

No. 6  
December 1970

# THE Gobi Times

A Newsletter specialising in the philately  
of Mongolia, Tuva, Bhutan, and the surrounding  
areas.

## "BAH" RELIEF

This years first "innovation" issue is not just a new release, but also a new "innovation." The Sculpture issue has hit the market.

The issue is beautiful. To be sure. But the editor, long a defender of the postal practices of Bhutan, even where her money raising took precedence over philatelic good sense and postal need, must now begin to take hard looks at this new issue.

The Bhutan Posts and Telegraph System seemingly is searching for new ideas in stamps. For many reasons this issue just can't be classified as stamps, and for many reasons.

The plastic will not hold a cancellation. It just wont. The plastic is practically indestructable. Ink wipes off in a flash. The stamp is so thick that a pile of them in a post office stock would be totally unacceptable. They wouldn't stand up right and they would slide all over.

They may be valid for postage, but in the modern scheme of things, they are so impractical.

Lastly, the wording on one is misspelled. "Mesopotamia" it should be.

One thing must be said for Bhutanese stamps, at least you get something for your money other than "tiny bits of paper" as one dealer I know once said.

Ones mail may arrive, but with these stamps affixed, the stamps probably wont.

Opinions expressed in this publication, may not necessarily be those of the publisher and editor, but in this case it is.

*Leonard A. Nadybal*

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# BHUTAN

འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་

## NEW ISSUES

In the fine traditon of bringing the up to the minute news from the four corners of Bhutan, wherever they may be, we herewith present the latest four year old information about a couple of lovelies.

On advice from Nasik Security Printers in India, two revenue stamps were produced by them for the Bhutanese Government in 1966. Date of first use in Bhutan is not known.



fig. A

10ch	25ch
(figure A)	
-----Offset ptg-----	
-----2.41cm-----	
x	
2.03cm	
Red	Jade

\*\*\*\*\*

## NEW CANCELLATIONS

Bob West, one of the active "informers" to the Gobi Times, has sent examples of cancellations from Ha Dzong, also known as Wangchuklo Dzong. It isn't known whether there are two cancellations from the same place or two post offices in the Ha Valley, where the Bhutan Royal Army has a training facility, at almost the same location. He also sent a Putlibhir cancellation, showing only the post office name in a rectangle. He says it was applied in purple. The editor presumes it is the standard stamp applied to the registration stickers applied to covers under normal circumstances.

Examples of the new cancellation mark of Chapcha are now arriving regularly, now that the Expt'l mark has been retired, months after the office became a regular "departmental post office."

## NEW ISSUES.

### Surcharged Down Stamps 1970

The longest set of stamps released to date, as of this printing, 45 stamps long, has appeared in two stages beginning in June.

Nineteen values appeared in June and an additional 25 or so late in November. Of the November denominations, the list is yet far from complete. There are hints of a 20ch surcharge on the 2Nu Ghandi memorial, but it has never been seen as far as we know. A 20ch on 1.30Nu Dancer and a 15ch on 1.30Nu Yak of 1962 were also reported, but these may be the remnants of the 1965 surcharged down set of eight that commands such high prices now.

It appears that the Bhutan post and telegraphs department is in a massive housecleaning operation, and at the same time sending supplies of letter rate stamps out to her post offices. These stamps have not been offered to the trade through Nassau.

The set is as follows, as far as known at presstime:

#### 5ch:

Mythology: 30ch., 50ch., 1.25Nu., 1.50Nu., 2Nu., 2.50Nu.

#### 20ch:

Rare Birds: 30ch., 50ch., 1.25Nu., 1.50Nu., 2Nu.

Rare Birds airpost values: 2.50Nu., 4Nu., 5Nu., 10Nu.

Animals: 1.50Nu., 2Nu., 3Nu., 4Nu., 5Nu.

Yeti: 1.25Nu., 2.50Nu., 3Nu., 5Nu., 6Nu., 7Nu.

Pheasants: 2Nu., 4Nu., 7Nu.

Mythology: 2Nu., 5Nu., 10Nu.

Boy Scouts: 1.25Nu., 4Nu.

Flowers (diamond): 4Nu., 5Nu.

Battle of Britain: 2Nu., 4Nu.

Freedom From Hunger: 1.50Nu.

UPU Membership: 1.05Nu., 1.40Nu., 4Nu.

#### Possible existence

Ghandi Memorial: 2Nu.

