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Officer's Corner

George Alevizos has just issued my *Chinese Presence in Tibet*, 129 pp., \$35.00, postpaid to USA addresses. Featured are not only the 1911-12 era classic overprinted issues mint and on cover, but also rare examples of the Chinese stamps unoverprinted. Documents with seals go back to 1731. Strong showing of the 1950s Chinese military and official correspondence cancelled in Tibet, especially lesser known Eastern Tibet. A claim for legitimizing postal items other than simply covers and stamps is proffered by including postal warrants, army communiqués, telegraph forms, mobile post office mail, a certificate of merit given a local Tibetan soldier, government flyers to local authorities, revenue papers, a wine-fee cover, postal memos, and a postal report in the form of a memorandum booklet from Sining, a custom

pass, and the like - in short, I'm arguing, any part of the postal service belongs in a study of a nation's managing another country's postal system, itself a significant part of the march of civilization.

(Editor's note: Please see bottom of this page for the President's other books on Tibet and Nepal).

Also in the news: We've just lost Al Zulueta, our excellent auctioneer. Family concerns have forced his resignation. Any suggestions for a replacement? Please write me at 248 Grandview Ave., Morgantown, WV 26501 USA, or call 304-292-2282 up to 10 AM EST or mid-afternoon on, or email: armand.singer@mail.wvu.edu.

Any objections to having your street and/or email address in a new directory?

Cheers,

Armand E. Singer

Editor's Ramblings

Please note our President's new email address on the inside front cover.

I am almost out of articles for PH. The last time that I ran out of articles, I sent out a short issue. As the postage is applied before I receive the envelopes, this is a waste of our funds. As you will see from the Statement of Accounts on page 11, postage is a huge expense for us. Let's not waste funds. **Please send me articles.**

You might also take note of the letter on page 10, and give some thought to a response to it. I will be happy to print any responses.

We also have in this issue, the promised article by our non-member Herr Bertsch of Germany. It has been a pleasure to receive his articles (and all articles from members). Perhaps in the future we shall have some more articles from Herr Bertsch.

Best wishes to all for the New Year, and please send any articles that you have.

Meeting Notice: NTPSC will have a meeting a WESTPEX 2003 on Sunday, 27 April 2003 at 11:00 AM in the Embarcadero Room.

Other books by Armand E. Singer

- 1) *The Armand E. Singer Tibet 1809-1975* (Alevizos 1995)
- 2) *The Armand E. Singer Nepal 1772-1961 and Beyond* (Alevizos 1997)
- 3) *Supplement to the Armand E. Singer Tibet 1809-1975* (Alevizos 1998)
- 4) *The "Officials" of Tibet* (G. Flack 1999)
- 5) Armand E. Singer and Robert F. Gould, *A Catalog of Himalayan Mountaineering Correspondence (with estimation of rarity)* (Alevizos 2002)

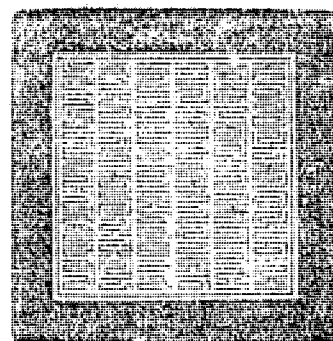
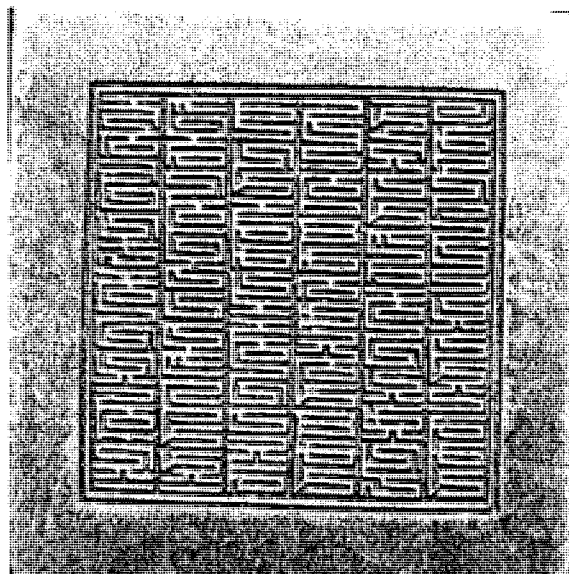
A Tibetan Official Seal of Pho-lha-nas

by Wolfgang Bertsch

In the view of H. Richardson “there can be no doubt the Phola was one of the best rulers Tibet has had and that for some eighteen years he gave his country prosperous and peaceful government”¹. Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa comes to a similar conclusion, but adds that “Pholhanas’ collaboration with the Manchu’s provided the grounds for Manchu, and later on Chinese, claims of over lordship in Tibet”².

