

Postal Himal



QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE
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DAGZE, TIBET (45km E of Lhasa). Bi-lingual Chinese/Tibetan postmark dated 15.5.1981 (18 instead of 81!).

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I hope that you enjoy being a member of our Society and look forward to having you renew your subscription with us.

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Dear Members

The start of another year, (they seem to pass all too quickly these days) and I hope that you all can continue to find something of interest in your collecting. After being battered by 'The Beast from the East', for those of you that live in warmer climates it was a very cold stream of air from Russia, so I am writing these notes before leaving for a couple of weeks of Spanish sun.

When we get back at the end of the month, Westpex is on the horizon at the end of April. I will be visiting the show again this year when we will be having our usual Sunday morning

meeting and I look forward to seeing our members from the west coast again.

The response from members to produce some articles for Frank Vignola has been good, so keep them coming as it makes life much easier when publishing the magazine. Lastly, a reminder that we still have a small number of members who have not renewed their subscription, if you are one of those please contact me and let me know if you will be continuing your membership.

Colin Hepper

Editor's Ramblings:

I would like to thank all the NTPS members who responded to a request for articles for the Postal Himal. There are several first time contributors to this issue and they have presented some interesting articles. This is very much appreciated! The next issue is scheduled to come out at the end of June, so if you have some interesting material that you would like others to know about, your articles would be very much appreciated. Thanks also should be given to Ken Goss for his proofing of the newsletter. It is a much easier to read thanks to his help.

In this issue there are several articles by Leo van der Velden and his collaborators on Bhutan, an independent country with close ties to Tibet, Nepal, and India. He has submitted articles before and we look forward to future articles on the Bhutanese postal system.

When I took over as editor, I copied the list of life members that were in the previous issue. I have

come to learn that many life members were off the list and I am publishing a more complete list. It still may contain omissions, so please let me know if you are a life member and not included. At present the NTSC is not accepting new life memberships as costs of mailing continue to increase.

Honorary Life Members: Colin Hepper, Jit Bahadur Manandhar

Life Members: Richard G. Azizkhan, Mario C. Barbieri, Joachim Bednorz, Johannes Bornmann, Jeremy Brewer, Douglas Hatch, William Janson, M. Lauk, Gerhard Lenser, Leo Martyn, R. Murray, Bruno le Peut, Peter Planken, Kedar Pradhan, Barbara Praytor, Surrender Lal Shrestha, Dick van der Wateren, Edmond Weissberg, Hans-Guenther Weik, Danny Kin Chi Wong, R. Wightman, Alfonso G. Zulueta Jr.

Congratulations!

Richard Frajola won a large gold at Aripex in Arizona in February with his "Nepal: The First Issue, 1881 to 1885."

Notes on the Use of Indian Post Offices in West Bengal and Assam in the 1960s as Part of the Bhutan Postal Services

by Leo van der Velden and Aranya Dutta Choudhury*

When in October 1962 the first post office was opened in Phuentsholing, then a trading post in South Bhutan bordering India, its international philatelic mailing address read:

Office of the Philatelic Officer
Phuntsholing, Bhutan
via Dalsingpara P.O.
Dist. Jalpaiguri (India)

The start of the modern era of the postal history of Bhutan in October 1962 was made possible through a postal agreement with India, not only dealing with the exchange of domestic mail, but also with the forwarding by India of international mail from Bhutan to all member countries of UPU, as Bhutan would only become a member of the UPU in 1969. The offices of exchange were Calcutta, Siliguri and Dalsingpara. So it was prudent for foreigners to add "via Dalsingpara PO, India" to their mail, as all international mail for Bhutan was handled by India. Furthermore, the first roads built in Bhutan were all starting at the main thoroughfare between the Indian cities of Siliguri in West-Bangal and Guwahati in Assam, going northwards into Bhutan, parallel and unconnected to each other. The major roads were from India to Samtse, Sarpang, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar.



