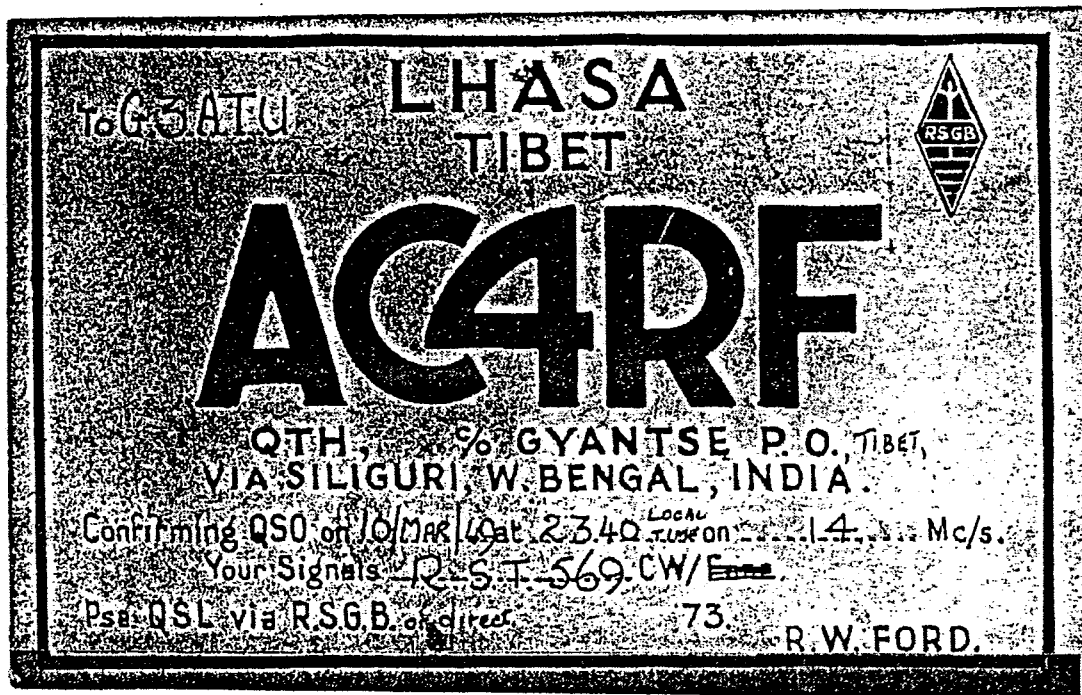


# Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE





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## Officers Corner

Hi, this is Dick, your Vice-President and I have to fill a part of Postal Himal No. 106.

For a start, I have a problem. You may know I have a classic collection, Internationally awarded Gold in The Hague, Toronto, and Nuremberg. Another collection, which has been exhibited in San Francisco, is my Postal Stationary 1887-1959 collection. Beside these exhibits I have a fine but small collection of Nepal Revenues. For our meeting in London 2000 I made photocopies of the pages and showed these to some members. I did the same in April 2001 at the NPS meeting during my trip to Kathmandu with my good friend Peter Planken. It was there that the present members asked me to write a book concerning these Revenues and this is the sad problem: how to get the knowledge to do so? The list of publications is very short and in the books (Parceval Landon and others) I can hardly find any information. In the NPS Journal can be found now and then an article, for instance about the Hand Struck Bedam Seals, Landlord Stamps and the various types of Documentary Stamps. The real information is of course inside the documents, but for translation one needs the help of our Nepalese collectors: members of the Study Circle and/or the NPS.

Herewith I make an appeal to these collectors for cooperation. My address is Mr. Dick van der Wateren, Ysbaanweg 8, Noorwolde 8391 H2, The Netherlands or email: [dvdwateren@planet.nl](mailto:dvdwateren@planet.nl).

## Editor's Ramblings

There has been a suggestion that Postal Himal should be printed on 8.5 x 17-inch paper and then folded with a cover to be stapled to the whole. I had thought to have our Journal printed on 8.5 x 11-inch paper with neither pre-punched holes nor staples. My thought behind this was that I had no idea how each person kept their issues. If I was to pre-punch it, should it be 3 holes, 5 holes, or 7 holes. If stapled, should there be one staple in the top left-hand corner or 3 staples down the left hand edge. I am prepared to do whatever the majority wish. Perhaps you could send me a short note either by mail or email and let me know your thoughts. If there is a clear-cut majority for one method, that is the way that I will do it. The suggestion that was put forward was to make our Journal look more professional, along the lines of The India Study Circle. Please also keep in mind that the greatest cost of the Postal Himal is postage. Items such as staples add weight, and we don't want to increase the weight so that it just exceed the next lowest rate at which the Journal can be posted, in other words, we don't want it to weigh 3.1 ounces so that it has to be posted for 4 ounces.

Rainer Fuchs maintains an excellent website for the Society at: <http://fuchs-online.com/ntpssc/>. If you have any comments or suggestions for the site, please contact Mr. Fuchs directly. You will find links to many other sites and a wealth of information. Among the items are a History and Purpose of the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle, a Subject Index for Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet and related Areas, a Catalogue Cross Reference Lists for Nepal and Tibet, a Discussion Page, a Guest Book for leaving messages, Links for Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Related Areas, plus others. The Links for Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Related Areas contains, among others, links to Joe Luft, Chuck Hendricksen, Linn's Stamp News, The India Study Circle, Stamp Auction Central, Rainer's Stamp Corner, China Stamp Society, Tibetan Government in Exile's Official Website, Bhutan WWW Virtual Library. Why not visit the site and see for yourself what he has to offer. Also, it takes a lot of work to keep a Web site up to date. If you have some time to spare why not leave him a message offering to help maintain the site. I am sure that it would be much appreciated and would help to make the site even more valuable to the membership as well as to any others he should happen across it.

This has been quite a week for climbers on Everest – the youngest, the oldest, and the first blind climber all reached the summit within a week of each other. The oldest and the first blind climber both reached the summit on the same day.

If you have an article that you would like to have published in the Journal, please send it to the editor. Also please indicate whether or not you wish to have the article returned to you after publication. If you do not indicate that you wish it returned, then I will presume that you do not want it back.

Word has been received of the death of King Birendra, Queen Aiswarya, and 6 other members of the royal family. An article will appear in the next Postal Himal. If any of you have met any of the slain members of the royal family and would care to share your impressions, I would be pleased to receive your article.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to David Crocker. At the WESTPEX show in San Francisco, David won a gold along with the Michael Rogers Award for best Asian exhibit for his 'Tibet: The 1933 Issue.'

**Dr. Hugh Edward Richardson**  
**Born 22 December 1905 - Died 03 December 2000**

Because of his long association with Tibet as British Trade Agent Gyantse and Officer in Charge, British Mission Lhasa (1936–1940 and 1946-1947), then Officer in Charge, Indian Mission Lhasa (1947-1950), he was rightly regarded as probably the greatest figure among the eminent personalities whose knowledge of the Tibetan scene has enriched our general understanding of that land. Although not himself a philatelist he did bring back from Tibet a small collection of covers and stamps as souvenirs of his time there. I am honored to have most of these in my collection as a Special Hugh Richardson Section. Among them are a few covers franked with the 1933 set cancelled in Lhasa and self-addressed to himself at Gyantse. He told me he had prepared them especially for collectors who might write to him during his time in Tibet asking for souvenirs – typical of the man! I was privileged to know him as a friend and to receive much advice from him on philatelic pieces over the years. I shall miss him.