Seals of this outstanding Tibetan ruler (ruled A.D. 1728-1747; his complete name, *Mi'i dbang po bsod nams stobs kyi rgyal po pho lha*, appears on the top and center seals to the right) were first published outside of Tibet by Rev. Tharchin³ and Luciano Petech⁴. Subsequently Dieter Schuh published four seals belonging to Pho-lha-nas. Three of these seals (seals G, H and I) are engraved with *'phags-pa* script, while one seal (seal J) is trilingual with Manjurian, Chinese and Tibetan *dbu-chan* inscriptions⁵. Further seals of Pho-lha-nas along with some of those already illustrated and described by Schuh were published in Tibet by Ou Chao-gui⁶, Chab-spen tshe-brtan phuntshogs and Ma-grong mi-'gyur rdo-rje⁷ and Chen Jin Zhong⁸. While many official seals which were crafted by Chinese artists and bestowed by Chinese emperors upon Tibetan political and religious leaders are illustrated in works published recently in Tibet and China⁹, I am not aware of any publication in which the illustration of an actual seal of Pho-lha-nas can be found. Therefore, the seal from a private collection which is illustrated to the right is a rare and remarkable example of a Tibetan official seal which was most probably made in Lhasa and gives evidence of the accomplished art of seal engraving and wood carving in the first part of the 18th century.

The seal under review (three figures to the right) must be the one which Schuh publishes as seal H, giving the following transcription of the six lines of *'phags-pa* script engraved on the seal's square metal plate (upper right figure). (The syllables between the square brackets are repeated using the standard Wylie system, which are transcribed differently by Schuh in the system used in Germany; the capital “Z” in the first line indicates a marker placed at the beginning of a sentence¹⁰):



- 1 Z Mi'i dban [dbang] po bsod names
- 2 / stobs kyi rgyal po pho lha
- 3 dban [dbang] gyi¹¹ tham ga phyogs thams
- 4 cad [cad] las rnam par rgyal ba don
- 5 kun 'grub pa bkra sis [shis] so/
- 6 rtag tu lha rgyal lo dge'o/

The following is an English translation of Schuh's German version of the seal inscription: "Seal of the ruler over humans, of *bSod-nams stobs kyi rgyal-po*, lord of *Pho-lha*, which is victorious over all directions and fulfils all wishes. Luck! Enduring victory to the gods! Hail!". "Ruler over humans (*mi-I dbang*)", seems to be a standard epithet used by contemporaries when referring to Pho-lha-nas¹².

The measurements of the illustrated seal match exactly those of seal H, given by Schuh as 4.5 x 4.5 (inscribed field: 3.1 x 3) centimeters. The illustrated seal has a height of 10.2 centimeters.

Rather than using precious metals like gold, silver or jade which was preferred in China for the manufacture of seals bestowed on Tibetan potentates, in the case of the illustrated seal the Tibetan artists valued simple materials like iron

and wood. The seal's wooden handle consists of a cubical lower portion in which the gilded iron body is adorned by two representations of glossy ganoderma fungus on each of the four sides, forming a decorative border. This mushroom, originally associated with Taoism and later adopted by Buddhism, was believed to have life prolonging qualities in ancient China. This design is occasionally found in Tibetan art, often resembling the representations of clouds¹³. The handle's upper part is drop or jewel shaped. It is intricately carved and includes two designs of triratna (*dkon mchog gsum*) amidst floral elements¹⁴.

None of the seven seals, the sizes of which are given by Tharchin, has the exact measurements of seal H¹⁵. The relatively long rule of Pho-lha-nas may explain the large number of seals which were carved in his name, the total number of seals manufactured for this ruler being probably in excess of the seven specimens which were recorded by Tharchin's compilers, Kalon Shadra and Kadrung Nornang.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1: Richardson, Hugh M.: *Tibet and its History*. Second revised and updated edition, Shambala, Boulder and London 1982, p. 53.
 - 2: Shakabpa, W. D. Tsepon: *Tibet. A Political History*. Potala Publications. New York 1984, p. 147.
 - 3: Shadra, Kalon H. E. & Nornang, Kadrung: *Letter-Writers. YIK-BSKUR RNAM GSHAG BY H. E. KALON SHADRA & KADRUNG NORANG and Various other collections of modern letter-writers. Short history of ancient kings, H. H. The Dalai Lamas & their Regents. The thirteen Code laws by king Srongtsen Gampo, lists of seals and their sizes as used by the Dalai Lamas & Regents*. Edited and published by G. Tharchin at the Tibet Mirror Press. Kalimpong, 1956.
- On p. 212 the sizes of seven different seals related to Pho-lha-nas are given, however, the actual imprints are missing which unfortunately is the case with all other Tibetan seals published by Tharchin. According to Dieter Schuh (*op. cit.* in footnote 5, p. 2) a manuscript of the seal book used by Tharchin which is preserved in Dharamsala and was photographed by Schuh, contains a few seal imprints.
- 4: Petech, Luciano (editor): *I Missionari Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal*. Il Nuovo Ramusio, Parte III. Raccolta de Viaggi, Testi e Documenti, Relativi ai Rapporti fra l'Europe e l'Oriente a cura dell'Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente. Volume secondo, Parte III. I Capuccini Marchigiani. Liberia dello Stato. Roma, 1953.

The undecipherable seal of Pho-lha-nas which Petech illustrates opposite page 210 is found on a document dated 9th September 1741.

See also Petech's review of Dieter Schuh's *Grundlagen tibetischer Siegelkunde*. (see footnote 5) in *The Journal of the Tibet Society*, Vol. 5, Bloomington 1985, pp. 110-111.

- 5: Schuh, Dieter: *Grundlagen tibetischer Siegelkunde. Eine Untersuchung über tibetische Siegelaufschriften in 'Phags-pa-Schrift*. [Foundations of Tibetan Sigillography. An Investigation of Tibetan Seal Inscriptions in 'Phags-pa Script]. *Monumenta Tibetica Historica: Abt. III, Diplomata et Epistolae*, Vol. 5, St. Augustin, 1981, pp. 68-73.
- 6: Ou Chao-gui and Qi Mei [for "'Jig-med'"]: *Xi zang li dai zang yin* {Tibetan Seals of Various Dynasties}. Xi-zang Ren-min Chu-ban-she [Tibet People's Publishing House]. Lhasa, 1991, p. 79.

