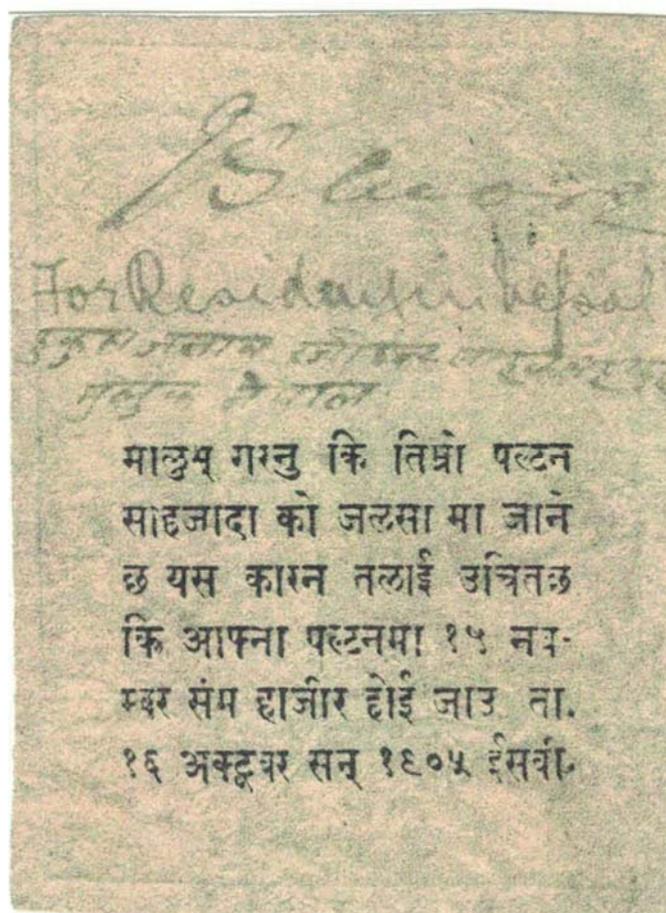


Postal Himal



QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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



Postal card with printed script that reads "Be aware that your Platoon will be going to Prince's Welcoming. So it is proper for thou to report to your Platoon. Go before 15 November." Dated 16 October 1905 A.D.

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Officer's Corner
by Rainer Fuchs

consider participating at philatelic exhibitions, not only for their personal pride and satisfaction but for advertisement of our collecting areas. Only if we keep our collecting areas alive we can generate new collectors.

On the request of the officers of the NTPSC I have taken over the position as Vice President. I believe there is no need to introduce myself in detail. Being a NTPSC member since many years with a good knowledge on Tibet and Nepal as well as some other areas I collect, I also host and maintain the Homepage of the NTPSC. I like to encourage all members to communicate openly and active, participate on stamp related Forums like the one I have created and to

Editor's Ramblings:

Thanks should be given to all those who have contributed articles to the Postal Himal over the past year. Those articles have made the Postal Himal an interesting read. For those who have not had a chance to write about their NTPSC interests, it would be a good time to submit an article. Write about an interesting Himalayan item that you recently acquired or what you have learned about Himalayan philately. Please share your interests and expertise. Articles are needed for the next issue of the Postal Himal as the reserves of articles have been used in this issue.

I would also like to thank the board for making me an Honorary Life Member for my contributions in putting together the Postal Himal. This task is a pleasure and has offered me an opportunity to correspond with many NTPSC members. Of course, this newsletter would not be possible without your contributions.

Thank you!

Congratulations!

Douglas Hatch won a silver-bronze, the N&TPSC award and the Errors, Freaks and Oddities Club award at ROPEX in Canandaigua, N.Y. in May with his "Nepal Moth Issue: What Could Go Wrong?"

Leo Martyn received a large silver, the India Study Circle award, and the Nepal and Tibet Philatelic Study Circle award at Westpex in San Francisco in April for his "Nepal/India: Cross-Border Postal History."

Leo Martyn won a large vermeil at the Rocky Mountain Stamp Show in Denver in May with his "India/Nepal Cross-Border Postal History."

