

Poet Vamśamaṇi Pays off His Share in the Father's Debt: A 17th-Century Debt-Clearance Certificate from Mithilā

Diwakar Acharya

Introduction

Manuscripts usually provide—besides literary texts they transmit—a wealth of information about the journey of those texts, their reception and transmission in the society of their production and use. Manuscripts contain important information not only in their colophons but also in chapter colophons, extra notes, and also on title pages and appended folios. They occasionally tell stories of their owners and scribes, their migration, socio-religious connections, intellectuality, and even feelings, and thus, may hint at the social, cultural and intellectual conditions of the time they were written and used in.

Without manuscript colophons no mediaeval history of Nepal could have been written. Chronicles definitely serve the purpose but they only record major events and even those records need scrutiny and verification. In the past, historians of mediaeval Nepal have used manuscript colophons basically to prepare chronologies and genealogies. We can take Luciano Petech's *Mediaeval History of Nepal* as the best representative of this line of history-writing. Petech (1984: 3) himself admits in the introduction of his book that he presents “a rather old-fashioned history-writing” that has to do with “dynasties, kings, wars, chronological problems etc.” According to him, “only those colophons which mention date and name of the king are useful” for the purpose of history-writing, and only these he has “collected and utilized” (ibid.: 9) for his work. Following the same principle, Hariram Joshi collected more colophons in his 1991 book entitled *Medieval Colophons*, but hardly anybody has paid attention to chapter colophons, additional notes, and

other similar records found in many manuscripts, although they are important for social, religious, and cultural history.

The notion of history, nonetheless, is gradually changing also in Nepalese historiography. History is now understood not merely as a dynastic or political history but a multi-dimensional phenomenon encompassing accounts of all walks of life, all representatives of the society: its authors, builders, tillers, lenders and borrowers, farmers and traders, and its heroes and villains. Further, historians have begun to pay attention to the interconnections of different communities and societies. Nepal has preserved an enormous wealth of documents and manuscripts that contain information needed to write this type of comprehensive history. It is therefore possible to produce this kind of history of Nepal, particularly of the modern, early modern, and premodern periods.

In this paper I am going to present a 17th-century debt-clearance certificate written in Mithilā in Maithili script but preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu (NAK). This rare and interesting document given to Mahopādhyāya Vaṃśamaṇi is appended to a 17th century manuscript of a Sanskrit work he copied in Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat 496, perhaps for his own use.¹ There are two extra folios inserted in the beginning of this manuscript. On the verso of the first of these folios Rudradhara's *Puṣpamālā*, a short text on the choice of flowers for different deities,² begins but on the recto of this folio a debt-clearance certificate is written in a different hand. Obviously, Vaṃśamaṇi was a staunch utilitarian who used the back of his debt-clearance certificate to begin a new text. This certificate provided by two ladies called Ratnāvātīdevī and Vacchalādevī states that the two ladies received the share Vaṃśamaṇi had in his father's debt and cleared him from the debt and the accumulated interest (plate 1). The certificate reads:

- 1 This manuscript of a Mīmāṃsā text entitled *Adhikaraṇamālā* bearing NAK Accession No. 5-325 can be found in NGMPP A 34/4. Vaṃśamaṇi copied it in the month of Āśvina, Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat 496 (equivalent to 1619 CE), almost ten years before the date of the debt-clearance certificate.
- 2 A transcription of this text can be found in Zotter (2013: 386–387). For an analysis of the content of the *Puṣpamālā* and some reflections on the identity of its author Rudradhara, see *ibid.*: 282–283. Zotter's transcription is based on two other manuscripts microfilmed by the NGMPP. Apparently, she was not then aware of this manuscript.

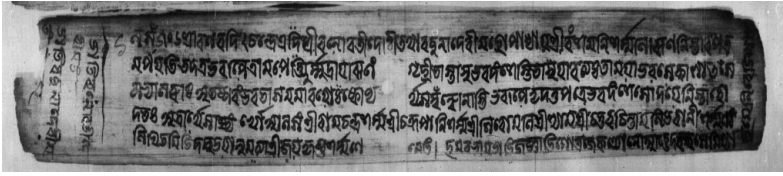


Plate 1: Vaṃśamaṇi's debt-clearance certificate; NAK acc. no. 5-325, microfilmed as NGMPP A 34/4; © National Archives, Nepal.

