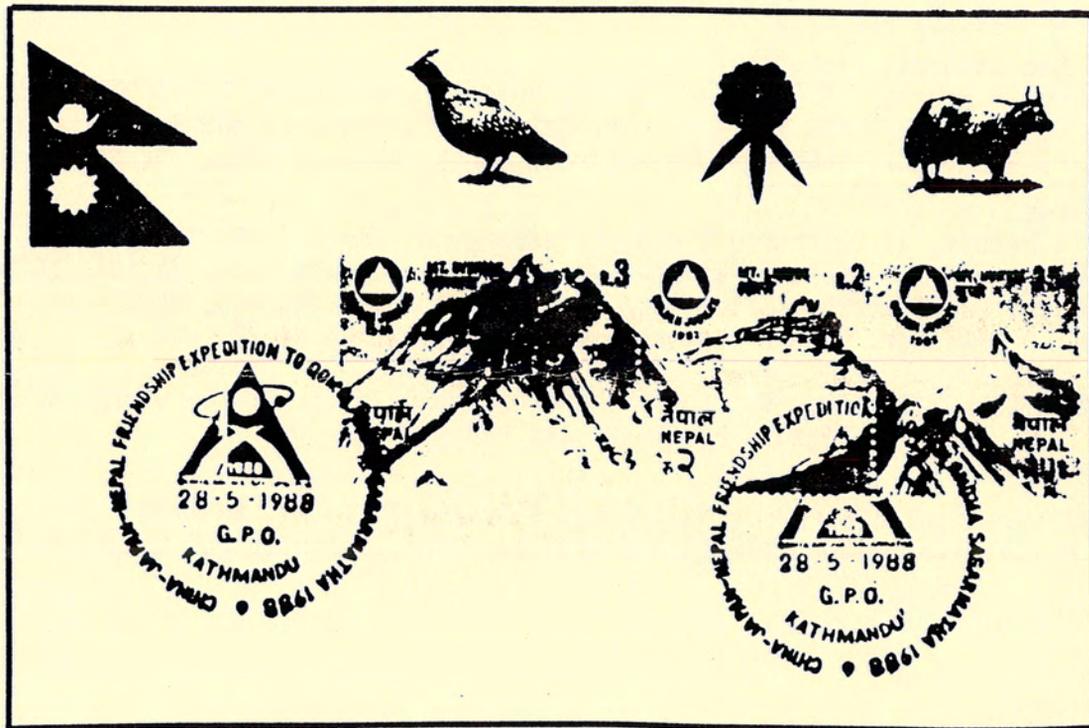


POSTAL HIMAL

QUARTERLY OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



No. 55

3rd Quarter 1988



POSTAL HIMAL is a quarterly publication of the Nepal, Tibet & Bhutan Philatelic Study Circle. Membership subscriptions run from January through December of each year. Dues should be paid to the society representative in your area. Information on advertising rates may be obtained from the editor.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: The first commemorative cover ever issued by the Postal Services Department of His Majesty's Government of Nepal was issued on 28 May 1988 to honor the China-Japan-Nepal Friendship Expedition to Sagarmatha. See page 38 for an article which appeared in THE RISING NEPAL on the following day. Our thanks to Mr. S. L. Shrestha, the Nepal Representative for the Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, for this illustration and a copy of the article.

Dear Friends,

Your editor is a bit behind schedule after an unusually busy summer -- but more about that a bit later. I want to call your attention to several items in this issue.

Note the various items of EXHIBITION NEWS which appear on page 30, including the special recognition of two outstanding members of our Study Circle -- Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl (page 30) and Prof. Dr. Armand E. Singer (page 32).

On page 33 we meet one of our most enthusiastic members, Dick van der Wateren. The idea of introducing members to each other via the pages of POSTAL HIMAL was suggested by a similar practice noted in PHILATELY, Vol. 14, January 1987, No. 1.

We are pleased to recognize two Nepalese authors who have presented short articles to this issue: Mr. Madan Bahadur Shrestha and Mr. Ramesh Shrestha. Your editor welcomes all who wish to share their knowledge with our members and he will help by 'improving' the authors' English, since he does not have a thorough knowledge of any other language!

If you bother to read the annual financial statements, you will note that Colin Hepper's statement looks better than mine -- but, since the statements are for one year, ending on 30 April, we can report that my 'negative' balance has been improved substantially since the date of that report. Although our Study Circle does not have a large cash surplus, its financial status is slowly improving. Although we have not made much progress toward the membership goals envisioned by our President, Dr. Pierre Couvreur, we are holding our own when many philatelic organizations are showing declining memberships.

Several of you have commented favorably on the account of four days in the city of Lhasa experienced by your editor and his wife in August 1986. That commentary is finished in this issue.

As always, your editor is seeking for material to publish in future issues of POSTAL HIMAL. So, as summer fades into fall -- at least for those of us who live in the northern hemisphere of our earth, find something to send to your editor.

Lester A. Michel

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING FOR MEMBERS ONLY

One insertion, per line \$1.00

Four insertions, per line 3.50

To calculate the number of lines your advertisement will require, count 39 characters per line, including all letters, numerals, punctuation marks and blank spaces between words. The final line, although it may require less than 39 characters & spaces, is counted as a full line. No charge is made for headings and advertisements will be placed under appropriate headings as needed. See the Classified Ad section in the final pages of any issue of The AMERICAN PHILATELIST for typical ad headings -- or simply send your advertisement, asking the editor to place it under an appropriate heading.

DEADLINES: Ad & payment in USA dollars must reach the editor by the first day of one of the following months -- February, May, August, November -- in order for ad to appear in issues normally mailed about a month after the deadline.

FOR SALE

Available: Nepal's special cancelled covers, postal stationeries, commercial covers, bank notes, etc., etc. Dealers are highly welcome. Kindly contact: Punnya R. Sthapit, GPO Box 1079, KATHMANDU, NEPAL (A Zone of Peace)

WANTED

NEPAL: Classic stamps with telegraph cancels of Birganj & Kathmandu -- also classic stamped covers. Offers w. photocopy & price to D.v.d.Wateren, IJsbaanweg 8-NL8391HZ Noordwolde, Netherlands.

A group is interested in the study of the varieties and 'errors' of 'modern' stamps printed in Nepal. These consist of Scott Nos. 102, C1, 118, 119, 120, 121-123, 125 & 134 (S.G. Nos. 115, 116, 118, 119, 134a, 135-137, 137a & 143). If you would be interested in participating in this study, please write to: J. R. Wright, 8 Windrush Close, Riverdene, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 2BY, England.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING AT INDIA '89

The Secretary of The Nepal Philatelic Society, Mr. Shyam P. Nhuchhe Pradhan, has reported that the Executive Committee has approved 26 January 1989 for an International Meeting of the members of our two Societies. This day is also the National Day of India, and should, therefore, bring the maximum number of members of both Societies to our proposed meeting.

