

# Postal Himal



QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE NEPAL AND TIBET PHILATELIC STUDY CIRCLE

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*Surendra Lal Shrestha passed away 18 July after a long illness.  
A life long member of the Philatelic Society in Kathmadu, a life  
member of the Society, and a our representative in Nepal for  
35 years*

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We hope that you enjoy being a member of our Society and look forward to having you renew your subscription with us.

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### Dear Members

Since the last issue of Postal Himal there have been a few more changes within the society. We now have a new secretary in Arunga Srivastava from India who will also look after our affairs in India. He is a very enthusiastic new member and at the moment he is building a new web site for us which I hope many of our members will use.

Also, since the last issue, as we had two bank accounts in the USA all the society funds are

now in one account run by our treasurer Eddie Hackstaff. Would all members please note that all subscriptions are now paid to Eddie irrespective of the country you live in.

I would also like to welcome Rishi Tulsian who has taken over the position of our representative in Nepal.

We still have a number of members for whom we have no email address so to help to keep our records up to-date, please send your email address to our secretary.

**Colin Hepper**

### Editor's Ramblings

Interesting articles keep arriving in the Editor's mailbag. We try to print the articles that arrive the first, but the space limitations means that we have to save some articles for the next issue of the Postal Himal. We do use short articles to fill in when there is not enough space to print the larger articles.

I would like to thank all those who contribute to the newsletter. They are the ones who keep

the study circle going.

We have changing leadership that will help refresh the NTPSC. Their increased participation is appreciated. I would also like to thank Ken Goss for copy editing the newsletter that helps make this a better publication and to Alan Warren who helps keep us up to date on philatelic awards won by our members.

### Show and Tell

The four Nepal exhibits by Leo Martyn at Sescal 2022 can be viewed at <https://sescalexhibits.org/>.

Eddie Hackstaff has videos on his Everest presentation at [Himalaya Expedition Mail \(hackstaff.com\)](https://www.hackstaff.com/HimalayaExpeditionMail)

### Awards

#### Indonesia 2022 Exhibition

This international show was held in Jakarta, August 4-9. Rishi Kumar Tulsyan's "Nepal: The Pre-Stamp and Classic Period 1779-1907" was displayed in the Championship Class.

Other awards were as follows:

Johannes Bornmann. "Nepal, Classic Postal Stationery 1887-1959" Gold

Ashok Rana. "Shri Pashupati Issues of Nepal 1907-1950" Vermeil

Kedar Pradhan. "Revenues of Nepal" Vermeil

The Global Philatelic Network. *Edition D'Or Vol. 47: Nepal – The Dr. Wolfgang C. Hellrigl Collection* Vermeil

Binod Shrestha. *Nepal as the World Sees Through Postal Stamps*, Silver

Kedar Prasad Pradhan. *The History of Nepalese Postage Stamps – A Matter of Glory to Nepal* Silver

Eddie Hackstaff Also, received a gold medal at the Minnesota Stamp Expo for his one frame exhibit "Mt. Everest Expedition Mail, 1922 - 1953"

## Surendra Lal Shrestha

by Colin Hepper



Surendra Lal Shrestha sadly passed away on 18 July after quite a long illness. He was a life member of the Society and a life long member of The Philatelic Society in Kathmandu. He had been our representative in Nepal for the past 35 years and did much to try and promote Nepalese philately and in his later years had a stamp shop. I have been a 'philatelic friend' with him for many years and purchased much of my modern postal history from him which he always gave me the translations. The first I heard of the major earthquake in 2015 was an email from him early in the morning which just said 'I am safe'. Surendra you are safe now and may you rest in Peace.

Colin Hepper

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### A Scarce Cover and Mountaineering History from the 1954 California Himalaya Expedition to Makalu

By Eddie Hackstaff

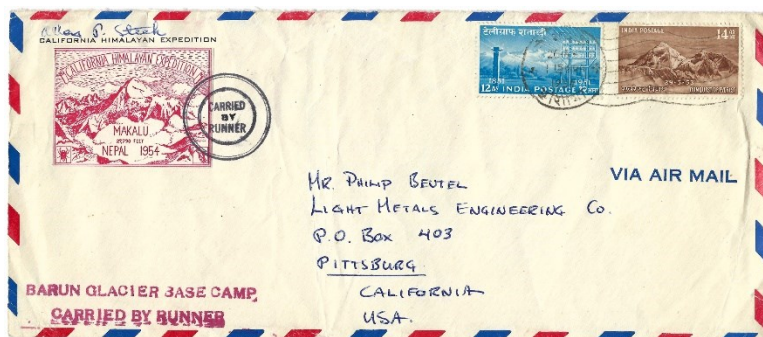


Figure 1, 1954 cover from the California Himalaya Expedition to Makalu with expedition

I would like to tell you about a scarce cover I recently acquired. For me this was the acquisition of a mythical cover that I had only read about; a commercially used cover from the 1954 California Himalaya Expedition to Makalu bearing an expedition label (Figure 1). But first, a little back-ground on the expedition and the label.