Illustrated is a trilingual seal of Pho-lha-nas which is described by Schuh (*op. cit.*, pp. 72-73) as seal J1. Schuh also gives a transcription of the seal's Tibetan *dBu-med* text.

- 7: Chab-spel tshe-brtan phun-tshogs & Ma-grong mi-'gyur rdo-rje: *Bod kyi gal che 'I lo rgyus yig cha bdams bsgrigs* [A Collection of Important Tibetan Historical Materials] Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skun khang, Lhasa, 1991, pp. 57-61.

This publication includes the reprint of a seal book (*tham deb bkod par*) which reproduces most of the seals, not as imprints, but in the form of drawings which often are inaccurate to a degree which makes the reading of seals with 'phags-pa script almost impossible. For example, on p. 58 the trilingual seal of Pho-lha-nas (Schuh seal J) is reproduced with the last two lines of the Tibetan text incorrectly rendered. The seal illustrated on p. 60 (upper part of the page) seems to be a somewhat phantastic and almost illegible drawing of the imprint of the seal which I discuss in this article (Schuh seal H).

- 8: Chen Jin Zhong: "Xi zang de ji yu yin zhang" [Auspicious words on Tibetan seals]. In: *Tibetan Folklore*, July 1995, issue 3, pp. 15-17.

Two seals of Pho-lha-nas are illustrated (figures 3 and 4) and their legends are transcribed in *dbu-can* and translated into Chinese. One is identical to Schuh's seal G and the other is the seal which I discuss in this article (Schuh seal H).

- 9: see for example: Sgrolkar [sGrol-dkar], Xiao Huaiyuan and Vodzer ['Od-zer] (chief editors): *A Collection of Historical Archives of Tibet [Bod kyi lo rgyus yig tshags gces bsdus]*. Compiled by the Archives of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Cultural Publishing House. Lhasa, 1995.

This profusely colour illustrated volume presents a selection of 107 documents kept in the Archives of Lhasa. All the documents are reproduced and their texts are transcribed or translated into Tibetan, Chinese and English. Most of the original documents are in the Tibetan and Chinese languages, some are in four languages, i.e. Tibetan, Chinese, Manjurian and Mongolian, and all of them bear Chinese or Tibetan seal imprints. The book contains several excellent colour reproductions of important historical seals and illustrates their imprints. However, the legends found on the seals are neither transcribed nor translated.

- 10: Schuh, Dieter: *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70. On pp. 95-96 Schuh illustrates a document, dated 20 January 1743, which has the imprint of seal H.

11: I read 'dbang gi...' instead of 'dbang gyi...'.

- 12: According to Ram Rahul Pho-lha-nas was <<"was commonly known as Mi-Wang P'o-lha (*Mi-dbang Pho-lha*), "Mighty P'o-lha">>. In: *The Tibet Journal*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring 1978, pp. 6-29.

See also Shakabpa, W. D. Tsepon: *op. cit.*, p. 143.

- 13: Xiaolan, Mao: "Glossy Ganoderma Vs Tibetan Buddhist Culture". In: *China's Tibet. A Bimonthly of Tibetan News & Views*. Vol. 12, No. 6, Beijing 2001, pp. 25-27.

The fungus design is well known in the form of the upper part of the so called ju-yi (ju-i) scepters which were presented in ancient China as a token of good wishes. The ju-i scepter is described as "a slightly bent staff with a fungus-shaped head bent over like a hook" by R. L. Hobson and is "commonly seen in the hands of Taoist genii". The Chinese name of the fungus is Ling-zhi, its scientific name is given as *polyporus lucidus* by Hobson. Cf. Hobson R. L.: *Chinese Pottery and Porcelain. An Account of the Potter's Art in China From Primitive Times to the*

Present Day. Reprinted by Dover Publications, Inc., New York 1976 (originally published in 1915), p. 289.

It should be noted that the handles of small Tibetan seals often have the shape of fungus; this design must therefore have been considered by Tibetans as auspicious and particularly suitable for seals. For an example see Schuh, *op. cit.*, p.34.

- 14: One may venture the interpretation that the seal's lower part represents *samsara* where longevity matters, while its upper part indicates Buddhism which leads beyond *samsara*.
- 15: Shadra, Kalon H. E. & Nornang, Kadrung: *op. cit.*, p. 210. Possibly the photocopy of the text edited by Tharchin which is available to me reproduces the original in slightly reduced size.

The second largest square on page 210 indicating the measurements of the second largest seal has an inscription which is very similar to the one of seal H and is given as follows: *Z mi'i dbang po bsod names stobs rgyal gyis pho lha dbang gi them ga phyogs thams chad las rnam par rgyal ba don kun grub pa bkra so lha rgyal lo dge'o//*

It may well be that Kalon Shadra and Kadrung Nornang are actually describing seal H and give a slightly variant (erroneous) reading of its inscription

Mail Runners in the Himalayas

from Stamps of India, submitted by Alan Warren

At a time when e-mail threatens to banish the postman to the museum, mail-runners are still the only means of communications in remote regions of the north Indian mountain state of Himachal Pradesh. Called 'Harkara' the khaki-clad mail-runners armed with a staff, bell and mailbag are a welcome sight in scores of isolated villages of the region bordering Tibet.

