

# Postal Himal

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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## Officer's Corner

During August we had a request from one of the universities in Cambridge to have our back issues of *Postal Himal* loaded onto the web pages they run for studies on the Nepal/Tibet area.

To have *Postal Himal* loaded onto the internet has been the subject of much discussion when the society officers have met. However we do come up against the real problem that anyone can then download the journal for free.

The following points are, as I see it, all relevant concerning exposure on the internet that need to be considered:

1. If it was decided to have *Postal Himal* on the internet then it should be on our own web site rather than that of Cambridge University who could link their site to ours.

2. What sort of time gap should be given before a copy becomes a 'back issue'?
3. Should *Postal Himal* be made available to members via the internet?

Member's views are very important on this issue to be able to establish the way forward for the Society in this modern age of electronics.

Unfortunately many of our members and officers are in the 'have been returned for a long time' class, but we would like to have a Society that keeps up with modern times.

So when you read this you must have some views on the subject, don't leave it to someone else to reply, do it yourself and send your thoughts either to myself or Richard Hanchett.

Colin

## Editor's Ramblings

This has been a busy year for traveling with the International Exhibitions in both London and Lisbon and family travel for Patricia and myself. We returned to the UK the end of June to travel on Norwegian Cruise Lines new liner, *Epic*, on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York. One week after that we were off to Hawaii for five weeks, with the grandchildren and their families. Fortunately for our sanity we had each of the families come for a different week. And next year of course there will be WESTPEX and the International Exhibition in New Delhi. I plan to attend both of them, and being in Asia I also plan to visit Nepal, possibly Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Taiwan. What this means for *Postal Himal* is that the 1st Quarter issue will most likely be delayed a month - going into the mails in April instead of March.

I trust that you will take the time to give some serious consideration raised in Colin's Officer's Corner article above. If you wish to respond our

mail and email address are on the inside front cover.

I don't know how many of you are planning to attend either WESTPEX or INDIA2011. I have generally found these shows to be quite enjoyable. There are the exhibits themselves which are always fascinating and from which you can learn quite a bit. Even if you can't afford to buy a lot of material due to high prices, you can always visit the dealers and look at what they have. And there is the opportunity to visit the country and city both before and after the show to do some sightseeing and learn first hand some of the culture which the area offers. You might also meet some old friends, or make new ones and enjoy socializing with them. That was how I met Dick van der Wateren - at the International Exhibition in India - many years ago.

Last, but by no means least, welcome to our newest Life Member, **Elizabeth Downey**.

## UPCOMING:

**INDIA 2011** 12-18 February 2011, New Delhi, Halls No. 8-11, Pragati Maidan Exhibition Complex  
**WESTPEX 2011** 29 April - May 1, 2011 San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel. Our meeting will be Sunday, May 1 at 11:00 AM.

## **The Ringer**

**by Dr. Frank E. Vignola III**

The first issue of Nepal's postal card is an interesting challenge for collectors as there were over 20 major varieties created during the 40 years of use before it was replaced by the second issue "blue" postal cards around 1928. The postal cards were first issued in 1887 and were reprinted as the supplies ran out. There are no postal records to determine when or how many of the cards were issued and post marks on the major varieties are used to establish the dates of issue. Fortunately, many of the printings contain easily identifiable changes in stamp dies, inscription wording and placement, and/or the running horse postal emblem.

The first issue postal card is similar in design to the Indian postal card that was in use at the time and that probably served as a model for Nepal's first postal card. The postal card consists of an orange two paisa (half Anna) stamp in the upper right hand corner, a running horse emblem in the center, inscriptions on either side of the horse, and brackets left and right for addresses. Dick van der Wateren's book "Nepal Postal Stationary", 1995, is an excellent reference for Nepalese postal cards.

Three varieties of stamp dies, five distinct horse emblems, and variations in inscriptions and spacing are used to distinguish the various printings (Figure 1). A quantity of the postal cards (van der Wateren's) Wa 5 to Wa 7 made it into European dealers' hands and unused copies of these cards are the most common. In the ensuing blue postal cards of the second issue, the overall design is similar with changes in the inscriptions and the whole postal card is printed in blue ink. Some of the running horse dies, used in the first issue, are also used in the second (blue) postal card issue. One printing, Wa 26, contains an unusual new horse die that appears to be crudely hand carved (horse die 6). This postal card is scarce and the earliest known usage is 1929. The reason that horse die 6 was made in such a crude manner is unknown, as horse die 5 was used in Nepal's third postal card issue that was printed in 1934.

There are no postal records of the first three issues of the Nepal postal cards, and occasionally new varieties have appeared. Therefore collectors of Nepal postal cards sometimes wondered if horse die 6 was used in the first postal card series. To date no copies of the first issue with horse die 6 have been recorded. Going through a selection of first issue postal cards on-line, I came across a first issue postal card showing this crudely carved horse die (Figure 2). It had been listed as Wa 6 and had the same characteristics of that printing except for the horse. I was dubious of the authenticity of the card, but it was inexpensive and so I purchased it in order to examine it in more detail.

After examining the card, the horse turned out to be in a slightly different ink than the rest of the card and, while the dimensions of the horse matched that of Wa 26, the image appeared slightly blurred (Figure 3). On closer examination, one could see where the original horse had been removed and the impression of the crudely carved horse die 6 had been substituted in its place. Thus one might say that the horse on this postal card is a real "Ringer".



Figure 3: Closer image of the "Ringer" horse. Notice the unevenness of the ink and that a portion of the paper has been removed from between the two forelegs.



Figure 1: Postal Card Wa 6. Normal card has horse die 2.

