

POSTAL HIMAL

QUARTERLY OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



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PHILATELIC
STUDY CIRCLE



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The cover illustration on this issue symbolizes the evolution and growth of our Study Circle during its ten years of continuous existence. The upper logo did not appear on Colin Hepper's newsletters until Issue No. 11 dated September 1978--nearly four years after the founding of the Study Circle. Although the Study Circle was founded as the Nepal Philatelic Study Circle, Dr. Pierre Couvreur, now our President, suggested quite early that it would be logical to include Tibet in our area of interest. Soon thereafter the name was changed to the one we use today, but the pair of logos in the central area of our cover illustration appeared much later when Thomas Matthiesen became our publisher and began to apply his artistic talents to the improvement of POSTAL HIMAL. From that pair of logos it was a logical next step to combine them, thus symbolizing our unity of purpose.

Dear Friends,

This issue represents a celebration of ten years of continuous existence for an organization that has grown and evolved to its present state. In this issue we have included a number of contributions from some of our 'old-timers,' including our two eminent patrons, H. D. S. Haverbeck and Mac Linscott Ricketts. Both old and new members will find something of interest in these articles and reminiscences--or so we hope!

We can be proud of the accomplishments of individual members in their writings, publications, exhibits, etc. and also of some outstanding philatelic literature in the form of books which have been published by, or with the aid of, our Study Circle. Most of these, while authored by one or two persons, could not have been written in their final form without the help of members of our group & the support of our organization--a fact freely acknowledged by the authors. But the printed word is not the organization and POSTAL HIMAL is only a vehicle by which we maintain our contacts with one another. The organization is, most importantly, a group of men and women dedicated to a common purpose. As such, it lives and breathes and will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the members--or, it will die.

On the back of the cover page you will see the names of the first paid Life Members. We honor these members who have shown their confidence in the future of our Study Circle & we invite all who can to join them. At the same time we honor our new members and want to assure them that we seek their aid as we try to make our second decade even more successful than the first. Your editor is always eager to hear from any of you and seeks your constructive criticism, your ideas & your support.

Please note that the enclosed auction list, although a bit shorter than usual, consists entirely of donated material. We thank the donors for their generosity and we trust that members will help our cause by bidding enthusiastically.

Lester A. Michel

(Some thoughts selected from a letter written to the officers of our Study Circle & dated 10 December 1984.--Ed.)

"..... We can be very proud of the steps gradually climbed year after year by our Circle, the POSTAL HIMAL, the numerous publications & the activities of our growing membership. We congratulate all those who have received well-deserved awards and those who have contributed, through the various writings, to our increasing knowledge of the postal histories of Nepal & Tibet..... As we stand on the threshold of our second decade, we have no reason to be afraid, but it is time for our Circle to develop a sound financial base. There are many reasons to be proud of our common past, & thanks are due to all who are part of our bright past. Now let us step boldly into the future. We are on a good trail so just stick to it and expand the good name of the field we have chosen. My best wishes to each one of you.

Your president,
Pierre Couvreur

STAMP NEWS

Colin Hepper, our Secretary and Philately Editor of the British Philatelic Federation's publication, STAMP NEWS, has called our attention to an item in a recent issue under the heading, "Market Movements," which we quote here:

"NEPAL: For years, the 1960/61 'Official' overprints have been sought after by collectors, the very scarce R1 value reaching a high of £ 50. Late in 1983, not only were considerable unsold stocks of these (then long withdrawn) stamps placed on sale at face value by the Nepali Post Office, but a further five previously unknown denominations were also made available. These stamps go off sale on 4 April this year, & while it is obvious that the appearance of these additional quantities has destroyed the value of the original stamps, you would not go wrong if you picked up a set or two of the remainders at the lowest possible price before stocks dry up. But beware false claims about them--they should be very cheap indeed."

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EXHIBITION NEWS

The first Eastern Regional Meeting of our Study Circle will be held at RIPEX XX in the Biltmore Plaza Hotel, Providence, RI, at 11 AM on Sunday, 21 April. Your editor has arranged for a booth (or table) at which the advantages of membership in the Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle will be presented to the waiting philatelic world. All members and friends are encouraged to stop by for a chat and for an opportunity to examine virtually all the recent publications relating to our area of interest. (See POSTAL HIMAL No. 40, page 42, for additional details concerning this important meeting.)

