

Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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	126 - 2nd Quarter 2006	June 02, 2006	June 20, 2006
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	128 - 4th Quarter 2006	November 25, 2006	December 09, 2006

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Officer's Corner

Another year seems to have quickly gone by, and it has been a busy time for me in particular. As promised a couple of years ago, I have completed my book on the Modern Postmarks of Nepal. In April I finally had to stop and get it published, which was an interesting time in that I printed the book myself in batches of ten, which was decided by the largest table I had to collate the pages. Finding a book binder was not quite so easy and eventually one was found about an hour's drive away in the next town. It was down a narrow cobbled street with a small shop front. Once inside I felt that I was stepping back in time, in a long narrow room, piled with books and what to me seemed antiquated machines for doing the work. Apart from the owner, there was one other man at a table working with a template and tools for hand stitching the piles of books in front of him.

They were both very helpful to a novice publisher and came up with what I believe was a very good product. I did inquire if the cost of binding would be reduced depending upon the

quantity, but the answer was it takes exactly the same amount of time for each book whether you have one done or a hundred. When I finally came to collect the finished books, the owner very kindly presented me with a leather bound copy for my self as a gift from him.

So what next? I will continue to record the modern postmarks and hopefully will from time to time produce supplements to the present book.

After having spent eleven years living in Spain my wife and I have decided to have a change and will be moving back to live in the UK from early December this year. So would all members please note that as from 1st December 2005 my address will be:

Colin Hepper
12 Charnwood Close
Peterborough
Cambs. PE2 9BZ
England.

Email: colinhepper@aol.com or colinhepper@hotmail.co.uk

Editor's Ramblings

I neglected to mention in the last issue that Danny Wong's article was first published in *The London Philatelist* and was reprinted with the kind permission of the Royal Philatelic Society. Part 2 of Danny's article begins on page 2 and part 3 will appear in *PH* 125.

In the last issue I asked members to let me know if they wanted me to continue to use color on the front cover. The result was a tie - 0 in favor and 0 against. So, I will make my own decision. I did receive a note from one member who said it was a 'good issue'.

This month we welcome three new (to this

Journal) authors. One is Karl-Heinz Michel, with two articles which first appeared in Forschungsgemeinschaft Indien. The articles have been translated from German to English by the APS Translation Service.

The second is Malcolm Campbell from Australia.

The third is Ted Bahry on his visit to Lhasa. I always enjoy receiving articles, and especially those from new authors to *PH*. Hope that you enjoy their articles also. And speaking of articles, I always can use more of them. Do YOU have one to send to me?

P. Gupta, one of our Life Members passed away August 30, 2005 at Kolkata, India. He was perhaps the best known Indian philatelist. He was the first Indian to win a Grand Prize of Honor in 1983 at Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was the first, and perhaps still the only person, to ever have three exhibits simultaneously in the FIP Championship Class.

Stamps of India and Collin Hepper

In Memoriam

Purnendu Gupta (1931-2005)

Together with Colin Hepper and myself, Purnendu Gupta was one of the three founder members of the Nepal Philatelic Study Circle. He formed several important collections, which he showed at various international exhibitions, but his favourite and best exhibit was definitely Nepal. During his first visit to Kathmandu, in 1951, shortly after Nepal had opened its frontiers to foreigners, he developed a keen interest in the stamps of this Himalayan Kingdom. His Nepal exhibit, which comprised not only the classic stamps, but also Pashupati and subsequent issues, received a Gold medal at INDIPEX 73 and a Large Gold at INTERPHIL 76, in Philadelphia. This, incidentally, was the first Large Gold medal ever awarded to an Indian philatelist. Finally, at BRASILIANA 83, the Nepal exhibit obtained the Grand Prix d'Honneur in the FIP Championship Class.

Failing health prompted P. Gupta, as he was generally known, to sell his Nepal collection. A few years back it was auctioned by David Feldman in Zurich. I had the privilege of writing up the collection for the auction catalogue.

I remember Purnendu as a very kind and most co-operative friend. In 1974 or 1975 I visited him at his home in Calcutta, and we had long talks about Nepalese stamps and postal markings. He introduced me to various Calcutta dealers and together we visited the "workshop" of a notorious forger (K.M.) who had tried his hand on ½ orange-vermilions and the like. I still treasure a book that Purnendu gave me when I left Calcutta – it is Haverbeck's *The Postage Stamps of Nepal*, beautifully bound in green and red leather, with gold lettering.

