

Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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

Secretary: Mr. Colin T. Hepper
 C72 Calle Miguel Angel
 El Sueno - Fase I
 El Chaparral
 03180 Torrevieja
 Alicante
 Spain
 Phone & Fax 34 96 6784701
 email: hepper@redestb.es

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

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 754-1223 Japan
 Andre Navari, BP 10, 13361 Marseille Cedex 10, France

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	114—2nd Quarter 2003	June 6, 2003	June 14, 2003

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Officers Corner

During the past year I visited Nepal for a short stay. As always, my Nepali friends have given me a fine welcome. They provided me with a lot of information for my new book, which I mentioned in my last Officer's Corner. I asked the membership to help me with information and several have responded, making my work much easier. In the present PH you will find a two page sample (see pages 13-14, Editor). I hope that members will write to me where I have made mistakes, especially in the Nepali text.

As you can see (page 14, Editor) the 3 annas Handstruck Revenue stamp is missing from my collection. I would

like to ask anyone who has it to please send me a good photocopy of this stamp, or even better, a complete document with this denomination. That is all that is needed to complete the Handstruck Revenue section.

Another problem is the translation of some Lal Mohur documents that I have. They are connected with the Revenue History section of my book. Can anyone help me with this in the very near future? Please write or mail me as soon as possible. Please respond either to Ysbaanweg 8, Noorwolde 8391 H2, The Netherlands or via email to dvdwateren@planet.nl.

Editor's Ramblings

As you will observe, there have been several changes made to the layout of PH. These are based on suggestions made from one of our members, Karl Winkelmann, who has been among other things, a professional photographer and the editor of the Irish Airmail Society. Look for more changes to be made over the coming months.

Mr. Iiro Kakko is a collector of Bhutan. He and a small group have been doing work on Bhutan postal cancellations (period 1962-1994). They have been able to categorize almost all of the cancellations by type. If anyone has any interest in contributing to their work please contact Mr. Kakko. When the work is finished it will be published in PH. He is also looking for information on the practice of using revenue stamps on hotel bills in Bhutan. Lastly he would appreciate any information on the following Bhutan stamps:

1. Mi 102B, 104B, 106B, 108B (the Yak and Yeti issue of 1966-1967)
2. Mi B147B (Scouts issue 30 Nov 1971)
3. Mi 976B, 977B, B1130B (Ameripex issue 16 Jun 1986)

He would like to know how many were printed as we suspects that they are all under priced. Mr. Kakko may be contacted at dromen@dlc.fi or by post at Jvratie 2821, 13500 HAMEENLINNA, Finland.

Congratulations to the following members who won awards at the WESTPEX show in San Francisco in April:

Leo Martyn gold and the APS research medal and the Postal History Society medal for 'The Development of Nepal's Postal System'.

Armand Singer vermeil for 'The Chinese Presence in Tibet'.

Frank Vignola vermeil and the NTPSC award for 'Nepal: The Two Paise Type Design Cards 1887-1939'.

Roger Skinner silver-bronze for 'An Overview of Nepal Postal Stationary'.

At the COLOPEX show in February in Ohio: Paul C. Hager vermeil for 'The Pashupati Era of Nepal'.

New Tibet Collector (but experienced advanced collector of GB) is interested in 1933 Issue material: stamps, sheets and covers. Please contact Mike McKillip, PO Box 22486, Lexington, KY 40502, USA or email mrmckillip@hotmail.com

The Hulak System

Julie Marshall

A recently published book by Mahesh C. Regmi, *Imperial Gorkha: an account of Gorkhali rule in Kumaon (1791-1815)* (Delhi, Adroit Publishers, 1999) provides an interesting and detailed account of the *hulak* system as it operated between Kathmandu and Kumaon, to the west of Nepal, which was under Gorkha rule during the years to 1815.

Regmi discusses the logistical problems of transport and communications that the Gorkha faced between Kathmandu and Kumaon, and the way they solved this problem by forcing the inhabitants of the different areas to provide labor without wages. This forced labor system was known as *jhara* in the hill and mountain regions and *beggar* in the Tarai regions, and was used to transport military supplies and official mail. However, as it was not possible to use the same porters over long distances from their villages, the Gorkhali rulers set up a relay system of *jhara* porters. This meant that the porters only carried loads for about two or three hours per day. It was this relay system that was known as *hulak*.

Regmi explains the difficulties of using the *hulak* system regularly for carrying military supplies due to their bulk and quantity and because the frequency of need was not regular. On the other hand the system was well developed for carrying official mail. From 1804 permanent *hulak* posts were set up on the Kathmandu-Kumaon route with eight mail-carriers at each post

around the clock. The only benefit for the mail carriers was that they were exempted from the other *jhara* obligations. Although they were warned that they would be punished if they abandoned their posts many did so, and in enough numbers to lead to an official inquiry into the system in 1807. This identified several weaknesses of the system such as the inadequate number of *hulak* households, the long distance that each relay had to cover, and the lack of incentives. This inquiry led to an improvement of the system and also increased the incentives to the *hulak* mail carriers. They were given a 50% rebate on homestead taxes and security of tenure on their homes and fields as long as they paid the rents due on these lands. This was in addition to exemption from forced labor for other purposes. Further benefits were provided from 1809. Despite these improvements *hulak* services were marked by delays, and it took several weeks for official mail to reach Kathmandu from Almora and other western destinations, a time that remained much the same even in subsequent decades. Regmi describes the reasons for these problems but notes that as the service was not abolished until 1913, there were no alternatives to the *hulak* system in the mountainous terrain of Nepal.