[1] *lasaṃ 506 śrāvaṇabadi 2 candre edi śrīratnāvātīdevī tathā vacchalādevī mahopādhyāyaśrīvaṃśamaṇiśarmmaṇe* <|>³
ṛṇanistāra-ṇapatra[2]*m arpayati tad atra bhavatpitrā matpa{i}*
ttyur mmudrā yā ṛṇaṃ gṛhītās tāsu bhavadamśe [']*sti*⁴ {*tāsu*}
yāvatyah tā mayā bhavatsakāśāt sa[3]*labhyā labdhāḥ ataṣ*
paraṃ bhavatā samaṃ āvayo{*h*}*ṣ ko* [']*py arthasambandho*
nāsti bhavatpitṛdattapatre bhavadamśe sodaye nistāro [4]
dattaḥ atrārṥthe sākṣyaṃ (khau)ālasaṃ śrīrāmacandraśarmma-
śrīcakraṇāṇiśarmma-śrīśiromaṇi-śrīśyāma-śrīcaturacintāmaṇi-
bhavāniśarmmaṇaḥ [5] *likhitam i*{*tī*}*dam ubhayā-numatyā*
śrījayaḥkrṣṇaśarmmaṇe<*ne*>*ti* | *hamara bhāya iti i jñāti-gotraje*
ka(*tyo*)*no ācchedabarase mithyā* [the line continues in the right
margin] †*ha*(*me*) *nivebhi*(*śā*)†
[In the left margin in four short lines:] *iti ratnāvātīdevī-*
mataṃ
iti vacchalādevīmā-
taṃ

Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat 506 (+1123=1629 CE⁵), Monday the second of the dark half of Śrāvaṇa. On this day, Śrī Ratnāvātī Devī and Vacchalā Devī offer [this] debt-clearance certificate to Mahopādhyāya Vaṃśamaṇi Śarmā. On this matter, as much is your share in the amount of cash your father accepted as a debt from our husband, so much I have received from you together with the interest to be received. From now on, we two do not have any financial relation with you. On the bond your father had submitted, we have

- 3 An *akṣara* the scribe has cancelled is placed inside curly braces { }, the one I cancelled in the editorial process is inside angular brackets <...>, and the one I read unclearly or uncertainly is inside parenthesis (...). In the end of the document I have placed between two cruxes a few *akṣaras* I am unable to interpret.
- 4 *asti* for *santi*; the scribe apparently is confused here. After *asti* he has written and canceled *tāsu*.
- 5 For the basis of this conversion of Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat, see below p. 219.

written a statement of clearance concerning your share in the debt and the increment (*udaya*). Witnesses in this are these people from Khauāla: Śrī Rāmacandra Śarmā, Śrī Cakrapāṇi Śarmā, Śrī Śiromaṇi, Śrī Śyāma, Śrī Caturacintāmaṇi, and Bhavānī Śarmā. This document is written by Śrī Jayakṛṣṇa Śarmā with the consent of both [parties]. Finis.

Any implication or claim made by anyone among the relatives and kinsmen stating, “he is our brother,” will be invalid; †*ha(me) nīvebhi(śā)†*.

Thus approved by Ratnāvati Devī. Thus approved by Vacchalā Devī.

Poet Vaṃśamaṇi’s Presence in Mithilā and the Nepal Valley

We know that Mahopādhyāya Vaṃśamaṇi was a poet writing in Sanskrit and Maithili who first worked for King Jagajjyotir Malla of Bhaktapur and later, after his demise, for King Pratāpa Malla of Kathmandu. The following literary works of this poet have survived:

1. The *Harikelimahākāvya*, an epic poem on Kṛṣṇa’s story, already published from Nepal Sanskrit University;⁶
2. the *Durgāvijayaḍima*, a heroic play describing Durgā’s victory over demons;⁷
3. the *Gītadigambara*, a melodrama dwelling on Śiva’s story which was staged on the occasion of Pratāpa Malla’s *tulādāna*⁸ in NS 770 (1650 CE);⁹
4. the *Vṛttamahārṇava*, a work on Sanskrit prosody, which survives only in an incomplete manuscript;¹⁰
5. the *Caturaṅgatarāṅgiṇī*, a work on the Indian chess play;¹¹

6 For bibliographical details, see Dhakal 1995.

7 NAK Accession No. 1-1075, NGMPP A 19/10, incomplete.

8 A ritual gift of gold and other important items equal to a man’s weight is called *tulādāna*. It is called so because during this ritual the performer mounts a scale (*tulā*) to weigh himself against the items prepared for charity. This royal ceremony was so popular among the royals that even Humayun, Akbar, and his descendants had included it in their birthday ceremonies. For some details, see Eraly 2007: 71–72.

