outline of topics in the corresponding *adhyāya* in the Brahmasūtra. Thus for example, in the second *kalāpa*, the *avirodhakalāpa*, Lakṣmaṇa elicits from the sixteen verses the Brahmasūtra's arguments in its second, *avirodha* chapter against the refutations of Advaita by the Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Vaiśeṣika, and theist schools of thought, and against their cosmological arguments.<sup>90</sup> Lakṣmaṇa's commentary on the second verse of the section argues that the verse proves that the Sāṅkhyas cannot cite *śruti* passages in favour of *prakṛti* as an independently existing entity;<sup>91</sup> the commentary on the fifth argues that that verse shows the illogic in the theistic doctrine of *bhedābheda*,<sup>92</sup> and so on.

The vast majority of this *kalāpa* is devoted to the commentary on the seventh verse, Rv 1.23.<sup>93</sup> The verse itself describes Dilīpa's expertise in all subjects of learning as part of his maturity of character.<sup>94</sup> Here Lakṣmaṇa inserts a lengthy, versified account of all the branches of Vedic learning and their relationship to the *śruti*, as well as a doxographical survey of other schools of thought.<sup>95</sup> The discussion includes a substantial section on *alaṃkāraśāstra* with examples of verses taken from poets such as Māgha and Daṇḍin. The burden of the entire commentary on this verse is to show that other disciplines and literatures are subordinate and supporting elements of Advaitin teaching.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>90</sup> The *maṅgala* verse that introduces the *kalāpa* runs as follows: *samanvayanti vedāntāḥ sadadvaita itī sthite / udyate rā[sic; read sam-?] nirākartuṃ mānāntaraparāhatim //*. "It being established that the Upaniṣads are in agreement about the nonduality of Being, I shall endeavour to remove the contradiction by other authoritative statements."

<sup>91</sup> *avaidikatvaṃ sāṅkhyābhimatāyāḥ prakṛter yadi / tat kim artham ajām ekām ityādīti nirasyati //*. "Here he rebuffs the objection (of the Sāṅkhyas that) the Upaniṣadic passage (i.e., Taittirīyopaniṣad 4.5) stating that the *prakṛti* is 'one, unborn' would be meaningless if the Sāṅkhya's doctrine of an insentient *prakṛti* were un-Vedic." See further Appendix A, 6b.

<sup>92</sup> *ajñasya rāgato duḥkhaṃ nātmajñasya virāgataḥ / bhedābhedadṛṣor vyaktaḥ phalabheda itīryate //*. "He will argue that the one who is ignorant suffers due to his passions, while the one who knows the Self does not, due to his dispassion. Thus there is an evident difference in result for the seer of difference and the seer of non-difference." See further Appendix A, 6c.

<sup>93</sup> In the BORI MS the commentary on the second *kalāpa* fills fifty-three folios. Of those folios, thirty-one are taken up by the commentary on this verse.

<sup>94</sup> Rv 1.23: *anākṛṣṭasya viṣayair vidyānāṃ pārādṛśvanah / tasya dharmarater āsīd vṛddhātvaṃ jarasā vinā //*.

<sup>95</sup> Compare Madhusūdana Sarasvatī's Prasthānabheda, which was composed originally as part of his commentary on the Śivamahimastotra.

<sup>96</sup> *asyaivāśeṣaśeṣīnyā vidhayātiprathīyasaḥ / jñātajñeyatamatvaṃ cety udāharati bhārati //*. "The verse (i.e., Rv 1.23) states that this (Self) exceedingly compendious in an all-encompassing manner is the most knowable thing through all known things." See further Appendix A, 6d.

Lakṣmaṇa is not relentlessly schematic, however. When the verse suggests to him another Advaita topic from elsewhere in the Brahmasūtra, he will turn to that topic instead, even if it is not part of the sequence of *adhikaraṇas* he would otherwise like to follow. This can be seen in the example I have chosen to consider in more detail below.

#### DESIGN OF THE ADVAITASUDHĀ IN THE TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUAL VERSES

Needless to say, this approach to the Raghuvamśa's first *sarga* is an extraordinary one, which to secure in detail requires an extraordinary philological effort. Lakṣmaṇa's design for the commentary therefore includes a format for tackling each verse in a way that furthers this plan of interpretation. The structure of the comment on each verse is this. Lakṣmaṇa begins with an introductory verse (or two or more), in which the meaning of the verse is introduced, as a topic of Advaitin teaching. Lakṣmaṇa then cites the verse twice in full: once in its literary form, with *sandhi*, and then again, with the *sandhi* undone.<sup>97</sup> The extraordinary philological efforts begin with the undoing of *sandhi*. Lakṣmaṇa often divides the text up in an unexpected way, often rather radically so.<sup>98</sup> The *anvaya*, or prose word order, of the verse is then presented, together with a statement of the construction (*yojanā*) of any difficult part, when this is needed. Lakṣmaṇa then works through the verse in its *anvaya* arrangement providing glosses. Those words of the verse that have survived the *sandhi* (re)segmentation intact are often given unexpected or alternative derivations and or meanings, usually based on the possibilities made available in the lexicons. The unexpected segmentations are justified and explained using the *sūtras* of the Aṣṭādhyāyī and citations of supporting grammatical works. As this philological treatment proceeds, the Advaitin burden of the argument is advanced. The commentary sometimes then proceeds to further lengthy argument for the non-dualist reading of the verse, and can also extend to arguments not over the Raghuvamśa's meaning, but over the rightness of the Advaitin position on a

<sup>97</sup> In the later chapters, Lakṣmaṇa does not always provide the *padacheda* analysis in detail, especially when he does not need to resegment many words. See the example cited below, p. 55.

<sup>98</sup> For example, he analyzes Rv 1.17d, *tasya niyantur nemivṛttayaḥ*, as consisting of the following four words: *tasi*, *aniyantuh*, *nemivṛt*, *tayaḥ*. *tasi* is analyzed as the locative singular of a root agent noun from a verbal root *tas*. *aniyantuh* is the genitive singular of the agent noun *niyantṛ*, with privative *a-* prefix; *nemivṛt* is the nominative singular of a compound of the root agent noun from the verbal root *vṛt* with the noun *nemin*, based on *nema*, which is derived from the root *nī* plus suffix *-man*; *taya* is an adjective in nominative singular, an agent noun formed with the suffix *-a* from the verbal root *ti*. See BORI MS *kalāpa* 2, f. 3r, l. 4-10.



topic in the Brahmasūtra. While in some places the meaning of the verse is amenable to adaptation to Lakṣmaṇa's higher reading of it with minimal changes, more often his radical approach to the verse in the end leaves very little that could be recognized from the story of Dilīpa of the race of Raghu.

#### AN EXAMPLE OF THE APPROACH – THE VERSE RV 1.20

Let us consider as an example a brief commentary, taken from the second *kalāpa*, the *avirodha* chapter discussed above. Although the general intention of this section of the Raghuvamśa's first *sarga* is evident to Lakṣmaṇa, he is able to turn aside from the main thread of his argument when the verse suggests to him some other secret meaning.

