

POSTAL HIMAL

QUARTERLY OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



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Our cover illustration is the Circle Head-office handstamp of Lyanglyang, Nepal, one of seven such offices described by our Honorary Member, Shri J. B. Manandhar, in his article titled "Post Offices Under Circle Offices" which appears on page 44 of this issue. The translation of this marking is:

19 Lyanglyang 98
Postal Head Office

Mr. Manandhar, who spent many years in important posts in the Postal Services Department, is presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce of His Majesty's Government of Nepal.

Dear Friends,

Another year is past and I am glad for the opportunity to thank all of you who have contributed to POSTAL HIMAL during 1984. As all of our readers know, we have had difficulty in maintaining a regular publishing schedule, but we are optimistic concerning the future. It is our intent to publish POSTAL HIMAL No. 41 about 1 April and, after that, to publish on a regular quarterly basis. Therefore, material intended for a given issue should be in our hands no later than two weeks prior to April 1, July 1, October 1 or January 1, and preferably earlier.

As you know, the Study Circle has now been in existence for ten years. We can all be proud of what has been accomplished during that period, but we must now look to the future. Our financial situation is precarious, postal rates in the USA will soon be raised by 10%, both for internal & overseas mail, and costs of all things continue to rise. Thus we have found it necessary to increase the annual dues, as noted on the back of the cover for this issue. Nevertheless, due largely to generous and hardworking persons, including our president, Dr. Couvreur, our secretary, Colin Hepper, our area representatives, including Dhruba Rudra and Roger Skinner, and all those who have written articles for publication, we feel that our Study Circle and its official publication have a very bright future.

It is our intent to designate our next issue (No. 41) as the TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE. We ask everyone who reads these words to send the editor something for publication--reminiscences articles, new findings philatelic, questions, suggestions, etc. Let us all do our best to make 1985 our best year yet.

My wife and I have weathered a difficult family crisis during the past few months which has now been resolved. We thank all who sent Holiday Greetings and words of encouragement to us at year's end. Namaste.

Lester A. Michel

We are pleased to announce that Frank Westbrook has accepted the post of Publicity Chairman. He has spent many years as a professional in the publicity and public relations field and we are fortunate that he is able to accept this newly created post. The following excerpts are taken from his letter to Colin Hepper, dated 28 October 1984:

"You ask for other ideas, and I suggest one that very likely you are already considering--a membership drive. With the machinery for servicing members in place, new dues should provide a substantial source of new money. The earlier Study Circle membership roster I have is dated 1979. It shows 70 members. The latest, received a day or two ago, shows 154 members--a substantial gain. But I would also guess, if the increase in the cost of Nepalese material is any indicator, that there are a great many collectors of Nepal (& Tibet) out there who are not members of the Study Circle..... Wider public knowledge of the Society and its benefits should encourage new membership."

We would welcome your suggestions and ask that you send them either to Frank or to your editor.--If each of us could find one new member in 1985, it would not only help to alleviate our precarious financial situation, but would also enlarge our circle of friends and add to our collective knowledge concerning the stamps and postal history of our area of interest.

XXX
 X FOR SALE: X
 X Rare antique maps of Nepal (dated X
 X 1817, 1834 and 1852), X
 X rare antique maps of Tibet (dated X
 X 1749 and c.1850), X
 X 19th century Royal 'red-seal' X
 X documents of Nepal. X
 X Please contact Dr. Wolfgang C. X
 X Hellrigl, P.O. Box 349, 39100 X
 X Bozen, Italy. X
 XXX

EXHIBITION NEWS

The following list of awards at various exhibitions in the USA has been gleaned from a column titled "Winners Circle" in STAMP COLLECTOR (a philatelic weekly) in various issues dated from 5 November 1984 through 7 January 1985:

APEX '84, September 8-9, Aurora, Colorado, Aurora Stamp Club, awarded Arthur F. Ackley a SILVER for his exhibit titled: "Tibet: Stamps and Postal Markings."

MERPEX VIII, October 19-21, Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, Merchantville Stamp Club, awarded Art a GOLD for the same exhibit.

NOJEX '84, October 26-28, Secaucus, New Jersey, North Jersey Federation of Stamp Clubs, recognized Art with a VERMEIL award for the exhibit mentioned above and John A. Young, Jr., with a VERMEIL for his exhibit titled "Classic Issues of Nepal."

FLOREX '84, November 2-4, St. Petersburg, Florida, Florida Federation of Stamp Clubs, awarded a GOLD to Frederick C. J. De Ridder for his exhibit titled: "Postal History of Tibet," and a VERMEIL to John A. Young, Jr., for his exhibit titled: "Early Native Issues of Nepal" plus a SILVER for his exhibit titled: "A Selection of Tibet Stamps and Covers."

VAPEX '84, November 9-11, Virginia Beach, Virginia, Virginia Philatelic Federation, awarded a VERMEIL to John A. Young, Jr., for his exhibit titled: "Nepal Classics."