Ed Gosnell won a large vermeil at Colopex in Ohio in June with his "The Nepalese Courts in Tibet."

After publishing a list of life members in the Postal Himal, it has come to my attention that several life members have been left off the list. To the best of my knowledge and those who keep track of life membership, a complete list of life members is given below. My apologies to those who were omitted from the previous list and if there are others who are not on this list, please let me know.

Honorary Life Members: Colin Hepper, Jit Bahadur Manandhar, Frank Vignola

Life Members: Richard G. Azizkhan, Mario C. Barbieri, Joachim Bednorz, Johannes Bornmann, Jeremy Brewer, Steve Chazen, Elizabeth Downey, Douglas Hatch, William Janson, Jaya Hari Jha, Manfred Lauk, Gerhard Lenser, Leo Martyn, R. Murray, Bruno le Peut, Peter Planken, Kedar Pradhan, Barbara Praytor, Surendra Lal Shrestha, Roger Skinner, Rishi Tulsyan, Dick van der Wateren, Edmond Weissberg, Hans-Guenther Weik, Danny Kin Chi Wong, R. Wightman, Alfonso G. Zulueta Jr.



Bo C. Olsson in Memorium

By Bengt-Erik Larsson

Bo C. Olsson, well known to Tibet collector all over the world has died.

Bo started to collect Tibet already in 1956, over 60 years ago. He was a schoolboy then and had been fascinated by his teachers telling about the mysterious Tibet. A Gibbons Simplified catalogue was a Christmas gift in 1956. Soon he contacted Stanley Gibbons to send him a selection of approvals. Their stock of Tibet was very limited and he was sent just a few stamps. Needless to say, he bought them all and that was his start of a lifelong relation with Tibet stamps. His major interest was to study the different printing or colour shades. He made a checklist that completed Waterfall's Handbook list. This

checklist is included in the Feldman catalogue over his and mine collection. This catalogue which include nearly all Tibet stamps will certainly be useful for collector in the future.

Bo was more interested in research than mounting on pages, so his only participation in an exhibition was that the Swedish Post arranged at their PostExpo localities in 1988 in Goteborg. A special postmark depicting The Potala was available for all posting.

In his later year he contributed to the research of the postal routes in Tibet.

I met Bo in the beginning of the 2000 when I was very new in the Tibet field. He became a very good friend who taught me a lot of the Tibet philately. He was always glad to share his knowledge and wanted more collectors to be interested in Tibet. I will miss him.

Editor's notes

Bo Olsson contributed a number of articles to the Postal Himal and we all benefitted from his contributions to the knowledge of Tibetan philately. When I became editor of the Postal Himal I started corresponding with him about his contributions to the publication. At the time

he was battling cancer and well aware that he was running out of options. One of his goals was to share his knowledge of Tibetan philately while he was still able.

I miss corresponding with Bo and am in awe at his determination to share his knowledge while he was able. In a sense he lives on in the inspiration and knowledge that he shared.

A less known Tibetan forgery

by Bo Olsson

In Haverbeck's Handbook, and only there as far I know, a mysterious set of forgeries are mentioned. We read: "At this point we want to quote a short piece that appeared in "The Shanghai Modern Philatelic Magazine" of march 31, 1946. "The Tibet Post Office surcharged the 1934 lion patterned stamps. There were three types of them, red, green and yellow. The surcharges were black characters and the value was 3 tranka. The stamps were obtained from a traveller back from Tibet. The detail condition of this issue was unknown." I doubt the "traveller" was back from Tibet. Tibet had no modern printers, so he is rather back from a basement printing office somewhere in China.



