

POSTAL HIMAL

QUARTERLY OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET

PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE



1861 Sikkim Expedition



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HIMALAYAN VIEWS

by

Leo Martyn

Our Secretary, Colin Hepper, has closed the Study Circle's Giro account for European members as Giro accounts are not allowed with non UK addresses (Colin now lives in Spain).

o o o o o

The feature article in this issue deals with the postal history of Sikkim - an area which is part of the Himalayan scene and very closely tied, geographically and politically, to our areas of interest.

o o o o o

The Nepal & Tibet Philatelic Study Circle will be the host society at Sescal (Los Angeles) in 1998 (Oct. 2-4). We will be allotted a minimum of 100 frames for exhibits, a society table, and a meeting room. Hopefully some members will form new exhibits - Sescal is a major national show.

o o o o o

The 13th General Meeting of the Nepal Philatelic Society (Kathmandu) took place on Aug. 26, 1995. A new executive committee was elected, including Mr. Chandra Kumar Sthapit - President, Mr. Bishnu Lal Shrestha - Vice-President, Mr. Ramesh Kumar Shrestha - Secretary, and Mr. Shree Prashad Regmi - Treasurer. Membership information is available from the secretary, whose mailing address is: Gha 2-671 Naxal, Kathmandu, Nepal.

o o o o o

In the Nov. 28 (1995) issue of Rising Nepal, the following story appeared (quoted from "News From Nepal", H-6): "Faster Than a Speeding Turtle. The Dang District Development Committee, hurrying to get a copy of its annual progress report to the press office in Tulsipur, 24 kilometers away, spent an extra fifteen rupees to send it express delivery. It arrived at its destination 47 days later, having moved at an average speed of about a kilometer a day."

o o o o o

The last study circle auction was very successful with sales totaling more than \$14,000. Some members complained regarding the format change of indicating a starting price instead of an estimated price. For reasons of bookkeeping, Roger Skinner and I felt that using a starting price was more efficient and yet didn't affect the final price of the lot. For example, in the past I would run lot X with an estimate of \$120 (reserved/starting price of 2/3rds = \$80), but using the new format lot X would be listed with a starting price (reserve) of \$80 and an estimate of \$120. Now, bidders do not have to figure 2/3rds (which, in most cases, does not reduce precisely) of the estimate to determine the minimum bid. This also eliminates one procedure for bidders converting dollars into other currencies.

Many lots will have starting prices equal to estimates. Lots having higher (sometimes much higher) estimates reflect the consignor's views that he/she is willing to accept a certain amount but feels they are worth more and bidders should consider offers higher than the starting prices. Also, if a member consigns a lot indicating a price far below the "market value", I would indicate an estimate based upon 25+ years of collecting and studying the material, thus giving bidders a more accurate (I hope) basis for bidding.

* * * * *

by Wolfgang C. Hellrigl

This new publication of mine contains two unfortunate errors that occurred during the process of scanning the illustrations into the manuscript.

Firstly, on page 11, the illustration shown as Type B39 is actually a repetition of Type B38. The correct illustration of Type B39 is shown below:



B39
PHARIJONG F.P.O. No. 81

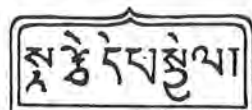
The second scanning error occurred on the map on page 29: the Tibetan inscription below Phari erroneously reads Yatung and the Tibetan inscription below Yatung reads Phari.

I received numerous comments on this new book, from Tibet collectors. Particularly useful were the reports of unrecorded markings (by Derek Bates and Colin Narbeth) and of several new dates of use (by Derek Bates, George Alevizos and our new member, Fortune Wang). These new finds are listed below, in the hope that other collectors might report other unrecorded types and dates.

1) New Types:

Early Registration Handstamps (p. 38):

While leafing through an older auction catalogue (a frequent goldmine for delightful items one has failed to bid on), I found the illustration of a cover bearing a possibly unique registration handstamp of Nangartse. The cover is franked with stamps of the 1933 issue and can approximately be allocated to the 1940s:



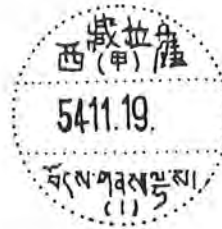
T81
NANGARTSE

As was to be expected, most of the new information regarded the period of the Chinese People's Republic, 1953-1959. The discovery of four new types is most promising and it is hoped that further unrecorded markings may turn up:

Bilingual Datestamps - Large Dotted Circle (p. 47)



C228
GYANTSE



C229
LHASA

Bilingual Datestamps - Large Solid Circle (p. 49)



C289
LHASA



C295
SHETANG

2) Extended Periods of Use (the new dates are underlined):