The fourth verse of the *kalāpa* is Rv 1.20, *tasya saṁvṛtamantrasya*, etc.<sup>99</sup> This verse is normally read as describing Dilīpa's leak-proof conduct of policy discussions, so that his intentions were known only when his undertakings were *faits accomplis*. Here, however, the verse provides the occasion for Lakṣmaṇa to discuss a point of eligibility or *adhikāra*. The verse, he says, rules out the need for the performance (in the same life) of Vedic *yajñas* as a preparation for Vedantic enlightenment. The text is as follows:<sup>100</sup>

*ananuṣṭhitayajñāder api vijñānitā katham /  
dṛśyamānopapadyety atra prāha sarasvatī //*

*tasya saṁvṛtamantrasya gūḍhākāreṅgitasya ca /  
phalānumeyāḥ prārambhāḥ saṁskārāḥ prāktanā iva //* (Rv 1.20)

*tasīti chedaḥ. tasyaty upakṣiṇoti nijānandam iti taḥ. tasU upakṣaye. KVIP. tasyām tasy avidyāyām. karaṇasyādhikaraṇatvavivakṣayā saptamī. manute iti mantā matyādyantaḥkaraṇavṛttisākṣī. manU avabodhane. asmāt tṛC. mantaiva aḥ paramātmā mantra<ḥ>. na saṁvṛto mantro yasyāsāv asaṁvṛtamantraḥ. tasyāsaṁvṛtamantrasya anāvṛtapratyakparamātmavarūpasya. gūḍhe parāprataṛkye ākāre<ṇ>gite kāyamanaśceṣṭe yasya sa<sup>101</sup> gūḍhākāreṅgitāḥ, tasya gūḍhākāreṅgitasya, “yaṁ na santam na cāsantam nāśrutam na bahuśrutam na sukrtaṁ na durvṛttaṁ veda kaś cit sa brāhmaṇaḥ” ity<sup>102</sup>ādismṛtyuktabrāhmaṇyasampannasyātmavidāḥ. prāgbhavāḥ prāktanā janmāntarasahasrānuṣṭhitāḥ. prakarṣeṇa phalānabhisandhilakṣaṇenārabhyanta iti prārambhāḥ parāgarthavaimukhyapratyagekaprāvānyādhāyino yajñādayaḥ. saṁskriyata ebhir iti saṁskārāḥ śravaṇādayaḥ. karaṇe ghaṅ. adhyātmavāsanāviśeṣā vā.*

<sup>99</sup> Rv 1.20: *tasya saṁvṛtamantrasya gūḍhākāreṅgitasya ca / phalānumeyāḥ prārambhāḥ saṁskārāḥ prāktanā iva //*.

<sup>100</sup> BORI MS, f. 9v, l. 3 – 10r, l. 5.

<sup>101</sup> MS reads *sā*.

<sup>102</sup> Vasiṣṭhadharmasūtra 6.44. Śaṅkara cites this verse in the Brahmasūtrabhāṣya on 3.4.50. It is also found in the Nārada-parivṛjaka Upaniṣad, as 4.46.

*tadrūpaphalenānumātum arhāḥ phalānumeyāḥ. “pūrvābhyāsena [10r] tenaiva hriyate hy avāśo ‘pi sa” iti<sup>103</sup> bhagavaduktadiśāharnīsam ātmānusandhānena prāktanā “āvṛttir asakṛdupadeśāt” ity<sup>104</sup> upadiśyamānaśravaṇādīsaṃskārā yathānumīyante tathāivāpratibaddhāmatattvasākṣātkāreṇa. “sarvāpekṣā ca yajñādiśruter aśvavat” ity<sup>105</sup> upadiśṭā yajñādayo ‘py anumātavyāḥ. anyathā phalasyākasmikatāpatter iti bhāvaḥ.*

*uktam hi bhagavatā: “anekajanmasaṃsiddhas tato yāti parāṃ gatim” iti.<sup>106</sup> śivamāhātmyakhaṇḍe saptamādhyāye skānde ‘pi: “yeṣāṃ asti pariñānam vineha jñānasādhanam, kalpanīyam tu tat teṣāṃ pūrvajanmasu sūribhir” iti.<sup>107</sup> vārttike ‘pi: “yas tu janmāntarābhyāsāt kṣālitāḥ ‘śeṣakāmanaḥ, ādāv evādhikāri sa punaḥ karma na vikṣate” iti.<sup>108</sup>*

The commentary begins with an introductory verse that makes the above assertion about *adhikāra*.<sup>109</sup> The verse is then cited in full. Here, since very little needs to be resegmented, Lakṣmaṇa dispenses with a full version of his *padapāṭha*-like analysis, providing only those analyses that are unusual as he goes along. *tasya saṃvṛtamantrasya* is re-divided as *tasi asaṃvṛtamantrasya*. Lakṣmaṇa then explains that *tasi* is the locative of a root agent-noun *tas*, from the verb *tasyati*, to diminish. It refers to *avidyā*, in that it diminishes the inherent bliss of *brahman*.<sup>110</sup> *mantra*, the second element in the compound *asaṃvṛtamantrasya*, is itself a compound, a *karmadhāraya* made up of two nouns: the agent noun *mantr*, the witness of the activity of the inner functions, such as the mind, and the monosyllabic word *a*, which refers to the *paramātmā*. The one for whom the Supreme Self, the witness of thought, remains unconcealed (*asaṃvṛtamantrasya*) in the presence of *avidyā* (*tasi*), as a knower of the inner Self, has movements (*iṅgita*) of body and mind (*ākāra*) that are inconceivable by others (*gūḍha*). Lakṣmaṇa here cites a *smṛti* source to the effect that the true Brahmin is one whom no one knows either as good or bad, learned or unlearned, etc.<sup>111</sup>

This knower of the Self has undertaken activities without attachment in thousands of previous lives (*prāktanāḥ*). Those excellent activities (*prārambhāḥ*)

<sup>103</sup> BG 6.44.

<sup>104</sup> BrSū IV.1.1.

<sup>105</sup> BrSū III.4.26.

<sup>106</sup> BG 6.45.

<sup>107</sup> Sūtasamhitā, Śivamāhātmya 7, vs. 23. The printed text reads *kalpyam tat sādhanam teṣām*.

<sup>108</sup> Sureśvara’s Sambandhavārttika on Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya of Śaṅkara, *vārttika* 88.

<sup>109</sup> “This verse responds to the question, how is it possible, as we do see occurring, for one who has not yet performed the rituals required by dharmic obligation, such as sacrifices, to have special (Vedantic) knowledge?”

<sup>110</sup> The locative is used in the sense of the locus, where the instrument is the locus of the diminution.

<sup>111</sup> Vasiṣṭhadharmasūtra 6.44.

– sacrifices and the like – have created the single inclination to turn inward (*saṃskārāḥ*), and not toward outer things. Or this term may refer to the Vedantic practices of hearing, thinking, and so on, which create particular spiritual impressions (*vāsanā*).

