

POSTAL HIMAL

QUARTERLY OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



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OUR COVER ILLUSTRATION: is a drawing of the Medical School in Lhasa, Tibet. It is autographed by the artist, Heinrich Harrer, whom most of you will remember for his book "Seven Years in Tibet" published in 1954 as a book of the month club selection. Kurt H. Dahnke mentions Mr. Harrer in his article starting on page 38 of this issue.

Dear Friends,

I am sorry to report that Mr. Thomas Matthiesen has regretfully resigned his position as publisher of Postal Himal. Tom has contributed much to our publication during the more than five years he has served in his capacity. His knowledge of art, photography, layout & printing have made our publication what it is today--a fine & respected addition to our philatelic literature. We shall miss him, although I know that he will continue to give us suggestions & advice. If you find this issue a bit below our usual standard, I trust that you will have patience with me while I attempt to fill the gap.

Frank Vignola has returned from Australia and AUSIPEX '84 and he promises us a report on that international show in an early issue. He also took time to visit New Zealand & sent me a souvenir card of a helicopter trip to famed Mt. Cook.--Frank will be preparing for that Eastern Regional meeting at RIPEX XX next April at which he hopes to meet many of you--particularly from the eastern part of the USA.

With no auction list or other enclosures with this issue, we have a full 16-page number and welcome a new author to our pages--the noted Tibet authority Kurt H. Dahnke, and we thank Rev. Peter Garland for help with translation from the German.

The literature judges at STAmPSHOW 84 had two criticisms of Postal Himal: 1) poor quality in some illustrations, and 2) not enough content of research quality.--Our publication has come a long way since Colin Hepper started it, and you, dear readers, can help us make it even better. All can contribute, and even new members can let us know what they want more of in future issues.

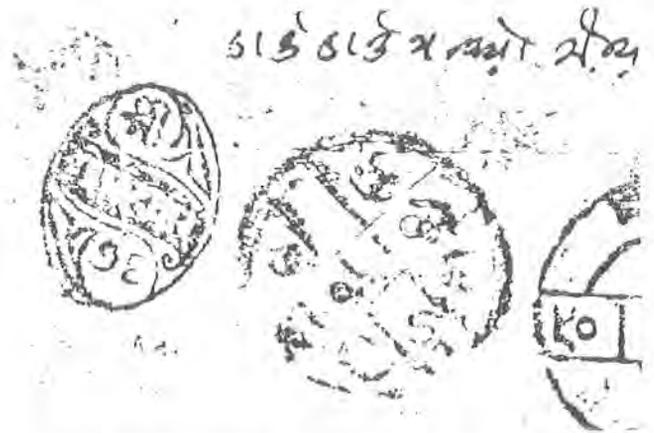
And don't forget to send your donated lots to Colin Hepper for our 1985 fund raising auction. Help us keep the cost of membership within the reach of every collector but sending at least one item to Colin as part of our team effort.

Thank you all for your support.

Lester A. Michel

ANOTHER NEPAL SEAL REPORTED

The illustration of an oval Nepal seal on the cover of Postal Himal No. 37, First Quarter 1984, brought a response from Mr. S. L. Shrestha, who states: "I was excited by the illustration on the cover of Postal Himal No. 37 and the apparent adaptation of the 1933 'Gorkha Darbar' seal to censorship usage. The official stampless registered cover, illustrated below, was mailed from Gorkha to the Commander-in-Chief at Kathmandu, informing him of the Great Earthquake which occurred on 1990 Magh 2 B.S. (1933 A.D.). The quake, which occurred at 2:30 PM and which lasted four to five minutes, did serious damage to the Gorkha palace."



We note that the size, shape & design of this seal is virtually the same as that of the seal discussed in Mr. Mulmi's article (PH No. 37, pp. 5,6). Mr. Shrestha, a serious student of Nepal philately for many years, goes on to state that he had not previously seen the adaptation of this seal for censorship purposes & wishes to thank Mr. Mulmi for his contribution.

We observe that, in the above illustration, the Gorkha cancellation is dated 90/10/4 B.S., which converts to ca. 17 January 1934 A.D., using Dr. W. Hellrigl's conversion method, and that the Kathmandu receiving mark is dated two days later. The oval seal clearly shows the year digits '79,' indicating that it was in use from the early 1920s. (We note, also, that the 1983 supplement to S. L. Shrestha's Nepal Stamp Album is now available.--Ed.)

EXHIBITION NEWS

Our exhibit of Postal Himal in the literature section of STaMpsHOW '84 in Dallas on 23-26 August was awarded a SILVER-BRONZE medal. Nearly 60 entries in this most prestigious literature competition received critical judging. We noted that only one GOLD medal was awarded and Keith A. Wagner, Executive Director of the American Philatelic Society, in his letter announcing the award, stated in part: "You will find yourself in extremely good company,"--Incidentally, your editor has supplied the American Philatelic Research Library of the APS with a complete file of Postal Himal & its prior newsletters. In expressing their thanks for this gift, officers of the APRL stated that these items were being bound together in a single volume to better preserve them for use by philatelic students and historians. We now send the current issues of Postal Himal to the APRL in exchange for their quarterly titled "Philatelic Literature Review."

Although we were unable to attend STaMpsHOW '84, John A. Young, Jr. did attend and continued his winning ways by receiving a GOLD for his Nepal exhibit in the open competition.--Jack also entered both of his exhibits in an important Pennsylvania show the following month, which brought us this report:

NEPAL & TIBET TAKE VERMEILS AT SEPAD
--Alan Warren

Separate exhibits on Nepal and Tibet entered at SEPAD's Philadelphia show in September won VERMEIL medals for John A. Young, Jr. The Nepal exhibit began with 19th century pre-stamp letters followed by stampless official correspondence used during the stamp period with examples as recent as 1970. The entry also contained the stamps of the first issue with examples of shades, multiple pieces, sheets and on cover. The Shri Pashupati issues were also shown with examples of proofs, mint & used blocks and covers.

Young's Tibet showing started with early stampless covers including official letters from Tibet to Nepal, followed by some covers sent to Col. Fran-

cis Younghusband at the Tibet Frontier Commission. The 1911 Chinese post office issue was represented with mint examples as well as used on covers. The first issue of Tibet was seen with mint, used, sheets and even counterfeit examples. The 1914 issue was represented including forgeries of those two stamps.