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|--|
| Type B15 | (p. 10) | 04.04.1909 - <u>12.09.1941</u> |
| Type B116 | (p. 19) | <u>12.05.1904</u> - 10.09.1904 |
| Type C12 | (p. 24) | 09.01.1911 - <u>03.07.1911</u> |
| Type C14 | (p. 24) | 07.01.1911 - <u>25.10.1911</u> |
| Type C21 | (p. 25) | 14.12.1910 - <u>24.10.1911</u> |
| Type C152 | Violet (p. 45) | <u>25.03.1956</u> |
| Type C200 | Blue (p. 46) | <u>01.09.1960</u> |
| Type C228 | (p. 47) | <u>07.06.1956</u> [see new type above] |
| Type C229 | (p. 47) | <u>19.11.1954</u> [see new type above] |
| Type C230 | (p. 47) | <u>14.04.1955</u> |
| Type C262 | (p. 50) | <u>08.11.1955</u> |
| Type C289 | (p. 50) | <u>28.04.1959</u> [see new type above] |
| Type C295 | Black (p. 50) | <u>27.12.1959</u> [see new type above] |
| Type C295 | Violet (p. 50) | <u>27.12.1959</u> [see new type above] |
| Type C294 | (p. 50) | <u>20.05.1956</u> |
| Type C401 | (p. 51) | <u>01.06.1955</u> |
| Type E3 | Darjeel. (p. 54) | 18.08.1924 - <u>12.09.1924</u> |

3) Censor Markings?

Derek Bates reports the following small markings of Lhasa, struck in red. They could possibly represent censor markings used by the Chinese People's Republic. Derek mentions that he has seen them exclusively on mail from Lhasa to Nepal. Lhasa/1 was in use between May and July, 1958, and Lhasa/2 between June and December, 1959. Does anyone have further information on these markings?



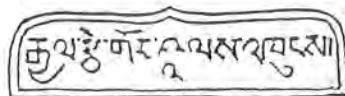
LHASA/1



LHASA/2

4) A Private Handstamp of Gyantse?

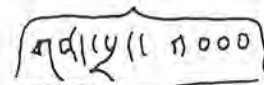
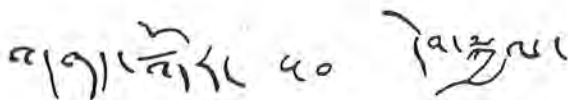
The following type was found on an unregistered cover from Gyantse to Kathmandu, dated 5th September, 1919. The cover was posted directly at the British-Indian P.O. of Gyantse, without first passing through the Tibetan P.O. The marking strongly resembles the registration handstamps in use at the Tibetan P.O., but since the cover was neither registered nor processed through the native postal system, it is believed that the marking in question may be of a private nature. Can anyone supply further information on this marking?



Private handstamp of Gyantse?

