



Rukshana Newa &lt;rukshana.newa@gmail.com&gt;

## Fwd: Comments on the Nepala-samvat Publication

1 message

**Sanyukta Shrestha** < > Mon, Jul 6, 2020 at 12:44 PM To: Rukshana Newa < >, supriya manandhar < >

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Kamal Malla** < >  
 Date: Wed, Apr 18, 2012 at 3:53 PM  
 Subject: Fwd: Comments on the Nepala-samvat Publication  
 To: Sanyukta Shrestha < >

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From: **Kamal Malla** < >  
 Date: Sun, Oct 10, 2010 at 9:06 AM  
 Subject: Comments on the Nepala-samvat Publication  
 To: Asmeet Malla < >  
 Cc: Asmeet Malla < >

Asmeet Bhaju,

Here are some more of my comments on the New Year Celebrations Committee Publication edited by Prem Shanti Tuladhar and Naresh Bir Shakya. Please feel free to translate or use it the way you feel at ease.

Coming back to the publication, there are a number of factual inaccuracies.

For instance, the epoch era was NOT called "Nepala-samvat" before the year 148, it was simply called "Samvat" to begin with. It was mentioned as "Nepala-vatsara" in a manuscript dated Samvat 148, now in the collection of S.K. Saraswati of Calcutta (See Petech, 1984),

Its association with the name of Shankhadhara is not attested before Samvat 827, when it was mentioned as "Sakhwa Samvat". The first inscription to mention Shankhadhara explicitly comes as late as Samvat 957, in Patan Tichhu Galli.,

The first printed Nepalese almanac, the so-called "dhunge-paatro", goes back to 1884. Its author Dharmadutta Sharma (the late Ravindra, Natha Sharma's grand-father) does not mention the name . But a, printed almanac to mention the name of Shakhadhar was dated NS 1024/AD, 1904 (See Levi, 1901-4).

Dr Diwakar Acharya of the Nepal Research, Centre has recently published a colophon, dated Samvat 816, in which, the epoch era is mentioned as "Shaknudutta Samvat". In the 19th-century "Bhasha Vamshavalis" I have examined (some 20 or so, including the Hodgson Collection in the British Library), the name, of the founder is also confusing---from Saphaa, Saakhaa, Shankha to Shankhadhara.

The legend of its foundation too is not consistent. All that we know for sure is that the epoch era was founded at the time of Raghavadeva, on Tuesday, October 20, 879. The later vernacular chronicles, compiled between 1829-1880s, narrate the commonplace legend of the transformation of sand-into-gold.,

The only reliable archaeological evidence we have is the stone statue said to be of Shankhadara --the retail trader, originally standing by the south gate of Pashupati temple. There is also a chaitya in , Madu-khyo, Kathmandu said to have been built by him. So was he a Buddhist or was he a Hindu? How did a retail trader make so much money so that he could cancel everyone's debts----the traditional story is not all too convincing.

Not long ago, I discovered a stone-pillar in Sina-mangala, on the way to Sanothimi, near the Pepsi-cola factory, a 10-12 ft tall slender, roughly-hewn stone-pillar, now worshipped as a siva-linga equipped, with an iron trishula. Originally, this

is said to have been used as, a "weighing scale" to weigh the debt documents, paid off by Shankhadhar's generosity. Sinaa-mangala is, of course, a popular corruption of Sanskrit, Shila-mugala, or stone pillar. I searched and found that pillar out, on the basis of the precise directions given in a Nepali, vamshavali, published in Ancient Nepal, its original is now housed in the Kaiser Library. This modern chronicle is copied at the turn of the century.,

The authentic document explaining Chandra Shumshere's motives for adopting Vikrama -samvat is Jaggannatha and Vaijanath Sendhain's versified panegyric, entitled *Chandra-mayukha* (Nirmayasagar Press, Bombay:1913, page 87), where there are three laconic verses, explaining how the State benefits from such a measure and how Chandra's calendar reform of "tithi into miti" had finally rid the country of the confusions of lunar tithi, 13-month year and dark half and bright half of a lunar month.,

The lunar calender was invented by Babylonians in ca. 4000 BC. It was brought to the Indus Valley by the nomadic Indo-Aryans in about 1350, BC. Unlike the solar calender ( in which a civil day is calculated from mid-night to mid-night or from a sun-rise to another sun-rise), the lunar calendar is based on the phases of the Moon or periods of "lunation" which in Hindu calendar is called "the tithi". Its duration is totally inconsistent and unpredictable so that a tithi may end and another begin at any moment, any second, in a solar day.

This gives rise to the problem of deciding WHEN does a tithi end. In order to know the ending moment of a tithi (which is the most crucial for calculation), one has to carry a pocket almanac, as it were, since it is simply unpredictable!,

Secondly, a lunar tithi may span longer or shorter than a solar/civil day.

Thirdly, a lunar tithi may be doubled or lost. The same civil day may contain more than one lunar tithi.

Fourthly, in order to adjust the two reckonings, every two-and-a-half year, there has to be an intercalary month, or additional lunar month, because the lunar year is shorter by 11.25 days than the solar year. This also gives rise to the problem of a "lost lunar month". As lunar calendar is so fraught with practical problems it is not adopted as official one by any modern government in the world. However, it is still the RITUAL calendar in India, China and Islamic countries all over the world.

As far as I know, the first PUBLIC celebration of Nepala-samvat was organized by Cwasa Pasa in 1954 at Hanuman Dhoka where celebrities like Sardar Narendra Mani Acharya Dixit and Bal Krishna Sam were present. It was here that Sam said that he would start using it "from tomorrow" (See Paasaa, Souvenir Issue, No 4). I hope Prime Minister Comrade Puspa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda's, commitment is not going to be yet another "tomorrow"-syndrome!.,

With best wishes,

Your loving  
Tahbwaa