Congratulations to Art Ackley, Jack Young and Fred De Ridder on their awards and a big THANK YOU for helping to keep our area of interest in the philatelic news.--Your editor would appreciate receiving information about other awards received by our members elsewhere in the world, and he apologizes for any oversights and omissions from the above list. We are in the process of selecting an Awards Chairman, who will not only coordinate a Study Circle award program, but who will also (we hope) provide us with regular reports on exhibitions and awards relating to our area of interest wherever they may occur around the world.

EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING AT RIPEX

As reported in our last issue of POSTAL HIMAL, plans for the first Eastern Regional Meeting of our Study Circle are moving ahead. Frank Vignola, who will have a busy schedule as one of the judges, has asked your editor to chair the meeting scheduled for 11 AM in the Biltmore Plaza Hotel in Providence, RI, during RIPEX XX on Sunday, 21 April '85. Besides Frank Vignola and Lester Michel, that outstanding, longtime student of both Nepal & Tibet philately, Prof. Dr. Armand E. Singer, will also attend. As Armand is also a world traveller and mountaineer, we have asked him to show slides of his recent trip to China, Lhasa and the Everest Base Camp area on the Rongbuk Glacier. These fine pictures will be accompanied by Armand's inimitable patter.

Frank Vignola reports that at least two Nepal exhibits and two Tibet exhibits have been entered in the show, and there may be others. We urge all area members to attend this meeting and to enjoy the fellowship of "kindred souls" along with your contributions to the discussions concerning the future of the Study Circle and POSTAL HIMAL.

AMERIPEX '86

Plans for what has been described as "the largest philatelic exhibition ever held in North America" are in full cry. Although this exhibition in Chicago is still 18 months away, exhibit entries must be in by 30 June 1985. If you may want to enter an exhibit or simply want more information about this big event, check your stamp publications, or write your editor.



S. L. Shrestha is shown at left receiving a VERMEIL medal for his Tibet exhibit at INDIPEX '73, more than 10 years ago.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(1) from J. B. Manandhar:

I read with great interest a letter to the editor written by Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl and published in POSTAL HIMAL No. 36, 4th Quarter, 1983, dated 1 March 1984. I would like to thank Dr. Hellrigl for his notes & questions.

First I wish to state that I had not seen Dr. Hellrigl's "A Catalogue of Nepalese Postmarks (1897-1935)" brought out in West Germany in October 1982, at the time of writing the article "Thak Post Office" published in your esteemed quarterly in the first quarter of 1983. So I could not refer to the newly recorded earliest date of Thak post office. As I mentioned in my article, the decision of the then Rana Prime Minister made in September 1924 relating to the establishment of the post office under reference, leaves much remaining to be done to find out the exact date of opening of Thak post office, which falls between 1924 and 1928.

Now let me turn to the illustration given in my article and discuss it briefly. I prefer to call it a name stamp rather than a cancellation or something else. In Nepal, government offices are supposed to put their name stamps on their official mail at the time of despatch. As a result I have found that name stamp on the back of a stampless official letter booked on 1998.4.24 B.S. (Bikram era) and sent by Thak post office. This name stamp is similar to Dhading and Achham Ridi-kot types. If we take into consideration the inscriptions it looks a bit different from the Amlekhganj one mentioned by Dr. Hellrigl. Whatever it may be, the Amlekhganj type also is nothing by a name stamp. Though it is found used as a cancellation in the then combined (post and telephone) office like Amlekhganj it seems to me a misnomer to term it the telephone/telegraph cancellation as stated by Dr. Hellrigl in his catalogue (page 63).

I guess that Dr. Hellrigl did not receive a copy of PHILATELY, Vol. 10, No. 1, published in January 1983, which carries my article titled "Vansittart's

List of Post Offices - An Analytical Study." I wish to assure all interested in Nepalese philately that I will, as usual, be disseminating rare information in the future, also.

I agree that the Anarmani postmark illustrated in POSTAL HIMAL No. 26, p. 24, is very interesting and Dr. Hellrigl, being the first person to introduce this postmark, deserves our admiration and respect. I would like to congratulate him with hat in hand. I think it would not be considered out of the way if I mention here that I was quite aware of the existence of Anarmani post office which started functioning during the seventies of the Bikram era. We, in Nepal, since 1964 A.D., have been using the oft-quoted document of 15 Aswin 1977 B.S., as the reference material, and which contains Anarmani post office in its list.

J. B. Manandhar

(2) from Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl:

In his excellent review of "The Classic Stamps of Nepal" (POSTAL HIMAL No. 38), Prof. Dr. Armand Singer raises a query that requires a brief explanation.

Dr. Singer doubted my statement that the substituted 1 anna cliche in the 4 annas sheet of setting 12 was actually inverted. He was, as he put it, unconvinced. I can now report that this 'dispute' has meanwhile been settled to the satisfaction of all concerned. In fact, after I sent him an explanatory note, Dr. Singer replied: "Your proof of the fete-beche position of cliche 8 (i.e., the 1 anna cliche in the 4 annas sheet) seems sound. I surrender. How about answering my doubts in the pages of POSTAL HIMAL?"