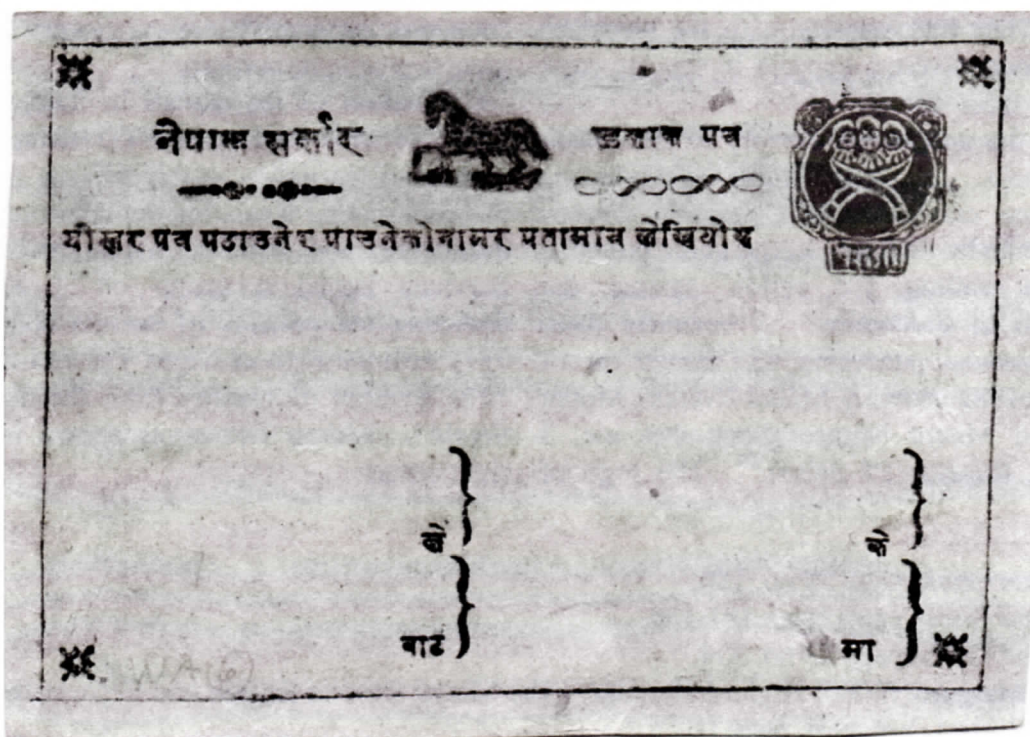


Figure 2: Postal Card Wa 6 with crude horse die 6.

## The Himalayas on Nepalese Postage Stamps (continued)

by Binod K. Shrestha

### Other Stamps with Mount Everest

Founded in 1946 in Paris, France the International Hotel and Restaurant Association (IH&RA) is the only business organization in the world representing the hospitality industry worldwide. Its members are national and international hotel and restaurant associations and chains throughout the world representing some 50 brands. The 70th Council meeting of the IH&RA was held in October 1981 in Kathmandu and a stamp was issued on 30 October 1981 (Scott 395) with the logo of the Association, the flag of Nepal and Mount Everest behind the flag at the top of the stamp.

Nepal Telecommunications Corporation established the Sagarmatha Satellite Earth Station in 1982, starting its service with six SCPC channels for international communications with Standard B Earth Station (STH-01B) and was operational via INTELSAT 60°E Satellite. A stamp was issued on 7 November 1982 (Scott 403, 5 Rupees) showing a dish antenna and satellite with the Nepalese flag.<sup>27</sup> Mount Everest appears in the top right corner.

In 1982 the golden anniversary of the Union Internationale des Association d'Alpinisme (UIAA) was celebrated in Chamonix, France and Kathmandu. UIAA Kathmandu issued a declaration calling for action against the degradation of mountains. A beautiful three stamp horizontal panorama was issued on 18 November 1982 showing Mount Everest, Mount Lhotse and Mount Nuptse (Scott 404 a-c, 3 Rupees, 2 Rupees, 25 paisa).<sup>28</sup> The logo of

UIAA appears in the top left corner of each stamp. The Nepalese flag, national animal (cow), national flower (rhododendron) and national bird (pheasant) are printed in the border of the sheet.

On the occasion of the meeting of the Congress of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KTMC) from 6 to 11 May 1985, a stamp was issued (Scott 432, 10 Rupees) with features of Sagarmatha National Park showing Mount Everest behind the Lhotse-Nuptse ridge and pictures of pheasant, musk deer and Himalayan thar on the edge of the stamp.<sup>29</sup> The logo of the KMTC is in the top left corner of the stamp. The Sagarmatha National Park, established on 16 July 1976 is the highest national park in the world, located above 3000m. The park comprises the upper catchment areas (1148 sq. km.) of the Dudh Kosi and Bhoite Kosi Rivers.<sup>30</sup> UNESCO recognized Sagarmatha National Park as a World Heritage Site in 1976 as the park "contains superlative natural beauty and is of great aesthetic importance".<sup>31</sup>

Cultivation of tea started in Ilam, Nepal in 1873. In 2000 the Nepalese Government issued a national tea policy to develop tea production and promotion. Realizing the importance of the production and trade of tea in Nepal, Postal Services issued a stamp on 7 July 2003 depicting tea gardens of eastern Nepal (Scott 731) with the logo of Nepal Tea and the slogan "The Symbol of Quality from the Top of the World". Mount Everest is shown in the top right corner.

<sup>27</sup> Singer and Gould page 79 no. 186.

<sup>28</sup> Singer and Gould page 79 no.187-189.

<sup>29</sup> Singer and Gould page 83 no. 234.

