

## The *Yogasāra* Cited in Vimalabodha's Commentary on the *Mahābhārata*

*Christopher Minkowski*

### Introduction

The second oldest commentary on the *Mahābhārata* that is known to us is the work of Vimalabodha, who in his introduction entitles the text *Durghaṭārthaparakāśini* in one verse, and *Durbodhaṭpadabodhini* in the next.<sup>1</sup> Because Vimalabodha refers to the earlier *Mahābhārata* commentator, Devabodha (eleventh century), and to the author Bhoja, king of Dhār (eleventh Century), and is in turn referred to by the *Mahābhārata* commentator Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa (fourteenth century), V. S. Sukthankar assigned Vimalabodha to some time in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries (Sukthankar 1935–36). Vimalabodha's engagement with the *Mahābhārata* is a departure from that of his predecessor, Devabodha, in a number of ways; some of his innovations were continued in later commentaries. Just as Vimalabodha sometimes repeated glosses and lines of interpretation from Devabodha's commentary, ideas and even entire discussions originally presented in Vimalabodha's commentary are repeated by later commentators, including Arjunamiśra (sixteenth century) and Nilakaṇṭha Caturdhara (seventeenth century).

Vimalabodha refers to a large number of sources, including verses from elsewhere in the *Mahābhārata*, from the Vedas and Upaniṣads, from well-known Dharma- and Nitiśāstra texts, and from various philosophers.<sup>2</sup> Vimalabodha directly cites many other sources without attributing them. Some of these passages are readily identified, while others remain unknown. The purpose of this article is to discuss one such source that is named and directly cited, a text Vimalabodha calls the *Yogasāra*. Vimalabodha (henceforth Vimala) refers to the *Yogasāra*

- 1 The text of these two verses is cited from two BORI manuscripts (Belvalkar 1966: cxxxix–cxl). The colophons at the end of *parvans* refer to the commentary more simply as the *Viśamaśloki* or the *Viśamaślokyākhyā* or *-tikā*. Research on this paper was made possible by a grant from the Leverhulme Trust, RPG-2021-177.
- 2 P. K. Gode provided a list of sixty-three sources named in Vimalabodha's commentary, working from the manuscript BORI 84 of 1869–1870 (Gode 1935). One can see Gode's penciled underlining of these sources as they appear in the leaves of the manuscript itself. Some of these named sources are repetitions, the total number of distinct sources mentioned being slightly above fifty.

in his commentary on two verses, in two *parvans*, CE 5.45.13 and CE 12.188.1.<sup>3</sup> The *Yogasāra* known to him was a versified text: he cites one *upajāti* verse in his discussion of 5.45.13, and five *anustubh* verses, which appear to constitute a continuous sequence, in his discussion of 12.188.1.

Here I aim to identify the most likely candidates for this source. The chapter moves through the following five sections:

1. a brief summary of the nature and format of Vimalabodha's commentary;<sup>4</sup>
2. the text of the verses cited from the *Yogasāra*, as reconstructed from manuscripts currently available to me;
3. a discussion of the verses and commentaries in which these citations appear, along with later echoings or repetitions of these passages in later commentaries;
4. a sifting of the more than thirty texts known to the *New Catalogus Catalogorum* by the title of *Yogasāra* in order to identify the most likely text, while ruling out others;
5. a discussion of why Vimala has cited these verses, and what is distinctive about them with reference to the history of yoga.<sup>5</sup>

## 1. Vimalabodha's commentary

In keeping with his practice of using scholarly resources available in his scholarly environment, Vimala begins by acknowledging a number of genres and authorities aside from his predecessor, Devabodha. Among these are lexicons, Vedic passages, and commentaries. He appears to know other existing lore or scholarship on the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>6</sup> While Devabodha's commen-

- 3 I refer to verses in the *Mahābhārata* using the numbering of the Critical Edition (Sukthankar 1933–1959), for ease of location of the text in other editions. This was of course not the numbering known to Vimalabodha. The equivalent verses in the Vulgate edition are 5.46.13 and 12.195.1 (Kiñjavadekar 1929–1936). The equivalent verse in Bakre's edition of the Udyogaparvan is also 5.46.13 (Bakre 1920).
- 4 This is an as yet unpublished text. Here I work from eight manuscripts from three Indian collections, as described below. As part of the Leverhulme project I am developing an initial working edition of Vimalabodha's commentary.
- 5 I have received indispensable help from Valters Negribs, from James Mallinson, who read a draft of the paper and provided corrections and improvements, and especially from Jason Birch, who went out of his way to provide me with access to materials and information he has developed in his research activities. Given the quasi-scientific nature of the *mahābhūta-yoga* described in one of these passages, it may perhaps be relevant to the interests of Dominik Wujastyk, to whom I commend this essay. I offer the chapter as a tribute to my colleague's boundless energy, buoyant cheer, and useful productivity, whose friendship by now seems *anādi*, and which, I trust, will be *ananta*.
- 6 *nighaṇṭabbhāṣyanigamaniruktāni viśeṣataḥ vaiṣampāyanaṭīkādivasvānimatāni ca (1) vikṣya* etc. (Belvalkar 1966: cxxxix–cxl). Gode and others have noted the reference to a *Vaiṣampāyanaṭīkā*. The compound might be segmented differently, referring to Vaiṣampāyana, i.e., the text of the *Mahā-*

tary mostly consists of glosses of difficult words, Vimalabodha's commentary takes the *śloka* as the unit of analysis. The working title of Vimala's commentary, which one encounters in the colophons to *parvans*, *Viśamaślokī*, reveals this orientation.<sup>7</sup> Vimalabodha covers a smaller number of verses than Devabodha does, but they are more thoroughly discussed. In keeping with this difference, Vimalabodha's commentary on the *Mahābhārata* is the first to present the text of an entire verse before commenting on it. The comment usually begins with *asyārthaḥ*, or more explicitly, *asya ślokasyārthaḥ*. It typically ends with *ity arthaḥ*. Since he sometimes comments only on a single verse in a chapter, Vimala in places begins with an explanation of the narrative context. The commentary usually presents an *anvaya* or *sambandha* for the verse, glossing as it goes. Occasionally it will include grammatical analysis. Often it closes by explaining the larger meaning of the verse – its *āśaya* or *bhāva* or *abbhiprāya*. In support of both his rendering of particular words and these larger meanings, Vimala adduces verses, epigrams, and *sūtras* from his many sources. Vimala also refers to interpretations of particular verses by others, not just Devabodha's. For example, for *Mahābhārata* verses that also circulated in Dharma and Nīti texts, he may refer to the comments or renderings of *nibandhakāras* and the like.

While usually respectful of Devabodha's interpretation, and in places dependent on it, Vimalabodha does not shrink from criticizing him in places. For example, in his comment on CE 12.47.27, which describes a personified, idealized Vedic sacrifice (*tasmai yajñātmane namaḥ*) he mentions Devabodha's explanation of a compound (*dāśārdbabavirākṛtim*) and then rules it out, saying that that explanation is no good (*tad asādhū*), giving a reason for saying so.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. The text of the verses cited from the *Yogasāra*

The text of the citations I offer here is a simplified version of a working edition currently in preparation.<sup>9</sup> It is based primarily on two manuscripts: BORI 84 of 1869–70 and Mysore C2136, with supplementary readings from six other manuscripts: BORI 167 of 1887–91; BORI 171 of 1884–87; Baroda 6579; Baroda 11288; Baroda 11677; and Baroda 11930, when

*bbārata* itself. Either way, there appears to be at least one *ṭikā* other than Devabodha's known to him, and perhaps more, given the *-ādi-*.

7 Or the colophon will say *ete N-parvaṇi viśamaślokāḥ*.

8 BORI 84f. 59r. For *asādhū* the Mysore manuscript (f. 26v) reads *asaṃmataṃ* – “not the consensus view”; the Nārāyaṇa transcript (p. 64), *mandam* – “dumb.”

