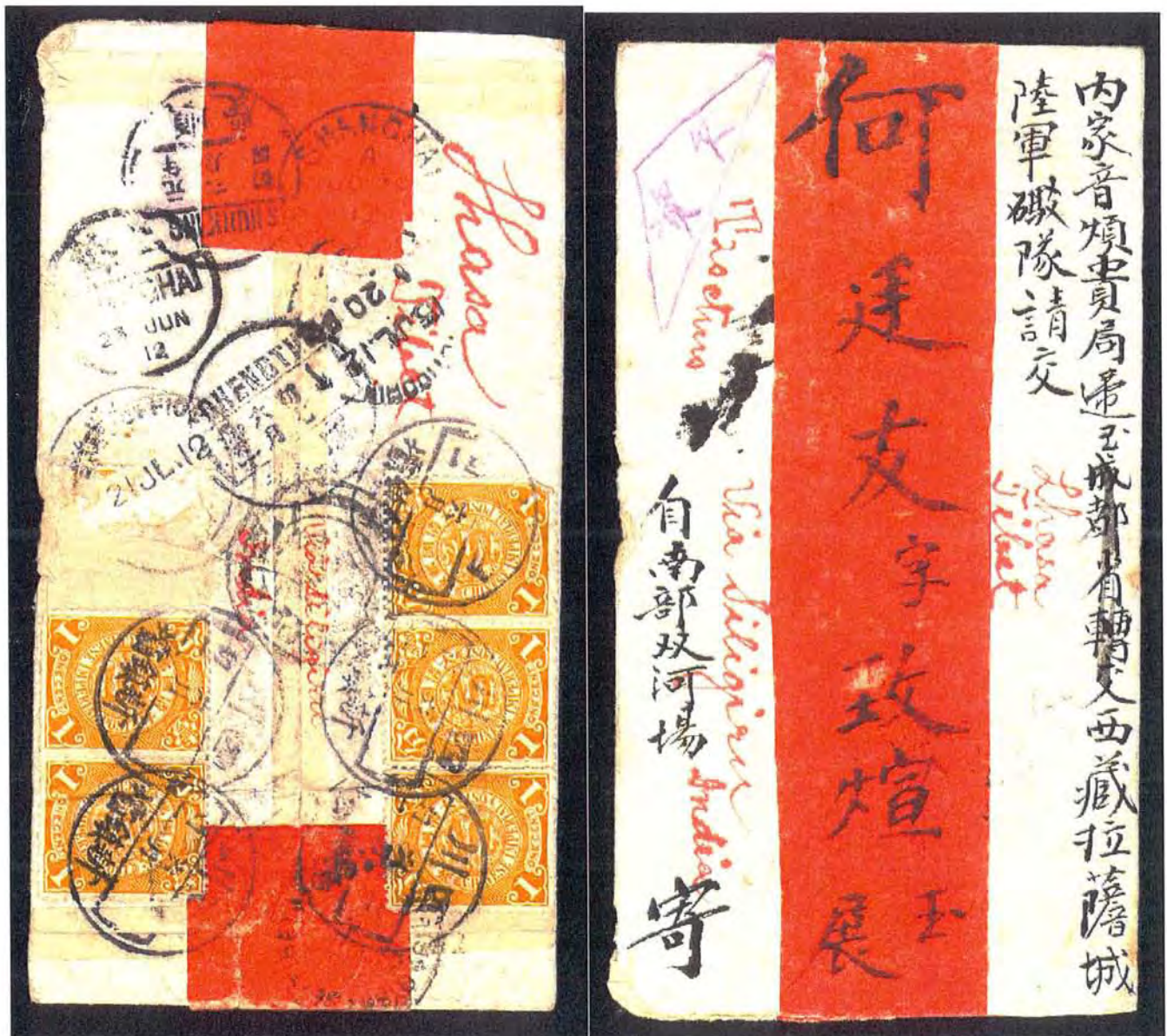


# Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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





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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Officer's Corner	Armand Singer	1	New 1/2 Anna Forgery	Wolfgang Hellrigl	12
Editor's Ramblings	Richard M. Hanchett	1	Kailaly Exchange PO Error	Colin Hepper	13
Chinese Imperial Post-Tibet	Danny Wong	2	Heinrich Harrer dies at 93	Alan Warren	13
Letter	Jaya Hari Jha	10	Bhutan Shirt Letter 1983	Paul Zatulove	14
Nepal Post Offices	Colin Hepper	11	News from Kathmandu	Surendra Lal Shrestha	16



## Officer's Corner

I was hoping that readers would have an article (I wrote most of it) about the wonderful discovery of Tibetan proofs of the 1912s, including a unique set of three die proofs, found in Asia by Geoffrey Flack. I would have begged the editor to let the article take the place of this page. Well, the news has been postponed until the 2nd Quarter issue, so these lines are but a teaser.