This is only a very brief summary of Regmi's account of the *hulak* system. Full details can be found on pages 26-37 of his interesting book.

On a more somber note, the following members have been dropped for non-payment of dues: Rudolph F. Bauer, Louis H. Bornmann, Daniel A. Brouillette, Michael J. Fassbender, David O. Frick, J. T. Lotwala, Donald McKenney, Mark P. Pleyte, Gabriel Pustel, Elaine Sweeny, Francis A. Westbrook. Also many members in Nepal have not paid their dues. It has been decided to send a single copy of **PH** to the Nepal Philatelic Society to be shared by those members who have not paid their dues.

The Board of Directors made a decision at the WESTPEX show to drop members who are in arrears. This decision was not made lightly but was based on economics. We will probably need to institute a dues increase either in 2003 or 2004 and it was decided that the Society could no longer carry members who do not pay.

Dues notices will be included in the 4th Quarter issue along with notification of to whom the dues are to be remitted. Any member whose dues have not been received by the end of January will be dropped. As stated the Board did not make this decision lightly, but we must be fiscally responsible and we cannot, in good conscience, ask for a dues increase while carrying those who are not paying their fair share.

CHAMDO CAMPAIGN

by Danny Kin Chi Wong

The victorious communist declared the founding of the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949 while continuing their march westwards. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Xining on 5 September. The young Panchen Lama, then based in Kumbum Monastery near Xining, pledged allegiance to the new republic and urged early liberation of Tibet.

On 23 November, the new central government assigned the task of advancing into Tibet to the northwest armed force (the First Field Army). However, due to logistical consideration, the decision was reversed, and the southwest armed force (the Second Field Army) was assigned instead. The Eighteenth Army was deployed as the task force, advancing from Sichuan, supported by troops from Yunnan, Qinghai and Xinjiang. Such deployment was coined the concentric advance into Tibet.

On 24 March 1950, Kangding was taken by the 62nd Army of the First Field Army from the hands of the defeated Nationalist troops. Kangding (Datsedo) was the eastern end of the old Sichuan-Tibet Road (Kham-Tsang Road), hence the road to Lhasa became wide open.

Three corps were attached to the 18th Army, respectively 52nd, 53rd and 54th Corps. On 3 February, the vanguard started their march from Leshan, Sichuan, but it was unable to advance further than Ya'an due to Nationalist resistance. The main force began marching on 29 March, and the Advanced Command entered Kangding on 24 April. After Kangding, the overland route split into two, the 52nd Corps took the north route via Kantse and Derge, and the 53rd Corps took the southern route via Bathang.

One brigade from Yunnan was deployed. It was the 126th Brigade under the 42nd Corps of the 14th Army. Three thousand pack animals were used. Qinghai raised a 600 man cavalry troop to advance through Yushu. The Xinjiang troop entered the western Ngari region of Tibet from Khotan. The vanguard was only 130 men from the 1st Company, 1st Brigade of the Independent Cavalry Corps.

To insure smooth logistic support, road improvement was a high priority. On 26 August 1950, the road

between Ya'an and Kantse was open to motor traffic, but the onward journey was still to be undertaken by pack animals.

On 6 October 1950, the People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtse by force to take Chamdo. While Tibet deployed one third of their total forces on the Chamdo front, they were smashed, and the commander was captured, ending the Chamdo Campaign on 24 October with a communist victory. In November, the Yunnan troops captured the Lolong, Sobando, Bomi and Bianba dzongs.

Lhasa fell in chaos after the campaign, the Regent resigned and the young Dalai Lama took over all secular power. He fled to the border town of Yatung on 2 January 1951, and dispatched his representatives to Beijing to negotiate a political settlement. On 23 May, the Agreement on the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet (popularly referred to as the Seventeen Point Agreement) was signed, and the People's Liberation Army marched into Lhasa on 9 September.

The Chamdo Campaign was the last battle fought by the People's Liberation Army, in the mainland, to liberate China, hence the campaign mail is much sought after by Chinese philatelists. The mountainous terrain of Kham made large scale military maneuvers difficult, restricting the size of the combat forces. While it took more than a half-year of military preparation. The Chamdo Campaign was finished in 20 days. In the early years, only three armies were deployed in the Tibet highland, namely the First Field Army Group in Qinghai (First Army) and Aba, Sichuan, and the 18th Army of the Second Field Army in Kham and Tibet.

Commencing late 1951, a unified China Military Post frank-free dater was used to replace the military date-stamps of various military units. The small size of the forces, the short period of the campaign and the strict confidentially enforced made the Chamdo Campaign mail a rarity. In many cases, less than 5 or 10 covers bearing a particular date-stamp were recorded, and some were even lone survivors.