9 For these purposes I am regularizing variants in sandhi, both internal and external. I confine myself to recording variants that make a difference in the meaning. I do not record eccentric variants, wherein a single manuscript presents an obvious mistake e.g., *prādo* for *prāpte*.

the passages are available in those manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> These six manuscripts are often too faulty to justify full collation, but they provide supporting readings that are helpful in solving cruxes. Bakre's edition of the Udyogaparvan includes the commentary of Vimala, among others (Bakre 1920). Bakre used more than one manuscript and in places made editorial changes. I have collated his readings for CE 5.45.13. Because of its close relationship to Vimala's commentary, I have also made use of a transcription of a manuscript of the commentary attributed to Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, the *Bhāratārthaprakāśa*, which is preserved in the government manuscripts collection in Chennai, GOML R2169.<sup>11</sup> The commentary of Arjunamiśra on CE 5.45.13 includes a parallel to Vimala's comment close enough to amount to a testimony, and is referred to here when helpful.

### A. Citation in the commentary on *Mahābhārata* CE 5.45.13:<sup>12</sup>

I include a brief part of the commentary that leads into this verse. More details about Vimala's framing are discussed in the next section. In brief, Vimalabodha reads the verse as being about *sadyomukti*, or instant liberation (and bodily death).

... *vidadbhātīty āgamād bodhavyaṃ. kṛtsnarūpaś*<sup>13</sup> *cāsāv iti somasiddhāntaḥ. uk-*  
*taṃ*<sup>14</sup> *ca yogasāre:*

- 10 My thanks to Amruta Natu and Shreenand Bapat at BORI, to the Mysore ORI, and to Vipul Patel at the Baroda OI. Also, thanks to Vishal Sharma, Shree Nahata, Poorva Palekar, and Harshal Patel for help in working with these institutes.
- 11 The history and identity of the *Bhāratārthaprakāśa*, attributed to Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, requires further study. The GOML R2169, at least, presents a text that is often very close to, or identical with, the text of Vimalabodha's commentary as that has been preserved in the manuscripts I have been able to examine. In other places it is expanded or clarified, or simply reworded slightly. There are significant lacunae in the GOML manuscript, including all of the commentary on the Udyogaparvan. The modern copyist lists the title of this work as *Bhāratatātparyasaṃgraha*. Colophons in descriptive catalogues sometimes call it simply the *Bhāratavyākhyāna* or *-vyākhyā*. The colophon at the end of the GOML transcript calls it simply the *-ṭīkā*. The commentary on the Udyoga, only available to me in the text that Bakre has published in his edition, does not follow the pattern of the GOML manuscript elsewhere. One possibility is that Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa wrote an independent commentary only on the Udyogaparvan, which he or some later author supplemented with a somewhat improved version of Vimala's commentary on the rest of the epic. Another is that there are two works that have been confused.
- 12 The passage begins in BORI 84 on f. 47v; in Mysore 2136 on f. 13r; Baroda 11288 on f. 53v; in Baroda 11677 on f. 61v; in Baroda 11930 on f. 16r; in BORI 167 on f. 34r. in BORI 171 on f. 34v; the Udyogaparvan is missing in Baroda 6579 and GOML R2136.
- 13 Bakre, BORI 167: *kṛtsna-* (BORI 171 *kṛtsnu-*); BORI 84, Mysore, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, Baroda 11930: *kṛṣṇa-*.
- 14 Bakre, Mysore: *uktaṃ*; BORI 84: *uktaś*.

kapālapadmasthitasomabimbam<sup>15</sup> ācintayan taṃ<sup>16</sup> janakānticauram<sup>17</sup> |  
 prasyandi<sup>18</sup> pīyūṣalavāsthi<sup>19</sup> carmā prāpnoti caikādaśa lakṣaṇāni ||

Notes:

The passage refers in this context to the Āgama and to the Somasiddhānta, which gives us some help in placing the genre of literature in which we might find this *Yogasāra*.

*kṛṣṇarūpaḥ* vs. *kṛtsnarūpaḥ*: The *asau* in this sentence refers to the mind, conceived to be the moon, present in the crown of the head. Is it full (*kṛtsna-*) or dark (*kṛṣṇa-*)? There are readings in the manuscripts that support both possibilities. Since earlier in the commentary the moon is said to be nourishing the tissues of the body with *amṛta* or Soma, I suppose it is full, and so read *kṛtsna-*. What might be in favor of it being dark is the difficult compound, *janakānticauram*. Arjunamiśra's commentary, which reproduces Vimala's with minor changes for this passage, reads *kṛtsna-* as well.<sup>20</sup>

*ācintayan taṃ* vs. *acintayan taṃ*: *ā + cint* is an unusual collocation. I assume that the meditation on the mind as moon results in the flow of Soma throughout the body. The use of *cint* in the third verse cited below supports that interpretation. It might instead be, however, that not thinking about the mind or moon is what achieves this effect.<sup>21</sup>

*janakānticauram*: The thief of the love or luster of the people or of the Janaloka? It would appear to be a descriptor of the disk of the moon. There are no useful variants. This remains a problem in the text for now. If the moon is indeed dark (*kṛṣṇa*), then this adjective could describe a moon whose luster is stolen. Could we read *-gauram*? Perhaps *-cauram* is to be understood in the sense of surpassing.

*prasyandipīyūṣalavāsthicarmā*: "whose skin and bones have drops of flowing ambrosia." In the discussion that precedes citation of this verse, Vimala refers to a nourishing flow of Soma to the constituent elements or *dhātus* of the body. See more discussion of the context below. Arjunamiśra's version, as it appears in Bakre, reads *-vasāptikarmā*. If *vasā-* is correct, but the

15 Mysore, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11930, BORI 171: *-bimbam*; BORI 84, Bakre, BORI 167: *-viśvam*; Baroda 11677: *-dr̥ṣyam*.

16 Mysore, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *ācintayan taṃ*; (Baroda 11930 *āvintapan taṃ*; BORI 171 *āvintayan raṃ*); BORI 84; Bakre: *acintayan taṃ*.

17 All manuscripts and Bakre read *janakānticauram*, except BORI 167: *janakānticauram*; BORI 171 *janakānticauram*.

18 Bakre, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, Baroda 11930: *prasyandi-*; BORI 84, Mysore, BORI 171: *prasāndi-*.

19 BORI 84, Bakre, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, Baroda 11930: *-lavāsthi-*; Mysore: *-lavāsti-*; Arjunamiśra in Bakre: *-vasāpti-*.

20 I cite Arjunamiśra's commentary from Bakre's edition of the Udyogaparvan.

21 My thanks to James Mallinson for this suggestion.

following words are not, we would have *-vasāsthicarmā*: three of the bodily tissues that receive the flowing ambrosia.<sup>22</sup>

### B. Verses from the *Yogasāra* cited in Vimalabodha's commentary at *Mahābhārata* CE 12.188.1.<sup>23</sup>

The context will receive further discussion in the next section of this paper. Here it suffices to say that this passage forms part of a discussion of a fourfold meditation (*dhyānaṃ caturvidhaṃ*), and pertains to the first of these meditations, which is concerned with the five material elements (or *mahābhūtas*).

*tatra nābher adbaḥ pṛthivīsthānaṃ. tad brahmagranthir<sup>24</sup> ity<sup>25</sup> ucyate. tasmin line  
manasi sarvaśāstrārthasamvettā kavir bhavati.*

*uktaṃ ca:*

*ūrdhvādhoromamadhyastho brahmagranthir udābrtaḥ |  
sarvaśāstrārthasamvettā kavir bhavati tadgata iti ||<sup>26</sup>*

*tadūpari jalasthānaṃ nābhis<sup>27</sup> tajjanitasarojamadhye manasi line jalastambhā-  
disiddhir<sup>28</sup> bhavati. uktaṃ ca*

*nābhisaraḥsamudbhūtasitapaṅkajamadhyagaḥ<sup>29</sup> |  
somalokam avāpnoti stambhayec ca jalaṃ sadā ||*

- 22 *tvak* or *carman* does appear as the first in the list of *dhātus* in some Ayurveda texts. See Maas 2007: 125–162, 134, and n. 19. I thank the editors for this reference.
- 23 The relevant passage begins in BORI 84 on f. 66v; in Mysore 2136 on f. 35r; in Nārāyaṇa on p. 81; in Baroda 6579 on f. 11v; in Baroda 11288 on f. 77r; in Baroda 11677 on f. 87; in BORI 167 on f. 50v; in Baroda 11930 on f. 31r (the manuscript has some missing leaves, so the text begins with *sitapaṅkajamadhyagaḥ*); Baroda 11288 has a large lacuna at the beginning.
- 24 BORI 84, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *brahmagranthir*; Mysore: *brahmagradhir*; Nārāyaṇa: *br̥hadgranthir*. Other manuscripts are missing this section.
- 25 BORI 84 omits *iti*. Present in Mysore, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, BORI 167.
- 26 Mysore omits everything from *uktaṃ* to end of the verse. Instead of the second line of the verse, BORI 84 reads only *sarvaśāstravettā kavir bhavati*. Nārāyaṇa, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, BORI 167 read the second line as constituted. See below for a parallel for *ab* in the *Kubjikāmatatantra*.
- 27 BORI 167 omits *tadūpari jalasthānaṃ nābhiḥ*. Baroda 11677 inserts in margin.
- 28 Mysore, Nārāyaṇa, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *-stambhādi-*; BORI 84: *-stambhanādi-*.
- 29 Mysore: *nābhi-*; BORI 84, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677: *nābhi-*; missing in Baroda 11930, Nārāyaṇa. Baroda 6579, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *-saraḥsam-*; Nārāyaṇa: *-sarassam-*; Mysore, BORI 84: *-sarasam-*.