<sup>30</sup> Jeffries, Margaret (2006) Highest Heritage - The Mount Everest Region and Sagarmatha National Park, Pilgrims, Varanasi, page 11.

<sup>31</sup> A number of stamps have been issued showing Sagarmatha National Park, a Natural World Heritage Site: United Nations (Scott 211), Grenada Grenadines (Scott 1984) and also a pre-stamped envelope from Australia.

In April 2006 strikes and street protests in Kathmandu forced the King to reinstate the parliament. A seven-party coalition resumed control of the government and stripped the king of most of his powers. On 24 December 2007, seven parties, including the former Maoist rebels and the ruling party, agreed to abolish the monarchy and declare Nepal a Federal Republic. On 28 May 2008 the newly elected Constituent Assembly declared Nepal a Federal

Democratic Republic, abolishing the 240 year old monarchy. Ram Baran Yadav of the Nepali Congress became the first president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal on 23 July 2008. On 8 October 2009 a stamp marked “Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal” (Scott xxx, 2 Rupees) was issued. In addition to the map of Nepal, Nepalese flag and the Coat of Arms, Mount Everest is shown at the top center of the stamp.



From left: International Hotel Association (Scott 395), Sagarmatha Earth Station (Scott 403), Union of International Association of Alpinist (Scott 404a-c)



From left: Sagarmatha National Park (Scott 432), Nepal Tea (Scott), Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal (Scott xxx)

### Aerogrammes

A bluish aerogramme with “jet flying over mountains” was issued on 29-30 December 1973 with a printed stamp (Wateren 12, Type 6, 1.25 Rupees). The main mountain on the right side of the stamp is Ama Dablam. Mount Everest can be seen on the far right behind the Nuptse ridge.

### Post Cards

The 7th, 8th and 9th lots of post cards pictured Mount Everest and the design also included the Crown of Nepal, the words “post card” in Devanagari and English, a kuris (sword) and the words “name and address” in Devanagari.<sup>32</sup> The 7th lot (20 paisa, gray blue vertical stamp)

included the date of issue (29/5/1978) in the lower left corner. The 8th lot (30 paisa, gray horizontal stamp, issued 16 November 1984) has five address lines and “sanket no.” (code no.) on the right side. The 9th lot (30 paisa, brown horizontal stamp, issued 8 September 1988) has four lines for the address.

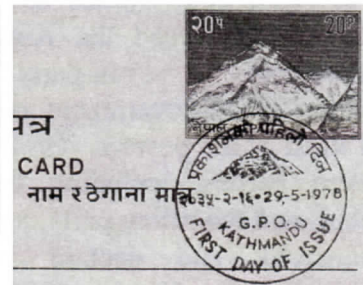
### Postal Envelopes

Among the number of envelopes issued, three pictured Mount Everest (30 paisa, vertical stamp in purple, issued 29 October 1980, 60 paisa, vertical stamp in blue, issued 8 September 1988, 1 Rupee, vertical stamp in blue). All showed the Nepalese Crown over Mount Everest.

<sup>32</sup> Gupta, Hardayal Singh (1997) Glimpse of Nepal Philately and Postage Stamps of Nepal, Kathmandu page 77-83.



Aerogramme



Post cards



Envelopes

#### D. The Other Nepalese Eight Thousanders

The eight-thousanders are the fourteen mountains on earth that are more the 8000m high above sea level. They are all located in the Himalayan and Karakoram mountain ranges in Asia.<sup>33</sup> Of the 14 eight-thousanders, eight are located in the Nepal Himalaya. On 19 October 2004, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the First Ascent of Mount Cho Oyu, a set of 8 Mountain Series stamps were issued (Scott 747 a-h, 10 Rupees each) with pictures of the 8 peaks located in Nepal.

##### Kanchenjunga (8586m)

Kanchenjunga is the subject of three Nepalese stamps. The first was issued 28 December 1971 as part of the Visit Nepal Series of Himalayan Peaks (Scott 254, 1 Rupee, deep blue and

brown).<sup>34</sup> The second stamp was issued on 19 October 2004 (Scott 747b) as part of the Mountain Series of eight stamps. Finally the third stamp was issued on 25 May 2005 on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the First Ascent of Mount Kanchenjunga (Scott 757). The first stamp identifies the elevation of the peak as 8597m while the correct height of 8586m is mentioned on the later two stamps.

Kanchenjunga is the third highest mountain in the world (after Mount Everest and K2), with an elevation of 8586m.<sup>35</sup> Kanchenjunga translated means "The Five Treasures of Snow", as it contains five peaks, four of them over 8450m. Until 1852, Kanchenjunga was assumed to be the highest mountain in the world, but calculations made by the British Great

<sup>33</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight-thousander>.

<sup>34</sup> Singer and Gould page 148 no. 9.

<sup>35</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanchenjunga>. Singer and Gould page 115 no. 6.





The stamps depicting Kanchenjunga and a cover signed by Joe Brown and George Band. The third signature id that of Tony Streater who climbed on 26 June 1955.