That these activities were undertaken can be inferred from their effects (*phalānumeya*), which take the form of the inclination or impressions just mentioned. Lakṣmaṇa then cites some authorities. He points out that just as earlier refinements (i.e., practised in earlier lives), like the Vedantic practices of hearing and so on, which are taught in BrSū IV.1.1 (“Repetition of hearing and the rest is required, because the Upaniṣads teach it more than once”), are inferred from the uninterrupted (*aharniśam*) investigation of the Self through the hint (*diśā*) given by the Exalted One in BG 6.44 (“... for he is carried along irresistibly by that earlier practice”), in exactly the same way can they be inferred from the unobstructed experience of the nature of the Self. Actions such as sacrifices, which are taught in BrSū III.4.26 (“And there is need of all practices, because the Vedas enjoin sacrifices and the rest, as in the case of the horse”), can also be inferred to have been done in earlier lives. Otherwise there would be results arising due to no cause.

The Bhagavadgītā (6.45) says that the *yogin* goes to the highest condition after many births. Two other authorities, the Skandapurāṇa and the Vārttika of Sureśvara, are quoted to the same effect, that an apparently spontaneously enlightened or passionless person can be inferred to have followed the intricacies of the prescribed path in previous lives.

#### UNDERSTANDING LAKṢMAṆA'S ADVAITASUDHĀ

This, then, is a rough sketch of the argument and method of the Advaitasudhā, Lakṣmaṇa's re-interpretation of the Raghuvamśa's first *sarga*. Lakṣmaṇa has also indicated in his introduction and in the later parts of his last *kalāpa* that these findings can be extended to the remainder of the Raghuvamśa, and indeed, to all good Sanskrit literature.

What are we to make of Lakṣmaṇa's claim? Is it credible? Furthermore, why should he have bothered with a nondualist reading of the Raghuvamśa? Are there not enough explicitly Advaita texts, that Lakṣmaṇa has to bring nondualism into the classics of *kāvya*? What about the methods he has resorted to here? Are there not undesirable implications in the longer term, for Sanskrit textual practices and for the autonomous value of *laukika kāvya*?

The nondualist reading of Kālidāsa's opus is not one that a reader would find otherwise. It is, at best, a secret meaning. The Raghuvamśa does not accomplish the enlightening effect that Lakṣmaṇa has found for it unless its nondual meaning is pointed out by a commentary. Although, as we have seen, Lakṣmaṇa makes some gestures toward calling this extension of nondualist dogma into *kāvya* a retrieval of original intent, the gestures do not conceal the evident sense he conveys of originality and discovery.

#### ON FINDING DOUBLE-MEANING

Some of the unexpected techniques that Lakṣmaṇa uses – among them ubiquitous reliance on secondary meanings in glossaries and unusual grammatical analysis – were developed and elaborated for the purpose of reading the *dvisandhāna* literature. As Bronner has shown, poets and connoisseurs of that genre had evolved their own apparatus of philology in order to produce and consume double-meaning texts.<sup>112</sup> What is different in the Advaitasudhā, however, is the choice of text to which to apply this apparatus. Lakṣmaṇa posits the existence of a hidden or neglected layer of meaning in the Raghuvamśa, which it is his contribution to uncover or reanimate.<sup>113</sup> The Raghuvamśa, however, had up until then not been thought to operate as a double-meaning text. Kālidāsa had not made an explicit claim of double meaning, not at least until Lakṣmaṇa attempted to show that he had implied it.

In his history of the *dvisandhāna* literary movement, Bronner has also shown that some theorists in the Sanskrit literary tradition quickly recognized the dangers inherent in the double-meaning philology, chief among them that it might be applied to texts where it was not wanted or expected. This did not stop readers from applying the techniques to early classics of the literary canon.<sup>114</sup> The extension of the *dvisandhāna* techniques to reading texts in theological ways was not unique to Lakṣmaṇa either. Consider the commentary of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī on the Śivamahimastotra. Madhusūdana, the influential Advaitin author of the sixteenth century, commented on the work of Puṣpadanta in such a way as to find a second layer of meaning, so that each *sikhariṇī* verse was

<sup>112</sup> Bronner 2010: 155-194.

<sup>113</sup> This does not mean that he denies the presence of the other layer, only that his reading explains the *paramārtha*. See, for example, his commentary on Rv 1.21, under *kalāpa* 2, verse 5 in his organization, where he refers to the *kathāpakṣa*. See BORI MS *kalāpa* 2, f. 11r, penultimate line.

<sup>114</sup> Bronner 2010: 159-169.

found to praise not just Śiva, as usually assumed, but also Viṣṇu, at the same time and in the same words. The commentary made a theological point thereby, and implied a criticism of the overly partisan tenor of the struggles between Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas that prevailed in Madhusūdana's period.

Now, we might be tempted to think of the Advaitasudhā's literary enterprise as "mere panditry", that is, as over-ingenious in a way generally typical of pre-modern Indian intellectuals. Since it appears, however, that the Advaitasudhā was only one text in what was a growing trend, it would be a failure of historical imagination simply to dismiss it as pre-philological, without understanding its historical context, especially given the substantial investment of intellectual effort that Lakṣmaṇa made to compose it.

I suggest that the key to understanding the Advaitasudhā lies in its explicitly Advaitin programme. Lakṣmaṇa, in writing this commentary, participated in an original way in the great intellectual and cultural contest that dominated the literary lives of Advaitins in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, their struggle with the followers of the *sampradāyas*, especially the Vaiṣṇava ones.<sup>115</sup> Lakṣmaṇa's work belongs to the strand of Advaitin argumentation that was based primarily on the proper interpretation of the textually authoritative sources. One aspect of this approach involved reconceptualizing the Vedic, Vedantic, and Sanskritic canons. What constituted textual authority and how that authority was to be read and understood came not just from the direct interpretation of passages, but also from the conception of the literature's organization.

As has been mentioned above, in one long passage in the Advaitasudhā Lakṣmaṇa provided a detailed redescription of the organization of Vedic and Vedantic literature. Through his commentaries, furthermore, he proposed to include in the Vedantic canon texts that had not previously been counted as Vedantic: the Rāghavapāṇḍavīya and especially the Raghuvamśa. In order to implement this philosophical approach to the reconceptualized canon, Lakṣmaṇa made use of allowable, but non-standard versions of Sanskritic philological techniques.

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<sup>115</sup> For a discussion of this context, see Minkowski 2011.

## THE INFLUENCE ON NĪLAKAṆṬHA

Is this what we might expect to find in the *guru* of Nīlakaṇṭha? Yes, indeed. Nīlakaṇṭha is not a slavish follower of Lakṣmaṇa’s literary programme, but there is certainly a family resemblance. Let us review briefly Nīlakaṇṭha’s own literary profile.<sup>116</sup> Nīlakaṇṭha wrote a number of Advaita works, both independent treatises as well as commentaries on works of *itihāsa* and *purāṇa*. The independent treatises (Vedāntakataka and Ṣaṭtantrīsāra especially) feature compendious doxographies of philosophical positions as well as schematic organizations of Vedic and *vaidika* literature. They also feature polemical arguments, both with other Advaitins, particularly Appayya Dīkṣita, and with dualist Vedāntins and theological particularists.