(Thanks to Derrick Dawson for the above article – the Editor)

**Babu Chhiri**  
**Born 1966 - Died 29 May 2001**

Babu Chhiri, a Sherpa guide who made the quickest trip up Mount Everest and also stayed at the top the longest without using bottled oxygen, has died from a fall into a crevasse of the world's highest peak.

The 35-year-old Sherpa was guiding a team of mountaineers Sunday when he slipped and fell 100 feet into a crevasse at Camp Two, situated at 20,400 feet.

Babu Sherpa, a friend and business partner, said Monday that Chhiri left camp alone to take photographs and his absence was not noticed until dinnertime three hours later. Teammates searched the snowy slopes, following his footprints. His body was found around midnight.

'It was only a short fall, if there had been somebody around at the time to help him out he would definitely have survived,' said Babu Sherpa.

Most climbers take two to four days to cover the distance from base camp to the summit. Last year, Chhiri scampered up the 29,035-foot summit from the 17,160-foot base camp in just 16 hours and 56 minutes, shattering the record of 20 hours and 24 minutes set by fellow Sherpa, Kaji, in 1998. He had reached the summit of Everest 10 times since his first ascent in 1990, and, in 1955, became the only person to reach the peak twice in 14 days.

On May 6, 1999, Chhiri became the first person to remain on the summit without bottled oxygen for 21 hours. Most foreign summiteers remain at the peak just long enough to have their photo taken.

Chhiri is survived by his wife and six daughters. Chhiri hoped to build a school in his village of Taksindo with the money he was collecting through his climbs. 'I never had the chance to go to school,' he said. 'I want all my girls, all the children, to get the education that I never had.'

(The above from [www.ctnow.com](http://www.ctnow.com). Several members also sent notification – the Editor)

# The Tibetan Wireless Telegraph System (Part 2)

Derrick Dawson

The Tibetan Telegraph System had its origin in the Younghusband Mission of 1903-04. The line between Gantok and Gyantse, some 250 miles in length, was constructed under the supervision of the Post Office engineer, M. L. Trunigar (or Truninger). The early problem of defending the system against possible Tibetan attempts to cut the wire was largely solved by Trunigar's explaining to the Lamas that the Mission was in a strange land about which the foreigners were in total ignorance: their maps were useless and they felt lost. The wire was being laid so that once the Mission had concluded its business with the Dalai Lama they would be able to find their way back home as fast as possible.

After the Mission's withdrawal, maintenance of the system was entrusted to W. P. Rosemeyer who was stationed at Pharijong where, incidentally, he met and arranged hospitality for the XIII Dalai Lama during his flight from the invading Chinese in February 1910.

During 1915 the Tibetan Government wanted to extend the line to Lhasa and after lengthy negotiation James Fairley, a telegraph engineer, was dispatched to undertake a survey. He reached Lhasa in 1920, the line was completed in 1922, and from then until 1937 Rosemeyer was responsible for its maintenance, making 7 visits to Lhasa during that period.

The radio had its origin in 1934 when the Chinese Mission of Condolence on the death of the XIII Dalai Lama visited Lhasa. General Huang Ma-Sung, in charge of the Mission, left behind on his departure a permanent Mission with a radio operator and transmitter. This was to become a matter of contention with the British who set up their own radio facilities in Lhasa when the 1936 Mission under Basil Gould concluded their business. A radio station was housed in the British Mission at Dekyi Lingka and this functioned up to 1954 when the Indian authorities, who had by then replaced the British, concluded an agreement with the Chinese recognizing Tibet as part of China.

Over the past 30 years I have found a few pieces of Postal History which fit into this background picture, and these are described and illustrated in the following paragraphs

1. An Acknowledgement of a Telegraphic Money Order

RECEIVED 1874. M. O. ACKNOWLEDGMENT. (This is a duplicate receipt which will be returned by the Post Office to the remitter.)

Acknowledge to have received payment of Telegraphic Money  
Order No. 3526 dated 16/3/17 for the sum of Rupees (words)  
Six hundred and

Date stamp of the office of payment: BARA BAZAR CALCUTTA 4:50 PM  
Date stamp of the office of issue: SILIGURI 16/3/17

Signature (in ink) of payee or thumb-impression, if payee is illiterate. 691907017 & 711078

Date 17-3 1917

Private communication (to be continued on reverse of this portion, if necessary).

T. M. O. ACKNOWLEDGMENT. (On Postal Service.)

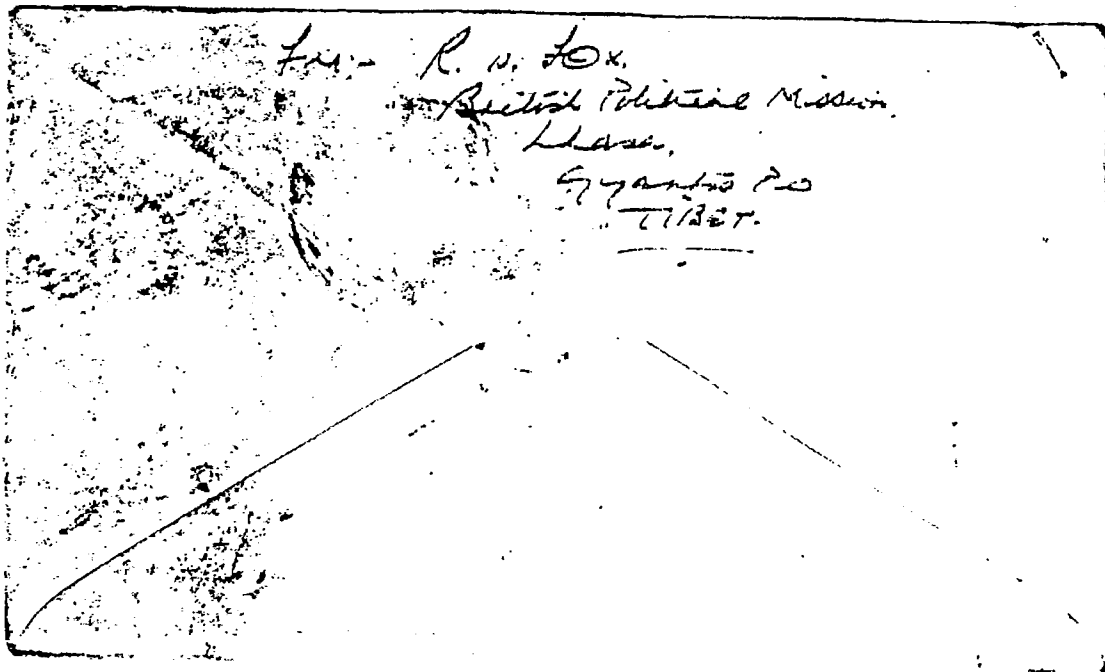
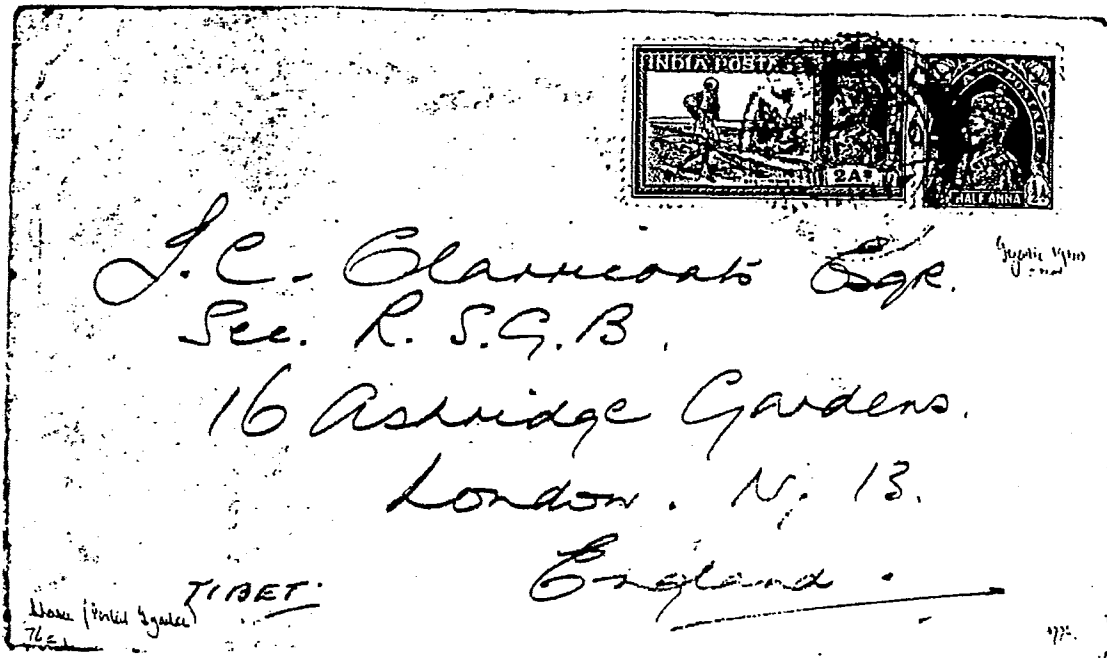
Name of remitter. Bekharatna