The eight-thousanders of Nepal. The covers are signed by Reinhold Messner, the first person to ascend all 14 eight-thousanders and Juanito Oiarzabal, the sixth man to reach the 14 summits of the 14 eight-thousanders

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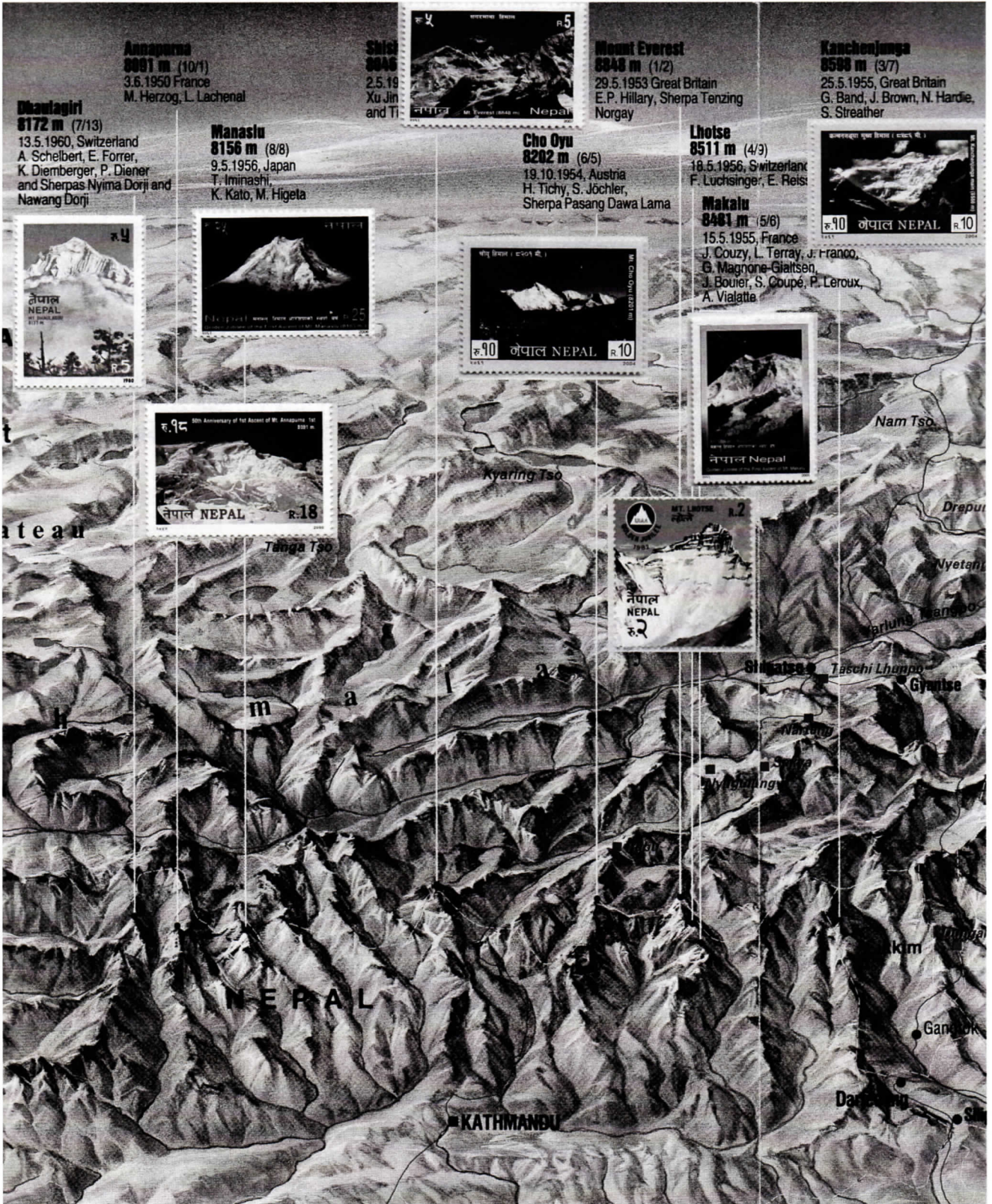
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<sup>36</sup> Kanchenjunga has been the subject on a number of stamps: India (Scott 268, 784, 785, 1223), Poland (Scott 2394). Bhutan (Scott 426) and the Gambia have issued stamps showing the Darjeeling train locomotive with Kanchenjunga in the background or as an insert.

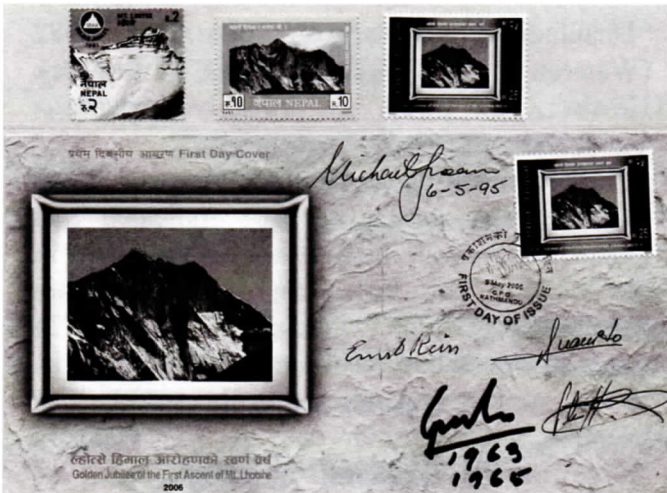
<sup>37</sup> Yugoslavia issued a stamp (Scott 2095) with a picture of Lhotse to mark the first successful ascent of the South Face by Tom Cesen of Slovenia.

<sup>38</sup> Singer and Gould page 79 nos. 187-189, page 188 no. 36.

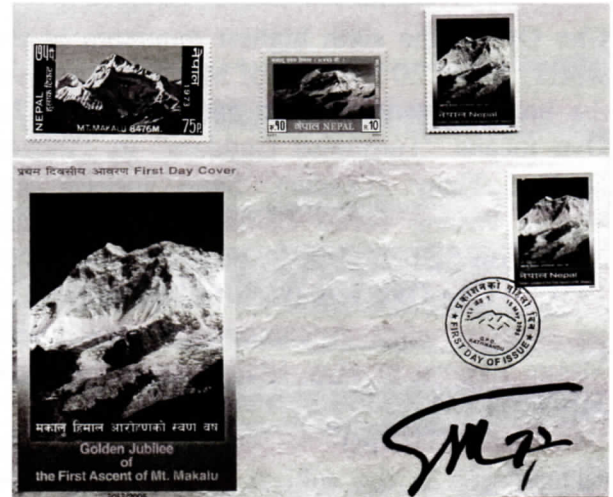
<sup>39</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lhotse>. Singer and Gould page 115 no. 4.