Dancers: 1.30Nu

1962 First Issue: 15ch on 1.30Nu

Most of this issue has been seen used. So far no errors of significant varieties have been reported. Quantities printed is not known. Earliest known cancellation so far found is 19 June (20ch on 2Nu Animals). Any additional information about this set, naturally is solicited and would be appreciated.



### BAHAMAS CANCELLATIONS

It has become common knowledge that First Day Covers of Bhutanese issues that are sold through Bhutan Stamp Agency, Ltd., of Nassau are created in Nassau.

The illustration below shows one such cover, cancelled with a Phuntsholing mark, and the first day of issue noted between the dorji symbols of the cancellation mark. This date is appropriately changed and either inserted in the circle or stamped separately. Most odd about this cancellation mark is that it changes shape. From an almost perfect circle to the oval shape shown here. Evidently the device is no more than a rubber stamp!



It is known that this cancellation is applied to whatever first day covers the orderer requests, and at times, years after the initial first day. The author recently ordered a set of the first 3D space set, which were serviced in Bhutan on separate envelopes for each value, or affixed to a souvenir brochure and cancelled with a colorless embossing "squeeze" device, and a purple date stamped over the cancellation. The FDC's from Nassau, sent around the time of issue also had the colorless cancellation, a purple air mail stamp as well as purple date in some instances. Some had an additional black Phuntsholing cancellation below the affixed stamps with the date, just as an ordinary letter would be cancelled. The agency will now send all orderers first day covers of that issue, duly cancelled with the "oval" rubber device like the one above, which first appeared early last year, as far as is known.

All this leads one to believe the agency has the power, whether with Government sanction or not, to create FDC's of past issues just to bolster stamp sales. Additionally, the agency announced the first space 3D issue was sold out one month after original issue. Where do stamps for created first day covers come from now?

# BRUTAN POST OFFICES & MARKINGS

Updated listing

		Registered mark seen	Slogan cancels known	FDC cities	Post. Due mark known	Pmk. w/o date known	Pmk w/- part dt. seen	See note number.....
Phuntsholing GPO								
Thimpu GPO	canc. rds "Tashichho Dzong"							1
Eitheka								
Byakar Dzong								
Chancha	EXPTL P.O. #C. 2353							4
Charcharay								
Chengmari								
Chimakothi	EXPTL P.O. #C. 2594							
Chirang								
Daga Dzong								
Dagapela								
Dagana								
Deothang	canc. rds. "Deothang P.O."							
Diafam								
Dorokha								
Gasa								
Gelechohu								
Ghumounay								
Kalikhola								2
Kanglung								
Khasadrangchu	canc. rds. "" "P.O."							
Lamidara								
Lingshi	canc. rds. "Lingshi P.O."							
Luntshi								
Mongar Dzong								
Punakha								
Putlibhir	EXPTL P.O. #C. 1778							
Rindung Dzong (at Paro)								3
Sarchi								
Sandrup Jongkhar								
Sarobhang								
Shangong								
Sibsoo								
Surrey								
Tashi Yangtse Dzong								
Tashigang								
Thinleygaon								
Tongsa								
Tongsa	EXPTL P.O. #32906 (closed)							
Warrong								
Wangchuklo Dzong (at Ha)								
Wangdiphodrang								

## POST OFFICE OPENINGS

After much searching, many letters, and much research, here is another in our rapidly developing series of charts and lists. This one is the opening dates for each of Bhutan's post offices. Where dates are omitted, the particular post office is not open or the date of opening is not yet known. This list is a good indication of the development of the Bhutan F&T.