We note that John A. Young, Jr. was awarded a GOLD at SARAPEX '85, February 8-10, in Sarasota, Florida, by the Sarasota Philatelic Club. His exhibit of "Classic Nepal" continues to be recognized wherever it is exhibited. Jack also wins awards with his Tibet exhibit, as well. Keep up the good work, Jack.



HONORS AND AWARDS

Dr. W. C. Hellrigl, in a letter dated 29 November 1984, informed us that: "Just today I received a communication from England, saying that THE CLASSIC STAMPS OF NEPAL had won the "Martin Memorial Trophy," the India Study Circle's award for the best literary work on the subject of philately of the Indian sub-continent published in 1984. This is a tremendous success for the book and for Nepal, generally and I am really thrilled to have won this award now for the second time (the first time with THE NATIVE POSTMARKS OF NEPAL)."

In a recent letter, Mr. P. Gupta, President Elect of the Philatelic Congress of India, has informed us that he has been elected as a Fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, London.

And, Prof. Dr. Armand E. Singer writes that he has been elected to membership in The Collectors Club of New York. Congratulations are extended to these, our members, for the recognitions they have received--and for adding to the status of philately in the areas represented by our Study Circle.



REGIONAL MEETING IN KATHMANDU
--Wolfgang Hellrigl

On 20 December 1984 a joint meeting of the Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle & the Nepal Philatelic Society was held in the NPS's rooms on New Road, Kathmandu.

Approximately 35 philatelists attended the meeting, including no less than 11 members of the Study Circle, viz:

Hardayal S. Gupta, S. Pradhan, M. K. Mulmi, M. Raj Bhandary, Nanda G. Rajkarnikar, Ramesh Shrestha, Surendra L. Shrestha, Bishnu L. Shrestha, Punnya R. Sthapit, Prof. Dr. Axel Werner & myself.

This encounter with our numerous Nepalese friends was, of course, a great pleasure and the atmosphere was very cordial. Various points were raised & discussed, priority being given to some serious problems connected with recent developments in Nepal philately.

Firstly, the old stocks of official overprints on King Mahendra stamps--inexplicably "re-issued" by the postal authorities--are still causing considerable uneasiness in philatelic quarters. The sale, on auction or otherwise, of these stamps at exorbitant prices has caused problems for collectors, dealers and auctioneers alike. It was agreed by all that this most unfortunate measure has greatly damaged the image of Nepal's new issue policy. Hence I was rather surprised to learn that the Nepal Philatelic Society had not lodged an official protest to the postal authorities and I therefore suggested that it was high time for the Society to take a firm stand on this matter, if only to avoid a possible repetition of a similar disaster in the future.

A second problem area is represented by the imperforate sheets of recent new issues that have turned up with alarming regularity. These imperforate varieties were allegedly ordered by some unscrupulous persons and then slowly introduced into the market. Again, it was regretted that the Nepal Philatelic Society passively accepted these practices without taking the slightest measures to stop them. A strong protest, addressed to the postal authorities, should be lodged without further delay. I promised to take this matter up with the managing director of Carl Uberreuter,

the Viennese printing firm responsible for the issues in question.

Another typical problem--forgeries--was also discussed at length. It was agreed that early detection of forgeries is most essential for their efficient control. The Secretary of the NPS promised that the Society would co-operate by quickly informing the Study Circle of any new developments in this area.

Actually, I did come across a brand new type of 1/2-anna-black forgery, complete with sheet framelines. This photographically reproduced imitation must be regarded as a very good forgery:



1/2 anna, made in Calcutta, 1984

I was also shown a cover bearing a forgery of the special cancellation used by the German Himalayan Expedition to Manaslu, dated 16 June 1977.

Another novelty were imitations of about half a dozen different red ink seals of Tibet, including Dalai Lama seals. All of these were on piece, not on the usual complete letter sheets.

The day after the meeting, a special auction was held and, again, the attendance was very high.

After this meeting, I paid individual visits to a number of members in the course of which I received many interesting informations. Messrs. Rudra and S. L. Shrestha showed me some unrecorded postal markings of the classic period, including a small circular cancellation of Taulihawa.