Some time later, when research for the books on the postal markings and on the classic issues started, Purnendu was most helpful and eager to supply data and illustrations from his collection. With P. Gupta's demise, on 30 August 2005, our Study Circle loses one of his pioneers. He was a true gentleman, a kind person and a good friend.

Wolfgang Hellrigl

CHINESE IMPERIAL POST IN TIBET

Danny Kin-chi Wong

This article was first published in *The London Philatelist* and is reprinted with the kind permission of the Royal Philatelic Society, - editor

“Unoverprinted stamps”

Regular Chinese Imperial Post stamps, denominated in silver dollars, were used in Tibet generally until March 1911. They are commonly referred to as “unoverprinted” stamps versus the trilingual surcharge stamps used later. As the currencies in circulation in Tibet then were trangka and Indian rupee, the following exchange rate applied when selling the stamps:

1 trangka	=	15 cents
1 rupee	=	48 cents

As at the opening of the post office, the prevailing postage rate (since 1 October 1907) was 2 cents for ordinary letters and 1 cent for post cards. Commencing 5 August 1910, the rate was adjusted to 3 cents for ordinary letters, and 10 cents for foreign countries, while the post card rate remained unchanged. The postage rate was adjusted yet again when the rupee-surcharged stamps were introduced.

During the first 50 days of the postal service, a total of merely 188 dollars worth of stamps were sold in Lhasa. All letters bearing the 2 cent rate must have been sent between 16 June and 4 August 1910, and only Lhasa and Yatung post offices were open then. Less than 5 such covers were recorded. Figure 7 illustrated this. Post cards used in Tibet, as in Figure 8, are also very rare, only a dozen has survived. Figure 9 was sent from Shigatse, via Gyantse, and delivered by Lhasa post office even on Chinese New Year Day!

Four types of cancellers were used by Chinese Imperial Post in Tibet, categorized as C1, C2, C3 and C4 by Waterfall. I adhere to his numbering here in memory of his contribution to Tibet philately. Hellrigl recorded the earliest usage of C3 on 21 December 1910, and latest usage on 29 November 1911. C1 and C4 were

applied in Lhasa only, with known usage of C4 between 21 June and 28 November 1911. As surviving letters bearing the 2 cent rate (or its multiple) were tied by C2 canceller, this proved that it was used earlier than the C1 canceller, not the other way around.

Waterfall recorded a cover with a red label “registered” inkbrushed in Chinese, sent by a Chinese in Lhasa in January 1909. It was later mistaken by some as the earliest cover related to the Chinese post office. The postal inspector was not even appointed then. The label was a private notation by the sender, and had nothing to do with the Chinese post office.

In 1910, the Chinese post offices in Tibet handled a total of 23,640 pieces of mail, grown to 36,590 pieces in 1911, plus 900 parcels.

Tibet surcharged stamps

The surcharged stamps were denominated in Indian currency in Chinese, English and Tibetan. A new postal tariff, proposed by Deng and approved by the General Post Office, came into force with the new issue:

Letters (20g)	one anna
Post card	half anna (one anna for card with reply)
Printed matter	one anna (for first 100g)
Small packet	one anna (for first 100g)
Registration	two annas (four annas for AR)
Parcel	six annas (up to 1 lb)

The overprinting was done in Shanghai. The following were printed in the first run in January 1911. The total quantity was more than one year consumption, and it is highly unlikely that there were further print runs within the same year. Thus this is the most authoritative figure concerning the quantity of issue, generally only one-third of the estimate by Holmes in 1940,

which explained its scarcity.

<u>Value</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Pane</u>	<u>Print-run</u>
3 pies	24,000	2x 20	600 sheets
half anna	30,000	2x 20	750 sheets
one anna	30,000	2x 20	750 sheets
two annas	24,000	2x 25	480 sheets
2½ anna	24,000	2x 20	600 sheets
three annas	10,000	2x 25	200 sheets
four annas	12,000	2x 20	300 sheets
six annas	6,000	2x 20	150 sheets
12 annas	6,000	2x 20	150 sheets
one rupee	2,400	1x 48	50 sheets
two rupees	960	1x 48	20 sheets

On 15 March 1911, Deng wrote in his monthly report to the Director-General of Posts in Beijing

that the surcharged stamps were received weeks ago and distributed to the post offices for sales. This would date the issue of the surcharge stamps to the second half of February or the first half of March. The recent discovery of a set of surcharged stamps cancelled 24 February 1911, per Figure 10, would probably place the date of issue to February, instead of March, as generally perceived.

