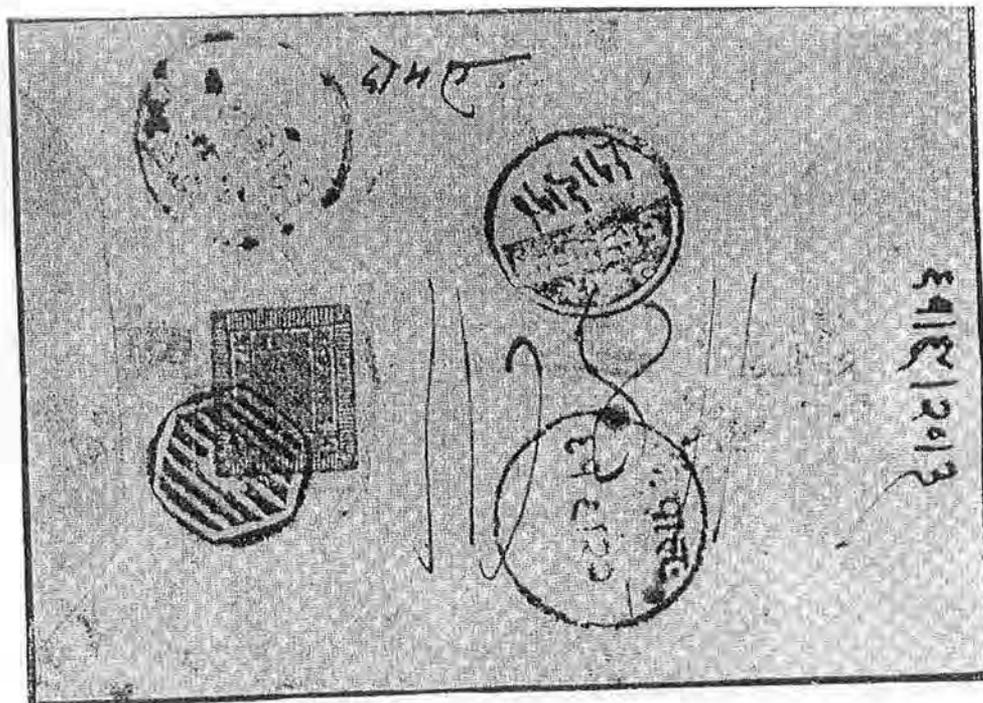


Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

NTPSC Homepage (courtesy of Rainer Fuchs) <http://fuchs-online.com/ntpssc>





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

	<u>One Year</u>	<u>Three Years</u>	<u>Life Member</u>
Great Britain	£12	£33	£250
USA	\$18	\$50	\$375
Europe	€19	€52	€390

American Philatelic Society Affiliate #122 British Philatelic Federation Affiliate #435

Secretary: Mr. Colin T. Hepper
C72 Calle Miguel Angel
El Sueno - Fase I
El Chaparral
03184 Torrevieja
Alicante
Spain
Phone & Fax 34 96 6784701
email: hepper@terra.es

Editor: Mr. Richard M. Hanchett
6 Rainbow Court
Warwick, RI 02889-1118
USA
Phone (401) 738 0466
email: editorofpostalhimal@cox.net

The Board of Directors:

<u>President:</u>	Prof. Armand Singer, armand.singer@mail.wvu.edu	<u>Past President:</u>	Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl
<u>Vice President:</u>	Mr. Dick van der Wateren	<u>Secretary:</u>	Mr. Colin T. Hepper
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Mr. Colin T. Hepper	<u>Auctioneer:</u>	Mr. Leo Martyn
<u>Members at large:</u>	Mr. Christopher Kinch, Mr. Alan Warren	<u>Editor:</u>	Mr. Richard M. Hanchett

Representatives:

Europe: Mr. Colin T. Hepper - see address above
Nepal: Mr. Surendra Lal Shrestha, G. P. O. Box 72, Kathmandu, Nepal
USA: Mr. Roger Skinner, 1020 Covington Road, Los Altos, CA 94024, USA

Life Members: Mario C. Barbieri, Jeremy Brewer, Geoffrey Flack, P. Gupta, Richard M. Hanchett, Wolfgang C. Hellrigl, William Janson, Kenneth Javonovich, G. Lenser, Leo Martyn, R. Murray, Peter Planken, Barbara Praytor, Surendra Lal Shrestha, Roger Skinner, Dick van der Wateren, Alfonso G. Zulueta Jr.