Letter from Kalikhola to Phuntsholing via Dalsingpara, distt. Jalpaiguri (W. Bengal)

So mail for post offices under Samtse (spelled Samchi in the past) PO would read "via Banarhat", to Sarpang (Sarbhong) "via Kokrajhar, Assam", to Gelephu (Gaylephug) "via Bongaigaon", and for those handled by Samdrup Jongkhar (including places like Trashigang and Mongar) "via Menoka TE" or "via Rangia", with TE standing for Tea Plantation. Also the mail for smaller places in Bhutan with an own post office and an independent motorable road connection to India, would be assisted by Indian post offices, like Kalikhola

(Continued on page 5)

Bhutan PO	Indian PO (attached)	Indian Railway Station (RS)
Sarbhong (and Chirang)	<u>Kokrajhar</u> (Dist. Golpara, Assam)	Kokrajhar
Samdrup Jongkhar (serving also Trashigang and Mongar)	Menoka	<u>Rangia</u>
Samchi	Chamurchi	<u>Banarhat</u>
Chengmari	<u>Carron</u>	-
Kalikhola	<u>Newlands</u> , Kumatagram	Alipurduar
Gelephu / Gaylephug	Runikata	Bongaigaon
Phuntsholing (serving the north - west incl. Thimphu and Paro)	<u>Dalsingpara</u>	Alipurduar
Sibsoo	<u>Jaldakha Hydel</u>	-

Overview of Bhutan POs and their related POs in India (main ones used in addresses are underlined); Menoka, Carron and Newlands are Tea Estates, and sometimes added to these names as T.E.

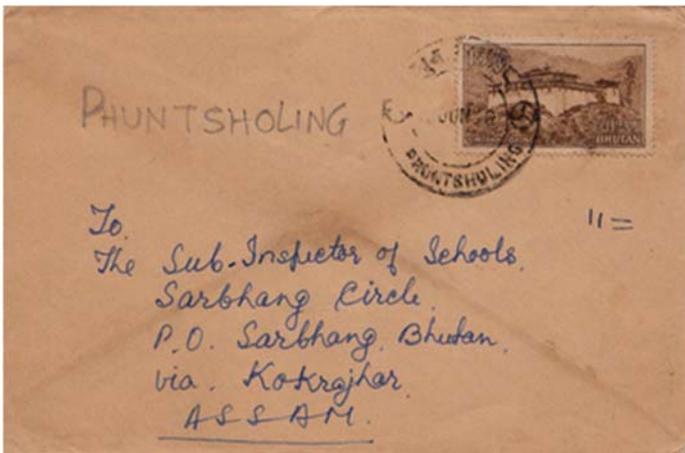
* with thanks to Mr Iiro Kakko for his comments.

(Continued from page 4)

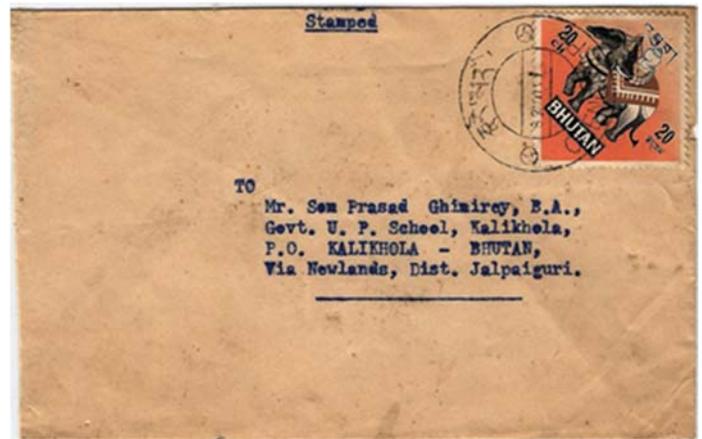
(present name Lhamoizingkha) "via Newland TE" with often added 'District Jalpaiguri', Sibsoo (Sibsu) via Jaldakha PO and Chengmari "via Carron TE". In a number of cases the name of the PO at the nearest railway station was added to the address name, and not the nearest post office which was attached to the routing of the mail.