Phuntsholing	10 Oct 1962	upgraded to GFO status 2 May 1967
Rinpung Dzong	5 Nov 1962	
Tashichho Dz.	28 Mar 1963	upgraded to GFO status 17 May 1969
Samdrup Jongk.	14 May 1965	
Wangdiphodrang	15 May 1965	
Tashigang	14 Jul 1965	
Chimakothi	8 Sep 1965	expt'l. post office "C-2594"
Chapcha	9 Sep 1965	expt'l. post office "C-2353"
Wangchuklo Dz.	16 Sep 1965	
Putlibhir	24 Sep 1965	expt'l. post office "C-1778"
Sarbhang	7 Oct 1965	
Samchi	22 Oct 1965	
Chirang	12 Nov 1965	
Gelegphu	24 Nov 1965	
Mongar Dzong	7 May 1966	
Byakar Dzong	20 May 1966	
Tongsa Dzong	31 May 1966	expt'l. post office "C-2096"
Tongsa	unknown	
Lhuntsi Dzong	1 Jun 1966	
Sibsoo	1 Jun 1966	
Punakha	9 Jun 1966	
Lamidara	15 Feb 1967	expt'l. post office "C-2840"
Shemgong	29 Feb 1968	
Kalikhola	15 Mar 1968	
Chengmari	20 Mar 1968	
Dagana Dzong	unknown	
Lingshi Dzong	26 Feb 1969	
Gasa	5 Mar 1969	
Dorokha	17 Mar 1969	
Deothang	21 Mar 1969	
Daga Dzong	5 Apr 1969	
Khasadrapchu	7 Feb 1970	"B.F.O."
Kanglung	3 Mar 1970	"B.F.O."
Tashiyangshi	17 Mar 1970	
Wamrong	3 Apr 1970	"B.F.O."
Bitheka		
Diafam		
Chargaray		
Surey		"B.F.O."
Ghumauney		"B.F.O."
Thinleygong		"B.F.O."



## Notes on Post Office chart

The Tongsa post office now has its own cancellation device. It carried an extra-departmental post office number for about two years. What date the post office was upgraded to the status of a regular departmental office is not known.

The Chapcha post office was upgraded to departmental status, effective 3 February 1970, but still maintains the original extra-departmental cancellation device reading "C-2353."

It is not currently known what "B.P.O." stands for. Presumably, "branch post office." They are referred to as extra-departmental in post department communications, and the extra-departmental post offices with the "C" numbers carry the "B.P.O." when they are mentioned in communications when it is desirable to abbreviate the mention of their status. Evidently they mean one and the same thing. The cancellation devices of the "B.P.O.'s" no longer carry "C" numbers. Only the "B.P.O." initials after the town name.

Last issue we pictured a cover with a cancellation inscribed "C-3945." No information is forthcoming regarding this. The Bhutan Post & Telegraphs officers have declined comments about it. The Philatelic Agency at Phuntsholing says no such post office appears on its list.

It may be disputed that the opening of the Phuntsholing post office was earlier in 1962, sometime around April through June. The self styled "postmaster-general", Lhendup Dorji, now deposed and in exile, stated in a letter in July 1962 that the stamps were available at the time of his writing. The 10 October cancellations only state that 10 October 1962 was the date of inauguration of the Post & Telegraph system. Not necessarily the Phuntsholing post office opening date. A Rome correspondent who was in Bhutan at the time says that there was no place to mail letters prior to 10 October and that runners had to be utilized.

It is well known that post offices of a sort existed for dispatch of mail prior to 1962. An attempt to list known cancellations is under way. It should appear early in 1971 if work proceeds on schedule.

The Putlibhir post office has been reported closed. The source of the statement is not known, and the accuracy of the statement has not been checked on.

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## POSTAL RATE CHANGES

Effective 1 July 1970, the Bhutan posts and telegraph system raised certain fees and rates to conform with increases made by the Indian government. The changes given here are expressed in Indian currency, but are expressed on stamps in Chetrum-Nultam units.

Books, packets and samples are up 5 n.p. to 20 n.p. for each unit up to 50 grams. 10 n.p. for each 25 gram unit thereafter, up from the same charge for every 50 gram unit thereafter.

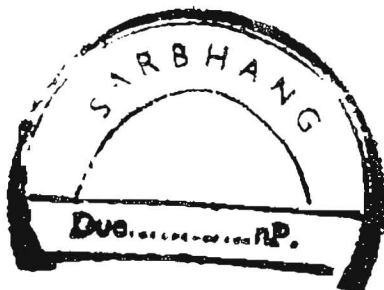
Parcels up 10 n.p. to 90 n.p. for every 400 grams or portion.

Registration fee is revised from 75 n.p. to 95 n.p.

Money Orders now 20 n.p. for every Rs. 100 (revised from the same rate for every Rs. 200.) When the amount of the money order exceeds Rs. 100, then 40 n.p. for every Rs. 20 or fraction thereover. (Revised from 30 n. p. for every Rs. 20 unit in excess of Rs 200.)

Also, the government has initiated a Rs. 1 "parcel delivery fee" to be levied on the parcels addressee upon delivery, irrespective of size or total weight.

What types of markings are affixed to the package to show payment is not known. This may be of considerable importance to collectors.