*tadupari hṛdi prānasthānaṃ. tasmīn manasi line sarvajñatvādikam bhavati. uktaṃ ca*

*hṛtpadmapīṭhamadhyastham<sup>30</sup> cintayañ jīvasaṃjñakam<sup>31</sup> |  
pradīpakalikākāraṃ sarvajñatvaṃ prapadyate ||*

*tadupari bhrūmadhye tejasthānaṃ. tatra line manasi pratibhādisiddhayo<sup>32</sup> bhavanti. uktaṃ ca.*

*sarvedamayaṃ binduṃ<sup>33</sup> bhrūvor madhye vyavasthitaṃ |  
yas taṃ vedamayaṃ veda sa veda bhuvanatrayaṃ ||*

*tadupari kapālāntara ākāśasthānaṃ.<sup>34</sup> tatrādhomukhapadmamadhye<sup>35</sup> mano niveśya tribhuvanam eva vaśīkurate.<sup>36</sup> uktaṃ ca.*

*kapālākāśamadhyastham<sup>37</sup> yad adhomukhapānkajam |  
tanmadhye<sup>38</sup> manasi prāpte vāśyaṃ syād bhuvanatrayaṃ ||*

*etāni yogasāre<sup>39</sup> draṣṭavyāni.*

Notes:

The verses are in the *anuṣṭubh* meter and are better and more consistently preserved in the manuscripts than is the verse in the Udyogaparvan.

*hṛtpīṭhapadma-* vs. *hṛtpadmapīṭha-*. Three manuscripts (Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, BORI 167) record *hṛtpīṭhapadma-*. Baroda 6579 does preserve good readings and is some-

30 Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *hṛtpīṭhapadma-*; BORI 84, Mysore, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11930, Nārāyaṇa: *hṛtpadmapīṭha-*.

31 Mysore: *-saṃjñakam*; BORI 84 and all other manuscripts that contain this passage: *saṃjñakam*

32 Mysore, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, Baroda 11930: *pratibhādisiddhayo*; BORI 84, Baroda 11288: *prātibhāvayādisiddhayo*; Nārāyaṇa: *pratibhātiśayo*; BORI 167: *sarvāḥ siddhayo*.

33 BORI 84, Mysore: *sarvedamayaṃ binduṃ*; Baroda 11933: *sarvedamayaṃ bimbanam*; Nārāyaṇa: *sarvedamayaṃ vidyud*; Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *sarvedavaymayam viṣṇuṃ* (Baroda 6579: *viṣṇu*).

34 Baroda 6579, Baroda 11677: *kapālāntara ākāśa*; Nārāyaṇa: *kapālāntare ākāśa-*; Mysore, Baroda 11288: *kapālāntarākāśa-*; BORI 84: *kapālāntarā ākāśa-*; Baroda 11930: *kapālāntarākārākāśa-*; Baroda 11288: *kapālākāśamadhyastha-*. The pattern of the preceding prose suggests strongly *kapālāntare*, becoming *-āntara* and hiatus after sandhi.

35 BORI 84: *tatra sukha-*; all other manuscripts that contain this passage: *tatrādhomukha-*.

36 Mysore: *vaśīkaroti*; all other manuscripts that contain this passage: *vaśīkurate*.

37 Nārāyaṇa: *kapālādhomukhamadhyastham*; all other manuscripts that contain this passage: *kapālākāśamadhyastham*.

38 BORI 84, Baroda 6579, Baroda 11288, Baroda 11677, BORI 167: *-madhye*; Mysore, Baroda 11930, Nārāyaṇa: *-madhyam*.

39 BORI 84, Mysore: *yogasāre*; Baroda 11288: *yogasyare*; Baroda 11677, Baroda 11930, BORI 167: *bhūtayogasāre*; Baroda 6579: *bhūtayogatyāder*; Nārāyaṇa: *bhūtasāre*.

times independent. Nevertheless, it appears to me that logic requires the other reading, which is supported by Mysore, BORI 84, and the Nārāyaṇa manuscripts.

*pratibhādisiddhaya* or *pratibhāvvyādi* or other. Most of the gains or powers predicted in the introductions to the other sections are reflected in the verses themselves. Intuitive knowledge is not obviously connected to knowledge of the *bbuwanatraya* uniquely.<sup>40</sup> The more expected term for the power would be *pratibha*, which occurs in the *Yogasūtra* twice (3.33, 36), the second time in connection with enhanced sensory powers. *pratibhāvya* is not used to refer to a yogic ability, as far as I know. We might expect *pratibhādisiddhaya*, not reflected in any manuscript.

*sarvavedamayam binduṃ* vs. *sarvadevamayam viṣṇuṃ*. A number of manuscripts reflect what seems to be a conscious change or alternative reading of the verse, in which the point (*bindu*) between the eyes is replaced by Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu is made *devamaya*- rather than *vedamaya*-

*yogasāre* vs. *bhūtayogasāre*. More manuscripts preserve the attribution as *bhūtayogasāra*, rather than *yogasāra*. This is in keeping with the topic of Vimalabodha's discussion, which is a material (*bhautika*) form of meditation. I have been unable to find a record of any text or section of text that is called the *Bhūtayogasāra*. More on this below, but it is worth noting here that the *Yogasāra* text cited here might be a different one than the text cited in the Udyogaparvan.

### 3. The commentaries in which the verses are cited

I turn now to the immediate literary context of the verses from the *Yogasāra* that are cited in Vimala's commentary. The citations form part of Vimala's discussion of particular *Mahābhārata* verses; these discussions need to be understood, at least in a synoptic way, in order to understand Vimala's point in citing the *Yogasāra* when and where he does.

#### A. Udyogaparvan 5.45.13

Vimala cites a verse from the *Yogasāra* in his commentary on CE 5.45.13, in which there is a series of consumings: *prāṇa* swallows *apāna*; the moon swallows *prāṇa*; the sun the moon; and the sun is swallowed by "that higher [thing]" (*tat param*).<sup>41</sup> Vimala takes the verse as describing *sadyomukti* or the yogic practice whereby those who are well beyond interest in worldly things, (*atinirvedavatām*)<sup>42</sup> can leave the body, thereby terminating their bodily lives.<sup>43</sup>

40 Cf. *Yogasūtra* 3.26: *bbuwanajñānaṃ sūrye saṃyamāt*.

41 Vimala's reading of the verse is: *apānaṃ girati prāṇaḥ prāṇaṃ girati candramāḥ; ādityo girate candram sūryaṃ girati tat param*. CE 5.45.13abcd agrees except in the d *pāda*: *ādityaṃ girate paraḥ*.

42 Most manuscripts (BORI 84, Bakre, Baroda 11288, 11677, 11930) read *anirvedavatām*, while three others (Mysore, BORI 167, BORI 171 (most likely)) read *anirvedatām*. I use Arjunamīśra's reading, as cited in Bakre's ed.: *atinirvedavatām*. I suspect that the *-ti-* was omitted in a parent to the surviving manuscripts of Vimala. It might be possible to make sense of *anirvedavatām*, as referring to people who are still full of interest in life but who want an immediate release from it, but it seems unlikely in the context.

