

# REGISTRATION MARKINGS OF THE CHINESE POST OFFICE IN LHASA SINCE 1954.

A study of the various types of Registration markings used at LHASA by the Chinese Post Office since 1954 makes a fascinating exercise. Since 1954 LHASA has used a score of different postmarks, but no one postmark is known only on Registered letters, nor is any one type of Registered marking known only with one particular postmark, so there appears to be no relationship between the various types of postmark and Registration mark. Neither is there any reason to believe that LHASA had more than one Post Office in operation during this period. There may, therefore, be some form of system to be found in the Registration markings.



65

The first type of marking is a simple manuscript "#" (sometimes preceded by an "R") and a number. (This practice is known from all the towns and many villages in Tibet.) The earliest of these I have from LHASA is #725 dated 17 SEPTEMBER 1954. This is followed on 20 NOVEMBER 1954 by #2541; although it stretches credulity

a little to accept that 1800 Registered letters were sent from LHASA in 1954 in just over two months it is just possible that these two could be in the same sequence - except that a third one is # 1988 dated 16 JUNE 1955. So if these numbers are sequential a new series must have been started, and the number of Registered letters sent markedly reduced, in 1955.

The first type of Registration label appears early in 1956.

LHASA 0903



Registered,  
by air mail  
via CCCP.

123456789  
Mestigynapogreat  
abucanoma

R No. 269

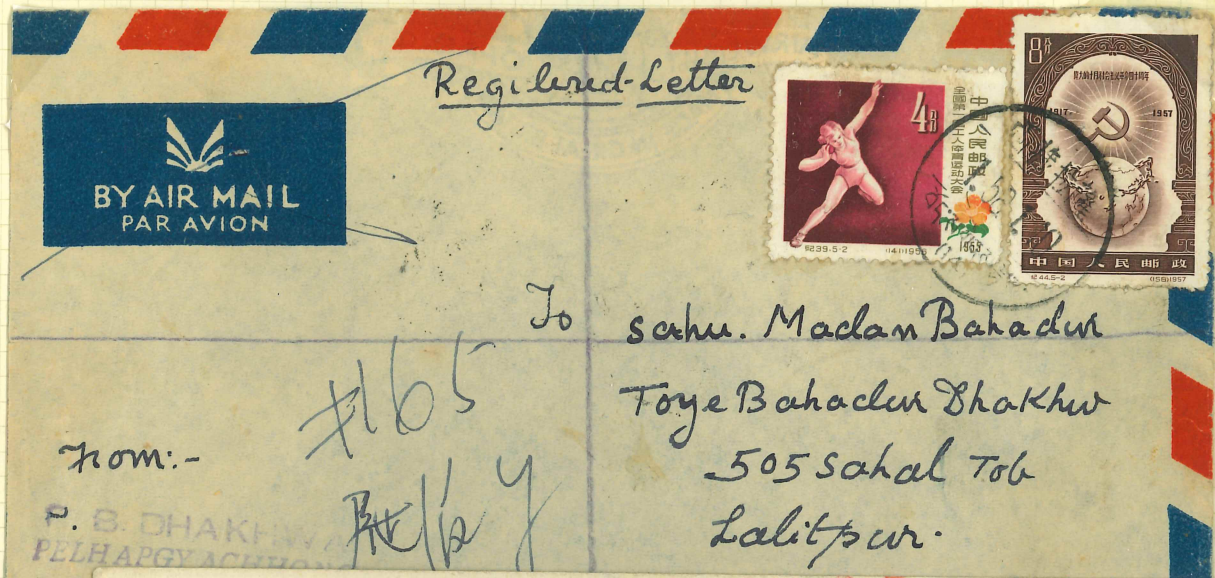
Mr. Theo Klewitz  
Am Badegarten 9  
(16) Fulda

Germany, Europe

Германия, Европа

This label is printed in vermilion, size 40mm x 17mm and nonletted in colour. It carries no town name (it was sometimes inserted in manuscript) but does have printed numbers as an integral part of the label. In this series I have numbers from 190 dated MARCH 1956, though 269 (MARCH), 403 (MAY), 758 (AUGUST) to 2680 on 4 AUGUST 1957. It is probable that the sequence went only as far as 3000