TO  
MR. B. K. Poddar  
13, Chandni Chowk Street  
Calcutta - 13.



Typical postage  
due marking.



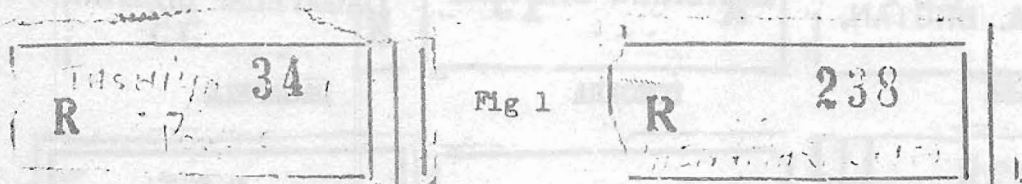
## POST OFFICE REGISTRATION LABELS AND MARKINGS

In the last issue of the Gobi Times (No. 5) we published an updated listing of the registration marks seen from the various Bhutanese post offices. By referring to the chart, one can see that the majority of the offices have labels. There are some that probably do, but the marking has just not been seen by collectors.

Registration service was introduced in 1967. Exactly what date or at what post office is not known. The service began with a postal agreement with India that permitted exchange of registered mail matter. The Bhutanese Government was always willing to accept registered mail from any country, but no facilities existed to obtain signatures necessary to prove receipt. In September 1969 the United States Government first allowed registered mail to Bhutan solely on the basis of reciprocity. If Bhutan would accept it, as it did, so would the United States. The only problem for a while was that the Indian Government would not allow passage of registered mail through India for Bhutan. Somehow, presumably, the UPU was a helpful party, because it was in a UPU publication that the problem was publicized. In February 1970, the amendment to the USPOD International Mail manual was distributed, and the way was paved for unhindered dispatch of registered mail to Bhutan.

It costs 90c to register a letter from the U.S. to Bhutan, but only about 20c to register a letter from Bhutan to the U.S.A. Internal registration runs 80ch or about 11c U.S.

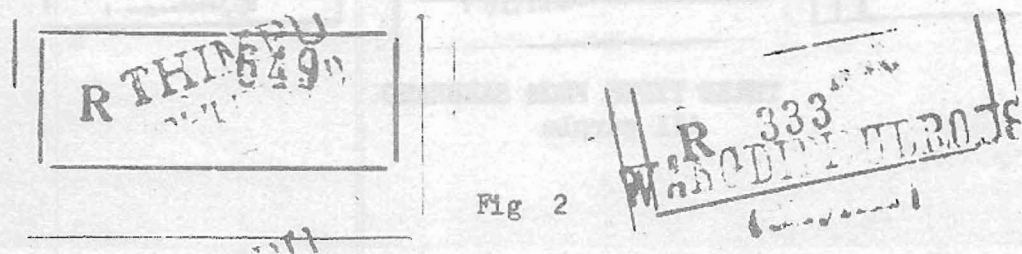
There are two basic labels used on registered mail, and they vary only in the "R" on them. One is narrow, and the other is wide and a little more bold. (Fig 1)



(These two are handwritten types from Chengmari and Tashiyangtse post offices)

The labels vary in many ways when one considers the border line and the breaks found in them. So far they are too numerous to even bother with.

The labels are applied both stamped with the post office name and without. In some instances the label is affixed and then the name is stamped. (Fig 2)



The remainder of this article will be illustrations of the markings of the various hill post offices. Some are handwritten, some are stamped, some are in purple and some are black, and they are noted here. This is by no means complete. Additions to illustrate in future issues will be welcome. The editors would like to thank Mr. George Russell of Auckland, New Zealand for most illustrations used here.

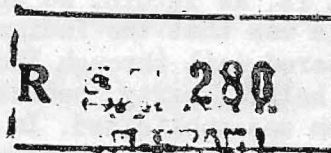
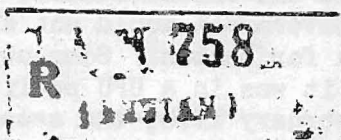