Your editor has received messages from several members of our Study Circle and can report that Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl (Italy), Mr. Dick van der Wateren (Netherlands) and Mr. Richard Hanchett (USA), are planning to attend. And we call attention to the fact that Mr. Shyam P. Nhuchhe Pradhan will be present as the National Commissioner for Nepal. Mr. Frank Vignola has arranged to send one of his fine Nepal exhibits to INDIA '89 via the National Commissioner for USA (West), Lynne S. Warm-Griffiths. Mr. Vignola regrets that he will be unable to attend in person.

Your editor will continue to act as a 'clearing house' of information and asks that all members who plan to attend any part of INDIA '89 (scheduled for 20-29 January 1989) inform us of their plans. Look for a final report in POSTAL HIMAL No. 56, which should reach all members sometime in December 1988. This meeting should be a memorable event for members of both Societies and your presence can make it a 'high point' for yourself and other members of our two philatelic organizations.

HELLRIGL/VIGNOLA HANDBOOK WINS AGAIN

Dr. Hellrigl reports that "The Classic Stamps of Nepal" received its sixth international GOLD medal in a row -- at the world exhibition, FINLANDIA '88 -- held in Helsinki in June.

Last year Dr. Hellrigl was invited to display his entire Nepal collection (comprising the classic and Pashupati issues, postal stationery and India used in Nepal) at the Royal Philatelic Society meeting in London. This opportunity was a rare honour and now Dr. Hellrigl has been awarded the "Tilleard Medal", which is the Royal Philatelic Society's award for the best display of the 1987/1988 season. The medal was presented during the Annual General Meeting of the RPSL. (We can all take pride in the recognition given to Dr. Hellrigl, Frank Vignola and other members of our Study Circle who have helped to make the philately of our area of interest recognized at the highest levels. We extend our congratulations and our thanks to these members -- and especially to Dr. Hellrigl.--Ed.)

STAMP WORLD LONDON 90

The next International Stamp Exhibition to be staged in London will be held in the Alexandra Palace, London's newest and most luxurious exhibition & leisure centre, on 3-13 May 1990. The exhibition has full FIP patronage and will have 3,000 frames of stamps on display, in addition to 200 stands for dealers and postal administrations.

(concluded on page 31)

STAMPS from OVERSEAS

35 Church Hill
Winchmore Hill, London N21 1LN

Specialising in Asia and the unusual



Mail auction catalogues, with a good run of Nepal postal stationery, are in preparation. Study Circle members are invited to apply as early as possible. Your postage will be refunded if you bid successfully.

THE MESSAGE PRINTED POSTAL CARD OF NEPAL

--Ramesh Shrestha

It is customary in many countries for individuals & commercial firms to have their letters or messages printed on various stationeries issued by Postal Administrations.

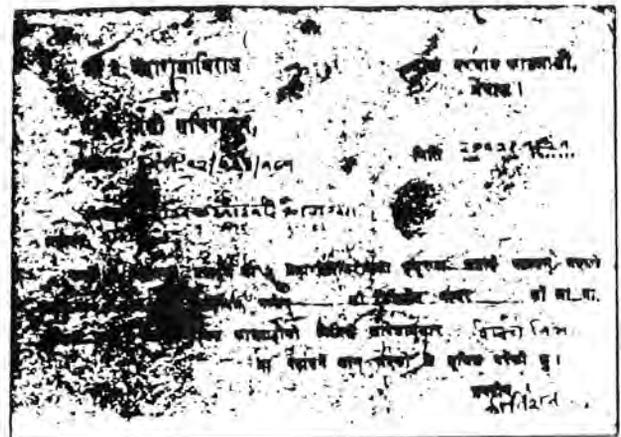
Recently I came across a 2 Pice Postal Card of 1935 with a printed message on the reverse side. This item bears the reply letter from His Majesty's Chief Personnel Secretariat which is translated somewhat as follows:

Snrre	
His Majesty's Chief Personnel Secretariat	Royal Palace, Kathmandu Nepal
Letter No:	Date:
Subject :-	
Dear Sir,	
This is in connection to your request letter on above subject to His Majesty dated _____, Tel No _____, Telegram of _____ have been duly forwarded. This is to inform you by order that the letter have been sent to _____ for necessary action.	
Yours	

Personally, I think that this is the earliest postal stationery with such practice in Nepal. This postal card also bears an additional 2 Pice stamp (Scott #60) and was posted at the Kathmandu GPO on 2012 Jestha 18 B.S., corresponding to 31 May 1956 A.D., approximately. Also note an official circular rubber stamp of His Majesty's Chief Personnel Secretariat. See illustrations (reduced from actual size) of both sides in column at right.

This type of Pashupati postal card was printed at the Gorkha Patra Press and was used from 1935 onward. I have found a few differentiations in this card from Colin Hepper's article in POSTAL HIMAL No. 26 (Summer 1981), titled "The 1935 Issue of the 2 Pice Postcard". Undoubtedly the stamp die used is Type II and the distance from the top of line ending in 'patra' (पत्र) to stamp die is 16½ mm. The length of inscription 'Name & Address Only' (नाम रैजाना प्रक) is 28 mm. The inscription is Type I, i.e., 'tra' (त्रे of मात्र) is horizontal to the top line. The vertical line in the middle is also very thin and the colour of the postal card is dark brown. The quality of the paper (a native paper) is poor and very thin. Finally, one

is poor and very thin. Finally, one major difference is the size which is only 133 mm x 89 mm -- previously unrecorded. Therefore this card can be regarded as one more variety in the 1935 Shiva Mahadeva 2 Pice Postal Card.



Finally, I have a request to make to our members. If anyone has an earlier message printed postal card, please let the editor, or me, know so that further information can be distributed through POSTAL HIMAL.

STAMP WORLD LONDON 90 (concluded)--

The Prospectus of the exhibition will be available early in 1988, and, our Secretary, Mr. Colin Hepper, is already making plans for an International Meeting of the NEPAL & TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE during that event. It would be appropriate to inform Colin of your plans to attend and/or if you plan to enter an exhibit. This will be an outstanding event and all who possibly can should start planning to attend.--Ed.

ARMAND SINGER TALKS ABOUT TIBET AT THE
COLLECTORS CLUB

--Alan Warren

Some of this country's most prestigious collectors have been invited to speak at the Collectors Club of New York. Tibet philately from 1809 to 1962 was the topic presented by the noted Tibet authority, Armand E. Singer, at the Club on 4 May 1988. Armand began by acknowledging the contributions of the Collectors Club member, Harrison D. S. Haverbeck, whose monograph in two editions was one of the major works in this field.