The runners cover long distances on foot across deep valleys, gushing rivers and snow-smeared mountains, and brave heavy snow and avalanches to keep lines of communications open. "The runners' job isn't over with just mail delivery", said 80-year-old Sukh Das, who has been delivering mail between villages for decades. "He is also the roving reporter, the carrier of news from one village to another and it is not uncommon for him to be an adviser to the tribals in the regions of Lahaul Spiti, Kinnaur, Pangi or Dodra-Kawar", Das said. Das said runners are popular in villages because often they help tribes people read or write letters and even advise them on various issues.

Even heavy snow that cuts off parts of

Himachal Pradesh for more than half the year does not deter the mail-runners who dig themselves paths, officials said. "Their territory begins where motorable roads end", said an official from the state's postal department in the provincial capital of Shimla, India's most popular summer resort. "Without their services mail may never be delivered in several villages perched atop ridges or hidden in icy mountains", another official said, adding the Harkaras even deliver to Hindu holy men mediating in caves.

Vijay Bhushan, Himachal Pradesh's chief postmaster-general, said only a few of the runners were full-time employees of the state-run postal department. "There are 1,719 mail runners in the state and of which only 65 are working as full-time employees, while the rest are part-timers", he said. Bhushan admitted the job could be dangerous. "It is not unusual for some of them to be buried in avalanches in the high mountains", the department chief said. He did not give details of their wages or working hours but admitted the runners were bottom in the postal department's pecking order.

Editors note. See also the article by Julie Marshall "Mail Runners 1931", PH #112, page 15.

Registered Postal Receipts Of Nepal

by Sagar Man Shrestha

The Registered Postal Receipts of Nepal are one of the interesting items for the postal history collectors of this country. The early used receipts are very difficult to get. Even Wolfgang Hellrigl and Colin Hepper have shown few unused receipts in their book "The Native Postmarks Of Nepal" (see pages 102 and 103). The Registered Postal Receipts for the letters sent to the King and Rana Prime Minister Sri 3 Maharajadhiraj are scarce and hard to find. Below are the descriptions of a few interesting items from my collection.

Description of the Receipts

Figure 1: This is a letter receipt posted on VS 1992 chaitra 8 gatey = A.D. 1936/3/22 tied by the famous Birgunj fancy transitional postmark cancellation without date on it. The letter was sent to Sri 3 Maharaja of Nepal.

This receipt was for the use of parcels only which was crossed out (first line) and "Ra" was written by ink meaning "registered letter receipt to be given to the sender". The second line says that all efforts will be done to find it intact if it is lost or damaged. The third line is for the registration number, weight, postage charge and the posting date. The fourth and fifth lines are for the name and address of the sender. The sixth and seventh lines are for the recipient's name and address which is Sri 3 Maharaja Ka Hajurma. The eighth line is for the signature of the postal clerk and the last line says that the letter has seven wax seals on it.

Figure 2: The cancellation and printing details are as for Figure 1, except that instead of being for a parcel the first line reads "registry receipt to be given to the sender". The letter was sent to the west commander general (Pa. Ka. Ja.) Mohan Shamsheer c/o Kharga Nisana office Nepal, posted on VS 1992/1/27/5 = A.D. 1935/5/11.

Figure 3: In this receipt form the details of the first two lines are slightly changed. The first line says "this is to be kept at parcel dispatch office" tied with a Box Devanagari registration cachet of the Birgunj Exchange Office. The second line is for the details of the posted item and the third line is for the registration number, weight, charge and date. The letter for this receipt was posted to Sri 3 Maharaja through Guthi management office on VS 1996/11/1/5 = A.D. 1940/2/15.

Figure 4: This revised form has the first line very clearly printed "receipt for the registry" with the Birgunj Exchange Office cachet, as in Figure 3, at the left corner. The second and third lines interchanged the details. The posting date was VS 1996/7/7/5 = A.D. 1939/10/21 and the letter was sent to commander general Hiranya Shamsheer Jung Bahadur Rana. This form has separate boxes for the recipient and delivery date cancellations at the right hand side.

All of the above receipt forms were printed on native hand made paper.

Figure 5: Sometimes when printed receipts were not available, the postal clerk had to write the entire receipt by hand. This hand written form on machine made paper has the Birgunj Exchange Office cachet cancellation and the registration number is 1877, posted on VS 12/6/3/2 = A.D. 1955/9/17. It was addressed to Sri 5 Sarkar Ka Hajurma (His Majesty King Mahendra) at Narayanhitti Royal Palace, Nepal.

Figure 6: Due to the short supply of printed receipt forms as well as the shortage of writing paper, the postal clerk sometimes had to use the back side of used native paper to make a hand written receipt. This form has registration number 1988. It was posted on VS 2008/8/3/1 = A.D. 1951/11/17 and tied by the Birgunj Exchange Office cachet cancellation.

Figures 7 and 8: These two modern multi purpose receipt forms on machine made paper were used to send letters to Sri 5 Maharaja (His Majesty King Mahendra) at Sawari Camp, Simra (a small village which has the airport of Birgunj) and were posted at Birgunj on 31

January 1965. They use the bilingual postmark (the first standardized cancellation used throughout the country) which uses the Gregorian calendar instead of the Bikram Sambat calendar.