Hellrigl, REGIONAL MEET...(concluded)--

Mr. J. B. Manandhar informed me that he had seen an official document of 1881 which specified that the issue date of the first stamps of Nepal was the first day of the Nepalese lunar New Year (not the Nepalese solar year, as assumed in "The Classic Stamps of Nepal"). The difference between lunar and solar New Year is a question of a few days, but, nevertheless, is anyone able to calculate the exact day of the beginning of the lunar year, back in 1881?

Perhaps the most important piece of information was Mr. S. L. Shrestha's discovery that the postal rates of registered letters not only depended on the weight but also on the fact whether an acknowledgement of receipt was required. All registered letters marked "acknowledgement due" had to be franked with an additional 1 anna (later 4 pice) stamp. After checking several registered covers bearing 7 annas or more, I found that a surprisingly high percentage were indeed marked "acknowledgement due".

SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS ON THE "OFFICIAL" STAMPS OF TIBET

--H. D. S. Haverbeck

While reading POSTAL HIMAL No. 40 a few weeks ago, I was much taken with Dr. Armand Singer's notes on unanswered questions. He raised the question of the "Official Stamps" of Tibet. I have looked through my previous writings on the stamps of Tibet and note an absence of any reference in detail as to how I came to accept them.

The first examples that I had seen came from Mr. E. A. Smythies in 1947. I renewed my correspondence with him after his retirement from the Indian Civil Service. We were busily engaged in swapping United States and Canadian stamps for those of Nepal and Tibet. Among other Tibet material he sent me was a single copy of the stamp which became Scott No. 01. He said that he had gotten it in the bazaar at Kathmandu along with some other stamps. He had a pair of the stamps which he cut apart so that I could have one. He did not remember exactly what year he had found it

but thought it had been two or three years before he retired. This would put it sometime in 1943-44. I sent a photographic enlargement to a friend in the Yale University Library for translation of the Tibetan inscription. He reported that it read "Tibet Government order ticket" (or stamp). In 1948 I showed the stamp to the chief of the Trade Mission to the United States, Surkhang Depbn. He said the "ticket" was only for Tibetan officials and that I should not have it as it must have been stolen. A few years later (about 1952-53), Mr. Philip H. Cummings showed me some envelopes he had received from Tibet. They were franked with similar stamps to the one that I had. I wrote to my contacts in India and Nepal for further information. My contact in Kathmandu, formerly Mr. Smythies' clerk, informed me that they were the old government official stamps which the communists had found & were using up. Subsequently many more covers appeared--some obviously made to order.

Until this point I had been rather on the fence about the stamps. I had thought that the fact that there was an inscription "STAMP" in latin characters was more an indication of fiscal use than as postal stamps--particularly since the stamps of the first issue were inscribed "POSTAGE" in Latin characters. However, there were enough non-philatelic usages to warrant the belief that these stamps were being used for the prepayment of postage. It is also interesting to note that no more of them turned up after the 1 karmanga (Scott No. 01) had been found by Smythies until the report from Mr. Cummings. Sometime later than the events described, another copy of the 1 karmanga was found in the well-known Danish collection that was broken up by Harmer Rooke and Co. The stamp brought a substantial price, as did Smythies' copy when sold by Robson Lowe.

I do not claim to have the last word on this discussion, but until some more positive evidence against them appears, I shall believe in their bona-fides.



THE HISTORY OF AN ADDICTION

--Mac Linscott Ricketts

Lester Michel has asked me to contribute something to this issue of POSTAL HIMAL MARKING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY of the Society. He suggested a reminiscence, and the proposal was too great a temptation for me to resist. I haven't collected the stamps of any country seriously since I abandoned my Nepal and Tibet collections and mail-order business in 1965-66, but I still feel a nostalgic thrill whenever I am reminded of those years of the late 'fifties and early 'sixties when the philately of the Himalayan region was for me a real addiction. So I have taken out some old files--the remnants of a voluminous correspondence, most of which has been long since discarded--and have used their contents to supplement and correct my all too imperfect memory of those years.