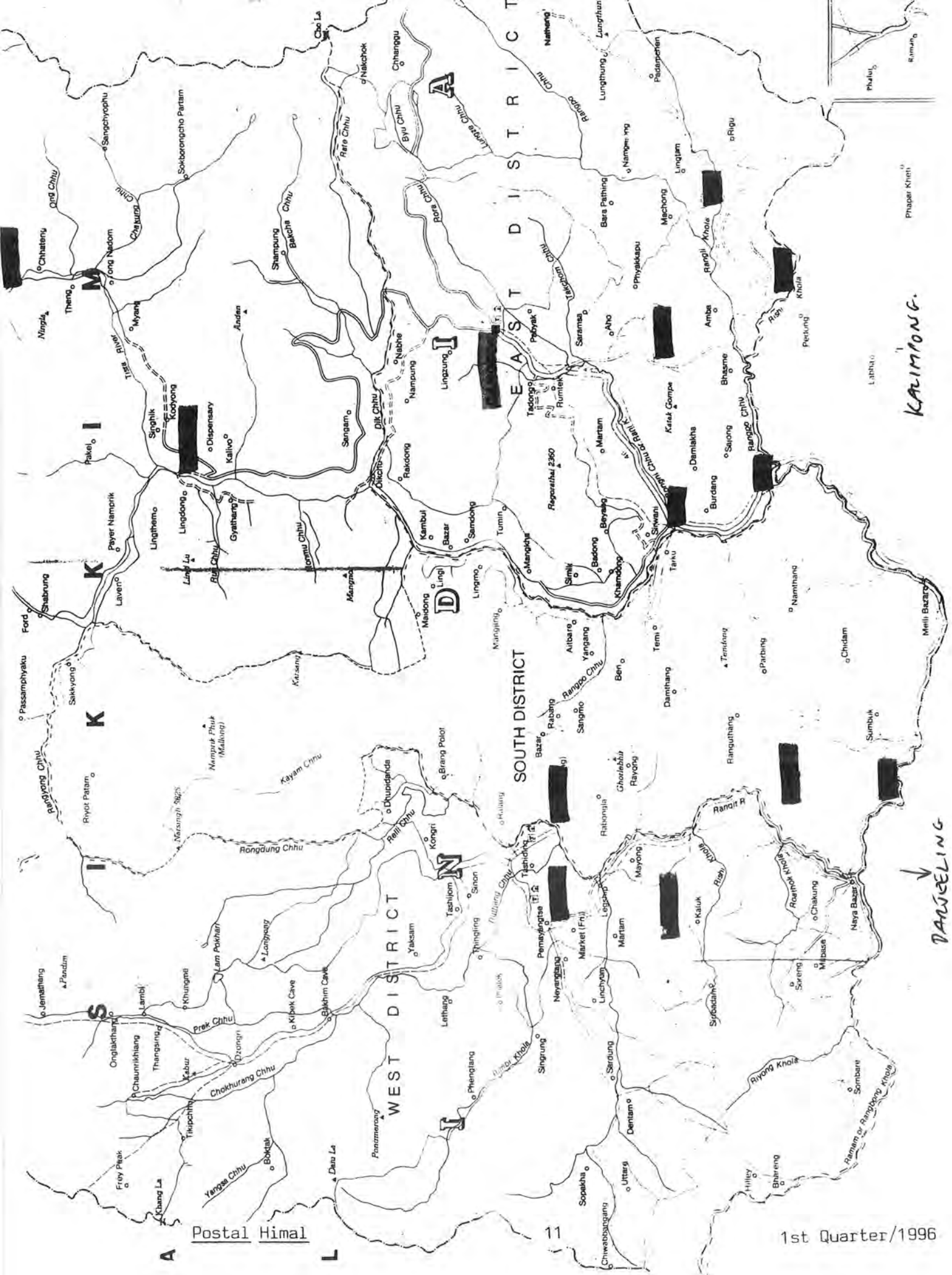
5) Manuscript Insurance Markings

I have started to do some research on insured mail from Tibet. So far, I have found only two items that bear manuscript insurance markings (illustrated below). Can anyone produce further insured items?



Manuscript insurance markings

* * * * *



Postal Himal

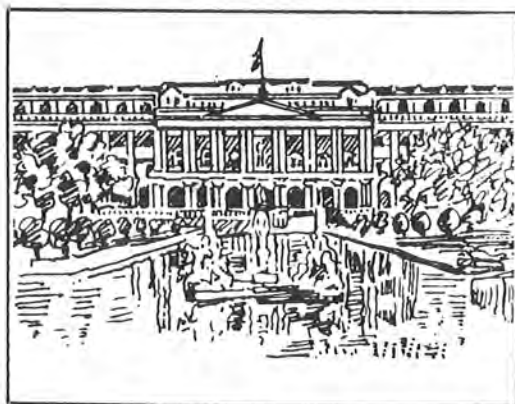
KAILASH

DANJELING

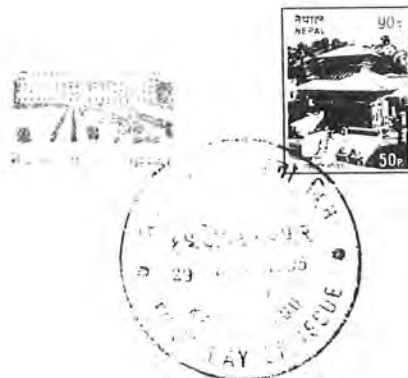
NEW ISSUES FROM NEPAL

Mr. D.R. Pandey, the Officer-In-Charge of the Nepal Philatelic Bureau in Kathmandu, sent the following information (including stamps and FDC's) regarding new issues from Nepal - 1995.

प्रथम दिवसीय आवरण / FIRST DAY COVER



नियमित टिकटमाला
REGULAR SERIES
२०५२/१९९५



May 29 - Singhadarbar and Pashupati Temple.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Denomination | | 5. Format | |
| (a) Singhadarbar | 0.10 | (a) Horizontal | |
| (b) Pashupati Temple | 0.50 | (b) Vertical | |
| 2. Size: | 21 x 26 mm | 6. Sheet Composition: | 100 Stamps |
| 3. Colour: One Colour | | 7. Designer | |
| (a) Peacock Green | | (a) M. N. Rana | |
| (b) Dark Blue | | (b) K. K. Karmacharya | |
| 4. Quantity | 10,000,000 (Ten million) each | 8. Printer: | The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Limited |

प्रथम दिवसीय आवरण
FIRST DAY COVER



क्यान्सर निको हुन सक्छ

क्यान्सर रोग सम्बन्धि
DISEASE OF CANCER

२०५२/१९९५



- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Denomination | : Rs. 2/- |
| Size | : 28 x 39 mm. |
| Sheet Composition | : 50 stamps |
| Quantity | : One million |
| Colour | : 4 Colours |
| Format | : Vertical |
| Process | : Off-set lithography |
| Paper | : High quality (102 gsm.) stamp paper |
| Designer | : M. N. Rana |
| Printer | : Government printing office, Austria, Vienna |

June 23 - Disease Of Cancer.