Location of Major Nepal Himalayan Peaks



Stamps depicting Lhotse. The cover is signed by the first summiteer Ernst Reiss. The other signatures are of Peter Hillary, Nawang Gomba and Michael Groom.



Stamps depicting Makalu. The cover is signed by summiteer Guido Mangnone who reached the summit on 16 May 1955.

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Stamps depicting Cho Oyu



<sup>40</sup> On the occasion of the International Year of the Mountains, Tuvalu issued a stamp (Scott 896) depicting Makalu.

<sup>41</sup> Singer and Gould page 150 no. 9.

<sup>42</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makalu>. Singer and Gould page 115 no. 10.

<sup>43</sup> Singer and Gould page 194 no. 76.

Cho Oyu is the sixth highest mountain in the world. It lies 20 km west of Mount Everest, on the border between China and Nepal.<sup>44</sup> Cho Oyu means “Turquoise Goddess” in Tibetan. Herbert Tichy (Leader), Sepp Jöchler and Sherpa Pasang Dawa Lama of the Austrian expedition first climber the peak on 19 October 1954.<sup>45</sup> Cho Oyu was the fifth 8000m peak to be climber, after Annapurna in June 1950, Mount Everest in May 1953, Nanga Parbat in July 1953 and K2 in July 1954.

#### **Dhaulagiri (8167m)<sup>46</sup>**

Dhaulagiri is the subject of three Nepalese stamps. The first was issued on 1 July 1968 (Scott C5, 2.50 Rupees, deep blue) on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation. The peak is not identified by name on the stamp nor in the catalogue. The second stamp was issued on 14 September 1980 as part of the Visit Nepal Series (Scott 387).<sup>47</sup> The third stamp was issued on 19 October 2004 as part of the Mountain Series of 8 stamps (Scott 747f). The second stamp states the elevation of the peak to be 8137m instead of 8167m as given on the third stamp.

There are also two aerogrammes identified as

“Dhaulagiri”<sup>48</sup> issued on 14 April 1982 (Wateren 15, Type 7, 2.50 Rupees, 10 Rupees). However, the peaks are probably Annapurna South and Huinchuli.

Computations by Lt. William Spencer Webb from surveys started in 1808 indicated that Dhaulagiri was the highest known mountain in the world. This lasted for 30 years before Kanchenjunga took Dhaulagiri’s place. In terms of rise above local terrain, Dhaulagiri is, in fact, almost unparalleled in the world. For example, it rises 7000m over the Kali Gandaki Gorge to the southeast in about 30km of horizontal distance. The South and West Faces of Dhaulagiri both feature massive drops; each rising over 4000m from its base, and each has been the site of epic climbs.<sup>49</sup> Kurt Diemberger, Peter Diener, Ernst Forrer, Albin Schelbert, Nyima Dorji and Nawang Dorji, members of a Swiss/Austrian expedition, led by Max Eiselin, first climbed Dhaulagiri on 13 May 1960. This was the last 8000m peak to be conquered. It ended the decade of human struggle to reach the summit of the highest mountains on the planet which started with the conquest of Annapurna I by the French in 1950.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cho\\_Oyu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cho_Oyu).

<sup>45</sup> Singer and Gould page 102 no. 5.

<sup>46</sup> A stamp from Nevis (Scott 1302) issued to commemorate the International Year of the Mountains depicts Dhaulagiri. It is one of the six stamps in the sheetlet.

<sup>47</sup> Singer and Gould page 178 no. 39.

<sup>48</sup> Refer to Gupta page 82.

<sup>49</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhaulagiri>.

<sup>50</sup> The highest peak in Europe, Mont Blanc (4779m), was first climber in 1786. In Africa, Kilimanjaro (5861m) was climbed in 1889. Aconcagua (6920m), the highest peak in the western hemisphere, was climber in 1987. The first ascent of 75 Alpine peaks over 3000m had been completed by 1906. In the Himalayas, the first major ascent took place in 1907 when T. Longstaff, A. Brocherel and Karbir Burathoki climbed Trisul (7120m) in 1907. (Gurung, page 83).

to be continued - ed.

## Tibet Post Marks and Postal Lines 1912-1933

by Bo C. Olsson

The author wishes to thank Dr. Wolfgang Hellrigl for his kind permission to use a map and postmarks from his book "The Postal Markings of Tibet".

It is interesting to see how the Tibetan postal marks have developed parallel to the postal system with its postal lines and the opening of new post offices in different parts of the country; or more correctly how they probably developed, because so much is unknown about Tibetan postal history.

At the time when the government of the Dalai Lama decided that a general postal system be established in Tibet, the British already had a post office since 1904 in Gyantse in the central part of the country. As a matter of fact, the British opened several more offices thereafter.

In 1912, the first domestic post offices opened in Lhasa and Gyantse. Thus, Lhasa via the British post office in Gyantse had direct contact with the outer world, and Tibetan letter writers now had access to the world's postal routes.

However, at that time the world from a Tibetan letter writer's perspective included mainly India and Nepal and to some extent Bhutan. Letters to other countries are rare if not non-existent.

During 1909 – 11 there were also imperial Chinese post offices in some Tibetan cities.