Figure 11 is a wrapper of the surcharged stamps, clearly in Indian currency. Figure 12 is the largest multiple of surcharged stamps used on cover, with surcharge variety. Covers with unoverprinted and surcharged stamps used in combination are rare, with less than 10 recorded, as in Figure 13.

The concluding part will appear in PH 125. - editor



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 10



Figure 9



Figure 13

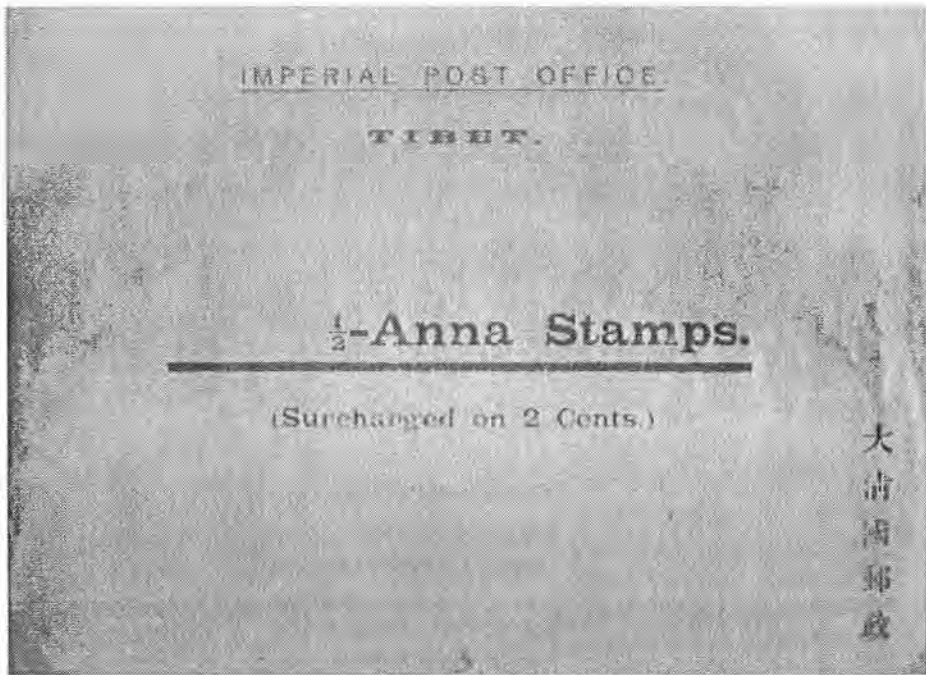


Figure 11

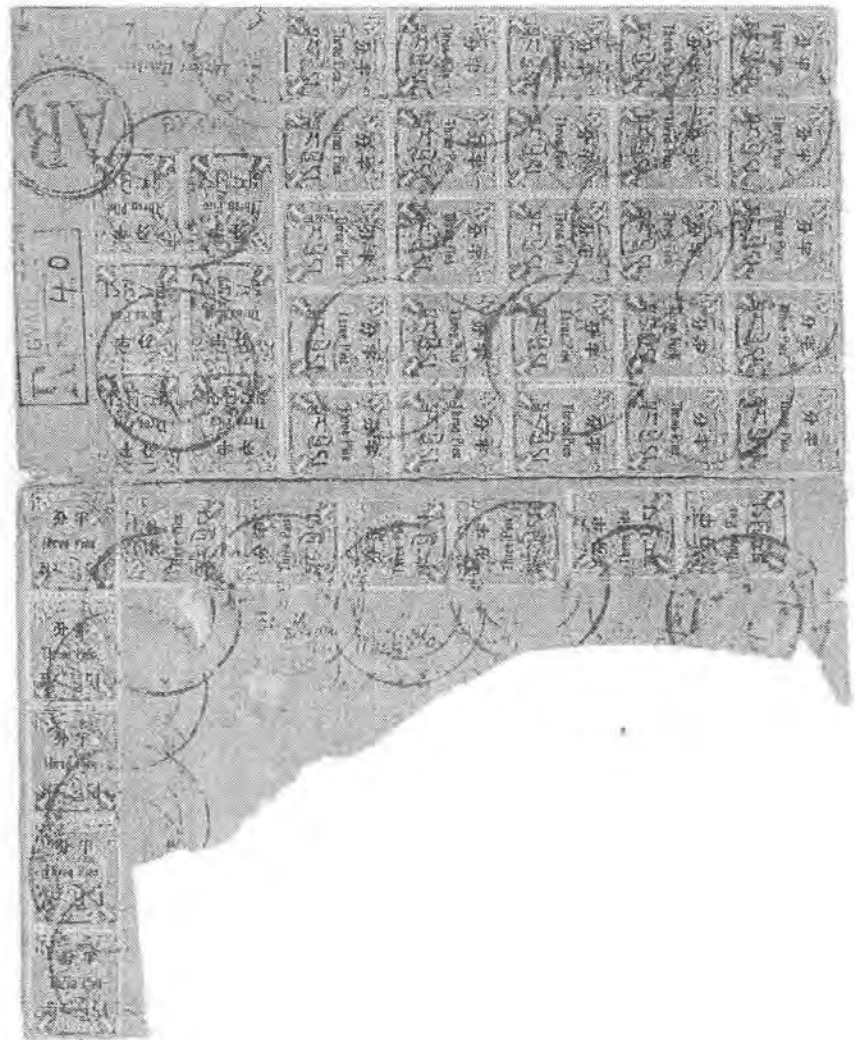


Figure 12

Did A Mobile Post Office Exist In Kathmandu In 1963?

Karl-Heinz Michel

The illustrated cover has been in my possession for about 40 years. I received it from a collector known to me as Karl H. Teumer, who resided in the USA. The sender was Mr. Prem Bahadur Shrestha, Kathmandu. This cover purports to have been mailed at a Mobile Post Office and shows the following features:

- 1) Cancelled with a barely legible cancel from the series "Registration postmarks 1959-1963" by Hellrigl/Hepper.
- 2) Registry label with No. 11 and manuscript notation "Kath. Mobile P. O.", with an additional manuscript notation reading "Kath. Mobile P. O. No. 11".
- 3) There is on the reverse a cancel "Kathmandu GPO 18 Dec 63" from the series "All English

postmarks 1959-1966" by Hellrigl/Hepper. It is probably GPO IV.

- 4) Arrival cancel "North Chicago 24 Dec. 1963".

Since the recipient had moved there are two additional cancel.

- 5) Cancel "Chicago Registry Division 25 Dec 1963"
- 6) Cancel "Chicago Ogden Park Sta. 26 Dec 1963"

To my knowledge nothing has been reported so far concerning a Mobile Post Office in Kathmandu.