Postal Himal

1st Quarter/1996

the Tibetan cancellations used in Pharijong do in the 1950's. The reference to SINGTAM as being in WESTERN SIKKIM is also interesting, as it is clear from the map that it not very far west - presumably it refers to the fact that this Post Office was on the western route to Gangtok, through Rangpo, rather than the old 1888 route, through Rhenock. I have restricted this short study to the period before Indian Independence, although some of the postal markings illustrated continued to be used well into the 1950's.

Another philatelic exploit in Sikkim were the rocket mail experiments conducted by Stephen Smith in April⁵ and Sept./October 1935. Certain special cancellations and stamps were produced for these flights, but they never had any practical postal use.

Table of Postal Markings of Sikkim

| Post Office | | Earliest Date | Latest Date |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|
| GANTAK B.O. / SIKKIM | Date stamp | 26.4.96 | |
| GANGTOK | Date stamp | 24.5.03 | 22.11.22 |
| GANGTOK | Date stamp, with hour type | 28.1.29 | |
| GANGTOK | Obliterator | 22.6.03 ¹ | |
| GANGTOK | Obliterator, with hour type | 25.8.12 | 3.12.40 |
| GANGTOK | Large Date stamp | 17.6.26 | 24.9.35 |
| GANGTOK | Large Delivery stamp, with hour type | 28.1.29 | 22.5.42 |
| GANGTOK BAZAR | With wavy lines | 24.8.41 | |
| CHUNGTANG B.O./ SIKKIM | Large date stamp | 12.5.29 | 8.5.32 |
| GAYZING (GNATONG) | Date stamp | 28.12.03 | |
| KEWZING B.O./ SIKKIM | Large Date stamp | 18.2.35 | 27.3.41 |
| MAJHITAR | | | |
| MAGAN B.O./ SIKKIM | Large date stamp | 8.10.28 | 24.8.34 |
| NAMCHI | | | |
| PAKYONG B.O./ SIKKIM | Date Stamp | 25.1.13 | |

The April flights were described in detail in *From the Diary of Stephen Smith*, compiled by D.N.Jatia, The Philatelic Congress of India, New Delhi, 1980.

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| (RANGPO) | Small date stamp | EXPERIMENTAL P.O.C-3 ³ | 3.10.88 | 5.10.88 |
| RANGPO | Date stamp | | 30.4.03 | 6.11.16 |
| RANGPO | Obliterator | | | 18.12.42 |
| RANGPO | Large date stamp | | 13.4.35 | |
| (RHENOCK) | Small data stamp | EXPI RIMENTAL P.O. C-22 | 16.12.88 | late.5.89 |
| RHENOCK B.O./ DARJEELING | Date Stamp | | 7.9.01 | |
| RHENOCK | Large date Stamp | | 1.4.30 | |
| | Obliterator with hour type | With dark line | 1.4.36 | 19.11.36 |
| RINCHENPONG | | | | |
| RUNGLIBAZAR B.O./ SIKKIM | | | 18.5.42 | 18.2.52 |
| SINGTAM B.O./ WESTERN SIKKIM | | | 13.7.21 | 13.4.35 |
| TOKUL | | | | |

¹ This illustration taken from Virk p.87

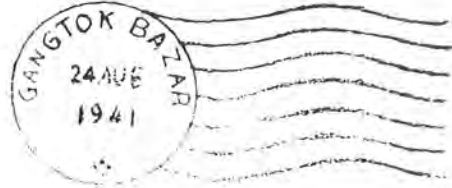
² Illustrated by Virk.

