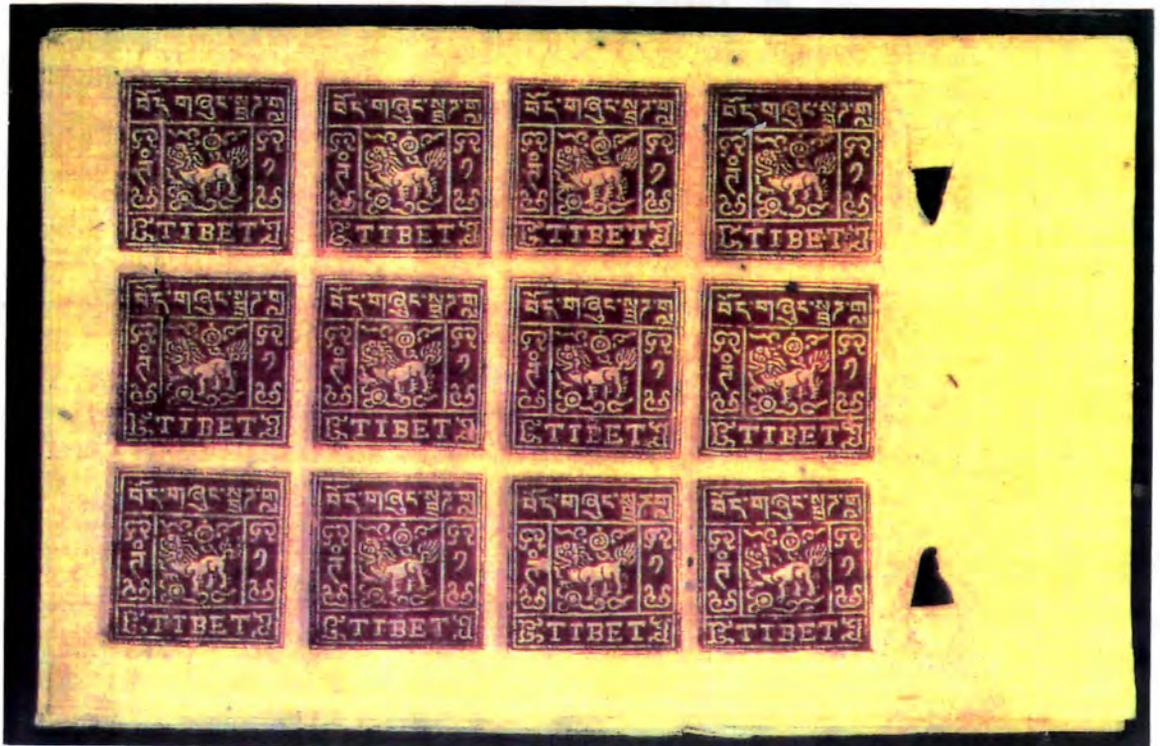


POSTAL HIMAL

QUARTERLY OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET

PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



TIBETAN BOOKLETS FOUND

No. 74

2nd Quarter 1993



Postal Himal is a quarterly publication of the Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle. Membership subscriptions run from January through December of each year. Dues should be paid in local currency at the prevailing exchange rate to the society representative in your area.

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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 74 letters, numerals, punctuation marks and blank spaces between words. Ads will be placed under appropriate headings without charge for the headings, or simply send your own ad, asking the editor to place it under an appropriate heading (at no extra cost).

DEADLINE: Ad and payment in USA dollar (or in mint USA postage stamps) 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 issue mailed about one month later. Any change of copy after the first insertion will be counted as a new advertisement.

FOR SALE: TIBETAN STAMPS AND POSTAL HISTORY. I currently have a large stock of quality material from all periods. I would be glad to send you a selection tailored to your specific needs. Want lists invited. I also have a list of out-of-print books and articles on Tibetan philately for which I can provide photocopies. This will be sent to anyone requesting it. George Bourke, P.O. Box 1174, Jackson, Mi., 49201, U.S.A.

WANTED: Tibetan Local Post Stamps and Postal History from 1912 - 1960. Single stamps, multiples, sheets, covers and proofs. I am willing to pay good prices and or exchange other Tibet material of all periods, Nepal stamps (Pashupati and Gorkha Patra Press issues) or quality stamps of the whole world. Write to: Rainer Fuchs, Am Burkardstuhl 31, 8702 Himmelstadt, Germany.

WANTED: NEPAL FDCs, Folders, Gurkha Patra Press imperfs., classical issues, covers 1900-1960. Please ask for want-list. Heinz Schobel, Hornerstr. 1, D-2800 Bremen 1, Germany.

WANTED: CLASSIC AND PASHUPATI COVERS FROM Nepal. I will purchase and or trade better stamps and covers. Also wanted, better or unusual Nepalese covers from the 1950's and 1960's. Leo Martyn, P.O. Box 49263, Los Angeles, CA, 90049-0263, USA.

* * * * *

FOR SALE AND/OR TRADE

1. One anna, wove paper, pin-perf, rare deep blue color (H/V 1a), MINT BLOCK OF FOUR, some perfs missing on one stamp, lightly hinged, full original brown gum, V.F., VERY RARE MULTIPLE. \$1600.
2. Four anna, wove paper, pin-perf (H/V 3), MINT BLOCK OF SIX - positions 1-3, 9-11, most likely second largest multiple known, two stamps lightly hinged, others never hinged, full original brown gum, EXTREMELY RARE MULTIPLE, 3mm perf separation between two stamps, V.F. \$2900.
3. Four anna, wove paper, pin-perf (H/V 3a), mint horizontal strip of three, ironed out crease - fine appearance, one stamp never hinged - others lightly hinged, full original brown gum. \$600.
4. Four anna, wove paper, imperf (H/V 6), MINT - BLOCK OF SIX, BLOCK OF FOUR, VERTICAL STRIP OF FIVE - FORMERLY ONE BLOCK OF FIFTEEN (positions 17-19, 25-27, 33-35, 41-43, 49-51), two stamps faint crease, others V.F., EXTREMELY RARE MULTIPLES. \$4700.