Black

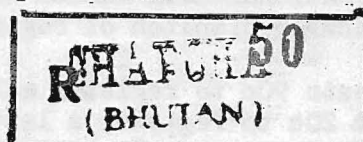


Purple

Purple  
THREE TYPES FROM SIBSOO

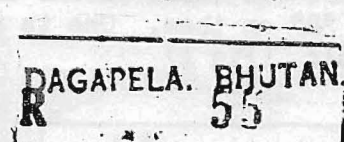
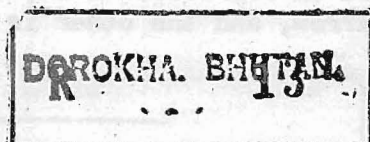
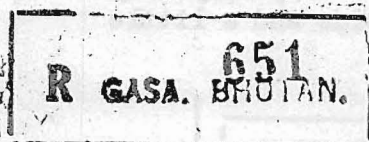


THREE TYPES FROM SAMCHI  
All Purple



RIMPUNG DZONG  
Black only

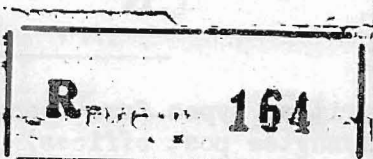
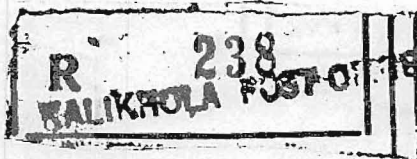
CHAPCHA EXPTL 2353  
Purple only



GASA

DOROKHA

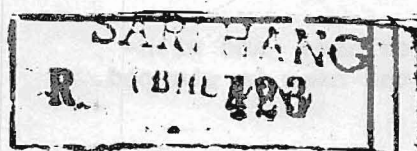
DAGAPELA



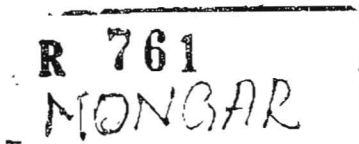
KALIKHOLA

SHENGANG of  
SHENGONG as pak. reads

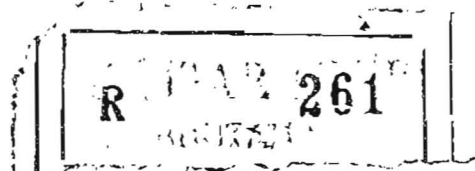
TASHIGANG



THREE TYPES FROM SARBHANG  
All purple

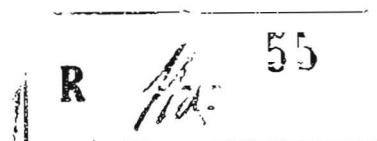


Handwritten

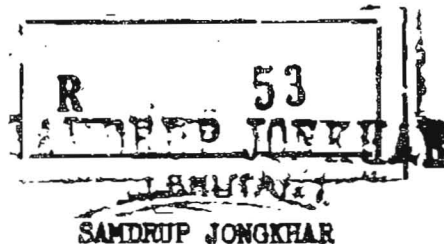
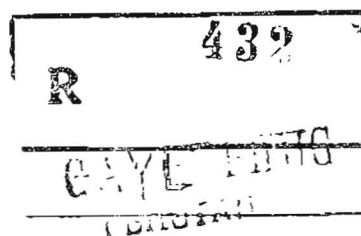


Tall "R"

Large "R"  
THREE TYPES FROM MONGAR

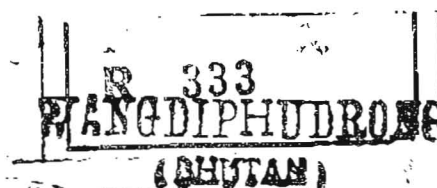


Handwritten  
WANGCHUKLO DZONG at the  
HAA or "HA" Dzong

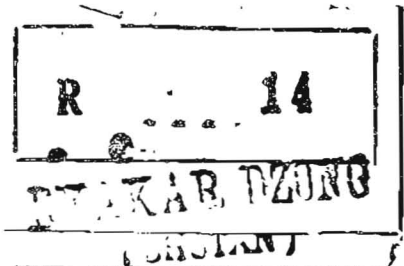


SAMDRUP JONGKHAR

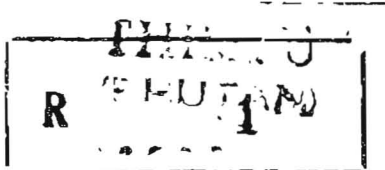
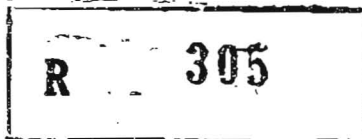
GELEOPHU  
Also spelled "GAYLEPHUG" or on  
old maps seen, "GELEPHUG" or "GELEPHU."