9 NAK Accession No. 1-382, NGMPP B 15/9.

10 NAK Accession No. 5-7971, NGMPP A 20/13.

11 NAK Accession No. 1-1612, NGMPP A 314/20.

6. an extensive commentary on the *Saṅgītabhāskara* which is ascribed jointly to Vaṃśamaṇi and King Jagajjyotir Malla¹² and
7. the *Nalacaritanāṭaka*, a Maithili language melodrama, composed in the early years of the reign of Kathmandu King Bhūpāendra Malla (1687–1700).¹³

Besides these works, there are a number of manuscripts now preserved in the National Archives, Kathmandu, which were apparently copied by Vaṃśamaṇi perhaps for his own use. At the end of many of these manuscripts he has added one or two verses of his composition.¹⁴

From the benedictory and epilogue verses of his works, we know that Vaṃśamaṇi came from Mithilā, belonged to the clan of Bilvapañca (Belauñca) Bhāradvāja Brahmans, and his father and mother were named Rāmacandra and Jayamati respectively.¹⁵ From the texts

12 NAK Accession No. 2-222, NGMPP B 288/27.

13 NAK Accession No. 4-967, NGMPP B 314/22. Veni Madhav Dhakal who edited the *Harikelimahākāvya* does not know about the *Durgāvijayaḍima*, *Vṛttamahārṇa*, and *Nalacaritanāṭaka*. Therefore, he lists the other four as confirmed works of Vaṃśamaṇi (Dhakal 1995: 7–8). It is highly probable that Vaṃśamaṇi composed more works. I agree with the suggestion that some works attributed to King Jagajjyotir Malla, particularly those in which Vaṃśamaṇi is mentioned as the reviser such as *Dīpikā* on the *Narapatijayacaryāsvarodaya* (copied in Śaka 1539/Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat 494), might have been compositions of Vaṃśamaṇi. Similarly, Vaṃśamaṇi might have been fully or partially responsible for the Maithili plays attributed to the same king. Dhakal (1995: 9) discards this possibility on the ground that there is no concrete proof. I would even suspect that some of the eulogies to the temple deities of Kathmandu, found in the inscriptions of King Pratāpa Malla and ascribed to him, may have been Vaṃśamaṇi's compositions. Ramavatar Yadav (2011) suggests that the *Nalacaritanāṭaka* can be a composition of King Jagajjyotir Malla, but we cannot ignore the fact that songs in this text embed Vaṃśamaṇi's name (for such a song, but in translation, see Chaudhary 2010: 108–109). Further, a manuscript (NGMPP B 22/1) of a commentary on the *Śivagītā* in the handwriting of Vaṃśamaṇi has been found. The colophon merely records that Vaṃśamaṇi “wrote” it, but does not formally attribute its composition to anybody. So, it is not sure whether Vaṃśamaṇi is the scribe or the author of this commentary.

14 Here is an example of such a verse from the end of the *Śivagītāṭikā* (NGMPP B 22/1, fol. 168v):

*kīrṇāḥ kvāpi jaṭāḥ kvacid bhasitam apy asti kvacit kutracit
khaṇḍenduḥ kvacid aibhacarmaṃ ḍamaruḥ kvāpi triśūlam kvacit |
itthaṃ gīrṇahalāhale 'ivikale gaurībhujālambini
sthāṇau gāruḍamantratrantrakarāṇavyagrā gaṇāḥ pāntu vaḥ ||
avatū vo girisutā | śaśībhṛtaḥ priyatamā ||*

Matted hairs are to one side and smeared ashes to the other. Somewhere in one corner lies the crescent moon and in another corner the elephant hide. His drum is in one corner and his trident in another. As Śiva has thus drunk the Halāhala poison, become extremely ill, and fallen on the arms of Gaurī, may his troops protect you who are now eager to apply on him the mantras and tantric procedures of the Gāruḍa tradition. May the daughter of the Himalaya Mountain protect you, the dearest of the moon-bearer.