The third issue was extensively shown with pin-perforated examples, sheets & counterfeits. A rare shade of the one trangka was shown in full sheet--almost chocolate brown. Many examples of the third issue were shown on cover as well. (A report on SEPAD '84 which appeared in Stamp Collector for 15 October also noted that Jack's Nepal exhibit earned him the Philadelphia Stamp Club Liberty Bell Award. Congratulation, Jack--and thank you for keeping Nepal & Tibet philately before the philatelic public.--Ed.)

REGIONAL MEETING AT RIPEX XX

A recent letter from Raymond C. Gailaguet (15 Fletcher St., Rumford, RI 02916), Chairman of this important show informs us that the Regional Meeting of the Nepal & Tibet Study Circle will be held at 11 AM on Sunday, 21 April 1985. Frank Vignola will be the featured speaker and, as reported in Postal Himal No. 38, will be one of the judges at the exhibition. The prospectus indicates that one of the classifications (#5) is reserved for Thai & Nepal exhibits. This would be a fine opportunity to exhibit and to attend the first regional meeting of our Study Circle to be held on the East coast. A prospectus can be obtained by writing to the Chairman, or to your editor.



EXHIBITION NEWS (concluded)--

REGIONAL MEETING IN EDINBURGH

Colin Hepper reports on his meeting with three Study Circle members in Scotland: "We had a very interesting meeting lasting over three hours and, because they were fairly new collectors to Nepal, I was able to help them with identification of the early classic issues, including forgeries. I also took along some classic issues to show them the range of "standard" colour shades and some of the flaws & damaged cliches, finishing off with postal history from 1800 to 1910.

"It was a really very pleasant afternoon, with the meeting being held in Robert Murray's Stamp Shop..... John Reid and David Innes are both school teachers and all three started to collect Nepal & Tibet about three years ago--well worth the 300-mile trip to meet them." (See picture on page 29.)

STAmPSHOW '84 ACTIVITIES

--Ken Jones

(Extracted from a letter sent to Roger Skinner after the show.--Ed.)

Held in Dallas on the 23rd through the 26th of August, this annual APS show provided another opportunity for Study Circle members to get together. Hosted by local Texas member Ken Jones, two members came quite a distance. Vernon Richards from Victoria, BC (Canada), and one who must now qualify for the title of 'roving ambassador,' John Young of Devon, Pennsylvania. Louis Bornmann from Lancaster, Texas, also attended to fill in some local color.

The meeting was started by a showing of Ken Jones' new slide program titled "PHILATELY OF NEPAL," which is designed to show folks unfamiliar with Nepal some of the interesting aspects of a collection of this country. Ken is now making duplicate slides to be made available for other new collectors & clubs to use. You will read more about this slide program in future issues of Postal Himal, I am sure.

Vernon Richards showed a copy of a Human Rights Issue (yellow printing) with a normal stamp on one side and a remarkable mirror print on the reverse.

The printing was too sharp to be an off-set, and we surmised that, during printing, an inked impression was transferred to the roller, allowing both sides of some stamps to be inked in one pass. In any case, there should be more copies out there!

A discussion of the so-called 'bamboo letters' ensued. These odd shaped items, 1-2 inches wide, 12-14 inches long, with a seal, are certainly interesting items. So far, it has been hard to find dates in the text to establish a period of use. We encourage members to send articles to our editor--even short ones--to enlighten us about them.

Louis asked for more information about the Court Fee stamps, which Ken will provide from his index to Postal Himal. Perhaps it is time for a survey of all the denominations & colors held by members.

One encouraging aspect of the show was the fact that all noted that several of the dealers had Nepal and Tibet material for sale! Even a few classic items were to be seen in dealer's hands. Perhaps our publicity about the Study Circle meeting has prompted more dealers to carry material. For whatever reason, we encourage it even more!

A good roundtable discussion was had by all, and it heightens our resolve to hold more meetings around the country at as many APS EXHIBITIONS as may be possible. (Note that the Spring Meeting of the APS will be held in conjunction with RIPEX XX next April and that STAmPSHOW '85 is to be held in southern California next August.--Ed.)



KATHMANDU

AUTHENTICATING NEPAL-TIBET STAMPS AND
COVERS

--Armand E. Singer

In a word--how to tell the real thing from the fakes? A problem simple to formulate but devilishly hard to solve. Obviously, the faking of stamps and covers has been going on all over the collectors' world since the beginnings of the hobby, but I submit that for areas such as Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, etc.--most of native Asia, actually--the problem is especially virulent. And for good reasons:

1) The language barrier. For most of us dwellers in the West, the preponderance of items from Europe, Latin America, Africa, or the British Colonies, past & present, involve only a few languages (mainly English, German, French, Spanish & Italian), and those left over, such as the Scandinavian Group, Dutch, Portuguese, for instance, fairly closely resemble one or more of the first set. Many of us study French, German or Spanish in school. For the remainder--Russian, Czech, Hebrew, Greek, Hungarian and the like--it is usually not difficult to find translators among our large immigrant populations. Arabic can sometimes prove more of a problem. But the Asian languages are more likely to prove terra incognita, even Chinese or Japanese, and for these at least we can find native speakers. In any event, most Asiatic tongues are written with non-roman characters; even worse, Chinese and Japanese are ideographic, not phonetic. All this limits most Western collectors to recognizing town names, a few standard philatelic phrases, the number systems (and even here, lunar or Devanagiri calendars make for their own special woes). The multiple scripts of Tibet, in addition, are difficult to decipher, even for those familiar with Tibetan printed characters.

2) In the particular cases of Nepal & Tibet, the rough printing methods make counterfeits harder to differentiate from the genuine article.

3) New finds are forever cropping up, particularly in Tibet: one-sang greens, "officials," telegraph & revenue stamps etc., without our having access to re-

liable government files or sources against which to verify them. In general, for both countries, there is lacking a large body of unarguable knowledge.

4) The really knowledgeable dealers & auctioneers, out of a scant half dozen at best who can qualify for the title (names on private request!) often differ in their assessment of the genuineness of any given example.