Nīlakaṇṭha’s commentaries on epic and Purāṇic works, the Vedastutiṭīkā, the Gaṇeśagītāṭīkā, and especially the Dīpa, offered an explicitly Advaitin reading of those texts, and continued the arguments begun in the independent works.<sup>117</sup> The most distinctive or surprising works by Nīlakaṇṭha, however, were produced in a genre of his own creation, which he called the *mantrarahasyaprakāśa*. The term *mantra* here referred to the verses of the Ṛgveda, which he selected, assembled and commented on in such a way that he could elicit from them the story of the Rāmāyaṇa, of the Kṛṣṇa episode of the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, or of the Kāśīkhaṇḍa.<sup>118</sup> Nīlakaṇṭha also produced a Mantraśārīraka, in which he elicited from selected verses of the Ṛgveda the *sūtras* of the Brahmasūtra. These works in effect redescribed the status in the literary canon of the texts that they read back into the Ṛgveda, at the same time that the Ṛgveda’s meaning was redescribed to be read out into these texts.

Just as Lakṣmaṇa brought the Raghuvamśa into the Advaita canon, and suggested the same possibility for other texts, so Nīlakaṇṭha brought in the entire Mahābhārata, including the Harivamśa, not just the epic’s “didactic” episodes. Through the *mantrarahasyaprakāśa* works, he also brought in the Kṛṣṇa story from the Bhāgavatapurāṇa, and the Ṛgveda beyond the small number of *ṛcas* ordinarily invoked by Advaitins. He also brought in passages from a tantric text describing the use of magic squares.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Minkowski 2005b, Minkowski 2008b.

<sup>117</sup> Minkowski 2004b.

<sup>118</sup> Minkowski, forthcoming, and Minkowski 2002.

<sup>119</sup> Minkowski 2008a.

Both Lakṣmaṇa and Nīlakaṇṭha relied on contemporary glossaries to find unlikely meanings for words, and provided vernacular glosses for words.<sup>120</sup> Both emphasized the importance of living in Banaras.<sup>121</sup> While Lakṣmaṇa was conspicuous for the unexpected uses to which he put the *vaiyākaraṇa* tradition, Nīlakaṇṭha was not. On the other hand, Nīlakaṇṭha, a Ṛgvedin, developed an approach to the Ṛgveda as an instrument of textual authorization of a sort that Lakṣmaṇa, the Taittirīyaka, did not. Nīlakaṇṭha was nothing like the stylist in Sanskrit composition that Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita was, and was much more given to writing polemical essays.

Lakṣmaṇa was certainly well-connected in the circles of learned Deccani Brahmins, through his family and his *gurus*, and was well-educated in a number of different disciplines. Thus it is not surprising that Nīlakaṇṭha would have sought him out as a teacher. It is a little more surprising that he chose Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita as his Vedantic *guru*, at a time when the city of Banaras was well-populated with nondualist *sannyāsins*. Perhaps it was Lakṣmaṇa's position in a lineage of Advaitins (*brahmajñānivaṃśa*) who remained family men that attracted Nīlakaṇṭha. Nevertheless, Lakṣmaṇa appears to have been living the life of a quasi-renunciant. We do not know whether Lakṣmaṇa ever married or had children. He describes his move to Banaras as motivated by a spiritual quest. Forsaking fortune (*apāsya śriyaḥ*), and caring little for his own bodily needs, he moved there, he says, to spend his time serving the god of Banaras, Viśvanātha.<sup>122</sup> The fortune forsaken was probably a comfortable livelihood (*vṛtti*) in the Deccan. This was left behind for the world of learned *śāstrins* and *sannyāsins* in and around the Viśvanātha temple. The profile that we have been able to reconstruct further secures the identity of Nīlakaṇṭha's *guru* as the author Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita, and makes clear some of the inspirations for Nīlakaṇṭha's own work.

<sup>120</sup> For Nīlakaṇṭha see Printz 1911 and Minkowski 2004a. On Lakṣmaṇa see the citations in Gode 1946: 4.

<sup>121</sup> For Nīlakaṇṭha on Banaras, see Minkowski 2002.

<sup>122</sup> Advaitasudhā, *puṣpikā* vs. 10: *sa lakṣmaṇo dakṣiṇādīśy apāsya śriyaḥ sadānandam a-mandam icchan / kāśyām udāsīnamatiḥ śarīre viśveśasevī samayākaroti //*. See further Appendix A, 2e.



## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## 1. Nīlakaṇṭha's verses about Lakṣmaṇārya

a. From the conclusion to the Dīpa on the Mokṣadharmaparvan:<sup>123</sup>

*vedānte lakṣmaṇāryaṃ kratuvidhivivṛtau tīrthanārāyaṇāryaṃ  
tarke dhīreśamiśrān phaṇipatibhaṇitau polagaṅgādharāryam /  
vede sāṅge pitṛvyaṃ śivam atha pitaram dakṣiṇāmūrtyupāstau  
śraute cintāmaṇiṃ yaḥ śaraṇam upagato bhūmni gopāladevam // 1 //*  
(Sragdharā)

Compare the conclusion to Nīlakaṇṭha's Rudrasārasaṃgrahavyākhyā:<sup>124</sup>

*gopālaṃ bhūmni vede śivam atha vinaye dakṣiṇāmūrtyupāstau<sup>125</sup>  
vedānte lakṣmaṇāryaṃ kratuvidhivivṛtau tīrthanārāyaṇāryaṃ /  
tarke dhīreśamiśrān phaṇipatibhaṇitau polagaṅgādharāryaṃ  
śraute cintāmaṇiṃ yo<sup>126</sup> gurum akṛta kṛtiṃ  
tasya santaḥ punantu // 1 //* (Sragdharā)

## b. maṅgala verse for the Dīpa on the Āśramavāsika and the following three parvans:

*śrīnārāyaṇalakṣmaṇau tatapadaṃ dhīreśagaṅgādharau  
gopālaṃ ca nidhāya cetasi śivaṃ cintāmaṇiṃ cādadat /  
parvasv āśramavāsikādiṣu caturṣv ārabhyate bhārata  
pūrvācāryamatānugena viduṣā bhāvaprādīpo 'dbhutaḥ // 1 //*  
(Śārdūlavikrīḍita)

c. Second maṅgala verse for the Dīpa on the Āpaddharmaparvan:<sup>127</sup>

*gopālanārāyaṇalakṣmaṇāryān dhīreśagaṅgādharanīlakaṇṭhān<sup>128</sup> /  
cintāmaṇiṃ sāmbaśivam ca natvā vivṛṇma āpadgatarājadharmān // 2 //*  
(Upajāti)

<sup>123</sup> The verse is also cited in Gode 1946: 6.

<sup>124</sup> This text is as yet unpublished. See Sastri 1922: 2803, MS R 2070. Cited in Gode 1946: 6, from Gode 1938: 69.

<sup>125</sup> MS reads *-upāssau*. Gode corrects to *-upāstau*.

<sup>126</sup> Gode omits *yo*, but it is in the manuscript, and required by the metre.

<sup>127</sup> The second *maṅgala* verse for the Dāna section of the Anuśāsanaparvan has the same text as this in its first three *pādas*.

<sup>128</sup> It is unclear who this Nīlakaṇṭha might be. There is some possibility that Nīlakaṇṭha had members of his family compose some sections of the commentary for him. Hence this *maṅgala* might have been composed by a younger brother or a son.