15 Cf. Dhakal 1995: 3.

he copied we also know that he was interested in Sanskrit literature, particularly drama, prosody, Jyautiṣa, Mīmāṃsā, and also Vedānta, but beyond this point we do not know anything about Vaṃśamaṇi's family and standing in the society. The document I presented here adds an interesting detail to this information and raises a few questions.

Scholars identify Vaṃśamaṇi's father Rāmacandra as the author of the *Kāśīvijaya* and *Pārijātaḥaraṇa*, which were composed during the reign of Bhaktapur King Tribhuvana Malla (r. 1561–1613).¹⁶ Dhakal (1995: introduction, p. 5) mentions in his edition of the *Harikeli-mahākāvya* that no original work of Vaṃśamaṇi's father Rāmacandra could be found. But recently, Rajit Bahadur Shrestha has located and published the *Kāśīvijaya*, a melodrama with 120 songs. Although the author does not mention his name anywhere in the prologue or epilogue, he does mention his own name along with his sponsor King Tribhuvana Malla,¹⁷ from Song 21 down to the last. Both of Rāmacandra's short plays are composed in Maithili and Newari, and so it can be guessed that his mother tongue was Maithili.¹⁸ Thus, the time, name, and language of this Rāmacandra match with those of Vaṃśamaṇi's father. Vaṃśamaṇi praises his father as a scholar well versed in various systems of knowledge¹⁹ but it is doubtful how much truth is there in this statement. Although it is not certain, because the name Rāmacandra is very common, there is still a good possibility that this Rāmacandra is Vaṃśamaṇi's father. Unlike Vaṃśamaṇi's, no autograph of Rāmacandra

16 For regnal periods of all Malla kings mentioned in this paper, see Slusser 1982: 397–401.

17 The author of this *nāṭaka* calls himself Vipra Rāmacandra.

18 To compose passages in Newari language, he might have received assistance from some local scholar, or the king himself. But it is also conceivable that Rāmacandra himself had learnt the language after coming into contact with the Newar culture of Kathmandu Valley.

19 *Durgāvijayaḍima* fol. 2v4–5:

*nirddoṣo koṣavṛnde naṭati paṭutayā nāṭako nāṭake 'pi
nyāye vaiśeṣike 'pi (unmetrical) vilasati saviśeṣaiś ca sāmkye 'pi yuktayā |
gadye padye tihṛdye sahrdayahṛdayānandinī yasya buddhir
jātaḥ śrībilvapañcābhīdhasajaladhau candramā rāmacandraḥ ||
tasya putro jaṅamītram amitragagāmbujah |
dhīro vaṃśamaṇiś cakre durgāvijayarūpakam ||*

He is flawless in [his command of] lexicons. He is an actor and acts skilfully when it comes to dramas. In [the realms of] Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, and specially Sāmkyha, he shines forth with his argument. His mind works well in both prose and poetry, which are excessively pleasant, and causes delight to the heart of the connoisseur. Such a person, Rāmacandra, a moon among men, was born here in this ocean-like place called Bilvapañca. His son Vaṃśamaṇi, a friend of the whole world and a sky-lotus for non-friends, composed this play named “The Victory of Durgā” (*Durgāvijaya*).

has been found, nor any detail of the events of his lifetime. On the other hand, Vaṃśamaṇi does not appear in the scenario in the lifetime of Tribhuvana Malla, but only after four years of his demise in 1617, Vaṃśamaṇi completes the task of composing and copying a commentary on the *Narapatijayacaryāsvarodaya* for his successor, King Jagajjyotir Malla (r. 1614–1637). So, only as a working hypothesis we can accept this Rāmacandra and Vaṃśamaṇi as father and son tied closely to these two kings of Bhaktapur.