43 *sampraty atinirvedavatām sadyovimuktim icchatām dhyānopāyaḥ kathyate*.



Vimalabodha provides glosses of the terms in the verse that explain this practice, in which, first, the *vāyu* or wind present in the *apāna* (this wind being the *bbūtātman* or individualized soul), is moved to the place of the *prāṇa* by means of *utkrāntiyoga*.<sup>44</sup> The *prāṇa*, here called the *jīvātman*, consumes the entity of *vāyu/apāna/bbūtātman*, which is to say, it brings it under its sway.<sup>45</sup> The *prāṇa*, in turn, is brought to the domain of the inner self (*antarātman*), the inner self being the same thing as the mind, for which the moon is a synonym.<sup>46</sup> The domain of the inner self/mind/moon is the top of the head. Located there it fills the body's tissues with ambrosia, thereby nourishing them.<sup>47</sup> This idea of filling the tissues with *amṛta* can be supported from the Āgama, Vimala says. Then he invokes the Somasiddhānta to say that the mind/moon is full.<sup>48</sup> To demonstrate that last point, Vimala brings in the verse from the *Yogasāra*, as cited above, which refers to the *bimba* or disk of the moon.

Continuing with this sequence, then, Vimala explains that, using the *utkrāntiyoga*, the mind / moon is brought out of the head via the *brabmarandhra* to the realm of the sun, which is to say, the *buddhi*. The *buddhi*/sun then "consumes" the mind/moon, and becomes all-illuminating.<sup>49</sup> The higher self (*paramātman*) then consumes the sun/*buddhi*. Thereupon follows liberation, which is characterized by the removal of the accumulation of all the attributes of the individual, such as the *buddhi*.<sup>50</sup>

## B. Śāntiparvan, *Mahābhārata* 12.188.1

The five verses that Vimala cites from the *Yogasāra* in the Śāntiparvan all occur in the discussion of CE 12.188.1. This *adhyāya* (12.188), called the *Dhyānayogavidhi* in some colophons, comes early in the Mokṣadharmaparvan and speaks of a fourfold meditation (*caturvidhaṃ*

44 *apānamadhyasthitam vāyum bbūtātmasamjñitam utkrāntiyogena prāṇasthānam upāgamam.*

45 *sa jīvātmā prāṇasamjñakāḥ girati gilati vaśīkarotīty arthaḥ.*

46 *prāṇam antarātmaviśayam āgataṃ. antarātmā manas candra iti paryāyaḥ.*

47 *tasya viśayo mūrdhā. tatrastha evāsāv amṛtena debadhātūn pūrayan puṣṭim vidadhāti.*

48 Or dark, if *kṛṣṇa-* is the reading.

49 *tam evambhūtam candram ādityo girati grasati. utkrāntidhyānayogena taṃ brabmarandhbrenāditya- viśayam nītam tadādityo grasati. ādityo buddhir ucyate viśayaprakāśarūpatvāt. taṃ candram asau grasati. tataś ca viśvaprakāśo jāyate.* The manuscripts are more or less evenly split between *taṃ candram asau grasati* and *taṃ candramasam grasati*. The sense is not crucially changed by this difference.

50 *taṭpūrvoddiṣṭaḥ paramātmā sūryam girati. tato buddhyādisakalaguṇasamḍobanivṛtilakṣaṇo mokṣa iti bhāvāḥ.* A significant number of the manuscripts read *-samḍeba-* rather than *-samḍoba-*, but while *samḍebanivṛtti* makes sense in other contexts, given the rest of the compound, it seems more likely that here we have an aggregate or collection *-samḍoba-*. It might be noted here that Vimalabodha does not give any explanation of the eleven *lakṣaṇas* mentioned in the *Yogasāra*'s verse. A set of eleven *lakṣaṇas* is relatively rare in this context, I am informed, which will require further historical elucidation.

*dhyānam*).<sup>51</sup> Vimalabodha explains the four types of meditation as being related to the material elements (*bbautika*), the sense of 'I' (*āhaṃkārika*), the intellect (*bauddha*), and the Self (*ādhyātmika*).<sup>52</sup> He begins with the material form of *dhyāna*, describing it as a dissolving of the mind into the five elements.<sup>53</sup> At this point, Vimala's discussion of the five steps of material meditation starts, beginning *tatra nābber adbo pṛthivīsthānam*.<sup>54</sup> The verses of the *Yogasāra* are here cited in relation to the *bbautika* form of meditation.

After Vimala's explanation of this series of five practices, the material stage is complete, and the meditation proceeds to the one related to the sense of 'I' (*āhaṃkārika*), one in which aspirants imagine themselves to be Vāsudeva or another deity.<sup>55</sup> Vimala cites two sources to support the principle involved, *Bhagavadgītā* 17.3 and *Narasimhapurāṇa* 62.17.<sup>56</sup>

This is followed by the meditation related to the intellect (*bauddha*), which, in the terminology of the Sāṃkhya, Vimala explains, is a particular evolute of the *prakṛti*, the *mahat* in the form of the inner organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*). The *buddhi* is at the same time a content of cognition, the knowledge of non-difference between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*.<sup>57</sup> The seed syllable (*mantrabījam*) that forms the content of meditation is in essence an evolute of the *āhaṃkāra* that has, in turn, developed from this *buddhi*.<sup>58</sup> In keeping with this conceptualization, Vimala cites a verse about Viṣṇu the Lord as inner self, upon whom one should meditate.<sup>59</sup>

Upon completing this level of practice, for the fourth (*ādhyātmika*) and last meditation, the meditator is to put his mind, freed from content, into the *kṣetrajñā* self.<sup>60</sup> To exemplify this freedom from the content of awareness, Vimala cites a verse from the *Amṛtabindu Upaniṣad*.<sup>61</sup> Vimala closes his comment on 12.188.1 by saying that all of this has already been said here and

51 *banta vaksyāmi te pārtha dhyānayogaṃ caturvidham; yaṃ jñātvā śāsvatim siddhiṃ gacchanti paramarṣayaḥ*. The verse that Vimala has in front of him reads the same as its counterpart in CE 1.188.1.

52 *tac caturvidham catuḥprakāram. bbautikam āhaṃkārikam bauddham ādhyātmikam ca*.

53 *tatra bbautikam pṛthivyādiṣu pañcasu manaso layaḥ*.

54 See passage cited in section 2 of this paper.

55 *evam bhūtābhūmiṃ jtvā āhaṃkāre mano niyojayet. āhaṃkāraś ca bhāvitavāsudevādidevatābbhimānaḥ*.

56 *yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ* (BG 17.3); *dhyeyaḥ sadā savitṛmaṇḍalamadhyavartī* etc. (NṛP 62.17). These are both, broadly speaking, Vaiṣṇava sources.

57 *evam āhaṃkārabhūmiṃ jtvā buddhau mano niveśayet. sa ca prakṛtipuruṣayor abhedajñānam. mahadākhyāntaḥkaraṇarūpaprakṛtipariṇāmaviśeṣaḥ*.

58 *yato 'haṃkārapariṇāmātmā mantrabījam iti yāvat*.

59 *yat sarvavarnāśrayabījam ekaṃ sa caiva viṣṇuḥ prabbur antarātmā. jvālāsahasrārciṣam aprameyaṃ dhyātṛvā naro mucyati janmabandhāt*. Some manuscripts read *yaḥ* for *yat*. This verse remains unidentified. It is explicitly Vaiṣṇava.

60 *buddhibhūmiṃ api jtvā kṣetrajñātmani nirviśayaṃ mano niveśayet*. Some manuscripts read *nirviśaye*.