The proof referred to consisted in my observation that the side inscriptions of all 1 anna recut-frame cliches show constant asymmetries which usually enable hawk-eyed philatelists to decide whether even a blurred cliche is upright or inverted. Since the substituted 1 anna cliche is invariably blurred, this method is perhaps the only practicable way to prove that this cliche is definitely inverted.

Wolfgang Hellrigl

POST OFFICES UNDER CIRCLE OFFICES

--J. B. Manandhar

Prior to joining the Universal Postal Union a need for starting a "double running (mail) system" was seriously felt in Nepal by the then Rana Government in accordance with Commanding Colonel Ganga Bahadur Basnet's suggestions. To achieve this end it was decided on Monday, 23 Poush 1997 B.S., to open seven "Circle Head Offices" with a sanctioned staff of one Superintendent, one clerk & one peon at each circle office. With this forward looking decentralised move, offices of 5 Sub-Inspectors established some five years earlier at Dhankuta, Pokhara, Doti, Jaleswar & Banke, were closed down. The newly opened offices were made to station at centrally located places of circles like Dhankuta, Lyanglyang, Central (Kathmandu), Gorkha, Palpa, Dahaban & Doti. Their negative name stamps (see front cover illustration) are of oblong shape measuring approximately 80 mm x 20 mm, with Devanagari characters and figures (the Bikram year '1998' and the name of the circle in the first line & the inscription 'Postal Head Office' in the second line). The circle offices were terminated in 2017 B.S. as a result of the establishment of seven offices of 'Controller of Post Offices.'

As Superintendents were the heads of circle offices, the offices were popularly known as Postal Superintendent Offices and/or Postal Head Offices. The Superintendents were authorised with the specific and written 'Sawal' (rules and regulations) to perform inspection and supervision of post offices, of mail lines & of 'Janchakis' (overseers) jobs. They were permitted to make final appointments of runners and postmen, were empowered to fine wrongdoers a sum of money and were entrusted to submit confidential service records meant for the annual 'pajani' (reappointment or dismissal from the post). Though all of them were equal in authority, Postal Superintendents working at Lyanglyang, Dahaban and Doti used to get Rs. 100 less, i.e., Rs. 500 only as their annual pay.

For the sake of clear-cut demarcation of jurisdictions, post offices function-

ing during 1997 B.S. were put under the Circle Offices with distinct separation as listed below:-

(1) Central Postal Head Office

1. Dhulikhel
2. Chautara
3. Tatapani
4. Bhaktapur
5. Lalitpur
6. Bhimphedi
7. Amlekhgunj
8. Birgunj
9. Kalaiya
10. Katarbana
11. Sarlahi

(2) Lyanglyang Postal Head Office

1. Okhaldunga
2. Lyanglyang
3. Dolkha
4. Sindhuli
5. Jaleswar
6. Siraha
7. Hanumannagar
8. Udiapur

(3) Dhankuta Postal Head Office

1. Illam
2. Pashupatinagar
3. Terathum
4. Taplejung
5. Bhojpur
6. Chainpur
7. Bijaypur
8. Biratnagar
9. Rangeli
10. Jhapa
11. Dhankuta

(4) Gorkha Postal Head Office

1. Trishuli
2. Rasuwa
3. Dhading
4. Gorkha
5. Chitwan
6. Kunchha
7. Bandipur
8. Pokhara
9. Baglung
10. Thak
11. Syanja

(5) Palpa Postal Head Office

1. Palpa
2. Ridi
3. Pyuthan
4. Butwal
5. Bhairahawa
6. Parasi
7. Shergunj
8. Taulihawa
9. Shivraj

(6) Dahaban Postal Head Office

1. Dahaban
2. Sallyan
3. Banke
4. Bardia
5. Kailali
6. Kanchanpur
7. Jajarkot
8. Dang
9. Chorahi

(7) Doti Postal Head Office

1. Dailekh
2. Karnali
3. Jumla
4. Ridikot
5. Doti
6. Daleldhura
7. Bajhang
8. Baitadi
9. Darchula

The Superintendent Sawal not only listed 67 post offices as given above but also marked off the boundaries of the Superintendents over 42 overseers serving in different parts of the Kingdom. Though the groups of post offices given above did not encompass all post offices (in particular, two post offices operating in Kathmandu) no one will deny that they have their own research value. (We wish to thank S. L. Shrestha for sending us photocopies of covers bearing the Postal Head Office name stamps of Doti, Gorkha & Palpa.--Ed.)