Payments can be made in installments and invitations of trades are welcomed. Photocopies for the asking. Leo Martyn, P.O. Box 49263, Los Angeles, CA 90049-0263, U.S.A. FAX 310 476 2608. Other rare stamps available.

EDITORIAL

Leo Martyn

Standing (left to right): Bill Janson, Roger Skinner, Vernon Richards, Alfonso Zulueta Jr., Frank E. Vignola, Frank J. Vignola, Frealon Bibbins, Leo Martyn.



Seated (left to right): William McConnell, Geoffrey Flack, Armand Singer, Larry Scott, Sidhartha Tuladhar.

No, the above are not former residents of Alcatraz prison, but Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle members who attended the first meeting at our yearly gathering in San Francisco in April. Many thanks to Bill Janson for the photo. Next year's gathering will take place on April 29 to May 1, at the Quality Hotel and Conference Center, Van Ness and Geary streets. We will have two meetings with speakers and a slide show or two. Exhibitors interested in obtaining a prospectus should write to Steve Schumann, 2417 Cabrillo Drive, Hayward, CA 94545.

Next year we have the opportunity to have an international society meeting in Washington, D.C. ("Napex '94"), June 24-26. The show will take place at the Sheraton National Hotel, 900 South Ohme St., Arlington, VA, 22204, phone 703/521-1900, FAX 703/521-2122. I think we will have two meetings with presentations, also a certain number of exhibition frames. Armand Singer is our contact with the show officials and will give further details here when available. For a prospectus, write to Michael Dixon, P.O. Box 7474, McLean, VA, 22106-7474. It should be an exciting event since

the North American Unit of the Indian Study Circle will also be a participating society with meetings and exhibits.

* * * * *

The distinguished philatelist Henry Garratt-Adams passed away in 1991. In April, Christie's Robson Lowe auctioned off his substantial collections of Nepal and Tibet (see "Auction Action" in this issue). He was an early scholar of Nepalese philately, and probably was the first to do a serious study of the 1941-1946 Pashupati issue (see "War-Time Issues of Nepal, 1941-1946", The Philatelic Journal of Great Britain, July-Sep. 1947, pp. 57-60). He also had studies published of Nepal's ½ anna, in addition to other articles dealing with the classic issues of Nepal and Tibet. Earlier in the year Christies auctioned off Garratt-Adams' fine collection of Indian States.

* * * * *

Please note that in the last issue (#73, p. 18) when preparing Krishna Raj-Bhandari's article, "Seals of Mals" (Revenue Offices)", I mistakenly labled the ILAM seal as GULMI and the GULMI seal as ILAM - please correct your issue.

* * * * *

We are sad to learn from Surrendra Lal Shrestha that Mr. Madan Bahadur Shrestha, Secretary of the Nepal Philatelic Society, passed away on Mar. 1 of this year.

* * * * *

Michael Rogers, in his regular "Asia" column in Linn's Stamp News, presented an article on the 1924 Mount Everest Expedition local label in the August 23 issue.

* * * * *

A new society named the "Fakes and Forgeries Study Group" came into existence in March of this year. It was "formed in order to provide a single location for the sharing, compilation and discussion of information regarding the entire range of non-genuine world-wide philatelic material" quoted from issue No.1 - Statement of Purpose).

Dues are: U.S.A. - \$10; Canada, Mexico - \$11; South America - \$13; Europe - \$14; Africa, Asia, Pacific Rim - \$16. For membership or additional information contact Mary Gerew, 3401 Brockport-Spencerport Road, Spencerport, N.Y., 14559, U.S.A.

* * * * *

It has been three years since our last Membership List was issued. Is anyone interested in having a current list published, possibly indicating one's collecting interests? If so, contact me, Roger Skinner or Colin Hepper.

* * * * *

I just received George Alevizos' October 21 "Totally Topical" Mail Sale catalogue. Listed are 60 lots of Bhutan (no items earlier than 1962) including essays, proofs, one hand painted essay, and 26 covers, including 20 F.D.C.s prepared in Bhutan - listed as being scarce.

* * * * *

CORRECTIONS

Please notify the editor of any significant errors so that corrections can be printed.