In 1954, the California Himalayan Expedition left the U.S. with hopes of becoming the first to reach the summit of Makalu, the 5th highest peak in the world at

8,463 meters (27,766 feet). This was the first attempt to scale the peak. The expedition objectives incorporated a full-fledged scientific program to include biological and physiological research.

Sponsorship of the expedition was critical due to limited funding. The team appealed to the Sierra Club and the American Alpine Club, which provided significant support in funding and equipment. The time period of the expedition was the dawn of the jet age. The US Air Force was very interested in the high-altitude physiological research portion of this expedition. As a result, the Air Force flew the expedition to and from Calcutta, India. This resulted in a large reduction in the funding requirements for the movement of equipment. At that time the best available equipment was Korean War-style tents and clothing, not the light equipment we are familiar with today.

Facing a tight budget, Dr. Lawrence Swan, a serious mountaineer and stamp collector, recalled the success of the 1924 British Mt.

(Continued on page 5)

## A Scarce Cover and Mountaineering History from the 1954 California Himalaya Expedition to Makalu

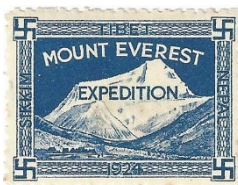


Figure 2, 1924 British Mt. Everest Expedition label

(Continued from page 4)

### Everest Expedition label (Figure 2).

Dr. Swan thought souvenir covers bearing an expedition label and mailed from base camp would be a great fund-raising idea. Dr. Swan found a photograph of the Mt. Everest range that captured Makalu taken during the 1933 Houston Mt. Everest Flight. With some artistic license he created a label.

The first labels were printed in both red and blue with about 500 of each so as not to offend Stanford or Berkeley University. While in base camp the initial list of donors arrived and the first print run of labels was sold out. A request was sent to Dr. Swan's wife to generate a second printing for an additional 200 labels. This time green was the color of choice (Figure 3).



Figure 3, The three labels created by Dr. Swan.

The expedition employed three markings on the mail. The first was a double-double circle applied in either black or red. An additional straight line "BARUN GLACIER BASE CAMP" marking, in black or red, was applied to the mail processed at the expedition base camp post office. A third red straight-line marking,

"CARRIED BY RUNNER," I have seen only on the commercially used cover (Figure 1). A couple of these markings were reused in later expeditions.

The souvenir covers were advertised for \$1.00 and were handmade envelopes using locally produced paper with the special expedition label and markings. The covers were intended to help raise funds for the expedition. However, after the cost of the labels, native paper, cost for porter support in making the envelopes, cost for porter transport to Biratnager, Nepal, Nepal postage to India and India postage to the final destination, not much was left of the \$1.00.

According to Dr. Swan, the souvenir covers were considered a triple franked cover. The labels were affixed to the envelopes at the "unofficial" Barun Glacier P.O. used by the expedition members and porters. The label (an unofficial local) paid for the mail to be carried from base camp by an expedition porter to Biratnagar, Nepal, where Nepalese stamps were added and cancelled. As Nepal was not part of the U.P.U., the mail needed to reach an Indian P.O. to continue the journey to its final destination. The Nepal P.O. dispatched the mail with another "official" runner across the border to Jogbani, India, where additional Indian stamps were added for a posting on to its final destination, thus it is a triple-franked cover.

A total of 280 souvenir covers were sent with the red label and 205 souvenir covers were sent with the blue label. Only 30 souvenir covers were sent with the green label (Figure 4). In the end, the covers may not be considered a fund-raising success but they were definitely a philatelic success.

In Dr. Swan's book, "Tales of the Himalaya, Adventures of a Naturalist," he dedicates an entire chapter to this philatelic adventure. In it he states some of the expedition members asked to use the label on their mail. The sherpas also asked for the labels. A notable

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## A Scarce Cover and Mountaineering History from the 1954 California Himalaya Expedition to Makalu



Figure 4, Souvenir covers with a red and green label

(Continued from page 5)

sherpa, Sonam Gompu, requested a label for a letter to his uncle, Tensing Norgay, who later gained fame for the first ascent of Mt. Everest with Edmund Hillary.