### Postal Line 1

Lhasa – Dongkur – Chushu – Pelti –  
Nangartse – Gyantse

LHASA, the capital of Tibet hardly requires a closer description. If nothing else, the impressive Potala Palace is known to most.

DONGKUR is a place that nowadays is difficult to locate. Waterfall does not give a location description, whereas Haverbeck called the place Gongkur and also provided a description that led me to connect it with the current location of the Lhasa airport.

Hellrigl hesitates, but says that the Tibetan text undoubtedly starts with "GO." Perhaps, we will never solve the puzzle about Dongkur's location.

CHUSHU is a small town by the mighty river Tsangpo southwest of Lhasa.

PELTI is located by Yamdrok Tso (Turkos Lake).

NANGARTSE (later Nagartse) also located by Yamdrok Tso.

GYANTSE is Tibet's third largest city where the Indian trade delegation had its headquarters, and where mail to and from abroad was exchanged. Even the telegraph line between Lhasa and India passed through the town.

The first marks were all of the so-called negative type, i.e. the text could be read in white against a black (sometimes colored) background. All of the post offices along the postal line from Lhasa and down to Gyantse had these marks.

It is very likely that the Tibetan postal system was built in stages. After the main line Lhasa – Gyantse the expansion continued. And since Gyantse had a British – Indian post office there was no incentive to lengthen the line down to Phari (Pharijong) at that time. A telegram dated in Kalimpong in Northern India on June 9, 1912 and published in the paper "The Englishman" stated that: "During the last month the Tibetan government has established an independent postal service between Lhasa and Gyantse."

As far as marks are concerned the first known year is from Wolfgang Hellrigl's handbook "The Postal Markings of Tibet." We realize that it is not certain that all of the small post offices between Lhasa and Gyantse opened at the same time. They probably did not and could have opened several years after Lhasa and Gyantse, since all are minor locations and not much mail from there. Most of the stamp imprints are transit marks.

Dongkur is an extremely uncommon mark and as far as I know is only known 1924 – 26 on postal sacks containing the Lhasa government's

diplomatic mail to the legation in India.

Self-imposed isolation was characteristic of the old Tibet. Lhasa had only the British legation and the embassies of Nepal and Bhutan. The Nepalese had consulates in the largest cities, but nothing else.

The postal runners who delivered the diplomatic mail had a tough going of it. In those days there were actually no roads in Tibet that resembled what we consider roads. The level differences between the passes and the valleys were literally dizzying, and even under favorable conditions it took four days between Lhasa and Phari. For the postal runners there was no room for laziness in reaching their destination.

### **Postal Line 2**

Lhasa – Dechen – Medagongkur

DECHEN is a small town immediately east of Lhasa.

MEDAGONGKUR is located northeast of Lhasa.

It can be concluded from the design of the marks that the postal system's next expansion happened eastward from Lhasa. The Dechen and Medagongkur early marks resemble very much the usual negative marks already used on the main line between Lhasa and Gyantse. They are of the so-called negative type except the middle segment is square instead of circular. The marks also have ornaments lacking on the initial negative marks.

Waterfall had pictured the negative ornamentals together with the other negative marks (page 115 in his handbook) and I think that is the right place for them. And even though the ornamentals differ from the first negative marks they still belong together somehow.

### **Postal Line 3**

Medagongkur – Gyamda

GYAMDA is another small town by the eastern postal line and was the capital of Kongpo province.

The next step was probably the opening of the post office in Gyamda. The mark is of the same type as that of Dechen and Medagongkur - only it is a regular mark (not a negative). The mark looks like the "failing link" between the

negative marks and the later positive ornamentals.

### **Postal Line 4**

Gyantse – Penam – Shigatse

PENAM is a little village located immediately southwest of Shigatse.

SHIGATSE is Tibet's second city and here is the monastery of the Panchen Lama.

Apparently within a brief period the next expansion happened toward the west and southwest. This brought also the introduction of a new mark type for the most recent post offices of Shigatse and Penam in the west.

Some years ago a similar mark was discovered at the Oga Dzong (Holkar) location in the eastern system. The locality should not have had this type of mark, but the probable explanation is that the post office in Oga Dzong opened later than the other post offices in the east, and apparently at that time a mark was being made for Phari. Thus, the similar appearance.

A post office in Holkar meant that the postal line was lengthened southward from the main line. It is surprising that the, for Tibetan standards, large city of Chamdo was not connected to Lhasa in that a post office would have opened there, too. Instead, merchants and the public had to trust travelers to carry their mail. As a matter of fact this was done also in most cases in eastern locations with post offices. There is no other way to explain the few existing postally used letters and in some cases mark imprints.

### **Postal Line 5**

5A: Gyantse – Phari

5B: Silk road – Oga Dzong

PHARI (also called Pharijong = Phari dzong (Castle Phari) is located in the Chumbi Valley of south Tibet. As in Gyantse, mail to and from Tibet was exchanged at the British-Indian Post.

OGA DZONG is really a place "east of sun, west of moon." Until the 1980s its first postal mark was unknown and is still known on one copy only in cut condition on a letter mail cutting. So, not even a whole imprint exists.

The western postal line final expansion happened from Gyantse down to Phari in the Chumbi Valley. Probably there was also an

expansion of the postal line eastward. That might explain why post marks of the same design exist for such separate places as Phari and Oga Dzong.

Oga Dzong is missing from Reinhard's list of Tibetan post offices 1922, perhaps because Oga Dzong came about later than Phari. Waterfall put the place between Gyandie and Chomorach and so did Hellrigl who later corrected the placement of Oga Dzong and sent me an altered map. I tried to find the location on two maps of Tibet that I have. Absent from the first map, the second gave a result. Oga Dzong was where Hellrigl had placed it, but spelled Oka instead of Oga. However, this means nothing special. The Tibetan language in essence is so different from the European that the spelling of one location depends on who is listening and writing down. Oga (Dzong) has among other been spelled as Holkar, Holgha, Holdga, O Kha, Wolkha, and Wosel.