Figure 1 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - IMAKADU
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 1

Figure 2 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - श्री ५ महाराज
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 2

Figure 3 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - श्री ५ महाराज
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 3

Figure 4 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - श्री ५ महाराज
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 4

Figure 5 shows handwritten text and signatures in Nepali, including a circular postmark from Birgunj.

Figure 5

Figure 6 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - श्री ५ महाराज
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 6

Figure 7 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - श्री ५ महाराज
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 7

Figure 8 is a receipt form with the following fields and handwritten entries:

- नाम: (Name) - श्री ५ महाराज
- पता: (Address) - SIMRA
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज
- व्यक्ति: (Person) - श्री ५ महाराज

Figure 8

Captain Bennett Sends A Letter from HQ
1933 Flight Over Everest
by Armand E. Singer

Unlike the 1933 climbing expedition to Everest, the Houston-Mount Everest Expedition was a huge success. Captain R. A. Bennett, Medical Officer, writes this interesting account to a Colonel Worthington. It must be remembered that in 1933 a flight rising over thirty thousand feet was something very special. Note that, as well, there is a mention of a flight over Kanchenjunga, April 4. Collectors of mountaineering take notice.

The tone of Bennett's letter is effusively sunny. There were, however, problems not even hinted at here. I hope in the near future to publish from another correspondence a somewhat darker picture. The official account is *First over Everest: The Houston-Mount Everest Expedition 1933*. by Fellows, Stewart Blacker, Etherton, and the Marquees of Douglas and Clydesdale (London 1933).

The bracketed additions are mine.

RAJ DARBHANGA

Purnea

5-4-33 [=April 5, 1933]

Dear Colonel Worthington,

I thought I should write and let you know how I am getting on here. When I arrived, I found that we were to live in comparative luxury. The Maharaja of Darbhanga lent the expedition this big house and we live in quite good style here. The aerodrome is about nine miles away, and there is a fleet of cars to take us there and back at any time. The party numbers twenty five; there are about ten Gaumont Cinema men making a picture of the whole show. One of them flew over Everest taking movie pictures of it. It is going to be a very big picture, starting from the manufacture of the aeroplanes, and ending with the flight over Everest. It will be released in a few months and I'm sure it will be a wonderful picture.

The aeronautical correspondent of the "Times" is also here, so I have had a very interesting time studying the workings of both the cinema and the press.

Everybody is very nice a cheery, and we are a very happy household. The two chief pilots, Clydesdale and Macintyre, are charming fellows. Air Commodore and Mrs. Fellows are two of the nicest people one could wish to meet.

The flight over Everest was a great success [3 April]. The two aeroplanes went over, with Clydesdale and Col. Blacker in one, and Macintyre, and Bonnett, the cinema photographer, in the other. They took only three hours to fly over and back. I have seen the photographs, and they are wonderful. There are one or two of the summit of Everest, which are magnificent. The two pilots and Col. Blacker felt quite fit when they returned, but unfortunately something went wrong with Bonnett's oxygen supply when he was over the mountain, at a height of about 32000 feet. He felt very sick and weak, but made a marvelously quick recovery. Although he was losing all his oxygen, he managed to go on taking photographs.

Yesterday, Air Commodore Fellowes and Ellison, flew over Kichenjunga, which is only a few hundred feet lower than Everest.

Ellison returned alone, having lost the Air Commodore over the mountain. We had a very few anxious hours wondering what had happened to him, but he landed at Dinajpur, so everything is alright.

Air Commodore Fellowes took me up to have a look at the mountains. We went up about 12000 feet, and the sight of Everest and Makalu, peering out of the clouds, miles above us, was magnificent. It was my first flight in an aeroplane, and a very thrilling one.

I haven't had much to do in the medical line. Everybody has been very fit, but later on. This place becomes very unhealthy, malaria and kala-agar being the chief diseases here. I expect the expedition to end about the 10th or 12th of this month, so we shall be away before the unhealthy season starts.

They are going to do a few more flights, mostly over the lower mountains. I don't know whether they will do Everest a second time [they did: a mountain flight, and a second over Everest]. The obstacle is the wind, which is usually over 100 miles an hour at that height. The maximum they attempt to fly at, is about 50.

I haven't had any opportunities of doing research work. They couldn't run to a microscope etc., money being very tight. Really, they are so well fitted with electricity, heated clothing, and they get a continuous supply of oxygen, that a short flight at over 30000 feet does not affect them in the least. As a matter of fact, they tell me that they feel very exhilarated by the oxygen.

There is a large pool of water at the aerodrome which we use as a bathing pool. A diving board was fixed up, and we were having a most enjoyable time swimming about, when, to our horror, we found that a mugga ["mugger" - a big crocodile] was keeping us company! We are now trying to shoot it [later, they did].

Would you give my kindest regards to Mrs. Worthington.

Yours sincerely,

RA Bennet

Editor's note: Armand also sent a copy of the actual letter which I have not copied into *PH*. We look forward to the article from another correspondent that Armand mentions in his introduction.

The following letter was sent to me by Colin Hepper. It raises several points that need to be addressed.

6-1-03

Dear Mr. Hepper

Please find enclosed my dues for 2003.

I must say to you that after many weeks of thinking, I have decided to carry on with *Postal Himal*. As a new collector of Tibet I find that the journal does not give enough news or information about the stamps and postal history of Tibet and concentrates more on Nepal, which for me and most other Tibet collectors, is so frustrating.