Address of remitter. \_\_\_\_\_

Name of post office of issue. Gyantse

This was sent by the trader Bekharatna from Gyantse on 16 March 1917 to Calcutta. Dispatch is shown by the Gyantse Tibet via Siliguri single circle datestamp on that date with the payment of the sum of 600 Rupees at Bara Bazar Calcutta at 4:45 p.m. the following day. This is the earliest piece I have and is set, therefore, during the period when Tibet was pressing for an extension of the line to Lhasa.

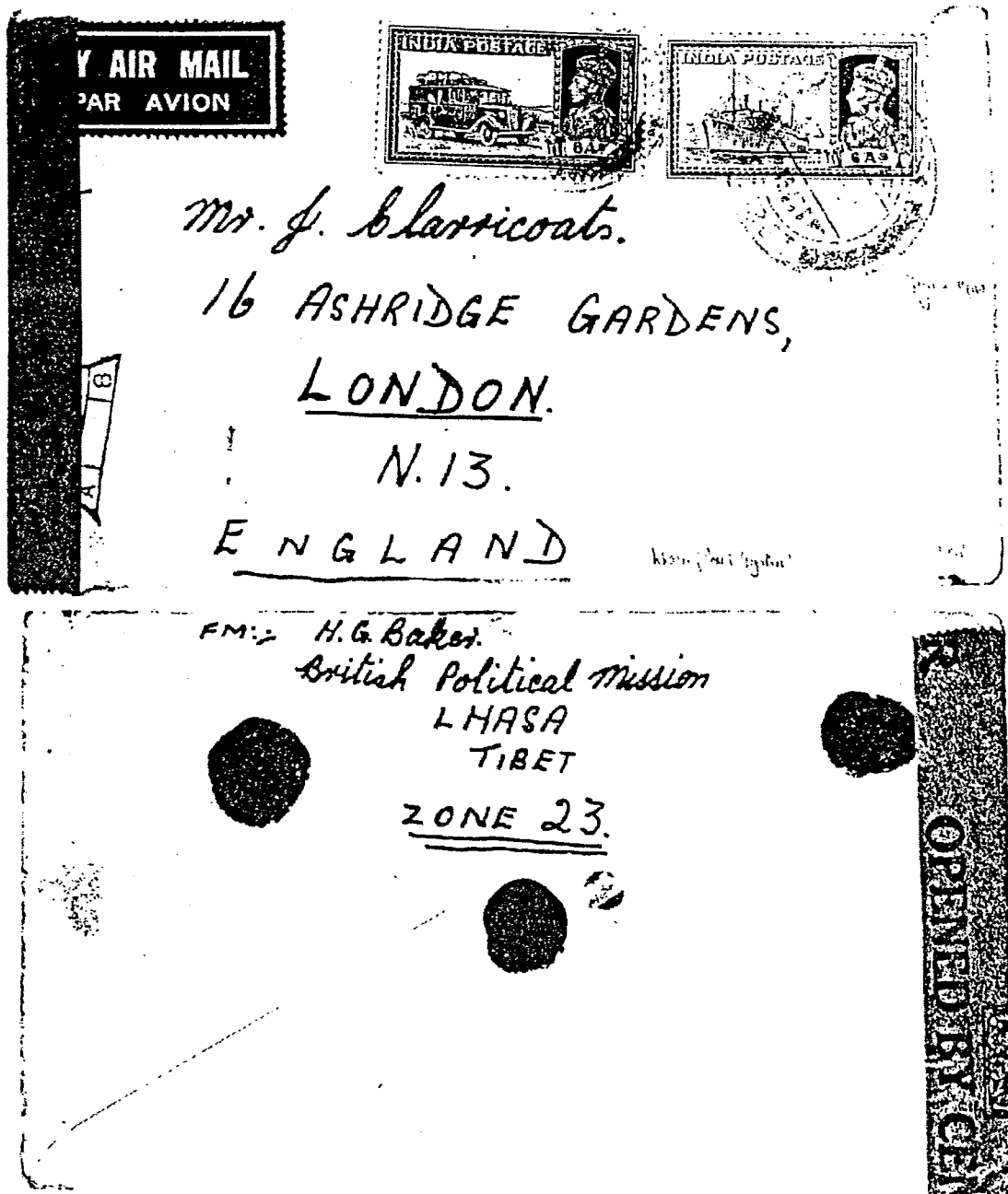
2. A cover from reg Fox, Wireless Operator at the British Mission in Lhasa



This wartime uncensored cover was sent by Fox on 2 Nov. 1940, the Indian stamps being cancelled at Gyantse by the Hellrigl Type B 16 cancel on that date. Most mail from the Mission was carried by courier to Guantse where it entered the Indian Postal System for onward transmission.

Fox, who had served as an artilleryman during the Younghusband campaign, stayed on in Tibet at the Gyantse Trade Agency and married a Tibetan lady. Of all the British personnel in Tibet he could claim the longest service in Lhasa, from 1937 to 1950.