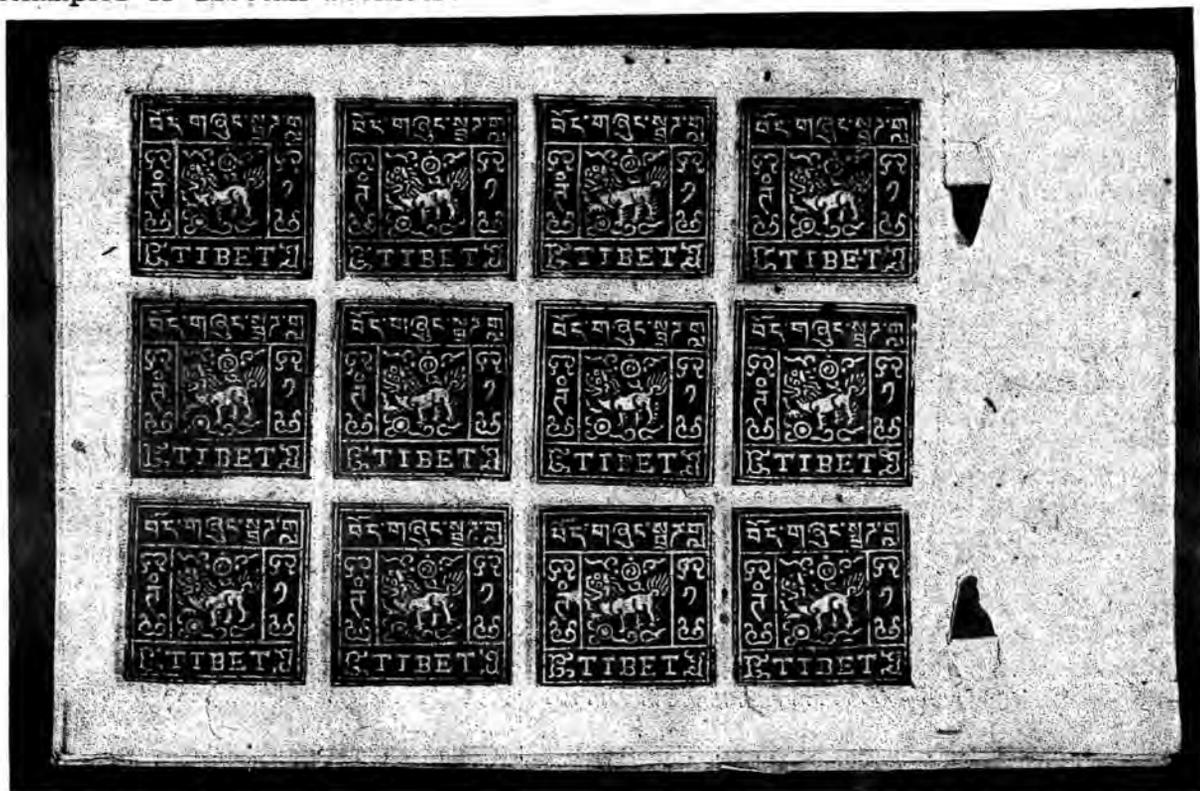
* * * * *

TIBETAN BOOKLETS FOUND

Geoffrey Flack

The only known booklet of Tibetan Stamps was unfortunately broken up in the 1950s.

In July of this year, on a trip to Nepal, I purchased two complete booklets of the 1933 Issue of Tibet. Each booklet consisted of 5 perforated sheets of the 1 Trangka value tied together by two paper staples. The two were discovered in Sikkim in 1990 and are believed to be the only existing examples of Tibetan booklets.



A Complete Booklet of the 1tr Value (5 Sheets)

The booklets were not mentioned by Waterfall or Haverbeck and very little is known about them. In an article entitled "*Of Sewing Machines, Perforations, and Other Kindred Tibetan Matters*" (American Philatelist, April 1986) Dr. Armand Singer made an excellent case for a "sewing machine" (no doubt a 'Singer') being used to perforate the earliest printings of the 1933 Issue of

Tibet. It is in this article he mentioned having once owned a booklet or "packet of six or more sheets" of the 1/2tr value perforated. (Both of my booklets consist of 5 sheets .. and Dr. Singer has recently stated that it is possible his 1/2tr booklet may have also contained 5 sheets.) In the article Dr. Singer went on to say "I sold several of the sheets after untying them from the stack." The rarity and demand for perforated sheets may explain why Dr. Singer's booklet was broken up, but unfortunately this was the only example of a booklet that seems to have been recorded.

Nick Rhodes, in his excellent article on the Williamson Collection (Postal Himal #36, 1983), described how the booklets were made. Though the Williamson collection contained several perforated sheets it did not actually contain a booklet. That said, Mr. Rhodes' accurately described the booklets. He went into some detail on how the "V" shaped paper staples were used "for fastening the sheets into little booklets". Rhodes suggested the booklets contained 5 sheets, but I don't believe he had actually seen a complete booklet. It has been more than 60 years since these stamps were printed and with the exception of these two articles there doesn't seem to be any other reference to them. In this same 60 years Armand's 1/2tr booklet (broken up in the 1950s) seems to have been the only recorded example.



Paper Staple in the top right corner of the booklet

A study of the two booklets, in my possession, show the sheets were "stapled" together prior to perforating (using two paper staples in the right margin). In the case of both booklets the "paper staples" point away from the top and bottom edges ... (this seems to be consistent with all the perforated sheets .. the exception being an example of the 4tr mentioned by Rhodes.) The perforating was done from above .. the holes becoming larger on the lower sheets. Both booklets show evidence of additional

pinholes in the top left corner of cliché 1 and the bottom left corner of cliché 9 these pinholes exist on all 5 sheets of each booklet. In all likelihood a needle and thread was passed through the sheets to help align them before perforating. (Similar holes can be found in the corners on other examples of the perforated stamps ... but they are not always restricted to the top and bottom left corners.) Both of these booklets are well aligned and seem to have been very carefully perforated .. however keeping the perforations within the margins was almost impossible except on the top sheet. (Only 41 of the 120 stamps found in the two booklets are 4 margin copies. The design is cut into on 1 or more sides on the other 79 stamps.)

Both booklets are printed in Carmine-Lake (Waterfall #141). This is believed to be the earliest printing (circa 1933-34), but some flaws have started to appear. 1) Cliché 1 .. the dot to the right of the Yin-Yang is attached to the circle 2) Cliché 7 .. early stages of damage to the top loop of the "B" 3) Cliché 11 .. early stages of a progressive flaw on the third Tibetan character in the top panel and the right hook under the lion has closed. The paper used is thin, high quality, white native paper. The sheets are all 9.5 x 15cm and were in all likelihood cut to size after being stapled together. (Had they been cut prior to printing .. as suggested by Rhodes ...it is unlikely, if not impossible, for the stamps to be so well aligned.)

Perforated sheets of all five values can be found with paper staples in the right margin ... leading me to believe that booklets of all five values existed at one time. That said, not all perforated sheets came from booklets as some perforated sheets have been found without these paper staples.

I'm quite sure the general catalogues are not ready to list a Tibetan booklet, but they did exist and do exist and are surely one of the rarest stamp items of Tibet.

[Ed. Dr. Singer's article, "Of Sewing Machines, Perforations, and Other Kindred Tibetan Matters", will be reprinted in the next issue of the Postal Himal.]

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[Ed. The following article appeared in the Civil Censorship Study Group's quarterly, Bulletin, of July, 1993 (Vol. 20, No. 3). Konrad Morenweiser, one of the editors of the Bulletin also authored a very fine handbook and catalogue titled Zivilzensur in British Inden 1939-1945. This informative book contains some information regarding censored covers of Nepal and Tibet.]