This document is dated in Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat and normally it is difficult to convert a date in this Saṃvat, because the counting of this Saṃvat differs in different traditions and time periods. Pant has listed “15 different traditions regarding, its beginning clustered within a span of 27 years falling between 1104–1130” (Pant 1997: 159–160). Nevertheless, this uncertainty does not bother us, because Vaṃśamaṇi himself writes in the colophon of the *Narapatijayacaryāsvarodayaṭīkā* that he finished the task, either copying or composition of the *ṭīkā*, for Jagajjyotir Malla in Śaka 1539 and also gives the corresponding Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat 494. This means that in Vaṃśamaṇi's time Śaka and Lakṣmaṇa Saṃvat were 1045 years apart. Therefore, if we add 1123 to the year in this document we can get its equivalent in the Common Era. Thus, it is sure that Vaṃśamaṇi paid off his debt in 1629 CE. Vaṃśamaṇi was already working for Jagajjyotir Malla in 1617, but he needed a long time, 12 more years, to save enough money to pay off his share in the father's debt and its interest. This suggests that the undisclosed amount his father borrowed was not small, and/or the reward he received from Jagajjyotir Malla was not handsome. However, we cannot rule out that some other factors like dispute over the terms of payment had delayed the payment.

For many years Vaṃśamaṇi worked for Jagajjyotir Malla (r. 1614–1637) in Bhaktapur; in many of his works he praises Jagajjyotir Malla. But obviously after the demise of his patron he left Bhaktapur and joined the Kathmandu King Pratāpa Malla (r. 1641–1674) and appears to be still alive in the early years of the reign of Bhūpāendra Malla (r. 1687–1700) to compose the *Nalacaritanāṭaka*.²⁰ It seems that pref-

20 Cf. Chaudhary 2010: 108–109. He cites a song allegedly from the *Nalacaritanāṭaka* in translation which includes Vaṃśamaṇi's name and reads thus,

“The sweet night is passing away
O, give up your unreasonable obstinacy.
Poet Vamsamani sing the song,
For who does not love to make such a request.”

erences of Nareśa Malla (r. 1637–1644), the new king of Bhaktapur, were different than those of his predecessor.

This document was prepared and signed in Khauāla. I am unable to identify this village but do not think that a place of this name or anything closer existed in the Kathmandu Valley. The document is written in Sanskrit and Maithili language using Maithili script, and all witnesses mentioned in this document are Brahmans. There is a good possibility that Khauāl is the place where his father received debt, and also that this is the place where he raised his family, although Vaṃśamaṇi records in his *Harikelimahākāvya* that Bilvapañca/Belauñci was the ancestral place of his family.²¹ But it is not necessary that Vaṃśamaṇi or his father were still living in the ancestral place. In any case, this document implies that Vaṃśamaṇi's connection with Mithilā was not broken even when he was working for the Bhaktapur King. It is very likely that his family was not fully settled in the Kathmandu Valley. Perhaps, Vaṃśamaṇi occasionally visited Bhaktapur for a few days or weeks to receive his assignments and deliver them, otherwise lived in Mithilā. It is at least sure that his connections and relations were in Mithilā and perhaps he owned properties there. At this point, we can also ask why and when Vaṃśamaṇi's father, if he is the same Rāmacandra working for the Bhaktapur king Tribhuvana Malla, borrowed money in Mithilā. Is it possible that he had a financial crisis and for this reason he worked for the Bhaktapur king?

Classical Texts on Debt-Clearance

This certificate, though quite short, provides an example of inheritance of the father's debt and its repayment. The husband of Ratnāvāṭidevī and Vacchalādevī had lend an undisclosed amount of money to Vaṃśamaṇi's father, and after the death of both the creditor and borrower, one of the borrower's son Vaṃśamaṇi paid off his share in the father's debt together with its interest. Dharmaśāstra texts speak of "the pious obligation of the son to pay off his father's debts even if he

21 Maithili Brahmans name Belauch and Ekharā as the original places of Jhā Brahmans of the Bhāradvāja clan. Dhakal (1995: 3) and Yogesh Raj (personal communication) inform that Lekhnath Mishra has published an article about Vaṃśamaṇi Jhā in a local journal called *Mithilā Bhārati* (1969, no. 1.3–4, as Yogesh Raj personally communicated) which contains the genealogy of Vaṃśamaṇi according to the Brahman family Pañjis. Unfortunately, I am unable to locate this publication.