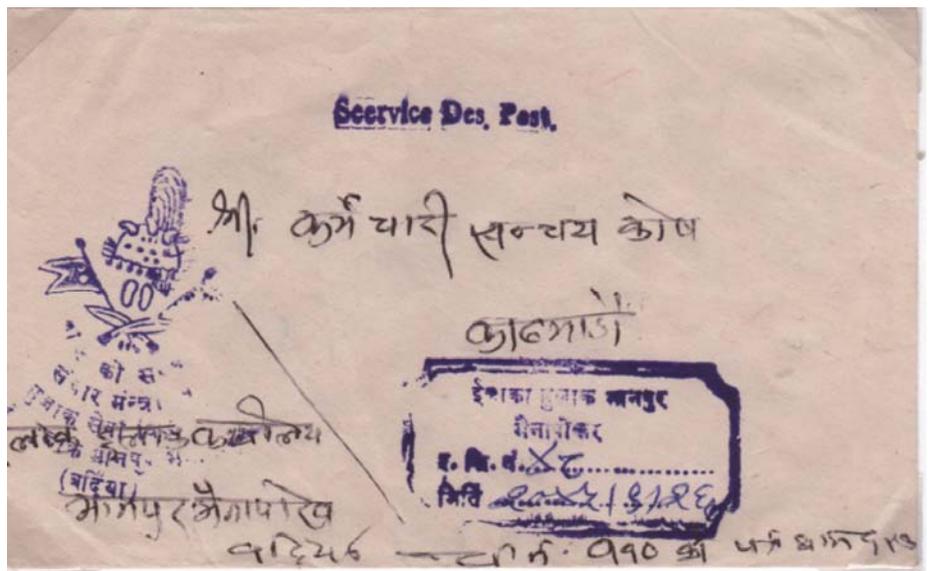
NEPAL - The Official Post Office Handstamp

by Colin Hepper

All post offices had an official hand stamp that was used on official mail at the top of letter sheets or on the envelopes of official mail. These hand stamps all have the standard Crown with crossed Kukris and Flags below. 'his is set above the post office details and is almost always in the form of an arc. This is a standard design for all government offices and only those which contain the work "Hulak" are from a post

office. This hand stamp is usually found on both the front and back of official letters, but occasionally it can be found cancelling the adhesive stamps on general public letters. *This hand stamp should be used exclusively for official letters.* Around 1% of letters from the general public can be found cancelled with this type hand stamp.

(Continued on page 6)



Official registered letter showing the normal use of the department hand stamp from Elaka Area Post Office, Manur in the Bardia District. The large rectangular hand stamp is for recording the registration details dated: 2045/1/26 = April 1990.

An example of a departmental handstamp that does not contain the word 'Hulak.' and is therefore not one from a post office, being used to cancel stamps for the prepayment of an official letter. It has also been signed in red ink across the bottom row of stamps.