I would have thought that the many old and very experienced collectors of Tibet would have had more to say than they do. Also there is no new material at all on offer from anyone.

All of the new members of Tibet I feel need to be kept informed of material for sale or of any finds old or new.

I have found over the last twelve months that there is no Tibet stamps or postal history for sale anywhere in the UK for collectors such as myself. It would seem that Tibet is restricted to a small band of wealthy collectors who have control of most of what goes on sale, leaving the poor ordinary collector out on the limb.

I will give this year one more 'go' and if there is still no material on the market I will consider selling my Tibet collection.

Best wishes

F. C. Malpas
22 Whiston Ave.
Wolverhampton
WV11 2HQ
England

Members, and especially those who collect Tibet, how would you respond to Mr. Malpas? Speaking as the editor, I would say that he is correct on the lack of articles (**please see article on page 12**). I am also very frustrated on the lack of articles on any subject from any of our members except for these very few who contribute on a fairly regular basis. I believe that both Alevizos and Flack have material for sale. There is also Sukhani Europhil out of India who have auctions. While the great majority of their items are India, they usually have some lots of Nepal and Tibet. (**This is not an endorsement of any of the names mentioned here**). If any member would care to respond to Mr. Malpas through this Journal, I would be pleased to publish their reply. If you wish to respond directly to him at the above address, I am sure that he would like to hear from you

I would also ask members to please send me articles on Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim or Bhutan.

Statement of Accounts
from Colin Hepper

THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

Statement of accounts - USA (\$)

Year - 1st January 2002 - 31 December 2002

	Income		Expenditure
Subscriptions	1284.50		
Postal Himal-Back Issues	170.00	Postal Himal Printing	521.68
Trans. From Savings Account	600.00	Postal Himal Postage	2671.83
Donation	25.00	Miscellaneous	100.00
		Bank Charge	
TOTAL	2079.50	TOTAL	3293.51
BALANCE	-1214.01		
Savings Account	1031.65	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3293.51
TOTAL	-182.36		

Statement of Accounts - Europe (£)

Year - 1st January 2002 - 31 December 2002

Income		Expenditure	
Bank Interest	5.13	Photocopying	15.00
Subscriptions	267.00	Postage	25.43
		ABPS Subs.	15.60
Balance Fwd.	3389.56		
Total	3661.69	Total	56.03
Life Members Account	3050.00		
TOTAL INCOME	6711.69	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	56.03
BALANCE	6655.66		
COMBINED TOTAL	£'s Sterling		
USA converted to £'s	-121.57		
Europe	6655.66		
TOTAL	6534.09		

An Old Collector Visits Tibet

by William J. Thomas

It is not often in our lives that we get the opportunity to fulfill our childhood dreams. This past September [editor, 1992] I did just that!! When I began to collect stamps in the early forties I was attracted to exotic countries and sought out those stamps from exotic places such as Danzig, Afghanistan, Persia, Tannu Touva and others. For a long time I looked at a blank space under the heading of Tibet. In vain I requested dealer after dealer to send me some Tibetan stamps. In lieu of stamps I began to search out books and read about this strange and forbidden country of lamas, yaks and the Potala Palace. Finally, I was able to locate some stamps from a man in New York who found them for me at a dealer there.

By then I was "hooked" on Tibet and the interest has continued to this day. When the possibility of taking a trip surface earlier this year [editor, 1992] I jumped at it. Seldom does reality match dreams, but I have to say that Tibet was up to my dreams and expectations. The people, far from being cowed by the Chinese occupation, go on with their lives as though nothing has changed for the last 500 years.

The Tibetan government had set up a postal system and issued stamps in 1912 and this postal system continued to function until supplanted by the Chinese Postal System in the 1950's. Tibet issued 23 different stamps with innumerable color and paper as well as design variations. Letters within Tibet were carried by relay runners who carried spears with bells on them as an indication of their rank. Each runner carried the mail 4 to 6 miles usually by foot unless the need for an urgent Government dispatch warranted the use of a horse by the runner. Letters destined for foreign countries were turned over to the British and later Indian mail service in Gyantse. From Gyantse mail moved down the ancient caravan route through

Sikkim and into the efficient British Indian Postal System.

This old system of the Tibetan postal system has completely vanished with Chinese stamps replacing Tibetan ones and post offices like those pictured in the accompanying photos replacing the now forgotten Tibetan post offices.

The Chinese do not maintain post offices in each Tibetan village, but accumulate the mail at major hub post offices such as Xigatze and Lhasa and then send the mail out by motor transport such as a bus or truck to the remote villages. For towns and villages in sparsely populated western Tibet there might be months between mail deliveries. However, I will say this; when you mail anything in Tibet with the proper postage affixed it will get delivered. I have attached post card copies which have been sent from various towns and villages across Tibet.

One thing which came as a bit of a surprise, I brought a strip of 10 stamps to send post cards back to the US. After licking them and putting them on the cards I found they dropped off; NO GUM! But the ever practical Chinese had glue pots on the tables in the post office for any of their stamps without gum.

In the bazaars of Lhasa or Gyantse or Xigatze you can buy coins issued by the old Tibetan government and you can buy paper money issued by old Tibet. But when you ask about stamps you get a very blank stare! None of the Tibetans I came into contact with could remember the old Tibetan stamps. So now, we the philatelists of the world, must be the keepers of part of the heritage of old Tibet and its stamps which pictured something that looked like anything but the lion it was supposed to be.