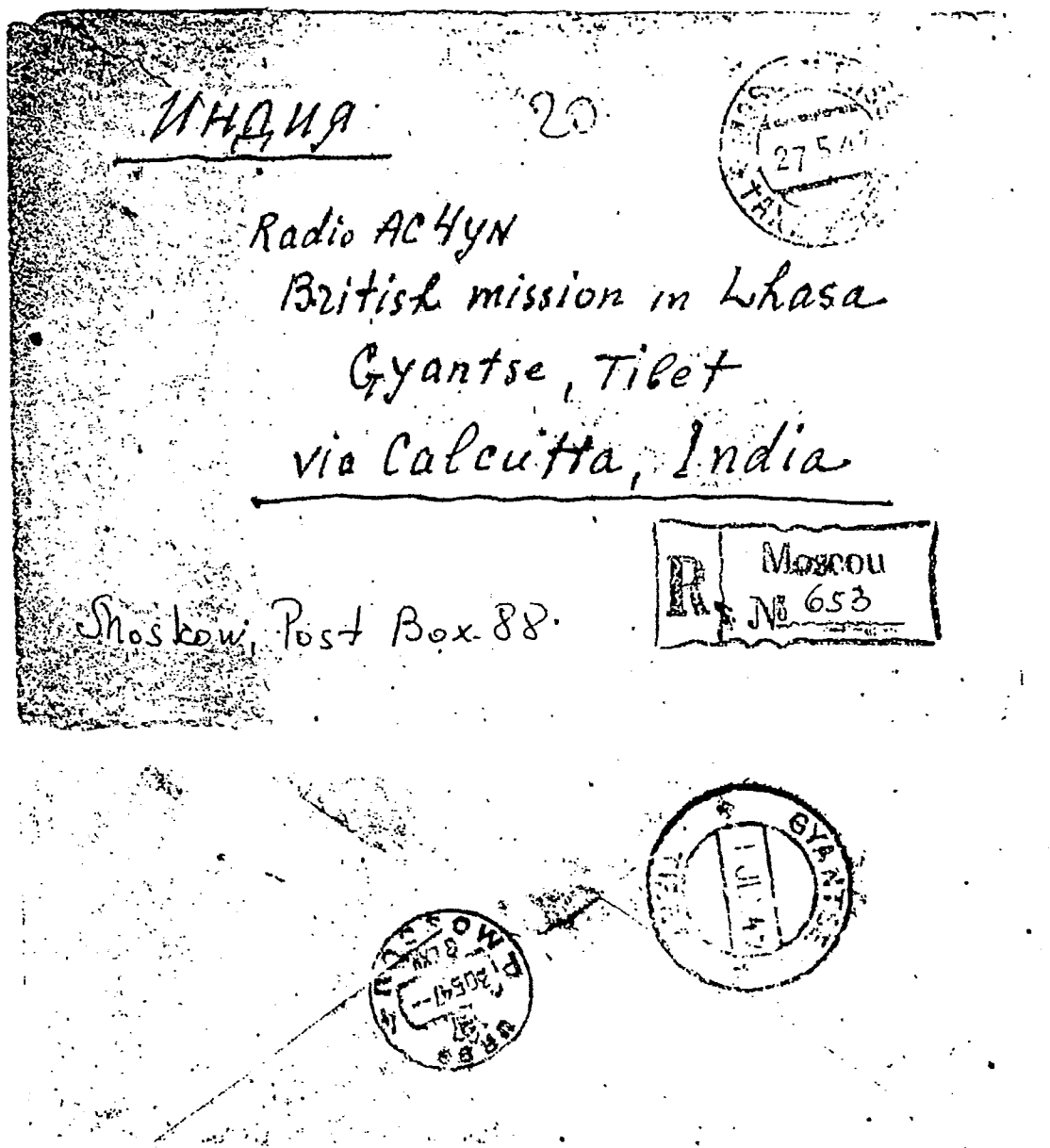
3. A cover from H. G. Baker, relief Wireless Operator at the British Mission in Lhasa



A censored airmail cover sent to the same address as No. 2 above, Mr. Clarricoats, as the preceding indicates, was Secretary of what I take to be the Radio Society of Great Britain, presumably an organization for radio 'hams'. We do know that AC4YN, the call sign of the Lhasa post, was a popular target for radio enthusiasts throughout the world, and both Fox and Baker were evidently in touch with the organization from time to time. Hugh Richardson, who was then Head of Mission at Lhasa, told me that Baker deputised for Fox when the latter was on leave.

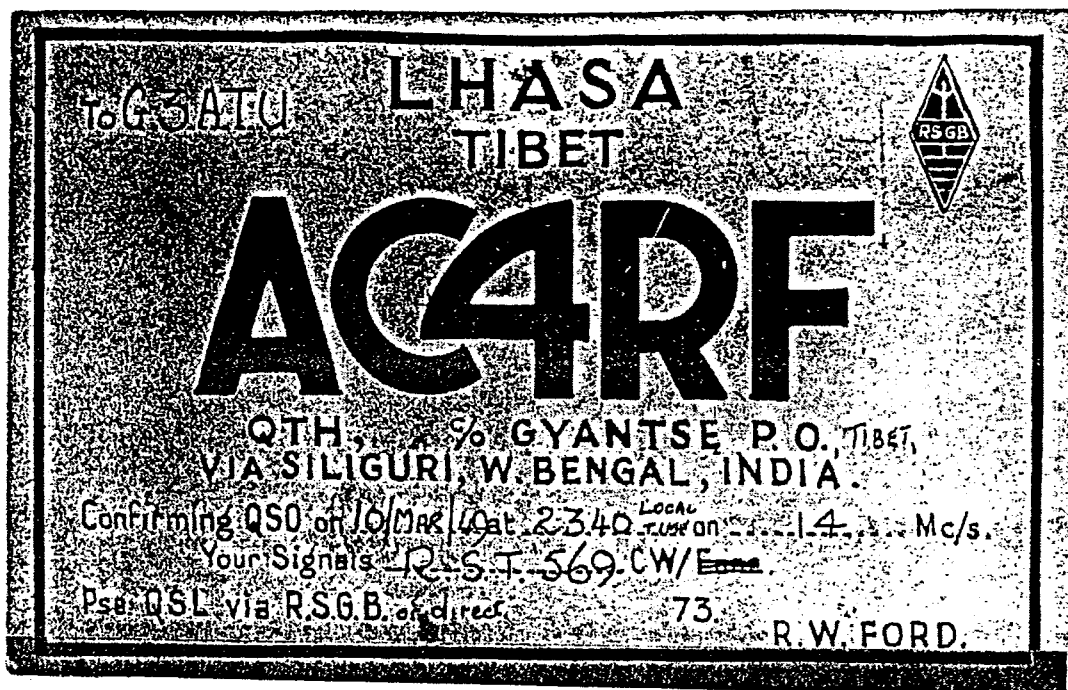


4. From behind the Iron Curtain. A cover from Moscow to Radio AC4YN



From Moscow, registered, sender's name missing, Post Box address. Posted Moscow 27 May 1947; Gyantse receipt 1 July 1947. This cover was among those brought back from Tibet by Hugh Richardson in his personal papers and was acquired by me some years ago along with several other Richardson pieces. He had no recollection of the sender. It may have been an innocent radio 'ham' if such existed in the Soviet Union. Or could there have been a more sinister explanation? Who can say? It is certainly intriguing.