Compare the second *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Udyogaparvan:

*gopālanārāyaṇalakṣmaṇāryā dhīreśagaṅgādharaṇīlakaṇṭhāḥ*<sup>129</sup> /  
*cintāmaṇiḥ sām̐baśivaś ca pūjyā diśantu sarve guravo matiṃ me* // 2 //  
 (Upajāti)

d. Second *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Vanaparvan:

*yajjijñāsā labhyate yajñamukhyair yatraikāgryaṃ prārthyate saṃyamādyaiḥ /*  
*taṃ seve 'haṃ sadguruṃ lakṣmaṇāryaṃ*  
*brahma brahmajñānivaṃśāvataṃsam* // 2 // (Śālinī)

e. Second *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Ādiparvan:<sup>130</sup>

*bāhyaḥ*<sup>131</sup> *stenābhibhāṣī bahir udavasitaṃ pāti*<sup>132</sup> *tarko 'pratiṣṭho*  
*mīmāṃsā prātihāryaṃ bhajati guṇagaṇaṃ yasya saṃkhyāti saṃkhyāḥ /*  
*hṛtpīṭhe yogaśuddhe nihitam upaṇiṣadvāhavṛndaiḥ paraṃ me*  
*bhāgyaṃ śrīlakṣmaṇāryo jagati vijayate yasya leśaḥ śivādyāḥ* // 2 //  
 (Sragdharā)

f. *maṅgala* verse for the Vedāntakataka, *samanvaya* section, part three:<sup>133</sup>

*dyubhvādyādharabhūmākṣaraparadaharo bhāsako 'ṅguṣṭhamātro*  
*devaiḥ śravyo na śūdrair dhavanakaraparajyotirākāśadhīsthaḥ /*  
*avyakte 'gnyādyajothē vapuṣi sa nṛtamāḥ[?] sarvathā khādihetuḥ*  
*pumkartā vākyamṛgyaḥ prakṛtir iti girāṃ gocaro lakṣmaṇo 'vyāt* // 1 //  
 (Sragdharā)

g. Second *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Sabhāparvan:

*jīve bhujijḥ svaparasṛṣṭavapuryujeva*  
*yatreśatāparadhiyā nijamāyayā vā /*  
*sṛṣṭair upādhibhir asaṅgacitāv apīṣṭā*  
*tasmin mamāstu ratir ātmani lakṣmaṇārye* // 2 // (Vasantatilaka)

h. Ninth *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Ādiparvan:<sup>134</sup>

*uttāneṣu iha kośaviGRAHAbalaṃ padyeṣu naivāśritam*  
*gambhīreṣu na setavo na vihitāḥ kūtānanaṣphoṭitāḥ /*

<sup>129</sup> See the previous note.

<sup>130</sup> Repeated as the second *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Harivaṃśa.

<sup>131</sup> Harivaṃśādīpa, *maṅgala* vs. 2 reads *bāhya*.

<sup>132</sup> Harivaṃśādīpa, *maṅgala* vs. 2 reads *yāti*.

<sup>133</sup> The verse introduces the commentary on Brahmasūtra I.3. The text is unpublished. It is here cited from SB MS 27519 (*Sarasvati Bhavana Library* 1961: 78-79), f. 24v.

<sup>134</sup> Repeated as the fifth *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Mokṣadharmaparvan and as the tenth *maṅgala* verse for the Dīpa on the Harivaṃśa.

*na chinnā na tamaścārānanatatir bhaktānanāhlādītā  
no dīnā na vibhīṣaṇās ca vihitāḥ*<sup>135</sup> *śrīlakṣmaṇāryaśritaiḥ* // 9 //  
(Śārdūlavikrīḍita)

i. Second *maṅgala* verse for the Vedāntatātparyanivedana by Govinda, Nīlakaṇṭha's son:<sup>136</sup>

*gopālasaṃcintanavītadoṣaḥ prabodhitāḥ śrīgurulakṣmaṇena /  
vedāntatātparyanivedanena svabodhaśuddhiṃ karavāṇi satsu* // (Upajāti)

## 2. Lakṣmaṇa's references to his family and teachers

a. The colophon to the sixth *kalāpa* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>137</sup>

*iti śrīmatpadavākyapramāṇapārāvārapārīṇaparamahaṃsaparivrājakācārya-  
śrīmaduttamaślokatīrthamahāmuniḥpākaṭāksaikavīkṣitabrahmajñāni-  
vaṃśāvataṃsadattasūrisutalakṣmaṇapaṇḍitaviracitāyāṃ raghuvaṃśāpara-  
paryāyasārasvatopaniṣadvyākhyāyāṃ advaitasudhāsamākhyaḥvidyāyāṃ videhakai-  
valyasamarthano nāma ṣaṣṭhaḥ kalāpaḥ.*

b. Thirteenth verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>138</sup>

*bhāsvadbrahmajñānivaṃśāvataṃsaśrīmadgojādattasūriprasūteḥ /  
hr̥dyo vidvallaṣṭmaṇasya prayāso viśveśasya prītaye śaśvad astu* // 13 //  
(Śālinī)

c. *puṣpikā* of the Yogacandrikā:<sup>139</sup>

*viśiṣṭataraśiṣṭasaṃsadavatamaṃsagaṇeśatas  
tathā tadamuḥjād atiprathītavīdyanārāyaṇāt /  
adhītacarakādīkaḥ parilasatpayovāhinī-  
pavitritanare pure mahati yas tu devālaye* // (Pṛthvī)

*sa dattatamūjo gaṇeśaraḥḥunāthanāmānujo  
'grajaḥ sumativīṭthalāt paramatattvavītsantatau /  
śaranniśi samudyato haridiśīva śītadyutiḥ  
sudhīr akṛta candrikām atulamātulānugrahāt* // (Pṛthvī)

<sup>135</sup> The Gaṇapata Kṛṣṇājī edition of the Mokṣadharmā (Khāḍilkar 1862-1863) reads: *nodīnās ca vibhīṣaṇā na vihitāḥ.*

<sup>136</sup> Cited from the description in Sastri 1900-1911: 2/175.

<sup>137</sup> Cited from BORI MS no. 143 of 1902-07, f. 3r, l. 3-5. The colophon for the sixth *kalāpa* in the Alvar manuscript is given in Peterson 1892: 41. The colophon for the first *kalāpa* is given in Sarma 1944: 72, based on the Bikaner MS.

<sup>138</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 9.