New Members:

Change of Address:

Dropped for Non-Payment of Dues:

Lost Members: (Anyone knowing the address, please send it in)

<u>Publishing Schedule:</u>	<u>Issue</u>	<u>Cutoff for Articles</u>	<u>Into Mail</u>
	122 - 2nd Quarter 2005	May 28, 2005	June 11, 2005
	123 - 3rd Quarter 2005	August 27, 2005	September 17, 2005
	124 - 4th Quarter 2005	November 19, 2005	December 03, 2005
	125 - 1st Quarter 2006	February 24, 2006	March 18, 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Officer's Corner		1	First Day Covers	13
Editor's Ramblings	Richard M Hanchett	1	Vernay Article	Armand E. Singer
Nepal: The Tainted Years	Armand E. Singer	2	New Post Card	Shrestha and Hepper
A Matter of Secrecy	David Froud	12		

Officer's Corner

Any further comments on Danny Wong's proposed philatelic 'expedition' to Tibet and Nepal, summer 2006?

We are definitely setting up a table when we attend the World Philatelic Exhibition, Washington, D. C., May 27-June 3, 2006. I know of at least two of us who will have exhibits (one Nepal, one Tibet). There surely will be more. This is one show we shouldn't miss.

Frank Vignola's wife Mae (not a Tibet or Nepal specialist like Frank, but award winner for Latin America material) passed away recently. She was always a big help at our

annual appearances at WESTPEX in San Francisco. We have sent condolences. As for Frank, after consulting with several of our most active members/officers, we have elected Frank himself to honorary membership. The book he did with member Wolfgang Hellrigl is our bible for classic Nepal. The number of awards, gold at that, he has won literally filled one room of their apartment in San Francisco. He, with Hellrigl and Couvreur were the founding members of our NTPSC. No one deserves the honor more than he.

Armand

Editor's Ramblings

I have just returned from my trip to the Antarctic. From Providence, Rhode Island I flew to Atlanta and from there to Buenos Aires and from Buenos Aires to Ushuaia, Argentina. It was an 18-day expedition boat trip, visiting the Antarctic Peninsula, various islands in the Southern Ocean, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. A total of 88 passengers - the great majority of whom were British subjects. What a wonderful trip! The area covered was, of course, huge. We were 2 days at sea going from Ushuaia to the Antarctic Peninsula, 2 days from the Peninsula to South Georgia, 2 days from South Georgia to the Falkland and 1 day from the Falklands to Ushuaia. The remaining 11 days were spent visiting the areas listed above. It was quiet, desolate, remote, covered in eternal snow and ice, and it was very, very beautiful.

There were icebergs and ice floes. More wild life than you might think - we saw reindeer, 4 different species of penguins, 3 species of whales and 4 species of seals, including the

elephant seal (the male can weight up to 9,000 pounds), along with multiple species of terns, albatross and other birds. We had, usually, three or four landings a day by Zodiac. On all of the landings there was wild life and walking tours (some of them too strenuous for your editor). The weather was generally good, and being the southern hemisphere it was summer time and warm (30 to 40 degrees F). That was warmer than the weather those in Rhode Island experienced.

This trip also allowed me to visit the two continents which I had previously not been to - South America and Antarctica. I have now visited all 7 of the continents.

Next year I plan to spend 5 weeks in India, Nepal, Cambodia, and, hopefully, Sikkim and Bhutan. It has been a while since I last visited this region and I look forward to visiting it again. I have previously visited India and Nepal, but not the other three and I look forward to seeing them.

CONGRATULATIONS to Donald Peterson on receiving a bronze for his exhibit 'Postal History of Bhutan's First Issues, 1962' at the American Philatelic Society's winter show in Atlanta in February.

Nepal: The Tainted Years

Armand E. Singer

Nepal, it its counterfeits lack something of the renown of Tibet's (especially those pesky "officials"), does have its moments. Most notorious, surely, is the 1875 cavalry stamp, the country's alleged first issue, at one time thought genuine if incredibly rare (five copies, including one in the royal British collection, so the story went), then widely debunked, but recently acquiring a certain degree of authenticity (see Leo Martyn's scholarly article, *PH* 103-04 [3rd - 4th quarter, 2000]: 29-40). The classic issues, 1881 on, provide a few examples of counterfeits, some good enough to fool the unwary. Haverbeck's *Postage Stamp of Nepal* (New York: Collectors Club [1961?]) discusses most of them at length in chapter 13. More recent years have seen a dubious item or two. Don't be tempted to purchase the 1935 Sri Pashupati 4 pice in black instead of green (oxidation did the trick), or with the center panel in blue. Among others I suspect must exist, I was offered one of the recent multicolored issues (I cannot recall which one) with the gold color missing. Strong magnification revealed traces of the gold still visible in the paper fibers. No sale.