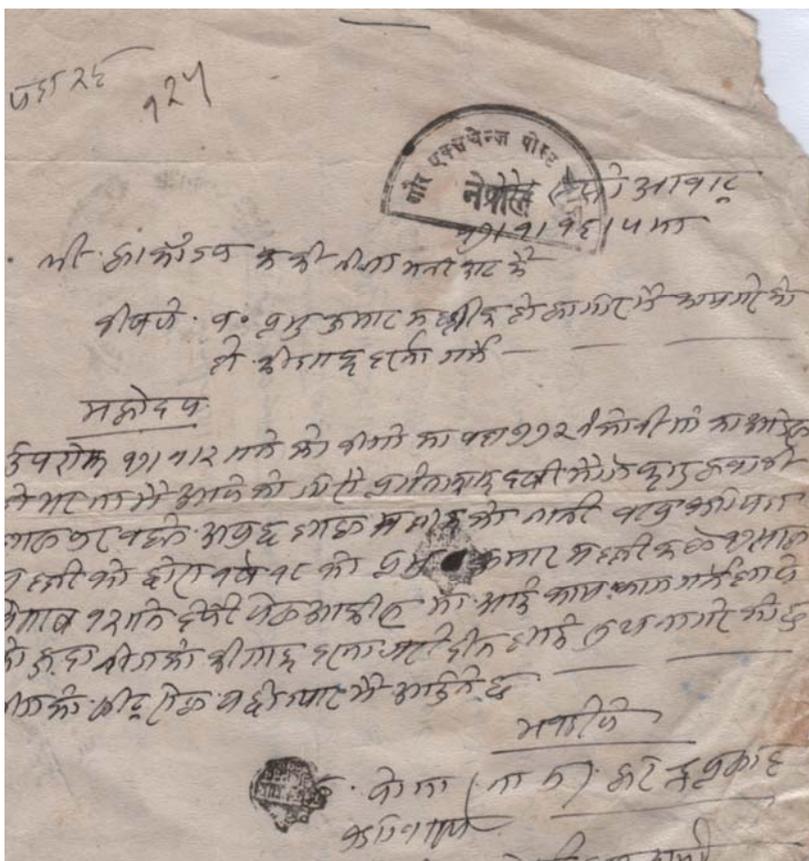




The Morang Post Office hand stamp differs from the majority in that the text is in straight lines rather than being curved. The receiving date stamp on the registered letter is August 1971.

(Continued from page 5)

The hand stamp from the Bosbote Post Office in the Tanahun District is the only one where the name of the post office has to be written in by hand. There is no indication on the illustrated cover of the date of posting.



The illustrated letter from Gorkha Post Office is dated 17/1/16 = 28 April 1960 and has a large horse shoe shaped hand stamp at the top. This was probably local to Gorkha before the more standard issue came out.

Gedu PO: a Post Office Shivering in Cold Fog¹

by Leo van der Velden

Gedu PO opened in 1996, when the nearby village Putlibhir PO (1965), shifted to there, followed a few years later by Darla PO (although the nearby Sinchekha PO is sometimes referred to as Darla PO in official Bhutan Post communications). The township of Gedu began with the start of the construction of a veneer and plywood factory in 1981. Because of forest conservation concerns, this factory was closed in 1995. In order to make use of the existing office buildings and staff quarters of the wood factory, the Royal Government of Bhutan decided to set up the headquarters of the newly established Tala Hydroelectric Project (THP) in Gedu in 1996, which led to grand-scale construction and infrastructure activities and provided a general economic boom for the local economy. THP built 840 housing units, a high school, sport facilities, a hospital and a water treatment plant. A little over ten years later THP started to construct new offices and apartment buildings in Sinchekha, Arekha and Gurung Dara along the road from Dala to the Tala Hydro powerhouse at Tabdi along the Wangchu river, 24 kms from Gedu. The School of Management of the Royal University of Bhutan

was transferred to Gedu to make use of the old THP offices and staff quarters. The university college started June 2008 in full.

Gedu is located along the Thimphu – Phuentsholing highway, 46 km from Phunstholing, which is the gateway to India. Gedu is most of the year covered in thick fog, and in wintertime the related humidity makes one shivering to the bones from the cold. A grim place, not really suitable for a university school according to me. Gedu PO has a few rooms in one of the office blocks, one side directly looking out at the highway. The PO is very busy when the university is open: 400 money orders (MOs) per month, incoming on an average some 130 post items per day and out 60 -70 per day. The PO has no philatelic items, but is otherwise a full-fledged post office.

Gedu PO has direct mail bags to Phuentsholing, Tsimasham (also known as Tshimakothi), Sinchekha and the capital city Thimphu. Mail for two gewogs (blocks, with a gup as headman) are collected from Gedu PO: Bongo gewog and Darla (Tala, Dala) gewog.

(Continued on page 8)



PO Gedu is housed in a building along the Thimphu – Phuentsholing highway, just 3 km away from the old Putlibhir PO which shifted to Gedu

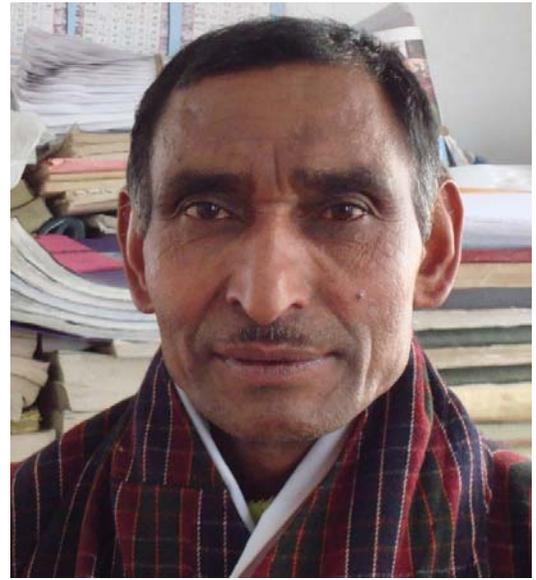


Gedu postman Tobdhen in civilian clothes on Sunday 14 December 2008 with a just arrived mailbag

¹This article reflects the situation in late 2008 and early 2009 when I visited Gedu PO and interviewed its staff.