Armand's talk was well illustrated with lovely slides and many of the specific items about which he spoke were also on display in the Club's frames in the same room, where visitors could have a close first hand look at these gems. He began with an 1809 cover bearing the typical red seal and went on to the "shirt" and "scarf" letters of the period. Among several Bailey covers he described was one with a pair of India 1/2-anna stamps with the type-written "Tibet" overprint.

Following some examples of Frontier Commission covers, we saw a complete set of the Chinese overprints in mint blocks of four, plus a complete sheet of the 3 annas on 16c showing the large inverted "S". Chinese-Tibet cancels were plentiful on both cards and covers. The era of Tibet postage stamps was introduced with examples of the Waterlow trial color proofs, and the controversial one trangka yellow color sheet was seen first-hand.

An indication of the depth of Armand's collection was the showing of "kiss" prints and double impressions of the first issue. Another unusual item he pointed out was the use of quadrisepts of the 1933 issue. In one example, 3/4 of a 4 trangka stamp plus a 2 trangka stamp were used to meet the 5 trangka rate. Another beauty was a sheet of the "infamous" 1 sang value with the wavy line cancel.

To witness such a specialist in the field of Tibet talking enthusiastically, and especially with the wry humor which is characteristic of Armand's presentation style, and for over an hour and a half, was about as close as this listener has come to paradise.



NEPAL & TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

Statement of UK Accounts
for year ending 30th April 1988

<u>INCOME</u>	£ P.
Subscriptions	642.00
Bank Interest	188.71
Donations	15.00
Commission on Auctions:	
No. 40	126.83
No. 41	54.83
No. 42	78.39
No. 43	69.73
Commission on Sales of Postmarks book	11.50
Sub-total	£ 1,186.99
Cash at Bank (1987)	453.68
Total	£ 1,640.67

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Postage	40.80
Transfer to L. Michel	390.49
Transfer to R. Skinner	162.33
Stationery	15.37
Auction Invoices	26.98
B.P.F. Subscription	10.00
LONDON '90 donation	50.00
Transfer to 'Extra Interest' Acct	300.00
Room hire, London meeting	15.00
Sub-total	£ 1,010.75
Cash at Bank (1988)	629.92
Total	£ 1,640.67
Amount held in 'Extra Interest' Account	£ 2,300.00

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EDITOR'S ACCOUNT
for year ending 30th April 1988

<u>INCOME</u>	
Transferred from C. Hepper	\$ 577.78
Advertising Income	\$ 45.00
Sub-total	\$ 622.78
Cash at Bank (1987)	(-60.04)
Total	\$ 562.74
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	
Printing on POSTAL HIMAL	
No. 50	\$ 90.00
No. 51	190.00
No. 52	185.00
No. 53	90.00
Collating, folding & stuffing above four issues of PH	100.00
Nepal slide show	40.00
Postage	69.78
Miscellaneous Expenses	45.00
Sub-total	\$ 769.78
Cash at Bank (1988)	(-207.74)
Total	\$ 562.74

INTRODUCING DICK van der WATEREN

(At your editor's request, Dick has provided the following 'story' of his life as a stamp collector. It is hoped that other members will provide the editor with similar 'histories', thus helping our scattered members to get better acquainted with one another.--Ed.)

Born in 1924 and growing up in the 'lean twenties', I collected stamps, beginning as a boy of ten or twelve years old. From my own limited spending money I bought stamps of Norway and so built a small collection of that country. But, in war-time the family was very hungry - especially in the winter of 1944-45 - and so we traded my stamps for butter and eggs.

A somewhat better time came and I built a collection of Luxembourg and of Belgium, but, after several years, my household needed an icebox! You can understand what happened -- I no longer have a Belgium collection! My Luxembourg collection was too nice for selling - being nearly complete - and it is still in my hands.

In March 1983 I made my first trip to Nepal where, at the Kathmandu G.P.O., I bought my first 'modern' stamps. The counter clerk gave me a card of a stamp dealer, so I went to him and found him in his small shop, playing cards with a Nepal specialist from Wiesbaden, Germany. Of course, more Nepal stamps were added to my small stockbook and I became a member of the Nepal Philatelic Society.

Back in Holland I put an advertisement in our stamp monthly, "PHILATELY", and I received the address of Colin Hepper of our Study Circle. Then, in the summer of 1984, I met Colin in Peterborough and saw his Nepal collection. It is needless to say that I was delighted.

My own collection of Nepal has continued to grow and I have found many nice pieces in auctions - sometimes at a very low price. I enjoy receiving letters from all over the world and have a regular correspondence with some of the people who share my collecting interests. In Germany I met Mr. A. Werner and, in Italy, Wolfgang Hellrigl and Erhard Mailänder - and I learned many new facts relating to Nepal philately. Of course, I was with my very good friend, Peter Planken, in London last year and especially enjoyed the Nepal & Tibet displays.

The first time I showed my collection in a regional exhibition I received a VERMEIL award and, some weeks ago in another exhibition, I was again successful and received another VERMEIL award.

I want to thank our Study Circle for the help I have received since joining, and, because of that help, I decided to become a Life Member of the Circle. I thank all my friends in Nepal and elsewhere in the world for their kind and valuable help with my fascinating hobby. I hope to meet with all of them sometime in the future.



Dick van der Wateren



A CORRECTION

Mr. Frank Vignola has pointed out an error in our report of Larry Scott's success in exhibiting -- as reported by your editor on page 16 of POSTAL HIMAL No. 54, 2nd Quarter 1988. Actually, Mr. Scott entered his exhibit in April at NEVPEX '88 in Reno, in conjunction with the annual Spring Meeting of the American Philatelic Society. At that show he received a VERMEIL, plus a special award for the Best Exhibit by a resident of the State of Nevada -- an award not offered at FILATELIC FIESTA 1988, as the earlier report indicated. (We extend our thanks to Frank for bringing the error to our attention and offer an apology to Larry as well.--Ed.)

--Lester A. Michel

(Eleventh in a series of discussions for beginners and intermediate collectors)

TELEGRAPHIC USE OF POSTAL ISSUES:

In the last instalment we completed a discussion of postal stationery. In this article we will consider 'used' postage stamps and analyze the distinctions between postal use and 'telegraphic' use.