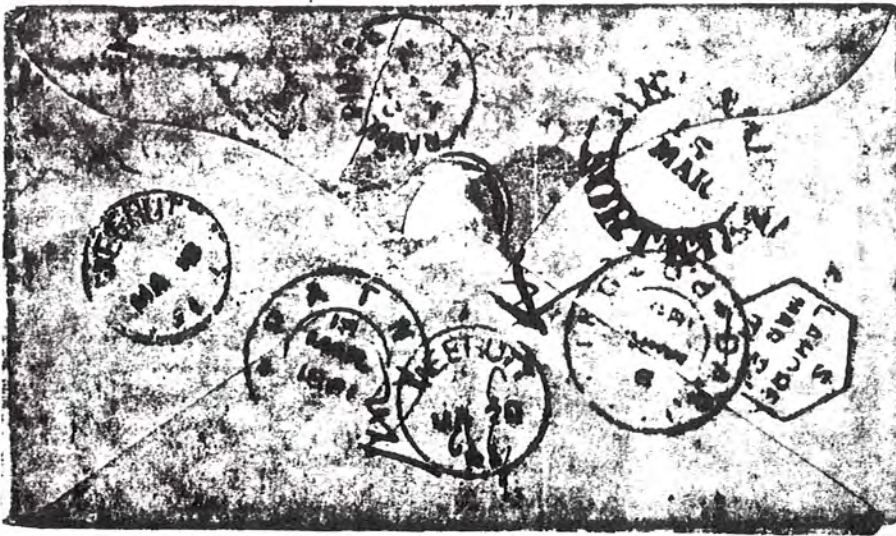
³ The Experimental cancellations were published by Geoffrey Flack, *op.cit.*

Registration labels are standard in format, and I illustrate one from Gangtok, with a small namestamp, one with the same namestamp on a Parcel Label, both dating from 1935, and one from Rhenock, showing a large rectangular namestamp, dating from 1930. Also, I illustrate the front of a registered cover from PAKYONG Branch Office, with an attractive rectangular namestamp, and the name of the local district office, GANGTOK, in red. All the other postal markings illustrated are in normal black ink.

To complete this very preliminary study, I show the crest of the Chogyal, or Maharajah, of Sikkim, and that of the Political Office in Sikkim, and a photograph of the Telegraph Office in Gangtok, taken about 1912.







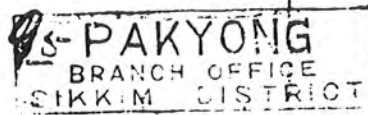
Cancelled "B68" (Darjeeling)

Inside flap of the cover (the letter is missing) reads "Send me details of 'amalgamation' for pick up. I'm looking out for Bran "

Reverse of the 1861 Sikkim Expedition correspondence (see the front cover).

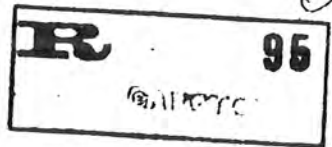
Registered

Stamp



Registered cover from the Pakyong Branch Office.

*Herbert J. Simmons.
32 Addington Street
RAMSGATE*



ENGLAND



Telegraph Office in Gangtok (c. 1912).

Notes on the Postal History of Sikkim (1888-1947)

by Nick Rhodes

Various people have written about the Revenue stamps of Sikkim¹ that are occasionally found on covers that have passed through the post, but I not aware of any more general articles about the postal history of Sikkim². Here, therefore, are a few notes which I hope will encourage somebody to work on producing a more comprehensive study.

The first Sikkim item that I have noted is connected with the small war that was waged between the British and the Raja of Sikkim in 1861. At that time the Raja of Sikkim was unhappy that the British had tricked him out of the Darjeeling District, without giving him the proper compensation that he was expecting, and he was unwise enough to think that a belligerent attitude would get him what he wanted. After some provocation, a small British force advanced well into Sikkim, and the cover, illustrated, is a rare philatelic record of this expedition, having been sent from Yantong on 5th March 1861, presumably carried by a military runner, it received a B68 cancellation in Darjeeling and a red Darjeeling dispatch mark on 9th March, before being sent on to Meerut and Rawalpindi. During this expedition there do not appear to have been any official mail services, as there were during the Bhutan war four years later, but nevertheless this cover deserves mention³.

The next time we hear about Sikkim in philatelic terms is during 1888-89, when the Sikkim Field Force operated a postal service inside Sikkim, and briefly inside Tibet. The philatelic history of this military expedition, whose prime purpose was to demarcate the border with Tibet, has recently been well covered by Geoffrey Flack⁴. Also, Brig. D.S. Virk has noted in his book entitled *Sikkim-Tibet 1903-1908* that several Post Offices were opened in Sikkim in 1888 in connection with that expedition, with the implication that they had remained operational after the military operations ceased. He then goes on to describe in some detail the postal situation that existed in Sikkim in 1903, in connection with the postal services established for the Tibet Frontier Commission.