Postmistress Pema Wangmo in front of Gedu PO entrance



Village postman R. B. Khati

(Continued from page 7)

The latter's gup office receives Nu 300 per month for their mail carriers services, while Bongo gewog didn't request for any pay. The village of Bongo is 4 hours walking distance from the road head at Meritsimo community primary school. Villagers pick up the mail when they visit the branch office of the Bank of Bhutan opposite the PO. The postmaster of Gedu is Ms Pema Wangmo. She originates from Radhi in Tashigang district in eastern Bhutan. She completed class X in nearby Khaling in 1996. After graduating from a computer course in 1997 Ms Wangmo joined Bhutan Post in 1998 in Samdrup Jongkhar as postal assistant till early 2005. From February 2005 to June 2008 she was postmaster in Kanglung, home of the famous Sherubtse College, now part of the University of Bhutan. Arranged by her parents, Ms Wangmo got married in 2002 to her husband who had just

completed a Bachelor's degree in Commerce. The next year he received a scholarship to study for Masters in Commerce in Perth, Australia. He returned successfully at the end of 2004 and received an appointment at Sherubtse College. Bhutan Post facilitated that she could follow her husband to Kanglung, and then mid June 2008 to Gedu, when he got re-assigned to the newly opened Gedu/Gaeddu College of Business Studies.

Two postmen assist Ms Wangmo: Mr Tobdhen Choni, who joined Bhutan Post directly in Gedu after completing class X in Rangjung, Tashigang district, and Mr Ram Bhadur Khati, an old timer with Bhutan Post since 1973. Mr R. B. Khati was before with Dala (or Darla) PO and with the Dala / Mirchingchu Extension P.O at the Tala Hydro building site of the Hindustan Construction Company. A well-kept letter box in Darla hangs

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Active seals of Gedu PO

(Continued from page 8)

outside the shop ran by Mr Khati's wife, located just below the alternative highway from Gedu to Phuentsholing via Pasakha. Mr Khati empties the letter box on a regular basis and takes any mail to his work at the Gedu PO. The active seals say GEDU P.O. (Regd or M.O.), except for the negative wax seal used for closing post bags and sealing money order letters. This seals states: Putlibhir, the name of the PO shifted to Gedu, which was located at a road

junction called Jumja, 3 km south of the present Gedu PO. The seal used to cancel mail states "Regd" for registered, but is used to cancel any mail. The two dead seals with Gedu PO are due stamps, one stating "P.O. Putlibhir", while the other states "Putlibhir P.O. Bhutan", both however use the abbreviation "Rp" (for Rupee), instead of NU for Ngultrum, a reminder of the early days of the dedicated postal services, which started in Bhutan only in 1962 with Indian assistance, while even at present the Ngultrum is at par with the Indian Rupee.



Old 'due' seals at Gedu PO, no longer used.

Do 4 Anna Pin-Perforated Stamps Exist for the Second Setting?

by Frank E. Vignola

Recently a 4 Anna pin-perforated pair on European wove paper turned up (see figure 1). At first, I attributed the pair to a printing from the second setting. Without marginal inscriptions it is not possible to identify the setting with certainty. The reason this pair was attributed to the second printing was that stamps had small white faults that are attributed to stamps printed from the setting 2. The stamp on the right clearly has numerous small faults and the marginal frame shows a buildup of ink that is typical with usage.

Turning the pair over, reveals a brownish gum on the back that is typical of the early printing of the clearly printed copies. Less clearly printed copies of the first setting have a white gum.