That brings us back to the cover in Figure 1. Dr. Swan's book confirms the existence of the non-souvenir covers. In all my research on Himalayan expedition correspondence I have never come across an example of the 1954 expedition cover mailed by an expedition member until now. Recently, I was lucky to acquire this scarce cover mailed by expedition member Allen Steck. To my surprise, the original letter was still in the envelope! The fact the letter was still in the envelope makes this an amazing piece of mountaineering history. The letter describes the performance of the new lightweight pack frames provided by the recipient (Light Metals Engineering, Co., Pittsburgh, California), the ongoing physiological testing and the plans for the team to start reconnaissance of Makalu for possible climbing routes.

The expedition completed the first thorough reconnaissance of Makalu for climbing purposes

and attempted the southeast ridge. They were turned around at 23,300 feet due to extreme weather. Two other expeditions attempted the peak later that year but were also repulsed by bad weather. The following year a French expedition became the first to ascend the Makalu peak using an approach from the north. The difficult southeast ridge that this expedition attempted would not be successfully climbed until 1970. Despite all the setbacks the expedition successfully completed extensive scientific research and mapping of the area.

As for Dr. Swan, the mountaineer, he would go on to join more Himalayan expeditions. Dr. Swan, the philatelist produced expedition labels for the 1960-61 Himalayan Scientific and Mountaineering Expedition and the successful 1963 American Mt. Everest Expedition (Figure 5).



Fig. 5, Souvenir covers from the 1960-1961 expedition and 1963 American Mt. Everest expedition.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or additional details about this story at: [eddie@hackstaff.com](mailto:eddie@hackstaff.com).

## A Note on “The 1938-1939 Schafer Tibet Expedition”

by Clark L. Miller

Leo Martyn’s article on the Ernst [Schäfer Expedition to Tibet in 1938-1939](#) included a cover front sent to Germany by one of the members of the team. (1) Based on a similar complete cover the sender can be identified as Edmund Geer, the expedition’s logistics and transport manager. The complete cover is in the same handwriting and was also sent via Air Mail to the same correspondent. Fortunately, Geer included his name on the reverse. (Figures 1 and 2).



**Figure 1.** Front of Ernst Schäfer Expedition to Tibet cover from Edmund Geer, logistics and transport manager. Poorly struck Lhasa postmark on Tibetan stamps paying 3 1/6 trangka postage, slightly overpaying the 3 trangka rate.

It is also possible to identify all those attending the party in the photograph included in the article. Once in Lhasa, the Schäfer Expedition set about finding friends. Their first was Chang Wei-pei (Zhang Weibai), the Chinese representative at Lhasa. Chang, along with a Tibetan official and a Nepali representative met the expedition outside the city and escorted them through the western gate into Lhasa. The Chinese, wanting to improve Schafer’s prospects, entertained the members of the expedition shortly after their arrival at a banquet at the Chinese mission.



**Figure 2.** Reverse of Geer cover. This airmail letter entered the British India Post at Gyantse, 15 February 1939 and was sent to Hersbruck, Nuremberg, Germany. The return address reads: “G. Geer, Lhasa / Tibet, Schäfer Tibet Expedition.”

The guests included Tsarong Dzasa, former Commander-in-Chief of the Army and one of the richest men in Tibet. Tsarong had been a close advisor to the late 13th Dalai Lama and was a champion of modernization and reform. (2)

Under SS pennants and a swastika, the members of the expedition held a feast for their Lhasa friends at Tredilinka, “a drab and pokey official residence” provided for them by the Tibetan government. The guests included Tsarong, Chang Wei-pei, and four Westernized Tibetans. Khenrab Künsang Möndrong (Möndro), Kyibu Wangdu Norbu (Kyipup) and Rigzin Dorje Ringang had been sent to England in 1913 by the 13th Dalai Lama to receive a Western education at Rugby School. Completing the dinner party was Jigmé Taring, Tibet’s Treasurer, who had been educated at St. Paul’s School in Darjeeling. The expedition’s influential friends lobbied on their behalf with the Kashag, Tibet’s ruling council, and succeeded in

*(Continued on page 8)*

## A Note on “The 1938-1939 Schafer Tibet Expedition”

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extending their stay in Lhasa from a fortnight to over two months. (3)

In this cropped photo Tsarong sits at the head of the table with Ernst [Schäfer](#). On the left, beginning at the end, are Kyibu, Bruno Berger (entomologist), Chang Wei-pei, and Edmund Geer (Schäfer’s right-hand man). Next to Schäfer on the right are Jigmé and then Ringang. Examples of an un-cropped version of the same photo show Möndro and Karl Wienert (geophysicist) seated on the right following Ringang. Ernst Krause (the expedition’s camera operator) took the photo. (4)