61 *mana eva manuṣyānām kāraṇam bandhamokṣayaḥ*. The manuscripts have various versions of the second line of this verse, (e.g., Nārāyaṇa: *bandhāya viśayāsaṃgaṃ mukter nirviśayaṃ manaḥ*). All of the versions vary from the received *Amṛtabindu Upaniṣad*; nevertheless, all maintain a contrast between an attachment to percipient content, which leads to bondage, and a removal of content, which leads to liberation.

there by the sage (*muni*), by which he probably means Vyāsa; Vimala is simply condensing it into one place for the sake of easy understanding.<sup>62</sup>

#### Part 4. Identification of the *Yogasāra*

In identifying the *Yogasāra* from which these verses are cited, we must first acknowledge that there may be two texts: a *Yogasāra* linked to the Somasiddhānta and Śaiva contexts, on the one hand, from which the commentary on CE 5.45.13 cites, and a *Yogasāra* linked to Vaiṣṇava contexts on the other, from which the commentary on CE 12.288.1 cites. Many of the manuscripts of Vimala that I had available refer to a *Bhūtayogasāra* in the ascriptions of the latter. There is no work of that title mentioned in the NCC, Aufrecht's original CC, or the Kaivalyadhāma catalog (SMYM), either as an independent title, a portion of another work, or even as a source referred to in other texts.<sup>63</sup>

There is no such problem with texts called simply the *Yogasāra*. The NCC has pages of references to manuscripts that carry this title. Many of these titles can be ruled out at the outset, as they are works that use the term *Yoga* in a medical sense or an astronomical or astrological sense.<sup>64</sup> Within the category of *yoga* understood as a practice that brings about powers or a higher transformation of the person or both, there are some that can be ruled out as well. There are, for example, works on *yoga* by Jaina authors, especially Hemacandra, the influential twelfth-century polymath, whose form of *yoga* hews closely to the Jain soteriological line, and does not go in for yogic nexus points within the body, much less visualizations of Viṣṇu.<sup>65</sup> There are also works that are simply too late to be considered as a source for Vimalabodha, most prominently the *Yogasārasaṃgraha* of Vijñānabhikṣu, an author of the sixteenth century.<sup>66</sup> Indeed most of the *Yogasāras* that have an attributed author and that

62 *sarvam etat tatra tatra muninaivoktam. sukhragabhañārtham tu saṃkṣīpya asmābhir iboktam ity avadhātavyam ity arthaḥ.*

63 *Bhūtajaya* is a result of a meditational practice, however. See below, part 5. The discussion of *bhautika* meditation might be the reason the copyists attribute these verses to a work of that title.

64 For a variety of medical works with this title, by various authors, see NCC (Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 126a), as well as *Yogasārabandha* and *Yogasārasaṃjñā* (Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 128a) and a *Yogasārasaṃgraha* by various authors (Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 129a). For *Yogasāra* texts about the *vyotīṣas'* *yoga*, most notably the *Yogasārabhavya* of Bhāskarācārya and the *Yogasārasaṃgraha*, see Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 129a.

65 Hemacandra's work, usually called the *Yogasāstra*, has been published several times, with commentaries. See Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22 :126b–127. This text does make some mention of points of focus for the *prāṇa*, e.g., 5.14. (My thanks to James Mallinson for this reference.) See also the *Yogasāraprābhṛta* of Amitagati Ācārya (Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 128a), and the *Yogasāra* of Yogendradevamuni described in the Jodhpur RORI Catalogue as no. 817 (Jinavijaya 1963: 95f). This last is, in any case, not in Sanskrit and so cannot be our source.

66 Jha 1933. There is also a *Yogasāra* of an Appayya Dīkṣita of the nineteenth century, which presents a form of Vedāntic philosophy called *anubhavadvāita* (Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 126a).

the NCC classifies either as yoga or tantra come from a period too late to be viable as an influence on Vimalabodha. For example, there is the *Yogasāra* of Gaṅgānanda, described in the Asiatic Society catalog as manuscript no. 6621 (Sastri 1939: 737f.). Haraprasād Shāstri there remarks that the “work seeks to explain the main principles of Yoga by way of bringing out the significance of the different expressions used in” a verse of the author’s own creation in Mandākrānta meter. That is to say, it provides an ingenious multivalent commentary on a single verse composed by the author so as to elicit all the teachings of yoga. This can hardly be Vimala’s source.

As for the remaining possible candidates mentioned in the NCC, we may work through them in order of increasing likelihood. Some of these are ruled out entirely, based on a search of the text, when it has been available. Others are unlikely given their length, or the sort of discussion they engage in. Finally, there are some that remain candidates, manuscripts of which are yet to be consulted.

## A. Texts that are ruled out

### 1. *The Yogasārasaṃgraha*

This is a different work than Vijñānabhikṣu’s work, though it carries the same title. A manuscript of it is described in the GOML Descriptive Catalogue as no. 4373.<sup>67</sup> It begins, *pranamāmi gaṇeśānām pranaṭārtiprabhañjanam*, etc. It has fourteen chapters, on topics such as *pātañjalayoga*, *layayoga*, *rājayoga*, and *haṭhayoga*, as well as the *kuṇḍalinī* and the *prānas*. An electronic file was made by the Muktabodha organization, based on a transcript on file at the IFP Pondicherry (IFP T 0859), that transcript being copied from a complete manuscript at the GOML.<sup>68</sup> The text frequently cites a text called the *Yogasāramañjarī*, as well as the *Sūtasambhitā* (mid-twelfth century) and the *Yogayājñavalkya* (thirteenth–fourteenth century).<sup>69</sup> The manuscript as transcribed does not include any of Vimalabodha’s cited verses. Citation of the *Yogayājñavalkya* should make the work too late for Vimalabodha to have known it.

### 2. *The Yogasārasamuccaya*

This work has an alternative title, the *Akulāgamatantra*. A manuscript of this text is described in the India Office catalogue as manuscripts no. 2565 and 2566.<sup>70</sup> It begins *ādau yas tu tvayā*

67 Rangacarya 1910: 3257–32759. Also see Adyar VIII. 98 and 99. There are probably a half dozen other manuscripts of this text, (Raghavan *et al.* 1968–2015, vol. 22: 128a).

68 The text represented in the Pondicherry copy is probably not based on GOML 4373, given the differences between them.

69 Birch has assigned this text to the eighteenth century (Birch 2020: 464, n. 43).

70 IO 1894: 876–879. RASB 6113; Hpr II.1 is apparently a different manuscript than the previous one; Mysore ND XVII. ii 50487; BORI Descriptive Catalogue XVI.ii.1; and two other manuscripts.

*nātha munisiddhair anekadhā*.<sup>71</sup> It consists of ten chapters or *paṭalas*, and is a dialogue between Śiva and Pārvatī. The Muktabodha organization has made a transcription of a NGMPP manuscript (no. 1–9 Reel No. B 115/6), which contains the first nine chapters. The verses cited by Vimalabodha do not occur in these nine chapters.<sup>72</sup>

### 3. The Yogasāra

This work takes the form of a dialogue between Pārvatī and Parameśvara. A manuscript of this text is described in the GOML Descriptive Catalogue IX as 4372. Jason Birch and Gupta Viśvanātha have produced a transcription of GOML 4372, which they kindly shared with me. Their transcription includes their notes about the text's relationship to other, mostly later Yoga texts. According to their analysis the work shares parallels with the *Haṭhāpradīpikā*, but is exclusively a Rājayoga text. It consists of only sixty-six verses. It begins: *katham muktīpradaṃ deva katham jñānapradāyakaṃ*. It contains none of the verses of the *Yogasāra* that Vimala cites.

## B. Texts that are unlikely

### 1. The Yogasāra of Hariśaṅkara, son of Lakṣmaṇajyotirvid

A manuscript of this text is described in the RASB catalog as no. 6599.<sup>73</sup> The author describes himself in an internal colophon as Hariśaṅkara, son of Lakṣmaṇajyotirvid. It begins: *vande taṃ paramātmānaṃ saccidānandam avayam*. The extant manuscript has only three leaves and covers the first chapter, on the importance of the *guru*, and the next chapter, which begins with a description of the *kumbhaka* form of *prāṇāyāma*. It is difficult to say more, but it seems unlikely to be Vimala's source given the individual authorship and its initial focus.