Only with the opening of the road between Thimphu and Tashigang could mail travel that way

within Bhutan. But even at present there are a number of places with post offices only reachable by car via India, like the whole of Samtse Dzongkhag, Gomtu, Lhamoizingkha, Nganglam and Jomotshangkha (formerly Daifam), even though the mail is since 1969 completely managed by Bhutan Post.



Phuntsholing to Sarbhang via Kokrajhar (State of Assam)



To Kalikhola via Newlands PO in Jalpaiguri (W.Bengal)



Three of the stamps in the 2017 Small Mammals of Nepal on first day cover.

Tashiling CMO Built on *Kidu* Land Received from H.M. the Fourth Druk Gyalpo *Leo van der Velden*

Tashiling CMO in 2009

Tashiling or Trashiling Community Mail Office (CMO) is located in a grocery shop cum bar and small restaurant in Trongsa district in central Bhutan along the west - east national "lateral" highway, a little over 30 km before reaching Trongsa Dzong if you are coming from the capital Thimphu. It is also known as Tashiling (Tshangkhar) CMO, as the Agency Post Office (APO) in nearby Tshangkhar moved in 1996 to Trashiling, creating the CMO there.

The CMO is since mid-2004 in the name of Ms Dorji Lhamu, the daughter of the former postal agent Mr Uygen Norbu, who is still looking after the CMO. Mr Norbu wanted at a certain point to resign completely, but his wife didn't allow him, as the CMO attracts customers for the grocery store and restaurant. It is interesting that I encountered this argument at other places

where the CMO is located in a grocery store or restaurant, like in Phubjika and Ura.

Tashiling CMO looks after Tangsibji gewog (block). Mr Norbu is born in 1959 in Nwela, another village in the same gewog. In 1983 he finished class 10 at the Sarpang High School. After an agricultural training he worked for the agricultural bureau in Zhemgang and Chukhha districts. In 1992 he started a shop with his savings in a bamboo hut in Tshangkhar and opened the APO there in 1993. In 2001 his wife requested land from H.M. the Fourth Druk Gyalpo under the royal *kidu* ("well-being") welfare system, and received the present plot along the high way on which he built the combined shop / restaurant/ CMO.

Tashiling CMO has three seals:

a) one modern German made metal one, with

(Continued on page 7)



Tashiling CMO in 2009



Picture of the seals at Tashiling CMO

(Continued from page 6)

the date stuck. It states "TSHANGKHA APO"; with text in Dzongkha. Used for cancellation of mail.

b) old negative type with PAR (i.e. parcel) marking, stating TONGSA DZONG, used for wax seals for closing of post bags and MO envelopes; the seal doesn't carry any text in Dzongkha.

c) old negative type, but newer than the one under b, stating TSHANGKHA A.P.O., also with text in Dzongkha. This one is in general not used; the old Tongsa Dzong seal is used instead.