### NOTES:

- 1) Leo Martyn, “The 1938-1939 Schafer Tibet Expedition,” **Postal Himal**, Number 187. 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2021, September 2021, pp. 13-14.
- 2) Christopher [Hale](#), **Himmler’s Crusade: The Nazi Expedition to Find the Origins of the Aryan Race** (2003); pp. 233-234; Isrun [Engelhardt](#), **Tibet in 1938-1939: Photographs from the Ernst Schäfer Expedition to Tibet** (2007), pp 38-39; “The Autobiography of Tsarong,” pp.103-109; Tsering Shakya, “A Brief Comment on Tsarong,” pp. 110-111.
- 3) Hale, pp. 234, 246, 267-272, 292; “Four Rugby Boys,” From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia; Engelhardt, pp. 38, 60, 83-84.
- 4) Hale lists the expedition’s friends attending the feast on page 271 and includes an uncropped version of the **Postal Himal** photo following page 298. The caption on Hale’s photo identifies Tsarong, Schäfer, Berger, Geer, Wienert, and Möndro. The same uncropped photo appears in “1938–39 German expedition to Tibet,” From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. The caption provided is like Hale’s but adds the identification of the Chinese representative in Lhasa, Chang Wei-pei. Jigmé appears in both the cropped and un-cropped versions of the photo but is not named in either one. The “Four Rugby Boys” article includes a different photo taken at the party which identifies Kyibu, Ringang, Möndro, Chang Wei-pei, and Tsarong. Engelhardt includes the same photo with a similar caption, p 160.

### Cavendish Auction

The October 2022 Cavendish Auction catalog is now on line. The auction contains the Colin Hepper collection of Nepal Stamps and Postal History See <https://www.cavendish-auctions.com/>.

# The Genesis of Bhutan Postage Stamps, the 1950s Indian Diplomatic Discussion

by Aranya Dutta Choudhury<sup>1</sup>

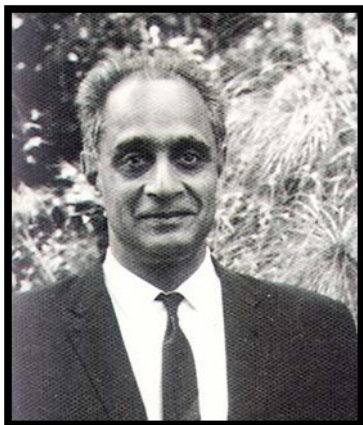


Fig. 1: Apa Balasaheb Pant

and the Kingdom of Bhutan based in Gangtok, that a report has been received that the Government of Bhutan intends to print their own stamps and join the Universal Postal Union.

Roy continues that the scheme of printing stamps for Bhutan was taken by the Maharaja of Bhutan already back in 1950-1951 when the King visited England. Upon his return to Bhutan he persuaded his ministers to explore the idea of usage of postage stamps and a plan was initiated for the Bhutan postal administration to join the Universal Postal Union. Jigme Palden Dorji, since 1953 Agent of the Government of Bhutan based at Bhutan House, Kalimpong was entrusted with bringing this to fruition (note that in 1958 Jigme Dorji would become the first Prime Minister of Bhutan).

Jigme Dorji, on his part had authorised Burt Kerr Todd, an American friend of both him as well as the King, to take necessary action for the scheme of printing stamps of Bhutan. Todd was at that time holidaying in



Fig. 2: Jigme Palden Dorji

Bhutan along with his “newly wedded wife” as the diplomatic missive says. Furthermore, the letter states that Todd has contacted Hugh Harrison of the security printers Harrison & Sons Ltd. in England, to take up Bhutan's case for admission to the Universal Postal Union (UPU). The letter ends with asking Apa Pant to look into the matter urgently and send a report to the MEA so that a proper advice can be sent to the Bhutan Government in such matters of international importance.

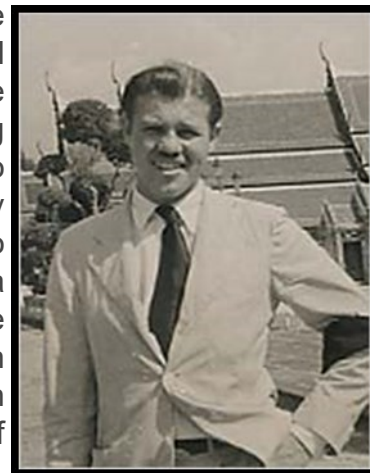


Fig. 3: Burt Kerr Todd

The missive was acted upon very promptly by Apa Pant, showing how urgent and serious the Government of India considered the intention of Bhutan to print their own postage stamps. Indeed, it has been said and experienced in many cases, that issuing own postage stamps, like a country's flag, is the assertion of the country's international personality.