GREAT NEPAL-TIBET MYSTERIES

--Armand E. Singer

All of us old Nepal & Tibet hands have made do with a passel of theories purporting to solve our philatelic problems. Trouble is, granted their possibility, even ingenuity, many of them just do not really answer all the questions or satisfy all the queries. For instance, among the Nepal mysteries: Why were the wartime Pashupati issues reprinted all the way up to the 1950s? Colin Hepper's excellent new Sri Pashupati Issues of Nepal (p. 35) ventures the possibility that they were continued to stretch out the new 1949 pictorial issue until the appearance of its 1954 replacement. But why not simply print more of the 1949 stamps themselves? On page 36, he discusses the "negative" Sri Pashupatis, now considered by most students to be genuine. Instead of rubbing ink into the engraved lines of the 1907 stamp plates, the printers merely coated the surface, the result being so poor that the whole project was abandoned. But who attempted so harebrained a scheme in the first place--and with all four values instead of just one to see how it would turn out? How did the sheets get into circulation? -- Another puzzler: With the 1935 issue (see Hepper, p. 29) we know the 8p stamp is scarce, because, Hepper suggests, the government failed to anticipate the need for this value. Understandable. Who's perfect? But why not print more of them? -- Next, let us take the case of the 1941 local printings (see Hepper, p. 44). The green color exists in several shades, difficulties, Hepper suggests, being experienced in maintaining the consistency of the green. But why aim at consistency in printing up more and more batches of an error?

Haverbeck (The Postage Stamps of Nepal, p. 42) repeats, as do most of us, the theory that the orange-vermilion printing of the normally black half-anna "officials" was possibly done to make it coincide with the same color on the 1887 postal card. Sounds likely enough until we recall that the half-anna stamp did not appear until 1899 & the orange-vermilion printing until

about 1903 (or, as Dr. Hellrigl has now established, not until 1917). Why, then, were the "officials" ever printed in any color but orange-red? The same stamp is also known in other shades, ranging into yellow; the cards are not.

There are also some ingenious explanations to legitimize the so-called essay sheet of 6 x 7 for this same half-anna black, as well. Rather than opt for a lengthy catalogue of proofs that the sheet is a forgery and that it is perfectly genuine, I will merely observe that the arguments convince mainly those wishing to confirm their already formed prejudices. Similarly, arguments over the bona fides of the first Children's Day sheets, in black rather than blue, overprinted "CANCELLED," fail to effect a consensus. Myself, I would not testify for either the "essays" or the overprints, but others would and do. Even the explanations for the printing in English of "SERVICE" over the native 1907 Pashupati issue (which contains in itself not a word of English and was intended for internal use) remain weak, particularly since the overprints were not issued.

Then there is the dropped plate of the 4p Pashupati Kathmandu printings. According to some, the fall caused a one millimeter misalignment between top & bottom of the plate. I prefer Hepper's observations (p. 67). But I have measured some printings from before the fall which already show a differentiation. In all justice & humility, I should close out this discussion of typical unsolved mysteries by recalling the nineteenth-century two-anna blue find, which I wrote up recently in the pages of POSTAL HIMAL. The theories, at least any I could adduce, really do not touch all the bases. P.S.--The number, plating and chronology of the printings of the 1881-1917 issues, never before satisfactorily worked out, have finally been solved in the Hellrigl-Vignola book, "The Classic Issues of Nepal."

Tibet has its own share of unsolved riddles. Take that of the single-circle Dhomo (= Yatung) cancel, Waterfall (2nd ed., pp. 121-22) type XVII, first reported by the great New Zealand authority, George Russell.

Singer, MYSTERIES (concluded)--

authority, George Russell. He knew it only from a photo of a cover. I believe no other example has ever surfaced. Why should this type be totally unlike all the other native cancels, all the basic types of which are replicated, some for as many as half a dozen towns? Why have no other examples of this particular one ever been found, Yatung being an important settlement? What was the need for a native cancel in the first place? Yatung, far to the south of most of the other Tibetan towns, on the Sikkim border, is known with only British-Indian and Chinese cancels from this earlier period. Phari, of course, not too many miles away, had both native and non-native cancels, but it was a junction point for transfer into the Tibetan mail system. Is it a fake? Its pedigree is certainly nebulous.

Why did the one-sang (= 6 2/3 trangkas) greens appear ca. 1950 in the format of the 1912 issue, almost forty years after the first five values in the set, and close to twenty after the 1912 issue was superseded by the new 1933 set--and in no value that seemingly fits any postal rate before, then, or later?

Is there any justification for trusting the integrity of the "officials," new sizes and values of which appear on the market from time to time? Though most of us say we know they are bogus, we lack true certainty. Even singles fetch good prices. Inquiries to Tibet government sources have not proved conclusive; unquestionably genuine covers do not exist, to my best knowledge. I, for one, have never seen one even reasonably genuine in appearance.

Then we have the flower design cancels from Dechen, Gyamda & Medagongkur. Waterfall (2nd ed., pp. 127 & 154) classifies them as "blatantly philatelic" forgeries. But Wolfgang Hellrigl argues most convincingly to grant them a clean bill of health, in a recent article in the China Clipper (44 [1980?]; 179-85).