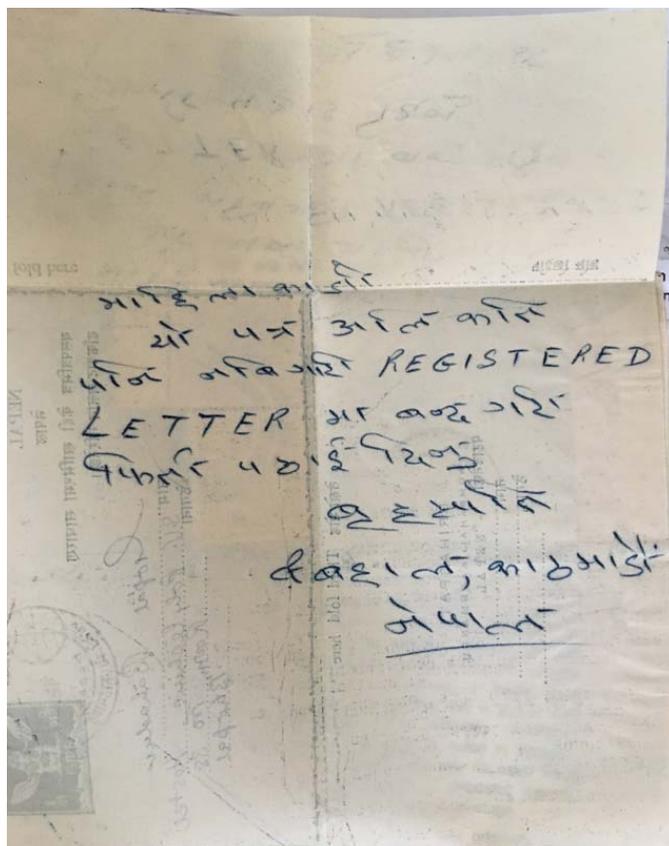
The CMO sells postage and legal stamps, and also handles money orders (MOs), especially incoming funds for students, with exceptionally, say once per year, also an outgoing MO.



The seals of Tashiling CMO

Origin of Postal Usage of Nepal's First Aerogram

by William Drell



In the September 2017 issue #171, an article by Sandeep Jaiswal appeared on the unusual usage of the first aerogram of Nepal H&G FG1. The above figure shows a similar aerogram from Brihaspati to Bhopal, India using the aerogram with the first day cancel and added postage to pay for the mailing to Bhopal, India. The message inside the aerogram “Mahila Kaji, Please take care of this letter and put this in a Registered Letter and return it back.”

The aerogram is not signed. This was obviously used for philatelic purposes but was commercially used after the FDC was cancelled. I do not know if any other copies exist with the letter included.



Two block of the Moths of Nepal 1974 issue

Framelines of Setting 5 of the 2 Annas

By Julie Marshall

In late 1998, I bought a block of 18 of the 2 annas from a George Alevizos auction which is from the right hand bottom side of the sheet.

The block was described as from Setting 7. However, it was obviously not from this setting as the bottom frameline of this block is 11-12 mm from the stamps and the right frameline is 12 mm from the stamps (in Setting 7 the right frameline is 4-5 mm from the stamps). The framelines are quite thick. It is printed on medium-thick paper of good quality. It includes the flaw in pos. 31. The colour is a dull bluish violet.

Herrigl/Vignola in their "Chart of 2 annas settings" in their *Classic Stamps of Nepal* list the bottom, left and right framelines of both Settings 5 and 6 as 13 mm (and the left and bottom framelines of Setting 6 are definitely 13 mm). Under "Progressive flaws" they list the flaw in pos 31 as first appearing in Setting 6. However, it seems they were assuming that Setting 5 would have the same framelines as Setting 6 as see Hellrigl's comments in the below letter that the only blocks he knew of were from the top and bottom corners of the left side.

I wrote to Wolfgang Hellrigl at the time and his reply to me was as follows:

"As for your block of the two annas, it is definitely from Setting 5 or 6. I do not have the relevant details of the right bottom sheet corner of Setting 5, as the only blocks I know of are from the top and bottom corners of the left side, but the distances of the framelines would match. The bluish shade would be an additional clue. From your comments it does not appear to be the very blue shade, however.

Setting 6 has similar framelines, but on the right bottom side of the sheet they are not thick, and they also have some distinct breaks which your block has not.



Scan of block of 18 of 2 anna setting. The scan comes out more violet than the original block

All this leads me to think that your block is probably (90%?) from Setting 5. In that case, it would be the largest known multiple of this rare setting!" (end of quote)

I recently displayed some of my classic stamps at a meeting of the Royal Philatelic Society of Victoria which led me to look at this block again. The distance of the framelines in my block from the stamps of 11-12 mm for the bottom and 12 mm for the right side would seem to make a clear distinction between Settings 5 and 6 apart from the very blue colour.