5. A Radio 'Ham' Communication Report Card from Robert Ford in Chabmdo



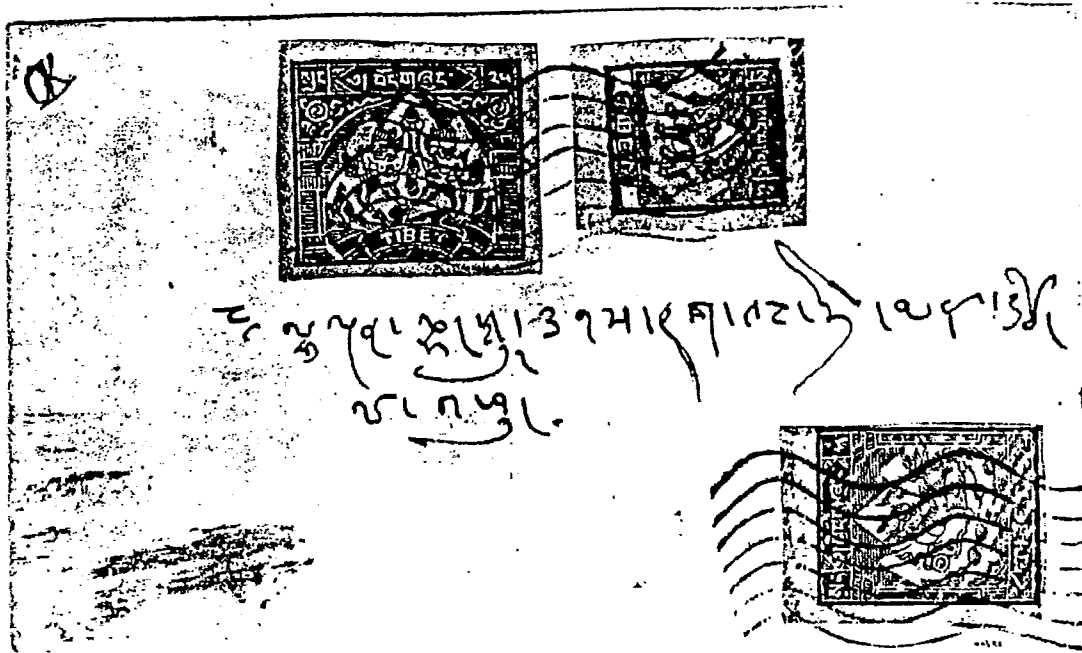
*This card for the of qso com.  
Rxtx he is a modified T32  
running from a 6 volt battery  
T3es Dx.  
Bob.  
AC4RF*

This card, dated 10 Mar 1949 could well be unique. It was acquired from a dealer who was selling off a hoard of around 11,000 radio cards from all over the world. There was a minute section of such cards from the Far East, including one each from Sikkim and Tibet.

Ford, who had previously served at the Gangtok Residency, was employed by the Tibetan Government as a Radio Operator from 1948, first in Lhasa and then in Chabmdo, Kham Province. He was captured by the invading Chinese Communist forces near Chabmdo on 18 October 1950 and spent the next 4.5 years as their prisoner.

AC4RF was the call sign of Chabmdo. All mail was routed via the Gyantse Trade Agency.

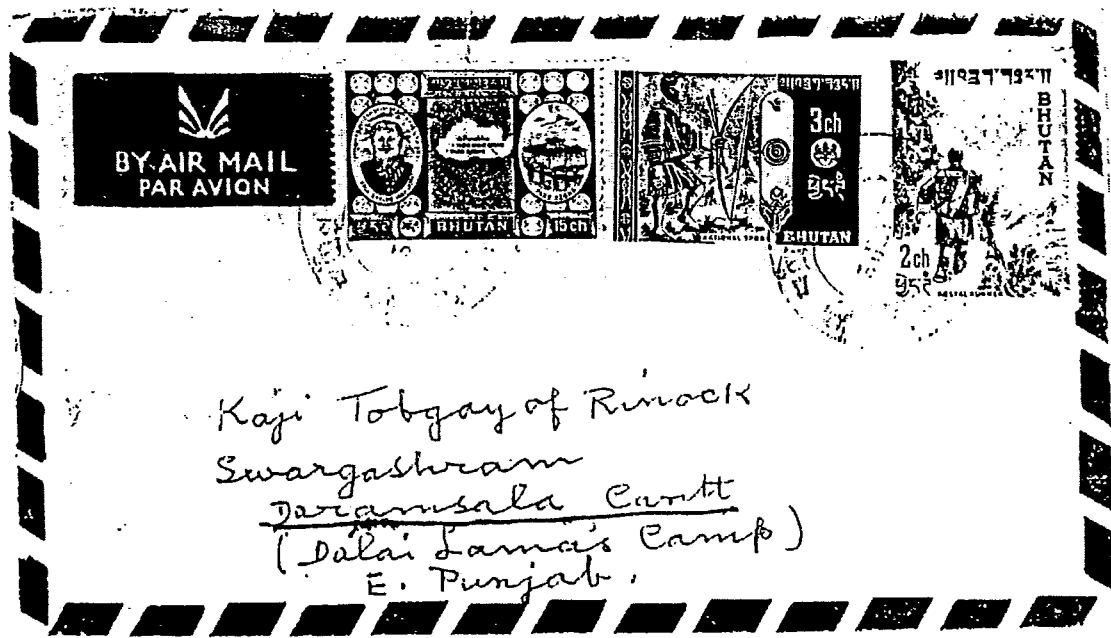
6. A cover bearing Wireless Telegraph stamps cancelled by the wavy line cancel in black



I had always thought of this cover as a phantasy. It bears the ½, 5 and 25 Srang values of the W. T. stamps. The script seems to be a peculiar mix of Tibetan characters and numerals, some perhaps in Nepali. Apart from the opening characters which are recognisably 'Lha Idan', the ancient form of 'Lhasa', I think it could be some kind of code. Only after reading Geoffrey Flack's article on Tibet's Wireless telegraph (PH Nos 75 & 76, especially p. 51 where he advances the theory that such covers may have been used to deliver telegrams) did I begin to suspect that it could be something more important.

One clue may be the fact that the cover originally had been sealed and carefully opened since the flap is entire and has the gummed portion almost entirely covered with paper from the lower part of the cover. This might suggest that, unlike most forged covers, it contained a message of some kind. Also the lower-left of the front of the cover has gum markings that something – a ticket or receipt slip? – has been removed. One can only speculate.

## 7. A Bhuteneese cover to the Dalai Lama's Camp at Dharsamala



What has a Bhuteneese cover to do with the Tibetan Wireless Telegraph System?