Some of these mysteries simply spring from incomplete evidence; we must needs rely on plausible theorizing. Others

doubtless lie in differing concepts of logic in Eastern & Western minds, which make, let us say, a Tibetan's reasons for a given act, worlds apart from an Englishman's. The twain may meet more frequently than the pessimistic Kipling imagined, but the two certainly do not always see eye to eye. In any event, these mysteries and their oft contested solutions help make the Himalayan regions among philately's most fascinating.

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MAIL SERVICES TO CHITWAN, 1882

(An excerpt from Regmi Research Series, Year 15, No. 6, June 1983, pp. 82-84, with thanks to Colin Hepper,--Ed.)

In Magh 1936 (January 1980) Major-Captain Muktinath Upreti, Chief of the Chitwan Mal, submitted the following report to Kathmandu:

"In order to operate mail (hulak) services to Chitwan, mail-carriers (hulaki) had been appointed previously for transporting mail through the Hitaura route. They were paid a salary of Rs 3 each per month. However, the mail-carriers refused to work on this salary because the mail route passed through forests, and the Rapti river was flooded during the rainy season. Moreover, they added, they had to remain in constant fear of death at night because the area was infested with such wild animals as rhinoceros, tiger and elephant.

"In Shrawan 1939 (July 1882), therefore, I raised the salary of the mail-carriers to Rs 4 per month, and that of inspectors (Janchaki) to Rs 6. I have been operating postal services accordingly."

On 10 Falgun Badi 1937 (February 1881), Prime Minister Ranoddip Simha approved a decision refusing to sanction the increment made by Major-Captain Muktinath Upreti. Instead, he decreed the following arrangements:

- (1) Mail shall be transported (to Chitwan) through Upardang or Hitaura, whichever route is shorter.
- (2) Rice-lands shall be assigned (to mail-carriers) to operate mail services through such route.

MAIL SERVICES (continued)--

Earlier, an order had been sent to the Nepal Goswara Hulak Ghar (Nepal General Post Office) on 10 Magh Badi 1937 (January 1881) to appoint mail-carriers with assignments of rice-lands on Adhiya tenure for operating mail services to Chitwan through Upardang-Gadhi. The Nepal Hulak Goswara Adda Ghar then submitted the following report:

"The Hitaura route is very difficult, because the Rapti river becomes impassable during the rainy season, and it is difficult to operate mail services even through salaried mail-carriers. Orders may, therefore, be issued to appoint mail-carriers with assignments of rice-lands under adhiya tenure through the Nuwakot-Irat-Upardang route. Arrangements may also be made to grant tax-exemption to these mail-carriers as in other Hulak posts.

"In case these arrangements are sanctioned, the 14 mail-carriers appointed for the Hitaura route on a total salary of Kampani Rs 504 may be dismissed."

On 11 Baisakh Badi 1939 (April 1882), Prime Minister Ranoddip Simha sent the following order to Major-Captain Mukti-nath Upreti because of the delay in implementing the arrangements mentioned above:

"Appoint 32 households for two Hulak posts with assignments of revenue from Bardgandi lands (i.e., lands measured in terms of ox-team units) obtained from the Chitwan Mal. Grant those households tax-exemptions at the rate of Mohar Rs 3 each. In case these arrangements are not implemented by 1 Jetha 1939 (14 May 1882), permission shall no longer be granted to debit the salaries of the (Hitaura) mail-carriers."

A similar order was sent to the Bak-yauta Goswara Adda, warning it that it would be punished with a fine if arrangements were not made for assignments of rice-lands by that date (14 May 1882).

On 5 Bhadra Sudi 1939 (August 1882), the Nepal Hulak Goswara Ghar submitted the following report to Kathmandu:

"In accordance with the order of 11 Baisakh Badi 1939 (April 1882), the salaried mail-carriers have been dismissed. However, assignments of land have not yet been made. Consequently, mail services have been disrupted. Until such assignments are made, the following arrangements may, therefore, be sanctioned:

- (1) Peons of the West No. 2 Bak-yauta Adda should be employed to transport mail to Chitwan every Wednesday.
- (2) Peons of the Chitwan Mal Adda should be employed to transport mail from Chitwan to Gorkha.
- (3) The Nepal Hulak Goswara Ghar should be authorized to despatch mail to Chitwan every Sunday."

However, the government decided that "peons belonging to the Militia must not be employed for the transportation of mail." It, therefore, decreed that the dismissed mail-carriers be reinstated and mail services operated accordingly.

The Nepal Hulak Goswara Ghar, however, responded as follows on 9 Aswin Badi 1939 (September 1882):

"If the dismissed mail-carriers are reinstated, the government will incur a total expenditure of Kampani Rs 504. Until mail-carriers are appointed with assignments of rice-lands under adhiya tenure, four mail-carriers, two each at Gorkha and Upardang-Jhuwani, may be appointed on a monthly salary of Mohar Rs 5 each. Mail services can be operated for the time being if necessary orders are sent to the Nepal Hulak Goswara Ghar, the Kamandari Kitaphana, the Kausi Tosakhana, and the Chitwan Mal."