It was sometime in 1956 that I read a miniscule ad in Linn's Weekly offering collections of 100 different stamps of Nepal for \$10.00 postpaid, direct from a man in Kathmandu with the name of the Vedic deity, Brihaspati. At that time I was a 25-year old Methodist minister and general stamp collector residing in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Having never so much as seen a stamp of Nepal and being intrigued by the mystery of writing to such an exotic land, I responded to the ad, and, in due time, I received a brown native-paper envelope bulging with its mysterious contents. Was there some rare narcotic mixed with the ink of those tiny scraps of paper, illegibly printed in garish colors? I never knew; but from that moment, I was hooked. And, in order to support my habit, I decided to become a dealer.

I still have the aerogramme dated 10 November 1956 in which Brihaspati quoted me his wholesale prices on collections of 100 different (\$6.00 each, nine for \$50.00), 90 different (\$4.60 each) etc. He also offered some revenue stamps and the 1956 Coronation set, each stamp priced individually per 100. The one Rupee value was much higher than the others: \$50.00 per 100. Mr. Brihaspati's explanation: "These stamps only 5,000 exist. Printed only for the use of King and Queen. So we hear."

I don't remember precisely the sequence of events over the next year and a half. I know that I acquired a number of contacts in Nepal, made some lucky auction purchases, accumulated a small but broad stock of Nepal and Tibet, ran ads in Linn's & attracted a few buyers, obtained a copy of Harrison D.S. Haverbeck's first handbook of Nepal and exchanged several letters with him, and discovered that blue crossed kukris postal cards existed (Haverbeck saw his first one in 1957 & I received my first in an early 1958 lot--priced at \$2.00!). By April of 1958 I was ready to offer the waiting world the first philatelic dealer's price list of Nepal. By this time I was living in the St. Petersburg suburb of Gulfport, was pastor of a church paying \$4,000 annual salary plus housing, and my wife was expecting our third child. The price list--produced on the church's mimeograph machine--was 10 pages long and contained all manner of useful information for collectors--most of it culled from Haverbeck's catalog, but some of it original. It began:

"So far as I know, this is the first attempt ever undertaken by any American stamp dealer to publish a comprehensive price list of Nepal postage stamps, postal stationery, covers, and revenue stamps. Undoubtedly, it will need revision almost as soon as it is printed since new data and new materials are coming into my hands continually..... Nepal stamps are not 'pretty.' The early locally-produced issues are among the world's ugliest stamps. But this only adds to their fascination! None of the major stamps is so expensive that the average collector cannot afford it, yet some are almost impossible to find at any price. The collecting of varieties and covers makes the field a challenge to the most serious collector."

At that time I had no 1881s to offer, so I left them unpriced on my list. The 1886 set I offered for \$1.50 used, and the half-anna orange-vermillion for \$3.75 mint or used (and I sold some at these prices, too!). The 1907 set used was a quarter, and the 1949 pictorials I offered for \$2.00 mint, \$1.60 used; the 1954 maps for \$1.50 mint, \$1.95 used;

Ricketts, HISTORY.....(concluded)--

and the 1954 kings \$1.50 mint & \$1.60 used. The 1956 Coronation low values were 40¢ mint and a dime more used; the 1 Rupee \$1.50 mint, \$3.00 fine used, \$2.00 v.g. used. I had very few orange-vermilion postal cards then, but I priced them as "starting at \$1.00," inviting clients to place their names on a waiting list. I listed ten varieties, including one I had identified myself, and noted the existence of the blue card just discovered. I also offered commercial covers, starting at 20¢ each for recent ones. One could buy from me then a set of FDCs of the 1949 issue for \$3.95. Revenue stamps were priced at \$2.00 to \$17.50.

On June 1, 1958, I released a single-page price list of Tibet offerings. Some sample prices: #1: 75¢ mint, 95¢ used; #2: \$1.00 & \$1.25; #5: \$2.00 & \$3.00; #7 & #8: \$25.00 each, mint or used. (I remember obtaining an auction lot once with dozens of #5s and #7s, in enamel paint, postally used, some in multiple pieces.) Commercial covers of the 1933 issues I offered for \$2.50 up-- and I sold them for that price when I had them.

The next five or six years remain in my memory as a fabulous time. In 1959 I decided to prepare for college teaching. I left Florida, moved to Illinois, took a "student appointment" church at Lovington, and entered graduate school at the University of Chicago. My stamp business grew to its maximum (some 25 or 30 regular customers, with a profit never as much as \$1,000 annually, because I was always skimming the best stuff for myself!). In those years I had the thrill of discovering the blue Pashupati cards and several new varieties of the vermilion and blue kukris types. I eagerly opened each new packet from Nepal, never knowing what the dealers would have to offer me next.

