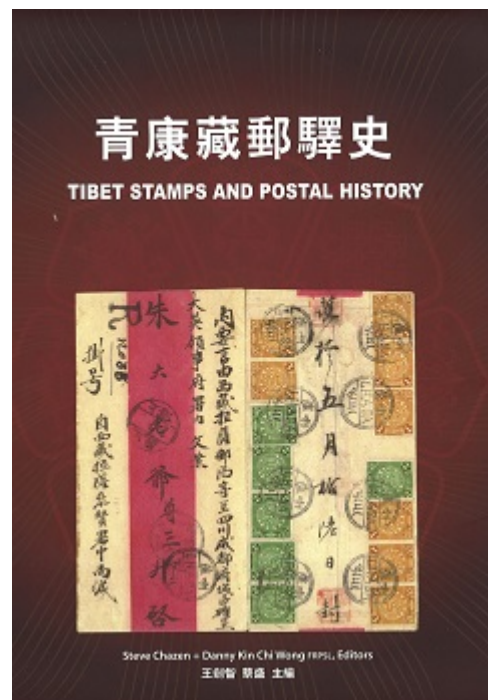


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Chazon, Steve/Wong, Danny Tibest stamps and postal history This

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Chazon, Steve/Wong, Danny Tibest stamps and postal history

This book is the first attempt to outline the postal history of the entire Tibetan highland.

Chazon, Steve / Wong, Danny Tibest Briefmarken und Postgeschichte

Dieses Buch ist der erste Versuch, die Postgeschichte des gesamten tibetischen Hochlandes zu skizzieren.

In a narrow sense, 'Tibet' refer to a much larger area of people sharing the same culture, spilling into the south of the Himalayas. This is the first survey of the postal history of the Tibetan-speaking people, from antiquity to modern times. Previous studies have tended to focus on central Tibet and overlook the other regions. Chapter 1 outlines the historical and geographical background of this study. Geographical boundaries of this study are defined by the boundaries of the Tibetan autonomous polities, which roughly

correspond to the traditional cultural divisions of U-Tsang (central Tibet), Kham (eastern Tibet), Amdo (northeast Tibet) and Ngari (western Tibet). Hence, Ngari is included in the chapters on Tibet, Labrang and other Tibetan regions in Gansu Province are included in the chapters on Qinghai, and Tibetan regions in Sichuan and Yunnan provinces are included in the chapter on Kham (Xikang).

The next chapters deal with the Imperial courier system (yizhan) in Tibet during the Qing dynasty and beyond. Chapter 2 focuses on domestic mail including Chinese, Mongolian and Tibetan, and chapter 3 on trans-Himalayan mail. Many letters are of historical significance and deserve further study.

Chapter 4 deals with Nepali military and official mail from Tibet handled by couriers, Nepali Court mail in the three border towns of Tibet, and mail from Mustang, a Tibetan enclave in Nepal. British military and civilian post offices in Tibet are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. British military intrigues in Tibet shaped the modern history of Tibet. They caused the opening of the Yatung Customs and the route to Lhasa in 1894, and the importance of the Khasa trade route rapidly diminished. The more systematic Waterfall numbering system for postal markings are restored here, alongside the Hellrigl numbering. The British Indian post dominated Tibet for decades until their withdrawal in 1955.

Chinese post offices in Tibet, Kham (Xikang) and Qinghai during the Imperial and Republican eras are discussed in the succeeding Chapters 7, 8 and 9, plus chapter 10 deals with China-Tibet mail during the period of Tibetan separation from China. This includes important discoveries in the earliest mail, combination covers and secret postal routes, as well as a clarification of the Imperial postal tariffs in Tibet. The numbering of the postal markings in these chapters are original to this book.

The Tibetan local post and its fascinating proofs, cliches, settings, papers, colours and shades of the 1913, 1924 and 1933 and other issues are discussed in Chapters 11 and 12. Rates, markings, and domestic and international routes are presented in Chapter 13. As will be shown, we argue that the 1912 issue was in fact issued in 1913, and we attempt to clarify the prevailing postage rates. We also argue that the eastern route is not what it was perceived to be. Here the Waterfall and Hellrigl numbering of the postal markings are used in parallel.

The last part of this study is devoted to the early years of the People's Post. Chapter 14 is a pioneering study of the military posts, and Chapters 15-18 deal with the People's Post in Qinghai, Kham, Chamdo and Tibet respectively. The year 1965 marked the birth of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, the closure of the Yatung route and the opening of the Khasa exchange office. History effectively turned a full circle. The numbering of postal markings in these chapters are original, although Hellrigl numbers are listed alongside to save our readers trouble. Furthermore, in order to complete the story of the evolution of the postal markings, some of those described post-date 1965.

Tibetan regions outside China including Sikkim, Bhutan and Ladakh are discussed in brief in the appendices. Sikkim and Nepal played such important roles in the postal history of Tibet that two chapters are devoted to Nepal and references to Sikkim are found throughout this study.

A note on the translations. Tibetan names are transliterated according to their pronunciation, rather than the lengthy phonetically more precise spellings. Hence, the simpler version 'hamdo' (or Chabdo as it appeared in postal markings) is used instead of Chab mdo, and 'Ngari' is used rather than mNga 'ris. For Chinese names, the transliteration as it appeared in contemporary postal markings is used whenever possible, and pinyin is adopted where no contemporary postal markings are to hand. Thus, 'Tatsinlu' (itself a transliteration of Dαtsindo from Tibetan) morphed into 'Kangting' in the Republican era, and into 'Kangding' today. Similarly, 'Sikang', derived from 'Kham' in Tibetan became 'Xikang' in 1950-55 before the province was dissolved, and 'Peking' became 'Beijing' with the advent of the People's Republic. Measurements are in metric whenever possible, although Imperial measures used in earlier literature are retained.

This book is intended as a general introduction to this important aspect of Tibetology, incorporating major

findings over the past decades. For specialists in the respective stamps, please consult the studies in colour, shade, plating, varieties and errors listed under 'further reading' in the respective chapters.

FOREWORD by STEVE CHAZEN
FOREWORD by DANNY KC WONG
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