This recommendation was accepted, and orders as mentioned above were issued accordingly on 9 Kartik Badi 1939 (October 1882) in the name of Prime Minister Ranoddip Simha and Commander-in-Chief General Dhir Shumshere Jung Rana Bahadur.

Lt. Colonel Bijaya Jung Pande Chhetri was Chief of the Nepal Hulak Goswara Adda at that time, with Dittha Lokaman Siddhi as his deputy. (Regmi Research Collection Vol. 82, pp. 519-525.)

(To be continued.--Ed.)

THE POSTAL SERVICE OF NEPAL (continued
from Postal Himal No 37, p. 11)--

Chapter 8 - Mail Transportation (4
pages) with ten numbered items:

1. Nepal is probably the only country in the world where air transport of mail preceded transport by road. There are few roads today and the foot runner remains the basis of the national postal network. It still takes longer for a letter to travel from Kathmandu to most of the district headquarters than to most capital cities of the world.

2. The main limiting factor to acceleration of the mail is the absence of transport facilities. Therefore the best possible use should be made of the facilities that are available. There have been cases of road transport operators refusing to carry mail and of mail being crowded off air services by freight and baggage. This should not be permitted, with high priority of mail being an essential condition for granting a transport license.

3. Mail conveyance should be transferred from foot runner to road or air services as soon as reasonable. Reliability and speed are two important, and sometimes conflicting factors. Normally, a reliable service is more acceptable than a speedy but sometimes unreliable service.

4. There are proposals for many more STOL airstrips in the hilly regions of the country; but their value to the postal service will be slight unless the air services are regular and reasonably frequent.

5. Even allowing for the most optimistic improvements in land & air communications it is likely that most post offices in the country will remain dependent on foot transport for many years to come. Therefore the foot runner system should be made as efficient as possible. Careful planning and thorough supervision are needed for improvement and acceleration.

6. The impression is inescapable that the system was once more highly organized and better controlled than it now is. Postal chowki (handover points)

were equipped with secure accommodation; a clear distinction was maintained between main lines and branch lines; mail moved more rapidly over the former and there was an efficient system of control and inspection. Regrettably, much of this organisation has been allowed to deteriorate. In its enthusiasm to enter the jet age the Postal Services Department has tended to overlook the fact that most of the country remains dependent on the foot age.

7. To carry a bag of mail from one point to another requires a minimum of intelligence. But to plan the movements of hundreds of runners in all parts of the country, so that the many thousands of letters can be sorted and redistributed to reach their destinations in the shortest possible time, is an operation of great complexity requiring a high degree of intelligence and long experience.

8. One weakness is that the responsibility for control of mail line operation does not seem to be clearly defined. At present the mail line overseers are at the same rank as the runners. Although they may soon be upgraded in the near future, the mail line overseers cannot be expected to bear the primary responsibility for the efficiency of the system. This responsibility must be placed clearly on the Controllers of Post Offices.

9. In Chapter 7, paragraph 11, it was recommended that the day to day inspection and control of postal services should be organised at the District level, and that each district post office should have an officer of not less than mukhiya rank who would be responsible for inspection of EDPOs and mail lines in the District. Separate mail line Overseers should disappear.

10. At the same time, it is highly desirable that the Department should initiate a thorough review of the mail runner system. See Part III.

Chapter 9 - Accommodation and Equipment (7 pages) with sixteen numbered items:

1. The postal service has special accommodation needs. Ordinary office work can be performed in rooms of any

POSTAL SERVICE (continued)--

size, shape or location, but the postal service resembles a group of factories receiving raw material and producing a finished product. No expensive or elaborate machinery are involved, but space and a certain amount of simple equipment are essential.

2. It is important to realise that the growth of postal traffic is not controlled by government or by the PSD. It arises from external factors such as education, trade, advertising, social customs, etc. The experience in almost every country is that the actual growth of postal traffic has outstripped all estimates. Buildings which were planned to last for fifty years have become obsolete in twenty or less. Many of Nepal's buildings are obsolete.

3. The most urgent building requirement is for a completely new Postal Stock Depot. At present, stocks of forms, mail bags, seals, uniforms, etc. are spread over several buildings in totally unsatisfactory conditions. Meanwhile, in all parts of the country, the postal service is in difficulty because of the delay in receiving essential materials.

4. The postal service cannot become properly efficient unless supplies of forms and other items in daily use are kept up to date. The Postal Stock Department cannot meet this requirement unless it has adequate space for the following purposes:-

- (i) Reception, check & unpacking of incoming stores.
- (ii) Easily accessible storage for a large variety of items in proper condition.
- (iii) Assembly, check & packing of outgoing despatches.
- (iv) Accommodation for office staff.

5. A large new building is required with easy access for road transport and with most of the accommodation on the ground floor. The precise location is unimportant. It should be provided in Kathmandu as soon as possible. When it becomes too small--as will inevitably happen within a few years--it could be converted into a sub-depot and a new main stock depot provided at Hetauda,

which will be the most suitable location after completion of the East-West Highway.