received no property from the father,” because a debtor who has not repaid his debts “may be born as a slave, a servant, a woman or a beast in the house of his creditor”²² (Kane 1993: 417). Either all brothers are living in a joint family or separated, they have to share the debt in accordance with their respective share in the father's property,²³ or that person who is in charge of the joint family should arrange the repayment (*Nāradaśmṛti, vyavahārapada* 1.2). As an educated *paṇḍita*, Vaṃśamaṇi must have felt the pressure induced by such statements of Dharmaśāstra texts. We do not know whether Vaṃśamaṇi received any property from his father or not but he paid off his share in the debt with its interest. Let me remind the reader that according to the Dharmaśāstra texts not only the son but also grandson is liable to pay the ancestral debt. As Kane reports, “[e]ven when no ancestral estate was taken by the descendants the son was liable to pay his father's debts with interest, grandson without” (Kane 1993: 444), but with the fourth generation liability for a debt ceases completely (*Nāradaśmṛti, vyavahārapada* 1.4). All this can be found in the *Nāradaśmṛti*, a text popular in the Kathmandu Valley, perhaps already since late Licchavi period. Moreover, Bṛhaspati recommends that the father's debt must be paid before paying one's own debt (Kane 1993: 445). Our document does not tell how big was the amount Vaṃśamaṇi's father borrowed and at what rate the interest was charged. Dharmaśāstras tell that an 80th part of the borrowed sum per month that amounts to 15 percent per annum is regarded as the ideal rate of interest (ibid.: 418). But in practice, it might have been higher.

Vaṃśamaṇi's clearance certificate mentions the bond signed by his father at the time of borrowing. According to the classical legal norms, the borrower should provide the creditor a signed document, and when the debt is cleared together with interest, the creditor should tear off or return the original bond (*Nāradaśmṛti, vyavahārapada* 1.101–102, Kane 1993: 442). But if the debt is paid in installments, the creditor must write on the back of the bond the sums he received from the borrower in different dates. The creditor should also sign a receipt and give it to the borrower. The document published here is an example of such

22 *Kātyāyanasṛti* 551 and 591 (as cited in Kane 1993: 417 n. 676): *pitṛṇām sūnubhir jātaṁ dānenavādhamād ṛṇāt | vimokṣas tu yatas tasmād icchanti pitarah sutān || uddhārādikam ādāya svāmīne na dadāti yaḥ | sa tasya dāso bhṛtyaḥ strīḥ paśur vā jāyate gṛhe ||*

23 If taken for the sake of the whole family, even a debt of a paternal uncle, mother, or brother should be paid by the heirs (*Nāradaśmṛti, vyavahārapada* 1.3).

a document, and it mentions the original document of debt submitted by the borrower, which clearly remains with the family of the creditor until the debt is fully paid. I am sure that a case like *Vaṃśamaṇi*'s was a common phenomenon although it is not discussed separately in the *Dharmaśāstras*. We can imagine that this case, too, is covered in the category of repayment in instalments. In ordinary situation, the creditor provides a new document declaring that the borrower is freed from the debt only after the payment of the whole. In case of inherited debt it is logical that the creditor provides a document like the one given to *Vaṃśamaṇi* to each of the sons of the borrower once each one's share in that debt is cleared. The fact that *Vaṃśamaṇi* has paid off his share in the debt and due interest is recorded on the back of the original bond. It does not record the actual amount borrowed and paid back. As the clearance certificate concludes, it makes a clear statement that the two parties have no more financial relations, and adds that any claim made by any of the relatives and kinsmen stating that *Vaṃśamaṇi* is their brother and therefore should share the burden again would be invalid. This statement is interestingly written in Maithili.

A professional scribe or a capable person prepares a traditional document by the consent of both parties involved. Our document conforms to this rule. The *Dharmaśāstras* advise, “[w]hen a debt is borrowed in the presence of witnesses, it should be returned in the presence of the same or other witnesses”²⁴ (Kane 1993: 442). In the above document, too, we find six persons of the same Brahman class mentioned as witnesses. Whether these are the same people who witnessed *Vaṃśamaṇi*'s father taking the debt or different cannot be known. The scribe, too, is a Brahman. Two widows of the creditor have approved this document. As the *Nāradaśrī* (*vyavahārapada* 1.28–34) states, all ethical activities of the senior-most person in a family, executed according to the rule, are valid. However, the *Dharmaśāstras* do not normally allow women to carry out any legal financial transaction independently. The *Arthaśāstra* III.1 (cf. Kane 1993: 412 n. 661) tells that a woman whose husband or son are alive is incompetent and any agreement she makes is invalid. On the other hand, the *Nāradaśrī* (*vyavahārapada* 1.33)

24 *Yājñavalkyaśrī* II.94cd: *sākṣimac ca bhaved yad vā tad dātavyam sasākṣikam. Viṣṇuśrī* VI.24: *sasākṣikam āptaṃ sasākṣikam eva dadyāt*. Kane does not cite these original statements but only provides the reference. These statements simply say that a debt borrowed in presence of witnesses should be returned in the presence of witnesses. Witnesses at the time of return can be “the same or other” is obviously Kane's interpretation based on practicality.

states that after the death of the father, the mother becomes the head of the family. Therefore, I guess that the two widows of the creditor accepted the payment and distributed it among the sons. It is also possible that these widows did not have any son, and so are acting independently on their own.