Modern China-Tibet Postal History

by Brian W. Smith

For several years I have endeavoured to collect examples of covers mailed from Chinese Post Offices on the Tibetan Plateau, in particular the Tibet Autonomous Region, but also former Tibetan areas Amdo & Kham.

Much of the early postal history of the Chinese occupation after 1950 was documented by C. W. Chiu in the China Clipper and reproduced by Waterfall in 1965. Indian P.O.s in Tibet were closed in April 1955, native Tibet P.O.s by 1956. By this date the Chinese had established some 40 civilian P.O.s in Central and Eastern Tibet leaving all postal services run by the PRC.

I have examples of covers from most decades but have narrowed my interest to the period from the Cultural Revolution [1966-1976] to the present. There is much to document in this period when many new Post Offices have appeared. As of the year 2000 I understand there were about 220 Post Offices serving Tibet's needs undoubtedly more today. I rather fancifully thought that I would try and get a representative cover from each place - to date I have only managed 43!



DAGZE, TIBET (45km E of Lhasa). Bi-lingual Chinese/Tibetan postmark 15.5.1981 (18 instead of 81 !). Hand made envelope! Addressed to C.W.Chiu, Hong Kong.

Whilst some are commercial covers, others domestic, the majority of my holdings are 'philatelic', that is they have been sent by Chinese travelers in Tibet to their own, or a colleagues home address. They were then kept if the traveler was a collector, or sold on. Either way they have all done genuine postal service and without these examples there would be very few available.



GYATSE, TIBET (Chinese name GYACA). Shannan Prefecture, E of Tsethang, on R.Tsangpo. Bi-lingual Chinese Tibetan cds 15.4.1980. Addressed to Shenyang, China.

All modern Tibet covers have bi-lingual Chinese/Tibetan date stamps, first introduced in the 1950s. They were standardised in the early 1960s to a solid double circle with PRC in Chinese at the top, the date in a central oblong box, the town or place name in Chinese & Tibetan in the lower part of the circle. For a time cancels from Lhasa had Chinese and Romanised LASA or LHASA displayed (into the 1980s). Nyalam on the Kathmandu-Lhasa highway had a smaller non-standard dater with Romanised NIELAMU. Earlier Lhasa and Yatung examples are Hellrigl

(Continued on page 11)

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C200 & C201 [Postal Markings of Tibet. G. Flack 1996].

Covers can often be found franked with Tibet themed Chinese stamps which add an attractive element to a collection.

I welcome contact with other members who might like to share information with a view to compiling an up to date list of China Posts Tibetan Post Offices. Has anyone already done this? The best listing I have found is that compiled by member Derek Dawson in Postal Himal #79 (1990)



JIN-TU, GARNZE TIBETAN AUTONOMOUS PREFECTURE) SECHWAN formerly KHAM.1978 China YAK 8f stamp. Bi-lingual Chinese/Tibetan dater 12.7.1981. Addressed to Shenyang, China.

where he lists 85 Post Offices, including 5 in Lhasa itself. Crucially, for those of us who do not read Tibetan, Derek provides the Tibetan characters for each place name so that one can identify or cross-check bi-lingual postmarks with relative ease. But though still very useful this list needs to be updated to the present.

Member Danny K. Wong has also written (in 2001-2002) a series of informative articles for the CPSL (China Philatelic Society of London) which covers the whole range of Tibet postal history from 1950 and is illustrated with examples of the changing Postmarks of modern Tibet.

I can be contacted by Email: brian63@inbox.com. I shall be pleased to hear from you.