More interesting were the negative reprints of the 1907 Sri Pashupatis that surfaced around 1950, supposedly faked by crooked dealers. They have now, however, been shown to be primitive attempts by the Nepalese government to provide stamps increasingly hard to obtain from the London printer, Perkins-Bacon, because of WWII (see the whole story in Thomas Matthiesen and Frank Vignola, *PH* 73 [1st quarter 1993]: 10-15).

All this serves to let me segue into the real subject of the present article, stamps of the years 1958-61, beginning with Scott C1 (October 16) through Scott 134 (March 1), and in particular Scott 120, King Mahendra Opening Parliament, July 1, 1959.

What I once called "The Era of Errors"

involves in particular Scott's 102, 118, 119, 120, 121-23, 125, 134, and C1, all printed in Kathmandu by the local Gorkha Patra press; other stamps of the period done in Nasik, India in the Security Printing Press, remained Simon pure.

The perforation varieties rival those of the earlier Nepal press efforts 1941-49, but these were largely war or post-war issues, done on somewhat faulty machines, and thus with more excusable errors. Most experts consider them unintentional, that is, genuine. The 1958-61 errors were almost certainly created on purpose to sell to collectors, the sheets secretly smuggled out of the press building. The shenanigans were widely bruited about in Kathmandu itself, and honest dealers and collectors expressed their outrage.

Along with these perforation varieties we should note the probably related case of the black overprint on the government service stamp (originally Scott 124, portrait of King Mahendra), now becoming Scott O15. The overprint, "Kaj Sarkari", simply means "service" or "official use", well and good, but it is considered illegal. *Gibbons' Stamp Monthly* (December 1960) reported that after some two hundred copies were sold, "police action [was taken] against the Director of the G.P.O., the store-keeper responsible for the stock and one of the buyers who had advertised in India what he had obtained! The buyer's remaining stock was destroyed and he was compensated at face value". Virtually the same account is echoed in the following report to be found in *The Philatelic Trader* (November 11, 1960): 663, repeating a letter from "A Philatelist" originally from an October 9 issue of a Kathmandu newspaper, *The Motherland*:

The G.P.O. of Nepal celebrated the 41st birthday of His Majesty the King on June 11th last. On that occasion a one rupee postage stamp was issued by the department, which was overprinted with the terms "Kaj

Sarkary" ("official use") in black letters which was sold to the public again on July 27th.

The Anti-Corruption Department is learnt to protest this issuing of stamps on allegation that such stamps are ineligible to issue on His Majesty's birthday, because of which the department is in predicament in selling these stamps. But the Department is learnt to have reported that such overprinting of postage stamps in black letters had been issued, as is enlisted by Stanley Jevons (Gibbons? - Ed. 'P.M. '), in 1953, on August 15th, 1948 by the Government of India, which from the number 305 to 308 bore dedication ... to Mahatma Ghandi in black letters, and regarding this a record saying "A very small quantity was 'overprinted service' for the use of the Governor General".

Moreover, the seller is learnt to have confessed to the Anti-Corruption Department for selling those stamps by mistake.

There can be no mistake about the selling or over-selling of the already prepared stamps.

But mistake in printing in black letters on a living great man's likeness is simply unimaginable - and especially so on the occasion of his birthday. These stamps are likely to go into albums of famous philatelists in the world.

Were no other means found out for such "official use" of postage stamps? What does this black print mean?

Aside from a few phrases where the English is a bit confusing, the message and the philatelist's outrage are quite clear. These were indeed perilous times for Nepal, including its philatelic activities. Let the well-known pioneer of Nepalese philately, Dr. Mac Ricketts, paint a larger picture (from an article, "News from Nepal", appearing in the June 1962 issue of the *S.P.A. Journal* [p. 517]):

At the time of this writing (March) King Mahendra is ruling through an appointed six-man Cabinet, more than one year after he dissolved the Nepalese Parliament and suppressed the country's fifteen political parties. Exiled politicians, based in India, have incited dozens of armed attacks and revolts throughout Nepal. At their head is General Subarna Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, a member of the old Rana aristocracy whom Mahendra's father overthrew in 1951 (commemorated on the Tenth Anniversary of Democracy stamp, 1961).

That the government should intervene over the selling of official stamps to the general public makes reasonable sense (though literally all of the official stamps have been available to the

public then and now, most of them at fairly low prices), but it remains puzzling as to why the post office officials would have defaced the king's portrait in the first place, Nepal having the religious beliefs it did. My guess: someone in power was sending a message that Mahendra's rule offended the ousted Rana rulers (see Ricketts' article above). For whatever the following facts prove, the same "outrage" was duplicated on the Mahendra portrait in a smaller size (Scott 144-46) in 1962 as Scott O12-14 (despite the lower catalog number this followed O15), arousing no hue or cry whatsoever, sold to the public then and still available at modest prices.