Who has further information or similar covers? There should be at least 10 more registered letters in existence.



This article first appeared in Forschungsgemeinschaft Indien, and I thank them for permission to reprint it. The article has been translated from German to English by the APS Translation Service.





Technical Details

Subject : H.M. Queen Mother Ratna Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah
 Denomination : Rs. 20.00
 Color : Four
 Stamps per Sheet : 50
 Size : 30 x 40 mm
 Process : Offset Lithography
 Quantity : One Million
 Format : Horizontal
 Paper : High Quality Stamp Paper
 Designer : M.N. Rana
 Printer : Austrian Gov't Printing Office, Vienna



Technical Details

Subject : Mammal Stamp Series
 Denomination : Rs. 10.00 each
 Color : Four Color
 Stamps per Sheet : 16 of each stamp
 Size : 30 x 40 mm
 Process : Offset Lithography
 Quantity : 0.25 Million of each
 Format : Horizontal
 Paper : High Quality Stamp Paper
 Designer : M.N. Rana
 Printer : Austrian Gov't Printing Office, Vienna



Technical Details

Subject : Fruit Series
 Denomination : Rs. 10.00 each
 Color : Four Color
 Stamps per Sheet : 16 of each stamp
 Size : 30 x 40 mm
 Process : Offset Lithography
 Quantity : 0.25 Million of each
 Format : Horizontal
 Paper : High Quality Stamp Paper
 Designer : K.K. Karmacharya
 Printer : Austrian Gov't Printing Office, Vienna

Courtesy of HMG, Nepal Post, Nepal Philatelic Bureau, Kathmandu

The 'Bael Fruit' Gum On The Classic Nepal Issues by Malcolm Campbell and Surendra Lal Shrestha

Any collector of the stamps or postal stationery of Nepal is bound to have encountered the thick reddish gum that spoils so many of the early issues.