FIRST FIELD ARMY MAILS

The First Field Army post office was disbanded at the end of 1949. Between the disbandment and the introduction of the unified China Military Post, the soldier's mail of the First Field Army were generally carried by the civilian post office with postage paid.

Liberation of Qinghai. The First Field Army Group consisting of the First, Second and Third Corps as well as the Cavalry Brigade and the Bombing Brigade was concurrently responsible for the Qinghai Military Region. The three corps later participated actively in the building of the Qinghai-Tibet Road and the Qinghai-Kham Road. Figure 1 was a soldier's family letter sent from Third Corps of the First Army used on a preprinted cover of Northwest Animal Husbandry Corporation, applied with a vertical "post-free" cachet and "Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia/Military Post Office First branch" dater dated 20 September 1949, within half a month after liberation. This is the earliest recorded military cover origination from liberated Qinghai. The military dater pre-dated a later one with "First Field Army/Military Post Office First Branch".

Qinghai Cavalry. The Cavalry was formed by the Cavalry Brigade of the First Army in March 1950, with 600 men and more than a thousand horses. It left Xining on 21 June and arrived Jyekundo on 24 July. It was this very unit that captured the Tibetan commander in the Chamdo Campaign. Figure 2 is a cover sent from "Cavalry Brigade, First Field Army Group" in March 1950. It entered the post in Xining on 3 April to Shanxi and arrived without an arrival dater. It was applied with a "Privileged soldier's mail" cachet. This is the only recorded mail from the Cavalry.

Liberation of Kangding. Figure 3 is a cover from

"556 Brigade, 62nd Army, 18th Army Group". It was franked with postage, cancelled by a Kangding 27 April 1950 dater, with a 3 May Chengdu transit, but no Yisi, Shanxi arrival dater. The 18 Army group, belonging to the First Field Army Group, captured Kangding from the Nationalists on 24 March, and is not to be confused with the 18th Army which belonged to the Second Field Army Group.

Liberation of Aba. Aba, located in northern Sichuan, was a Tibetan region with the administrative center in Maoxian. Although Maoxian was liberated on 19 January 1950, followed by Songpan on 9 February, the Nationalist army teamed up with the Tibetans to put up a fierce resistance with their base deep in the pasture. The communists had to call in reinforcements and moved steadily northward, finally eliminating the Nationalist guerillas in 1955. Figure 4 is a cover dispatched from Songpan on 24 September 1953 to Guanghan, impressed with the docketing cachet of Gonggan 20th Battalion, and a five-star post-free cachet in black. Guerilla warfare was still going on then.

The Xinjiang Contingent. The Contingent which set off from Khotan to Ngari, was wiped out by harsh weather and a lack of logistical support. The famous exchange between Mao Tsedong and the Governor of Ngari was of a later date and must have been carried by special courier. For the sake of logistical support, Ngari was placed under the control of Xinjiang rather than Tibet until after the Cultural Revolution. Figure 5 is a preprinted cover from "Northern Tibet Logistics Unit, South Xinjiang Military Region, Xinjiang, PLA", and originated from Gartok on 27 February 1953. This is the earliest recorded cover of the Xinjiang Contingent.

SECOND FIELD ARMY MAILS

The Eighteenth Army. Figure 6 is a cover from the "Second Brigade, Heavy-artillery Corps, 18th Army" to Zhuqi, Hubei. It was franked with the five-point star free-post cachet along with "18th Branch, Second Field Army Post" dater of 23 March 1950, transit via Chungqing on 3 April, but with an arrival dater. On 6 March a ceremony was held in the 18th Army headquarters in Leshan, Sichuan, marking the beginning of the march towards Tibet. The main force started the march on 29 March. Thus this is the earliest recorded cover of the PLA force from Tibet.

The 52nd Corps. Figure 7 is a cover with the official seal of "Hygiene Unit, 52nd Corps, 18th

Army". The date of dispatch was handwritten 23 May 1950 on the reverse. It was franked with the five-point star free-post cachet along with "First Station, Second Field Army Post" dater of 31 May, addressed to Fenyang, Shanxi and arrived on 13 June. The vanguard of the 52nd Division arrived at Kantse as early as 28 April, so this letter was likely dispatched in the vicinity of Kantse. The preprinted cover itself is of some historic interest, inscribed "to the heroic People's Liberation Army" on one side, and "from the Tobacco Trade Chamber of Leshan, Sichuan", obviously a well-wishing gift for the contingent marching towards Tibet.

Third Station. There were 10 military post stations in the Second Field Army Post. Since early 1950 most of them, but not all, were deployed in Kham and Tibet. Figure 8 is a cover from the “558th Brigade, Kangding, Sikang” to Kaifeng, Henan. It was sent on 14 September (handwritten), applied with the post-free cachet and “Third Station, Second Field Army Post” dater of 22 September, transit via Chengdu 28 September, and arrived on 5 October. The 62nd Army of the First Field Army which already captured Kangting moved to Ya’an then, and Kangding was garrisoned by the 18th Army. This letter must have been sent by a soldier in the country. The original letter was still intact and reflected on the harsh living condition there.