### 2. The Yogasāra

Another *Yogasāra* is described in the Adyar Descriptive Catalogue VIII as no. 97.<sup>74</sup> Adyar's manuscript is incomplete, but reaches the end of the third *adhyāya* within five leaves. It appears to have only five chapters, and by its own description is very brief. It begins: *athedāniṃ yogadharmo 'tisamāsarūpeṇa kathyate*. Its organization appears to be into five types of yoga: *mantra*, *sparśa*, *bhāva*, *abhāva*, and *mahāyoga*.<sup>75</sup> It is, furthermore, a work in prose. It

71 The various Descriptive Catalogues read this opening line variously.

72 There is a chance that they occur in the last chapter, of course.

73 Shāstrī 1940.

74 Aithal 1976.

75 *niruddhavrtyantare 'sya cittasya parameśvare niścalā yā tu vṛtṭiḥ sa yoga ity ucyate. yogaḥ punaḥ pañcadhā bbinnab: mantrayoga-sparśayoga-bhāvayoga-abbāvayoga-mahāyogabhedena*. The fivefold division of yogas is taught in the *Vāyaviyasamhitā* of the *Śivapurāṇa* (2.29.5–13) and the *Liṅgapurāṇa* (2.55.7–28). My thanks to James Mallinson for these references.

thus seems unlikely to have a versified discussion substantial enough to include the passages that Vimalabodha cites in his commentary.

### 3. *The Yogarahasya*

Another text has a variable title, listed in the NCC primarily as the *Yogarahasya*, though the text in one place refers to itself as a, or the, *Yogasāra*. Its colophon identifies it as the eighteenth and final chapter within a larger work called the *Hastigirimāhātmya*, which in turn is said to form part of the *Brahmapurāṇa*.<sup>76</sup> The text is instantiated in a manuscript described in the GOML Descriptive Catalogue IX as 4366, where it consists of nine leaves;<sup>77</sup> thus it is not a long text. Indices of the published *Brahmapurāṇa* make no mention of this *Hastigirimāhātmya*, which is not found in Stietenron *et al.*'s *Epic and Purāṇic Bibliography* or Rocher's *Purāṇas*. The text, or rather, this chapter of the text, begins *kathito vistareṇaiva hayamedhas tvayā vidhe; āvirbhāvas tathā viṣṇor hastīśailasya mūrdhani*. This text was edited recently by G. R. Srinivasan, who attributes it to the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*.<sup>78</sup> It forms part of a Vaiṣṇava-leaning text that has the city of Kāñcīpura (Hastigiri) as its focus. The manuscript and edition both feature Tamil annotations. It thus appears unlikely to be a source for Vimalabodha, who does not appear to have been a Tamil Vaiṣṇava.

## C. Texts that remain possible candidates to be Vimalabodha's source

### 1. *The Yogasāra*

One text called the *Yogasāra* is described in the GOML Triennial Catalogue of 1916–17 to 1918–19 as R2831r.<sup>79</sup> It comprises nine leaves and consists of a dialogue between Devī and Īśvara. It begins *mūlamantrasya māhātmyaṃ śrotum icchāmi śaṅkara*. It has four chapters or *paṭalas*, with the following titles: *Mūlamantramāhātmyam*, *Nādabindusvarūpavarṇanam*, *Nāḍīsthānapīṭhacakranirṇayaḥ*, and *Yogasādhakakramavarṇanam*. The third chapter seems especially likely to be a possible source for Vimala's comments on CE 12.188.1.

### 2. *The Yogasāra*

Finally, there is a *Yogasāra* text described in three catalogs from Calcutta, all produced by Haraprasād Shāstri.<sup>80</sup> The text takes the form of a conversation between Mahādeva and Pār-

76 *iti brāhmapurāṇe bṛḡgunāradasaṃvāde śrīhastigirimāhātmye aṣṭāṅgayogo nāma aṣṭādaśo 'dhyāyaḥ*. This is a different text from the *Hastigirimāhātmya* of Vedāntadeśika. Its closing section includes this line: *iti samyak samākhyāto yogasāro mayādhunā*.

77 Rangacharya 1910: 3257f.

78 Srinivasan 2006. To date I have been unable to examine the publication.

79 Sastri, S. K. *et al.* 1922: 4079f.

80 Hpr I. 301; Hpr II.173; and RASB VIII A 6115. Most of the chapter colophons begin: *iti śrīmadyogasāramahāgranthe sarvāgamottame śrīpārvatī-śiva-saṃvāde śatasāhasrjyaṃ sambhitāyāṃ...*

vati. It begins: *mātar me devadeveṣi yogeṣi prāṇavallabhe*. It has at least twelve chapters, some of the manuscripts described ending slightly earlier.<sup>81</sup> This text appears to have more parts not included in these manuscripts (*-mahāgranthē śatasāhasryāṃ saṃhitāyāṃ*), presents itself as the best of all Āgamas (*sarvāgamottame*), and emphasizes lore about the *cakras* or centers in the body, as well as a variety of preliminary yogic practices. The Toṣiṇī compendia of Rāmatoṣaṇa Bhaṭṭācārya, published in the nineteenth century, refer to this *Yogasāra* regularly.<sup>82</sup> I hope that one of the specialist researchers in Yoga will have had access to a manuscript of this text and be able to confirm or disconfirm it as the source for Vimala's comments.

To conclude this section, then, at this point we have not yet identified the definitive source for Vimalabodha, but there is a leading candidate, perusal of which might provide the answer to this question. There are, of course, other possibilities: for example, that the text does not survive in full, or survives under another title. The *Yogasārasaṃgraha* mentioned above as no. 1, for example, regularly refers to a *Yogasāramañjarī*, but this text survives under that name only in a single manuscript (IM 491). Both of these texts, in turn, by their title suggest the existence of some earlier, more capacious work, of the sort partially preserved in RASB VIII A 6115.

## 5. The significance of Vimala's citations of the *Yogasāra*

The purpose of this section is to provide some context, not just of the verses from the *Yogasāra* that Vimala has cited, but also of Vimala's use of them; that is, what his use shows us about his work as a commentator on the *Mahābhārata* by comparison with the work of other *Mahābhārata* commentators. The questions I wish to ask are, therefore: why has Vimalabodha introduced these *Yogasāra* verses where he has? Is there anything distinctive about the background of the *Mahābhārata* verses where he cites them? Is there anything distinctive

81 The contents of these chapters appear to be consistent between the manuscripts Haraprasād Shāstri describes, though Hpr I is more detailed for the beginning and less detailed for the later parts: *mantraṇaśaraṇavidhi; yoga(or -i)-mābātmya; śaṭcakradarśana; mūlādhārasthadevatādīkathanam; bāṇaliṅgopākhyāna; mañipūrakādbiṣṭhānacakrādivarṇanam; hr̥tpadmasya dhyānārcanādivarṇanam; ṣoḍaśadalasya varṇanam; śaṭcakrādicakre dvidalādivarṇanam; śrīguroḥ paraṃbrahmastotrakavacaṃ; gurusabasranāmādiḥ; vaśīkaraṇoddīpane rātrivyatyayakarmādinirūpaṇam.*

82 These works have been published as the *Prāṇatoṣiṇī* (Bhaṭṭa & Viśvāsa 1859). This includes an *Arthatoṣiṇī* and a *Bhaktitoṣiṇī*. The contents of particular *parichedas* that the Toṣiṇī texts mention as belonging to the *Yogasāra* correspond to the contents of chapters described by Haraprasād Shāstri in his *Notices* and *Descriptive Catalogue*. For example, Rāmatoṣaṇa cites almost all of the *Bāṇaliṅgastotra* and ends it with the chapter colophon found in Haraprasād's descriptions: *iti śrīyogasāre sarvāgamottame pārvatiśivasamvāde vāṇaliṅgastotram samāptam (Bhaktitoṣiṇī, lines 2554f)*. At line 2448 he attributes this *stotra* to the fifth *paricheda* of the *Yogasāra*, which is in conformity with Haraprasād's description. It appears, from comparing the citations from the *Yogasāra* that Sundaradeva makes in the *Haṭhatattvakaumudī* (eighteenth century), that these are drawn from this same *Yogasāra*. On Sundaradeva, see Birch 2018: 58f.

in Vimala's way of interpreting those verses? What, finally, is significant about the *Yogasāra* verses themselves?<sup>83</sup>

As to the first question, in general we might say that Vimala shows himself here, as in places elsewhere, to be turning to sources of information about the practice of yoga that are not available from his usual Brahminical, i.e., Vedic, śāstric, and Purāṇic sources. Vimala was working in a context in which even a mainstream Brahminical commentator on a *smārta* text was aware of the growth in prominence of new sorts of Yoga texts, which had increasing authority for those wishing to understand the practice of yoga. Implied in Vimala's use of these verses is, in turn, a re-reading of older passages in mainstream literature, what might have been called anachronism in a previous generation of modern historicist scholarship. Given what other commentators do with these *Mahābhārata* verses, as we shall see, Vimalabodha's context appears not to have been the same as that of other commentators on the epic.