6. The Postal Stamp Depot also urgently needs new accommodation. This could conveniently be provided in the same building as the new Stock Depot. At present, large quantities of stamps and stamped stationery are stored in various buildings where they constitute a severe security risk.

7. As stated in Chapter 6, more than half of the total postal traffic of the country passes through the three main Kathmandu sorting offices of G.P.O., Mail Centre and Foreign Post. These offices are in two large new buildings provided with Indian cooperation within the last few years. Unfortunately, so rapid has been the growth of traffic that they are already inadequate in some respects.

8. General Post Office. At times of pressure, the public counter becomes very crowded, even when all positions are staffed. Relief will soon be necessary and can best be provided by opening Branch Offices or EDPOs in other parts of the city such as Basantpur, Ason, Chhetrapati or Lazimpat. Similarly, congestion in the delivery section can be relieved by setting up postmen's delivery offices in places like Dilli Bazar to serve the eastern suburbs, or Lainchour to serve the northern suburbs.

9. The immediate, serious deficiency in G.P.O. is in the number of private post boxes. Before the new office was opened there were about 350 subscribers. The new office was constructed with 704 boxes built into the eastern wall. Already the number of boxes in use exceeds 900 and the demand is increasing. The surplus, at present, is provided by suites of small wooden boxes placed behind the public counter, inconvenient to both staff and public. The number of built-in boxes should be doubled by extending the eastern wall of GPO northwards as far as the Foreign Post building. This would enclose an area behind the garages which would provide a much needed extension to the registration room.

POSTAL SERVICE (continued)--

10. Mail Centre. The concept of a "Mail Centre" or main postal distributing office for the country, did not exist when the GPO building was planned. But growth in traffic volume and complexity had made such an office essential by the time the building was opened. Fortunately, it was possible to take over first floor accommodation originally intended as a training centre. Space is adequate but extremely inconvenient because of the absence of a lift, or any means other than stairs, for getting mail bags up and down. If Mail Centre is to stay where it is, a lift, or bag hoist, is an urgent requirement.

11. Foreign Post Building. When this building was planned it was expected that booking and delivery of foreign parcels would be done at the G.P.O. counter. By the time the building was opened, traffic had grown to such an extent that the original plan was impossible. This work is therefore being done in the Foreign Post Building in accommodations which were not designed to be used for public transactions. The best solution would be to extend the building at ground floor level on the northern side, to provide a separate delivery section with a public counter.

12. Both buildings, G.P.O. & Foreign Post, have been constructed so that extension at upper floor levels would be easy, but mechanical means should be provided for the transfer of mail bags up and down.

13. Other buildings. The need for a new postal stock depot over-rides all others, but there is hardly a postal building in the whole country which is completely adequate for its purpose. The annual budget allocation for new buildings needs to be substantially increased. Many offices are also without any furniture for either office work or postal work.

14. Maintenance. A serious deficiency, not confined to the Postal Services Department, is a general absence of a maintenance programme. Cleaning is neglected or insufficiently provided for.

Windows and electric light fittings become so begrimed that lighting efficiency is impaired. Small defects in electrical wiring, plumbing, etc. are neglected. For example, in the large new Foreign Post Office, there is now no water supply because a pump needs to be replaced. But even if a pump were provided, it will be found that plumbing repairs are needed.

15. In curious relation to the lack of maintenance is the difficulty of disposing of derelict equipment. In many offices there are broken items of furniture that will never be repaired but which occupy valuable space. The external appearance of the GPO building is marred by several old motor vehicles which have not been in use for at least 5 years and will never be used again. In the meantime, their value is decreasing year by year.

16. There is an urgent need for special attention to cleaning and maintenance of buildings and equipment in order to reduce overall costs and improve efficiency.

(to be continued)

A PREVIOUSLY UNREPORTED CANCELLATION
--Colin Hepper

A cover cancelled at the Royal Guest House Post Office during the visit of Queen Elizabeth in 1961 is illustrated below. The cancel is not very clear so I have enclosed a drawing of it. The signature on the cover is that of the pilot that I imagine flew either the aircraft carrying the Queen, or one that carried mail from that Post Office. The cover belongs to Mr. D. McCullough in the U.K.



ON CHECK-LIST OF ENVELOPES OF NEPAL

--J. B. Manandhar

I had a cursory glance at the "Check-list of Postal & Registered Envelopes of Nepal" prepared by S. L. Shrestha and published in POSTAL HIMAL No. 37, pp. 11-12. It made me feel on one hand that the list had done injustice to two vernacular research-oriented philatelic articles of 1966 A.D. and, on the other hand, that it could not do well in imparting information correctly. So I would like to make a few comments and furnish some additional data.