As well, don't forget the World Philatelic Exhibition in Washington, D.C. this coming May 27-June 3. The U.S. only gets to have one such exhibition every ten years. Several of us

will show our Nepal and Tibet holdings; we will also have a private meeting or two and our own desk. Get details from George Kramer, U.S. Eastern Commissioner, 99 Charles St., Clifton, NJ 07013 USA (telephone 973-471-8660; fax 973-471-8661; email [gjkk@optonline.net](mailto:gjkk@optonline.net)) or Lewis Bussey, Western U.S. Commissioner, P.O. Box 18674, Denver, CO 80218 USA (telephone and fax 303-321-6036; email [lebarch@aol.com](mailto:lebarch@aol.com)). That should get you a brochure with hotels, etc.

Armand

## Editor's Ramblings

Rainer Fuchs has written to say that his discussion page on the NTPSC home pages have been little used and that its maintenance has become difficult. He has created a new more user friendly forum at [fuchs-online.com/forum](http://fuchs-online.com/forum). There are only a few categories at present, but it can be extended. He would like to know if members are interested his continuing the forum. You can respond directly to him. Why not pay a visit to the forum now and see what you think of it.

In the next issue of PH, you will read about, and see photos of, an extraordinary and unique

find of Tibetan material, as Armand has hinted at in the Officer's Corner article above.

If you are planning to attend WASHINGTON2006, and I hope that you are, you really should make you plans at once so that you will be sure of getting a hotel room. We will have our general meeting on Monday, 29 May from 0900-1200.

The next international meeting at which we should have a large gathering will be LONDON2010, and it isn't too early to begin making your plans for that.

## In Memoriam

Word has been received from Jaya Hari Jha via Dick van der Wateren that Mr. Bishnu Lal Shrestha passed away on 17 December 2005.

Erratum: In the Officer's Corner of Postal Himal #122 Dick van der Wateren described the use of the Map series for Revenue purpose and the document in which the Government ordered this fiscal use. He said that 'one of my Nepal friends' pointed this out to him. Unfortunately he forgot to write the name of my friend and he should like to rectify this omission

and do him justice now. Dick writes "Every year I was in Kathmandu I visited him several times in his "Collector's Shop" where Jaya Hari Jha introduced me to other collectors of stamps and of paper money who came to him for a short talk or to order a coin or a stamp. The hours spent in this shop were always very pleasant and informative."

## CHINESE IMPERIAL POST IN TIBET (Part 3)

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

### The sea route and the overland route

Since the opening of Yatung, the sea route via India became the preferred route between Tibet and China proper. The Yatung Customs was used to receiving mails from China via Calcutta and Sikkim. After the opening of the post offices, mail to other parts of China also passed through India, and international postage was levied. Figure 14 is one such cover to Shanghai.

The Chinese faced tough competition from the British Indian post offices, they had to adopt a rate and efficiency that was comparable to the Indians. The British refused to recognize the validity of the Chinese postage, hence Indian postage stamps were to be additionally affixed, which reduced the efficiency and competitiveness of the Chinese. Thus, foreign mails were handled exclusively by the British, and commercially used imperial covers to any foreign destination are rare. Figure 15 is a 1911 cover from Lhasa, with C4 dater, sent to Calcutta, India, with Indian stamps added. Figure 16 is an unusual cover to India, as no Indian stamps were added.

The Indian post office refused to exchange mails at the border in Yatung, and insisted on exchanging in Gyantse, which would handicap the Chinese Gyantse-Yatung post traffic. In the end, a compromise was reached that incoming mails were to be exchanged in Gyantse, and outgoing mails in Yatung. Figure 17 is a 1911 incoming cover to Tibet, passed onto the Chinese post office in Gyantse, and returned and exited via Yatung. This is one of the four recorded cover that passed through both offices of exchange.