CENSOR MARKS FROM INDIA: FORGED OR GENUINE?

Konrad Morenweiser

World War Two : Censor Marks from India : Forged or Genuine?

by Konrad Morenweiser

Index 3D1-6

Material sent in by Manohar Lal, Andrew Norris and Karl Winkelmann.

Passed by Censor.

~~1937 1943~~

A

B

- A. The above censor handstamp appears on three covers (Manohar Lal) from Nepal to Bundi State. The sender is "Commanding General Mohun Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, Nepal" and the addressee "Srimati Majee Sahiba of Bundi" (Queen Mother of Bundi State). The dates of the covers are

१९३७.०८.२५

(25.8.1937)

19.9.1943

३०.१२.१९४३

(30.12.1943)

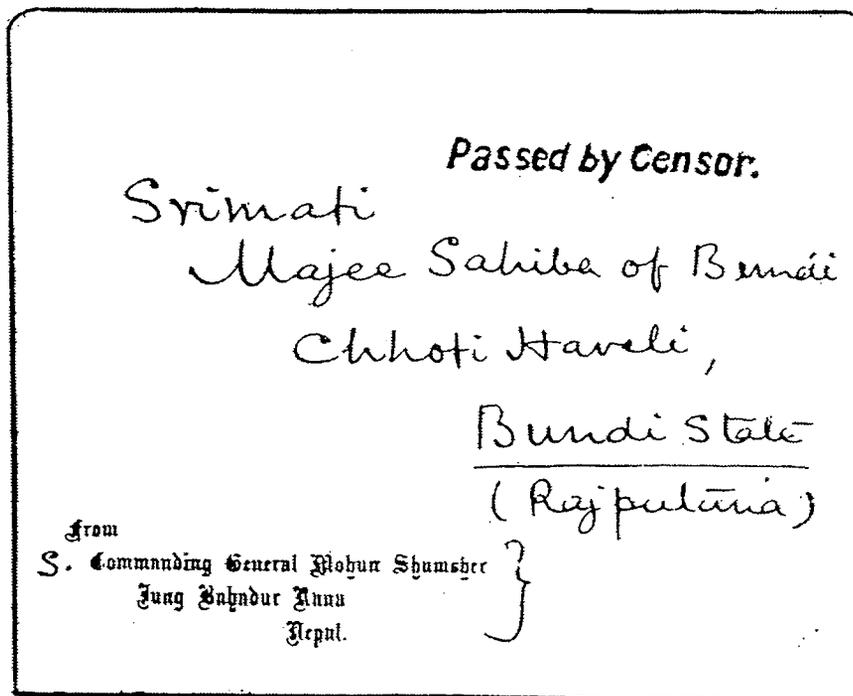
From the same intensity of ink of "Passed by Censor" and no sign of wear and tear within six years of use we can assume that they were applied at the same time.

And there was no reason for censorship in 1937.

Story given by the dealer in Calcutta for censorship:

"Mail of High Dignitaries of Nepal to other High Dignitaries of Indian Feudatory States was subject to censorship by British Authorities. This censormark is not to be found on ordinary citizen mails coming from Nepal to India or vice versa".

A fourth cover (Andrew Norris) from India to Penang with exactly the same handstamp proves this censormark clearly a FORGERY, because it was cancelled July 1910.



30.12.1943 From Nepal to India with forged censor handstamp.

- P. Two other covers (Karl Winkelmann) in exactly the same handwriting to the same address but without return address show a censor handstamp in Hindi (or Nepali?), meaning "Fassed by Censor".

जाय बाटे खुलेको
Sriemati
Majee Sahiba of Bunde.
Chhoti Haveli.
Bundi State
P. O. Bunde.
W. K. Winkelmann

On the first item
the date is
illegible

but the second is
from Nepal with
arrival mark Bunde
OCT 1946.

Were any censor-
stations still
working at this
time?

जाय बाटे खुलेको
Sriemati
Majee Sahiba of Bunde,
Chhoti Haveli
P. O. Bunde
Bundi State
(Rajputana)



Most likely a
FORGED
censormark!

AUCTION ACTION

Leo Martyn

On April 22, Christie's Robson Lowe auctioned off Henry Garratt-Adams' Nepal and Tibet collections. Many complete sheets from both countries were offered, much of which probably had been in Garratt-Adams' hands some 40-50 years. Some of the highlights were (prices do not include the buyer's premium):

Nepal

Lot 1446 - one anna, first issue, perforated, unused strip of 6 with full fancy ornamental borders (H/V 1). £ 1500.

Lot 1453 - one anna, unused complete sheet, setting 14 - the first re-cutting of position 64 (H/V 11). £ 650.

Lot 1457 - unused block of four (largest known multiple) of the one anna recut on European paper, including positions 23 - inverted, and 24 - recut (H/V 25, 25a), plus additional items. A bargain at £300.

Lot 1469 - two anna, setting 10, unused complete sheet, position 4 being the rare "Ragged Cliche". £ 1500.

Lot 1472 - two anna, setting 16, unused complete sheet. £ 700.

Lot 1473 - Two anna, setting 18, unused complete sheet. £ 800.

Lot 1483 - four anna, setting 5, complete sheet, unused. £ 1200.

Lot 1484 - four anna, setting 6, unused complete sheet. £ 650.

Lot 1486 - four anna, setting 7, unused complete sheet. £ 800.

Lot 1489 - four anna, setting 11, complete unused sheet - but not the rare olive-green shade as described in the catalogue. £ 750.

Lot 1491 - Half-anna, setting 1, sub-setting A, complete unused sheet with Dawson's manuscript note - "Instituted Xmas 1898 or January 1st, 1899". £ 400.

Lot 1492 - Half-anna, setting 1, sub-setting B, unused complete sheet. £ 200.

Lot 1494 - Half-anna, setting 3, unused complete sheet. £ 200.

Lot 1496 - Half-anna, setting 5, unused complete sheet. £ 380.