It is the gum of the woody "Bael Fruit" or "Woody Apple," known to botanists as *Aegle marmelos* in the family Rutaceae, which is where the citrus are found. It was commemorated on a recent issue of Nepal released on 20th August 2005 as part of a series of four Nepal native plants. The plant is a tree that is very slow growing to about 10 metres in the south eastern foothills region of Nepal, but it is also found throughout southeast Asia and into the Malay archipelago in regions that get a single monsoon each year. The gum was used on the classic stamps of Nepal that were mostly used without gum and even those that were issued with gum were usually stuck down with an adhesive due to problems of caste that forbade the licking of such things. Recall the events that precipitated the Indian Mutiny in 1858. Anyhow the Bael fruit gum was only used in the region of its natural occurrence in Nepal and was in use at remote post offices until at least 1964 according to Surendra Lal Shrestha who has a cover clearly showing Bael gum on the flaps dated on the Kathmandu receiver as 2 JL1964 in our dating system, that he asserts was in use in southern Nepal to about this time.

I worked on the Nepal-Australia Forestry Project in Nepal for 4 years, some 20 years ago and was aware that seven year old Newari girls were wedded in a ceremony to the Bael fruit which was their dedication to the Lord Vishnu (Bishnu) in Hindu culture; not unlike a confirmation in some sects of the Christian Church.

Now what to do about all those lovely classic stamps that carry this Bael gum blight? I have conducted some trials using various solvents since my enquiries to Surendra Lal Shrestha suggested that local philatelists in Nepal did not have a known solvent to this pernicious adhesive. I have found that Borax has some effect and in conjunction with scraping after soaking for at least 3 hours does remove the gum but seldom the stain that remains. Borax (sodium borate) is widely used in the cleaning trade as a flux to remove protein stains, such as blood and in the manufacture of glass. I'm sure we have members much more aware of chemical solvents than me who may be able to offer a better agent to remove these stains so that we can all enhance our collections. Of course the Bael gum does establish authenticity of these issues, as I'd doubt if any forger would resort to such use! Surendra Lal Shrestha informs us that the Korean made glue stick is now the universal adhesive in Nepalese post offices.



The last known cover with a Bael fruit gum seal 1964



The Bael fruit issue of 20 August 2005

Bhutan Highway Post Office

Karl-Heinz Michel

In October 1968 Jim Wong published, in the *American Congress Handbook*, a lengthy article with the title "The Postal Markings of Bhutan". In it he describes, among many very diverse cancels, a special cancel, which to my knowledge, has not been observed up to now. The cancel: Posted at mail Van.

Jim Wong at that time was president of the Bhutan Stamp Society of America (BSSA), editor of the journal *Asia Stamps and Coins Monthly* and author of many articles in philatelic journals such as *Linn's Weekly Stamp News*. He tried, a bit romantically, to prove the usage of this cancel:

Each morning red Royal Mail jeeps leave Paro and Phuntsholing to make the six-hour run between the two cities (there is a branch line connecting Thimpu). Along the route, postal agencies have been established at Putlibhir, Chimakothi, and Chapcha. All these jeeps 'moonlight' by carrying a passenger or two, presumably stops are made when necessary.

This provides enlightening background to or so-called 'H.P.O.' postal marking. A postal used cover was recently examined with a 15 ch Simtokha Dzong stamp tied with a straight line handstamp in purple reading 'Posted At Mail Van'.... It is addressed to the Deputy Director of Education, His Majesty's Government of Bhutan, Development Wing, P.O. Paro, from the Storekeeper, Education Dept., Govt. of Bhutan, Phuntsholing.

This is a so-called 'H.P.O.' marking because the jeep is not an 'H. P. O.' in the real sense of 'H. P. O.'s' and 'R. P. O.'s', as it has none of the equipment of

a post office. The question immediately arises concerning the application of this 'Posted At Mail Van' handstamp. As it does not show a post office name or date, presumably it was applied by the driver of the jeep...

Likewise I have in my possession a letter "Posted at Mail Van", which, per regulations, went to India. It is to all appearances a commercial letter which arrived in Calcutta on 26.8.1968. Unfortunately the sender is unknown. In my estimation this letter followed the customary postal route, but it is noteworthy that in the exchange office Phuntsholing, where at that time mail for abroad often was marked (cancelled), no postal markings were applied in this instance. To my knowledge more such letters exist.