Relay Stations. Figure 9 is a cover from the “52nd Corps Command” to Nanjing, impressed with “Fourth Station, Second Field Army Post” dater with an unclear date. Transit with cachets “Military Mail Relay/Second Station/Year.Month.Date” and “Military Mail Relay/Fourth Station/Year.Month.Date”. It was received by the Kangting civilian post office on 7 July, transit via Chengdu on 13 July and arrived Nanjing on 20 July. Such a small size cachet was never reported before.

The 53rd Corps. Figure 10 was sent from “The Guard, Ninth Team, Kham-Tsang Troop” to Wensui, Shanxi. It was franked with the five-point star free-post cachet along with “53rd Branch, Second Field Army Post” cachet without date. The date of dispatch written on the reverse was 12 November 1950, shortly after the Chamdo

Campaign. It was transit via Chengdu on 18 November, and arrived with an unclear dater. Most of the surviving covers from the 53rd Corps was from the same correspondent and this is the earliest.

The Yunnan Contingent. Figure 11 was a preprinted cover of “8-3, 126th Brigade” to Xichuan, Henan, with a handwritten date of dispatch of 7 November 1953. It was franked with “China Military Post/04442” post-free dater of 13 November, handed over on the same date to Zhongdian post office, transit via Shigu, 15 November, without an arrival dater. The 126th Brigade was the Yunnan Contingent in Tibet and this letter must have been dispatched from a Tibetan town within a 6-day journey west of Zhongdian. Hence, this plain looking cover is the earliest recorded cover of the Yunnan Contingent.

Entry into Lhasa. After the signing of the Seventeen-Point Agreement, the People’s Liberation Army marched into Lhasa on 9 September 1951. The civilian Lhasa post office was established on 1 July 1952 and opened to the public the following July. Before the civilian post office was open to the public a handful of the civilian mails were also handled by the military post office. Figure 12 is a cover from the “Tibet Scientific Work Team, Lhasa” dispatched through “18th Branch, Second Field Army Post” with a 31 March 1952 dater and post-free cachet. It was transit via Chengdu on 4 August and arrived Beijing 11 August. The journey took as long as 134 days! This is the only surviving civilian use of the Tibetan military post recorded.

This article was first published in the Journal of Chinese Philately, August 2001. Revised and expanded.



