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978-0-521-05168-2 - The Visaladevarasa: A Restoration of the Text

John D. Smith

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A RESTORATION OF THE TEXT

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PREFACE

However valuable a critical tool metrical emendation may be, it is a tool better fitted to delicate work than to heavy labour. To the best of my knowledge, it has never before been found necessary to emend an entire text on metrical principles. When those principles relate to a metre apparently unattested in any other text, one whose very form is deduced, not observed; when not a single MS gives, even approximately, a credible text; and when, above all, the metrical, linguistic and literary background to the text is almost completely unknown; then the process of restoration is all the more prone to doubt and error. I am happy to acknowledge the great assistance and encouragement I have received during this work from Dr F.R. Allchin, whose grasp of early NIA metrical forms was a great aid, from Mr S. Digby, who elucidated many obscurities, from Mr K. Koṭhārī, who enthusiastically supplied me with ideas and information, from Dr R.S. McGregor, who followed my progress closely and made numerous valuable suggestions, and from Mr K.R. Norman, who never refused my frequent and often time-consuming demands on his seemingly limitless knowledge of Indian philology and textual criticism. For all of the editorial and interpretative decisions made, however, the responsibility is entirely mine; and I can say no more for the result than that, however similar or dissimilar my restoration may be to the poem that Narapati Nālha composed, the text as given here is probably as close an approximation as we shall ever be able to make to the original form of the *Vīśaladevarāsa*.

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I must record my debt of gratitude to the Master and Fellows of Christ's College, Cambridge. Were it not for the Research Fellowship which I held there from 1972 to 1975, this work would probably never have been completed. I have also received very generous awards from the Smuts Memorial Fund and the Rapson Fund (the latter of which has also provided a subvention to meet the costs of publication of this book); to these Funds too I am happy to acknowledge my gratitude.

1976

John D. Smith