#### A. 5.45.13 *apānaṃ girati prāṇaḥ* etc.

This verse appears in a chapter of the *Sanatsujātīya* in which each verse has the refrain *yoginas taṃ prapaśyanti bhagavantaṃ sanātanam*. The chapter is not primarily a discourse on yoga, and instead instantiates the eternal Lord in a variety of cosmological and natural phenomena, having thereby an Upaniṣadic drift.

The set of four – *apāna*, *prāṇa*, moon, and sun – as a sequence is not unknown to other early literature. While Devabodha and other early commentators understand this set of four to form a sequence within the microcosm of the individual, and connect it with a meditation practice, Vimalabodha takes that further in interpreting this verse to relate to instant liberation and leaving the body (*sadyomukti* and *utkrāntiyoga*). Devabodha makes the identifications that then appear in Vimala: the moon means the *manas*, and the sun means the *buddhi*.<sup>84</sup> The sense that consuming means dissolving is also there.<sup>85</sup> But Devabodha makes no mention of *sadyomukti* or of *amṛta* flowing from the top of the head. Śāṅkara, or, really, \*Śāṅkara, author of the *Bhāṣya* commentary on the *Sanatsujātīya*, follows a similar line to Devabodha's in interpreting this verse.<sup>86</sup> He uses the action of contracting or withdrawing rather than dissolving

83 I hesitate to venture into the subject of the history of Yoga, in which there is currently such a dynamic and erudite cadre of specialist researchers active, who are unlocking the history of this movement in unprecedented ways, especially in its earlier periods. In writing this article I have benefitted from recent publications produced by this cadre, and conversations with several of them. I defer to their collective and individual expertise; what follows is offered in the hope that it might be of some use to them in establishing dating, and that they will be able to identify the likely channel of influence.

84 *candramā manaḥ. ādītyo buddhiḥ sattvādbhikyāt prabhāsvaratvāc ca.*

85 *girati grasate. apānaḥ* (Ed. *apānaṃ*) *prāṇe liyate ity arthaḥ*. Citations are from De 1944.

86 Scholars of Advaita and of Śāṅkara have written very little about this commentary since K. T. Telang discussed it in the introduction to his translation of the *Sanatsujātīya* (Telang 1882: 135–



to explain the verbs of consuming in the original verse.<sup>87</sup> He does not mention *sadyomukti* or the other related ideas.

Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, or the author of the *Bhāratārthaprakāśa* on the Udyogaparvan, follows his own line, identifying *prāṇa* and *apāna* with the *pūraka* and *recaka* forms of *prāṇāyāma*, the moon with *ākāśa*, and the sun with nothing other than itself.<sup>88</sup> Arjunamiśra incorporates both Devabodha and Vimalabodha in his commentary, repeating the one and then the other. His reuse of Vimalabodha is nearly verbatim and includes the *sadyomukti* theory, citing the *Yogasāra* verse and giving Vimala's *sadyomukti* theory in full.

Nilakaṇṭha does not pick up any of Vimala's unique ideas. He follows the earlier identifications of moon with mind and sun with *buddhi*, which Vimala also accepts.<sup>89</sup> He appears to know the \*Śaṅkara commentary, as he glosses *girati* with *upasaṃharati*.<sup>90</sup> Nilakaṇṭha cites two verses about yoga that summarize a similar practice.<sup>91</sup>

Thus Vimalabodha innovates with his reading of this verse as recommending a technique for bringing about departure from the body at will. He is evidently drawing from outside the usual Brahminical stream of commentary on yoga passages in the *Mahābhārata*, and is aware that he is doing so, for he supports his idea with mention of the Āgama, the Somasiddhānta, and then with the direct citation of the *Yogasāra*. The particular purpose of the citation, again, is to show that the moon which is present in the crown of the head, in the lotus located there, and dispenses ambrosia to the tissues of the body, thereby keeping it healthy, is full.

A related idea is found in a source for the earliest Haṭhayoga texts, the *Amṛtasiddhi*, in which the moon is located at the top of the head, the sun at the bottom of the spine, and the *bindu*, or semen, normally flows downward from the one to the other (Mallinson 2015).

148). It is not in the list of works attributed to Śaṅkara by Ānandagiri, so far as I can see. As Telang points out, it does receive mention in the *Śaṅkaradīgvijaya* in the list of Śaṅkara's compositions and was thus reckoned a work by Mādhavācārya in the Vijayanagara period (Telang 1882; 135). But it might have reached this status after Vimalabodha's time.

87 *etad uktaṃ bhavati – samādhibivelāyām apānam prāṇe upasaṃhṛtya prāṇaṃ manasi manāś ca buddhau buddhiṃ paramātmāny upasaṃhṛtya svābhāvīkacitsadānandādāvītyabrahmātmanāvāvaṭiṣṭhata ity arthaḥ*. Cited from Bakre's edition of the Udyogaparvan.

88 *girati ātmāny antarbhāvayati pūrakeṇa prāṇena miśrikr̥tasyāpānasya recakāvasthāyām prāṇena saba nīrgamāt. prāṇaṃ niṣṛtam ākāśarūpeṇa candramā girati. ākāśamūrtir hi candraḥ . . . tam candram ādītyo girati darśasamaye prāpte*. Cited from Bakre's edition of the Udyogaparvan. See earlier notes about the relation of the author of the *Bhāratārthaprakāśa* on the Udyogaparvan with the evidence of the manuscript of Sarvajña's commentary on the rest of the *Mahābhārata*.

89 *candramā atra manaḥ; ādītyo buddhiḥ, paraḥ paramātmā*. Cited from Bakre's edition of the Udyogaparvan.

90 *apānam iti. girati upasaṃharati svātmani yogaśāstroktarītyā*.

91 *pārṣṇinā gudam āpidya dantair dantān asaṃspr̥śan. dṛḍhāsano 'pānavāyum unnayec ca śanaiḥ śanaiḥ. tam prāṇenaikatām nitvā sbiraṃ kṛtvā hṛdambare. cetomātreṇa tiṣṭheta tac ca buddhau vilāpayet*. I have not found the source of these verses. Cf. *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 2.2.19cd–20ab. The metrical unit, *dantair dantān asaṃspr̥śan*, appears in *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 3.199b; *Viṣṇusmṛti* 97.1; and Vāgīśvarakīrti's *Mṛtyuvañcanopadeśa* 4.47b. It also appears in the *Mṛgendrantra's* Yogapāda, vs. 19. My thanks to James Mallinson and Jason Birch for these references.

The idea of a natural nourishing of the tissues is present in the *Amṛtasiddhi*, but the principle of the yogic practice of leaving the body at will is not.<sup>92</sup> Some ideas of the former sort are present in the yoga text, the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* (ca. twelfth century), where there are forms of meditation recommended that contemplate the heart lotus and the crown lotus streaming *amṛta* throughout the body.<sup>93</sup> Such ideas are present in the Śaiva forebears of these Yoga texts. For example, the seventh chapter of the *Netratantra* contrasts the *bindu*-retention practices underlying the *Amṛtasiddhi* with a different, Śākta type of meditative practice that results in the crown of the head diffusing *amṛta* throughout the body.<sup>94</sup> Vimalabodha signals that he is drawing on Śaiva forms of these traditions by the mention of the Somasiddhānta.<sup>95</sup> As for *sadyomukti*, some versions of this practice have crept into the Purāṇic literature from the Āgamic well before Vimala's day.<sup>96</sup>

### B. 12.188.1 *hanta vakṣyāmi te pārtha dhyānayogaṃ caturvidhaṃ* etc.

This verse opens an *adhyāya* of the Mokṣadharmaparvan, for which Johannes Bronkhorst has identified the probable Buddhist background, given the regular discussion in early Buddhist texts of a fourfold meditation and the similarities of the techniques discussed.<sup>97</sup> Vimalabodha introduces the verse in order to discuss it in a way that differs from the only other independent commentator on the Mokṣadharmā to whom I had access: Nilakaṇṭha Caturdhara. In his *Bhāratabhāvadīpa* on this chapter, Nilakaṇṭha interprets the fourfold meditation strictly in terms of Pātañjalayoga.<sup>98</sup> He refers to four *sūtras* (1.34, a part of 1.35, 1.38, and 1.39), and differentiates the four forms of meditation by their basis or focus (*ālambana*), offering the four possibilities as a gloss of these *sūtras*.<sup>99</sup>

92 Mallinson 2020: 412.

93 *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* (Maheshananda et al. 2005) 4.42–46: *ṣoḍaśacchandasaṃyuktaṃ śiraḥpadmād adhomukhāt; nirgatāmṛtadbhārābhiḥ sabasrābhiḥ samantataḥ* (4.43) *plāvitam puruṣaṃ drṣṭvā cintayitvā samāhitāḥ; tenāmṛtena saṃpūrṇaḥ sāṅgopāṅgakalevaram* (44) *abam eva paraṃ brahma paramāt-māham avyayaḥ*. Note the use of *cintaya-* as a verb in this practice. Thanks to Jason Birch, I have a transcription of this text made by James Mallinson, Jason Birch, and Mark Singleton for the SOAS Haṭha Yoga project.