I conducted the "business" on weekends (since I was in Chicago during the week), in such time as I could spare from pastoral & familial duties. I seldom had enough money to take advantage of the better offers made to me (I remember once turning down a block of 22 half anna vermillions at \$66.00--but later I

was able to get it for \$40.00!), & when I wrote a check for \$75.00 or \$100.00 for stamps, I always felt a twinge of conscience. My business depended upon a rapid turnover--I hoped to be paid for what I sold before the checks I had sent to Nepal would have had time to clear my bank. Auction bids were another gamble. Usually I just squeaked by.

But as I look back to those good old days from the perspective of the venerable age of 54, I have no regrets. I didn't charge my customers enough to make any money, really, but I had a hobby that distracted my mind from the more taxing concerns of graduate studies and parish hassles. Without selling more than I kept, I couldn't have afforded the hobby. And when I disposed of my collection a few years later--having by then become a college teacher--to help finance our first house, it was as though I were being paid for having had some fun.

The greatest rewards, though, were the personal friendships made, several of which continue to the present day. And someday I hope to visit Nepal and meet some of those crafty but lovable dealers. But I'm afraid that, if I do, I'll get another whiff of whatever it was that hooked me in the first place, and I'll be gone again.....

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TIBET 3-TRANGKA

Those of you who read THE AMERICAN PHILATELIST regularly, almost certainly saw the article in the November 1984 issue by Dr. Oakley Shields entitled "Tibetan 1950 3-Trangka: Fake or Genuine?"--especially if you are a student of Tibet philately.

Gilbert R. Richardson, one of our members, recently sent me a copy of a 'letter to the editor' of AP which appeared in the February 1985 issue and which I had overlooked. This letter, under the heading, "Another 3-Trangka," written by Robin H. Mix, is an interesting account of his acquisition of a defective *unused* copy of the stamp which is most interesting. Would any of you care to voice your opinion of these two articles for our readers?--Ed.

"CIVIL WAR COVERS FOUND IN ATTIC TRUNK"

--Armand E. Singer

Every serious collector deserves one miracle, one serendipitous find. I had been collecting for some thirty-five years before I experienced mine. But, no, it wasn't Civil War correspondence. And it was not found in an old attic trunk, either. Still, it was an incredible piece of luck.

Somewhere, I forget how, I had come on a Tibet cover addressed to a man in New York City. Philatelic and probably something that never even saw the mails, but with a real name and street number. The New York phone directory listed the same name, that of a well-known antique dealer, with a location only a block from that on my cover. On the off chance that he might prove a fellow collector and possible source of acquisitions or trades, I wrote him. I must have made a better impression than I had any right to expect, because a few weeks later there arrived a huge packet containing dozens of miniature sheets of the Tibet 1912 issue, first and enamel printings; first, perforated printing of several values of the 1933s; not to mention whole panes and sheets of the Chinese surcharges. An accompanying letter explained how the sender had received them as "payment" for a "loan" (i.e., the loan had apparently been a gift and the payment merely a token of appreciation) made to the son of a Scot father & Tibetan mother, who was then living in Kalimpong, India. My correspondent professed no use for the accumulation and no knowledge of its worth. I was urged to keep whatever I wished, give away or sell the rest. I won't admit whether I was tempted to retain the whole lot, but I actually sold a large percentage of the material to another collector and to a Baltimore dealer, though hanging on to what still furnishes the basis for much of my present collection. My benefactor expressed unexpected pleasure on receipt of a generous check and, in his reply, included for disposal, his personal, fairly complete mint collection of U.S., starting with the Columbian set, I recall. If the stamps had not been glued (yes, glued!) down on Scott album pages, I

would not venture a guess at what they might have raised. I steamed them loose, disposed of them through a reliable auction house, and my by now good friend received another fat check. Of them I kept only the \$1.30 and \$2.60 Zeppelins to fill out the sixty-five-cent value that I had bought for ninety cents back in 1930 as a teenager. The completed set, some years later, along with the rest of my U.S. classics brought me several thousand dollars, the total proceeds from which bagged one unique Tibet cover at a Robson Lowe sale in the 1970s. Is there a moral, or a cautionary tale, lurking somewhere in these lines?