According to Helrigle/Vignola, 1984, "it is doubtful whether any stamps of this setting were pin-perforated." Still, looking at these stamps with the blotchy appearance would seem to indicate that the pair was from the second

setting.

It is always a possibility that a few of the sheets from the second printing were pin-perforated. However, to prove that the second printing had pin-perforated stamps, examples with marginal inscriptions are needed. Since the marginal inscriptions of the first and second settings are similar, any pin-perforated example of the 4 Anna with marginal inscription should be examined to determine the proper setting.

With Nepalese stamps one never knows what one will find.



Figure 1. Pair of 4 Anna perforated stamps on European paper

Planned Prince of Wales Camp Tour Cancelled

by Leo Martyn

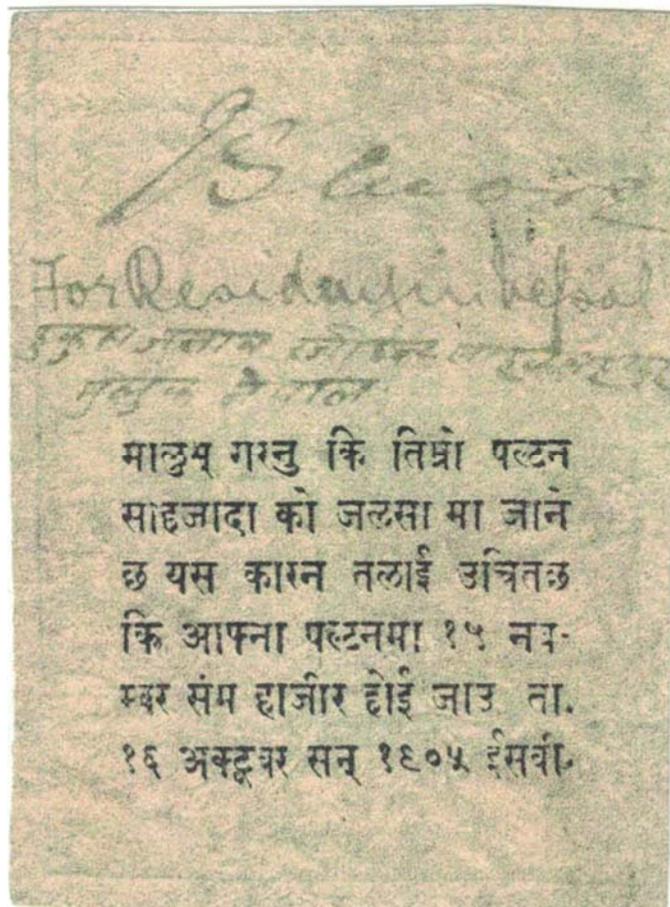


Figure 1: Dated 1905. Nepalese postal stationery card from the Nepal Residency in Kathmandu to a Gurkha regiment. The Devanagari address reads as: "To Gurkha Platoon No. 3502 Soldier Buddimaan Gurung, Village Gorkha Tole Pramanna Gorkha, District Gorkha."

The Prince of Wales journeyed on an extensive tour in India from 1905 through 1906, which was to include a hunting trip in the Maharaja's camp in Nepal. The Nepal portion was scheduled to be from February 21, 1906 through March 6, but the trip was cancelled due to an outbreak of cholera among thousands of beaters gathered for the hunt.

This is the only such card recorded with the printed script and is particularly unusual for Nepalese correspondence regarding the 1905-1906 Prince of Wales tour (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 2: The Devanagari script on the back reads as: "Order of Sir Resident, Brave country Nepal." The printed script reads as: "Be aware that your Platoon will be going to Prince's Welcoming. So it is proper for thou to report to your Platoon. Go before 15 November." Dated 16 October 1905 A.D.