3/9/93

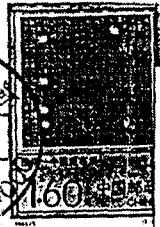
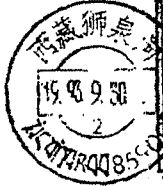
Wen Ma

POST CARD

Shipvamber.

Our 1st P.O. was Pertze but it was Sunday & it was closed. We are at the most shabby hotel imaginable. Marvellous drive & tomorrow our circum-bulation of Kailas. A geologist's dream. are truly on the road world. Our Sherpas & food food & our drivers best in the world.

Xegar Monastery



9-18-93
LHASA



Hi:
Arrived Today in good shape. Tired and a bit

BILL TH

Saper

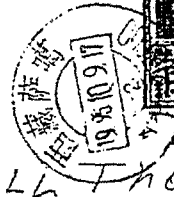
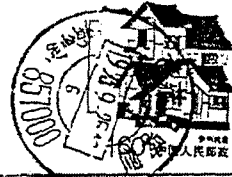
8/10/93

POST CARD

XIGATZE, TIBET
9-22-93 POST CARD

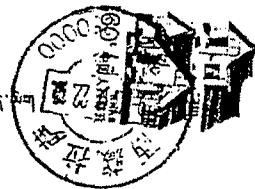
Hi:
Leaving here tomorrow for Himalayas. Time trip has been cancelled. Relations easy about what the and his glad he could

Re



LL Thomas

LHASA, TIBET
9-21-93
中国人民邮政明信片
Postcard
People's Republic of China



GYANTSE, TIBET
9-21-93 POST CARD

10/10/93

Zhangmu. Card POST CARD
#3. ZHANGMU, TIBET

It's Sunday but the hotel will post this card tomorrow. We continue on the bridge to K.M. I'll mail back your remaining card

Bill

BILL THOMAS
413 W. GARTNER

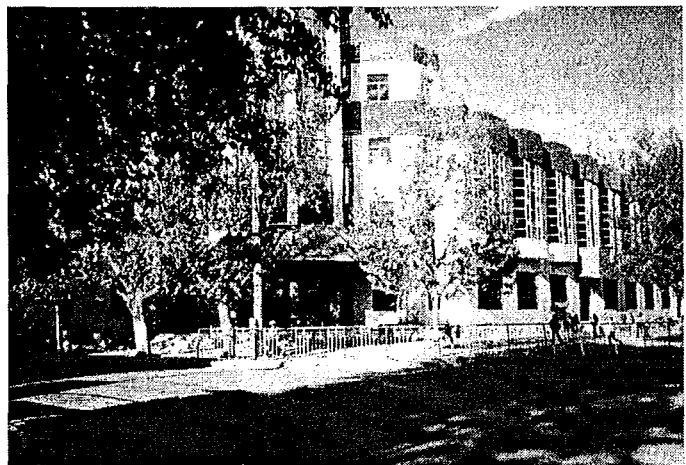
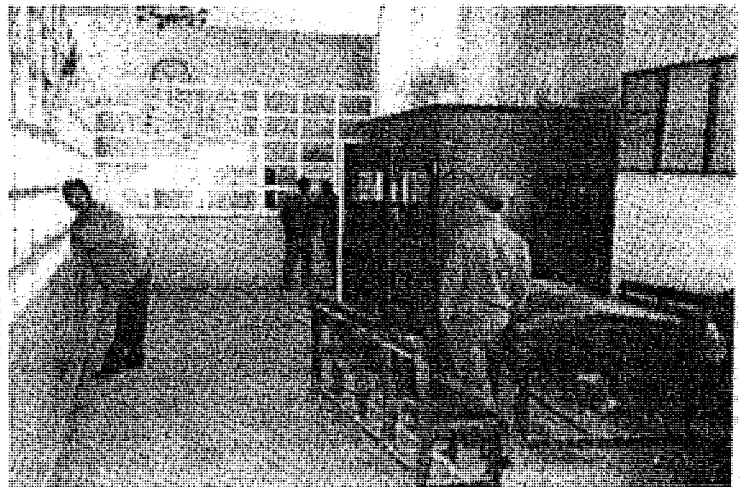
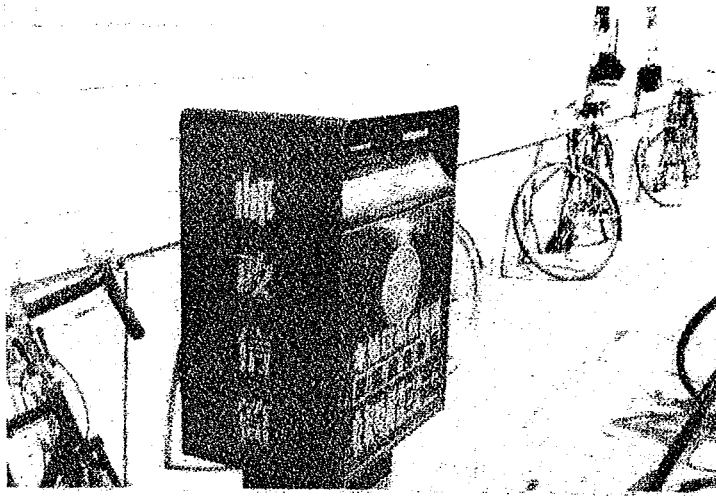


THOMAS J. THOMAS
W. Gartner Rd.
rville, Il. (60540)
U.S.A.