5) Most of the collectors in our area of interest lack expertise in the use of scientific research tools: chemical ink & paper analyses (even where experts exist, we need far more data on the characteristics of the genuine), use of infrared, ultraviolet, X-rays and the like.

6) Natives of Nepal and Tibet--some of them at least--tend to exhibit a different philosophy concerning what is permissible with cancels, dates, overprints, etc. Should a philatelist inquire as to whether, let us say, a certain stamp is known with overprint inverted or a cover with double postage, he could in time very likely receive just such an item in the mail. This error-on-order, example-on-demand attitude is known by most of us to exist, even if it is rarely admitted in print. The idea behind it seems to be: if the collector wants such an item it can be supplied to him. The rubber stamp, the postage stamps are available. The desired items can be fabricated. There is no counterfeiting or bogus item involved, merely some creative engineering! Many Easterners deplore the practice as much as the rest of us, but, unfortunately, far from all of us regard it as a philatelic sin!

7) The use of colored Xerox-type duplicators is increasingly making it difficult to distinguish the copies from the original singles & sheets. The better copies of the 1933 Tibet sheets, for instance, are very hard to identify unless one has a verified original (and in the identical printing) before him.

8) The existence of outdated but undestroyed cancellors from years back (in the case of Tibet for sure), usable on native papers that look as old or as new the day they are turned out as they

Singer, AUTHENTICATING (concluded)--

will fifty years later, makes authenticating the age of covers a risky enterprise.

What then are our weapons of defense? A Tibet or Nepal cover, to take an example, selling for \$25 to \$200 and more, might be asked to possess these following evidences of genuineness: Is it soiled, as the real ones most often are? Are the stamps genuine? Does it look its age? Are the rates correct for the postmark date (assuming that it bears a date)? Are the markings and handwriting satisfactory? Have stamps been added and struck with a later cancel? Are papers and inks as they should be? Even if all these criteria check out perfectly, however, not one is incapable of being faked. We are saved, if at all, by the degree of laziness and/or ignorance of the forger, and even more, by a sort of flying-by-the-seat-of-one's-pants approach to each cover or item we vet. We need a large reference collection of fakes & counterfeits as well, which luckily most of us have (we probably paid for many of them as genuine!). And a large dose of humility. Woe betide the expert who comes to believe in the myth of his own infallibility.

N E P A L F O R S A L E

1) Collection of 20 early postcards including H & G Nos: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 13a, 14, 15, 16 (double frame), 17 & 18 all unused, plus 10, 12 & 13a used with Kathmandu postmark (Hellrigl C70)
Price: 4,500 DM
2) Unmounted mint collection of blocks of 4, modern Nepal from October 1949 to April 1978. Complete except for 6 values: 2p + 1r King, 1r Map & 20p + 50p + 1r Crown
Price: 3,000 DM
3) Complete sheet set of King Mahendra, unmounted mint:
1962: 1, 2, 5, 10, 40 & 75p + 2, 5r
1966: 3p + 10r (S.G. Nos. 157-164a
1967: 75p or Scott Nos. 144-151a + 199)
Price: 1,300 DM
4) Sheet of Second Children's Day 1961, unmounted, mint, no folds & no perf separations
Price: 600 DM
For further details write to: Prof. Dr. Axel Werner, Römerberg 23, D-6200 Wiesbaden, West Germany.



Study Circle Meeting in Edinburgh: (reading from left to right)

Colin Hepper
John Reid
Robert Murray
David Innes

See article on page 27.



TIBETAN CURRENCY EXPLAINED

--N. G. Rhodes

Most philatelists are totally confused by the Tibetan monetary system. Reading Haverbeck gives some basic facts, but does nothing to explain how the system developed. In this article I hope that the system will, henceforth, make sense to readers.

The origin of the Tibetan currency system probably goes back to the 13th century, when the Chinese first sent silver in quantity to Tibet. This silver arrived in the form of ingots that were weighed according to the decimal system used in China. The Tibetans adopted the same weights, but gave them Tibetan names, as follows:-

- 100 sKar, pronounced "Kar" སྐར་ (སྐར)
- = 10 Sho, pronounced "Sho" ཤོ་ (ཤོ)
- = 1 Srang, pronounced "Sang" སྲང་ (སྲང)
- = 1 Chinese "Liang" or "Tael", or ca. 36 grams.

The system of trading silver by weight continued until the 17th century, when Nepalese coins became the common currency in Tibet. The Tibetans found these coins much more convenient than the silver ingots as they were a convenient size, and as they were accepted by the Nepalese at a standard value, they did not need to be weighed each time they changed hands. Their weight was roughly 1.5 Sho of silver, and they circulated at that value, although they were commonly called "Tangka" (1) or "Tam" () by the Tibetans. At this value 6 2/3 Tangkas were equal to 1 Srang.

These "Tangkas" were the only coins circulating in Tibet until the early 20th century, although, for small change, it became the practice to cut the coin into fractions of 1/3, 1/2 or 2/3. Including fractions, the coins circulating were, therefore:-

- 1/3 Tangka = 5 sKar, in Tibetan "རྟ་འཇམ་" pronounced "Kar-nga"
- 1/2 Tangka = 7.5 sKar, Tibetan "ཇེ་རྟ་མཚུང་" pronounced "Che-gye"
- 2/3 Tangka = 1 Sho, in Tibetan "ཤོ་གང་" pronounced "Sho-gang"
- 1 Tangka = in Tibetan "ཏམ་ཅིག་" pronounced "Tam-chi"

Readers should now look at their examples of the 1912 issue of Tibet, and will be able to recognize the denominations on the four higher value stamps, commencing at 6 o'clock and reading left to right. For accounting purposes the smallest cut coin was divided into half, called "Kha-gang" (ཁ་གང་), meaning "a part", and this was the denomination on the fifth stamp.

The following brief glossary shows exactly what each Tibetan word means:-

- ལྔ "nga" is the Tibetan word for "5"
- ཇེ "che" means "half"
- མཚུང་ "gye" means "eight" (Hence, "che-gye" means "half from eight, or 7.5, reminiscent of the German "halb acht".) (2)
- གང་ "gang" means "full" or "whole", so "Sho-gang" means a "full Sho"
- གཅིག་ "chi" means "one"

So it is just an ordinary decimal system with one foreign coin added. Simple isn't it!