Figure 1

Figure 9

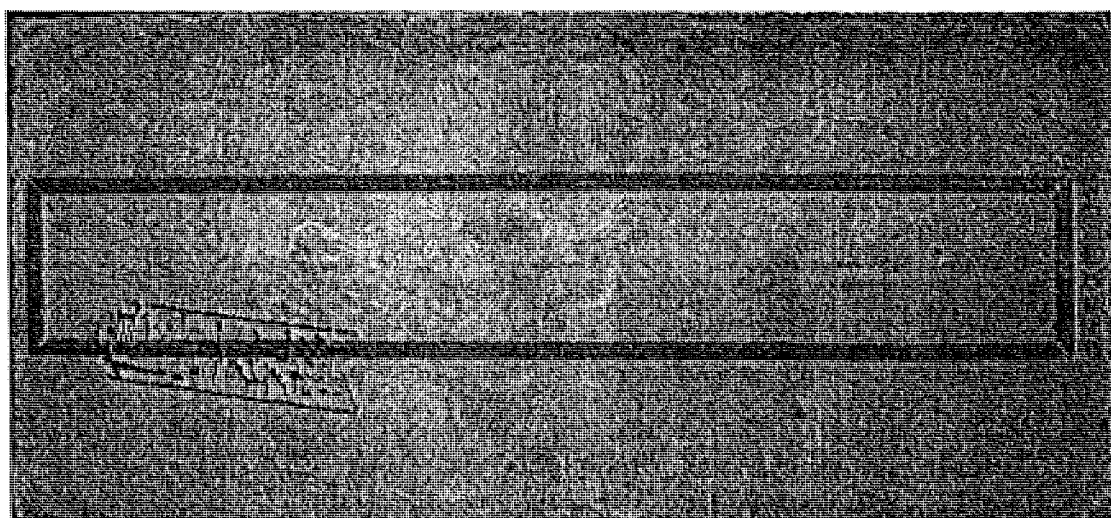


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 6



Post-free



18th Branch, Second
Field Army Post

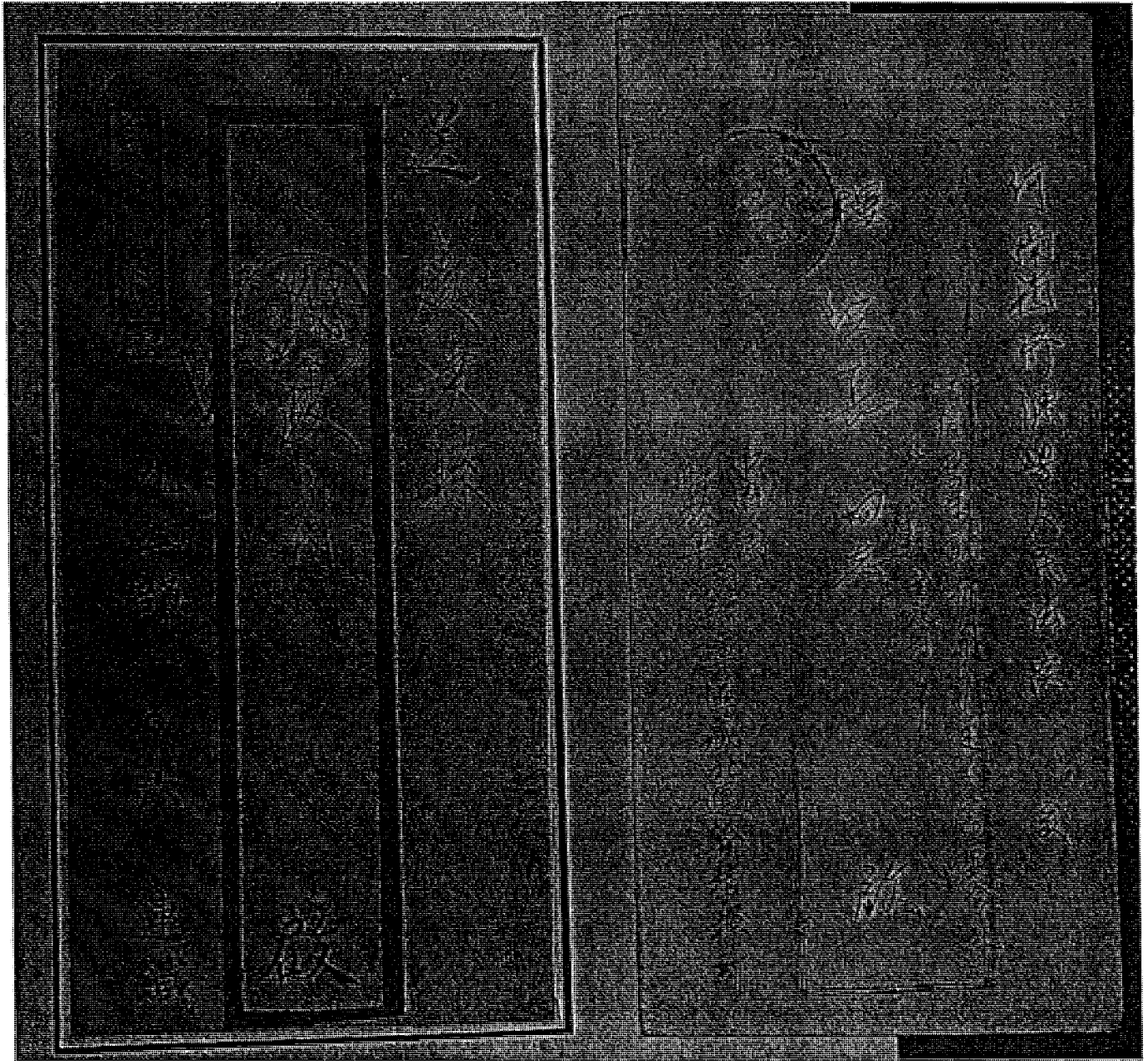


Figure 4