The cover was sent from Rinpung Dzong on 3 July 1963, and is yet another cover from the Hugh Richardson pieces. The addressee, Kazi Tobgay of Rinock, was born in Sikkim in 1925. In 1949 the Indian Mission in Lhasa, which was then headed by Hugh Richardson, appointed the Kazi, who was fluent in both Tibetan and English, as Interpreter. He held this post for 7 years, returning then to Sikkim. Quoting from an article by the Kazi on his experiences in Tibet, 'Tibet had her own communication system. Telegrams could be sent (from Lhasa – D. D.) to Gyantze, Yatung and India from the Tibetan telegraph Office. Wireless stations existed between Lhasa and Chabmdo and other places along the Eastern border. Stamps of higher demoninations were especially issued for sending messages.' This is the only clear testimony I have seen from a Tibetan source to support the use of special stamps for WT purposes. The Kazi also witnessed the escape of the young Dalai Lama 'from his palace at 10 o'clock at night for Yatung' and the subsequent entry of the Chinese Army into Lhasa. In 1959 the Indian Government asked him to accompany the Foreign Minister, Khrishna Menon, to receive the Dalai Lama at Bomdila on his final escape from Tibet. He accompanied the Lama to Tezpur, Mussoorie and Dharamsala, where he served for 13 years, to 1972, as the Dalai Lama's Chief Interpreter.

# An unrecorded printing of the first Postal Card?

Dick van der Wateren

When I obtained, in 1994, the postal stationary collection from Prof. Dr. Axel Werner he gave me also one card saying: 'I cannot list this card due to the small differences in the features with other cards. The card is damaged in the upper left corner. See what you can find out.' I always believed the card was of printing Wa 15 and I repaired the damaged corner with a part of another more damaged card of this printing.

I have obtained another card, which has been folded and ironed out, and at first sight is a printing of Wa 15. A more detailed study, however, revealed a remarkable difference with other cards of that printing and with my assumed (damaged) Wa 15 card as well.

At first I compared the damaged corner card (Figure II) with the cards I have (3) illustrated in my book at page 37 (Figure I). Then I did the same with the damaged corner card (Figure III) with the newly obtained card (Figure IV).

In Nepal Postal Stationary, page 37, I mentioned a card of the Vignola collection with a 4-mm gap between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> word of the heading. I have received from Dr. Vignola a photocopy of this card which can be seen to be exactly the same printing as the one depicted here: **Wa 15-b**. Even the sender's name is the same and the card is sent from Chispani one day before my card: B.S. 55-8-16.

## Figure I

1. wide gap
2. left frameline ends beyond bottom line
3. wide gap
4. right frameline ends beyond bottom line
5. ornament in 'normal' position
6. 'Ra' of 'Patra' damaged
7. brackets in 'normal' position

## Figure II

1. small gap
2. Left frameline ends not beyond bottom line
3. small gap
4. right frameline ends not beyond bottom line
5. ornament shifted to lower right
6. 'Ra' of 'Patra' intact
7. brackets shifted to the left

## Figure III

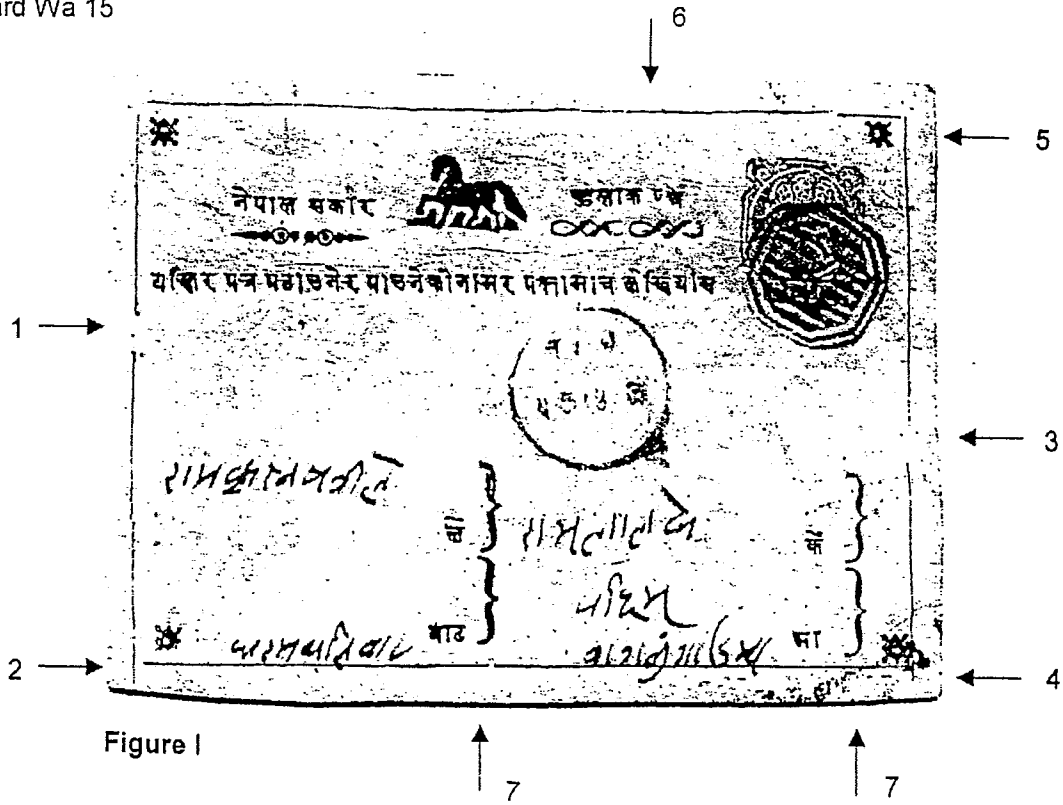
1. normal gap between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> character of the large heading
2. large heading 2 mm beyond the above ornament (the last character only)
3. bottom frameline slanting to the left
4. left frameline 85 mm

## Figure IV

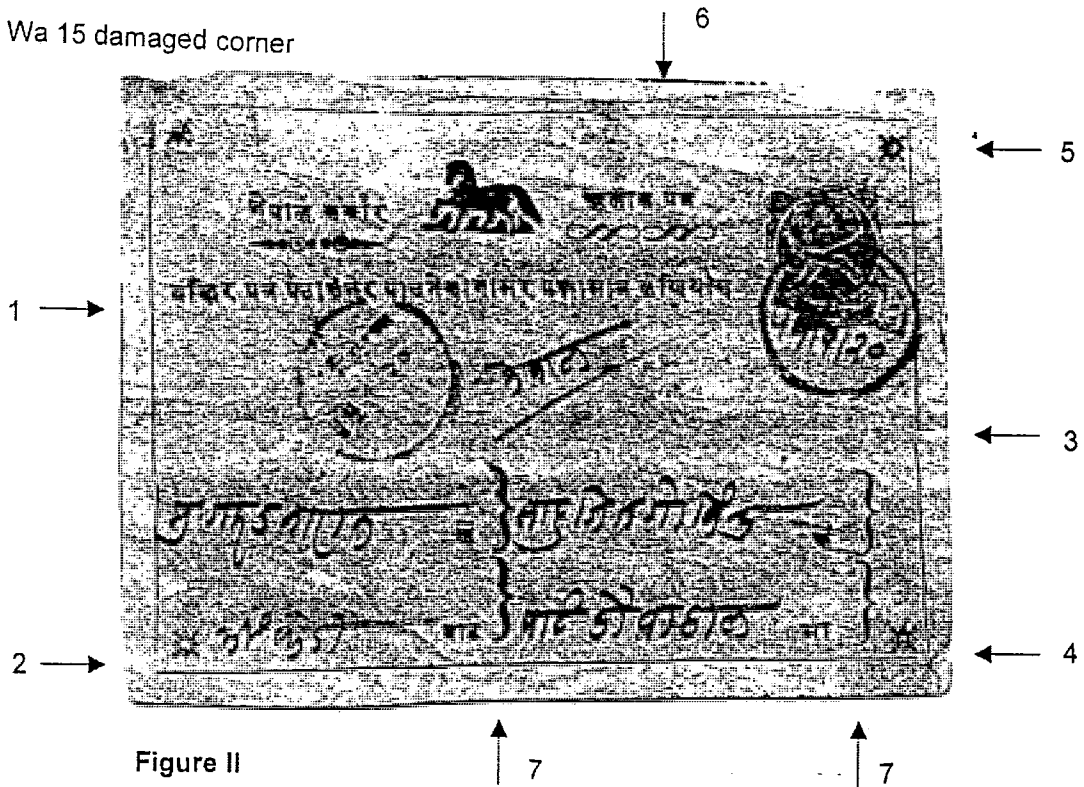
1. wide gap between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> character of the large heading
2. large heading 5.5 mm beyond the above ornament (the last two characters)
3. bottom frameline not slanting
4. left frameline 82 mm