Lot 1497 - Half-anna, setting 6, the rare orange-vermilion printing, group including an unused pair, a single with telegraph cancel, and a single on a philatlic "O'Sullivan" Nepal-India combination cover (see The Classic Stamps of Nepal by Hellrigl and Vignola, page 188). £ 950.

Lot 1508 - Pashupati issue die proof of vignette, internal side inscriptions and top corner ornaments (probably 1930 24p value). £ 650.



Vignette enlarged 200%

Original = 8.7cm. X 7cm.

Lot 1509 - Pashupati issues, collection of imperforate blocks. £1000.

Only 10 Nepal lots did not sell, containing half-anna sheets and sheets and large multiples of the Pashupati issues.

Tibet

- Lot 1721 - first issue, large group including many complete sheets and commercial covers. £ 9000.
- Lot 1722 - One-third tr., complete unused sheet minus position 4, rare cobalt shade (shiny enamel). £1400.
- Lot 1724 - One-half tr., purple, unused complete sheet. £ 520.
- Lot 1725 - Two-third tr., rose-carmine, unused complete sheet. £ 480.
- Lot 1727 - three covers (c. 1922) showing the hand-colored crest of Tsarong Shaphe (Director of the Mint and Secretary of the Treasury), one being stampless. £ 600.
- All seven Tibet lots sold.

* * * * *

Michael Rogers' auction of June 12-13 offered 137 lots of Tibet material plus 1 Bhutan lot and 1 P.R.C.-Tibet lot. Worth noting are (prices realized do not include the buyer's commission):

Bhutan

- Lot 832 - a collection virtually complete through the 1970's, including covers, errors and literature. \$ 800.

P.R.C.-Tibet

- Lot 757 - 1950's-1960's, 42 covers postmarked in Tibet. \$ 230.

Tibet

- Lot 1480 - 1854 Chinese Amban cover to Nepal. \$ 550.
- Lot 1481 - 1890 Chinese Amban cover to Nepal. \$ 375.
- Lot 1482 - 1911 Chinese-Office-In-Tibet double registered official "ON POSTAL SERVICE" stampless cover to Shanghai. Estimated at \$150. \$3500.
- Lot 1483 - 1911 Chinese-Office-In-Tibet double registered official cover via India (Indian stamps applied at Yatung). \$1000.
- Lot 1484 - 1911 Chinese-Office-In-Tibet registered cover bearing 3A and 4A stamps. \$1050.
- Lot 1495 - Waterlow die proof in blue. \$1550.
- Lot 1540 - 1937 cover bearing pair of pin-perfed ½ tr. \$ 600.
- Lot 1541 - Nepalese 8p postal stationery envelope used (Aug., 1937) to Tibet in combination with Tibet pin-perf 1 tr. \$ 260.
- Lot 1593 - 2 tr. (left half) plus 4 tr. on cover - 5 tr. rate. \$ 550.
- Lot 1596 - 1933 "quartered" 4 tr. plus another 4 tr. on cover. \$ 725.
- Lot 1615 - authenticated signature and seal of the 14th Dalai Lama. \$ 190.

Only 4 of the 137 lots did not sell - even though there were some questionable items.

Michael Rogers' next auction of Oct. 9-10 offers 69 lots of Tibet, including a 1903 Younghusband cover, two early Bailey covers, and complete sheets of the 1933 issue.

"The Negative Pashupati Proofs"

Wolfgang Hellrigl

I fully agree with Thomas Matthiesen and Dr. Frank E. Vignola (*Postal Himal* No. 73, pp. 10-15) that the "Negative Proofs" were almost certainly printed from the original Perkins, Bacon plates. The authors have further substantiated this theory by adding relevant printing details. As one who has "maligned" these "Negative Proofs" in the past, I must concede that several points - notably the early date (1948) of their first appearance on the market - speak in favour of these being perfectly genuine experimental proofs. On the other hand, the mere knowledge that they would have been printed from the genuine plates, does not necessarily take the last shadow of a doubt from them. In fact, the discarded plates could well have ended up in the hands of unauthorized persons who, in turn, may have experimented with them, for whatever reasons. In view of the total failure of this experiment, one wonders why the "Negative Proofs" (always provided that they were made in 1940/41) would have been kept in the official records for years rather than being destroyed on the spot. What also puzzles me is that E.A. Smythies, who lived in Kathmandu just at that time, was obviously not aware of them. Had he seen them - and he appears to have taken great interest in the printing processes of the following issues of 1941 - he would definitely have mentioned them in the Smythies/Dawson monograph of 1945.

To sum it up, the question of whether the "Negative Proofs" were the result of official or unauthorized experiments, will probably never be answered to the full satisfaction of critical postal historians. There are several points for as well as against the genuine-proof theory, but the respective speculations cannot be taken as facts. In this situation of persisting doubt it would, I believe, be wrong to claim that the items in question were absolutely genuine proofs, just as it would be wrong to condemn them outright. If "Negative Proofs" are included in collections or exhibits, the collector must, in my opinion, clearly express this doubt in the write-up by using an appropriate wording, such as "believed to have been prepared for the Nepalese postal authorities." Unless further evidence turns up, I do not think that I shall ever include these items in my personal exhibit, but thanks to Matthiesen and Vignola I shall at least have to pull them out from my reference collection of forgeries.

HELLRIGL B23: A MINOR FINE TUNING

Armand E. Singer

A rare Nepal datestamp used by the British-Indian Post Office in Kathmandu is numbered B23 in Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl's authoritative new volume on Nepal Postal History (see p. 92). He illustrates it as well with a photographic reproduction of a Sep. 8, 1870 cover (p. 95) and a color plate of the related duplex cancel on a cover of Dec. 5, 1871 (p.116). He rates B23 as "RR", with a value of 1,750 in black, 2,800 in red. The duplex (B10) rates "RRR" and 6,000 points, the p. 116 cover termed "unique".