Direct diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968 with the appointment of a resident representative of India in Thimphu. Before this India's relations with Bhutan were looked after by a Political Officer based in Sikkim. The basic framework of India - Bhutan bilateral relations is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 between the two countries. The bilateral treaty between the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan and Republic of India denotes a “special relationship” making Bhutan a protected state but not a protectorate. India wielded considerable influence over Bhutan's foreign

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<sup>1</sup> With thanks to Leo van der Velden for his concise editing and advice.

<sup>2</sup> letter no 1798-NGO/55, in file no. 7(4)-P, 1955, National Archives of India

## The Genesis of Bhutan Postage Stamps, the 1950s Indian Diplomatic Discussion

### TREATY OF PERPETUAL PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

Darjeeling,

8 August 1949

#### Article II

The Government of India undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part the Government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations

(Continued from page 9)

policy, defence and commerce.

Hence the Government of India was keen to understand in depth the ramifications of Bhutan issuing its own postage stamps and joining the UPU, and how India could contribute to the same. Apa Pant by a secret missive to Jigme Dorji (PO-7 (iv)/55) dated 5th of August 1955 enquired about the plans which the Government of Bhutan has on the matters reported by MEA. He remarked furthermore that the joining of the UPU by the Government of Bhutan has international implications and therefore the Indian government wants to be a part of the process.

Jigme Dorji takes some time to respond. After consulting the King of Bhutan he replies on 27th September 1955 to Apa Pant that the question of setting up a Postal System in Bhutan and joining the UPU had been considered in Bhutan for many years. The idea was originally floated by Sir B. Gould, a former British-India Political Officer for Sikkim, Bhutan and



Fig. 4: Sir Basil John Gould



Fig.5: First adhesive stamps of Bhutan- the postal fiscals

Tibet from 1935 to 1945 based in Gangtok (Sikkim). It is mentioned that even at that time the main idea was that the sale of stamps to collectors would be a great source of revenue for Bhutan<sup>3</sup>, as otherwise there is not much postal activity and adoption in Bhutan. Jigme Dorji writes as well that the first stamps of Bhutan were actually printed in London in 1949 with that idea only. They started being used first as revenue stamps in 1954 and also as postage stamps for internal use in Bhutan in 1955<sup>4</sup>. However, since these stamps have no international recognition and are treated as local stamps, the Government of Bhutan did ask private people and firms to make a few "enquiries on the matter of ways, means and customs and obligations and costs of joining the International Postal Union". He also clarifies that the Government of India was not kept in the loop, since there were no tangible results of these private enquiries by the Government of

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<sup>3</sup> See Aranya Dutta Choudhury, "Introduction of Postage Stamps in Bhutan - A letter from the Beginning", in Postal Himal 180, December 2019.

<sup>4</sup> The first stamps of Bhutan were revenue stamps, issued in 1954. In 1955 they became also valid as token of payment of postage for domestic mail, including to Bhutan House in Kalimpong (India), the Bhutanese exclaves near Mount Kailash (Tibet) as well as to the Bhutan Trade Agent at Lhasa.

## The Genesis of Bhutan Postage Stamps, the 1950s Indian Diplomatic Discussion

(Continued from page 10)

Bhutan. However one high level diplomat of the MEA, Mr. Ashok Bhadkamkar had been kept in the loop. He had promised Jigme Dorji that he will send all the forms and formats necessary for Bhutan to send in order to join the UPU.

Apa Pant was an astute diplomat, and he did not only give his opinion in writing to Jigme Dorji, but also informed Triloki N. Kaul, Joint Secretary MEA, that he will wait for the submission of the final report till he meets Jigme Dorji in person in Gangtok in the second week of November 1955.

Receiving this clarification and information from Jigme, Apa Pant sent MEA Deputy Secretary Sunil Roy a further missive dated November 17, 1955 providing information on what Jigme Dorji had replied and politely asking for advice of the Ministry. It is significant that Apa Pant supported Bhutan printing its own stamps by giving a few examples and giving his opinion: *“countries like Tichino, Andorra, Liechtenstein have their own postage stamps and most of them make colossal amount of money by selling them internationally and as all these three States have no assured international status and I do not know whether there would be any harm in our allowing Bhutan to have her own stamps. I would however like you to examine this matter more thoroughly”*.

Following this, there were a number of missives labelled Top Secret, between Apa Pant and Sunil Roy. As mentioned in one of these letters, Roy wanted Apa Pant to keep engaged with Jigme Dorji for any further data, as in his own words he wanted to examine *“this question from the broadest point of view and it is our genuine desire to serve the best interests of both the countries”*.

Finally, after much internal deliberations, Sunil Roy vide letter no F 56/94/NGO dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 1956, sent a top secret letter to Apa



Fig. 6: First postage stamps of Bhutan issued in 1962 - set of 7 values

Pant mentioning that he had enquired with P&T Directorate of India on the subject and also enclosed their report along with his letter.