#### Postal Line 6

CHOMORACK is an office located farthest east on the postal line. According to Waterfall a post office supposedly existed beyond Chomorack but at that time connected with the Chinese postal system. Renault reported that an early ornamental mark might have existed for Chomorack but any imprints are unknown. In any case it could have been of the same type as the one from Gyamda. What is known is that an ornamental 1933-type mark exists from that location. For clearness sake I choose to include also Chomorack in this account, a late expansion of the earlier lines.

In order to understand how difficult the research into this field is, I can tell you that Haverbeck in his book on Tibet only mentions the ornamental mark from Gyamda. All the others are unknown to him. Waterfall in his book has these early marks from the eastern line. The so-called flower marks he regards as forgeries. Apparently he only knew the marks from Dechen and Medagongkur, since only these were pictured.

Hellrigl in his handbook on marks has pictures of the flower marks from Dechen, Gyamda, and Medagongkur. Oka Dzong lacks this type,

which perhaps can be explained because the location is not situated along the main line.

There is a difference between Hellrigl's and my presentation. I do not put the flower marks as the first used in their respective locations. Hellrigl on his part wrote a very initiated article of the postal marks on the eastern line in "The China Clipper."

There is not much material that could help us collectors put these marks in the right order. In K. H. Dahnke's collection there was, however, a cutting with a stamp canceled with a flower mark from Medagongkur. Next to it a negative type arrival mark from Lhasa dated by hand but as usual lacking the year. Of course this could be an indication that the flower marks were first but could also mean that an older mark type was for some reason used temporarily. This is not common but it occurs.

In my view, it is not "the way" to put the flower marks first. In that case the "line of development" that I envisioned in introducing these postal marks is not quite accurate.

Lastly, Reinhard's list from 1922 indicates also a mark from Chomorack from the period of 1912 – 33 as well as Shetang (south of Lhasa). These marks are unknown to present day collectors but, since Renault had at least one letter marked to order from each post office, one can surmise that these two also existed.

Waterfall had a letter that possibly could have been from Shetang but the mark was indistinct, so he was not certain about it. I myself have a letter with a mark that I have not been able to place. I am just as uncertain whether it is Shetang as Waterfall was about his letter.

#### Tibet's Early Postal Marks

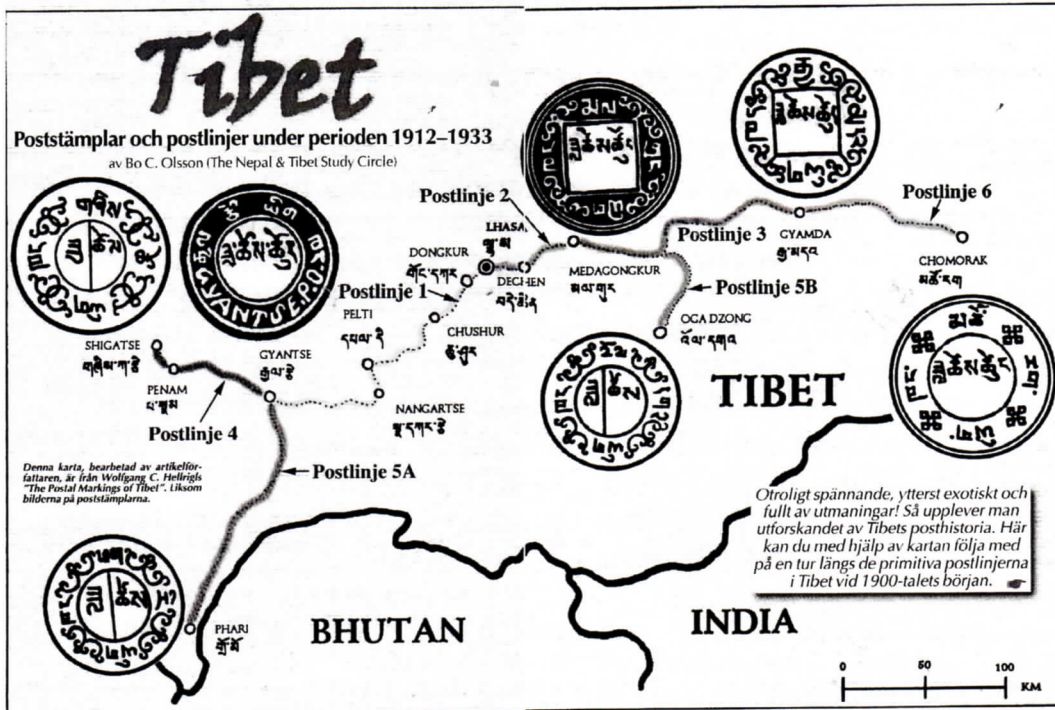
The years indicate the earliest known mark use. Some of the marks are only known on one or two copies and here the information about earliest use is lacking.

**Negative** postal marks with **circular** center: Lhasa and Gyantse 1913; Chushu, Nangartse, and Pelti 1915; Dongkur 1924. **Negative** marks with **rectangular** center and ornaments: Dechen, Medagongkur. Ornamental mark like the above but in **positive** appearance: Gyamda.