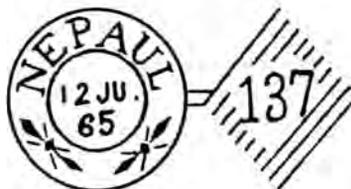
I first came across B23 around 1970, when a friend sent me a photostat of a cover from his own collection. I finally found one of my own, dated Dec. 29, 1872, then another (Dec. 7, 1871), and a third, date illegible, but associated with Indian cancels and/or datestamps, July 23-28, 1873 (so around July 31, thus extending Hellrigl's recorded usage by over three months), arrival marks, as is Hellrigl's example on p. 95, though of course his duplex on p. 116 is a true obliterating cancel, on an India Queen Victoria half-anna blue. I have before me, for possible purchase, a fourth B23 dated May 1[-], 1872.

You see reproduced here from his book Hellrigl's B23; note that there is only an outer circle, unlike the earlier NEPAUL datestamps and the one cancel of the 1860s (B9, B21, and B22, pp. 78 and 92 - also reproduced here from his book), which featured an inner circle as well. However, a partial inner circle is visible, if faint, on both of his photographic reproductions (p. 95 [fig. 1] and p. 116 [fig. 2]). It is quite clear on my 1871 [fig. 3] example, less so on my 1872 [fig. 4] and 1873 covers, and joins at least the letters "EPA" on the fourth cover mentioned above. This partial circle seems to join all the bottom legs of Hellrigl's example on p. 95 [fig. 1] and on the p. 116 duplex [fig. 2] is barely visible, connecting "E" to "P".

Is what we can see part of a complete circle, the remainder invisible because of poor inking or a worn die? Hellrigl's 1870 photo shows a clear strike, with not even a trace of the rest of a suppositious circle visible. His table on p. 93 lists Sep. 8, 1870 as the earliest recorded use; so, this cover for now represents the earliest example and as such the pristine state of the die. Furthermore, since none of the examples I have cited has a complete inner circle, it is difficult to allege constantly poor inking in the same place. Nevertheless, both my 1872 and 1873 examples as well as the May 1[-], 1872 copy mentioned above have the "U" so badly worn as to be missing the bottom loop and the right upright leg, making the letter resemble a "T". The die was obviously not well hardened. If we could only find an earlier cover, say, of the late 1860s!



B23



B9



B21



B22



Fig. 2

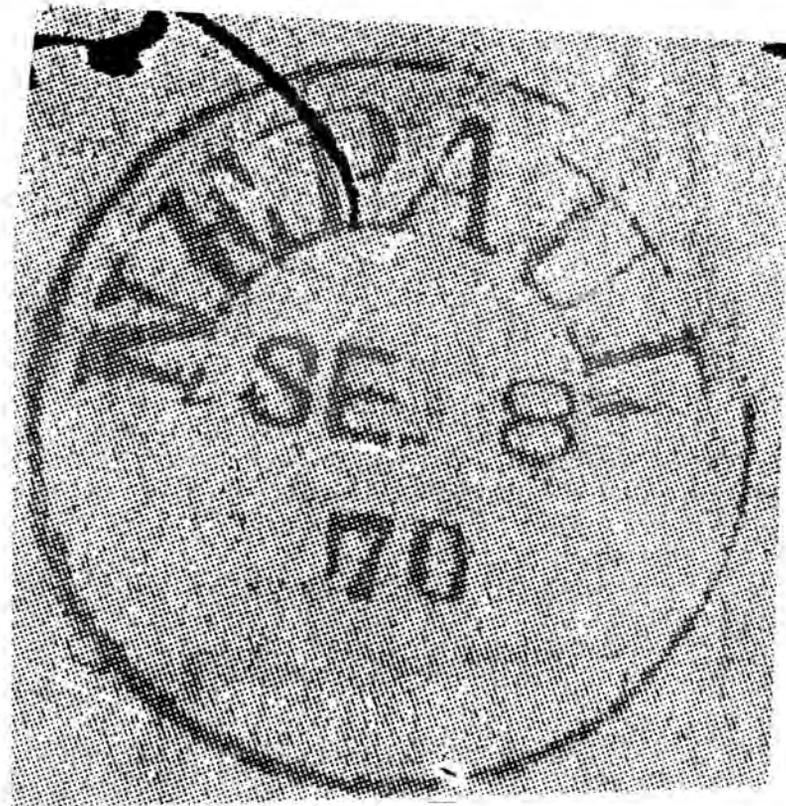


Fig. 1



Fig. 3

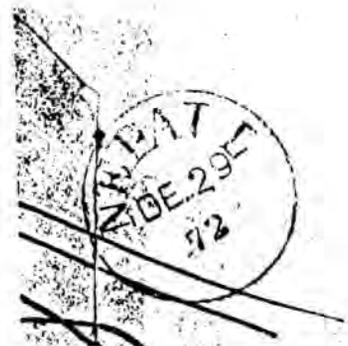


Fig. 4

PHILATELIC REFERENCES IN TO LHASA IN DISGUISE

Dr. Frank E. Vignola

I have recently read To Lhasa In Disguise, A Secret Expedition Through Mysterious Tibet, by Dr. William McGovern, published in New York, 1924. In the summer of 1922, the author, a Lecturer in Chinese and Japanese at the School of Oriental Studies, University of London, went with a "British Buddhist Mission" as the "Scientific Adviser" to Lhasa via Sikkim.

His book gives an account of the mission, including several references to the government courier service and the telegraph system. Quoted below are the pertinent passages (pages 432-434):

"Kyipup, the boy educated in England, continued to visit me frequently, and both he and Sonam gave me much interesting information concerning the new Tibetan post-office.

"From very early times Tibet has been possessed of a government courier service, with relays of ponies carrying messengers from the capital to the most distant provinces. These messengers were supposed to carry only government dispatches, but in some cases they could be bribed to deliver private letters as well. During the great reforms of the last few years the Government has sought to transform this old courier service into a regular post-office service, whereby the carrying of private letters and even packets is legalized. Up to the present time only twelve post-offices have been opened, the principal places being Lhasa, Shigatse, Gyangtse, Pari, and various intermediary points. These places are in the center of Tibet, and the outer provinces are still covered only by the old courier system.