Due to a lack of cooperation from the Indian side, it was deemed necessary to develop an alternative overland post route, along the Kham-Tsang *yizhan* route. Preparation commenced

April 1911, facilitated by the hand-over of *yizhan* personnel to the imperial post. Chamdo, Sobando and Gyamda post offices were established en route.

Figure 18 is a 1911 letter to Captain Bailey on his way from China to India via Tibet. The letter was forwarded to Kangting and Batang in June, only to find that the overland route was not yet operative and hence was re-directed by sea route via Shanghai to Calcutta. Figure 19 is a unique cover using the combined service of *yizhan* and post office, in August 1911. The first leg, between Chamdo and Batang, was delivered by *yizhan*, thereafter by the post office to Beijing.

Figure 20 is a cover dispatched from Lhasa on 13 September that traveled along the overland route. This was probably a test dispatch from the Lhasa post office to test out the time required to reach Beijing. There are less than 10 such overland covers recorded, all belonging to the same dispatch. It is apparent that the overland route was operative only from September 1911, but was interrupted by the Republican Revolution, hence such overland covers bear strong historical significance. Although Sobando and Gyamda were recorded in post office annuals and well-known among senior philatelists, no postmarks from these offices were ever recorded.

Figure 21 is a cover sent to a soldier in Lhasa by his family from Nanbu, Sichuan. It was mailed at Xinzhenba on 1 June 1912, traveling west via Chengtu (7 Jun), changed direction eastward to Shanghai, and took the sea route via Hong Kong to India. When it arrived at Gyantse in July, both Chinese post offices in Lhasa and Gyantse were closed, hence it was undeliverable. It is interesting to note that the sender specified the Chengtu route, paying a domestic postage and the address was entirely in Chinese (and English was added by post office staff in red

later), indicating it was meant to be delivered via the overland route, which unfortunately was closed to traffic due to armed hostilities. Postage stamps of 6 cents were affixed, although one was damaged in transit, indicating the special domestic postage rate to Tibet was the same as to Mongolia and Xinjiang, and double the normal rate. Hitherto, the postage rate to Tibet was not known, and this cover aptly closed the chapter on the overland post route.

The cover should have been returned to China, but was found in the papers of S. W. Laden La. Laden La was an Indian Government Official assigned to the Intelligence Branch. Under Charles Bell, Laden La had been responsible for the day to day program of the Dalai Lama while in exile in India. It is not a surprise that it was in the hands of Indian police as the British kept a watchful eye on Chinese mails especially the official ones, which was the reason why China insisted on opening the overland route in 1911.

### **Closure of the Chinese Imperial Post in Tibet**

In the first half of 1911, *yizhan* was abolished in Tibet and merged with the post office. In May 1911, the postal administration was separated from the Customs, and Deng was appointed superintendent of posts of Tibet.

The news of the 1911 Republican Revolution took one month to reach Lhasa, but it took no time for the disoriented soldiers to riot and loot the city. On 13 November (23<sup>rd</sup> day, 9<sup>th</sup> month), the very day of the riot, Deng closed the post office, took with him money, postage stamps and documents and fled Lhasa. He took refuge in the British Trade Mission in Yatung until 1 December, when he proceeded to Calcutta via Sikkim, together with postmasters of Gyantse and Yatung.

The disorganized Chinese soldiers were soon overpowered and repulsed by the Tibetans. Thousands of evacuated Chinese soldiers and civilians passed through Yatung to return to China via India. The last Lhasa Amban left Yatung for Sikkim on 14 April 1913. The

Yatung Customs was effectively closed in March 1913 and forcibly evacuated at the end of August, eliminating the last Chinese government organ in central Tibet.

Hence, Yatung was destined to be the last post office in central Tibet to close, in 1912. Figure 22 is a cover sent from Yatung and received by British Pharijong FPO No. 81 dated 3 May 1912. Yatung was 27 miles from Phari, a route normally covered in one day. Although philatelically-inspired, this indicates that the Yatung Chinese post office was still operative early in May 1912, probably the last days prior to its closure. Incidentally, the Dalai Lama returned from India to Tibet via Yatung in June 1912.

The Phari post office, also in Chumbi Valley, was known to be still operative in late November 1911, and must have been closed earlier than Yatung.

While in Calcutta, Deng received instructions to return to China and transfer the post office properties to Lu Xinqi, a Chinese merchant in India appointed Lhasa Amban by the Republican government. Three cartons were transferred. Unfortunately Lu was denied travel to Tibet by British India, eventually his office was relinquished at the end of 1918, and the post office properties were handed back to the General Post Office.