Whoever possesses similar letters may have more information concerning this so-called "Highway Post Office", such as the employment of a canceller by a postal employee (the driver of the postal van?).

So far I have found no references concerning the arrangement of this transport route between Paro and Phuntsholing. Such transport services were in existence about thirty years ago on several routes in Bhutan to transport mail, tourists, baggage, etc. The establishment of such a service between Tashigang and Mongar was officially announced.

A "Mail Jeep" was established in 1971 for the Chirang - Sarbharg route. The "Mail Jeep Service" Thimphu - Phuntsholing (and probably also to Paro) was established on 15.4.1976, after establishing a regular post bus service. I do not know whether the driver of the post bus was authorized to accept mail en route. Because there were not many regular post offices this seems to have been necessary.

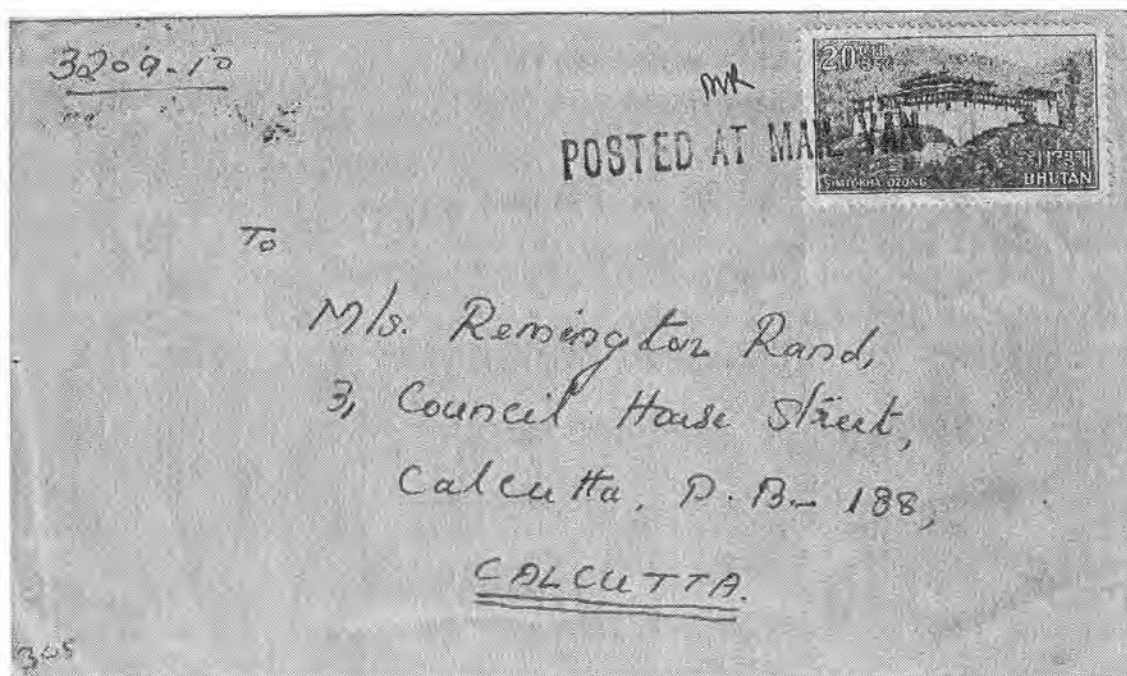
P&T Notice
Mail Jeep Service For
Tashigang-Mongar Dzong