Notes:

(1) Most philatelic works call this denomination a "trangka". The "r" is, in fact, silent, but is used by some Tibetan experts to distinguish the hard "t" in this word from the soft "t" which is more commonly found in Tibetan. I find the inclusion of the "r" confusing.

(2) In numerals, as on the 1933 issue, this is written as ~~8~~, i.e. an "8" with a line through it.



NEWS FROM SCOTT PUBLISHING COMPANY

Alan Warren has sent us a copy of a news release containing some information which may be of interest:

"Volume I of the 1985 Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue, covering the United States, United Nations, Great Britain and the Commonwealth, will be released on July 16 sporting a new cover and priced at \$20,....."

"Five unissued Nepal officials, which were sold as remainders at face value in 1983 after use of officials was discontinued, have been footnoted."

FOCUS ON FORGERIES - PART II
 --Wolfgang C. Hellrigl

The first Part of this series (cf. Postal Himal No. 35, pp. 34,35) has been successful in that several collectors have contacted me to report further covers bearing the recently forged Gyantse censor marking. This brings my total count to 8 covers and it is quite probable that more may have found their way into various collections.

To make matters worse, new forgeries of a variety of censor markings have since made their appearance. As far as I and other collectors are aware, all of these forgeries can be traced back to R. K. Lodha, of Kathmandu, an enterprising young man who obviously believes in censorship.....! While not all of the new forgeries are necessari-

ly connected with Tibet or Nepal, I still think it is important to show all types that have obviously emanated from the same workshop. I have no doubt that further types exist, so collectors are best advised to be more careful than ever before purchasing any censored covers. If anyone should come across a new type of forged handstamp, I would appreciate to be informed. The sooner we record these spurious markings the fewer problems they will create for collectors.

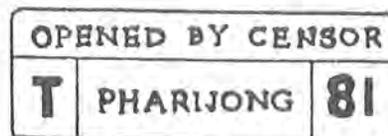
Here now are the new forgeries in question, some of which were first recorded & illustrated by K. Morenweiser (in "China-Philatelie", No. 62, pp. 75-80; June, 1984):



(seen on cover from Contai to Bombay, 1942)



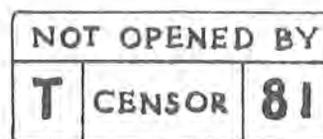
(seen on cover to Madura, 1960)



(seen on cover from India to Lhasa, 1927)



(seen on cover from Bombay to Rangoon, 1939)



(seen on cover from Benares to Lhasa, 1945)

Opened By Censor

(seen on cover from Assam to Kathmandu, 1953)



(seen on various postcards & covers from Kathmandu, dated as late as 1981!)

Hellrigl, FOCUS ON FORGERIES (concluded)

Recent auction sales in Europe & the USA included several forgeries of Nepal and Tibet. In particular, I noticed sheets of the so-called 1/2 anna Nepal "essay" at two leading Swiss auctions.

Worse than any forgery, the Nepal one rupee overprinted official stamp has been causing havoc at half a dozen auctions. Several recently purchased blocks & singles were sent to me for expertising. Most collectors now obtain this stamp at a certain discount from inflated catalogue prices, so their sole concern is that the overprint might be a forgery. They are utterly disappointed when told that this stamp is now available at face value.

By far the most interesting forgery I have seen for a long time is represented by a cover from Khasra, Nepal, to London bearing a combination of British-Indian stamps and a half anna stamp of Nepal. All adhesives are genuine but the cancellations - a SAWARI CAMP P.O. (of Khasra) postmark dated B.S. 68/9/12 and a British-Indian KING'S EMPEROR CAMP P.O. postmark dated 26 DEC. (1911) respectively - were cleverly forged.

The fact that the forger imitated my own drawing of the SAWARI CAMP postmark (cf. "The Native Postmarks of Nepal," p. 34) made it quite easy for me to spot a few faults in an otherwise very good imitation. The British-Indian postmark forgery is even better, featuring a break in the circle that also occurs in the genuine device!



forged SAWARI
CAMP P.O. (KHASRA)
cancellation



forged BRITISH-
INDIAN
cancellation

NEPAL OFFICIAL STAMPS NOW VALID FOR POSTAGE!

Mr. S. L. Shrestha has informed us that, since 18 March 1984, the Nepal Official stamps, which have been sold at face value for more than a year, have been used on all sorts of Official mail. The government decision was made on 23 February 1984, but no printed notice of this action was made available. Mr. Shrestha further notes that covers are seen using combinations of regular issue postage stamps and officials. We thank Mr. Shrestha, not only for the information, but for the examples illustrated below.



A U C T I O N * A C T I O N

--Lester A. Michel

In our last report under this heading (Postal Himal No. 35, pp. 30-32), with regard to a future sale by the Sun Philatelic Center, Inc., we stated that "The next sale is now scheduled for December 1983." In fact, auction #41 was held on 18 November. It included a good variety of stamps and postal history material for both Nepal & Tibet. The 16 lots of Nepal were listed with estimates ranging from \$20 to \$240, except for lot #568, valued at \$3,150. It was a full sheet of the now "infamous" Scott #015--the 1 Rupee overprinted Official stamp which was relatively scarce until the release of the stored stocks of Officials by the Nepalese Government last Spring (1983). Your editor wrote to our friends at the Sun Philatelic Center, apprising them of the facts and suggesting that the lot be withdrawn. We were quite pleased to receive a prompt reply which stated, in part: "We have had numerous complaints about the mentioned material and it will be withdrawn from auction." So, it is clear that your editor was not the only one to write concerning this lot and we wish to commend all of our readers who are helping to inform dealers and collectors about the confusing and unfortunate decision of the Nepalese authorities to release not only stored stocks of all issued Official stamps, but also overprinted varieties which were never issued nor used. Now we learn that, ca. a year after the release of these stamps, they have been authorized for use on official mail!!

The Tibet material (15 lots) offered in the 18 November auction, was also quite varied and included 9 lots of stamps, mostly in full sheets, five covers and one bank note. Estimates ranged from \$40 to more than \$2,000 for these lots, which were generally in fine condition.