Duksum PO, the Post Office Spared from a Rock-Fall

by Leo van der Velden Oct 2014 rev Dec 2017

I remember Duksum from my first visit in the late 1990s. The small trading place lies along the road from Trashigang to Trashiyangtse, 21 km from Trashigang town and just 2 km from the religious site of Gomphu Kora. Duksum consisted of one dead-end road with shops, restaurants and houses at both sides, and a post office housed in a shop building at the right side. The restaurants were catering to the high way travelers and the shops to nearby off-the-road communities, higher up in the mountains. Tourists were also passing by to see the Duksum Chazam, one of the very few antique iron chain bridges left in Bhutan, built in the 14th century.



The entrance of the dead end road with shops at both sides with the road sign "Bhutan Post Duksum"

When I visited Duksum again after almost ten years in October 2008, there were telltale changes. A rock-fall in July 2004 from the cliff towering over the area damaged many shops,

while the iron bridge had been dismantled in the same year because its support walls were reportedly crumbling. Duksum post office had been very lucky as big boulders from the rock-fall severely damaged the roof of the house at its left side, while at the right side two houses were completely leveled. The shops and restaurants were advised to vacate the area, but many stayed because of lack of a proper alternative. Furthermore, the once thriving business had shrunk, because a number of villages nearby have now feeder roads and people had opened their own shops.



The neighboring houses of the PO have been ruined by the rock fall

Duksum falls under Kamdang gewog in Trashiyangtse district and Duksum PO takes care of six of the eight gewogs (blocks) in the district. The remaining two gewogs of Yangtse and Bumdeling fall under Trashiyangtse town PO.

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The officiating postmaster in October 2008 was Mr Pem Dorji, who had been in charge of Duksum PO since May 2007, as the previous post master had disappeared earlier in 2007 after some embezzlement was discovered. Pem Dorji was before only a postman in Tashigang town from May 2005 to May 2007. He had completed class 10 in December 2004 and started to work for Bhutan Post shortly thereafter.

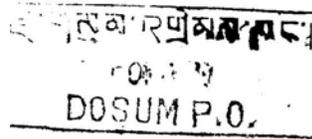


Postmaster Pem Dorji behind his desk

Duksum is a full PO, although quite poorly housed. School care takers from the following six gewog schools bring and collect mail to and from Duksum PO, for which they receive a remuneration of Nu 400 per month (2008):

- 1) Tsenkharla MSS (Middle Secondary School) in Khamdang gewog; formerly known as Rangthangwong Junior High;
- 2) Kheni LSS (Lower SS) in Toetsho gewog;
- 3) Tongzang LSS (official gewog spelling is Tomzhang);
- 4) Ramjar LSS in Ramjar gewog;
- 5) Jamkhar PS (Primary School) in Jamkhar gewog;
- 6) Yallang CPS (official gewog spelling is Yalang with one "l"), CPS= Community Primary School.

The post office placed a sign, red background with dark yellow letters, along the main road, alerting passersby of the existence of the post office. It states 'BHUTAN POST – DUKSUM' in Dzongkha and English. Other government agencies, however, refer to the place as Doksum. In the past it was also spelled as Dogsum or Dosum. The general cancellation seal (with working date mark) still in use states 'Dosum'.



The dead seals in stock were an oblong seal ('Dosum P.O.' in Dzongkha and English) and a small triangular shaped seal with the capital letter 'P', both used in the past on the old type Money Order forms. There is also a rubber seal with the text in English 'Postmaster Doksum P.O.'.



An old negative seal was still used as treasure seal, using normal stamp ink instead of black-red lacque, for forwarding of cash envelopes. It states 'Rongthong Woong' in Dzongkha and English, the name of the ruined dzong in nearby Tshenkharla (or Tsenkharla).

There was a post office in the past, using that seal, also spelled as Rangthang Woong PO, which, together with former Tongmiyangsa PO

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(in Tomzhang gewog), shifted to the newly opened post office in Duksum in early 1992. Note that the name 'Rongthong' was being cleared from official references in the 1990s, most probably as it was the ancestral home of a well known Sarchop (Eastern Bhutanese) opposition figure, who used the place name as part of his name: 'Rongthong Kunley Dorji' (before his death in exile in October 2011 he would reconcile with the Bhutanese government).