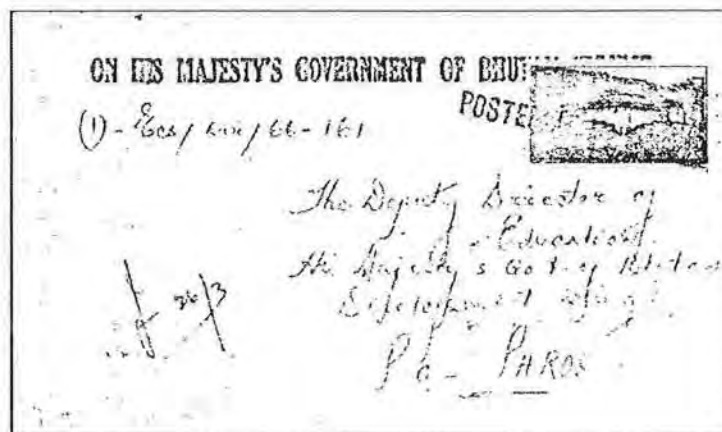
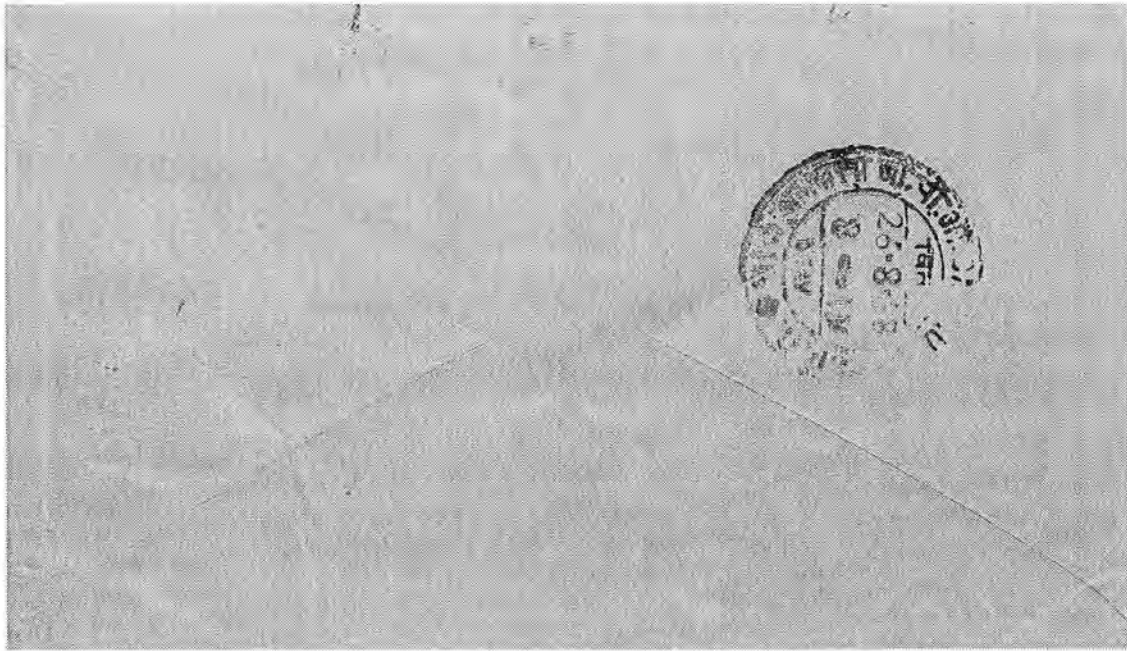
The P&T Department of the Royal Government of Bhutan have pleasure in announcing the introduction of a mail jeep service between Tashigang and Mongar Dzong with effect from 3rd May, 1970. Besides conveying mail, facilities for passenger conveyance and booking for the same have also been provided. The passenger and luggage fares have been fixed as follows:

	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>FARE</u>
1.	Tashigang	Mongar	Rs. 12/ (front seat)
	Mongar	Tashigang	Rs. 10/ (back seat)
2.	Bedding exceeding 20 KGs		Rs. 8/ per maund
3.	Tashigang	Machhang	Rs. 6/ (front seat)
	Machhang	Tashigang	Rs. 4/ (back seat)
4.	Mongar	Machhang	Rs. 6/ (front seat)
	Machhang	Mongar	Rs. 4/ (back seat)
5.	Bedding etc. exceeding 20 KGs for both (3) and (4) above		Rs. 4/ per maund

The public and all Government Departments are invited to take utmost advantage and benefit of the above facilities.

Sd/-
DIRECTOR, P&T





This article first appeared in Forschungsgemeinschaft Indien, and I thank them for permission to reprint it. The article has been translated from German to English by the APS Translation Service.

Colin Hepper and Alan Warren both report that our Treasurer has a website that Nepal collectors should look into. Members are invited to visit www.nepalphilately.net

Madhukar Jhingan the editor of Stamps of India Collectors Companion Webmaster, www.stampsofindia.com would like to know if any member can supply any information regarding this First Flight cover? Information can be sent either to the Editor or directly to Mr. Jhingan's email address.



CONGRATULATIONS

Alan Warren reports that our members won the following awards at the Pacific Explorer exhibition held in Sydney, Australia in April 2005.