The 42nd public auction by Sun Philatelic was held in San Francisco on 26 January 1984. Only 6 lots of Nepal were offered, including two small collections and a few covers. Estimates ranged from \$40 to more than \$400.

Two lots of Tibet--both shade varieties of the 2tr of the 1930s--were offered in this sale.

Beginning with the catalogue for Sale #43, the Sun Philatelic Center began to publish prices realized in the previous sale. So we can report that four of the five Nepal lots sold in auction #42 sold well below estimates, averaging slightly over 40% of the estimates. However, we note that these lots were stamps--mostly small collections. The remaining lot, consisting of a group of Pashupati covers, brought more than 30% more than the valuation.--The two Tibet lots received more interest. A mint margin block of 4 of the 2tr vermilion (Scott #12) went for \$140, its current catalogue valuation, while a full sheet of the 2tr red (Scott #17) valued at \$78, actually sold for \$320.

Nineteen lots of Nepal, in the Sun Auction #43, held on 12 April 1984, all sold below estimates, despite a good variety of stamps & postal history material, averaging about 30% of estimated valuations ranging from \$40 to more than \$350.

The ten Tibet lots in the same auction also sold below estimates, except for lot #546, an interesting combination cover from Gyantse to New York, bearing both Indian and Tibetan stamps. The average selling price for all lots was 47% of valuations ranging from \$40 to \$410.

The next Sun auction (#44), held on 28 June, offered 18 lots of Nepal which included a good variety of stamps and postal history material, valued from \$30 to \$100, not counting two modest collections estimated to be worth more than \$200 in one instance and \$376 in the other. These lots sold for well under the apparent catalogue valuations bringing \$32 and \$52, respectively. 15 remaining lots of Nepal sold from a bit above valuations to well below, bringing an average of slightly under 60% of valuations.

Four Tibet lots were offered. A one sang (Scott #6) in a RARE GREEN shade sold for \$125, against a valuation of \$900!! But a 1945 cover franked with a 4tr + a bisected 2tr, brought \$150, vs. an estimate of \$125. Two remaining covers valued at \$50 and \$250, sold for \$34 and \$100, respectively.

AUCTION ACTION (continued)--

Gold Medal Mail Sales (New York) has held several mail auctions since our last report. The first of these closed on 18 November 1983 & included 14 lots of Nepal stamps plus four lots of Tibet. The Nepal material included nothing issued prior to 1949 but contained a few interesting items, such as a full sheet of 4 of the 1960 Children's Day issue. We noted that the last lot consisted of a mint set of the Officials (Scott Nos. 01-011), valued at \$27.32--the values shown by Scott in both the 1983 and 1984 catalogs. It will be of interest to see when Scott catalogue prices will reflect the actions of the Nepal Government in releasing these at face value for a period of two years, beginning in mid-April 1983.

The first Tibet lot offered in that same sale was a mixed franking cover bearing four different Tibet stamps & three different Nepal stamps--including one issued no earlier than 1954. This obviously philatelic cover--if not actually fraudulent--was offered without a valuation. The remaining lots were stamps of the 1930s.

The next Gold Medal Mail Sales auction closed on 9 March 1984, offering 18 lots of Nepal stamps plus a similar number of Tibet lots. Among the Nepal lots, we noted the offering of the 1960 Children's Day sheet of 4 (imperforate) with an estimate of \$125.

The Tibet lots included three of the first native issue--three covers, one of which was a mixed franking item similar to the lot mentioned in our discussion of the November 1983 sale--plus a number of sheets & blocks of the issues of the 1930s. One cannot help but wonder about the authenticity of such material which seems to have proliferated in the past few years. The often sophisticated forgeries have been noted by Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl, who frequently writes articles on that subject for this publication and others.

A third Gold Medal Mail Sale, closing on 29 June 1984, included 22 lots of Nepal, mostly stamps in sets & groups, and no Tibet. The first six lots were used stamps from the classic period,

without indication of postal or telegraphic use. The remaining lots were mainly better stamps & sets issued from 1949 onward.

A fourth Gold Medal Mail Sale closed on 17 August 1984, offering 18 lots of Tibet, including a good variety of stamps, sets & sheets, plus two covers. Valuations ranged from \$30 to \$130 for these lots. No Nepal lots were included in this sale.

London & Brighton Stamp Auctions (England), in their Postal History Sale held on 2 December 1983, offered one lot (#1305) of Tibet--a fine appearing cover (illustrated on the back of the catalogue) franked with a pair of overprinted 2c Chinese stamps and dating from ca. 1911, sent from Lhasa to Gyantse. This lovely item was valued at 400 British pounds.

Another sale, held on 11 May 1984, included one lot of Nepal covers dated in the 1930s (seven in all) & valued at 45 pounds.

Finally, one interesting Tibet cover (registered mixed-franking via air from Yatung to the USA), Lot #1111, was offered in their September sale, with a valuation of 20 pounds.

The Stamp Collector's Guild (Hewlett, New York) offered two lots of mint Nepal stamps--1949 pictorial issue and 1954 map issue--in their mail sale which closed on 12 December 1983.

We received a copy of the Earl P. L. Apfelbaum, Inc., catalog for a Mail-Bid Sale (#182), which closed on 21 February 1984, in which 3 lots of Nepal stamps were offered, consisting of used examples of Scott #9, #10a (tete beche pair) and #16a (tete beche pair) with valuations corresponding to current Scott catalog figures of \$21, \$40 and \$57.50, respectively. We do not know what these lots actually brought, but relative newcomers to Nepal philately should realize that Scott cataloguing for the classic issues of Nepal is woefully inadequate and that, in general, does not distinguish between postal and telegraphic use.

Kover King Inc. (New York) specializes in postal history material with frequent public auctions. In Sale #110 held on 18 January 1984, three lots of

AUCTION ACTION (continued)--

On 1 March 1984 we received a Kover King Inc. catalog for a Net Price Sale, with prices to remain in effect until 30 April 1984. Interestingly, we noted three lots of Nepal mint cards offered with descriptions & valuations identical to those in the January auction!