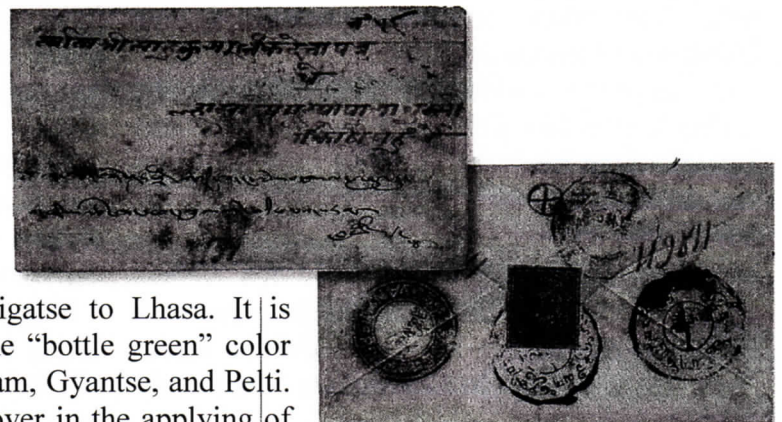
Ornamental postal mark of new design and

large format: Shigatse 1915; Penam 1916.  
Ornamental postal mark of design as above

but small format: Phari 1916; Oga Dzong  
(blank).

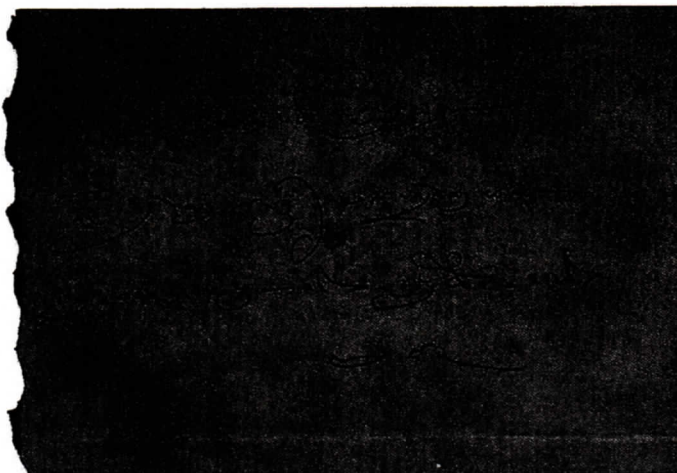


A Tibetan postal runner in typical attire and leather boots; he carried a spear to defend against wild animals. With a bell he announced his impending arrival at a postal station. According to information it took 8 – 10 days between Lhasa and Gangtok in Sikkim. And according to further information, a letter writer in Lhasa had to wait 17 days for a reply from Calcutta. The lines had a relay system with different runners and the system operated from dawn to dusk the whole day.



A very uncommon letter sent from Shigatse to Lhasa. It is franked with a very rare nuance from the “bottle green” color group. And it has transit marks from Penam, Gyantse, and Pelti. However, before long indifference took over in the applying of transit marks and by the 1920s these had become quite rare. The letter was sent by one of the large merchant houses and above the flap a notice threatening a curse on anyone not authorized to break the envelope seal.





A private letter sent from Medagongkur. The address reads: To Director Ketsang Ladrang, Lhasa/ From Thupten Wangdu, Medagongkur/"On a lucky day."



The Post in Gyantse, perhaps the postmaster himself is standing at the entrance with a sign above in three languages. The English version reads: "The Tibet Post Office." Thus, no visitor could miss the location of the town's post office.



The main post office in Lhasa was lodged in a former monastery - Tengyeling. The postmaster here also spoke English.



One of the so-called flower marks. The design resembles the 1933 marks from the Eastern postal line. See the Chomorack mark included on the first page map.

#### Bibliography of persons whose names appeared in this article.

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- Hellrigl, Wolfgang C. Expert on Tibet, Nepal, and Mongolia. Has published, among others, the catalog handbook “The Postal Markings of Tibet.”
- Reinhard, F. Editor of “Schweizer Briefmarken-Zeitung“ in the 1920s.
- Renaut, F.P. Wrote an article on Tibet in the Gibbons Monthly in 1923.
- Waterfall, Arnold C. Besides articles, he wrote “The Postal History of Tibet,” a “bible” to all Tibet collectors.

This article first appeared in *Nordisk Filateli*, May 2009. The editor thanks them for permission to reprint in here.

## Butterflies of Nepal by Colin Hepper

It is recorded that Nepal supports 11 out of the 15 families of butterflies in the world, with 643 species being identified to date, with new species being added to the list each year.

Butterflies have been studied in Nepal for over 150 years, with much of the original study and collection being undertaken by the British, including one or two British residents (the British Consuls of the day). After 1950 the

Japanese became involved in collection through scientific expeditions and this eventually resulted in the establishment by Tribhuvan University of the Natural History at Swayambhu in 1974.

Nepal Post issued a sheetlet of 16x10r. stamps on 8 October 2009 illustrating a cross-section, albeit, a very small one, of the country's fabulous butterfly population.



### Request for information regarding the 24 pice local Pashupati printing

If any member has a sheet of the 24 pice local Pashupati printing with the year date 2003 in **both** marginal inscriptions would you please let Colin Hepper know or let him have a photo copy or scan of the sheet. Colin writes: 'I am asking for this as I am having a go at bringing the Pashupati book I wrote 30 years ago up-to-date. In the book I stated that the first two printings had the year date on both marginal inscriptions and the remaining printings had some of the digits missing in the right hand margin. After having the book Armand Singer said that he had a sheet that fitted the first printing details but the year digits were missing on one side. Since then I have collected together many photocopies of all the sheet values but cannot find a 24 pice one that has complete inscriptions on both sides. So I am puzzled, as I must have seen this sheet or I would not have commented on it, or did I make a mistake?'

[Members can email Colin at [colinhepper@aol.co.uk](mailto:colinhepper@aol.co.uk) - ed.]