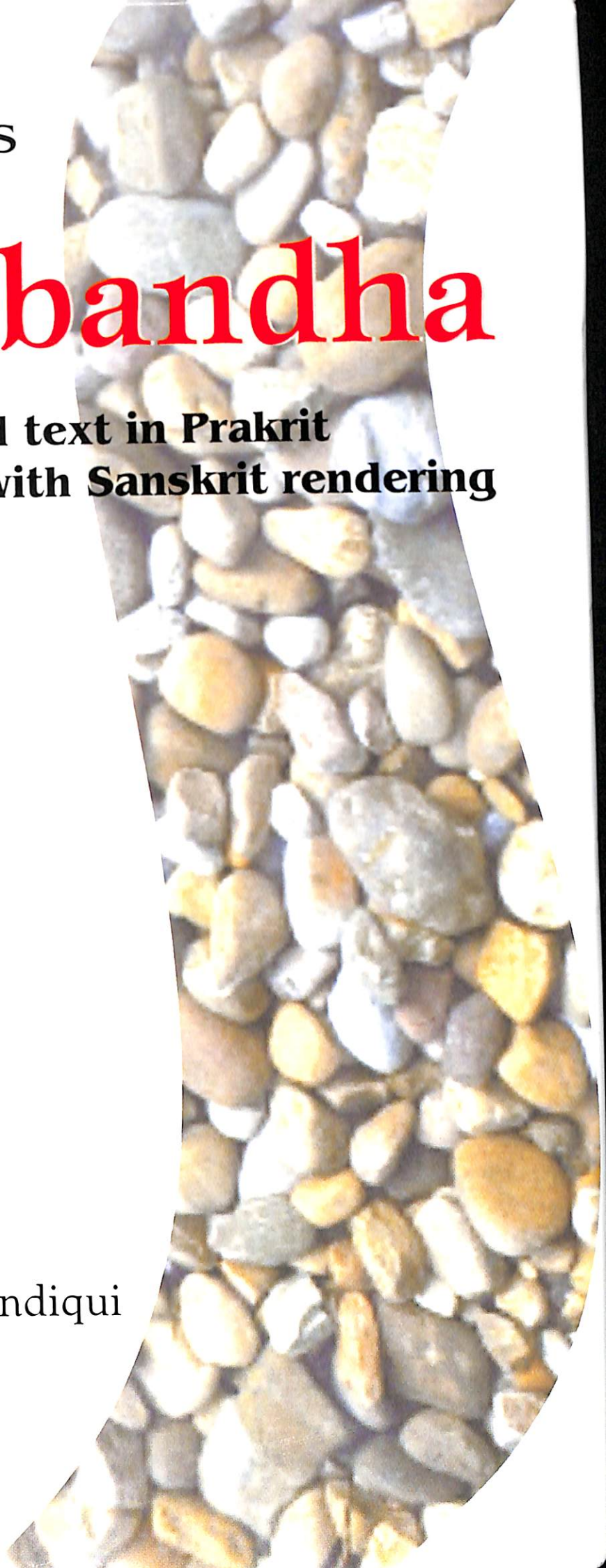


Pravarasena's

# Setubandha

**Original text in Prakrit  
accompanied with Sanskrit rendering**

English Translation  
and Critical Notes by  
Krishna Kanta Handiqui



## Preface

THE *Setubandha* is the only extant Prākṛta Mahākāvya that has come down to us from early times. The date of composition (c. fifth century CE) makes it a notable link in the evolution of the Mahākāvya in Prākṛta and Sanskrit. Further, as pointed out in the Introduction, the *Setubandha* has exercised unmistakable influence on Bhāravi and Māgha; and its importance lies in the fact that it represents a significant phase of the development of Kāvya poetry after Kālidāsa. Pravarasena's poem is often quoted in Alamkāra works, which points to the esteem in which it is held by Sanskrit writers on poetics.