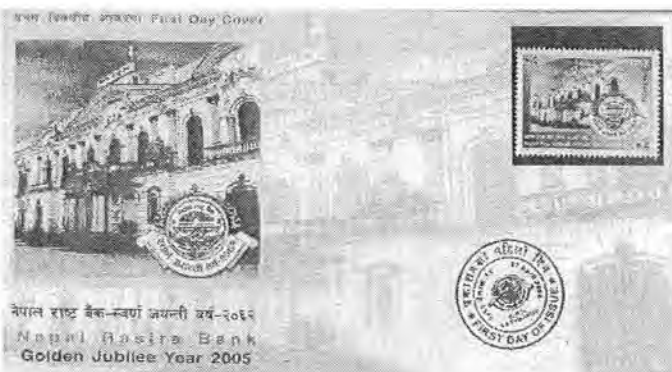
Rameswor Man Karmacharaya won a Large Silver for "Lord Pashupati".

Minaya Manandhar won a Small Silver for "Misprints and Errors of Nepal Stamps and Stationery".

Danny Wong won a Large Vermeil for "Development of Postal Services in Tibet".

Rishi Kumar Tulsyan won a Large Vermeil for "Postal Stationery of Nepal 1887-1959".

Deepah Manandhar won a Small Vermeil for "Postal Stationeries of Nepal".



Technical Details

Subject	: Golden Jubilee Nepal Rastra Bank
Denomination	: Rs. 2.00
Color	: Four Color
Stamps per Sheet	: 50
Size	: 30 x 40 mm
Process	: Offset Lithography
Quantity	: One Million
Format	: Horizontal
Paper	: High Quality Stamp Paper
Designer	: M.N. Rana
Printer	: Austrian Gov't Printing Office, Vienna

Courtesy of HMG, Nepal Post, Nepal Philatelic Bureau, Kathmandu

A Visit to Lhasa

Ted Bahry

I have traveled a lot but wanted to go to mainland China, where I had not been before, for a visit. My collecting friend (toy trains) wanted to go too. And he wanted to go to Tibet as well. Neither of us knew much about Tibet. So we wound up going together on a 17-day tour of China and Tibet. It was great!

There were 31 USA people in our random tour group. I was hoping to travel with perhaps football team cheerleaders but no such luck. Fortunately, our group was all about the same age (young at heart) and we were experienced travelers.

Our three days in Lhasa (locally pronounced Hasa) Tibet, the capital, was a great experience for me and our group enjoyed it too. I had been to high altitudes such as Lhasa (12,000+ ft) before with no problems but copped out and obtained a magic prescription pill to prevent high altitude sickness before I left the USA. It certainly helped. Interestingly, during my career with the U.S. Marines, I had been at high altitudes on the ground many times but had never heard of high altitude sickness!

Anyway, during our bus tour of Lhasa one day in April, we had a short break period and I surprised the tour guide by asking to be let off at the Lhasa post office. I only had a short time there and an interesting long hike back to our hotel afterward. The main Lhasa post office is on the major street, right across from the Dalai Lama's palace. The post office is relatively small. There was a counter for out of town mail with a variety of stamps and the usual language

difficulties. After all, I don't speak Tibetan or Chinese. The clerk there was helpful but mystified that anyone would want to put anything but high denomination stamps on foreign mail. And she wouldn't let me over rate the cards either!

Tibet has long been part of China so the post office was Chinese, of course, with beautiful PRC stamps. Airmail to the USA seemed to be at a rate of 4.50 Yuan (RMB), equal to about 55 cents per half ounce, in U.S. currency. Only two stamps were available at my hotel—the 4.50 Yuan and the 1 Yuan.

I sent my friend Alan Warren a letter and five postcards from Tibet. All got through with an average transit time of about 3-4 weeks via airmail. I put my USA return address on most of the mail, just in case it got lost. Three items were mailed from my hotel's mail box where I was assured that the mail was picked up seven days a week. The other three items were mailed by my local tour guide after I left.

For those interested in visiting Tibet, I recommend doing so soon. There are rumors of a major road and a major train line being built from Shanghai to Lhasa. Making a beautiful, remote area more accessible will obviously change things forever.

Alan is providing copies of items that I sent him and I'm sending along a few photos from Lhasa. Darn, I didn't get a photo of the large post box in the lobby of our tourist (oops, visitor) hotel.



འོ། རྒྱལ་འཛོམས་ལུ།
西藏賓館

Hotel Letterhead



Letter Box



Main Post Office



Postcard to USA



Reverse of Postcard to USA