

Historical: King Mukunda Sen's Invasion of Kathmandu Valley

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By

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"Nepal ki Kahani" (The Story of Nepal), by Kashi Prasad Srivastav, was published by Atma Ram & Sons from Delhi in 2011 Vikrama (A.D. 1954). Because it was aimed at spreading pro-Indian propaganda in Nepal, it contains such wrong statements as "the number of Madhesis and Indians in Nepal exceeds five million." According to Kashi Prasad Srivastav, Mukunda Sen of Palpa invaded Nepal Valley in 1544 Vikrama during the rule of Harideva, Nanyadeva's great-great-grandson.

Gorkha, a history of Nepal by Francis Tucker, a Lieutenant General of the British Army, was published in 2014 Vikrama (A.D. 1957). It reproduces the Vamshawali account of Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley. According to Tucker, a Magar serving in the court of King Mukunda of Nepal Valley was dismissed by his ministers on false charges. The Magar then returned to Tansen and described the affluence of Nepal Valley before King Mukunda Sen, who was thus tempted to invade Kathmandu Valley. Tucker implies that the invasion took place circa 1157 Vikrama.

Luciano Petech's Mediaeval History of Nepal, published from Rome in 2015 Vikrama (A.D. 1958) is of special importance among scholarly historical writings. It has a compact style free from verbosity. Instead of accepting what has been written in the Vamshawalis about Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley, Petech has put forward an interpretation of his own. He has also reproduced an account of the invasion contained in an unpublished Vamshawali in Sanskrit verse. That Vamshawali has given the time of Mukunda Sen as 1032 Shaka, or 1167 Vikrama, or 4211 Kali. According to it, Mukunda Sen, and dethroned him. However, Petech has pointed out that in 1167 Vikrama it was Nanyadeva, Ramasimha's great-grandfather, who was on the throne, hence the latter could not have been King of Nepal Valley in that year. According to the Gapalaraja Vamshawali, Ramasimha Deva, son of Narasimha Deva, was born in 1239 Vikrama. It also makes a reference at another place to Ramasimha Deva in 1301 Vikrama. Petech, therefore, concludes that Ramasimha reigned from 1262 to 1302 Vikrama.

Petech also maintains that according to a Vamshawali found by Giuseppe Tucci in Baglung, King Manimukunda Sen as the same person. Accordingly, he has placed Mukunda Sen in the beginning of the fourteenth century Vikrama, since references to his

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grandson, Jitari Malla, are available for the period 1344-46 Vikrama. The Sanskrit Vamshawali mentioned above states that Mukunda Sen was reigning in 1032 Shaka, or 1167 Vikrama, or 4211 Kali, but Petech has resolved the discrepancy in his own way. He rejects the view that Mukunda Sen was reigning in 1032 Shaka or 4211 Kali, but puts forward his own argument with regard to the Vikrama year 1167. In his opinion, the Vikrama calendar was not followed in the Nepal and Tirhut at that time, hence the year 1167 refers not to the Vikrama era but to the Shaka era. This means, according to Petech, that Mukunda Sen was reigning in 1302 Vikrama (1167 Shaka, 135). In that year, Abhaya Malla was reigning in Nepal Valley, and Petech therefore concludes that it was during his reign that Mukunda Sen invaded Nepal Valley.

There seems little substance in Petech's arguments. He has apparently forgotten that the Chronicler has indicated the date according to the Vikrama, Kali, and Shaka calendars, so that the question of whether or not any of these calendars was in use in any place at that time is irrelevant. The Vamshawali does not indicate which calendar was in use at that time, but gives the date according to all the three calendars. Petech himself has used the western calendar in his history of mediaeval Nepal. Will not it be ridiculous to conclude on the basis of a study of his work that the western calendar was in use in Nepal during the mediaeval period? How could a scholar like Petech arrive at such a ridiculous conclusion?

According to the Sanskrit Vamshawali, Mukunda Sen invaded Nepal Valley during the reign of Ramasimha. The Gopalaraja Vamshawali has made a reference to Ramasimha in the year 1301 Vikrama. In an attempt to prove Mukunda Sen as a contemporary of Ramasimha by any means, Petech argues that the date of 1167 Vikrama given in the Samstrik Vamshawali is actually 1167 Shaka, which corresponds to 1302 Vikrama. This is ridiculous. He has relied on the statement contained in the Baglung Vamshawali that Manimukunda was the maternal grandfather of Jitari Malla. But his evidence is not reliable.

The Gopalaraja Vamshawali makes a reference to Jitari Malla in 1344-46 Vikrama. Petech therefore maintains that this date relates to Jitari Malla, who is said to have been a son of Manimukunda's daughter. He argues that since the grandson was living during 1344-46 Vikrama, the grandfather must have lived during the early years of the fourteenth century Vikrama. This argument has led him to believe that Ramasimha and Mukunda Sen were contemporaries. The Gopalaraja Vamshawali contains a reference to Ramasimha in 1301 Vikrama, hence Petech believes that Mukunda Sen, who defeated Ramasimha in a battle, must have lived during the early years of the fourteenth century Vikrama. This view appears correct at first glance.