After the closure of the Yatung Customs and post office, the archive was eventually kept in Nanjing, China. The archive is an authoritative source of information on the history of the Chinese Imperial Post in Tibet, and its recent publication provided us more vivid details, dates and numbers, which this article attempts to highlight and supplement with surviving covers in my own and other private collections.

### **Capture of Chamdo**

After breaking away from China, Tibetan troops attempted to advance to the east to capture Kham. They were repulsed by the Tibet Expedition Force, and the Chinese maintained their stronghold in Chamdo. However, in 1918 Tibet launched a successful attack on the



Chinese garrison in Chamdo and captured the town. Despite the eastward campaigns launched by the Tibetans, they were unable to push much further east of the Yangtse. The Chinese and Tibetan forces maintained an uneasy peace until the communist captured Chamdo again in 1950.

After the revolution and the riot, the Chamdo post office came under the auspicious of the Sichuan Postal Administration. Chamdo was the last Chinese Imperial Post Office to open in Tibet, in the summer of 1911, and the last to

close, when the town fell into Tibetan hands in 1918. All recorded Chamdo daters (C3) were from the Republican period between 1913-14. Imperial postage stamps and the old calendar in datestamps were continued in use, as illustrated in Figure 23, making it the last post office in China to use imperial stamps and the old calendar. Only one pair of CIP stamps (on piece) with Republic of China overprint dated 1914, was recorded, in the Singer collection.

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*Armand E Singer, The Chinese Presence in Tibet, Alevizos, Topanga, USA 2002*