<sup>139</sup> Cited from IO MS 2753 (see Eggeling et al. 1887-1935: 5/982).

d. Fifth verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>140</sup>

*asti praśastavibhavo bhuvī bhūrividyā*<sup>141</sup>  
*vidyotamānaguṇadhāmasamānataśrīḥ /*  
***brahmajñavaṇṣajaladhīr*** *vasudhāsudhāmśus*<sup>142</sup>  
*tasmīn abhūd atimatir budhaviśvanāthaḥ // 5 //* (Vasantatilaka)

e. Tenth verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>143</sup>

*sa lakṣmaṇo dakṣiṇadiśy apāśya śriyaḥ sadānandam amandam*<sup>144</sup> *icchan /*  
*kāśyām udāsīnamatiḥ śarīre viśveśasevī samayākaroti // 10 //* (Upajāti)

f. Eleventh verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>145</sup>

*yaḥ śukladīkṣitavineyagaṇe gaṇeyaḥ*  
***śrīmādhavā*** *khyavibudhādhiḡatorutarkaḥ /*  
*vede pituḥ śrutasudhājaladher adhīr*  
*sāhityam anyajanuṣi*<sup>146</sup> *dhruvam adhyagiṣṭa // 11 //* (Vasantatilaka)

g. Eleventh verse of the *maṅgala* for the Advaitasudhā:<sup>147</sup>

*yatsaṅgato 'dvaitasudhāsamudre saṃviśya yadbhāvikatāmitāḥ smaḥ /*  
*narasvabhāvāpaharaḥ*<sup>148</sup> *suhṛn no nārāyaṇaḥ sarvaguruḥ sa jīyāt // 11 //*  
 (Upajāti)

h. Sixth verse of the *maṅgala* for the Advaitasudhā:<sup>149</sup>

*antaḥsantamasadhvaṃse*<sup>150</sup> *yasya gāvo vikasvarāḥ /*  
***śrīrāmāśramam***<sup>151</sup> *aśrāntaṃ bhāsvantaṃ taṃ samāśraye*<sup>152</sup> *// 6 //* (śloka)

i. *maṅgala* verse for the Advaitasudhā on Raghuvamśa 1.1:<sup>153</sup>

***rāmāśramottamaśloka*** *munidvayavinītadhīḥ /*  
*padeṣu vyañjayiṣyāmi padadvitayanaipuṇaḥ //* (śloka)

<sup>140</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 1-2.

<sup>141</sup> So the Alwar MS. The BORI MS reads *bhūrividyā*.

<sup>142</sup> Alwar MS reads *-sudhāmśus*.

<sup>143</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 6-7.

<sup>144</sup> Alwar MS reads *amedam*.

<sup>145</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 7-8.

<sup>146</sup> Alwar MS reads *anyajam api*.

<sup>147</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 1, f. 1v, l. 7-8.

<sup>148</sup> Alwar MS reads *-svabhāpaharo*.

<sup>149</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 1, f. 1v, l. 4-5.

<sup>150</sup> BORI MS reads *antamadhvaṃse*.

<sup>151</sup> BORI MS corrected from *rāmāśramam* in pencil, probably by Gode.

<sup>152</sup> Alwar MS reads *upāśraye*.

<sup>153</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 1, f. 3r, l. 11.

j. Ninth verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>154</sup>

*mohāndha*<sup>155</sup>*kārāpahāraṃ param*<sup>156</sup> *yad āhur*<sup>157</sup> *mahāveda*<sup>158</sup>*śirogiro 'tra /*  
*yadīyapunyair udiyāya kāsyaṃ tad uttamaśloka**yatīśamūrtyai*<sup>159</sup> // 9 //

(Upajāti)

k. Twelfth verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>160</sup>

*tenottamaśloka**vapurvṛṣāṅkakṛpākaṭākṣaika**nirīkṣitena /*  
*nirmathya sārāsvatasūktisindhū adyeyam*<sup>161</sup> *advaitasudhā vyadhāyi* // 12 //

(Upajāti)

l. Ninth and tenth (?) verses of the *maṅgala* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>162</sup>

*uttamaślokapādeṣu yad vastv adhigataṃ mayā /*  
*vaidīkaṃ vastu vāgdevyāḥ kathayāmi*<sup>163</sup> *hitam puraḥ*<sup>164</sup> /  
*kaḥ paśyed uttamaśloka**kṛpālo*<sup>165</sup>*kavivarjitaḥ /*

(śloka)

m. Second verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>166</sup>

*yeyam*<sup>167</sup> *kathāpatham apārthakam abhyupetya*  
*tattvaṃ śrutismṛtipurāṇasadāgamānām /*  
*āviścakāra raghuvaṃśakṛdāśayasthaṃ*<sup>168</sup>  
*sā naḥ sadā gurupadāmbujareṇur avyāt* // 2 //

(Vasantatilaka)

n. Sixteenth verse of the *puṣpikā* of the Advaitasudhā:<sup>169</sup>

*tīrṇavyākaraṇārṇavāḥ sphuradurudvaitiprabandhā api*  
*śrīmacchaṅkarasūnṛtaikarasikā ye ke 'pi lokottarāḥ /*

<sup>154</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 5-6.

<sup>155</sup> Alwar MS reads *mahāndha*-.

<sup>156</sup> BORI MS omits *param*.

<sup>157</sup> Alwar MS reads *yadā dur*-.

<sup>158</sup> BORI MS reads *mahovida*-.

<sup>159</sup> Alwar MS reads *-patīśamūrtyā*.

<sup>160</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30v, l. 8-9.

<sup>161</sup> Alwar MS reads *adhyeyam*.

<sup>162</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 1, f. 1v, l. 6-7. The text is disturbed in all MSS here. Either this is simply a *śloka* with six *pādas*, and the tenth verse has been omitted, or a line is missing. The BORI and Bikaner MSS both read the first line twice. Alwar has the verse number 9 relating to the quoted six *pādas* and then jumps to 11.

<sup>163</sup> Bikaner MS reads *kathayāpi*.

<sup>164</sup> Alwar MS reads *raḥ* for *puraḥ*.

<sup>165</sup> Bikaner MS reads *-kṛpāloḥ*-.

<sup>166</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 30r, l. 8-9.

<sup>167</sup> Alwar MS reads *yaya*.

<sup>168</sup> Alwar MS reads *-āśayatvam*.

<sup>169</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 6, f. 31r, l. 1-2.

*teṣām apy upale nipatyā vilasaty āmnāya*<sup>170</sup>*geyottama-  
ślokaśrī*<sup>171</sup>*caraṇoditāmṛtasarid bhūyād iyaṃ bhūtaye // 16 //*  
(Śārdūlavikrīḍita)

o. Second *maṅgala* verse for Nīlakaṇṭha's Rudrasārasaṃgrahavyākhyā:<sup>172</sup>

*uttamaślokaṭrthābdhilabdhāsadyuktimauktikaiḥ /  
khacitā rudrasūktasya dyotatām dhīmatām hr̥di // 2 //* (śloka)

3. Uttamaślokaṭrtha's Laghuvārttika with *ṭīkā* Laghunyāyasudhā<sup>173</sup>

a. Colophon of the first *adhyāya* of the Vedānta section:

*iti śrīmatparamahāṃsaparivrājakācāryaśrīmaduttamaślokaṭrthaviracitāyāṃ  
laghuvārttikaṭīkāyāṃ laghunyāyasudhāyāṃ uttaratantrē prathamādhyāyasya  
caturthaḥ pādaḥ /*

b. Colophon of the last *adhyāya* of the Vedānta section:

*itiśrīmacchuddhānandamunivaraḥkareṇa*<sup>174</sup>*śrīmaduttamaślokaṭrthayatinā  
viracitāyāṃ laghuvārttikaṭīkāyāṃ caturtho 'dhyāyaḥ samāptaḥ /*