A single lot, consisting of a signed card sent from Nepal by the 1960 Swiss Dhaulagiri Expedition, was offered in Kover King Inc. Auction Sale #115, which closed on 17 July. Their sale closing on 21 August illustrated a Tibet cover franked with a strip of 4 of the half-trangka purple (Scott #3) tied by two strikes of a faint cds.

David Feldman sent us catalogues for his Public Auction 36 (Zurich) to be held 29-30 March 1984. Only two lots of Nepal were offered, but 20 lots of Tibet were listed--all but one being postal history material. Starting bids ranging from "offer" to 1,000 Swiss francs were indicated, but an interesting feature at the back of the catalogue was a list of estimates of what each lot would bring. Here we learned that the average lot was expected to bring nearly double the starting bid. Fifteen of 22 lots from our area of interest were illustrated in this fine catalogue. This writer is not competent to comment on the quality of the Tibet items, but notes an interesting variety among the lots offered. The first of the two Nepal lots was a fine item--a registered cover from Kalaiya to Kathmandu, bearing four stamps--a 1a, a 2a & two 4a stamps. However, the description of the cover ("1886-89....apparently dated equiv 25.2.85") is probably in error, at least in the year digits "85," although it is not possible to tell from the illustration if the stamps are first issue or an early printing on good quality native paper. We do note, however, that the stamps are tied with 3 fine strikes of the Kalaiya killer (Hellrigl Type No. C36, with period of use listed as 1891-93).--The other Nepal item was a cover franked with Chinese stamps & cancels, addressed to Nepal.

In our last column under this heading (Postal Himal No. 35, pp. 30-32) we made reference to the George Alevizos Public

Auction Sale No. 42, held in Los Angeles on 8-10 November 1983. We can now report on the results. Fourteen Nepal lots sold at or above estimates, with the exception of two lots of modern errors. The better lots, such as #1899, #1900 & #1901, which featured fine early nineteenth century covers, brought 50% and more above the estimates!--The excellent variety of Tibet offerings did not, in general, sell at or above the valuations, although there were notable exceptions. A very fine & important stampless cover (Lot #2065) valued at \$750, went to a determined bidder for \$1,200 and a 1908 I-Chan cover (Lot #2088), valued at \$200 because of its poor condition, was knocked down at \$440. On the other hand, very few real bargains were to be had, but a 1910 postcard (Lot #2089) described, in part, as "the first we have seen," went to a fortunate buyer at exactly half of the valuation of \$1,500.--Finally, we would point out again that the George Alevizos catalogs offer the most extensive listing of literature for sale in our areas of interest that can be found anywhere.

The George Alevizos Public Auction Sale No. 45, scheduled for 26-27 June 1984, was delayed until 10-11 July, as most of you know. The catalog met the high standards we have come to expect from the leading auction firm in our areas of interest, and offered more than 50 lots of Nepal, with a similar number of Tibet lots. As usual, the variety was impressive, with something for nearly everyone. Nepal valuations ranged from \$40 for a mint set of the 1930 Sri Pashupati issues to \$1,500 for an accumulation of more than a thousand Sripech & Crossed Kukris stamps, all telegraphically used. Rarities included one of the five recorded used examples of the 2a, position #4, "Damaged Cliche," and a mint 1a blue, recut, on European paper ("only the third example we have handled in 12 years"). --Tibet was no less well represented and some fine postal history items were offered in both areas. Prices realized were not available at this time, but will be reported later.



AUCTION ACTION (concluded)--

S. C. Sukhani (India) sent us the first catalog of his India & States Auctions that we have received in some time. This auction, held on 14 July 1984, offered one Tibet cover and a nice array of stamps and covers of Nepal--nearly 30 lots in all. Valuations were fairly moderate, ranging from 35 to 700 Indian rupees. We also noted a list of philatelic literature for sale on the last page of the catalog--a list containing a few items which might be of interest to our readers.

Phil Slocum, one of our new members, has sent me a copy of his "Tibet Etcetera #3" listing of stamps and covers for sale. Some of the more interesting items are illustrated. His address can be found in the membership list enclosed with the previous issue of *Postal Himal* (No. 38, Second Quarter 1984).

LATE ADDITIONS

What may have been the last auction sale (No. 22) by Rajesh Kumar Lodha, who lost his membership in our Study Circle for unethical business dealings, closed on 10 October 1984. It offered 27 lots of India used in Nepal, 9 of India used in Tibet, 230 of Nepal and 44 of Tibet. In the variety of stamps and covers offered we noted that some lots were described as forgeries. However, Lot #765--a used tete beche pair of the half anna vermilion illustrated on the back cover--though implied to be genuine, is clearly a forgery. It is feared that, if reports are true, buyers paying for lots in advance may not receive them.

David Feldman has sent us catalogues for Mail Auction 3, which closed on 27 October 1984. 17 lots of Nepal & 40 of Tibet were included. Estimations of the Nepal lots were all in the 100-150 region while the Tibet lots showed a much greater range of 50-1,500--all in Swiss francs. Both country selections included a variety of stamps & covers, including some rather desirable items.

Herrick Stamp Company (Lawrence, New York) has sent us a copy of "New Stamp News No. 11" which offers mainly mint stamps & sets of recent issue at fixed prices. One of the Nepal offerings is

the popular set (Scott Nos. 84-88) and is priced at \$48.95. The other five listings are much more recent stamps & sets, all moderately priced.

The Madrid Stamp & Merchandising firm (Madrid, New York) has sent us a catalog for their Mail Sale #20 which closed on 26 October. We note three lots of Nepal stamps offered.

Member G. S. Rosamond has just sent us a copy of Auction Catalogue No. 25 of the China Philatelic Society of London. This fine organization offers regular auctions which include a remarkable variety of material, accurately described. This sale includes more than 700 lots, including more than 50 lots of literature, and, for our area, we note 12 lots of Tibet plus 3 of Nepal. Forgeries are listed separately and include two lots of Tibet. Valuations are generally moderate, with most under 10 pounds, though we did note two lots (China) valued at 200 pounds. This is their last mail auction in 1984, with a closing date of 13 November.

Finally, Colin Hepper has just sent us a report of Sotheby's auction held on 6-7 September, in which Lot #832 consisted of a Nepal 1930 Perkins Bacon 5r die proof in issued colors which sold for 187 pounds against an estimate of 10/15 pounds.