Before I conclude this paper I would like to raise a few general as well as specific questions for which I have found no definite answers. What comes first in my mind is how frequently and easily scholars and teachers moved from one place to another, one royal court to another, like Vaṃśamaṇi. I also wonder how the authors in the royal courts of the late mediaeval times in the Kathmandu Valley were rewarded, and how handsome were these rewards? How well-off was Vaṃśamaṇi? Why did his father borrow money? And, why did Vaṃśamaṇi work for Pratāpa Malla after the demise of Jagajjyotir Malla of Bhaktapur? On the basis of the available material, all these questions cannot be answered. We may make haphazard guesses to answer these questions but these will remain matters of speculation unless we find more of similar relevant documents.

Abbreviations

NAK	National Archives, Kathmandu
NGMPP	<i>Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project</i>
NS	Nepal Samvat

References

Primary Sources

- Kāśīvijaya*. Shrestha, Rajit Bahadur (ed.). NS 1124 (2004 CE). *The Kāśīvijaya of Rāmacandra*. Lalitpur: Hnū hisu pucaḥ.
- Nāradasmṛti*. Lariviere, Richard W. (ed./tr.). 2003. *The Nāradasmṛti: Critical Edition and Translation*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Yājñavalkyasmṛti*. Acharya, Narayan Ram (ed.). 1949. *Yājñavalkyasmṛti of Yogīśvara Yājñavalkya with the Commentary (Mitākṣarā) of Viṣṇāneśvara*. Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press.

- Viṣṇusmṛti*. Jolly, Julius. (ed.). 1881. *Viṣṇusmṛti: The Institutes of Vishnu together with Extracts from the Sanskrit Commentary of Nanda Paṇḍit Called Vaijayanti*. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society.
- Harikelimahākāvya*. Dhakal, Veni Madhav (ed.). 1995. *The Harikelimahākāvya of Vaṃśamaṇi*. Dang: Mahendra Sanskrit University.

Secondary Sources

- Chaudhary, Radhakrishna. 2010. *A Survey of Maithili Literature*. Delhi: Shruti Publication.
- Dhakal 1995. See Primary Sources, *Harikelimahākāvya*.
- Eraly, Abraham. 2007. *The Mughal World: Life in India's Last Golden Age*. Penguin Books India.
- Joshi, Hariram. 1991. *Medieval Colophons*. Lalitpur: Joshi Research Centre.
- Kane, P.V. 1993. *History of Dharmasāstra*. Vol. 3: *Rājadharmā, Vyavahāra, and Sadācāra*. Poona: The Bhandarkar Institute Press.
- Pant, Mahes Raj. 1997. "Six 15th- and 16th-Century Deeds from Tirhut Recording the Purchase of Slaves." In: *Recht, Staat und Verwaltung im klassischen Indien / The State, the Law, and Administration in Classical India*, ed. by B. Kölver. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 159–194.
- Petech, Luciano. 1984. *Mediaeval History of Nepal (c. 750–1482)*. Rome: IsMEO.
- Shrestha 2004. See Primary Sources, *Kāśīvijaya*.
- Slusser, Mary Shepherd. 1982. *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of Kathmandu Valley*. Vol. 1: *Text*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Yadav, Ramawatar. 2011. "Medieval Maithili Stagecraft in the Nepalmandala: The Bhaktapur School." *Contributions to Nepal Studies* 38.2: 171–190.
- Zotter, Astrid. 2013. "Von Blüten, Göttern und Gelehrten: Die Behandlung von *pūjā*-Blüten im *Puṣpacintāmaṇi*: Text, Herkunft und Deutung eines nepalischen Kompendiums." PhD. thesis Leipzig University [<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:15-qucosa-102174>; accessed 24 August 2017].