Postscript: A year or so following my "attic trunk" find, I visited the antique dealer in New York. His apartment, crammed full of priceless oriental art, was a miniature Metropolitan Museum. In 1957 I also visited the original owner of the Tibetan cache in Kalimpong. He was by then very old and deaf except to the high-pitched sounds of Tibetan spoken by his daughter. At the time he was busied in translating a batch of letters sent him from Lhasa by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, an acquaintance and friend from the days that he had spent there. I never learned whether he published his translations, but I still have a cover he gave me from that correspondence, addressed in the beautiful handwriting of some official scribe, with the obligatory red wax royal seal affixed.

Lightning, at least the benevolent kind that made Ben Franklin famous, has not struck again. I doubt that it will.

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7

A STAMP COLLECTOR BECOMES A PHILATELIST
 --Lester A. Michel

Although the writer has been a stamp collector for nearly 60 years, he had not taken any interest in covers or in postal history until about 15 years ago when he bid successfully for a batch of Nepal material that included some 100 covers. His recently awakened interest in Nepal and the curious unreadable writing on those covers caused him to study them rather carefully over a period of time. As a result, he discovered an incongruity in H. D. S. Haverbeck's book and wrote a letter to him some 11 years ago now. The letter read, in part:

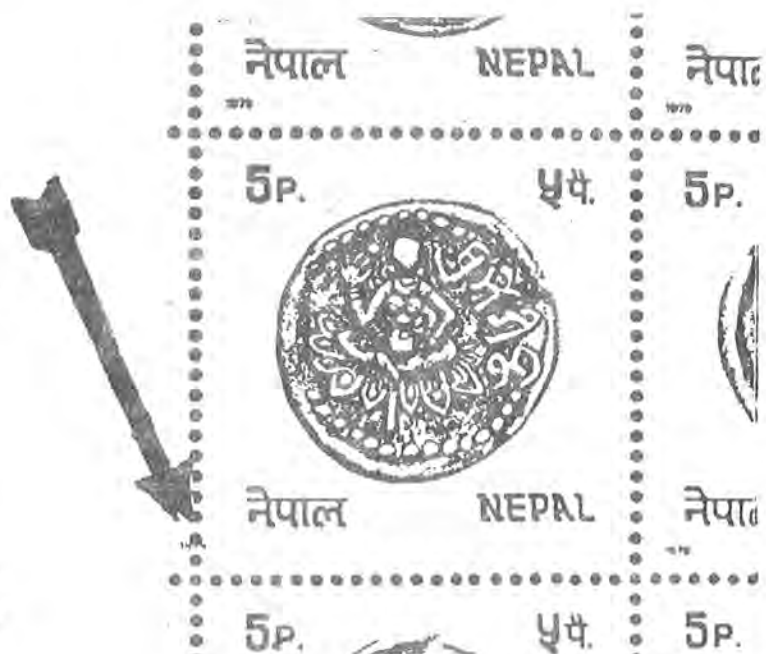
"On page 77, in your discussion of the triangular stamp (Scott #89) issued on 14 December 1956, I read that "....., the fact that the stamp did not carry a denomination suited to the postal rates & the issuance of a comparatively large number of stamps, all combine to brand it as speculative and unnecessary to the postal service." There is no doubt that this issue was made, in part, to attract philatelic interest. However, covers in my collection indicate that the denomination was appropriate for mail addressed to India at that time. My conclusion is based on the following information:

"I have a series of nearly 40 covers mailed from Kathmandu to Darjeeling, India, which span a period of six years, from 1952 to 1958. Most of these letters were sent to the same address and many of them to the same person. I could comment on these covers in other ways, but will simply state that they appear to have contained personal mail which was not philatelic in nature. A variety of stamps of the period were used on these covers and it appears that the rate to India changed from 8p to 12p sometime between December 11, 1953, and May 7, 1954, as ten covers prior to that earlier date all bear the equivalent of 8p in postage and all after the later date bear the equivalent of 12p. Five covers in the group bear a single copy of the triangular stamp referred to earlier. The Nepal cancels are generally not very clear, but the earliest of the Nepal dates appears to correspond to December, 1956, and is definitely not a

FDC. The Darjeeling receiving cancels are generally much clearer and span a year or more from February 1, 1957, to February, 1958, on these five covers."