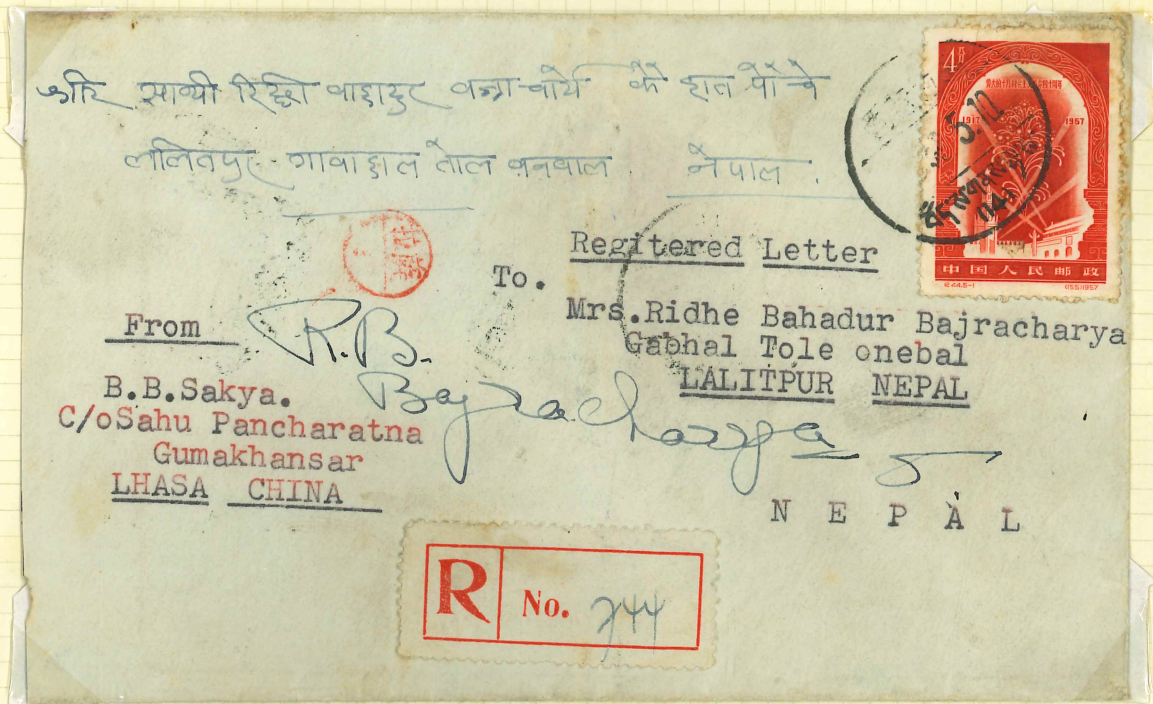
because on 10 JANUARY 1958 there is a reversion to # 165.



Known to Pali in Heilungchiang.

Proof that these letters with only manuscript markings were actually registered - and did not just have the markings added later to enhance their philatelic value - is often found in the remains of the Acknowledgement of Receipt slip stuck on the reverse.

Later in 1958 appears the second type of label, printed in vermilion, size 37mm x 13mm and perforated (roughly 12½). The office name still requires to be inserted by hand as does the Registration number, although there is a printed "No." on the label.



The earliest of these, with the number inserted in manuscript, is No 744 dated 10 MAY 1958, very possibly still in the same numerical sequence as the manuscript # 165 of four months earlier. The only other one almost certainly in this same sequence is No 1459 dated 7 SEPTEMBER 1958. It seems likely that this sequence of numbering continued only to the end of 1958 because an obviously new sequence appears in early 1959.

Still in manuscript and still on the same type of label this new sequence appears to run uninterrupted throughout the whole of 1959 for I have Nos 50, 28 JANUARY, 64 (FEBRUARY), 297 (APRIL), 318 (APRIL), 502 (JUNE), 604 (SEPTEMBER), 885 (OCTOBER) and 1131 on 3 DECEMBER.