"The mails are carried from place to place entirely by pony relays, but on the whole the service is swift. Gyangtse lies about 150 miles away from Lhasa, and letters come through in about two and a half days.

"The Tibetans have printed a very interesting collection of stamps, and the postal system is supposed to work exactly on the European scale, but letters go through much more frequently as the result of a small present to the postman than because of bearing a stamp.

"Tibet is not, of course, a member of the Postal Union, and there is no direct postal connection between Lhasa and the outside world, but there is a British post-office in the fort at Gyangtse, and there is a Tibetan post-office in the same city; and provided one has a friend in Gyangtse to transfer letters from one post-office to the other, it is possible to send to and receive letters from England and America while in Lhasa.

"I was lucky enough to be able to make the necessary arrangements and so was able once or twice to secure longed-for bundles of letters from home which were waiting for me in Darjeeling; but, alas, among them were urgent notices that my current income tax was unpaid and information as to what was going to happen to me in case I did not pay up in ten days.

"An even more striking instance of the new order of things in Tibet, rendered all the more striking because of the continuance of the old order alongside of it, is the telegraphic outfit which has been installed in the last two years. To be sure, the telegraph line only runs between Lhasa and Gyantse, 150 miles; and very crude, very childish and amateurish it is, but a real telegraph system. It breaks down every two or three weeks, but it is soon repaired, and as many as five telegraphic messages are sent over it every week! By means of the British Indian telegraphic outpost at Gyantse it is thus possible for one to be in almost immediate touch with the outside world while living in the most isolated and forbidden city of the world.

"I was interested to learn that the telegraph had been decreed by an executive order of the cabinet, largely as the result of Tsarong's influence, and without the National Assembly's being consulted. Needless to say, this reactionary body was very indignant at the innovation, but it was even more interesting to know that this modern invention was to help in trying to keep me—a foreigner—out. It was over the telegraph that the news came that I was thought to be in Tibet in disguise, and it was over the telegraph that the orders had gone out to the local officials that search be made for me so that I could be turned back."

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OF THE YORE-

SHOUTING POSTAL RUNNERS

KRISHNA RAJ-BHANDARI

Nepalèse postal runners, some six decades ago, had to follow a curious method of delivering and receiving postal articles from one postal post to another. Particular care had to be taken to see that the mails moved at the fastest possible speed. On Shrawana 23, 1990 B.S., an order was issued that as soon as the mail runners were in close proximity to the chauki (mail depot), they had to shout continuously in a loud voice to the chaukidar to be ready to receive the mail-bags being carried by the runners and also to deliver immediately the bags collected at the postal chauki for onward transmission.

Such a strange practice appears awkward today, but considering the type of governmental organization, the society and general approach to life in those days, the system worked rather well.

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"Books on Nepal: Travel Guides"

By Dan Edwards

Those interested in the stamps and postal histories of a faraway land eventually may want to learn something about the language, culture, or history of the country, or even decide to pay it a visit in person. This is the first in a series of short articles (if reader response is favorable) that will highlight books on different subjects relating to Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan.

Nepal was closed to nearly all foreigners until 1951, so tourism dates only from the mid 1950s. Mountaineering, specifically the dramatic French expedition to Annapurna in 1950 and the first ascent of Mount Everest on May 29, 1953, helped put Nepal on the map for the Western world. The coronation of King Mahendra in 1956 was the first occasion that attracted many foreign dignitaries and media/traveler celebrities like Lowell Thomas. During the 1960s, the growth of the U.S. Peace Corps, foreign aid missions and international charitable organizations in Nepal created a loyal group of "Nepal-wallahs," many of whom set off only with backpacks, iodine tablets (for water purification), and a knowledge of the language to experience Nepal's beauty and misery for themselves.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, college students from the West, the alienated, the idealistic, the curious, those who sought an alternative to wasteful consumerism through their Hindu gurus and Buddhist lamas (some of those spiritual teachers, mixing enterprise with opportunism, later came to the ironic conclusion that the grass was greener in the "materialistic" West), "hippies," pot-heads, back-to-nature romantics, macho mountaineers, draft resisters and Vietnam-war protesters--this multi-national conglomeration of restless youth drove, hitch-hiked or levitated across Europe, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and India to reach Nepal, where they could live in their own Shangri-La for \$3 a day. Many came to the end of their odyssey and found their spiritual quests fulfilled on the appropriately-named Freak Street in Kathmandu.

In the 1980s, "adventure travel" caught on among a wealthier clientele. One could pay \$100 a day or more to have a fleet of porters carry tents, canned food, white wine, and other luxuries undreamed of in village Nepal, and be served bed-tea and porridge at ten in the morning by under-employed but solicitous Sherpas. Foreigners on tight schedules and those reluctant to leave the comforting ambiance of Nepal's two "five-star" hotels could opt for supervised elephant rides or chartered helicopter flights. The Government kept increasing fees for trekking and mountaineering permits, but the flood of tourists and mountaineers continued unabated. Even lofty Mount Everest, a place that seemed as remote to the world of 100 years ago as the planet Jupiter seems to our world today, is now littered with trash and abandoned human corpses.

Probably the first book written for tourists was Maj. J.H. Elliott's Guide to Nepal, published in 1959; subsequent editions were issued in 1963 and 1969. The author presumably was a British Gurkha officer, and this is a decent general volume, with some illustrations, and an understandable focus on the Kathmandu Valley. Its descriptions provide contrast with today's well-developed tourist industry. In 1969, Elliott lists seven hotels; their rates were \$5 to \$10 per day. (He even notes that Nepal's postal service began in 1875.)

Prakash A. Raj, a Nepalese, has written Kathmandu and the Kingdom of Nepal, first published in 1976 and revised several times since. Unfortunately, there is only one chapter on the background of Nepal, where the author does not take advantage of a chance to present his own interpretation of his culture for the foreign reader. The rest of the book is standard tourist fare.