Few standard stamp catalogues are helpful in distinguishing between the two types of cancellations and virtually none give illustrations that are useful. Customarily one finds that the two types of usage are distinguished by the statement that "The usual telegraph cancellation is crescent-shaped." We can add that most postal cancellations are circular and show the date on which the postmark was applied, while the telegraph cancels normally bear a fixed date -- the year in which the particular office was opened. Of course, individual stamps rarely bear the entire mark and, since the telegraph cancels were designed and made large enough to cancel four stamps at a time, one is fortunate if the office of origin can be determined from the portion seen on a single stamp. For the moment, we call your attention to Figure 1, on page 35, where examples of the four earliest telegraph cancels are shown cancelling four half anna stamps in each instance, together with drawings of the complete cancellations.

The government of Nepal owns and operates both types of communications systems which, primarily, were established by & for governmental objectives. The postal system did not become available to private citizens until 1879 A.D. However, the 'telegraph' system was available to the public from its inception in 1917 A.D. Although the cost of sending a telegram was relatively high (3 pice per word as compared with the internal letter rate of 4 pice) the speed of delivery of a message was most valuable to Nepalese traders and business men. When private citizens wished to send a 'telegraph' message, the clerk determined the charge which the sender paid and affixed postage stamps to the back of the message form -- stamps representing the charge made. The stamps

were then cancelled and, after sending the message, the clerk filed the form. For the first ten years or so (approximately 1917 to ca. 1930 A.D.) the stamps used for this purpose were what are known as the 'classic' issues ($\frac{1}{2}$, 1, 2 & 4 anna) mostly printed from the old plates that had been 'retired' in 1907, when the first Sri Pashupati stamps were released. As collector's interests grew for 'used' examples of the classic issues and as these message forms with stamps attached were released from office files, these stamps found their way into the hands of local dealers who soaked the stamps off the forms -- the latter being considered worthless.

In most instances 'telegraphic' use generated many more used stamps than did postal use and are, therefore, less valuable. Therefore, a collector of the early issues should learn to distinguish between postal markings and 'telegraph' markings on used stamps. In general, stamps from the later period are less clearly printed and appear on a poorer grade of paper than the earlier postally used stamps. Variations in colors and shades are also helpful.

The Classic Period

One Anna

"The Classic Stamps of Nepal" by Hellrigl & Vignola indicates that only the last of 27 distinct settings includes the 'telegraphic' period of use. Unfortunately, no records of the number of printings or the quantity of each have survived. But we note that the original 1-anna 'plate', first introduced in 1881, shows such severe wear that by 1928 the individual printed stamps were no more than a somewhat rectangular blob of blue ink on a poor grade of paper! Indeed, about this time, a new plate (Plate II) was prepared. The stamps from this plate are readily distinguished, since the new master die embodied some readily observable differences from the original. See Figure 2, on page 35. Since this stamp was used only in the 'telegraph' service, it may be considered as Nepal's first and only telegraph stamp.

Two Annas

Originally printed in purple & violet shades, the 'telegraph' period includes a surprising number of settings with an entertaining array of colors and shades.

(continued on page 36)

Nepal

Map showing the locations of the telephone connections on the "party line" between Kathmandu and Birganj (near the Indian border) which was connected to the telegraph office in Raxaul. Thus tel/tel messages could be sent to the outside world from any one of three locations in Nepal from 1917 onward. A fourth office was opened in 1927 at the Northern terminus of a railroad - the only railroad in Nepal.

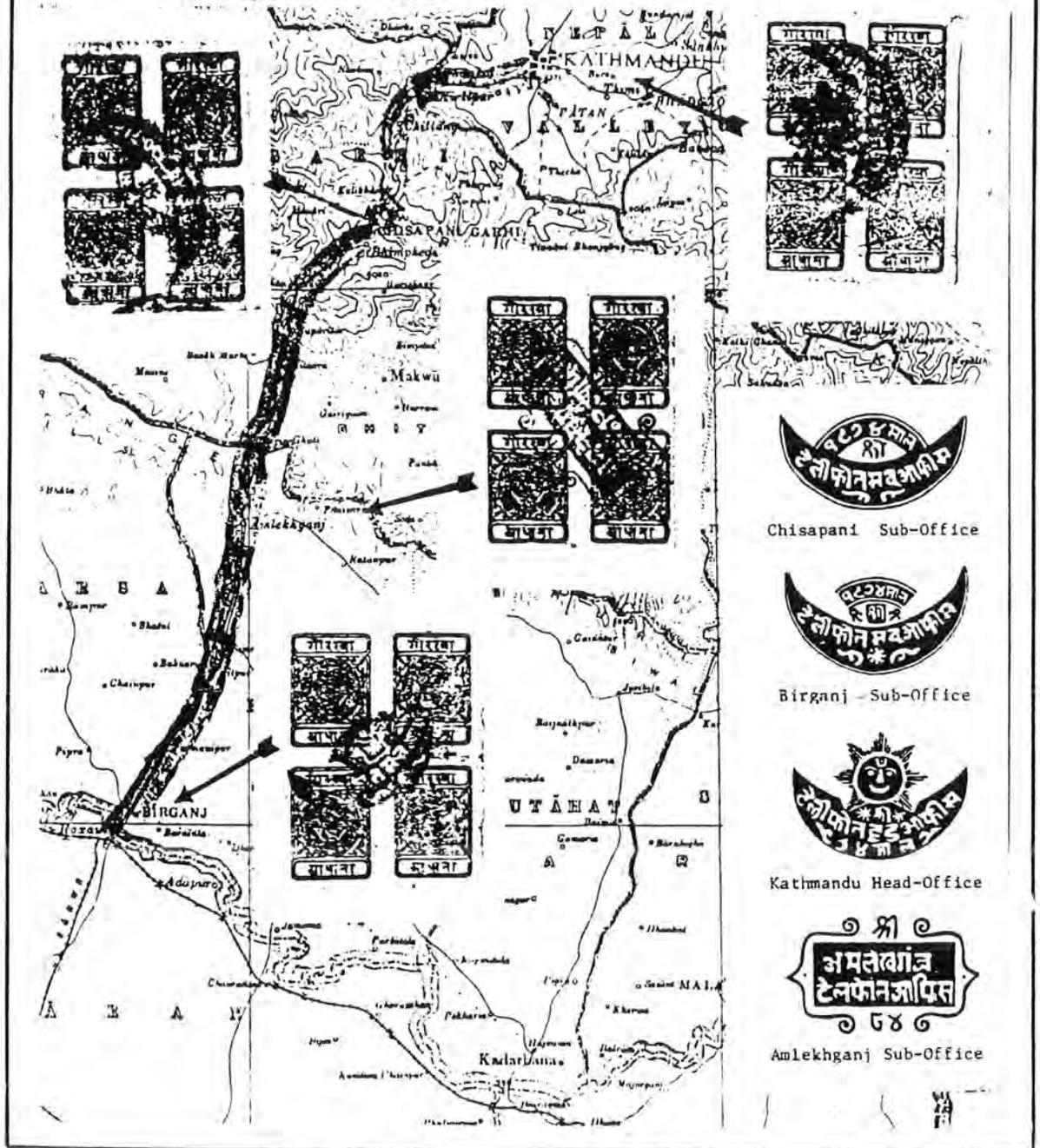
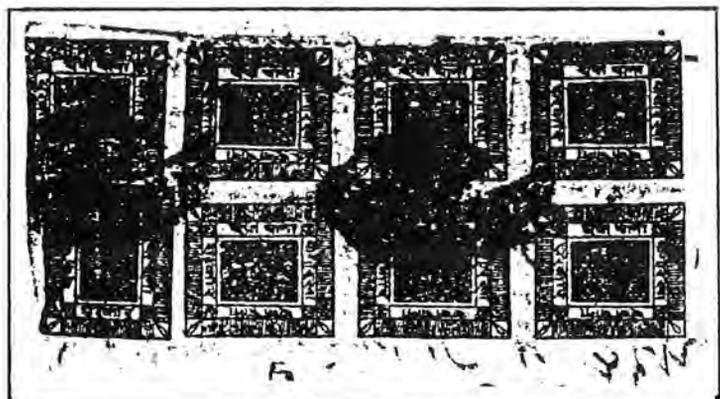