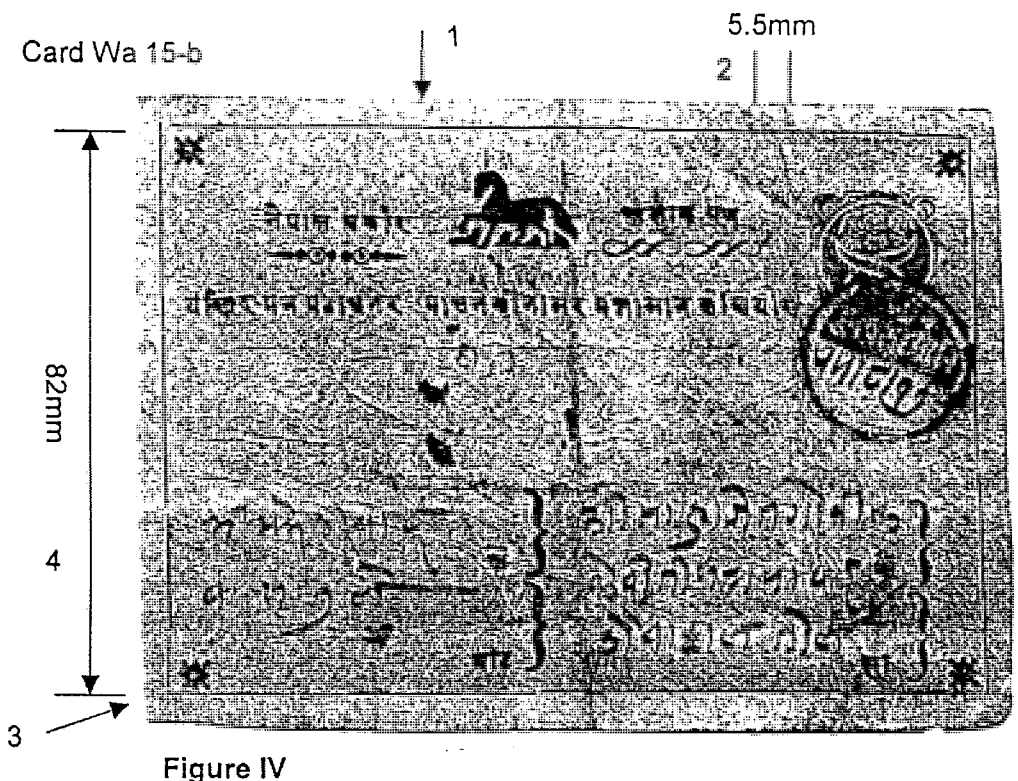
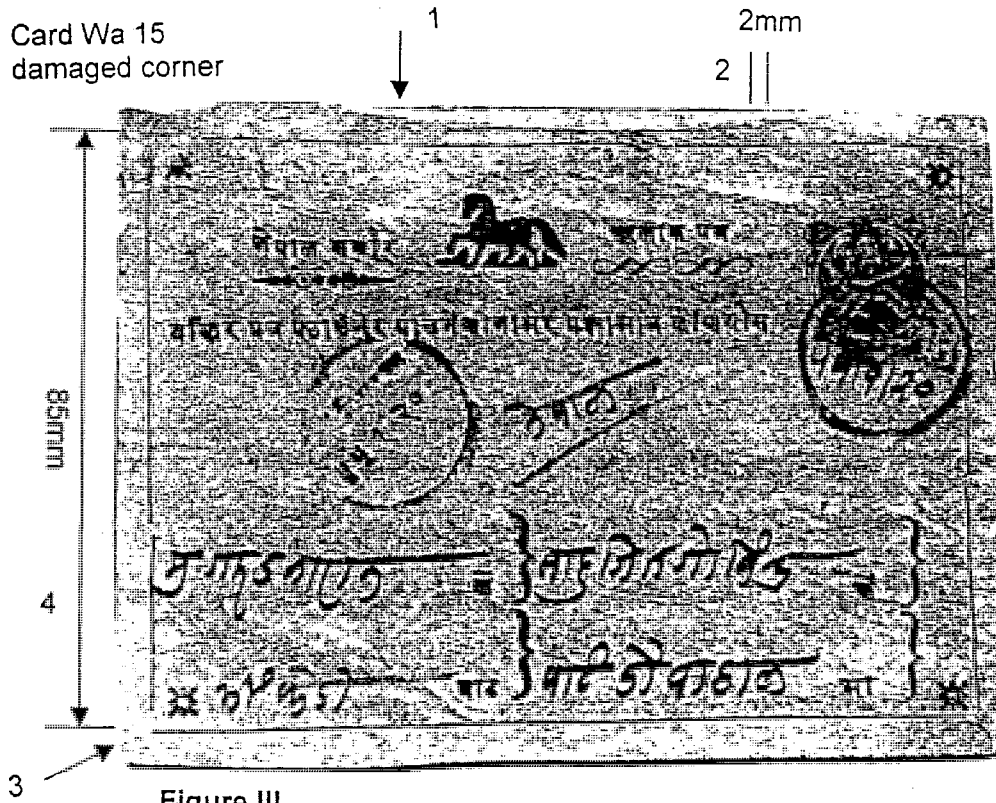
I have named the card with the damaged corner a **subtype of card Wa 15** but I believe the card of Figure IV is to be listed as a new printing **Wa 15-b** and this is the last printing before those with ornament II.

Card Wa 15



Card Wa 15 damaged corner





## Trekking and Touring in Tibet

By Julie Marshall

Last year my husband, Alan, and I visited Tibet for the first time, combining a trek to the Kangshung (or east) face of Everest with a visit to the major towns of Tibet, travelling with World Expeditions, an Australian company. We set off from Kathmandu in late September and drove to Tibet via the so-called Friendship Highway which runs from Kathmandu to Lhasa. The highway in fact is little more than a potholed track fit only for trucks and four wheel drive vehicles and, after the monsoon, was washed away in some places. However we did pass through towns familiar to Nepal collectors - Dhulikhel, Tatopani, and, just over the Tibetan border, Khasa – more generally known by its Tibetan name Zhangmu. From there the highway rose steeply to Nyalum (3900 m) which I believe was Kuti.