I would like first to quote Dr. W. C. Hellrigl:- "The Sambat date of 1982 (= 1925 A.D.) is shown in the bottom squares and this must consequently be taken as the date the die was imported from England (Shri Manandhar has shown convincingly that the 24 pice die was imported from England) and, therefore, it is virtually certain that the same applies to the remaining dies."(1)

I think Dr. Hellrigl might be pleased to have found confirmed his guess while going through information contained in the checklist, which is nothing but the translation of facts from Nepali into English without giving due courtesy to the first disseminator of information. Moreover, the checklist under reference is a part of the article entitled "Collecting Postal Envelopes and Aerogrammes of Nepal", published in 1983 A.D. In that article also, Mr. Shrestha did not quote specifically but made indirect references stating that "Shree J. B. Manandhar has written two very important articles dealing with Nepalese Postal Envelopes ('Sarkari Kham in Nepali - Hulak No. 9') and Postal Registered Envelopes ('Registari Kham' in Nepali - Hulak No. 14) in 2023 B.S. (= 1966 A.D.)."(2)

Almost all major information of the check-list such as import of 4 paisa & 24 paisa dies, name of supplier of the 4p envelope, issue date and year, gazette notification of Ministry of Transport for overprinting, P.M.'s decision for the order of printing the first registered envelope, quantity, etc., were taken from the two articles: 'Postal Envelopes' and 'Registered Envelopes' written by me. As my former article

has not yet seen the light of day in English version and as the writer could not copy skilfully by understanding the meaning of the sanad (government document) language contained in the article, corrections and additions are being made as follows:

- a) 1989.11.18 B.S. is the reporting date of transfer of 8 dies of the 4p envelope and of press materials from Mulki Khana to Chhapakhana (the press) but not the date of receipt of die as stated in the check-list.
- b) The decision to import the 4p die from England was made on Wednesday, 17 Jestha 1980 B.S. by Premier Chandra Shumshere J.B.R.
- c) On Friday, 4 Chaitra 1989 B.S., it was decided by Prime Minister Juddha Shumshere J.B.R. to import 8p dies from England.
- d) The number of registered envelope dies given in the check-list seems to be guesswork.
- e) Though Mr. Shrestha copied the quantity of all envelopes from my articles, I believe, he is confused even in the quantity of Nasik-made envelopes. To my knowledge, only one million 15p envelopes were ordered to get printed, whereas Mr. Shrestha listed 1,500,000 as the quantity.
- f) As 30p envelopes and Rs. 2.50 registered envelopes are the most modern issues and the creation of the 1980's, they were not included in my articles. And, up until now, I have not written any in depth article on them. So it is natural that their quantities are not known to the compiler of the check-list. To disseminate information pertaining to these two epoch-making stationeries I would like to state that the 30p and Rs. 2.50 envelopes were ordered three million and half a million, respectively, but were supplied in 3,120,000 and 501,000 respectively.

References:

- (1) Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl, "Nepal: The four pice envelope of 1933" (POSTAL STATIONERY, Vol. 19, No. 4, July-August 1977, page 145.)
- (2) S. L. Shrestha, "Collecting Postal Envelopes and Aerogrammes of Nepal" (HULAK No. 102, 14 April 1983, pp.41-42).

RECENT NEPAL STATIONERY ISSUES

Summarized from an article in "The Rising Nepal" (English language daily newspaper) titled "New Postcard, Aero-gramme Issued":

"The postal materials brought into circulation Friday (16 November 1984) include a registration envelope of Rs. 4/75 denomination, a postcard of 30 paisa denomination and an aero-gramme (for foreign destination) of Rs. 3/50 denomination."

The article continues with other information which may be of interest to some of our readers: "Meanwhile, in view of the increasing number of tourists and increased activities of the industrial & business sector in Nepal, the Postal Services Department has decided to keep open the Foreign Post Office section of the General Post Office in Kathmandu even on public holidays, except on Saturdays, like other post offices. The Foreign Post Office will conduct both parcel & delivery business even on public holidays.

"The post offices are closed only on Saturdays, four days in Vijaya Dashami festival, one day in Tihar festival and one day on the auspicious birthday of His Majesty the King. (RSS)"

(We are indebted to S. L. Shrestha for this information and for examples and illustrations of these items. He also reports that no first day cancellations were provided for any of these items. Other detailed information can be obtained from Mr. Shrestha or from your editor.--Ed.

NEPAL PHILATELIC PROGRAMME FOR 1985

S.N.	Date of Issue	Subject	Denomination
1.	February	24th session of Asian-African legal consultive committee	50p
2.	July	Youth Year	Rs 5.00
3.	September	Visit Nepal Series:- (A) Sagarmatha National Park (B) Jaleswor Mahadev (C) Devghat (D) Shaileswori (Doti) (E) Phoksondo Lake	Rs 1.00 10p 5p 50p Rs 4.50
4.	24 October	40th Anniversary of the United Nations	Rs 1.00
5.	28 December	(a) 41st Birthday of H.M. the King (b) Devghat Hydro Electric Project	Rs 1.00 Rs 2.00

Note:-

1. The programme noted above is subject to change with or without notice.
2. Details of each issue will be available from the Nepal Philatelic Bureau, Sundhara, Kathmandu. (Again, our thanks go to S. L. Shrestha for a copy of the official programme for 1985, from which the above information was taken.--Ed.)

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