The Jitari Malla mentioned in the Gopalaraja Vamshawali had an ancestor named Prithvi Malla, who is mentioned in the Dullu pillar inscription of 1414 Vikrama. This makes it clear that this Jitari Malla was the grandson of Krachalla and the son of Ashoka Challa. (Dhanawajra Vajracharya, "Karnali-Pradeshako Itihasako Ek Jhalak" (A glimpse of the history of the Karnali region), Purnima, No. 6, 2022 Vikrama (A.D. 1965), pp. 15-18). According to the Baglung Vamshawali, Jitari Malla, the son of Manimukunda's daughter,

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was the grandson of Naga Bam and the son of Narayana Malla. (Giuseppe Tucci, Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal, Rome, 1956 A.D., p. 121). Petech has mentioned in one place (p. 197) that Jitari Malla, who invaded Nepal Valley in 1344-46 Vikrama, was the son of Ashoka Challa, but he has failed to realize that there were actually two persons bearing the name of Jitari Malla. One was the son of Ashoka Challa, and the other of Narayana Malla.

Nor is this all. In 1997 Vikrama (A.D. 1940), Baburam Acharya had published an article captioned "Tanahunko Sen Vamsha" (the Sen dynasty of Tanahu). In that article, he had referred to a document issued by Rudra Sen, Mukunda Sen's father, in 1571 Vikrama. This shows that Mukunda Sen did not live as early as the Vamshawalis have claimed. Had Petech noticed this article of Baburam Acharya, he would have dealt with the problem in another way.

In any case, Petech has not been able to put forward any definitive views on the question of Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley. He has concluded his account with the following remark: "The tale of Mukundasena, in which a historical kernel is overlaid with legend nearly out of all recognition, refers to some inroad from western Nepal, from which the Tirhut rulers were the chief sufferers. And this is all that can be said about this portion of the modern Vamshawalis." (Luciano Petech, Mediaeval History of Nepal, Rome, A.D. 1958, p. 196).

Nepala Ko Aitihāsika Vivechana (an historical analysis of Nepal), by Dhundi Raj Shastri, (Varanasi: 2015 Vikrama) follows the tradition laid down by Bal Chandra Sharma in Nepala Ko Aitihāsika Ruparekha. Dhundi Raj Shastri, following Sylvain Levi, regards Ananda Malla and Ananta Malla as the same person. He writes, "Different scholars have expressed different opinions about Mukunda Sen's invasion. Baburam Acharya, however, regards the entire episode as imaginary." Like Bal Chandra Sharma, Dhundi Raj Shastri appears to have accepted Baburam Acharya's decision to reject that Vamshawali account of Mukunda Sen's invasion as outlined in the above-mentioned article. According to Wright's Vamshawali, Nanyadeva came to Nepal Valley in 946 Vikrama, when Ananda Malla was on the throne, and Mukunda Sen invaded Nepal Valley during the reign of Harideva, great-great-grandson of Ananda Malla. Even then, Dhundi Raj Shastri has referred to that Vamshawali as evidence for his claim that Mukunda Sen had invaded Nepal valley from the west during Ananda Malla's reign. Like Bal Chandra Sharma, Dhundi Raj Shastri seems to have failed to study this portion of Wright's Vamshawali carefully.

Paras Mani Pradhan's Nepali Bhasako Utpatti ra Vikasa (Origin and development of the Nepali language) has been published from Kalimpong in two editions in 2017 and 2029 Vikrama. The chapter captioned "Nepalako Itihasama Khasa Jati" (The Khas community of Nepali history) contains an account of Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley based on Wright's Vamshawali. However, Paras Mani Pradhan has given the date of the invasion four centuries after the time indicated in the Vamshawali. According to Wright's Vamshawali, the invasion took place during the latter part of the twelfth century Vikrama, whereas Paras Mani Pradhan has given the time of Mukunda Sen as 1575-1610

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Vikrama. he has raised no doubts about the authenticity of the account contained in Wright's Vamshawali of Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley, but at the same time accepted without any hesitation the regnal years of Mukunda Sen as given by Baburam Acharya, who believes that the entire episode is imaginary, because the Mukunda Sen of 1575-1610 Vikrama could not have lived so early.

In his Modern Nepal, published in 2015 Vikrama, Dilli Raman Regmi has raised the issue of Mukunda Sen's invasion, but only pointed out that while according to the Nepali Vamshawali King Mukunda Sen of Palpa invaded Patan with a big Magar army during the fourteenth century Vikrama, it had not yet been possible to identify Mukunda Sen in the context of the Palpa Vamshawali. In the second edition of his book, published in 2032 Vikrama, he has repeated the same point, and added that according to Bhawadatta's Vamshawali, the Mukunda Sen who invaded Nepal Valley was twelfth in line of the royal dynasty of Palpa.

A reference to Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley is found in Lilabhakta Munakarmi's Bhaktapurako Malla Kalina Sarala Itihasa (A simple history of Bhaktapur during the Malla period), published in 2021 Vikrama. Lilabhakta Munakarmi has referred to Mukunda Sen as Mukunda Simha and based his account largely on the Vamshawalis. According to him, the Nepal Samvat was introduced during the reign of Ananta Malla, who, he adds, was also known as Ananda Malla. The account of Ananta Malla is followed by that of Ananda Malla, and it is in the course of that account that reference has been made to Mukunda Sen's invasion. Lilabhakta Munakarmi has then pointed out that some historians regard Ananda Malla and Ananta Malla as the same person. He thus maintains that the Nepal Samvat was introduced during the reign of Ananta Malla, and that Mukunda Sen's invasion took place during the reign of Ananda Malla, whose account follows that of the former. All this indicates that in Lilabhakta Munakarmi's opinion Mukunda Sen invaded Nepal Valley around the end of the tenth century Vikrama. In another book, Mallakalina Nepal (Nepal during the Malla period), published in 2025 Vikrama, Lilabhakta Munakarmi has repeated these same points about Mukunda Sen's invasion of Nepal Valley.

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