One of the outcomes of the little war with Tibet, 1888-89, was that Claude White, who had been Assistant Political Officer with the military expedition, was appointed as Political Officer in Sikkim in June 1889, based in Gangtok. White's primary role was as an observer on the sensitive border with Tibet, but he also undertook the task of reorganising the administration of Sikkim itself. He adopted a very high-handed approach towards Thutob Namgyal, the Raja of Sikkim, and acted as if the little State had become part of India. In March 1890, the Anglo-Chinese convention at Calcutta, confirmed that Sikkim was now a British Protectorate, and China gave up any pretence to suzerainty. As usual in those Imperial days, the Sikkimese themselves were not consulted over the matter.

¹ e.g. W.Dennis Way, *Stamp Collecting*, 10.8.1951, p.653, A.C.Waterfall, *The Postal History of Tibet*, 1981 edition, pp.167-9 and N.G.Rhodes, "Notes on Sikkim State Stamps", *India Post*, no.78, vol.17/4, 1983

² Apart from the article by Robert D.West, "DENJONG, The Hidden Valley of Rice", *The American Philatelist*, vol.84/12 & 85/1 (Dec.1970, Jan. 1971). Although this mentions the Revenue Stamps, the military expeditions, and plans for stamps in the 1970's, it has very little about the normal postal services in Sikkim.

³ Armand Singer's collection.

⁴ *Postal Himal*, No.78, pp.33-41.

Covers from Sikkim are rather scarce, and the cancellations illustrated below merely record those in my own very modest collection, and a few published elsewhere. The earliest cover that I have noted was sent from Gangtok by Claude White himself on 26 Apr. 1896, and it is likely that several offices were opened before the end of the nineteenth century.

The following list of Post Offices is derived from the information provided by Brig. Virk, from the Sikkim State Administration Report for 1917, when ten offices are recorded, and similar Reports from 1922-31.

| | <u>Sikkim Post Offices</u> | | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1888 | 1903 | 1917 | 1922 | 1931 |
| Gangtok | x | x | x | x | x |
| Gangtok Bazar | | | | | |
| Chungthang | | | | x | x |
| Gayzing | | | | x | x |
| Gnatong | | | x | x | x |
| Kewzing | | | x | x | x |
| Majhitar | | | x | x | |
| Mangan | | | | x | x |
| Namchi | | | x | x | |
| Pakyong | x | | x | x | x |
| Rangpo | | x | x | x | x |
| Rhenock | x | x | x | x | x |
| Rinchenpong | | | x | x | x |
| Rongli | | | | x | x |
| Singtam | | x | x | x | x |
| Tokul | | x | | | |

The Majhitar Post Office appears to have been closed in 1926. An additional Post Office in Gangtok, located in Bazar area, was opened sometime between 1931 and 1941, the date of the earliest cancellation in my own collection. On the attached map I show the location of these Post Offices. All the Sikkimese Post offices seem to have been subordinate to the Head Office at Darjeeling.

I have cancellations from ten of these offices, and have no reason to believe that the others do not exist. As regards the different types of cancellation, it seems that a typical range of Indian postal markings were used, familiar to collectors of Himalayan stamps through the items that passed through the British Indian Post Offices in Nepal and Tibet. As a very modest start towards a comprehensive listing of the postal markings of this little studied area, I illustrate those that happen to be in my own collection, together with the range of dates that I happen to possess. It is interesting to note that some of the Branch Office cancellations mention SIKKIM, as does the earliest GANTAK (sic) cancellation, which refers to the office in the capital as being a B.O. (Branch Office), although Virk states that in 1903 it was a sub-office. The earliest RHENOCK cancellation refers to DARJEELING, in the same way that some of

July 11 - Personalities in Literature and Art (details unknown).

Sept. 1 - National Personalities Series.



- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| 1. Denominations: | | 5. Format: | Vertical |
| (a) Bhakti Thapa | 0.15 P. | 6. Sheet Composition: | 50 stamps |
| (b) Madan Bhandari | Re. 1.00 | 7. Process: | Off-set Lithography |
| (c) Prakash Raj Kaphley | Rs. 4.00 | 8. Paper: | High Quality Stamp Paper |
| 2. Size : | 27.52 x 38mm | 9. Designer: | Mohan N S Rana |
| 3. Colour: | 4 (four) colours | 10. Printer: | Government Printing Office Vienna, Austria. |
| 4. Quantity | (a) Three Million (b) & (c) one million each | | |



Sept. 1 - Animal Series.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Denominations: | Rs. 10/- each | 5. Format: | Horizontal |
| (a) Gaur | | 6. Quantity: | 4 millions (1 million each) |
| (b) Lynx | | 7. Process: | Off-set Lithography |
| (c) Hyena | | 8. Paper: | Official Security Paper |
| (d) Assamese Macaque | | 9. Designer: | Mohan N Rana |
| 2. Size : | 39.20 x 28.56mm | 10. Printer: | Helio Courvasier S.A. Switzerland |
| 3. Sheet Composition: | 16 stamps | | |
| 4. Colour: | 4 colours | | |