Mr. Haverbeck answered my letter most graciously, observing that my point seemed to be well documented & noting that his book was no longer up-to-date in some respects. But, to me, this exchange of correspondence was thrilling. I had made my first "discovery" concerning Nepal postal history and I was "hooked!" The realization that, for westerners at least, the study of postal history of a most interesting country was in its infancy, was most exciting, in that a mere beginner could make contributions to philatelic knowledge.

Now, more than ten years later, there are still opportunities to make both small and large discoveries concerning the postal history of both Nepal and Tibet. And, through POSTAL HIMAL, we all have the opportunity to share in a rich and exciting field of discovery.



Above is an enlarged illustration of stamp No. 5 on a full sheet of the 1979 5p coin stamp offered as lot No. 30 in Auction No. 32, enclosed with this issue. This is the first time that this interesting error has been called to our attention.—Ed.

COLLECTING NEPAL STAMPS IN THE FORTIES
AND FIFTIES

--L. B. Scott

By January 1946 I had obtained my doctor's degree, had completed war research on high explosives and penicillin, and was commencing an industrial career. Clearly, it was a good time to return to stamp collecting--on a financially modest scale. I began buying stamps from many countries, but Nepal especially interested me because the stamps were so unusual and yet they could be obtained at low prices. Soon I was bidding on Nepal auction lots. Quite quickly I discovered an important problem. Often my bid would be the only one received for the lot and I was then charged all, or nearly all, of the bid amount. A new approach was needed. I began having a friend bid one-tenth of catalog value on all lots of interest, and I would send in a more rational bid, as high as one-half catalog if I really wanted the item. Surprisingly often I received the lots at one step above one-tenth catalog value. In this way, over a period of years, I bought two sheets of the 4 anna with the 1 anna cliché, the 2 anna sheets with one, two and three clichés missing, and mint & used sheets of the 1 anna, new die. One interesting lot I obtained was a collection of ten used copies of the ½ anna, red-orange. Many years later I learned that this lot had been submitted by Frank Vignola and a friend to test the market. Needless to say, they were not happy with market conditions.

In 1958 our family went to England for a year and, as soon as the opportunity presented itself, I visited Stanley Gibbons. At that time Gibbons had multiple copies of all the stamps of Nepal, but at a very difficult price for me to accept, namely, full catalog value. Begrudgingly, I purchased a few special items such as SG #1-6, but I did not have the foresight to really expand my collection. One close decision I will always remember. Gibbons had two full sheets of the ½ anna, one with one inverted cliché (Hellrigl/Vignola Setting #3) and one with six (Setting #13). Setting #3 was considerably less expensive because of its lower catalog value, so I finally bought it. Today I consi-

der this sheet to be one of the stars in my Nepal collection. Looking back on the forties & fifties, I wish that I had spent more of my stamp money on Nepalese material instead of British Colonies in Africa and the Caribbean, but I am certainly thankful that I bought as much as I did.

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* NEPAL FOR SALE *
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1) Collection of 20 early postcards including H & G Nos: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 13a, 14, 15, 16 (double frame), 17 & 18 all unused, plus 10, 12 & 13a used with Kathmandu postmark (Hellrigl C70)
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4) Sheet of Second Children's Day 1961, unmounted, mint, no folds & no perf separations
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SHOWCASE

In the column titled "Auction Action" (POSTAL HIMAL No. 39, p. 35) your editor commented on an interesting cover offered in a David Feldman auction, whose description seemed likely to be partially incorrect. Leo Martyn has provided the following quotation from a certificate obtained from Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl on this cover: (The cover was registered and dates from May 1892. It bears two copies of the 4 anna, a 2 anna and a 1 anna, all of the 1886-1898 issue.)

"The stamps are imperforate but both 4 annas stamps show traces of pin-perforations on one side; these could well be unofficial pin-perforations, since the accepted perforations of the stamps on native paper did not commence until c. 1898. The stamps are on medium to thick paper.

"The three-colour franking is very rare. In addition, the extremely high rate (11 annas) is absolutely extraordinary. To the best of my knowledge, this is the highest franking ever recorded on a classic cover of Nepal!"