First and foremost, Roy agreed with Apa Pant's opinion that India must not stand in the way of Bhutan issuing their own postage stamps: *“ If Bhutan wants to have their own stamps, I do not think we should stand in her way. Even some of the Indian princely states had their own stamps in the old British days”*<sup>5</sup>. However, the thorough practical point of the feasibility of Bhutan joining the UPU was not lost on Sunil Roy: *“Membership of the Universal Postal Union is a different matter and Bhutan is not qualified to be a member”*. Instead of Bhutan approaching the UPU through any private channel or other nation, it is the Government of India who is best qualified and in best interests of Bhutan to approach UPU in making Bhutan a member of UPU. Over a period of time, it is inevitable that Bhutan will join the UPU and India should facilitate the same rather than become a hinderance. So, Roy confirms the nod of the MEA Foreign Secretary who opines that Bhutan is free to print her own stamps but advises against following any procedure to become UPU member through private channels.

The Directorate General, Posts & Telegraphs, New Delhi writes to MEA on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1956<sup>6</sup> that no

<sup>5</sup> Note that Apa Pant was a prince of the former Principality of Aundh, which, however, never issued their own postage or revenue stamps.

<sup>6</sup> note No C.61-4/56, dated 11<sup>th</sup> January 1956

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## The Genesis of Bhutan Postage Stamps, the 1950s Indian Diplomatic Discussion

(Continued from page 11)

papers relating to the printing of their own stamps by Bhutan Government appear to have been received in the P&T Directorate, and informs the MEA as follows:

1. Any sovereign country may apply for admission as a Member of the Universal Postal Union under article 3 of the Universal Postal Convention and the application is addressed through diplomatic channels to the Government of the Swiss Confederation who in turn address the Member countries of the UPU.
2. A country is considered admitted a Member of UPU if the application is approved by a 2/3rds majority of the member countries of the Union.
3. Under article 18 of the Convention, a member country contributes to the expenses of the International union according to eh class in which it is placed.
4. As the MEA is aware, Bhutan has no post offices. Only very recently that the Bhutan Government is considering a proposal for a few post offices. A country can apply for membership of the UPU only after it has got some sort of an organised Postal system in its territory.
5. It is not essential for a country to be a member of the Universal Postal Union to enable it to issue its own stamps. In fact the counties like Andorra, Liechtenstein mentioned in Apa B Pant's letter are not member of the Union. On the other hand, countries like People's Republic of China, Democratic Republic of Korea and Democratic Republic of Germany were not permitted for political reasons to take part in the workings of UPU at that time or to sign the convention and thus also were non members during the issuance of this note.
6. Countries which are non-members can

always have their mails for other countries exchanged through an intermediary which is a member of the UPU by concluding bilateral agreements with the member country. This country would normally perform this function for the Bhutan Government. It would also sponsor their application for the membership of the UPU, but advisable only after Bhutan has organised a postal system.



Fig. 7: Postage stamp commemorative issue on Bhutan's admission to the UPU in 1969

The above comprehensive advice was very important for Apa Pant and he sent a detailed 5-page note, marked again "Top Secret" on the Bhutanese position, sentiments and the implications for the Government of India on

January 27<sup>th</sup> 1956<sup>7</sup> to Triloki N. Kaul (Tikki Kaul), MEA Joint Secretary.

Apa Pant mentions that he will speak further with Jigme Dorji, armed with



Fig. 8: Triloki Nath "Tikki" Kaul

<sup>7</sup> file no PO-7(iv)/55/51/56, letter dated January 27<sup>th</sup> 1956

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## The Genesis of Bhutan Postage Stamps, the 1950s Indian Diplomatic Discussion

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this additional information and may even offer India's own printing presses for the job of printing Bhutan's own stamps.

Apa Pant laid very deep significance to the issue of printing of Postage stamps by Bhutan. He said that till now the Bhutanese independent identity has been rather vague and with this there comes a watershed moment in history where both the position of India and Bhutan needs to be clarified. He goes on to make significant diplomatic and rational points to support the issuance of Postage of Stamps of Bhutan, a few excerpts:

1. ***"...the Bhutanese themselves are extremely anxious to behave as an "independent nation" and apart from the ruling families and the Maharaja, even the common man in Bhutan is keenly conscious of his being a Bhutanese. Their shyness of the outside world and their desire to get into their own shell time and again is really an inverted form of nationalism. I am convinced of the burning desire of the Bhutanese in general to be a separate nation. "***
2. ***"To us Bhutan becoming a nation vis -a vis Tibet should be welcome. The more they feel independent of and separate from Tibet the better it would be for us. This would mean that we do in some form encourage the separate and independent status of Bhutan"***
3. ***"As long as we from our side do not give Bhutan satisfaction regarding her desire to be a nation with an international status, she would try to seek help from outside sources for this purpose. This attraction towards Burt Todd or Sirdar Sen is nothing but an indication that in this particular respect Bhutan feels that India cannot or would not satisfy her aspirations."***
4. ***"We shall also have to consider whether Bhutan can remain in an indefinable state***