The “Highway” in Tibet was even worse than in Nepal and deteriorated further as we drove down to the remote Kharta valley in southern Tibet where we were to begin our ten day trek to Everest. To get there we passed through spectacular, though very barren and eroded, hills and countryside and by small Tibetan settlements. The houses are usually built around a compound and have flat roofs with bundles of sticks on top to provide fuel for winter. Trees are very scarce and, when they do occur, they are surrounded by stone walls to protect them from animals. The Kharta Valley is a rarely visited area and the villagers seem to have avoided, to a large extent, Chinese influence although even here there was a Chinese school. The resourcefulness of the Tibetan people was demonstrated soon after we arrived. We were walking in the hills around the valley so as to acclimatise before beginning our trek and came across a truck that had fallen into the river when the “road” had collapsed under its weight. By the time we came back a couple of hours later the villagers had already constructed a ramp down into the river, pulled the truck upright and out of the river, and were already rolling rocks down from the mountainside above to repair the track! In Australia I am sure it would have been there until a crane came to lift it out!

The Kangshung face of Everest has only been climbed a couple of times, the first time in the 1983. The climber, George Mallory, on the British reconnaissance expedition to Everest in 1921, thought it would never be climbed, and all the British expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s concentrated on the easier North face (which we also later briefly visited). It is a very spectacular area, and Mallory described the Kham Valley, which we passed through after crossing our first 5000 metre pass, as the most beautiful valley in the world. Certainly the mountains that dominate this area are magnificent, especially Makalu (8475 m) and Chomo Lonzo (7790 m), which we felt were, in some ways, more spectacular than Everest. On one morning their high peaks were perfectly reflected in the early morning in a glacial lake beside which we were camped. Being autumn the Rhododendrons were not in flower but the alpine pastures were covered with gentians and other ground hugging flowers whilst many of the bushes on the high slopes were bright red and orange. We had perfect weather except when climbing the highest pass, the Langma La (5330 m) when we were walking through driving snow and hail. Although none of us suffered from altitude sickness (probably because we were taking the drug, Diamox) we were very short of breath crossing the higher passes. Fortunately we were only carrying day packs with the rest of our gear being carried by yaks.

When we arrived in Tibet the villagers were harvesting their crops of barley but by the time we began driving through Tibet following our trek they were winnowing the grain. They were still doing this in many places in the traditional way, tossing the grain into the air, although more modern methods were being used when we came closer to the more populated and prosperous valleys near Shigatse. Shigatse is the second largest city in Tibet and is a mixture of Chinese and Tibetan. The highlight of Shigatse, of course, is the Tashilhunpo Monastery, one of the six great Gelugpa institutions and the home of the Panchen Lama. There were photos everywhere of the 10th Panchen Lama, who died in 1989, as well as photos of the Chinese approved 11<sup>th</sup> reincarnation who spends most of his time in Beijing. There were no photos of the present Dalai Lama – these are forbidden in Tibet. Tashilhunpo is still a functioning monastic institution although the number of monks there is now comparatively few and most of them seemed old. However it was a fascinating place to visit – not only because of the statues of Buddha and the tombs of previous Panchen Lamas which were covered in gold and studded with semi-precious stones, but because of the numerous Tibetan pilgrims devoutly carrying out their devotions. They visited each of the shrines, prostrating themselves, adding butter to the numerous lamps in front of the images and tombs, and



giving money for the monastery and to the few monks murmuring prayers. Most of the pilgrims were old women and, generally in Tibet the most devout were the women.

Gyantse was also a fascinating place and seems to have avoided the Chinese influence of concrete building blocks better than most of the main Tibetan cities. The road from Gyantse to Lhasa crosses over the Karo La (5045 m) where the spectacular Nojin Kangstan glacier comes close to the road. It was here that British troops clashed with Tibetan forces during the 1904 Younghusband Expedition on its way to Lhasa. This is thought to be the highest battle ever fought in the history of war. Soon after we descended to Yamdrok Tso, a beautiful, turquoise freshwater lake and one of the four holy lakes of Tibet. The Lake is unusual as it is locked in a high bowl above the Tsangpo River and has no outlet and no perennial source of water. Recently the Chinese have built a tunnel to take the waters of the lake down 846 m to the Tsangpo River using gravity to create a hydroelectric supply. This began in 1997 and the water level of the lake is already falling.

Lhasa is the city which shows the most Chinese influence and when we arrived there in the late evening it was like driving into a Chinese city with hardly any Tibetan influence at all. It was not until the next day when we could see the Potala that we could really believe we were there. The Potala is one of the few major buildings in Tibet which escaped damage by the Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. It is now a World Heritage site and is really just a Museum with only a few monks as "caretakers". But it is magnificent - both the exterior and the interior. It is a building of massive proportions which towers over Lhasa, with stone staircases zigzagging across its rambling façade. Unfortunately in front of the Potala now is a large Chinese style square with a Chinese flag flying instead of the stream that can be seen in photos up until the early 90s. Inside, the richness of the tombs of the former Dalai Lamas which are gold encrusted chortens covered with semi-precious stones, the three dimensional mandalas, the many statues of saints and the Buddha, the thangkas and religious books, are awe-inspiring. In many places the only access between the floors of the Potala was by way of steep wooden ladders with very widely spaced rungs (obviously made for long legged monks!)

However the best part of Lhasa is the Jokhang and the Barkhor Square, situated in the centre of old Lhasa. The Jokhang is probably the most revered religious institution in Tibet and dates back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Its interior was damaged during the Cultural Revolution but has been restored and the central area is still supported by the enormous tree trunks brought from Nepal, which have been worn smooth over the ages. The Barkhor Square in front of the Jokhang is a constant movement of life, especially in the late afternoon when hundred of Tibetans from all parts of the country walk the pilgrim circuit round the Jokhang. Many twirl prayer wheels whilst others prostrate themselves, measuring their full length on the ground the whole way. The whole circuit is lined with stalls selling everything from prayer flags, skull bowls and other Tibetan artifacts to a few perfect fossils (we bought one of a Nothosaur, a predecessor of the Plesiosaurs).

We also visited the Norbulingka, the summer palace of the Dalai Lamas. This is a vast treed area but is now very run down and neglected though the gardens must have been beautiful in earlier times. The pavilion of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama was interesting as it housed the various palanquins and buggys used by the last two Dalai Lamas and also the remains of the car given to the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama by the British. The new Summer Palace of the present Dalai Lama was only completed in 1956. It has many beautiful murals, some showing the history of Tibet, whilst one in the Assembly Hall where his gold throne is situated, has images of the Dalai Lama's court, former Dalai Lamas and the present Dalai Lama and his family.

We returned to Kathmandu by air flying South China Airlines. It was a beautiful day (like most of our days in Tibet) with a sparkling blue sky. As we were flying right over the Himalayas we were looking forward to a last view of Everest and Makalu but the plane's windows were so crazed all you could see was a blur! But this could not take away a magnificent, very interesting encounter with a beautiful stark country.



Chomo Lonzo on the extreme left, Lhotse, and  
Everest on the extreme right



The author and her husband