As a postscript to the mysterious case of the black overprint (apologies to Conan Doyle and his famous creation), the original imprint has been hand-counterfeited very cleverly. The hand-drawn letters are so closely duplicated that you really need a magnifying glass to detect the tiny differences.

Back to the perforation abominations. Was anything done to punish, much less root out, the perpetrators? Not as far as I have been able to ascertain. The stamps themselves, perhaps to the shame of our hobby, remain popular and fetch good auction prices as pairs, pieces, and sheets. One in particular, the second Children's Day issue of 1961, is a true rarity, in sheets of sixteen especially, but even an imperforate pair can bring \$50.00 or more. The story runs that some government official sequestered a whole batch of the imperforated sheets, not releasing them until 1984, only fourteen coming on the market.

It makes a kind of perverse sense, when you think of it, not to come down too hard (at least in the matter of the earlier imperforates and partial perforates). The Nepal government suffered no real loss. To the contrary, since the overwhelming majority of the irregularities were purchased by foreign collectors, Nepal actually came out way ahead in its national economy.

In the matter of the July 1, 1959 red Parliament stamp, Scott 120, we have a quite different story. There were the usual perforation

varieties perpetrated upon the genuine stamps. *There were also counterfeits.* Now, it was the post office's ox being gored. The government somehow found the criminals and proceeded to take action.

The stamps were well reproduced. They were either turned out on a color Xerox-type machine, or, as rumor has it, reproduced on the government's own equipment. They exactly duplicate the originals, even down to the double-moon (or sun) variety seen once a sheet. The ink is duller than the genuine and the paper, rather than heavy, glossy white, is thinner and a dull off-white, almost gray. They are known mint, used, and on cover.

The police seized Vijay Raj Singh Suwal, a Kathmandu stamp dealer under the Anti-Corruption Act 2017, along with Sukuman Mandal of Calcutta, then residing in Kathmandu. The number 2017, if a date, would correspond to 1960 in our Western calendar. As Ricketts' article implies (see above), corruption could be expected in those troubled times, and obviously not just in matters philatelic.

The government for its case offered in evidence covers and pieces of the fakes (see illustrations) along with several articles from stamp magazines (oddly enough, not concerning the Parliament fake but the black Mahendra overprint - actually the three I have cited above: Ricketts' article, the irate letter from *The Motherland*, and the Gibbons' *Stamp Monthly* article). All the evidence has been stamped with the government's black rubber seal.

As I said, it is odd that the textual evidence all refers to the black overprint, not the counterfeit Parliament stamp. Could the Kathmandu dealer Suwal and Mandal of Calcutta be the same pair that the police took action against in the matter of the black overprint (see the Gibbon's article above)? If Suwal was being afforded better treatment in 1963, he could easily have been incarcerated or accused as early as 1960; remember how slowly justice was dispensed. In the case, the G.P.O. Director in question probably merely suffered a reprimand. The data on which the present article is based does not allow for certainty. A Kathmandu citizen

gathered it but decided (prudently!) that he better not publish it in Nepal. I have set down on these pages all the details that I was vouchsafed.

Here follows the decision handed down by Judge Bijaya Pratap Rana of the Kathmandu court (the defendants of course maintained their innocence, though the government had the faked material, seized from Mandal). Pratap Rana argues that the charges do not come under the Anti-Corruption Act and that they should have been handled under Civil and Forgery Law in the first place. His court did get the case but he says sufficient evidence is lacking. Case dismissed; the defendants are to get their deposit money back. (Raj Singh had put up 5000 Nepalese rupees, Mandal 3400 Nepalese rupees and a thousand Indian rupees).

Since the government did have the faked evidence, some amount of guilt was surely involved. Nothing seems to have been said about who actually produced the fakes (the accused merely marketed them), either privately or on the government press. There was no mention of the Birganj covers (they are not infrequently seen). A few further observations: the judges are from the Rana family, that is, the rulers deposed by the present ruling family. The faked stamp dates from 1959 as does one Birganj cover I show here. The Anti-Corruption Act 2017 I assume is dated 1960. The general outcry in the press comes in 1960-62. The arrests were made in or before 1963 (at least we know the letter affording Suwal better treatment is dated 019/12/18, which works out to April 1, 1963. The judge's decision is dated 031/3/16 = June 29, 1974. Negotiations and pleas bear the year 2019 and 2020 (1962, 1963), when monies were deposited, and 028/1/14, when Suwal was testifying in court, our equivalent of April 27, 1971.