***linked only with India with no outside connections forever. If she is not a protectorate she shall have to assume some status vis a vis not only India bit at least some of the other States."***

5. ***"Bhutan of course has not a large population. She is however bigger than Andorra, Liechtenstein, Tichino, and potentially she is much bigger than Cuba, Guatemala, Liberia and many other States that are now internationally recognised....." It certainly appears that unless some kind of an international status is obtainable emotionally and psychologically Bhutan would never be satisfied and would always look for assistance and help from those who would give her to understand that such a status is obtainable."***

Based on the very sound observations of Apa Pant, Tikki Kaul asked Apa Pant to come to New Delhi and discuss in person with him on this to arrive at a proper direction in this regard, during the conference of the Heads of Missions of Asia and Africa in March 1956. The discussion seems fruitful and the Archives mention a last Top Secret note no. PO-7(iv)/55/291/56 dated August 1, 1956 issued by Apa Pant (coincidentally exactly one year from the first diplomatic note when this question first was raised!). He mentions that the question of Bhutan printing her own postage stamps and joining the Universal Postal Union again came up for discussion with Jigme Dorji. Jigme Dorji on his behalf has assured Apa Pant that post offices were already being established in Bhutan and for their own internal use and primarily from the point of view of securing some own revenue they would like to print their own postage stamps. Apa categorically mentioned to Jigme that India has ***"no objection to their printing of postage stamps."***

On the question of Bhutan joining the UPU, Jigme Dorji mentioned to Apa Pant that in order to make some revenue internationally by the

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## The Genesis of Bhutan Postage Stamps, the 1950s Indian Diplomatic Discussion

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### NEHRU OFFERS AID TO BHUTAN IN VISIT

Special to The New York Times.

NEW DELHI, India, Sept. 26 —Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has offered a helping hand to the virtually inaccessible Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan to end its isolation from India and the modern world beyond.

An official dispatch tonight from Paro, Bhutanese capital, said that, in his talks with the ruling Maharaja in the last two days, the Indian leader had emphasized the importance of building roads to provide an overland link with adjoining Indian territory and to improve communications within the country.

Mr. Nehru gave assurance during his visit that India had no designs on the hermit kingdom of the Himalayas. He also recognized the need to safeguard Bhutan's independence. The only conceivable threat to that independence, it is acknowledged here, might come from neighboring Tibet, now a subject province of Communist China.

Nehru, who will begin the five-day homeward trek by Yak, mountain pony and jeep tomorrow, also promised Indian Government's technical assistance in the development of Bhutan's primitive economy. He mentioned the importance of establishing demonstration farms and the setting up of cottage industries on the Indian model.

The Maharaja of Bhutan, Jigmi Dorji Wangchuck, is bound by treaty to accept Indian advice in foreign affairs.

The New York Times

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sale of postage stamps, Bhutan needs to be a member of UPU. Apa Pant however mentioned that this activity is much more complex in nature since it involves a member nation sponsoring them and helping them to secure the required number of votes for this approval. Jigme Dorji agreed on this with Apa and consented to work with India on this aspect once the postage stamps are issued.

In September 1958 Jawaharlal Nehru does a 5-day trek over land to Bhutan emphasizing the need to safeguard Bhutan's independence and

promising Indian Government's technical assistance in the development of Bhutan's economy, roads, and links.

This was followed in 1961 by the first Five Year Plan of Bhutan including the set-up of a postal service.

Bhutan issued its first postage stamps and opened its first post office in October 1962, after an agreement was signed between Bhutan and India in September 1962, whereby India agreed under UPU regulations to recognize Bhutan's postage stamps as valid postage for not only India but also for all other countries in the world, for which postal service would be made available through India. So foreign mail was routed through India by a bilateral agreement, while also Indian post offices along the border with Bhutan would assist in the forwarding of domestic mail. Furthermore, India provided a postal advisor Dr. K. Ramamurti to assist with the setting up of a proper postal administration.

In 1967 India agrees to sponsor Bhutan's admission to the UPU and on 7 March 1969 Bhutan becomes a member of the UPU with the active assistance of India, two years before becoming a member of the United Nations. A very major role was played in this regard by Triloki N. Kaul, who became one of the most trusted friends of the King of Bhutan as well as one of the foremost diplomats of India<sup>8</sup>.