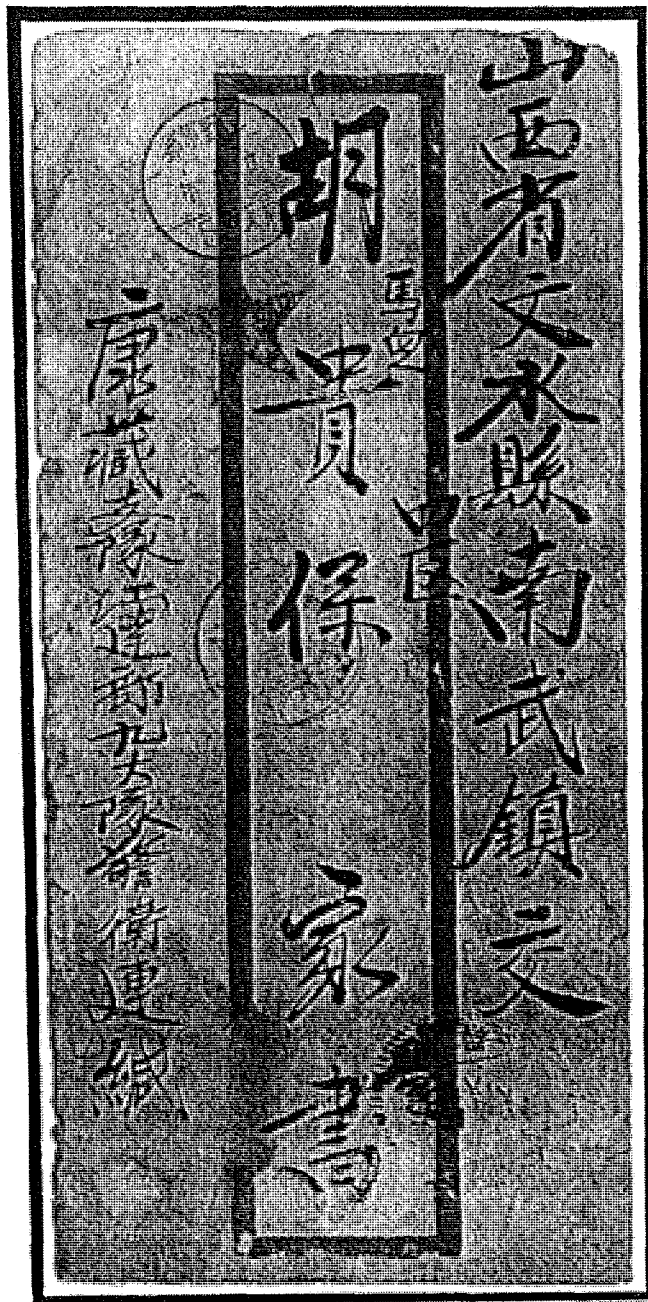
Figure 5



Figure 7

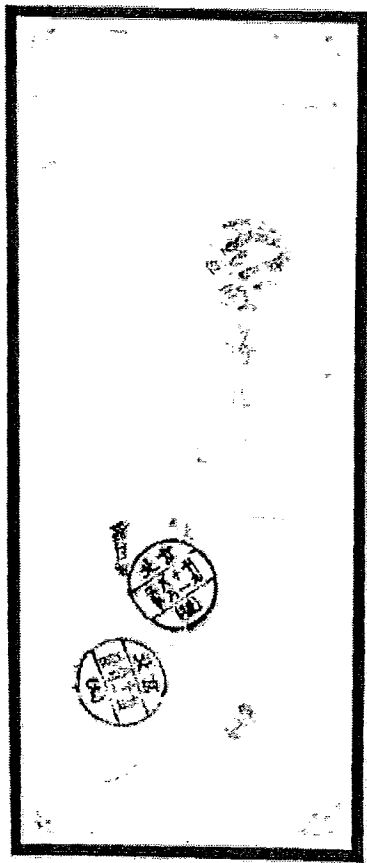


Figure 8



53rd Branch
without date

Figure 10

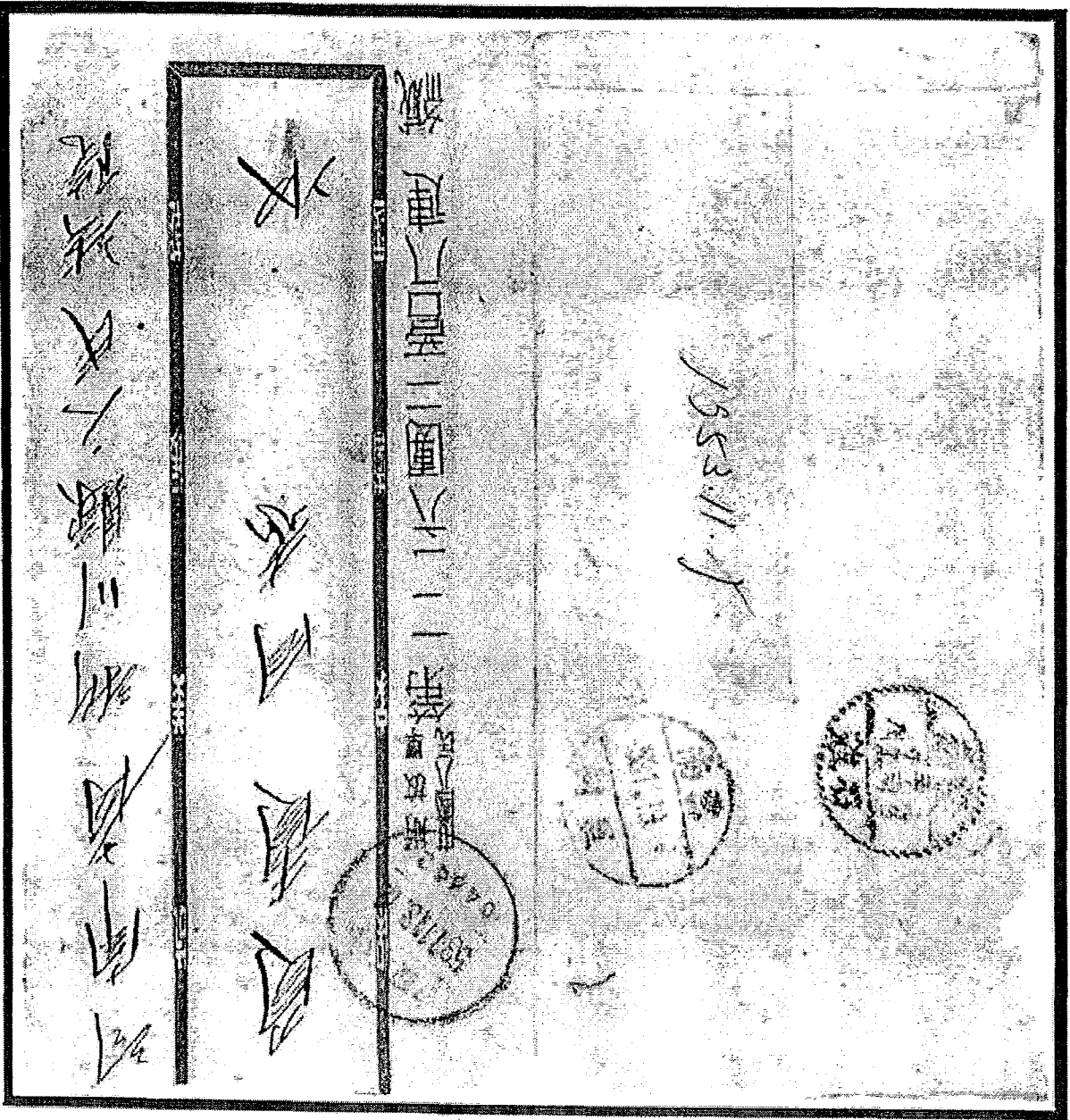


Civilian letter from Lhasa via Chengdu to Beijing took 154 days.