TSETHANG, TIBET (Chinese ZETANG). Town SE of Lhasa. Bi-lingual Chinese/Tibetan pmk 29.5.1987. Official Sealed green label tied by same pmk. Addressed to Fuhai, Sinkiang. Fuhai is situated in Altay region of Northern Sinkiang, N of Urumchi, near to borders of Mongolia & Kazakhstan



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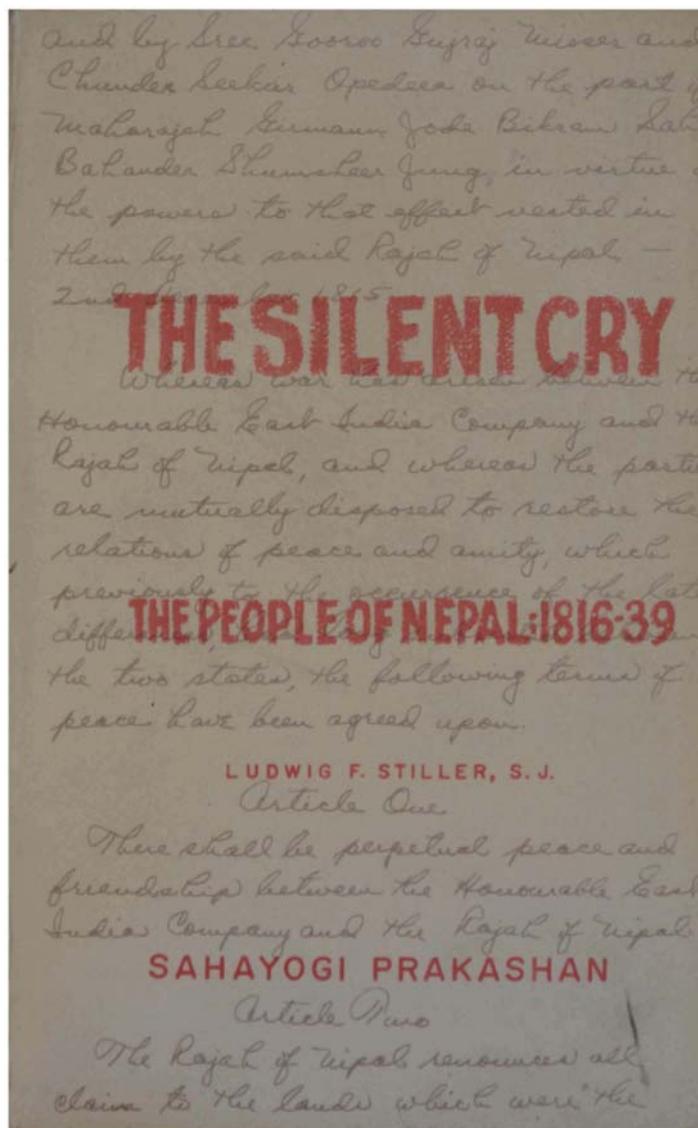
Pay finder's fee to collectors/dealers who make me aware of estate auction collections.

Thanks should be given to Johannes Bornmann for bringing this publication to the attention of the Postal Himal.

The 334 page publication by the Sahayogi Prakashan Tripureshwar of Kathmandu, Nepal is a fascinating publication of the events leading up to and the consequences of the resulting treaty from the Nepalese war with the British East India Company. Publication includes information on the treaty of Sagauli and many interesting facts about the government and people of Nepal during the period from 1816-1839.

Among the interesting items is a discussion of the Hulak postal system. Sample information about the Hulak service is given below.

“The hulak service was a primitive mail system. It was used to move government mail and goods across the mountains from one district to another, or even from Kathmandu to the farthest reaches of the kingdom. It utilized the only available means of transport, the human porter, but it worked with an efficiency that only the more modern improvements of roads and aircraft have been able to surpass. The hulak service was based on a few key points along the great road that led from Kathmandu westward to the border. There was nothing great about the road except the fact that it was the main artery of government communication. Essentially it was a well-travelled hill track. But it did make communication possible all along its length. The key points on this road, within the borders of present-day Nepal, were Doti, Achham, Dullu, Dailekh, Piuthan, Pokhara, Gorkha, Nuwakot, and Kathmandu. At each of these points military escorts were available, who, on orders from Kathmandu, protected the more valuable loads along the route. The loads themselves, whether letters or guns or ammunition, were carried by local villagers who had been assigned to this service. For each day's march along the road four groups of twenty families were assigned the task of moving the load along to the next point. Each group of families was directed by a *naike*, who was responsible for keeping villagers informed of their turn in rotation. If the terrain permitted a day's march of thirty miles, each of the