Figure 1 - (above) Refer to article beginning on page 34.

Figure 2 - (right) Eight 1a stamps from Plate II are attached to a piece of tel/tel message form and bearing two strikes of the Birganj cancel. Refer to article beginning on page 34.



Michel, BUILDING..... (continued)--

The last ten settings of the 31 now recognized are definitely assigned to the 'telegraph' period. The Scott catalogue lists only three colors, while Stanley Gibbons lists five. Collectors can identify at least 20 shades of such colors as gray-violet, claret, maroon & brown.

Four Annas

This is the highest denomination issued in the 'classic' period and it was used least during the 'telegraph' period. The eleventh setting is the only one assigned to this use from 1917 to 1929-30 -- all in shades of green.

Half Anna

This denomination, with its unique "Bow & Crossed Kukris" design, was first issued around the turn of the century. It was printed in black throughout its life -- with one exception. The first setting (No. 6) issued for 'telegraph' use was printed in orange-vermilion, creating perhaps the most popular stamp of the entire classic period -- and the most frequently counterfeited! While the beginner will naturally want to fill that 'space' in an album, the cost of doing so will be a deterrent, since so few were printed. Excellent forged copies are often encountered and no complete sheet of this setting is known. Seven additional settings -- all in the common black -- are ascribed to the 'telegraph' period and, since an entire sheet of 64 only cost 32 pice, large multiples and even full sheets, telegraphically used, are not hard to come by and are available at relatively moderate cost.

All of the classic issues are available as tete-beche pairs in telegraphically used condition at considerably lower cost than in postally used condition. Therefore, the collector of these interesting items should learn to recognize the distinctions between telegraph and postal cancellations.

The Sri Pashupati Period

The end of the period of use of the old 'classic' printings for 'telegraph' use, more or less coincided with the appearance of the second set of Sri Pashupati stamps in 1930, when remaining

stocks of the 1907 issue were released for 'telegraph' use. Since these issues were printed in England, the only 1907 stamps turned over to the 'telegraph' service were rather small remainders and these stamps were never reprinted specifically for 'telegraph' use. Therefore, used stamps of the 1907 issue bearing 'telegraph' cancels are not very common. Stamps of this issue which bear postal cancels are readily found, since the issue had a life of some 23 years.

The second set of Sri Pashupati stamps included four additional denominations: 24 & 32 pice, plus 1 & 5 Rupees -- the latter being Nepal's first bi-colored stamp. Neither of the two high values is common in used condition, as they saw little use either in the postal or the 'telegraph' service.

With the advent of another Sri Pashupati issue in 1935, matters become a bit more complex, with overlap in use between postal use and 'telegraph' usage. This fact need not concern us here, but collectors of used stamps may wish to separate postal usage from 'telegraph' use. The writer has found it interesting to collect stamps bearing the unusual cancel of the Amlekhganj office. Portions of that non-crescent-shaped cancel are easy to identify and may be found on the 1930 and 1935 issues. Apparently, this office did not do much business with private citizens. See Figure 1 again (page 35) to refresh your memory of this cancel.

The fourth set of stamps with the Sri Pashupati design is distinguished by the fact that it was printed in Nepal. These stamps are, in a sense, 'photocopies' of the British-printed stamps. The cruder methods of printing and perforating, as well as the use of poorer grades of paper, make most of these stamps fairly easy to distinguish from their British-printed counterparts. Most of these are found postally used and this writer has seen only the lowest denominations (2-, 4- and 8-p) telegraphically used. The old cancelling devices were becoming very worn by this time, so cancels are difficult to recognize. It is easier to find cancels (usually oval in shape) of new offices opened during this period. This usage is not common, however, due to the deterioration of the old telephone lines and, apparently, the early attempts to convert to radio-telephones during World War II -- attempts
(continued on page 37)

Michel, BUILDING.....(concluded)--

which, for the most part, were unsuccessful due to the lack of expertise in the maintenance and repair of the equipment involved. -- We note, however, that the thrifty Nepalese continued to use remainder stocks of British-printed Sri Pashupati stamps throughout the period.

The 'Service' Stamp Period

In 1959 Nepal issued an extensive series of 'Service' stamps and, for a period of about two years, required all government mail, which had formerly been carried without stamps, to bear these stamps. The treatment of 'telegraph' messages was similar. Since the bulk of messages in both these government services was extensive, used stamps, both on cover and on 'telegraph' message forms have become readily available -- at least from dealers in Nepal. These 'back-of-the-book' stamps are not as popular with collectors as postage stamps used by the public, so dealers in the western world are less likely to have them to offer. Nepal terminated the practice rather abruptly in late 1960. Then, just a few years ago, remainder stocks of all these stamps at face value, including several that had never been issued, were offered through the Nepal Philatelic Bureau. Dealers are likely to have stocks of these stamps in mint condition.

In our next issue of POSTAL HIMAL we will discuss Nepal revenue stamps and other 'back-of-the-book' items.