94 See Flood, Wernicke-Olesen & Khatiwoda forthcoming. See also the Buddhist *Mṛtyuwañ-canopadeśa* 4.43–45, which presents a similar form of meditation and with similar results: *mūrdhni candramaso bimbāt kṣaratpīyūṣāśikarān; bhādayataḥ samastāṅgaṃ romakūpaiḥ samantataḥ | śaḍ māśān bhāvayed yogi sarvasaṅgavivarjitaḥ; sarvarogān vinirjitya mṛtyuṃ jayati mṛtyuvat | śirasy adhomukhaṃ śuklaṃ sabasradalapaṅkajam; dhyātvā candrakramān mṛtyuṃ kalpādīṃś ca vināśayet |*.

95 Here I must leave it to the specialists to make a clearer determination of the nature of the influences.

96 See *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 2.2.15–21; 11.15.24.

97 Bronkhorst 1986: 43–46. I thank Valters Negribs for this reference.

98 Nilakaṇṭha on 12.195.1 in the Vulgate text (Chitrashala edition).

99 Note that in his discussion of the fourth of these *sūtras*, 1.39: *yathābbimatadhyānād vā*, Nilakaṇṭha allows for a meditation on an embodied deity such as Śiva, or on the deities of the six cakras: *yathābbimatam nilagrīvapitāmbarādivigrahaṃ ṣaṭcakra devatādikaṃ vā ālambya cittam sthīrikuryāt*. This

Vimalabodha, as we have seen, understands the *caturvidhaṃ dhyānam* to refer to four meditations that are related to the elements, the sense-of-‘I’, the intellect, and the spirit. Sarvajña Nārāyaṇa, in this case serving as a near contemporary expander of Vimala’s commentary, adduces a verse here, not found in Vimala, which summarizes these four forms of what he calls *jñānayoga*.<sup>100</sup>

As for the significance of Vimala’s citation of the verses from the *Yogasāra*, he uses them as his way of expounding the first, or material (*bhautika*) level of meditation, in which the mind is absorbed into the five elements, from the most concrete to the most subtle, whereby the *yogin* achieves various powers and knowledges. The five elements are spread along the body’s vertical axis, with the place of the earth element, the lowest, being in the *brahmagranthi*, below the navel. Thus this practice imagines five locations of meditation, which are associated with the five elements, the others being the navel, the heart, between the brows, and the top of the head.

In the tantric traditions, there were systems of spiritual nodes in numbers other than the later established *ṣaṭcakra* system, which was articulated initially in the (eleventh century) *Kubjikāmatatantra*.<sup>101</sup> But I have not been able to locate a system of five centers matched up to the five elements in the way that we find in the *Yogasāra* citations.<sup>102</sup>

The mention of the *brahmagranthi* in one of the cited *Yogasāra* verses is revealing of its background. In Yoga texts that are influenced by the *Amṛtasiddhi*, this *granthi* is conceptualized with two others, the Viṣṇu and Rudra *granthis*, as blockage points along the vertical axis of the person.<sup>103</sup> Mallinson refers to earlier schemes of more *granthis* in tantric predecessor texts: the *Kubjikāmatatantra*’s seventeenth chapter and the *Netratantra*’s seventh.<sup>104</sup> It is worth noting that the first line of the first verse that Vimala cites from the *Yogasāra*, the one that mentions the *brahmagranthi*, is very similar to a line from *Kubjikāmatatantra* 17.<sup>105</sup>

There are systems of yogic practice described in early Yoga texts that distribute the five elements through the body, and recommend yogic practices in relation to them, as for example in the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*, mentioned above. This text, however, distributes the elements

is not obviously drawing directly from Vimalabodha, who does not present the six-cakra system in any case. Nor does Vimala mention deities presiding over the five locations he lists, except in the case of a probably later variant to the passage about the centre between the eyebrows.

100 GOML R 2169 transcription, p. 81. *uktaṃ ca: mahābhūtaṣaḥ pūrvam abhaṅkāratmakas tataḥ; buddhir ādhyātmikāś ceti jñānayogaś caturvidhaḥ*. Again, this part of Sarvajña’s commentary, unlike that on the Udyogaparvan, largely follows Vimalabodha’s.

101 Flood 2006: 157–162.

102 It is probably worth noting that the five places are described eclectically, the first is a *granthi*, the next two and the topmost are lotuses; while the one between the eyes is a point. The downward facing lotus in the crown of the head is probably usefully determinative of a source.

103 Mallinson 2020: 414.

104 Mallinson 2020: 415–416, n. 22.

105 *Kubjikāmatatantra* 17.73ab: *adbordhvaromamadhye tu brahmagranthir udābrtā*. Compare the *Yogasāra* verse cited above: *ūrdhvādboromamadhyastho brahmagranthir udābrtaḥ*.

differently than the way the *Yogasāra* known to Vimala does. In the *Vasiṣṭhasambhitā* (4.6–8) the place of earth is from the knees to the feet; of water from the anus to the knees; of fire from the heart to the anus; of air from the brows to the heart; with ethereal space in the top part of the head.

The emphasis on the conquest of the elements as an early form of yogic practice is better known. *Yogasūtra* 3.44 prescribes the conquest of the *bhūtas* on many levels and in many modes as a result of a complex form of practice of *saṃyama*.<sup>106</sup> The tantric texts speak of a purification of the elements (*bhūtaśuddhi*) in the body as part of spiritual practice, but the purpose and technique of both of these appears different to what we see in the *Yogasāra*.<sup>107</sup>

Vimalabodha mentions a dissolving of the mind, while the *Yogasāra* verses do not, using instead verbs of motion, thinking, or positioning (*gam*, *cint*, *vyava* + *sthā*, *pra* + *āp*). Here Vimalabodha appears to be supplying a notion from the realm of yogic meditative practice, which can be called *layayoga*.<sup>108</sup> Versions of this practice become widespread in Brahminical appropriations of yogic meditation.

To conclude, then, one can see traces of the forerunners of Vimalabodha's source in Śaiva Tantric yoga, where practices of flooding the body with *amṛta* are described. Practices described in such texts as the *Mālinīvijayottaratantra* were popularized in yoga texts such as the *Vasiṣṭhasambhitā*, which had emerged into public accessibility not long before Vimala wrote his commentary.<sup>109</sup> Vimala's use of the *Yogasāra* can best be understood in relation to this history, which had begun about a century before he was active. Study of the relevant texts of this period should further clarify the networks of circulation of ideas and practice in which Vimala's commentary participated.

## Abbreviations

BG	<i>Bhagavadgītā</i>
CE	Critical Edition
NGMPP	Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
NṛP	<i>Nṛsiṃhapurāṇa</i>

Others are listed below under their respective catalogues.

106 *sthūlasvarūpasūksmānvayārthavattvasaṃyamād bhūtajayaḥ*.

107 Flood 2006: 108–113.

108 The practice has earlier, Tantric predecessors. Mallinson 2015: 119.

109 Mallinson 2015: 109–10. My thanks to Jason Birch for useful suggestions for this conclusion.

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