A Northwestern General auction on 18 July in Liverpool offered an interesting Tibet cover described: "1933-60 imperf 2t cinnamon and a bisected 4t tied together on flap of a cover with circ 'Phara' pmk, a scarce item (est L40)." It brought L50.

CORRECTION--

Prof. Armand E. Singer has pointed out two errors in the "Check-list of Postal & Registered Envelopes of Nepal" by S. L. Shrestha in *Postal Himal* No. 37 p. 11: (left-hand column)

Item 4. "4p black on #3" should read "8p black overprint on #3" and--

Item 5. "8p black on #3" should read "8p black overprint on #2."

We understand that Mr. Shrestha has confirmed these errors & corrections. We offer our apologies to the author, Mr. S. L. Shrestha, and to our readers.

INDIAN CENSORSHIP IN TIBET I

--Kurt H. Dahnke

(translated from the German by Rev. Peter Garland at the request of the editor)

A short time ago I received a cover which I would like to introduce to you. It is an Indian cover with a 4 anna registration fee and a 2 anna postage fee--both cancelled. The difference in the postage was put on the reverse with one stamp of 1 & 1/2 annas plus one of 6 pies. It was posted as a registered letter in Kalimpong on 8/12/51 and addressed to the Gurka Office in Gyantse. The receiver was a trader in Lhasa. When the letter was posted it was closed with five small black seals by the sender. The arrival date stamp of Gyantse, dated 15.12.1951, Type B 5, is stamped on the back of the letter faintly, but recognizably. Thus this is a very ordinary letter, one would think. What is unusual is the censorship stamp on the reverse, with the inscription "Opened by Censor/F.P.O./70/Gyantse Tibet" in violet.

Let us review some history. After the Younghusband Expedition, the British-Indian Postal Service started agencies or offices in some Tibetan towns & villages. At that time a Russian was one of the advisors to the Dalai Lama. The Tsar had cast his eye on Tibet. To give the Russians no pretext for any intrusions, these Indian Postal Agencies only existed in places where there were guard stations to protect trade and they remained under the Field Post Service. This only changed after the Russian revolution in 1918.

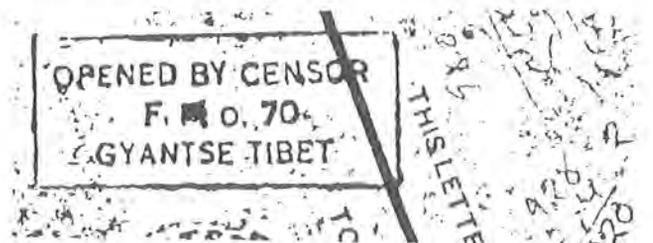
Yatung, being previously a Field Post Office, continued up to this time to have the additional inscription "FPO No 70." For the sake of accuracy, I just mention that the place was called Chumbi up to 1918. In 1909 the Cancel was renewed and the FPO addition was left out. Instead it had the addition "Via Siliguri." Pharijong continued to use the stamp FPO No 81, later to be changed to Pharijong and later to "Pharijong/Darjeeling." For some time Gyantse used the inscription "FPO No 24 + 26." "26" was later used from Chumbi for awhile. FPO No 32 was also

a travelling stamp which was used in a number of places--even in Gyantse. In 1906 there appeared a stamp "Gyantse-Tibet/Siliguri Base", which was then replaced by "Gyantse/Tibet." After the declaration of independence in 1947/48, India took over the post offices but continued to use the old cancellors.

The Maharajah of Kashmir joined India while the vast majority of the people, most of them followers of Islam, wanted to join Pakistan. Then came war between India and Pakistan &, in 1949, a Peace was concluded.

From the first World War, letters to and from Tibet are known which were subjected to censorship in India, but not in Tibet itself. Neither are such letters known from the second World War.

In 1952 India was not at war. Why then a censorship stamp on a letter sent to Tibet? Stranger still, there is an FPO number which was used in Yatung. This cover, therefore, looks like a fake to me, but, since it is the first such cover known to me, one can neither prove that it is genuine or that it is a fake at the moment, but it certainly is very doubtful. All the mentioned circumstances indicate that it is a fake. To find out I have sent a photocopy to the Indian Posts and War Ministries asking them for comments. I shall report in due course. I want to ask all my friends, if you have any similar covers or relevant material, would you please send me a photocopy to enable me to find out whether these items are genuine or not--and to fill any gaps in our knowledge. (We apologize for the long delay in publishing this article, but find it a good example of Prof. Singer's advice concerning "authenticating" a cover, in his article in this issue. We also call your attention to Dr. Hellrigl's article titled "Focus on Forgeries," also in this issue.--Ed.)



INDIAN CENSORSHIP IN TIBET II

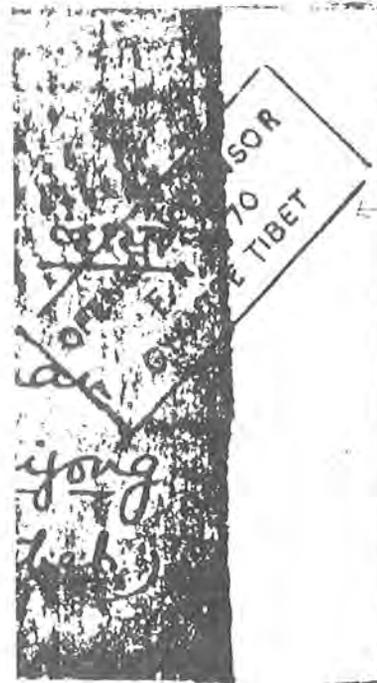
--Kurt H. Dahnke

(translated from the German by Rev. Peter Garland at the request of the editor)

Under this title I introduced a cover to you which seemed to me to be a fake (see INDIAN CENSORSHIP IN TIBET I in this issue). I sent a photocopy to the Posts and War Ministries in India asking them for comment. Unfortunately, up to now, I have not received any reply. Now, by chance, I obtained a second cover which I want to introduce to you. The letter is from Benares to Pharijong with a one anna stamp (Michel No. 149) posted 8 July 1939. It bears an arrival mark of Phari dated 13 July 1939. On the right side it is closed with a neutral white strip of paper which carries the censorship handstamp. Let us look at the cover closely. It shows indications of being used. The cancels are clear and genuine, as comparison with other pieces has shown. Since Phari is only just on the other side of the border it is even understandable that it took only 6 days. Many other letters took even longer. One odd thing about the letter is that it was sent beyond Phari a few hundred kilometers up to Gyantse, where it received a censorship stamp, to be brought back again--or was this cancellation used in Phari in spite of the inscription "Gyantse"?