Conclusion: Nepal's mills of justice grind most slowly, and at least in this case seem to have ground much grain.

BY REGISTERED POST



Cover sent to [inked out] [but =] Vijay Raj Singh. Mr. Singh was one of the men who was accused and jailed.

TO: VARESH N. MANANDHAR (philatelist) 14/599, Chasando Tole, Kathmandu, Nepal

Handwritten notes in Nepali and English, including 'Mr. HERRIGL' and a signature.

Mr. [redacted] (Dealer in Postage Stamps) No. [redacted] Kathmandu, NEPAL

Cancelled in Kathmandu (Hellrigl / Hepper p. 75, top second from left)



Block of 12 of the counterfeits. Cancelled Kalaiya (see Hellrigl/Hepper p. 73 top (1960))



गणेश सरकारी
Genuine



Scott O12

The counterfeit overprint has been blown up like the genuine.

The stamps themselves are about normal.



counterfeit



Birganj to Calcutta.

Registered perforated (but fake) pair with other postage.

Cancelled Hellrigl/Hepper p.74 row 2, second from left.

USE STAMP AGENCY
POST BOX 11421.
CALCUTTA-6, INDIA.



Counterfeit imperforate pair



श्री ५ को सरकार
विशेष पुलिस विभाग

पत्र संख्या:-

2019/12/18

विषय:- धुनुवा पुर्जि

सिंहदरवार
काठमाडौं, नेपाल
मिति: २९ १२ २०१८

श्री विजय राज सिंह सुवाल,

कम. ई. जॉय बहाल टोल ।

यस विभागको विशेष अनुसंधान शाखाई श्री सिंहसिलाघाट पु. नि
ऐन २०१७ को अन्तर्गत तपाइलाइ जात्रका मिति देखि के कुरा
सिधा ज्ञान पाउने गरी पुर्जा राखेको वी पुर्जा दिने छ।

2019/12/18
विशेष पुलिस

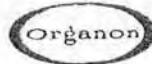
A copy of the original letter, in Nepali, telling Singh his rations would be improved. The word 'rations', according to my Kathmandu professor friend can have various related meanings. Basically it says he will be elevated to a higher category and now in category "A" could be food, supplies, even money [if prisoners are actually given an allowance as ours are in the United States].

The letter is dated 2019/12/18. This translates to April 1, 1963, so Singh is already in jail as this letter shows.



The cover of the letter sent to Singh to tell him that his rations would be improved.

Regd. Office : Himalaya House
38, Chowringhee Road, Cal.-71
Cable "Organon" 24-0681 (4 Lines)



001/9

NAME.....

To

ORGANON (INDIA) LIMITED
CALCUTTA

TOWN.....TERY. NO.....

REF. NO.....DATE.....

SUBJECT.....

His Majesty's Government
Special Police Department

Singhdurbar
Kathmandu, Nepal
Date: P.S. 019.12.18

Ref: 712/019

Subject: Custody-notice

Shree Vijay Raj Singh Suwal,
Kathmandu, Om Sahal Tole.

You are informed hereby that you will be in custody under Anti-corruption Act 2017 for special investigation and you will be entitled class A ration.

Sd/
Chief Officer

URGENT

Shree Vijay Raj Singh
Basantapur, Kathmandu.

His Majesty's Government
Ministry of Communication
Dept. of Postal Services

Tl. 1103/030 Cover-I

D. M. COPY

Esskays (1)/250 Books/5-76

Translation into English of the letter to Singh about better rations on ORGANON company stationery. That's the well-known (Calcutta) Nepal specialist P. Gupta's company. Possibly he was actually collecting some of this material in some way, but the whole collection of covers, stamps, and documents did not come from him. Someone else, let us say in this same firm, could be using the company's letterhead stationery. It remains a curious detail. G. Flack, who sent me this whole collection of evidence, isn't sure either.

Editor's note: Following is an English translation of the Nepali court judgment. Misspellings have been left as they appear in the original. Mr. Singer also sent a copy of the original document in Nepali. The Nepali copy was greatly reduced in size and not completely legible. It will be found after the English translation.

The text of Judgement made by Justice,
Bijaya Pratap Rana of Kathmandu Dist.
Court.

[Nepali text] 120

Plaintif : His Majesty's Govt.

Defendants:

- (1) Bijaya Raj Singh Swal,
own behalf
- (2) Sukumar Mandal
Pandu Khetri Bengali
4/34, Jahira Bazar Lane
Calcutta (present address :
Himalaya Hotel, Kathmandu)

Subj : Illegal gains made

From the papers submitted in conformity with legal procedures, and the stamps recovered from Sukumar Mandal do themselves testify by the nature of their mind that they (stamps) were not brought out in circulation by His Majesty's Govt. By bringing out these forged stamps Sukumar and Bijaya Raj Singh both in alliance and with the ill motives to achieve illegal gains, they have failed to observe the law though they were in the know of it.