A popular work that has been around for more than 20 years and recently revised is Stephen Bezruchka's A Guide to Trekking in Nepal. This is written for the person who wants to see Nepal the way it should be seen: by walking its village trails and interacting with its people. The book gives detailed information on treks throughout the country. There are useful chapters on health and medical problems and a short but valuable discussions of cross-cultural and environmental considerations to keep in mind. There also is a listing of foreign organizations and projects that are trying to assist Nepal's development. It also has the best bibliography of available travel guides.

The most comprehensive and best illustrated guides to Nepal appear in the "Insight" series, A Guide to Nepal and Kathmandu. The volumes are a collection of chapters written by Nepalese and foreign experts, who have lived and worked there for some time. Thus, their accounts have a credibility often lacking in the usually superficial articles in mass market publications written by journalists and world travelers.

Finally, there are regional or specialized guides to Nepal. Some are written by Nepalese and published in Nepal; style and quality may vary, but prices are always reasonable. A beautifully illustrated book on the trek from Jiri to Everest Base Camp is Ryohei Uchido's Trekking Mount Everest, first published in Japan. Another item with good information on routes and designed for the amateur mountaineer is Bill O'Connor's, The Trekking Peaks of Nepal.

In the next issue, we will highlight travel guides to Tibet and Bhutan. Future articles in this space could cover books on the languages, history, geography, ethnic groups, religion, foreign aid and economic development, politics and foreign relations, wildlife, travel and exploration, foreign missionary efforts, bibliographic and reference works, and/or photographic essays ("coffee-table" books) on Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan. Readers are invited to let the editor or the author know which

topics are of most interest. While most of the books we will cite are in English, foreign readers are encouraged to inform the author of exceptional works in foreign languages that have appeared on Nepal and Tibet.

Readers who would like additional information or help in locating copies of travel guides or other books on Nepal may contact the author, c/o Yak & Yeti Books, P.O. Box 5736, Rockville, MD 20855, (301) 869-5860.

AN UNUSUAL EARLY TIBETAN FORGERY VARIETY

George Bourke



2/3 TRANGKA FORGERY SET-OFF OR BLANKET PRINT (enlarged 2x)

I recently had the good fortune of obtaining two examples of a previously unrecorded variety of the 2/3 trangka of the first 1933 forgery set that appeared in 1937. Although mentioned by Waterfall as appearing six years after the originals were issued¹, i.e. 1939, an earlier date can be found in H.R. Holmes, The Postage Stamps of Tibet, published in the Philatelic Journal of Great Britain, October 1940, where Holmes describes and illustrates examples from this set and states that they appeared on the London market in 1937.

The new variety is printed on both sides, one side being reversed. Although it could easily be mistaken for a "kiss print".

a variety produced when wet freshly printed sheets are laid one on top of the other. It is in fact what is called a "blanket print" or "set-off".

A set-off is caused "by error, the press operates without a sheet of paper in it, and the ink prints upon the tympan material or backing of the press, normally masked by the sheet of paper to be printed; when the press is then operated with a sheet of paper in position it acquires two impressions—the one normal, from the inked subjects on the printing base, the other abnormal (reversed, reading from right-to-left) from the ink inadvertently deposited on the tympan material or backing. Such a set-off is sometimes termed a "blanket print"; and it is characteristic of such a blanket print that both sides (it and the normal impression) are in absolute register or key, but, of course, on different sides of the paper."2

It follows from this, that one full sheet would have been printed, although only two examples have been found thus far. These examples are from cliché 1 and 3.

Notes :

(1) Arnold C. Waterfall, "The Postal History of Tibet", London: Robson Lowe, 1981 edition, p. 155.

(2) L.N. Williams, "Fundamentals of Philately", State College, Pennsylvania: American Philatelic Society, 1990 edition, p. 174.

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LOCAL POSTAL TAX OF THE TIBETAN AUTONOMOUS REGION

Wilson Lin

The Tibetan Autonomous Region of China has been charging a local extra postage - a kind of local postal tax. As reported in the China Philately News, the extra postal rates are:

Printed Matter = RMB ¥ 0.2
Registered Letter = RMB ¥ 0.25
Business Parcel = RMB ¥ 0.8
Postal Remittance:
Under RMB ¥ 300 = RMB ¥ 0.7
RMB ¥ 300 and above = RMB ¥ 1.2

The local postal tax of China is as follows: from January 1, 1987, Guangdong Province first charged their local extra postage. This was in addition to the central postal rate. Many other areas also charged their own local extra postage, and used chops, receipts, labels, stickers, and lastly Heilongjiang Postal Tax stamps as evidence of a local postal tax. After July 31, 1990, the postal authorities raised the Chinese central postal rates and ordered all local post offices to discontinue charging their local postal taxes. This is the first period of Local Postal Taxes of China.

After Deng Xiao-Ping's travel in South China, many areas charged local postal taxes again. This can be referred to as the second period of Local Postal Taxes of China.

The Autonomous Region of Tibet didn't charge a local postal tax until April 1, 1991 - the second period. The China Philately News did not report the method in collecting the local postal tax or how it was recorded on covers. I hope to gather additional information and report it in a future article.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO "THE SRI PASHUPATI EXPERIMENTAL NEGATIVE PROOFS"

Surrendra Lal Shrestha

Illustrated below is the bottom row (center section removed for illustration purposes) of a complete sheet of 100 of the four pice Sri Pashupati experimental negative proof, as described in the article by Matthiesen and Vignola in Postal Himal No. 73. Please note the screw head impression at either edge of the sheet.

I think the negative proofs were not prepared in 1940 but possibly in 1917/18, when Nepal needed lots of stamps for Telegraph use. When the government failed to print the four values of the 1907 Pashupati issue locally they began to print the earlier "Gorkha Sarkar" designs to meet the needed quantities, including the new design one anna and the famous ½ anna red-orange.