4. Lakṣmaṇa's Sāracandrikā commentary on the Rāghavapāṇḍavīya

a. Kavirāja's *maṅgala* for the Rāghavapāṇḍavīya, 1.1:<sup>175</sup>

*svādhiṣṭhānāmbujarajahpuñjapīṅjaramūrtaye /  
icchādīnājagatsṛṣṭikarmaṇe brahmaṇe namaḥ // 1 //* (śloka)

b. From Lakṣmaṇa's commentary on Rāghavapāṇḍavīya 1.1:<sup>176</sup>

*vyatirekālaṃkāradhvaniḥ. tena saṃkalpamātrasāmagrīkaviśvasṛjaṃ namasya-  
tā mayāpi tanmātrasāmagrīkā kāvyasṛṣṭiḥ sukareti vyajyata iti **prāñcaḥ**.*

c. From Lakṣmaṇa's commentary on Rāghavapāṇḍavīya 1.1:<sup>177</sup>

*vastutas tu saṃsārānarthanivṛttirūpaṃ mahāmohamahimnā cetanācetanānā-  
nāprapañcātmanāvabhāsamānam akhaṇḍātmataṭṭvam evātra mantavyatveno-  
panyastam iti mantavyam.*

<sup>170</sup> Alwar MS reads *vilasan nāmnā ya-*.

<sup>171</sup> BORI MS reads *-śrī-*.

<sup>172</sup> See note 122 above for the source.

<sup>173</sup> IO MS 2321, cited from Eggeling et al. 1887-1935: I/744. See notes 52 and 53.

<sup>174</sup> Thus the IO MS. Vajhe's printed edition of the text gives Śuddhānanda more of a title: *śrīmatparamahāṃsaparivrājakācāryaśrīmacchuddhānandamunivaraḥkareṇa*.

<sup>175</sup> Rāghavapāṇḍavīya, p. 1.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Rāghavapāṇḍavīya, p. 1-2.

5. Lakṣmaṇa's Advaitasudhā, the opening statement<sup>178</sup>

a. On Lakṣmaṇa's ability to churn the sea of Soma:

*kṛpāvīpākaḥ padavākyamānasamānabhājām udito gurūṇām /  
majjan mahādvaitasudhāsamudre  
mando 'pi yan mandarātām upaimi // 12 //* (Upajāti)

b. On disclosing Kālidāsa's intention:

*satkathāparamārthābhyām<sup>179</sup> anurañjayate janān /  
āśayaṃ<sup>180</sup> kālidāsasya vivarītuṃ yatāmahe // 8 //* (śloka)

c. On the newness of his commentary:

*kāśīgaṅgāṭīkāsya ekā navyā<sup>181</sup> sūktir bhavyālokā // 20 //* (śloka)

d. How Kālidāsa reflected on the human condition:

*saccidānandam advaitam ātmatattvam avidyayā<sup>182</sup>/  
jīvabhāvam ivāpadya<sup>183</sup> duḥsvapneneva badhyate // 21 //<sup>184</sup>  
satkarmaśuddhacittam<sup>185</sup> tat tattvamasyādivedataḥ /  
gurūpadiṣṭam ātmānam avabudhya vimucyate // 22 //* (śloka)

e. Kālidāsa's decision to narrate a story:

*ity etac chrutisarvasvam abhisandhāya satkaviḥ /  
kālidāsaḥ pravavṛte kathām upadiśann<sup>186</sup> iha // 23 //* (śloka)

f. The nondualism of the Raghuvamśa:

*ity advaitāmṛtodgāraḥ sāksād evāsya dṛśyate /  
ekaiva mūrtir yā sṛṣṭir vedānteṣu evam<sup>187</sup> ity api // 28 //* (śloka)

g. Kālidāsa begins the Raghuvamśa with a maṅgala verse to the Gāyatrī:

*ato vādakathārūpe prabandhe 'tra mahākaviḥ /  
vadan vedārtham anvāha<sup>188</sup> vedamātari maṅgalam // 31 //* (śloka)

<sup>178</sup> Text based on the BORI MS *kalāpa* 1, f. 1v (vs. 1-14ab), f. 2r (vs. 14cd-23a), f. 2v (vs. 23b-37ab), with readings from Peterson's description of the Alwar MS (Peterson 1892: 39-41) noted.

<sup>179</sup> Alwar MS *-paramārthālpam*.

<sup>180</sup> BORI MS *āśayaṃ*.

<sup>181</sup> Alwar MS *nadyā*.

<sup>182</sup> BORI MS *avidyadyā*.

<sup>183</sup> BORI MS *ivāpapadya*.

<sup>184</sup> The Alwar MS has no numbering for the verses numbered here as 21, 22, and 23.

<sup>185</sup> BORI MS *-citta*.

<sup>186</sup> BORI MS *apadiśann*.

<sup>187</sup> BORI MS *vedānteṣu yam*.

<sup>188</sup> Alwar MS *anvāhaḥ*.



h. The Gāyatrī as containing all the Veda necessary:

*parihāyāpi*<sup>189</sup> *vedāṃs trīn karmāṇi vihitāni ca /*  
*gāyatrīmātram āśritya dvijo bhavati nirbhayaḥ // 33 //* (śloka)

## 6. Lakṣmaṇa's Advaitasudhā, the overall structure

a. From the introduction to the second *kalāpa*:<sup>190</sup>

*samanvayanti vedāntāḥ sadadvaita iti sthite /*  
*udyate rā [sic; read sam-?] nirākartuṃ mānāntaraparāhatim // 4 //* (śloka)

b. The anti-Sāṅkhya argument of Raghuvamśa 1.18:<sup>191</sup>

*avaidikatvaṃ sāmkyābhimatāyāḥ prakṛter yadi /*  
*tat kim artham ajām ekām ityādīti nirasyati //* (śloka)

c. The anti-Bhedābheda argument of Raghuvamśa 1.21:<sup>192</sup>

*ajñasya rāgato duḥkhaṃ nātmajñasya virāgataḥ /*  
*bhedābhedaḥśor vyaktaḥ phalabheda itīryate //* (śloka)

d. Raghuvamśa 1.23 and the subordinate status of other forms of knowledge:<sup>193</sup>

*asyaivāśeṣaśeṣiṇyā vidhayātiprathīyasaḥ /*  
*jñātajñeyatamatvaṃ cety udāharati bhāratī //* (śloka)

## APPENDIX B: UTTAMAŚLOKA'S GURUS

It may be possible to trace the lineage of Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita's Advaitin *gurus* further, though the evidence does not permit us to make all of the identifications with equal certainty. In the colophon to his *Laghuvārttika*, Uttamaśloka, Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita's principal *guru*, identifies himself as the servant of the *sannyāsin* Śuddhānanda, who was a *paramahaṃsa-parivrājakācārya*.<sup>194</sup>

Uttamaśloka also describes himself at the end of the work as inspired to write it by Viśveśvara.<sup>195</sup> This is probably to be taken as a form of homage to Śiva as

<sup>189</sup> BORI MS *parihāpyāpi*.

<sup>190</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 2, f. 1v, l. 2-4.

<sup>191</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 2, f. 4r, l. 8-9.