Oct. 16 - 50th Anniversary of The FAO.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| 1. Denomination: | Rs. 7/- | 6. Quantity: | One Million |
| 2. Size: | 38.5 x 29.6 mm | 7. Process: | Off-set Lithography |
| 3. Sheet Composition: | 50 stamps | 8. Paper: | High quality stamp paper |
| 4. Colour: | 4 Colours | 9. Designer: | K.K.Karmacharya |
| 5. Format: | Horizontal | 10. Printer: | Government Printing Office Vienna, Austria. |

Oct. 22 - Anniversary of The UNO.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Denomination: | Rs. 50/- | 7. Process: | Photogravure |
| 2. Size: | 56 x 37.67 mm | 8. Paper: | Official security paper |
| 3. Sheet Composition: | 10 stamps | 9. Designer: | Mohan N.S. Rana |
| 4. Colour: | Five colours | 10. Printer: | Helio Courvoisier S.A. Switzerland |
| 5. Format: | Vertical | 11. Date of Issue: | 22 Oct. 1995 |
| 6. Quantity: | One Million | | |



- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Denomination: | | 4. Colour: | 4 Colours | Nov. 8 - Visit Nepal Series. |
| (a) Bhimeswor | Re. 1/- | 5. Format: | (a) & (d) Vertical | |
| (b) Ugra Tara | Rs. 5/- | (b) & (c) Horizontal | | |
| (c) Mt. Nampa | Rs. 7/- | 6. Quantity: | 4 Millions (one Million each) | |
| (d) Traditional Nepalese Painting | Rs. 18 | 7. Process: | Off-set Lithography | |
| 2. Size: | | 8. Paper: | High quality stamp paper | |
| (a) 29.5 x 38.5 mm | | 9. Designer: | K.K.Karmacharya | |
| (b) 38.5 x 29.5 mm | | 10. Printer: | Government Printing Office Vienna, Austria. | |
| (c) 38.5 x 29.5 mm | | | | |
| (d) 31 x 49 mm | | | | |
| 3. Sheet Composition: | 50 stamps in each sheet | | | |

Dec. 23 - Birth Place of Gautam Buddha, Lumbini.



- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| 1. Denomination: | Rs. 20/- | 6. Quantity: | One Million |
| 2. Size: | 32.5 X 32.5 mm | 7. Process: | Off-set Lithography |
| 3. Sheet Composition: | 50 Stamps | 8. Paper: | High quality stamp paper |
| 4. Colour: | 4 Colours | 9. Designer: | K.K. Karmacharya |
| 5. Format: | Square | 10. Printer: | Government Printing Office Vienna, Austria |

- Denomination : Re. 1/-
 Size : 39 23 x 28 56 mm
 Sheet : 50 Stamps
 Quantity : One million
 Colour : Four + Gold
 Format : Vertical
 Process : Photogravure
 Paper : official Security Paper
 Designer : K K Karmacharya
 Printer : Helio Courvoisier S A SWITZERLAND



Dec. 27 - Golden Jubilee Birthday of H.M. The King.

- Denomination : Rs 12/-
 Size : 30 x 40 mm
 Sheet : 50 Stamps
 Quantity : One million
 Colour : Four + Gold
 Format : Vertical
 Process : Off-set Lithography
 Paper : High Quality Stamp Paper
 Designer : Mohan N S Rana
 Printer : Government Printing Office Vienna, AUSTRIA



Dec. 28 - 51st Birthday of H.M. The King.

Dec. 28 - 10th Anniversary of SAARC.



- | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|--|
| 1. Denomination | Rs. 10/- | 6. Quantity | One million |
| 2. Size: | 42.5 X 26.5 mm | 7. Process: | Off-set Lithography |
| 3. Sheet Composition: | 50 Stamps | 8. Paper: | High quality stamp paper |
| 4. Colour | 5 Colours | 9. Designer: | K.K. Karmacharya |
| 5. Format: | Horizontal | 10. Printer: | Government Printing office Vienna, Austria |

Many thanks to Mr. Pandry and The Nepal Philatelic Bureau - Leo Martyn.

THE ENAMEL INKS OF TIBET: A NEW LOOK

by

Armand E. Singer

A Tibet collector from Köln, Germany, Herr W. Franke, has written me two very interesting letters, wondering how the Lhasa printing office could have obtained supplies of enamel inks for their native issues when such inks, as far as he knows, were available only in the U.K., the U.S., and Germany. By decree of the Dalai Lama, no one from abroad, except for a few Asians, was allowed into Tibet.