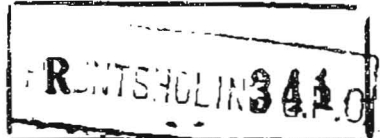
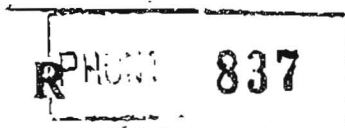
WANGDIPHODRANG P. O.  
label still shows the old  
"WANGDIPHUDRONG" spelling  
Labels known with both  
"R" types



BYAKAR DZONG



TWO TYPES OF THIMPU  
Thimpu P. O. is at Tashichho Dzong, the Capitol of Bhutan  
These two types of name stamps are found also in black as  
well as on the two types of pre-printed labels with the 2  
different "R's."



PHUNTSOLING G.P.O.  
always black

## PROPOSALS FOR POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT

This is a summary of the discussions in the 32<sup>d</sup> National Bhutanese Assembly, Tashichho Dzong, Thimpu, 22 April to 30 May 1970 (Reprinted from the Kuensel Fortnightly Bulletin of the Government of Bhutan)

The draft schemes of the Posts & Telegraphs Department were presented to the Assembly by the director, Mr. Lam Penjor. The director agreed to look into the criticism of some members that posts were delayed unduly. Some members also pointed out that the mail jeep service should be dispensed with and mail be carried out in Transportation Department busses. It was pointed out by the Finance Minister that the carriage of mails in Government busses would pose many problems at present; and that he would be reluctant to accept the responsibility of ensuring regular carriage of mails. The bus services on some routes were plying only once a week and late delivery of mails would have an adverse effect on the functioning of all Government departments. It was decided that the mail jeep service was to be retained for the present but reduced to the extent that bus service became more frequent and regular.

The Postal Director stated that his department proposed to take over the telephone exchanges at Thimpu, Paro and Phuntsholing during the Third Plan and for this purpose, the necessary personnel were being trained in India. Runner service for carrying mail at places where there were no motorable roads was to be expanded.

The proposed outlay of the Posts & Telegraphs Department for the Third Plan is Rupees 146.18 lakh. (Approx \$2.5 million) 1 June 1970

THROUGH THE GOBI TIMES OFFICE  
Post Office Box 1223  
Canoga Park, CA 93941

### KUENSEL

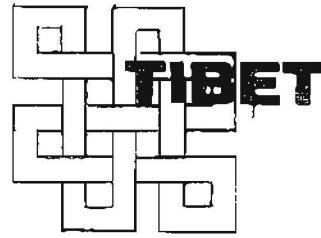
A FORTNIGHTLY OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE  
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR THIS MOST INFORMATIVE  
PUBLICATION. THE ONLY OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ROYAL  
GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN.

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Always posted with collectable commemorative  
postage stamps affixed.





This is the first of what we hope will be a regular addition to the G. T. A section on Tibet has been subject of many requests in letters to the Gobi Times editors, and I hope we can provide a feature worthy of note by even the most particular specialist in Tibetan material. This first article by Robert West of Ohio who has specialized in Tibetan stamps for the better part of two decades is, we feel, a good start, combining a good basic background of Tibetan history and significant, but little known philatelic information which we always like to feature in this publication. As usual, additions and comments as well as criticism and corrections are always welcome.

L.A.N.

#### WW II INVASION OF TIBET BY NATIONALIST CHINA

by ROBERT D. WEST

Deep within Central Asia lies a rather large tract of land over which battles have been fought for over centuries.

Just why control of this area is desirable is rather difficult to understand. The land is inhospitable, being subject to sudden storms, bitter winds, severe winters and short summers. In addition, this land is rather inaccessible because of the fortress-like mountains surrounding it.

By now, you must be fairly well aware that we are speaking of the Tibetan Plateau.

Ironically, since the 17th Century, this seemingly God-forsaken land has been the home of the God-king of the lamaistic peoples who, for the most part, are peace loving, happy mortals. But they have not always been able to follow the dictates of their religion.

Going back to the 13th Century, Kublai Khan conquered eastern Tibet and tribes to the west initiated a series of incursions in the early 1500's. The Mongols overran Tibet about the middle of the 17th Century (1644). During the next one hundred years, other Mongol groups attempted to take control.