Like many CMOs and POs Duksum had a problem with ink for the seal cancellations. Mr Pem Dorji was using normal purple stamp ink, and had to buy some when I visited the PO, as the stamp pad was dry. Many CMOs and POs were no longer using the black printing ink. Apparently the supply chain was not working well, as also new cancellation seals were in short supply. Some CMOs and POs had requested new ones in those days when I visited them, but never received any.



Recut 1 Anna on European wove paper canceled on back of a partial cover. Recuts on European wove paper were available for use only over a limited period. There are several such covers from Birganj. It is unusual to see one canceled with the Karnali obliterator. One Anna recuts on European wove paper can easily be miss identified as ordinary recuts.

Postally used copies of the 5 rupee Sri Pashupati stamp from the 1930 issue are difficult to find, especially used in the proper era. The 5 rupee on the partial cover to the right was cancelled philatelically at Kathmandu on June 20, 1944. Still this is an early postal cancel for the 5 rupee. The 5 rupee stamps could be purchased at the Kathmandu post office until the mid 1960s and some copies can be found on philatelic mail from Nepal.



A BICYCLE TOUR OF THE ANNAPURNAS

Bruno Le Peut and Leo Martyn

Recently I purchased a cover which turned out to be much more interesting than at first sight. The addressee was Bruno Le Peut; a life member of our Study Circle and one whom I have had correspondence with over the years. I

contacted him for more information regarding his tour for an article. Since English is not his first language I assisted him in writing the article, which has been set as to read in his own words.



On November 5, 1989, I took the direct flight from Paris to Kathmandu. On the 11th, a bus ride took me to Dumre; a small village in the Marsyangdi Valley (410 meters altitude) which was the starting point of my tour.

The first part was by a mountain road used by trucks to Besi Sahar (alt. 500m) – the temperature was warm at C 20. The next day involved a six hour trip over a trail made of stone steps to Sattale.

On the 13th I went to Chame on a trail near a ravine which involved two trips – at first to drop off my backpack and then go back for my bike. As I went rocks were falling so far down the ravine that I could not hear noises made by their fall. Then the trail entered a valley with up and down additional trails. I am able to travel at a fast pace and reach Pisang (alt. 3100 meters). A new and dangerous trail, dug into the rocks, ends the day's travel. My favorite game was

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going fast on the suspension bridges and avoiding the cables.

On the 17 I reached Manang via a difficult trail and stayed 2 days to avoid altitude sickness. I went to the post office and purchased a 60p stamp for the first cancellation of 11/19 on my expedition covers.

On the 28th I am on the trail to Tatopani (1189m). To finish the day's journey I have to carry the bike on my shoulder as there are many stone steps and my knees are so tired that I cannot ride the bike now. To reach Sikha, I need to ascend to 1900m, then a 2 day climb to reach Ghorapani at 2855 meters. It was a hard trip and time goes slowly – lots of stone steps along a very steep trail, but the beauty of the landscape made me very happy. The view was extraordinary and I reached the summit of Poon Hill (3194m). The snow on the Annapurnas is a beautiful show of colors, changing from white to red, then to purple as the night settled in.

The next day I am descending to Birethant at 1700m and enter beautiful forests with powerful rivers. Going down there are many stone steps but I was able to ride the bike between them.

On the morning of December 2nd I went to Chandrakot and then onto Pokhara for the last cancellation on my covers which were to be held for me using poste restante in Kathmandu. No 60p stamps were available in Pokhara so I used a 50p and two 5p for postage. I was thinking that I was the only one going to Annapurna for a trail bike tour, but, I met a man from New Zealand who was coming from Pokhara to Marpha, then crossing the Thorung La pass and continuing to Manang on his mountain bike. He was also expecting to be the first with a mountain bike around the Annapurnas. Mine was a Gary Fisher advance mountain bike model. He was one of the early makers of mountain bikes.

This was the last day of the Annapurnas bike tour. The joy of finishing this tour makes me very happy, but also sad to leave this unique life of the mountain people. I know that I will come back soon to the mountains of Nepal.



Nepal issued a bicycle touring subject stamp in 2009.

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Bruno Le Peut on his bicycle with prayer flags in the background