Figure 22



Figure 14



Figure 23







Figure 15

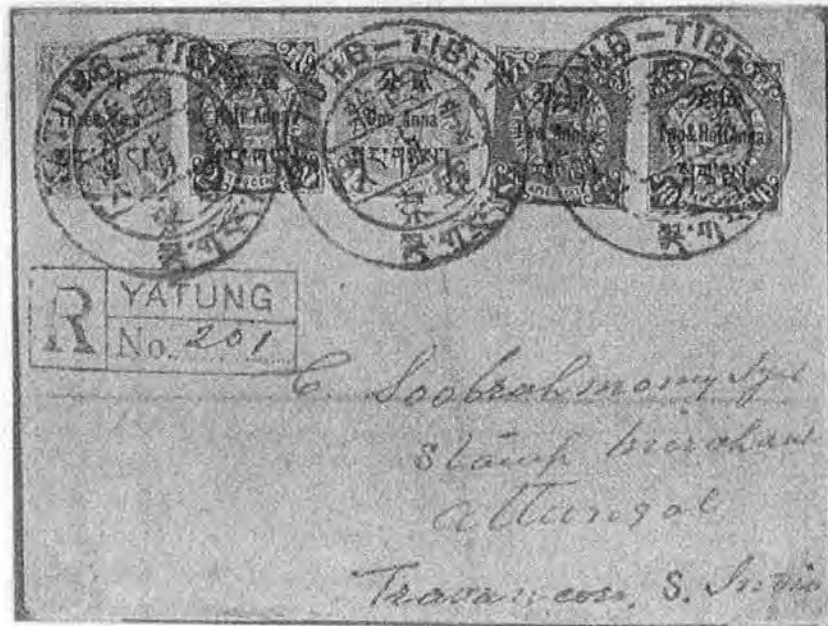


Figure 16

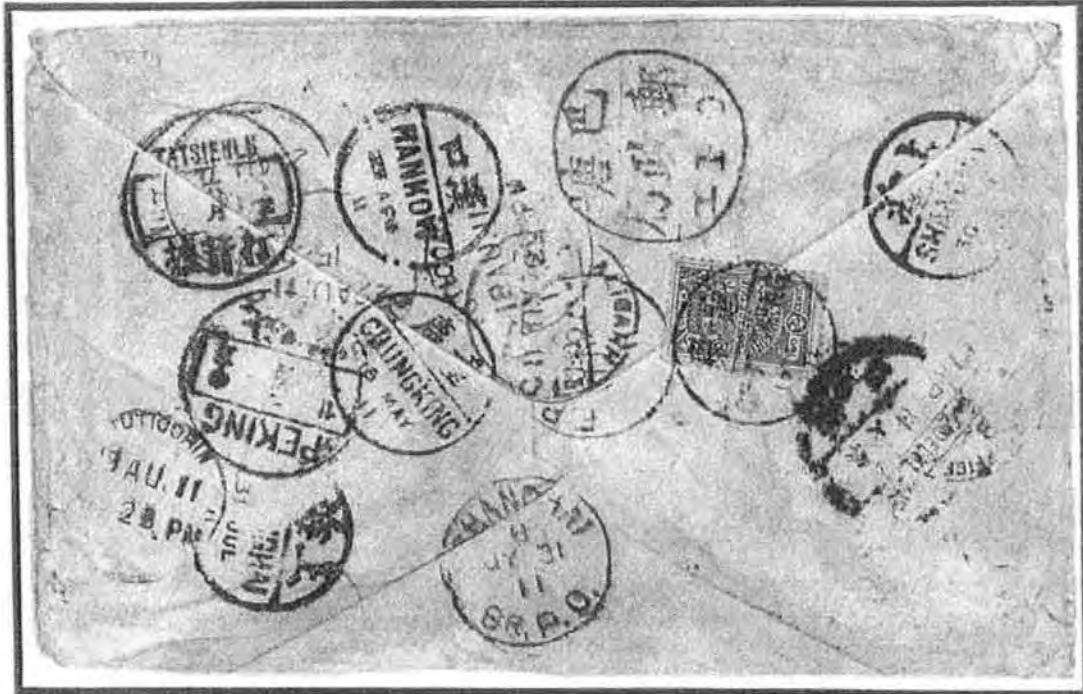
Non Indian stamp on reverse



on reverse  
Attungol "9 SEP 11"

### Attempt on the Overland Route

The Chinese Post Office invested much effort to open the traditional overland route between Chengtu and Lhasa in the summer of 1911.



Sent from UK 7 March 1911 trans-Siberia. Addressed to Capt. F M Bailey c/o British Legation in Peking (21st Third Month). pencilled re-direction to British Consulate, Chungking (16 May), then to Chengtu, to Calcutta and finally to Aligarh, India (24 Aug.). After Chengtu, the Chinese Post Office forwarded the mail via Tatsienlo (13th Sixth Month) and Batang for Calcutta. However, it was weeks before the overland route was operative: and the mail had to be transmitted by sea route via Shanghai (30/31 July).

Figure 18

Opening of Overland Route

By August 1942 the Chinese Post Roads were given the first-class responsibility for the Chando-Batang leg and the post office from Batang onwards.



The only recorded (Chang and post office combined) service cover, and pre-dated opening of Chando Post office.



Figure 19



Figure 17  
front and back



The following letter has been received from Mr. Jaya Hari Jha. The facts in this case have been confirmed by Colin Hepper. Mr. Hepper has sent his apologies to Mr. Jha. I include also my apology to Mr. Jha.

November 14, 2005

Dear Mr Hanchett,

I am Jaya Hari Jha, a member of NTPSC. I have been a regular subscriber of Postal Himal for the past two years. Currently, I am a researcher and collector of Nepalese banknotes. I have also written a book on Nepalese banknotes titled "An Overview of Nepalese Paper Money".

On page 1, of Issue No 122 of Postal Himal, you have printed "Also, a new series begins on page 6. Colin Hepper has purchased a large number of photographs of the Post Offices of Nepal. **The photos were all taken by Punny Sthapit.**"

I would like to reiterate that the photographs of the post offices that you are printing now were all taken by me and my friends and that these photos originate from my collection. I commenced this hobby of mine in 1982. While pursuing it, I have travelled to many remote and rural parts of the country such as Ridi, Dhankuta, Jumla, Doti, Dolakha etc., to take photographs of post offices there. I also asked my friend Late Mr Hans Wittman to get me some photographs when he came to Nepal and visited some places that I could not.

Further, I exhibited these photographs in NEPHIL '92, a national philatelic exhibition organised by Nepal Philatelic Society. My exhibition was entitled "Photographs of Nepalese Post Offices and their Post Marks", for which I was awarded a Silver Medal.

I have not been able to give continuance to this hobby of mine recently but I still have all the negatives of the photographs that I have taken.