<sup>192</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 2, f. 10r, l. 5-6.

<sup>193</sup> BORI MS *kalāpa* 2, f. 12v, l. 10 – 13r, l. 1.

<sup>194</sup> See Appendix A, 3b.

<sup>195</sup> *viśveśvaraprevitena śritaviśveśvamūrtinā / uttamaślokatīrthena tatprītyai grathitam sphu-  
ṭam //*. See IO MS 2322 / 2516, cited from Eggeling et al. 1887-1935: I/745. This is the third and final verse of the *Laghunyāyasudhā*.

the principal deity in Banaras, and helps us to locate Uttamaśloka there. Many authors active in Banaras during the period after the rebuilding of the Viśvanātha temple at the end of the sixteenth century referred to their wish to please Viśveśvara through their writing. Nīlakaṇṭha, whose literary career was spent in Banaras, did so in many of his works. Uttamaśloka may even have written the Laghuvārttika in the Viśvanātha temple complex, for in the same verse he describes himself as *śritaviśveśamūrti*. At the same time, there is some possibility that the inspiration to compose the work came from a *sannyāsin* called Viśveśvara, who might have been his *paramaguru*, as we shall see. It was not uncommon for writers to pay homage in a *maṅgala* verse in a double-meaning way, to a deity and a *guru* bearing the same name.

### Śuddhānanda

In the lists of authors on Advaita compiled by Potter, the name Śuddhānanda is listed as the author of two works: a commentary on Śaṅkara's Gauḍapāda-kārikābhāṣya, and a lengthy treatise called the Vedāntacintāmaṇi, with a commentary, Prakāśa.<sup>196</sup> Little is known about the former work, but a good deal is known about the latter, whose author is identified in its colophons as Śuddhānanda Sarasvatī or Śuddhānanda Bhikṣu or simply Śuddha Bhikṣu. Neither work has a date fixed for it internally. If the author of the Vedāntacintāmaṇi was indeed Uttamaśloka's *guru*, he may have been only a *vidyāguru*, as he evidently belonged to a different *daśanāmī* order.

### Viśveśvara

In turn, the Śuddhānanda who was the author of the Vedāntacintāmaṇi says that he was a bee buzzing around the lotus feet of his *guru*, Viśveśvara Sarasvatī. Viśveśvara too is described as a *paramahaṃsa-parivrājakācārya*.<sup>197</sup> As we

<sup>196</sup> For the Gauḍapādakārikā commentary, see Potter 1983: 582. He cites Bühler 1871-1873: 4/50. That manuscript is described as having 124 leaves, 24 lines, and no date, owner: Lalubhāi, Ahmadabad. For the Vedāntacintāmaṇi, see Potter 1983: 582. He cites Hall 1859, Mitra 1870-1895: 6/261-262, and *Sarasvatī Bhavana Library* 1888. Hall estimates the length of his manuscript at 6,700 *ślokas*. Mitra estimates the length of his at 7,260 *ślokas*. *Sarasvatī Bhavana Library* 1888 (MS 430) gives an estimate of 3,000 *ślokas*. This was a substantial treatise, in any case.

<sup>197</sup> Mitra 1870-1895: 6/262, MS no. 2200: *iti śrīparamahaṃsaparivrājakācāryaśrīviśveśvarabhagavatpūjyapādapādaṅkajabhṛṅgaśrīśuddhabhikṣusamgrhīto vedāntacintāmaṇiḥ sam-pūrṇaḥ*.

noted above, it is possible that Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita was influenced by someone called Viśveśvara.

We know of three Advaitin figures called Viśveśvara Sarasvatī. The first Viśveśvara is the one to whom Madhusūdana Sarasvatī pays homage in many of his works. Madhusūdana also declares in one place that his two main *gurus*, Viśveśvara and Mādhava, had a *guru* called Viśvaveda.

The second and best known Viśveśvara Sarasvatī composed a treatise on the *dharma* of *sannyāsins*, the Yatidharmasaṃgraha, also known as the Yatidharmasamuccaya and by various other titles. The author of this text identifies his *guru* as Sarvajña Viśveśa in the *maṅgala* verse. A manuscript of this text is dated by its scribe to 1611-1612 C.E.<sup>198</sup>

The third Viśveśvara is known from an unpublished manuscript of a commentary on the Siddhāntabindu of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī. Potter assigns this Viśveśvara a date of ca. 1600,<sup>199</sup> which would be the proper period for the *paramaguru* of Uttamaśloka.

In the *Catalogus Catalogorum*, Aufrecht concluded that, as the name *viśvaveda* means the same thing as *sarvajña*, therefore Viśveśvara, the *guru* of Madhusūdana, was also the author of the Yatidharmasaṃgraha, for they both have *gurus* whose names mean the same thing.<sup>200</sup> Since Madhusūdana was a figure of the mid to late sixteenth century, that identification would put this Viśveśvara into the earlier sixteenth century, which would be too early for him to be the *paramaguru* of Uttamaśloka. The identification of the first and second Viśveśvaras, though generally accepted, is based only on a surmise about an epithet of a *guru*, however, and it is not impossible that the author of the *yatidharma* text might be the same as our third Viśveśvara, who wrote the commentary on the Siddhāntabindu. We might recall here that Lakṣmaṇa too wrote a text that appears to have been about the *dharmas* of *sannyāsins*. Thus Lakṣmaṇa Paṇḍita may have been connected through his lineage to our third Viśveśvara, who may have been the same as the second Viśveśvara, the author of the Yatidharmasaṃgraha, and the pupil of Sarvajña Viśveśa.

<sup>198</sup> Kane 1975: 1091. The text has been published in the *Ānandāśrama Series*. See Gokhale 1928.

<sup>199</sup> Potter 1983: 382.

<sup>200</sup> Aufrecht (CC I/587) and Kane (1975: 1224) (and Olivelle 1977: 25, following him) identify this Viśveśvara as the *guru* of Madhusūdana Sarasvatī.

## Svayaṃprakāśa Yatīndra

To return to Śuddhānanda, a *sannyāsin* with that name is also mentioned by Svayaṃprakāśa Yati, the prominent Advaitin author of the early seventeenth century, that is, of the same period as Uttamaśloka. In a Tanjore manuscript of his commentary on the Advaitamakaranda, the Rasābhivyañjikā, Svayaṃprakāśa mentions among his *gurus* a Śuddhānanda.<sup>201</sup> If this is the same Śuddhānanda to whom Uttamaśloka does homage, then Svayaṃprakāśa Yati and Uttamaśloka, both of whom frequented Banaras, would have been *satīrthas*.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Sastri 1931b: 5751, MS no. 7637, a manuscript of the Advaitamakarandavyākhyā Rasābhivyañjikā by Svayaṃprakāśa Yati: *śuddhānandapadāmbhojamakarandanīṣevanāt / nirvāṇarasam āsādyā hṛṣṭāḥ śiṣyālipaṅktayāḥ* // . Other manuscripts of the same verse have other *gurus* mentioned, however.

<sup>202</sup> Srikantha Sastri (1938: 405) noted that Svayaṃprakāśa Yati and Uttamaśloka were connected as disciples of Śuddhānanda, though he put them all into an earlier century.

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