This is the petition from Special Police Branch demanding for punishment under Anti Corruption Law Act No. A, Para (8), Submitted on 027/10/26.

In reply as a rejoinder Bijaya Raj gave the statement and asked for the grant of more time on 028/1/14. The accusation as is made in the charge sheet that by bringing out the forged stamps I am in an attempt to have illegal gains is false and baseless; and that I have not done any such offense (Bijaya Raj's reply made on 028/1/20).

Negotiation was being made in between His Majesty's Govt. and the Govt. of India towards issuing a Summon against defendant Sukumar, and pending the final outcome of the negotiation, further negotiation with the Indian Embassy at Kathmandu was kept in suspense - is the explanation given in the letter of Foreign Ministry dated 029/11/28.

The charges labeled against the defendants since do not come under the perview of Bhrastachar Niharan Aain (Anti-Corruption Act), this case should have been

handled under Civil Law - clause Forgery. And as such the order was issued on 030/3/24 by Kathmandu Special Court to forward the file to Kathmandu Dist. Court where the case was registered and the files redirected on 030/4/23.

The decision of the Court

The case under reference, in conformity of 018, clause IV and Aa. Bam. 29 of Nayan Bisheshan Bibidh Byabastha comes under the jurisdiction of this court. In consideration of evidence made available and in accordance with Aa Bam No. 178 the court is empowered to take up the case and give its verdict.

The petition made by Bishesa Police Bibhag (Special Police Branch) soliciting that defendants should be brought to book for punishment under Bhrastachar Niharan Aain (Anti-Corruption Law) the Special Court is redirected to this court by Kathmandu Special Court, and it was registered in the court. For the reason that any action taken against Defendants under Anti-Corruption Law will be construed as irregular and ultra-vire. This case should have been governed by the principles as laid down in the clause of Forgery Law.

In forgery cases according to SARKAR MUDDA SAMBANDHI AAIN the case can qualify for registration if it is substantiated by proofs and evidence against the defendants, the fact of which is already mentioned in the KANUNI BYABASTHA.

In this case the charges against defendants are without support of evidences and hence the court is obliged to dismiss the case. It is also notified to the BISESH POLICE BEBHAG (Special Police Branch) that the day the case is dismissed under the law of AA BAM - 180 with the following decision in the following subjects.

To the following defendants : In accordance to the INSAF as is made above the deposit money made in different dates will be refunded; and that the defendants should be served with notice to get refund of the deposit money from the office where the deposits were made through contact with the Special Police Branch. - 1

And to write to Special Police Branch to help defendants get refund to the deposit money without having to pay any fees. - 2

- 1) The amount of Rs. 5,000/- N.C. which is said to have deposited on 020/1/5 by defendant, Bijaya Raj Singh Swal as is stated in his petition should be refunded to him without any fees.
- 2) The amount of Rs. 3,400/- N.C. and Rs. 1,000/- I.C. which is said to have been deposited by the defendant, Sukumar Mandal on 19/12/16 should be refunded to the party without charging any fees.

After giving hearing of the verdict to the defendant, Bijaya Raj Singh, and to the Special Police Branch the file should go to its proper filing place.

If the concerned persons ask for the copy of this verdict, they should be allowed to have its copy in accordance with the rules and the MISSIL (file) as per the rules, be sent to [Nepali text] (Aa-Ta-File Dept.)

16th of ASHAD, SUNDAY of the year 031.

Application is received from defendant, Bijaya Raj Singh, to have a copy of the 'Court Decision' which was made in 3 pages; and he should be allowed to have the copy made after realizing from him 60 paisa @ 0.20 per page as per rules & regulations.

sd/- Ramkrishn.
031/3/27/5

Handwritten Nepali text, likely a court decision or legal document. The text is dense and appears to be a formal record. It includes a date at the top: "16th of ASHAD, SUNDAY of the year 031." The text is written in a cursive style and covers most of the page.

Handwritten Nepali text, likely a court decision or legal document. The text is dense and appears to be a formal record. It includes a date at the top: "16th of ASHAD, SUNDAY of the year 031." The text is written in a cursive style and covers most of the page. There is a circular stamp at the bottom of the page.

Editor's Note: Spellings are as they appeared in the English translation of the Nepali documents.