When Mr Punny Sthapit came to me and asked for some photographs from my collection, he did not tell me why he wanted them, so I charged a minimum fee for reprinting cost of the photos from him. Had I known that those photographs would be printed in Postal Himal later, I would have donated these photos to NTPSC for the spread of information about Nepalese Postal service and its history. I have made similar contributions from my research to other Philatelists such as Mr Jit Bahadur Manandhar, Mr Dick van der Wateren and Late Mr Hans Wittman.

I hope that you will print my reiteration.

Best regards,

Jaya Hari Jha  
The Collector's Shop  
House no 21 Atkonarayan  
Kathmandu, Nepal  
Email: [jayaharijha@mail.com.np](mailto:jayaharijha@mail.com.np)

Nepal Post Offices - A Continuing Series  
 Colin Hepper - photos by Jaya Hari Jha



Government Postal Management  
 Office  
 Singha Durbar - Kathmandu



सिंहदरवार नगर हुलाक



Government Postal Management Office  
 Babar Mahal - Kathmandu

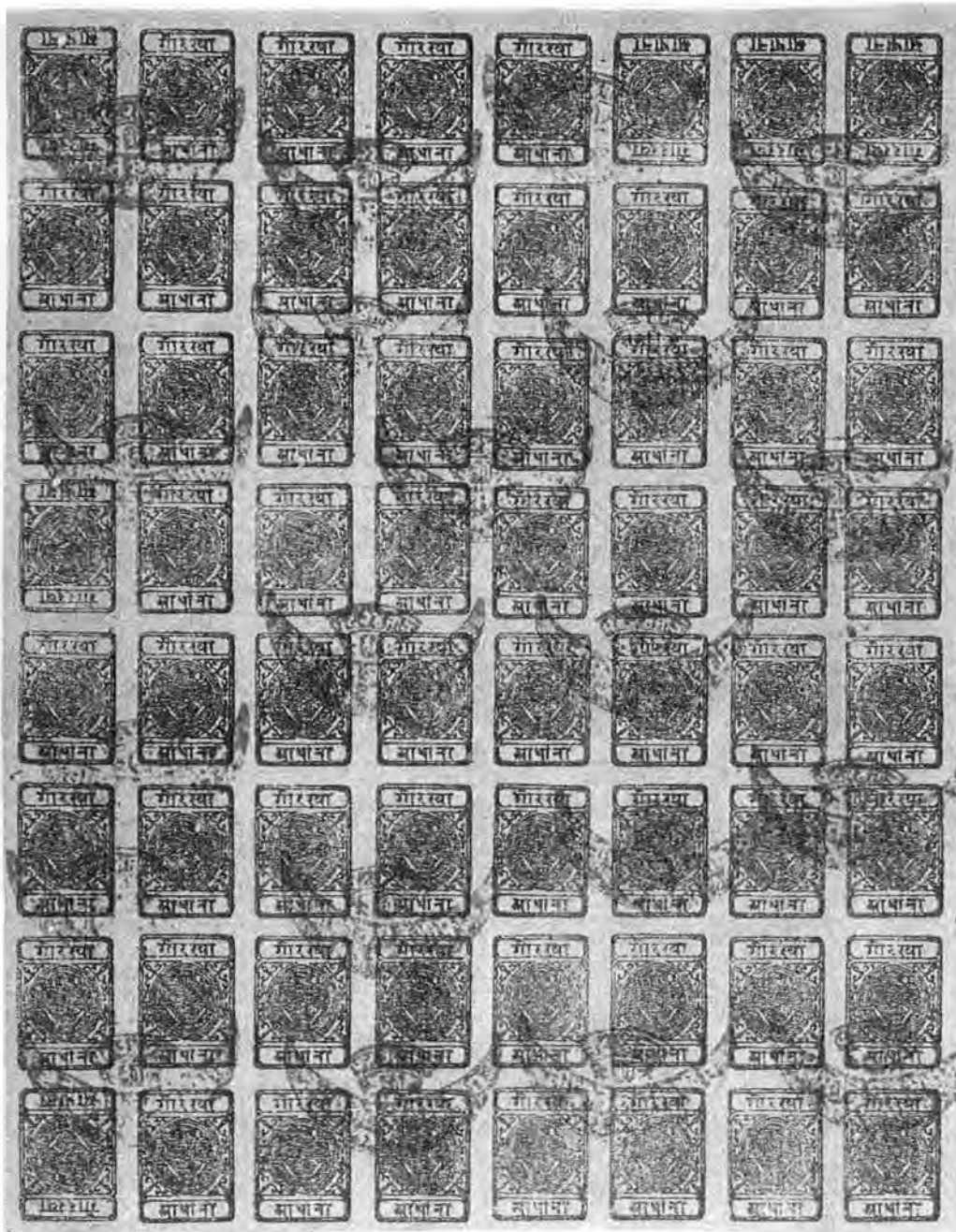
र. No.  
 Date  
 . P. O. Babar Mahal  
 (Kathmandu, Nepal)