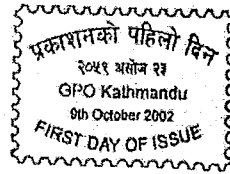
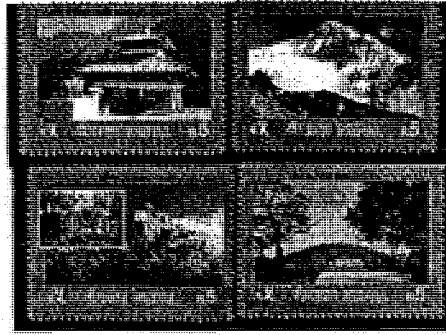
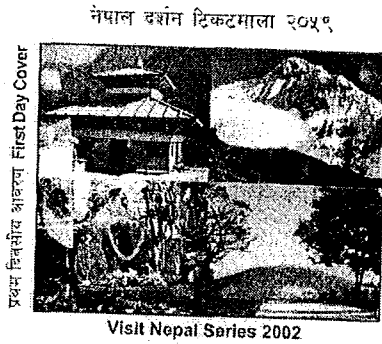
RS. DOROTHY J. THOMAS
13 W. Gartner Rd.
aperville, Il. 60540
.S.A.



Published by The First & Telecommunications Administration of Tibet Autonomous Region



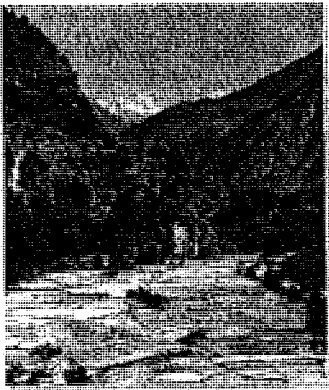
Post Office, Lhasa, Tibet



Technical Details

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| 1) Subject | : Visit Nepal Series | 7) Quantity | : One Million each |
| a) Pathibhara Devasthan, Tapiejung | | 8) Format | : Horizontal |
| b) Galeshwor Madadevsthan, Myagdi | | 9) Paper | : High Quality Stamp Paper |
| c) Ramgram Stupa, Nawalparasi | | 10) Designer | : K. K. Kamacharya |
| d) Mt. Nilgiri, Mustang | | 11) Printer | : Austrian Government Printing Office
Vienna, Austria |
| 2) Denomination | : R. 5 each | | |
| 3) Colour | : Four colour each | | |
| 4) Sheet Composition | : 50 stamps in each sheet | | |
| 5) Size | : 30 x 40 mm. | | |
| 6) Process | : Offset Lithography | | |

प्रथम दिवसीय आवरण First Day Cover



अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय पर्वतीय वर्ष २०५९
International Year of Mountains 2002



Technical Details

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------|--|
| 1) Subject | : International Year of Mountains 2002 | 7) Quantity | : One Million |
| 2) Denomination | : R. 5 | 8) Format | : Vertical |
| 3) Colour | : Four | 9) Paper | : High Quality Stamp Paper |
| 4) Sheet Composition | : 50 stamps in each sheet | 10) Designer | : M. N. Rana |
| 5) Size | : 30 x 40 mm. | 11) Printer | : Austrian Government Printing Office
Vienna, Austria |
| 6) Process | : Offset Lithography | | |

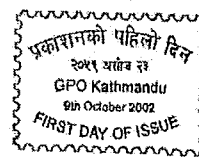
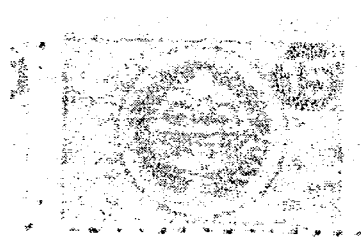
First Day Covers courtesy of HMG/N Postal Services Department Nepal Philatelic Bureau, Kathmandu

Rare Unknown 'Stamps'

by Dick van der Wateren

One of my friends sent me a photocopy of a sheet of 50 stamps with what looks like a bicycle in a circle, denomination 15.

The friend is a thematic (bicycles) collector and is, of course, interested to know if the 'stamps' are really stamps and what country issued them. He thinks that they are from a Himalayan country. If anyone has seen these stamps and knows where they were used and the purpose please contact me (Ysbaanweg 8, 8391 HZ Noorwolde, Netherlands) or our editor. Thanks in advance.



Technical Details

Subject : Visit Nepal Series

- a) Pathibhara Devasthan, Taplejung
- b) Galeswor Mahadevsthan, Myagdi
- c) Ramgram Stupa, Nawalparasi
- d) Mt. Nilgiri, Mustang

Denomination : R. 5 each

Colour : Four
Composition : 50 Stamps per sheet
Size : 30 x 40 mm.
Process : Offset Lithography
Quantity : One Million

Format : Horizontal
Paper : High Quality Stamp
Designer : K. K. Karmacharya
Printer : Austrian Gov't
Printing Office
Vienna, Austria

प्रथम दिनको शतव्य First Day Cover



Technical Details

Subject : International Year of Mountains 2002

Denomination : R. 5
Colour : Four
Composition : 50 Stamps per sheet
Size : 30 x 40 mm.
Process : Offset lithography
Quantity : One Million
Format : Vertical
Paper : High Quality Stamp
Paper

Designer : M. N. Rana
Printer : Austrian Gov't Printing
Office, Vienna, Austria

Thanks to HMG Nepal Philatelic Bureau for the above First Day Covers