Bibliography:

- Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, 1988 Edition, Vol. 1, Scott Publishing Company, Sidney, Ohio, USA, p. 784 (1987)
- George Alevizos, "Priced Guide to the 1881-1918 Native Issues of Nepal", published privately (1976) -- comments extensively on the distinction between postal and 'telegraphic' usage, uniformly pricing used copies bearing 'telegraph' cancellations much lower than those bearing postal markings.
- Stanley Gibbons Postage Stamp Catalog, 1985 Edition, Southeast Asia Section, Stanley Gibbons, London, England, p. 105 (1985).
- Wolfgang C. Hellrigl & Frank Vignola, "The Classic Stamps of Nepal", published by The Nepal & Tibet Philatelic

Study Circle, Bozen, Italy (May 1984)

Wolfgang Hellrigl & Colin Hepper, "The Native Postmarks of Nepal", published by the Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, Cambridgeshire, England, pp. 56-62 (1978)

Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl, "A Catalogue of Nepalese Postmarks (1879-1935)", First Edition, published by the author (with commentary in German & English), p. 63 (October 1982)

THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL EVEREST EXPEDITION & ITS COMMEMORATIVE ENVELOPE --Madan Bahadur Shrestha

1988 is the Australian Bicentenary Celebration Year. In conjunction with this celebration, the Australian Government organised the Australian Bicentennial Expedition to Mt. Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) under the patronage of Mr. Bob Hawke, the Australian Prime Minister.

This expedition was arranged without the help of Sherpas and was the first attempt on Mt. Sagarmatha without the help of Sherpas. Twenty-six members, including one woman, were led by Austin Brooks (51 yrs.) via the Southeast-Ridge route. The expedition cost approximately \$270,000 in US dollars.

On May 25, Paul Bayne (32 yrs.) reached the summit at 1200 hrs. and Patrick Alexander Cullinan (38 yrs.) made it two hours later. They hoisted the flags of NEPAL and AUSTRALIA atop Mt. Sagarmatha and returned to Camp IV at 2300 hrs. that night.

On May 28, the other member of the team, John Muir (27 yrs.), made the ascent at 1200 hours.

In honour of the success of the Australian Bicentennial Sagarmatha Expedition, the Nepal Philatelic Society issued a commemorative envelope with a logo of the expedition and HMG of Nepal granted a special cancellation. This cancellation is round in shape with "THE AUSTRALIAN BICENTENNIAL EVEREST EXPEDITION - 1988" between two circles. A drawing of Mt. Sagarmatha appears in the centre, above "GPO Kathmandu / June 6, 1988".

Only 150 souvenir covers were issued. Of these, 50 covers were taken by the team members and 25 were taken by the Australian Ambassador Official-staff in Kathmandu. Only 75 covers remained to be sold to the NPS members.

(concluded on page 38) 37



NEWS FROM KATHMANDU

(An article published in THE RISING NEPAL reporting on a reception honoring the team of climbers which carried out the 'cross-traverse' of the world's highest mountain on the 35th anniversary of the first ascent. Our thanks go to Mr. S. L. Shrestha, Nepal Representative for the N&TPSC, for the copy of this article which we quote here.--Ed.)

Kathmandu, May 28 (RSS)

"Nepal Philatelic Society hosted a reception in honour of the China-Japan-Nepal joint Sagarmatha expedition team here Saturday afternoon.

"On the occasion, chife guest and Communications Minister Hari Bahadur Basnet affixed the first cancellation mark on a commemorative envelope.

"Speaking on the occasion Minister Basnet said the success of the climbers of the China, Japan and Nepal joint expedition in cross-traversing the world's highest mountain, Sagarmatha, is not only a joy for the climbers and the people of Nepal, China and Japan but, to the world as a whole.

"The feat, coincidentally marks the thirty fifth anniversary of the first climb of Sagarmatha, he said, adding if in 1953 with the success of human beings on Sagarmatha, a mountaineering history was written, today, the joint expedition has added yet another chapter by achieving the unique feat of cross-traversing the peak simultaneously from the southern and northern sides of the giant peak.

"Remarking that the success also marked several first feats on Sagarmatha, he said the expedition put the highest number of climbers atop the summit at one occasion and the live telecast of the climb, also the first successful attempt ever made is yet another highly commendable record.

"The success of this expedition is the tale of the indomitable human spirit and coordinated work so well put up by all climbers and members of the joint expe-

dition team.

"Pointing out that His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev Friday awarded orders to different persons of Nepal, China and Japan on the occasion of the success of the expedition, he said this gesture from our august Sovereign is a token of our appreciation of the achievement and work put up by the expedition.

"During the function at which Nepal Mountaineering Association President Kumar Khadga Bikram Shaha was also present, mountaineers Noburo Yamada and Sungdare Sherpa who have climbed Sagarmatha five times, spoke of their experiences." (Your editor has quoted the article exactly, without any changes, so that the sense of pride and achievement is so clearly shown. We congratulate the officers and members of the Nepal Philatelic Society for their part in helping their government to mark the momentous occasion with the issue of this unusual item of Nepal postal stationery, and for hosting the reception.--Ed.)



M. B. Shrestha, AUSTRALIAN BI.....(concluded)--

The Australian Government also issued a stamped envelope (37 c.) in multicolor in honour of the Australian Bicentennial Everest Expedition on April 13 - 26, '88. The Nepal Philatelic Society added one stamp (Mt. Everest Rs. 3) and cancelled the stamp with the special cancellation mentioned above. In the history of Nepalese philately, this combination cover added a new chapter. Only 63 covers were prepared. Both types of covers were signed by the leader, Austin Brooks, and the three Summitters, Paul Bayne, Patrick Alexander Cullinan & John Muir.

(Unfortunately, the limitations of space prevent us from illustrating these two unusual collectors items. Readers interested in prices and other information should write to the author, Mr. Madan P. Shrestha, 14/518 Dhoka Tole, Kathmandu, NEPAL.--Ed.)



Michel, VISIT TO LHASA....(continued)--

Our last full day took us to the Potala -- a visit that we had all been anticipating. However, I had not yet been to the post office and had several cards which I wished to mail. So, before the bus was to leave (9 AM), a friend, Marshall Welch, and I walked briskly East on Xingfu Xi Lu Street, past the 'portable shops' of cobblers and other tradesmen; past the store fronts of the Tibetan community, until we reached the post office. Marshall was more interested in the temporary 'shops' being set up across the street in an open area, so we parted for a brief time -- I had to visit the post office. The post office is on the North side of the street and the morning sun lighted up the front well. I took a couple of pictures before going inside the somewhat cavernous building. As I entered, I first noted a lady seated at a desk on my left. As I approached the counter, I noted a sign on the wall behind the seated clerk proclaiming, in English, "Commemorative Stamps." After noting the grimy & curled appearance of singles and blocks laid out on the desk in front of this lady, I lost interest in trying to acquire any, knowing that they were all Chinese stamps anyway -- stamps I had already acquired in pristine condition at various hotel post offices in the cities we had already visited.