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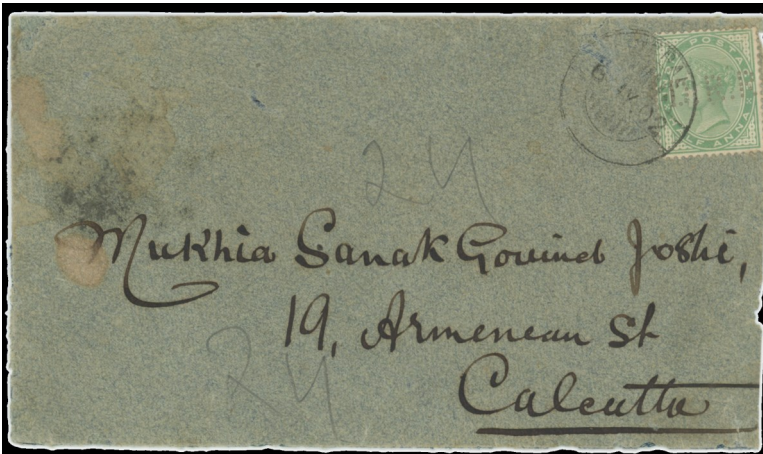
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<sup>8</sup> Triloki Nath Kaul's book on his tenure as India's Foreign Secretary (1967-1972) named "Diplomacy in Peace and War, Recollections and Reflections" is worth a read in this perspective.

## Perforated Initialed Postage Used In Nepal

by Leo Martyn



Front and reverse of cover sent May 6, 1902 from the British Residency in Kathmandu, Nepal to Calcutta, India



Enlargement of stamp with D. R. R. perfin



1902, May 6. A correspondence posted at the British Residency to Calcutta (May 9 delivery handstamp), bearing a "Perfin" Indian postage stamp tied by the newly introduced Nepalese "Swiss Type Double Circle" canceller (similar to

Switzerland's 1860 postmark). The Perfin initials, "D & R" are those of the addresser. Commercial perforated stamps used in Nepal are a rarity.

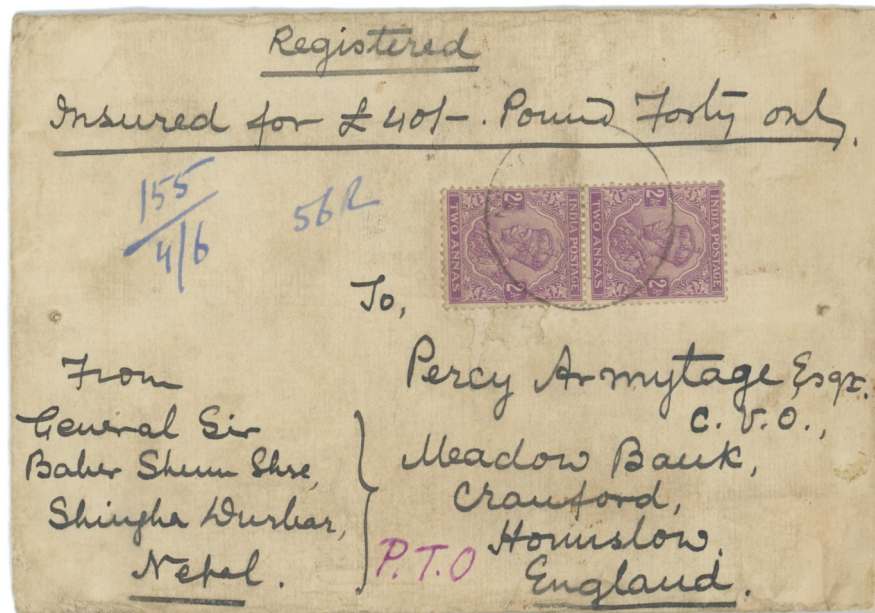
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### Advertisements

The Postal Himal accepts advertising from members of the NPTSC. The Postal Himal has been charging \$25 per issue for a business card size and \$100 for full page.

## An Unusual Return of Nepalese Mail to England

by Leo Martyn



1923, June 2. A registered cover from General Baber Sham Sher, son of the Prime Minister Maharaja Chandra Sham Sher, to England. The delivery was not completed as the contents were "Suspected to contain articles other than documents, returned to office of posting under clause 214, 218 of Guidi (viz guide). In the postal guide of 1903 article 214 refers to a group of privileged classes of offices which are entitled to receive letters at a rate not

exceed half an ounce in weight. Article 218 states that every parcel must be accompanied by a customs declaration. On page 39 of the guide money is not allowed to be sent by foreign post. Delivery was suspended on June 9 (red manuscript notation), probably in Bombay, and returned to the British Legation Post Office on June 14. As stated at the top of the cover currency in the amount of 40 pounds sterling was contained in the envelope.