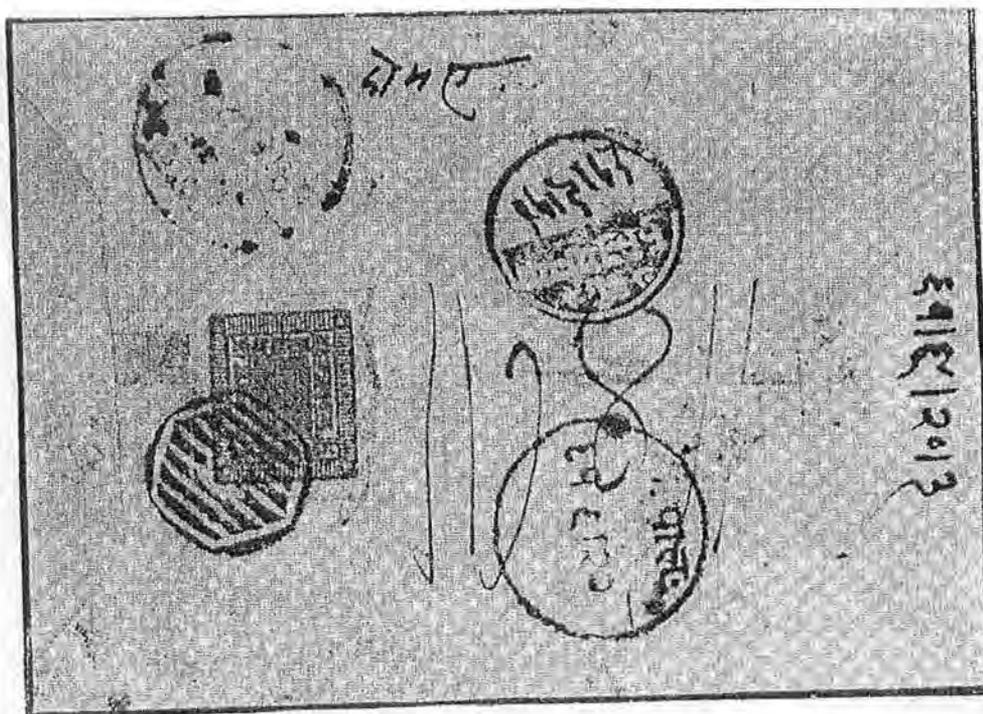
A Matter of Secrecy

David Froud

This article was prompted by the cover on the front of *Postal Himal*, 120 4th Quarter 2004.

When I was serving, in 1969, at the British Military Hospital in Dharan, I received a letter with a special inscription on the flap. I was told that it could only be opened by me, the addressee. This seemed unusual as most laboratory information can generally be read by all the lab staff. The orderly officer explained that it was endorsed with a special inscription and very severe penalties would be imposed on any unauthorized opening of the letter.

The contents were NOT world shattering and concerned the transportation of a sick child to Singapore on my return to that city. The matter was forgotten until I returned to the UK. In the book *Nepal and the Gurkhas* published by HMSO in 1965, I discovered the true significance of the inscription as illustrated on the cover kindly supplied to me by Colin Hepper.



It appears that the //78// inscription are the Ngari figures 74 and a half and imputes a curse of 74 and a half maunds (5,960 pounds in weight) on the unauthorized opener! This weight corresponds to the weight of holy threads removed from the bodies of the Rajputs after the sack of Chitor. Colin also informs me that today it is equal to the slaughter of 74 sacred cows - an enormous economic punishment.

I hope members may find this of interest and be on the lookout for this special mark which was common up to the end of World War II.



a



b



c



d

Technical Details

1. Subject : a) Golden Jubilee of the Establishment of Madan Puraskar
b) Sculpture Series, 2004
a) Jaya Varma, National Museum, Chhauni
b) Umamaheshwar, Pashupati
c) Vishorupa, Changuarayan
d) Banshagopal, Makawanpurgadhi
c) and d) Visit Nepal Series, 2004
c) Mayadevi Temple, Lumbini
d) Gadhimai, Bara
2. Denomination : a) Rs 5.00 each
b), c), d) Rs. 10.00 each
3. Color : Four Color
4. Sheet Composition : a) 50 stamps per sheet
b) 16 stamps per sheet (4 stamps each subject)
c) and d) 50 stamps per sheet (25 stamps each subject)
5. Size : a) 30 x 34.5 mm, b) 31.13 x 38.5 mm, c) and d) 40 x 26.5 mm
6. Process : Offset Lithography
7. Quantity : a) 1,000,000, b) 250,000 each, c) and d) 500,000 each
8. Format : Horizontal
9. Paper : High Quality Stamp Paper
10. Designer : K. K. Karmacharya
11. Printer : Austrian Government Printing Office, Vienna, Austria

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

The following was received from Armand Singer

The following letter was sent to me by Arthur Vernay, late dealer in Chinese antiquities, whom I met when I came on a letter sent to him by Lowell Thomas, Jr. during his own visit to Tibet.