In addition, I want to draw your attention to the following circumstances. The Second World War only started in September 1939. Some German mountain climbers (Harrer, etc.) were in India at that time and were detained there up to the beginning of the Second World War. On their mail & official mail which was posted before September, no censorship stamps are known. Of all the places this should have been the place to introduce an imprint for censorship in Tibet a month before the beginning of the war. In addition, this is an impression with quite a different form from the ones which were used on mail to & from Tibet later during the war. It is also strange that this handstamp had disappeared for many years and was replaced by others which

came to light in 1951 and to be used again then. Photocopies show that it is exactly the same handstamp. The small break in the frame line in the left upper edge is also identical. It is also strange that they had even kept the old stamp ink, because the colour of the impression in 1939 is the same as the impression in 1951. In my eyes, these similarities indicate a clear conclusion. Genuine letters have been changed by a faker into censorship covers. However, the forger was not familiar with the historical facts, and these items can be recognized as fakes from the dates involved. (See Dr. Hellrigl's article, titled "Focus on Forgeries - Part I" in Postal Himal No. 35, pp. 34-35, and "Part II" in this issue.--Ed.)



A bit redrawn, because nearly impossible to read



STAMP USAGE RELATED TO COUNTING METHODS

--M. W. Campbell

Although I have found the Scott Catalogue very useful, despite the fact that it is not a popular reference in Australia, I am concerned as to why Scott prices the 1954-1958 issues of Nepal according to their ascending face values, when they were not used or demanded equally. In fact, the three 50p issues of this period saw very little use. This was because the units of currency were 64 pice to a rupee, or 4 pice to an anna, and the people of Nepal in those days counted their finger segments using the thumb. The top of the little finger was touched with the thumb to denote 1 anna & then the the first joint of that finger for 2 annas, etc. In this fashion, 1 rupee could be counted on one hand. Obviously, it is not possible to count 50 pice using this system and it was not until decimal paisa were introduced in 1958 that any demand existed for 50p stamps. One wonders why the 50p issues of King Tribhuvan, Map of Nepal and the Royal Crown were ever prepared!

Incidentally, Nepalis still count the segments of their fingers--first segment being 25 paisa (ek sukar) or first segment being 50 paisa (ek mahor), due to inflation. This finger counting is very widespread in Nepal, where the pocket calculator is still seldom seen, even in a post office. Finger counting is also the reason that the 16p Temple of the 1949 issue (Scott No. 110) did not see much service postally, due to the introduction of decimal currency the previous year. It did not fit the new metric postal rates, even though 15pa became the standard letter rate five years later. After all, no Nepali was going to waste one paisa when that amount bought a box of matches in those days (well, almost!): That stamp is still on sale at the GPO today, 25 years after issue, but try to find a genuine postally used cover for the first five years of that stamp's usage!

There are many anomalies for the stamps catalogued in this period--for instance, a mint 2 rupee orange Map stamp (Scott No. 83) was, and still is, one of the cheapest and easiest to come

by in that set. Maybe this is because it so seldom saw service postally and that there were obviously huge supplies of remainders left in Singha Durbar, permitting the dealers to fill their stock books long after that stamp was in use. You would have had to, virtually, post a 20 kg parcel to use a 2 rupee stamp, since it could only be used internally. The standard letter rate at the time of its issue was only 6 pice and was only 12 pice when it ceased being used. People had very little faith in the parcel post of Nepal in those days, so why does Scott pricing fail to reflect the scarcity of a postally used 2 rupee stamp and to acknowledge the proliferation of this value in mint condition?

The Scott prices for, say, British Guiana 1934-51 (Scott 210-222) reflect very accurately the low usage of the middle values as well as the scarcity of some in used condition compared to those in mint condition. Why not Nepal? Does the editor of Scott Publishing Company, or Stanley Gibbons, for that matter, consult anyone from this Study Circle to determine their basis for setting valuations? Or, is it our responsibility to see that at least one Catalog Publisher is provided with an accurate assessment of values for the issues of Nepal? (This has been a concern of your editor for some time, and I have talked with one of the several editors of Scott Publishing Company concerning the inadequacy of their entries for Nepal. This is a subject upon which the expertise of Study Circle members could be put to good use. We invite comments and suggestions relating to this matter and assure our readers that we will aid in informing the proper authorities at Scott and, perhaps, other catalogue publishers.--Ed.)



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1) Member Derek McCullough of 9 Old Camp Road, Eastbourne, Sussex BN20 8DH, England, has recently come across some early postcards that do not correspond to the Higgins & Gage catalogue, and would be interested to know if they are new types or sub-types of cards already listed. Three of them resemble H & G # 15, 16 & 17--but there are differences.

Card marked 15 has a vowel missing over the character beneath the second front leg of the horse.

Card marked 16 is different in respect that the number of words is 6 whereas it is listed as having 5; also the second vowel over the characters under the horse's front legs is next to the first character with the vowel over it. In all other cards there is a letter in between the two consonants with the vowel over them.

Card marked 17 has a full stop after the end of the line of text and it does not correspond to Text C.

The fourth card, listed as a possible proof, is different from any H & G item.

2) In the book "The Native Postmarks of Nepal" by Hellrigl & Hepper, in the modern bi-lingual postmarks section (p. 75), it was stated that what was once a very common postmark at Gauchar Airport had not been recorded in the bi-lingual form & it was suggested that the office had, perhaps, been closed. I have recently discovered a bi-lingual postmark of Gauchar on a modern cover sent from Lhasa dated 12 July 1965. Does anyone have any information on this office? Is it, in fact, still in use? (Please write to Colin Hepper or to your editor if you have information to share.--Ed.)