carriers was responsible for a fourth of that, or seven and a half miles. If the terrain was more difficult, and only a march of sixteen miles was considered feasible, the average hulak bearer had to be concerned about moving the load only four miles. Letters moved along this relay system with amazing speed, and even heavier burdens moved at a pace that seemed remarkable in the hills.”

A review of the book can be found at http://bipinadhikari.com.np/Archives/Book_Reviews/The_silent_cry_ludwig_stiller_1976.php A revised addition is available on line at <https://www.pilgrimsonlineshop.com/7077-the-silent-cry-the-people-of-nepal-1816-1839.html>

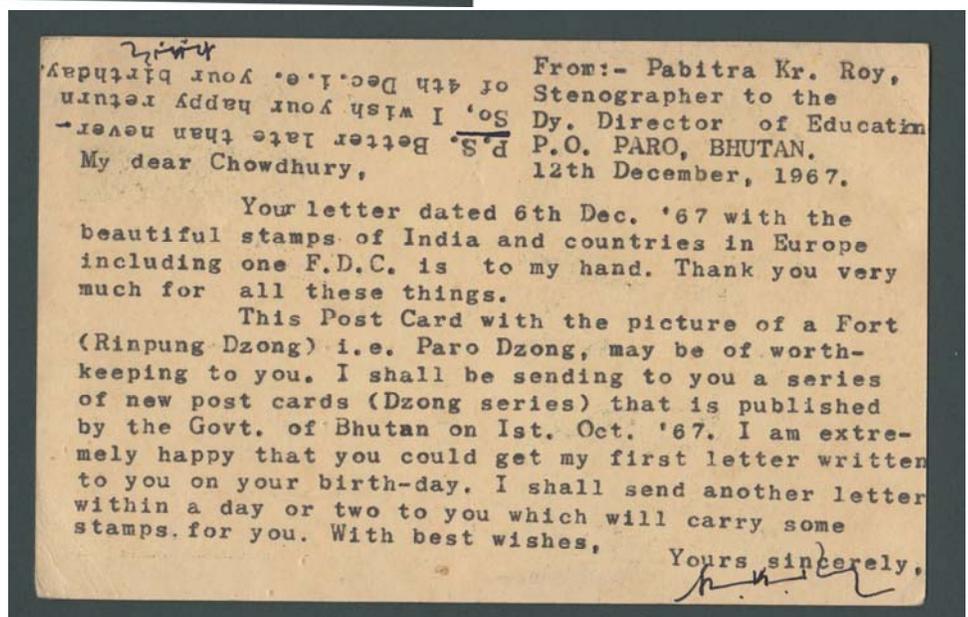
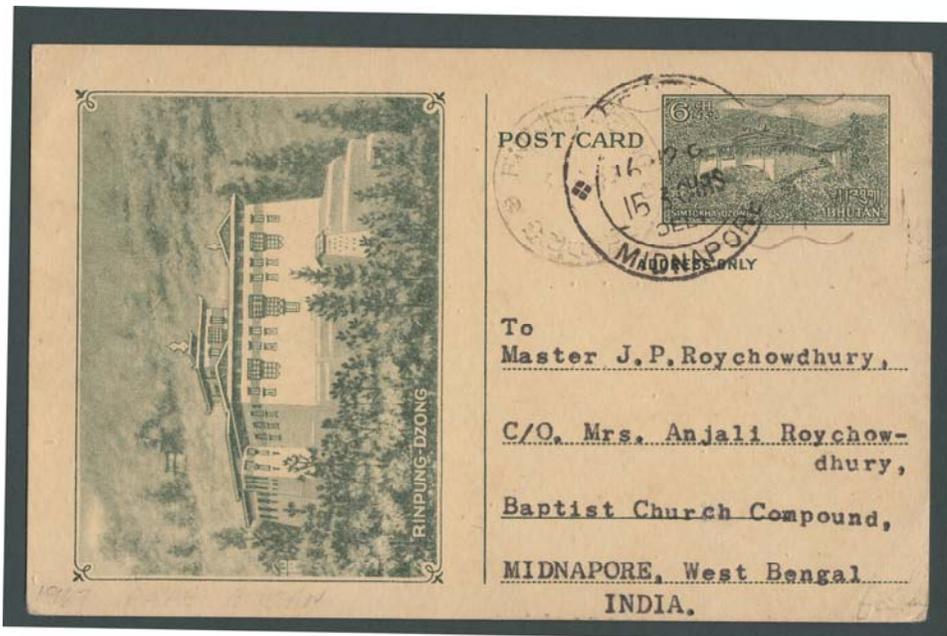
Bhutan's Postal Stationery—The Postcards