To my right, and in front of me, was a long L-shaped counter, behind which sat a lady equipped with a cancelling device and a mailbag. I wanted to take a picture of the cancelling process & handed her my cards. As I raised my camera, she apparently thought I was trying to take a picture of her, and she reacted quite negatively -- jumping up from her seat, running to a far corner of the area behind the counter and gesticulating wildly with her hands. Her meaning was quite clear, but she did not understand my English and I am no master of either Chinese or Tibetan. She finally came back to her seat and cancelled my cards quickly before putting them in a small mail bag, approximately 12-14 inches wide and, perhaps, 20-24 inches long. I finally coaxed her into holding the bag at arm's length while I took a picture of it -- a picture which included only her hand! -- I

had the distinct impression that my handfull of cards represented a fairly large fraction of the outgoing mail on that day, if that was the only bag used. Interestingly, the service was nothing short of spectacular. Frank Vignola later reported that he received his card (in San Francisco) five days after the postmark date. Armand Singer (in West Virginia) reported receipt in seven days -- not bad, considering the length of the trip.

Of course, the Potala, which is one of the wonders of the world, was not to be missed, so Marshall and I hiked rapidly back to the hotel, so as not to miss our bus. Instead of entering at the base of the front of this huge structure, our bus took us up a walled road at the West end of Red Hill, upon which the Potala has been built. The road is so narrow that it is barely wide enough for a bus to negotiate and turnouts at the hair-pin curves were the only places where vehicles could pass. It took awhile for the several buses and autos, taking turns going up to the point where passengers could be discharged, as there was no room for more than one vehicle at a time at that point. -- Our guide book states, among other things, that: "This architectural wonder of the world rises more than 1,000 feet above the valley floor and can be seen in all directions for miles around.

"A stronghold probably existed on Red Hill as early as the 7th century A.D. when King Songtsen Gampo built a fortress on it for his two foreign wives. He is reputed to have studied the Buddhist scriptures there after his conversion from the Bon faith. Fires, lightning and wars took their toll, yet 1,000 years later, two of the original rooms remained."

We had the privilege of spending several minutes in these two small rooms deep within the present Potala -- a privilege that future visitors may well be denied as their numbers increase. We found it to be rather crowded that day, with only one door at the end of a narrow, crooked hallway as the only entrance and the only exit as well. The two rooms were not only small, but furnished in rather spartan fashion compared to the rich furnishings in the living quarters of the most recent Dalai Lamas. One room was, essentially, a kitchen, while the other was, simply, a bedroom.

Michel, VISIT TO LHASA....(continued)--

The Potala consists of 3 sections, essentially -- a White palace and a Red palace, with a smaller Yellow palace in between. The word 'palace' is used by the Chinese and the Tibetans with a somewhat different meaning than we might use. The White 'palace' portion of the unified structure contains living quarters, offices, the seminary and the printing 'house.' The Red 'palace' was the home of the religious activities. It contains gold stupas, or the tombs of eight of the Dalai Lamas, the monks Assembly Hall, numerous chapels & shrines, and libraries for the Buddhist scriptures. The Yellow portion, between the two mentioned, houses giant banners embroidered with holy symbols which were hung across the front (South face) of the Potala during New Year festivals.

There are some 13 storeys and the entire construction is more than 1,300 feet long (East to West) & about 1,150 across (North to South). The walls are said to be more than 16 feet thick at the base. Much of the building material came from a pit behind the Potala -- a hole which was later turned into a lake.

One climbs countless sets of stairs to reach the roof, but the climb is well worth it, simply for the views in all directions, if nothing else. Taken as a whole, it is a stupendous piece of construction. Our reference states: "Today the Potala is a state museum with 35 caretaker monks, but to many thousands of Tibetan pilgrims it remains a beloved shrine."

The Chinese claim to have spent at least \$3,000,000 shoring up and repairing sagging portions of the enormous structure during the past 10 years or so. In any case, an entire book could easily be written about this remarkable building, its history and its many features.

From one side of the roof, a good view of Chokpori (Iron Hill) can be had. One of four holy mountains in this area, it used to be the site of a famous 17th century monastic medical school. However, it was completely demolished when the Red Guards used it for target practice and, today, a tall radio & TV antenna juts from the barren summit.

After a long morning at the Potala, and after the usual lunch at the hotel, we were driven to the plaza in front of the Jokhang -- the site of our first day's visit. This time, however, our

group was turned loose to explore the local market, just to the North of the Jokhang. The variety of goods being sold there, as well as the variety of activity, simply boggles the mind, while the senses are assaulted with sounds, sights and smells that make one feel that he must be on another planet!

As always, the people were both varied and fascinating. Martha & I noted one fellow, dressed in country clothes which were worn threadbare, fingering a sheer, 'hot pink' blouse, with an expression of wonder mixed with pleasure on his rough countenance. He acted as though he were interested in buying the item, but finally departed without it -- probably as stupefied by the sight and feel of a piece of clothing so far from his experience as I was!! -- The meat market, with pieces of meat, including visceral parts, and a dog nearby, chewing on a bone, was worth a picture -- all laid out on a well-used piece of cloth at the edge of the street. And the yak cheese in a stall that had evidently been located there for countless years, was notable, not only for the odor, but also for the oily condition of the ground underlying the area. Later we noted a sidewalk watch-repair shop -- one which could probably have used a small drawer full of old watches and parts which I have at home.

Dinner that evening was a change -- a buffet-style affair, where one could pick and choose among a much greater variety of dishes (including western-style ones) than we had been used to. I particularly enjoyed some of the rolls, as bread had been noticeably absent from our usual fare. And, we learned later, the meat which we had been eating (yak meat) was the same meat, ground up, of course, used to make 'hamburgers' in the coffee shop -- a place that some of our group had found and had been patronizing, rather than eat the normal fare at the round tables in the banquet hall. Several had mentioned the great 'hamburgers' they had found in the coffee shop -- much to our amusement. Actually, I found the yak meat very similar to the 'buffalo' (American bison) meat that I first became acquainted with as a boy, growing up in the sandhills of Nebraska. The meat was course, a bit tough, and with a similar 'gamey' flavor.

Martha and I had arrived for that dinner a little earlier than usual and Martha had struck up a conversation with a lady from Singapore. From her Martha learned about

Michel, VISIT TO LHASA....(continued)--

an unannounced performance by a local group of artists--musicians, actors, entertainers--that very evening. It turned out that a new manager for the hotel -- an experienced hotel man from Switzerland -- had arrived just a few days before we did and was trying out some ideas of his own, in an attempt to make a visit more attractive to tourists. The new Singapore friend told us that this would be a program which we should not miss, so, having a bit of time, Martha and I ran around trying to locate as many of our group as possible and telling them what we had learned.