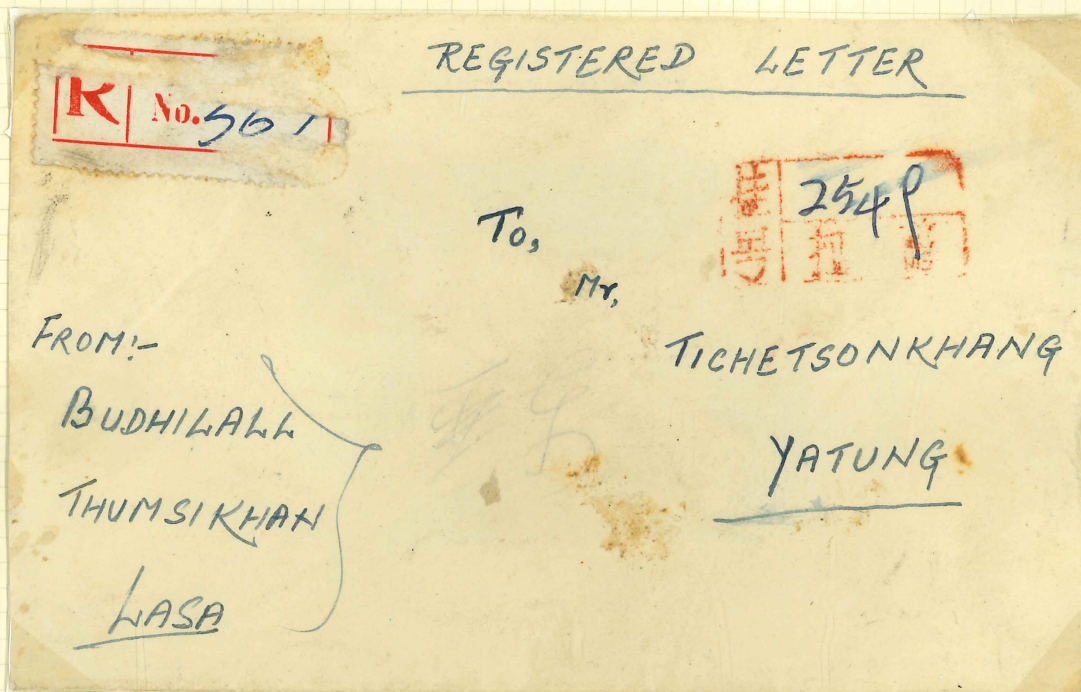


Another new sequence starts in 1960, still on the same type of label but now with the number inserted by means of a four-figure numerator.



This sequence runs from 0068 on 12 JANUARY 1960, through 1032, 16 JUNE, 1078, 20 JUNE, to 1230 on 8 JULY 1960.

But, during this 6 month period there are two "rogues". The first is dated 16 MARCH 1960 and has two different Registration numbers. One of these is a label inscribed in manuscript 367 (probably this being defaced) and there being in addition a Registration "chop" with the manuscript number 254



Either of these numbers could be in the sequence between 0068 in January and 1032 in June but there is no obvious explanation for the two different markings. The "chop" is inscribed LHASA in Chinese in the bottom panel and, although it has not been previously reported from LHASA, a very similar type of "chop" is known used from SHIGATSE between 1956 and 1959. Perhaps an explanation will be found one day.

The second "rogue" during this period is a series of three covers

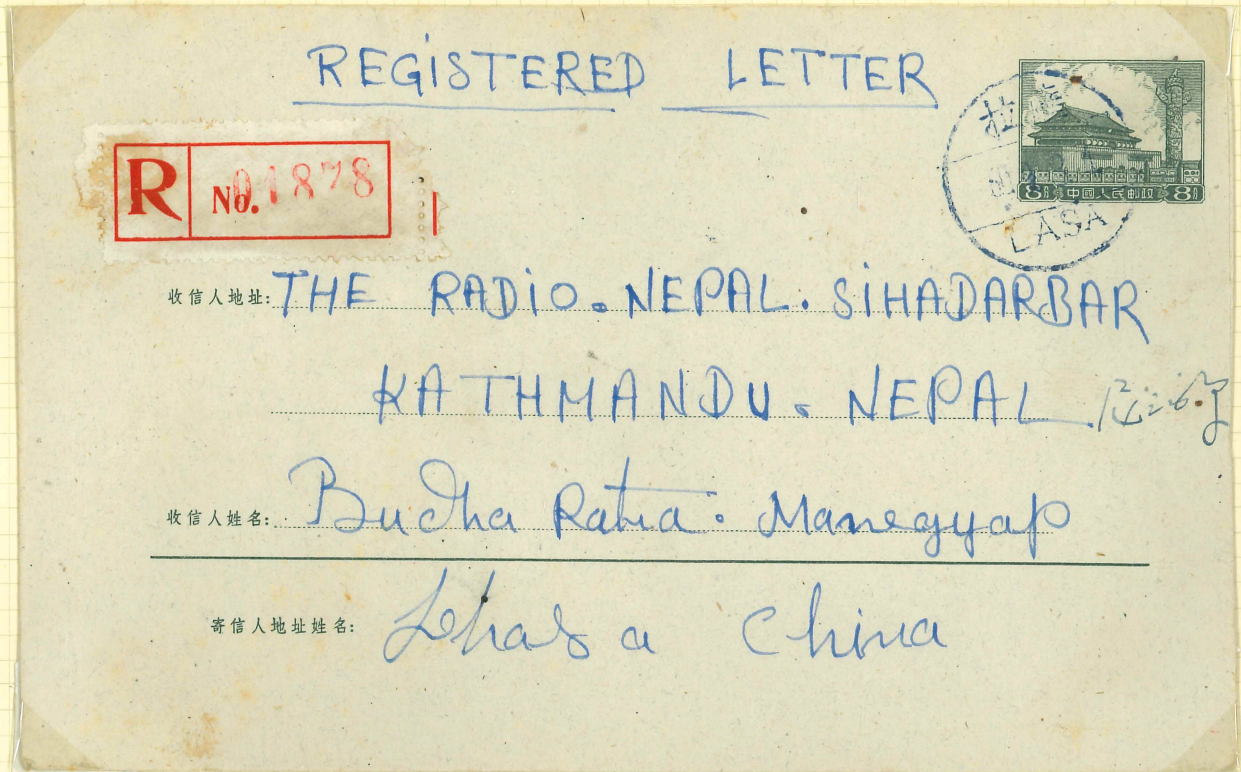
with consecutive Registration numbers, 435, 436 and 437 (although the "4" could conceivably be a "9") all dated 6 JUNE 1960.