Figure 12

Figure 11



Handstruck Revenue Stamps

Dick van der Wateren

The Handstruck Revenue stamps (seals) were introduced 1893 A.D. and can be found on a variety of documents or papers and in 9 different denominations namely: 'no value' (bedam), 1 paisa (yek paisa), 2 paisa (dui paisa), 3 paisa (tin paisa), 1 anna (yek anna), 2 anna (dui anna), 3 anna (tin anna), 4 anna (char anna) and 1 rupee (yek rupaiya).

The outer ring of the circle is of various nature, which can be seen in the illustrated copies in the present volume. The text of the following ring reads for the Bedam stamp '*nagad ba jinsi rupaiya samma ra yek rupaiya dekhi muni yek paisa samma tirneko*' meaning: 'receipt given to those who pay cash or goods valued between Re. 0.01 to Re. 1'.

This text differs for the other denominations due to the value of 'the cash or goods'.

The inner circle reads '*Jun chalniko bujhu linu parchha usai chalniko linu dimu*' meaning: 'charge the same which currency is in use'.

For the Tarai region the Indian Rupee or 'Kampani Rupian' (*Kamru*) and for the hill region the Nepali Rupee (*Moru*) were in use.

Finally in the middle of the stamp the denomination is given in letters and figures, for the 1 and 2 paisa in one line and for the other ones in two lines and in the notation of the 19th century.

) I = 1 paisa;) II = 2 paisa;) III = 3 paisa; /) = 1 anna;
 //) = 2 annas; ///) = 3 annas; ////) or 1 = 4 annas; १) = 1 rupee.

The diameter measures 46 - 48mm.



Bedam
no value



1 paisa



2 paisa



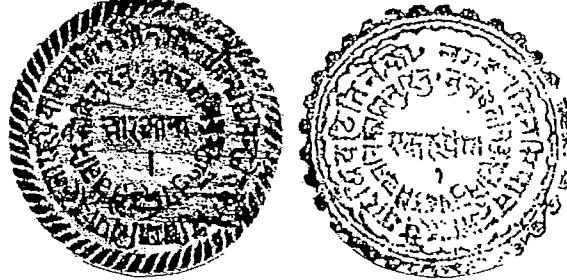
3 paisa



1 anna



2 annas



3 annas

4 annas

1 rupee

The following inscriptions in the outer circle reads:

For the 1 paisa receipt between Re 1 and Re 5:

Nagad ba jinsi 1 rupaiya dekhi mathi panch rupaiya samma tirneko

For the 2 paisa receipt between Re 5 and Re 10:

Nagad ba jinsi panch rupaiya dekhi mathi dash rupaiya samma tirneko

For the 3 paisa receipt between Re 10 to Re 50:

Nagad ba jinsi das rupaiya dekhi mathi pachas rupaiya samma tirneko

For the 1 anna receipt between Re. 50 and Re: 100:

Nagad ba jinsi yek ana dekhi mathi saya rupaiya samma tirneko

For the 2 annas receipt between Re. 100 and Re. 200:

Nagad ba jinsi dui anas dekhi mathi dui saya rupaiya samma tirneko

For the 3 annas receipt between Re. 200 and Re. 300:

Nagad ba jinsi tin anas dekhi mathi tin saya rupaiya samma tirneko

For the 4 annas receipt between Re. 300 and Re. 5.000:

Nagad ba jinsi tin saya rupaiya dekhi mathi panch hazaar samma tirneko

For the 1 rupee receipt for Re. 5.000+:

Nagad ba jinsi panch hazaar rupaiya dekhi mathi panch hazaar rupaiya.

The Handstruck Revenue stamps are always printed on the upper left part of the revenue papers. On the top of these papers is printed in red the so-called Red Revenue Entry-numbering stamp, covering the minimum charge of 1 paisa.

In a small open rectangle in the ornamental stamp the word *Nambar* (number) and in black the number. The papers are delivered to the offices with the red Entry stamp only. In his article for N.P.S. Journal *Philately* (Souvenir 2001) Mr. Ramesh Kumar Shrestha illustrated 33 varieties. Others may exist.