As for ourselves, we took chairs on the front row, immediately after eating dinner, and were glad that we did, as the flat floor of the large room did not provide good viewing for those farther back in the room. We had a close-up view of the dancers, the five-man musical group, the pantomime routines, etc., etc. -- all very colorful and interesting, though we could understand nothing that was said. Some of the program was quite humorous, as we could see, but the talk of the actors certainly added to the humor, judging from the response of the local people who had crowded into the back of the room to view the performances. Although the performers were not as gaudily dressed as those we had seen on stage in the fine arts auditorium across the street a couple of evenings earlier, we had the distinct feeling that we had witnessed a truly typical Tibetan show. I can still see, in my 'mind's eye,' the two 'yaks' cavorting in front of us. Each yak suit was occupied by two people, who put on such an acrobatic exhibition -- and at 12,000 feet above sea level -- that they must have been exhausted when they had finished!

Before going to bed that night, we had to put our luggage in the hall for pick-up, as, evidently, the luggage would be transported back to the airstrip by a slow truck! Having done that, we slept soundly until it was time to arise and go to a very early breakfast, well before daylight. Our breakfast was to be served in a small area near one of the kitchens -- an area I suspect was usually reserved for the people who worked there. We were having trouble finding our way, with no one around to

ask, when we spotted our American guide, Dominic Quan, who turned out to be just as lost as we were! By trial and error we finally found the kitchen and were soon ushered into the room almost fully occupied by the rest of our group -- and enjoyed a typical American-style breakfast, with bacon & eggs, waffles, fruit juices, cereal with milk, etc. I 'dug in' wondering only briefly how much such a breakfast actually cost -- in far off Tibet at 12,000 feet above sea level.

We were on our bus well before daylight and the group was unusually quiet, each person deep in his own thoughts, as we began the 1½ hour ride to the air strip. As we drove along, an occasional dim light would be seen and, as it began to grow lighter, we noticed the country people walking along the roadway, heading for the city, probably, or to work in a field somewhere. -- After a time, we crossed the long bridge across the river and, eventually, reached the air strip (I still cannot refer to it as an airport). There we elected to stay outside the one crowded building and let our guides take care of tickets, etc. As we visited with each other in the crisp, clear morning air, we noticed an attractive young Tibetan woman standing near one of the buses, while carrying a large metal can, something like the old milk cans we used on the farm years ago, but filled with water--some 10 to 12 gallons of it, I would judge. In a few moments the cameras were clicking and the woman was happily accepting the coins that were offered her. She had learned that coming to a nearby well at, or near, plane departure and arrival times, made her trip more worthwhile!

Finally, our plane was ready for us and we enjoyed the walk to it, as we knew we were getting our last views of this interesting valley. Again I was lucky to get a window seat and managed to get a few more shots of icy peaks sticking their summits up through the cloud layer that we were above for most of our trip back to Chengdu. Our four days in Lhasa were behind us now, but we had pictures and memories to last a lifetime.

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INDRA JATRA: FESTIVAL OF RAIN

--Dhurba K. Deep (writing in "The Rising Nepal," an English daily newspaper, printed in Kathmandu)

The Indrajatra festival began this week when a fifty feet long decorated pine pole, locally known as "Lingo" (also regarded as the victory banner of Lord Indra, the God of Heaven), was erected amidst a colourful religious function. Attended by the royal priests and government officials in a huge public gathering at the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square in Kathmandu city, this auspicious day marks the beginning of the Indra Jatra Festival.

This week long festival is celebrated by the entire Nepalese people in one form or another throughout the Kingdom of Nepal.

Some of the interesting aspects of this festival are the erecting of several small ceremonial poles displaying the statues of Indra-like Bhairave, the God of Space, and the staging of the traditional devil and deity dances, followed by fabulous feasts and festive revelry.

The third day of the festival today, is the most important day. It is today that the chariot festival of Kumari (the living Goddess), Bhairava and Ganesha, takes place. (Mr. Dhruva Rudra, who sent us this article points out that a stamp was issued under the 'Visit Nepal' series on 16 December 1975, depicting the living goddess 'KUMARI.') According to the time-honoured tradition, His Majesty the King, along with Her Majesty, the Queen, grace the occasion. The Gaddibaithak Hall in the heart of Kathmandu is fully packed with distinguished guests, diplomats and higher government officials. The beginning of the chariot festival is at the Basantpur Square, which is right across from the famed temple of the living Goddess and the time for this ceremonial function is some time around mid-afternoon. However it all depends upon the ritual performance of the big puja that takes place in the Kumari temple on this day.

GREAT GIVER:

Indra is honoured in Nepal more as a god of rain and foodgrain than in any other form. In the Rigveda there are many supporting references to his being a great giver of rain and foodgrain. The Veda speaks about his bravely beheading several demons like

Vritra, Urna, Shusna and so forth. Symbolically speaking, these demons are the ones responsible for drought and excessive rain and so forth, which often threatened people whose only way of livelihood then, as now, was agriculture. Looked at from a historical point of view, this festival appears to be very old and closely associated with the agricultural life of people.

The Bhavishya Purana contains a description of this festival. The Mahabharata also speaks very highly about the significance of this Jatra, where this Chediraj Vasu was the first king to introduce this festival for public celebration. This great epic has made the mention of all those kings who celebrated this festival with great feeling and faith. It is also written in the same text that leaders who maintain the tradition of celebrating this festival will be lucky enough to see the powerful rivers of milk and honey flowing incessantly throughout their land.

INDRA'S BANNER:

The Bhavishya Purana says that the ceremonial pole which is erected on the first day of this festival should be divided into several segments, or "puras." It must be remembered here that the word pura which is used above in the sense of segment is also used to signify a city-state. It is quite interesting to note that one of the very old Vedic names of Indra is Purandara which means a great destroyer of city-states. Most probably those small city-states were all ruled by non-Aryan kings or Dravidian chiefs. In the Vedas the valiant fighter king Indra is said to have 99 hands, which he used in destroying several enemy states. However, it is said that Indra was able to work out his ambitious plan to conquer those states only after he had received a great victory banner from Lord Vishnu. This is the reason why Nepalese have so much respect for this Indra "Dhoja" (banner) which they believe symbolises unity, strength and peace.

The 50p stamp of the 1975 'Visit Nepal' series, depicts KUMARI, the living goddess (Scott No. 310) & is illustrated here.