If the "4" is a badly written "9" then these three covers too would fit into the sequence with the four-figure numerator 1032 dated 16 JUNE. All three covers are from and to the same addressee and therefore probably philatelic but all were definitely registered because in addition to the remains of the Acknowledgement of Receipt they bear a "KALIMPONG REG" arrival mark on reverse. If they are numbers 435 and not 935 etc then their out of sequence and manuscript numbering must remain a mystery for the present.

Apart from these "rogues" this four-figure numerator sequence would appear to continue quite logically and correctly up to 1230 on 8 JUNE 1960. For some reason shortly after this a further "0" was added at the beginning of the number, turning it into a five-figure numerator. The numbering, however, appears to continue in the same sequence as the first of these

is No 01850 on 1 SEPTEMBER 1960 and the only other one 01878 on 8 SEPTEMBER.



Almost immediately this series is replaced by a six-figure numerator starting with 402248 on 13 OCTOBER 1960.



This new six-figure numerator has the numbers only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  mm tall instead of the 6 mm of the previous numerators. And still the last four figures appear to carry on the previous sequence, from 402248 and 402250 on 13 OCTOBER 1960 to 402312 and 402314 on 19 October 1960.

And then on 29 OCTOBER 1960 comes a reversion to the original four-figure numerator with 2403 and 2405, still apparently in the same sequence.



After the excesses of 1960, 1961 proves to be remarkably straightforward. A new numerical sequence was started in January, still on the same type of label and with the numbers inserted by a five-figure numerator. Unlike the five-figure numerator of 1960 the figures are only  $4\frac{1}{2}$  mm tall (instead of 6 mm). The earliest of this new sequence is No 00026 dated 2 JANUARY 1961 and it seems to run fairly straightforwardly through 00463 (MARCH)

00565 (MARCH), 00872 (APRIL) to 00953 on 10 MAY 1961

registered, by air-mail, par avion.



But then 01767 on 23 SEPTEMBER 1961 has the number in blue instead of the usual red.





*And the same label started a new sequence in 1968 at least to 167 on 25 MARCH.*



*What will happen in the future has yet to be seen, but there may well be just as many interesting variations as there have been in the past.*

There would appear to have been a dearth of mail from LHASA in 1962, 1963 and 1964 for I have seen very few covers at all and none registered.

Then in 1965 a new type of Registration label appears; the size is reduced to 35 mm x 11 mm, still in vermilion and perforated and this time with integral printed numbers (but still no town name). The earliest of these are 38 and 39 on 25 JANUARY 1965 and the next



300 on 18 JULY. These three all have the town name, in Chinese and English (spelt LASHA) added by rubber stamp.

After JULY 1965 there is another hiatus for I have seen no registered covers of 1966 but this new type of label is unlikely to have continued through much more than one full sequence because in 1967 there is a reversion to the previous 37 mm x 13 mm type, this time with the numbers inserted in blue by a three-figure numerator and again with the town name inserted sometimes by the rubber stamp. Of these I only have 163 on 9 APRIL and then 477 on 13 AUGUST 1967.