After his first letter, I wrote him that to my best knowledge his facts were indeed accurate; that is, Tibet was then closed to virtually all non-Asians. However, trade was carried on with India (see my article on the Singer sewing machines sold in Tibet by the India division of that company: Postal Himal 75-76 [1993], pp. 63-69; reprinted from The American Philatelist [April 1986]). India, I added, through England, would certainly have had access to all varieties of printing inks. My friend Geoffrey Flack of Vancouver, B.C. meanwhile suggested to me that such inks would work very well for the ever-present Tibetan religious tankas and were doubtless to be found in local markets. I further pointed out to Herr Frank that Tibetan stamps, especially the 1912 and 1914 issues (famed for the enamel printings), were printed in very small quantities at any given moment, a few sheets at a time at most; ink supplies would probably have presented no great problem. Hence the endless color shades. For printing currency, a much more careful process, inks from somewhere like India would almost certainly be a necessity. In any event, I concluded, no evidence has ever turned up that Tibet's native-issue stamps were printed outside the country (as were, for instance, Nepal's Sri Pashupati stamps, 1907 up until the World War II era). I did admit that whether local Tibetan chemists could have concocted their own enamel inks from native ingredients was another question, for which I had no answer.

Now I have a second letter from him, filled with pertinent observations. To begin with, he notes that he and Kurt Dahnke (the well-regarded Tibet collector and scholar of long standing, who he says agrees with him) have been in contact with a Frankfurt color chemist. Franke thinks color spectrum analysis is needed, and he is soon to meet with some officials in charge of the German mint to discuss similar color printing problems. Meanwhile, however, he offers these observations: Both he and Dahnke consider any true shiny ink results random and accidental. He agrees that the inks could possibly have come from India, but asks me to notice that the paper is native and that native inks would be in keeping. What concerns him most is the hit-and-miss quality of the gloss. It is rarely visible over any whole sheet. Held up to strong daylight, the stamps shine only in certain places or when the light angle is exactly right. He concludes with the belief that the ink is "no import," but rather "plain and simply" a "tropical resin," which gives the appearance of shiny enamel.

And he may be quite right. Such a theory neatly explains the generally spotty quality of the shininess, though of course it could also arise from irregular application of the ink (Tibetans commonly still apply ink with hand rollers to the wooden blocks used in printing books, as I have seen them doing).

Stay tuned: I have written my correspondent to ask whether he has come up with new data, either from discussions with the German mint officials, or more promisingly, from color spectrum analysis. We will keep you informed. Do you Study Circle members have any information to add?

* * * * *

BHUTAN - DZONG DAK COVERS

In an article by Mr L.Nadybal on the covers with mixed Chinese Bhutanese stamps, on covers from the period 1954-1962, it was thought that there were three known covers. Since the article was written, auction prices for these covers have risen considerably.

Although it is difficult for me living in Finland, to research this, I have managed to record 10 of these covers from material sent to me by fellow collectors. Of these covers, the majority have been sent by the same person on two different occasions, with the remainder sent as singles by other people. So it would seem that there are more of the so called Dzong Dak covers than was at first thought.

Apart from these genuine covers, fake covers are appearing on the market and are fetching high prices. To be able to establish how many genuine covers there are, would any of my fellow collectors who have these covers, please send me a photocopy. Results of the survey could be published in Postal Himal.

Please send details to: Iiro Kakko, Jyratie 2 B21, FIN-13500, Hamelinna, Finland.

BHUTAN - CHHETRAPATI E.D. POST OFFICE

This office was closed down on 13 April 1996.

* * * * *

A Translation of the TSARONG Crest

Nicholas Rhodes has kindly sent me a translation of the Tibetan characters on the banner on the underside of the Tsarong crests (see Postal Himal no. 84).

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| འཇམ་མེད་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ | nyin-mo-bde = happy day |
| མཚན་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ | mtsan-bde = happy night |
| ཚ་རྩེ་ | Tsa-rong = Tsarong (the family name) |
| ལྷ་ས་ | Lha-sa = Lhasa - only on Fig.4. |

I also have heard from other members who have covers with the Tsarong crest; I will report this information at a later date. If anyone has covers with this crest on them, it would be a great help to know the type and date if possible if you wish to report them.

Frealon Bibbins

* * * * *

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TIBET FOR SALE: Ask for available items at very competitive prices. I am also interested in buying everything from Tibet. Write or send a FAX to the following address (I am on duty here for the next few years): Rainer Fuchs, P.O. Box 2711, 22028 Salmiyah, Kuwait. FAX: 965-5316403.

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