by Brian G Vincent, FRPSNZ.

Len Nadybal's on-line catalogue of Bhutan Postal Stationery (www.japhila.cz) lists a number of postcards issued by Bhutan's Post & Telegraph Department. In 1966 a 6ch postcard was placed on sale, this depicting Simtokha Dzong on the postal imprint with Rinpung Dzong on the left side of the address panel. No first day of issue is given however these cards are known with slogan cancellations dated 5 November 1966. The postcard shown below was posted in December 1967, but the most interesting aspect is in the message typed on the reverse (also shown here). The writer states "*I shall be sending to you a series of new postcards (Dzong*

Series) that is published by the Govt. of Bhutan on 1st Oct. '67."

This series is listed in the above mentioned catalogue as "1967 Dzong Series Commemorative Cards" with a note that the first day of use is not known. The catalogue goes on to state "*Earliest known cancellations are circular cancellations dated 10 Oct 67 reading 'Postal Exhibition/Tashichho Dzong' on unaddressed cards in the stapled booklet.*" It would appear that, if the statement on my postcard is correct, the day of issue was 1st Oct 1967. Further evidence to confirm this date would be welcomed.



Four More Post Office Images

from Johannes Bornmann

These pictures for from the 1960's or 1970's that were obtained from ebay. These are some of the same pictures that Colin Hepper published in his book and were likely made available in earlier issues of the Postal Himal.



*Dailekh Chhoti Hulak
Sub Post Office*



*Koteswore
Additional Post Office*



*Rupandehi
District Post Office*



*Chapagaon Chhoti Hulak
Sub Post Office*

A View of Ha Post Office

by Leo van der Velden



Ha post office is housed in a nicely decorated traditional building

Ha PO is located in Ha town in Haa valley of Haa district in western Bhutan. Like many other post offices in Bhutan, Haa or Ha PO changed names over time¹. It started as Ha Dzong PO in 1965, but also used already the name Ha Po and Haa PO, would drop the word “dzong” completely, to return in the early 1970s as Wangchuk-lo-Dzong PO for a while, and then returning to the old Ha PO. Note that the Wangchuk-lo-Dzong is the old historical dzong of Ha, which, however, is being used for decades already as a military training school by the Indian military. Haa valley, bordering Sikkim state of

India and the Tibet region of China, was only opened up for tourists only in 2002, because of its strategic location. The major economic activity is rice production, yak herding and trade with neighbouring China. This picture of Ha PO is from 2008. Postmarks are from Karl-Heinz Michel collection and my own.



Postal marks show the changes in the name for present day Ha PO

¹See my article “Name changes of post offices in Bhutan 1962 – present” in Postal Himal 2015 #162 & 163

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