The letter did not go through the mail (enclosed in another, sent from out of the country?), but it bore a New York Address. I wrote to Mr. Vernay to see whether he had stamps to sell or trade. He wrote back to tell me he wasn't a collector but had a cache of stamps -- the Chinese overprints and some native Tibetan items as well -- and sent them to me to do as I wished. They had been sent to him by Mr. Macdonald in an effort to repay him for financing some exploratory expedition into Tibet. I kept some and sold some to dealers and we struck up a kind of friendship.

Macdonald was a very important British subject working for the government of Tibet at the time, even British trade agent in Gyantse in the 1920s. His son was on the British 1922 Everest assault. I actually met the old man in Kalimpong in 1957. He was by then almost deaf but could still hear high pitched Tibetan as spoken to him by his Tibetan wife. He had a fine collection of scarf letters from the 13th Dalai Lama, which he intended publishing, a cover from one of which (ca. 1930) he gave to me; a reproduction may be found in my "... Tibet 1809-1975" (Alevizos 1995) p. 6. I believe the project was never completed.

The present letter was, as it reads, sent me in 1956. Where he writes, "the present Dalai Lama ... now 15 years old," and adds "this was written in 1910," we must assume a typo for 1950. The present Dalai Lama was born in 1935.

See page 14 for a Xerox copy of the letter from Macdonald to Vernay -- editor.

from Surendra L. Shrestha

Eight members and four high altitude workers of Adventure Consultants Amadablam Expedition Autumn 2004 scaled 6,812-metre-high Mt. Amadablam on November 3 and 4. The successful summiteers are Robert J Gambi of Australia, Joanne Gambi, Paul V Rogers and David Mellor of Britain, Mark Sedon of New Zealand, Todd Holt, Joseph Caughlin and Luis Benitez of the US, Pasang Bhote, Phu Tasi Sherpa, Lhakpa Dorje Sherpa and Pasang Tenzing Sherpa of Solukhumbu. The team was permitted to climb Amadablam from the south-west ridge for a period of 45 days from October 17 under Benitez.

ARTHUR S. VERNAY
LOS CAYOS
NASSAU, BAHAMAS

22nd. March, 1956

Extract from a letter to me from Mr. David Macdonald.

Himalayan Hotel, Kalimpong P.O.
Darjeeling District, West Bengal
13th. March, 1950

Mr. Macdonald is the owner of the Himalayan Hotel.

"The Chinese Imperial stamp surcharged for Tibet was used by the Chinese during their occupation of Tibet in 1910-1912 when the Dalai fled to India with his Ministers. They returned to their country victoriously in 1912, and the Chinese were driven out of Tibet.

The Tibetan Government began to make their own stamps soon afterwards. I bought the stamps from the Chinese Post Master, Lhasa, when he was returning to China in 1911, while I was Trade Agent in Tibet.

The surcharges are Chinese and Tibetan." (End)

David had a Scotch father and Tibetan mother. He became a Tibetan subject and an ardent Buddhist. He had great influence during the incumbency of the 13th. Dalai Lama. The present Dalai Lama (this written in 1910) is now 15 years old, he succeeded the 13th.

I met David through an introduction given me by my friend the late Sir Frederick O'Connor when I was with him in Nepal in 1923, at this time he was minister to Nepal. Sir Frederick O'Connor was a great friend of the last Tashi Lama when he was in Shigatse, the second most important city in Tibet. He accompanied the Dalai Lama when he went to India in 1910. He spoke Tibetan fluently



Thanks to Surendra Lal Shrestha and Colin Hepper for copies of the new postcard introduced on 31 December 2004.

Technical Details

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 1) Subject | : Post card (Big bell, Durbar Square, Bhaktapur) |
| 2) Date of Issue | : 31 December 2004 |
| 3) Purpose | : To promote philately on postal stationary |
| 4) Denomination | : Rs 1.00 |
| 5) Color | : Two Color |
| 6) Size | : 140 x 90 mm (post card) 26 x 32.25 mm (stamp) |
| 7) Process | : Offset Lithography |
| 8) Quantity | : 250,000 |
| 9) Format | : Vertical |
| 10) Paper | : High Quality Card Board paper (more than 150 grams) |
| 11) Designer | : K. K. Karmacharya |
| 12) Printer | : Department of Press, Kathmandu, H.M.G., Nepal |

Surendra Lal Shrestha reports that Nepal has issued a series of 13 phone cards during the period 2000 - 2005. The front and back of 2 of them are illustrated below.