## A New ½ Anna Forgery

Wolfgang Hellrigl, RDP

A full sheet of an interesting new type of a ½-anna forgery has recently been found. Although the stamps were made from a single cliché, the sheet's appearance so closely matches the genuine, that it would probably fool anyone who did not care to examine it closely.

The single cliché was photographically reproduced from a genuine pos. 43 which features the "white oval flaw above the right side of the bow." Obviously, all other prominent flaws are missing, a fact that led to the discovery of the forgery. The sheet has pos. 1, 6, 7, 8, 25 and 57 inverted. It is telegraphically cancelled with the Birganj crescent (Type T3). The cancellation is a very dangerous imitation.





## Kailaly Exchange Post Office – Error

Colin Hepper



In a recent 'rummage' through my boxes of covers from Nepal, I came across the illustrated postmark from Kailaly Ex. P.O. which clearly has the word Nepal with a letter 'H' instead of 'N' making it Hecal.

This is on a small piece as illustrated and is dated 8 August 1962.

I would be interested to hear from any other member who may also have this error. So go on and have another look at your covers.

## Heinrich Harrer Dies at 93

Alan Warren

Heinrich Harrer, the flamboyant explorer, mountain climber and tutor of the Dalai Lama, died January 7 in Freisach, Austria. He was the author of *Seven Years in Tibet*, a popular book when it was published in 1954. The book was translated into many languages and made into a movie with Brad Pitt in 1997.

Harrer was the son of a postal worker and was born July 6, 1912 in Hüttenberg, Austria. He became an accomplished skier as well as mountaineer and landed a position on the Austrian ski team in the 1936 Olympics. His first claim to fame came in 1938 when he was a member of a four-man team that successfully completed the ascent of the north wall of the Eiger in the Swiss Alps. Others before and after had died in the attempt.

He was taking part in an expedition to climb Nanga Parbat in present day Pakistan when World War II broke out. Captured by the British and placed in a prison camp, he later escaped

with a companion and spent nearly two years to reach Tibet. He settled in Lhasa where he worked as a gardener and later served as a tutor to the 14-year old Dalai Lama. With the invasion of Chinese troops into Tibet in 1951, Harrer escaped via Sikkim to India, shortly before the Dalai Lama also fled the country.

His past caught up with him when it was learned that he had been a member of the Nazi Party. He joined the SS in order to teach skiing and his membership eventually led to his joining the government-financed expedition to the Himalayas. He was never involved in any atrocities. He went on to become a champion golfer, write over 20 books and make some 40 documentary films.

He founded a Tibetan museum in Austria and received many honors during his lifetime including Austria's Golden Humboldt medal, and the Light of Truth award presented by the Tibetan government in exile.

## Bhutan Shirt Letter 1883

Paul Zatulove

I have an 1883 parchment 'shirt letter' to the King of Nepal from Jongpon of Punakha. I am not sure which is the top and bottom. It is written in Bhutanese Tibetan and the seal is on the corner of the exterior. Can you tell me if I am exhibiting it correctly? I imagine it is a shirt letter simply because it was carried by royal runner in the folds of his shirt! It extends about 30 inches wide and 10 inches high. There was a marvelous photo from National Geographic of a mailman in the Himalayan region. It was from an issue ca1931 and printed in *PH* when it was published as a few pages on a Gestetner duplicating machine. I have been trying to locate the exact issue so I could request a copy of the color photo from the publication. I am preparing an exhibit on different methods of mail delivery. The royal runner over the Himalayas is the toughest route on foot that I can think of.



The above photo is from the cover of *Postal Himal* No.49 1st Quarter 1987. The description states that "...The way of life in Tibet was unique. It must have been an incredible, revealing moment when Tolstoy and Dolan heard a jingling of bells and turned to see a small wiry man trotting along the trail, carrying a spearhead staff with bells on it (to let people know he was coming); this was an official government mail carrier taking a message to someone in the next town..." - editor