Tibet, of course, had its turns at aggressiveness. In the days when the lamas were militaristically inclined, Tibet controlled parts of China as far east as Tatsienlu and above the Koko Nor to the north. Nepal and Sikkim vassals, and Bhutan simply was a place for Tibetans to migrate.

According to the law of averages, the tables were turned occasionally. At one time, Sikkim controlled Tibet's Chumbi Valley as well as parts of Bhutan and Nepal. Nepal, after an earlier defeat forced the Tibetans to give way in 1854, causing the Tibetans to pay tribute to the Churka tribesmen in Nepal for the following one hundred years.

The British in India also took a hand in Tibetan affairs. When the Tibetans encroached on the borders of Sikkim, the British launched a punitive expedition which stopped only after reaching Lhasa. This military sortie was in 1888. Later, in 1903-4, the British arranged two other trips into Tibet, ostensibly to establish trade relations, but additionally, to keep the Russians in Asia at a distance.

While the "Great Powers" recognized that China had a certain amount of authority over Tibet, no one thought China would do anything about it. However, in 1909, the Chinese moved into Tibet. The occupation didn't last long, for the Chinese revolution broke out in 1911 and the Chinese Imperialist Armies returned to China proper.

The Tibetans felt the time was ripe to declare their independence, and this they did in 1912. They also set about retaking territory they believed to be rightfully theirs. Chamdo was regained in 1918 and this triumph temporarily put an end to the Tibetans' aggressive tendencies.

But again in 1933, trouble erupted once more- this time along the Yangtse River. China claimed territory to the west of the Yangtse, while Tibet declared that cities east of the river were Tibetan. The Tibetans were somehow better equipped than the Chinese provincial troops, crossed the Yangtse and captured a number of towns that actually were more Tibetan than Chinese in character. It is a fact that Tibetans populate a much larger area than the usual Tibetan boundaries indicate. After the death of the 13th Dalai Lama in December, 1933, the situation eased and Tibetan troops gradually withdrew from the contested areas.

You ask: what is all the point of all this discussion of invasions and counter-invasions?

In the first place, it is always a good thing to have a little background of the country that interests you. Secondly, we wanted to disclose a planned invasion of Tibet that never took place!

During World War II (the "big beef", ed.), the Chinese Nationalists were battling for their lives, as the Japanese pushed them back into West Central China. Supplies were badly needed for the Chinese armies. World War II veterans will recall the Burma and Stillwell Roads and flying the "hump" - all efforts to assist the Chinese.

Whether the Nationalists wanted to gain time, have a safe place for training new troops, or to provide new supply lines for their fighting forces has never been stated. There was also the possibility that the Chinese wanted to forestall any Russian move into Tibet, such as occurred in Mongolia and Tuva. No matter what the reason and despite the many problems facing the Chinese, they decided to invade Tibet during 1944.

The invasion plan had advanced to the stage that Chinese stamps were overprinted for use in Tibet. The overprint took the form of the Chinese character for "Tibet", which was sided with two vertical wavy lines on the left and right of the character. It was applied in black.

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This overprint was placed on certain basic stamps which had been previously printed by Chung-Hwa Book Company of Hong Kong. They all have the portrait of Dr. Sun Yat Sen and consisted of a 2c olive green, 3c claret, 5c green, 8c olive green and 10c green stamps. (Scott numbers 349-51, 53 and 54.) The overprinting was done by Pacheng Printing Company of Nanping and Chung Hwa Book Company in Chungking.

It is difficult to understand why such low values were overprinted, as Chinese currency was considerably inflated at the time. The only apparent answer is that currency of a different valuation from that in China proper was to be used in Tibet.

However, as rapidly and mysteriously as it began, the Tibet invasion plan was abandoned in late 1944.

The existence of these stamps did not become known until 1951, when they were first shown by the Chinese Post Office during a philatelic exhibit at Taipei, Taiwan. Photographs of the overprinted stamps were made available to the author by Chinese postal authorities.

With the Chinese Nationalist failure to invade Tibet, it remained for the Communist Chinese to make good the most recent invasion of the Tibetan homeland. There are no distinctive postage stamps this time. Only postmarks to spark collectors interest.

Will peace ever come to this area? Over the centuries it hasn't over any lengthy period of time. Only the future will tell and we may not be around to see it. The only recent opportunity for an attempt at Independence for Tibet was during Mao's so-called "cultural revolution." China was in an uproar and it might have been possible for the Tibetans to take some action. With no organized resistance, or for whatever reason, an opportunity was somehow missed.

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