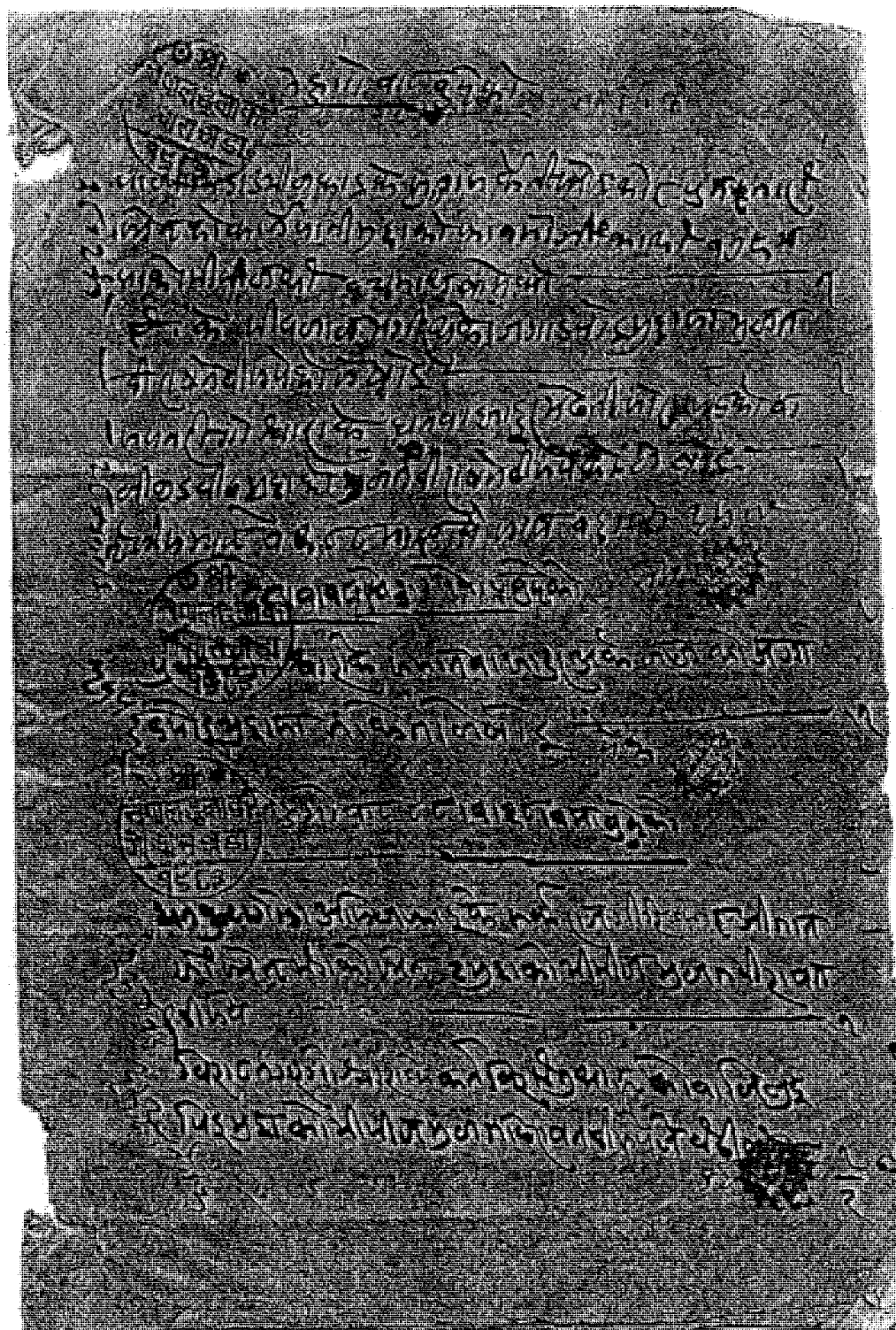
Another seal is printed in black under the Handstruck Revenue stamp on the paper, denoting the Office from which the receipt was sent to the revenue payer.

In the following pages different offices can be seen, so as Treasury Office, Custom Office, Land Revenue Office, etc.

Small personal seals are from the officials, responsible for the receipt.

Nepal Postal Documents

by Colin Hepper



A page from the Official Registry, maintained by Kathmandu GPO, regarding the receipt of Official (Kaj Sakari) letters and documents, from various parts of Nepal with their full description.

Manuscript at the top—'Received from Nepal Hulak Goswara'

Cancellation—'Shree/Nepal Hulak/Goswara Adda/1983' = 1927 A.D.

NEPAL - NEW ISSUE: 16 February 2001

**प्रजातन्त्र स्थापनाको ५० औं वर्ष
50th Anniversary of the Establishment of
Democracy**



Date of Issue	: 16th Feb. 2001	Printing Process	: Photogravure
Denomination	: R. 5.00	Format	: Horizontal
Size	: 28.56 X 39.23 mm	Paper	: High quality stamp paper
Colour	: Four	Designer	: K. K. Karmacharya
Sheet Composition	: 50 stamps per sheet	Printer	: Helio Courvoisier SA, Switzerland.
Quantity	: One Million		

प्रथम दिवसीय आवरण
FIRST DAY COVER



स्वर्ण वर्ष
वि.सं. २००१-२०५१
GOLDEN JUBILEE
1952-2002



Cover courtesy of HMG, Nepal Post
Philatelic Bureau, Kathmandu

Date of Issue	: 09 April 2002	Printing Process	: Offset Lithography
Denomination	: R. 2.00	Format	: Vertical
Size	: 38.5 x 29.6 mm.	Paper	: High quality stamp paper
Colour	: Two	Designer	: M. N. Rana
Sheet Composition	: 50 stamps per sheet	Printer	: Austrian Government Printing Office, Vienna, Austria
Quantity	: One million		