The *Setubandha*, also called *Rāvaṇavaho*, was critically edited by S. Goldschmidt, and published for the first time in 1880 at Strassburg then in Germany. A German translation of the text followed in 1884 as the second volume of the work. The *Setubandha* was published in India by the Nirnaya Sagar Press, the second edition of which appeared in 1935. The only merit of this edition is that it contains the commentary of Rāmadāsa on the poem as well as the Sanskrit *chāyā*. Goldschmidt had utilized this commentary in manuscript, and had also access to an imperfect manuscript of the commentary of Kṛṣṇavipra.

It was on the basis of the above materials that I had commenced translating the *Setubandha* from Prākṛta. But after translating a few hundred verses, I realized the need to consult other commentaries besides that of Rāmadāsa; and at my request my lamented friend Dr P.K. Gode, Curator, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, was kind enough to obtain for me transcripts of several unpublished commentaries from different manuscript libraries in India. The commentaries appeared to be of great value for a critical study of the poem, and it was thought advisable to include extracts from them as a supplement to the translation. The correction and revision of these extracts compiled from transcripts of imperfect manuscripts involved

frequently quotes the *Vaijayanti* of Yādavaprakāśa who is identified with Rāmānuja's early teacher of that name; and the lexicon may therefore be assigned to the second half of the eleventh century.<sup>200</sup> This gives the upper limit of Kṛṣṇa's date. The lower limit is uncertain, and we shall consider it in connection with the date of his successor Mādhavayajvan.

Kṛṣṇavipra's commentary seems to have been popular in Kerala. He refers to the Sahya as a mountain on the border of Kerala in his gloss on *Setu* 1.56, and mentions a north Indian custom in that on 1.2.

Unlike most other commentaries on the *Setubandha*, Kṛṣṇavipra's work contains a number of quotations from Sanskrit texts, almost all of which will be found in the extracts. Among lexicons he quotes, besides the *Vaijayanti*, Halāyudha's *Abhidhānaratnamālā* several times as well as Amarasimha and the *Amarasēṣa*. The latter work is obviously a supplement to the *Amarakośa* like the *Trikāṇḍasēṣa* of Puruṣottama. Aufrecht says that *Amarasēṣa* is another name of the *Trikāṇḍasēṣa*;<sup>201</sup> but our quotation<sup>202</sup> does not tally with the corresponding statement in the *Trikāṇḍasēṣa*.<sup>203</sup> It is therefore probable that the *Amarasēṣa* quoted by Kṛṣṇavipra is different from the work of Puruṣottama.

There is another quotation in Kṛṣṇavipra's gloss on *Setu* 2.9 which purports to give the different meanings of *praṇayana*. The Devanāgarī manuscript gives the source of the citation as Śeva; while the Grantha manuscript gives it as Ākhyāna. The Trivandrum manuscript has Khyāta. The correct reading is probable Ākhyāta, a work cited by Kṛṣṇa in his gloss on *Setu* 8.8.<sup>204</sup> It appears to be a work on verbs and their meanings.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>200</sup> See Oppert's edition, Madras, 1893; and Introduction to *Kalpद्रुकोśa* (GOS), p. XXVI.

<sup>201</sup> Cat. Cat. I *sub voce*.

<sup>202</sup> See Extracts 8.102.

<sup>203</sup> Kṛṣṇa says तुषारः शीकरेऽपि चेत्यमरशेषे. The printed text of *Trikāṇḍasēṣa* has तुषारः शीकरं हिमे (3.354). This appears also in a well-preserved manuscript of Puruṣottama's work in the Madras Oriental Manuscripts Library (D 1600).

<sup>204</sup> See Extracts 8.8.

<sup>205</sup> The quotation mentioned above is imperfectly reproduced in Extracts 2.9 from the Devanāgarī manuscript. It seems to be correctly given in the Trivandrum manuscript: प्रणयनं याच्ना। 'निर्माणमैत्रीयाच्नासु प्रणये चाग्निसंस्कृतौ' इति (आ)ख्याते.

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